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LATIN AMERICA BRIEF 77-157, 12 OCTOBER 1977. ■

1. CHILE: //THE CHILEAN GOVERNMENT'S RECENT MOVES TO AMELIORATE HUMAN RIGHTS PRACTICES HAVE BEGUN TO REMOVE A MAJOR IRRITANT IN RELATIONS WITH SOME OF ITS DOMESTIC CRITICS, PARTICULARLY THE CATHOLIC CHURCH AND--TO A LESSER EXTENT--LABOR. THE GOVERNMENT'S LONG-TERM INTENTIONS--SUCH AS THE PLAN FOR EVENTUAL RETURN TO DEMOCRATIC PROCESSES--INSPIRE SKEPTICISM BUT MANY CHILEANS CONCEDE THAT THE GOVERNMENT SEEMS TO HAVE ENDED THE WORST ASPECTS OF REPRESSION.//■

//THE CHURCH HAS ADOPTED A MORE CONCILIATORY ATTITUDE AND IS STUDIOUSLY AVOIDING A CONFRONTATION WITH THE GOVERNMENT. THE WARMING TREND HAS BEEN MOST EVIDENT IN COMMENTS BY CARDINAL SILVA, A LIBERAL WHO HAS FREQUENTLY VOICED OPPOSITION TO THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICIES. THE CARDINAL, AN ASTUTE POLITICAL OBSERVER, IS URGING CHURCH LEADERS TO BE CAUTIOUS IN APPLYING PRESSURE ON THE GOVERNMENT SINCE HE JUDGES THAT SUCH TACTICS WOULD NOW BE COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE.//■

//CARDINAL SILVA IS ADVOCATING THAT CHURCH VIEWS BE

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//THE GOVERNMENT'S ANTI-PATHY FOR THE LABOR LEADERS IN QUESTION STEMS FROM ITS CONVICTION THAT THEY ARE BEING USED BY THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY AND ARE ENGAGING IN POLITICAL ACTIVITY TO EMBARRASS THE GOVERNMENT. WHILE THIS DOES NOT APPEAR TO BE THE CASE, MISGIVINGS ABOUT THE POLITICAL MOTIVES OF THE GROUP'S SPOKESMAN MAY CAUSE SOME OF THE LABOR LEADERS TO REASSESS THEIR ROLE. A CONSENSUS MAY BE DEVELOPING AMONG THEM TO AVOID PROVOCATIONS THAT COULD FURTHER JEOPARDIZE THEIR STATUS.//

//THE GOVERNMENT WILL CONTINUE TO LOOK ASKANCE AT FREE LABOR ACTIVITY, BUT THE CURRENT TRUCE AT LEAST SUGGESTS A MORE TOLERANT POLICY. BOTH SIDES, IN FACT, SEEM DISPOSED TO AVOID EXTREMES AND TO SEEK A MODUS VIVENDI.//4

//LIKE THE CHURCH, LABOR MAY PERCEIVE THAT IT HAS MORE TO GAIN BY ENDING AN ADVERSARY RELATIONSHIP AND SWITCHING TO MORE SUBTLE FORMS OF PROTEST. AT A MINIMUM, BOTH GROUPS APPARENTLY BELIEVE THAT CHANGED CONDITIONS IN CHILE COULD PROVIDE THE CLIMATE FOR A GRADUAL RELAXATION OF HARSH RESTRICTIONS. [REDACTED]

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