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### FEATURED Q&A

#### What Does Chile's Successful Mine Rescue Mean for Piñera?

**Q** Last week's rescue of 33 miners trapped underground in Chile for 69 days cast the South American nation in an intense global spotlight, garnering perhaps unprecedented media attention worldwide and overshadowing some contentious domestic issues, such as the Mapuche indigenous movement's hunger strike against a Pinochet-era law that has been building since July. What does the successful rescue of the 33 miners mean for President Sebastián Piñera and his political power at home? What are the implications for Chile's relations abroad?

In the short term, the Piñera administration will have higher rates of approval from citizens. Though this is transient, it lends an aspect of inclusive and cultural nationalism. Such feats can inspire society and influence national consciousness and identity, bringing about new narratives. Whether or not this occurs will depend on Chileans. First, their willingness to value the virtues of teamwork, discipline and solidarity, shown by the workers, rather than the individual success that pervades daily life and shapes what it

*Continued on page 3*

**A** Sergio Bitar, former Chilean minister of mining, education and public works: "This feat shocked the world. People felt a deep sense of humanity and witnessed a high level of technical capacity in a small, far away country and Chile's international profile grew. Time will only tell whether we can advance the qualities that the world saw during those harrowing days. It was certainly an exceptional event: in the depth of a mine without air, water or space, the miners demonstrated an ability to survive the unimaginable with discipline, solidarity and hope; technicians, headed by the state-owned company Codelco, showed great skill to reach the miners; the families lent moral support; international experts gave invaluable advice; and the government acted decisively and effectively, running, incidentally, a well-planned commu-



#### European Parliament Awards Human Rights Prize to Cuban

The European Parliament on Thursday awarded its most prestigious human rights prize to Guillermo Fariñas, a Cuban who has waged more than 20 hunger strikes over the past two decades. See story on page 2.

*File Photo: Reuters.*

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## NEWS BRIEFS

**Suspected Cholera Outbreak Kills 135 in Rural Haiti**

A disease outbreak has killed at least 135 people and sent a surge of people to hospitals in Haiti's rural Artibonite region, the Associated Press reported. Health officials suspect the disease is cholera, a water-borne infection, but are awaiting lab results to confirm. The region is a haven for thousands of refugees from the country's deadly earthquake and relief groups' point to poor sanitation conditions in settlements as a likely cause of the outbreak.

**Earthquake Strikes Northern Mexico, No Damage Reported**

A 6.7 magnitude earthquake hit Mexico's Gulf of California Thursday, striking about 72 miles south of Los Mochis in the state of Sinaloa, the Associated Press reported. No damages or injuries were reported. The region was hit by three earthquakes of magnitudes between 5.5 and 5.8 on Tuesday and Wednesday. In La Paz, Baja California Sur, Alfonso Gómez, the city's assistant director of civil protection, told the AP that schools and other public buildings were evacuated when the earthquake struck.

**Panama's Martinelli Arrives in Taiwan for State Visit**

Panamanian President Ricardo Martinelli arrived Thursday in Taiwan, where he plans to meet with his counterpart as well as the island's top official overseeing ties with China, Agence France-Presse reported. Martinelli, the first Panamanian leader to visit Taiwan in six years, also is expected to meet with local business leaders in an effort to draw more investment to the Central American country.

## Political News

**European Parliament Awards Human Rights Prize to Cuban Dissident**

The European Parliament on Thursday awarded its most prestigious prize for human rights to Guillermo Fariñas, a Cuban dissident whose hunger strike earlier this year put pressure on Havana to release political prisoners, Reuters reported. "Fariñas was ready to sacrifice and risk his own health and life as a means of pressure to achieve change in Cuba," said European Parliament President Jerzy

“They are sending a message of dissatisfaction with the steps the Cuban government has taken to improve the human rights situation on the island.”

— *Guillermo Fariñas*

Buzek in announcing the awarding of the Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought to Fariñas. The European Union, along with the United States, has long urged Cuba's government to release political prisoners and take on democratic reforms. Fariñas, 48, has gone on hunger strikes more than 20 times in as many years to press for causes including the end of Internet censorship in Cuba. Fariñas was at his home in Santa Clara, Cuba, 170 miles east of Havana, when he learned of the award. He told Reuters the recognition was not for him but rather "for the Cuban people, for the prisoners ... for our brothers who are in the streets, and the exiles." Fariñas added that the award was recognition of other countries' concern for the human rights situation in Cuba. "This prize shows that democratic and civilized governments in any part of the world, in this case the Europeans, keep their eyes on the situation of human rights in Cuba," he told the wire service. "They are sending a message of dissatisfaction with the steps the Cuban govern-

ment has taken to improve the human rights situation on the island." Cuba's government had no official statement about the award. In 2008, the 27-nation European Union lifted diplomatic sanctions against Cuba, but it continues to link its economic cooperation with the communist island nation to its treatment of political prisoners. In July, Cuba agreed to free 52 political prisoners and send them to Spain. The agreement to free the prisoners, which the Catholic Church brokered, prompted Fariñas to end a 135-day hunger strike. In Washington, State Department spokesman P.J. Crowley called Fariñas "an outspoken proponent for freedom and democracy in Cuba." Crowley also urged Cuba's government to "follow through on recent public statements and release all political prisoners."

## Economic News

**Venezuela's Finance Minister Sees End of Recession Next Year**

Venezuelan Finance Minister Jorge Giordani said Thursday that he expects the country's economy to emerge from its severe recession next year with a 2 percent rate of growth, Bloomberg News reported. The growth forecast is part of a proposal for the country's 2011 budget, which includes 204.2 billion bolivars (\$47.5 billion) of spending, an increase of 28 percent from the 2010 budget, said Giordani. Venezuela could see consumer prices increase between 23 and 25 percent next year, he added. In September, prices increased 28.5 percent from the same month last year. Venezuela last year entered its first recession since 2003 amid falling oil prices and the global economic crisis. The economy has contracted for five straight quarters and remains in recession even as other economies in the region have again started to grow. "The budget was drafted under the principles of caution and austerity," Giordani said in



Giordani

File Photo:  
Venezuelan Gov't.

a speech to the National Assembly. "Our economy is now recovering after hitting bottom last year and we're at the doors of a new growth cycle." Venezuela is Latin America's top producer of oil and depends on the commodity for 95 percent of its export revenue. Oil also funds 47 percent of the government's spending. State oil company **PDVSA** is expected to export 2.68 million barrels a day on average next year at a price of \$40 a barrel, Giordani added.

## Company News

### Natura Cosméticos Shares Rise to Record as Profit Beats Forecasts

**Natura Cosméticos**, Brazil's largest manufacturer of cosmetics saw its shares rise to a record high in São Paulo as the company beat profit forecasts and the country's rate of unemployment dropped to a record low, Bloomberg News reported.

*Brazil's unemployment rate fell to 6.2 percent in September, a record low.*

Shares rose 3.4 percent to close at 49.10 reais as the benchmark Bovespa index fell 1.1 percent. Natura reported net income of 191.7 million reais (\$113 million), which changed little from the previous year. However, the company beat the 187.4 million reais, the average estimate of eight analyst surveyed by Bloomberg. The company's sales increased 22 percent to 1.28 billion reais. "What positively surprised us is that, despite tough comps, Natura's sales rep count continues to grow at a fast pace while its sales rep productivity remains positive," Daniela Bretthauer of **Raymond James & Associates Inc.** in São Paulo wrote to clients Thursday in a note. Also on Thursday, Brazil's national statistics agency said the country's unemployment rate dropped in September to a record low of 6.2 percent.

### Featured Q&A

*Continued from page 1*

means to be Chilean. Doing so means improving job security, training, salaries and creating greater, more equal opportunities. Second, it depends on our conviction that we can achieve things when there is a collective commitment to them. If they learn this lesson, Chileans could assume greater challenges, valuing the talent of all, without exclusion, and advance policy that brings together a strong, efficient state with entrepreneurial leadership, free from ideology."

**A Peter Winn, professor of history and Latin American Studies at Tufts University:** "President Sebastian Piñera has earned sizeable political dividends for his role in the successful rescue of the 33 trapped miners. Piñera's unnecessary personal involvement in the rescue was a political calculus. If it succeeded, his popularity would rise from its record low levels. If the rescue failed, his reputation as a get-it-done entrepreneur could suffer, but he might alter his negative public image as a cold, calculating capitalist. The real heroes of the drama, however, were the 33 miners, who not only survived 69 days of forced confinement in the bowels of the earth, but emerged stronger and more united. Piñera praised the 'Chilean

“Piñera's unnecessary personal involvement in the rescue was a political calculus.”

— Peter Winn

values' that they represented, but the values that enabled the miners to stick together and survive are not the neoliberal values of individualism and consumerism exemplified by Piñera, who became a billionaire promoting credit cards under the Pinochet dictatorship. Rather, the miners are throwbacks to the

older working-class values of social solidarity that Pinochet and neoliberalism tried to suppress. But Piñera declared on the night of the rescue that 'all Chile' had been changed by the miners' ordeal and rescue, including himself. He went on to promise Chile's workers that his government would assure that they did not work in dangerous conditions. For a man whose brother rewrote Chile's labor laws as Pinochet's labor minister to undermine the power of unions to protect working conditions, and whose allies on the political and economic right have blocked labor law reform and underfunded labor inspections, this is a striking pledge. If Piñera makes good on this promise, it means that he learned from the mining disaster and realizes that Chile needs both individual initiative and social solidarity if it is to succeed as a society. Then, his public embrace of the miners—as strong a symbol of leftist working class Chile as Piñera is of its rightist upper class—may help unite the country across its social, cultural and political divides."

**A Diego Valenzuela, international relations consultant based in Casablanca, Chile:** "When possibilities to rescue the miners alive were less than 1 percent, President Sebastián Piñera was adamant in his resolution to persevere in the efforts. This was indeed a crucial moment for Chile: rescuing the miners became a national goal. Chileans were united in backing their government's unrelenting efforts and the miners' families knew they were not alone in their anguish and prayers. When news arrived that the 33 miners were alive, the world media understood its significance for human values and covered the events as never before in Chile. The world rejoiced when the miners were rescued and rejoined their families after so much suffering; their resistance in face of adversity was simply heroic. Not only are they the emblem of a new Chile, but also an inspiring sample of human solidarity.

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**Featured Q&A***Continued from page 3*

More than one country invited them to celebrate this historical feat, and now it is the task of all Chileans to be themselves, to rescue the best of their latent abilities to advance in constructing a model society."

**A Peter M. Siavelis, associate professor of political science and director of the Latin American Studies Program at Wake Forest University:**

"Sebastián Piñera came to power promising to make Chile a first world country before 2018. The dramatic rescue of the 33 trapped miners plays well into the narrative Piñera is trying to construct for his government. The rescue cast Chile as a first-world country on the global stage, where the less-informed media chattered about the 'surprising' response to the disaster, as though Chile were Honduras. The rescue was the picture of efficiency, deliberateness and creative use of technology. The outcome went exactly as planned—complemented by matching sunglasses and stylish red jackets. It also played well on the domestic stage, showing that while Chile may not yet be a first-world country, it has a first-world government that delivers with efficiency and results. The rescue was a victory for Piñera, who took a risk against the advice of some advisors to plunge headlong into involvement in the crisis. Had the outcome been different it would have been fatal to his government. Happily for the miners, the world and Piñera, he was successful. If the rescue were the sole buoy for Piñera's government, he might still have reason to worry. These sorts of feel-good moments boost the popularity of politicians around the world, only to have such popularity quickly erode under the pressure of the more mundane concerns of unemployment, economic crisis and stagnant growth. Given Chile's positive economic position, however, the rescue provides more breathing room for Piñera to parlay his rescue-driven popularity into deeper policy change. Indeed, immediately after the rescue Piñera recounted how the operation would be a model for con-

fronting the country's deeper problems of education, inequality and social welfare, securing Chile a place at the first world table."

**A Patricio Navia, master teacher of global studies at New York University and a professor of political science at Universidad Diego Portales in Santiago:**

"The rescue of the 33 miners puts Chile in the world spotlight. Because Chile has done a number of things very well in the last two decades, the world will learn about Chile's democratic consolidation, sustained economic growth and combination of market-friendly policies and social earmarked spending that have helped reduced poverty and created opportunities for millions of Chileans. Yet, the world will also learn about Chile's pending challenges in terms of social and economic inequality, deplorable labor conditions for many low-skilled workers and unacceptably low quality of public education. In fact, the rescue operation happened at the same time that the government was negotiating with Mapuche leaders on a hunger-strike to press both for historic demands and for a fair re-trial of the crimes they were accused of under a Pinochet-era anti-terrorism law. Just as Chileans were celebrating the rescue, the government was reminded that there were many other pending issues. True, President Piñera—the first right-wing president in Chile since Pinochet—can be proud to have rescued the miners. If Pinochet led a government that repressed and disappeared opponents, Piñera did everything possible to rescue—literally from hell—the miners alive and well. That is a good start. But it will be more difficult to bring up to par with industrialized countries' standards public education, health services and labor standards."

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*The Advisor welcomes reactions to the Q&A above. Readers can write editor Gene Kuleta at [gkuleta@thedialogue.org](mailto:gkuleta@thedialogue.org) with comments.*

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