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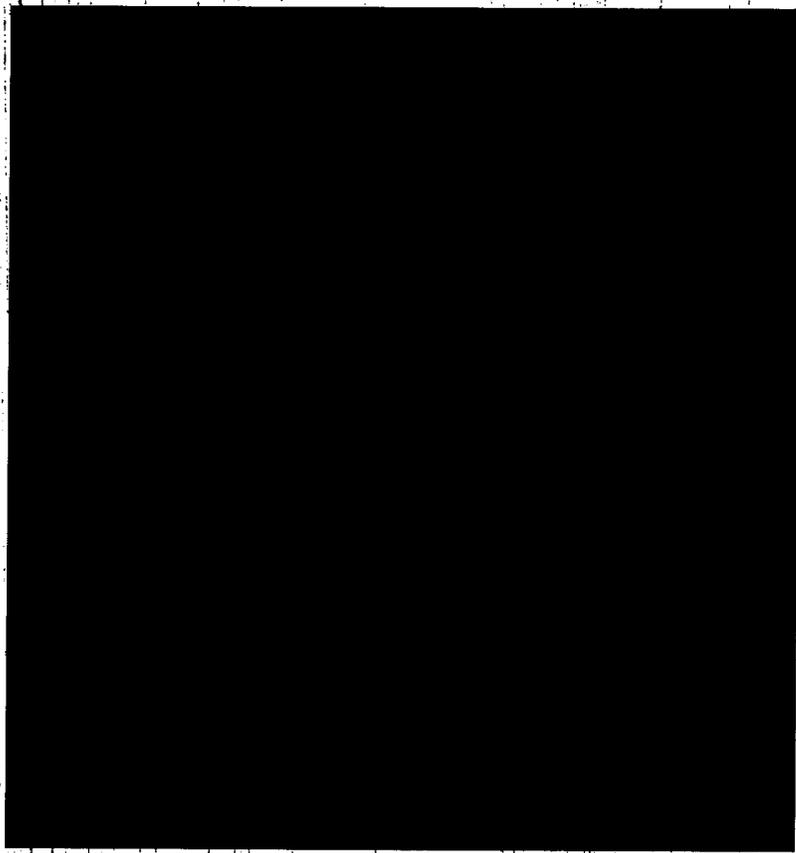
Latin American Trends
Annex
STAFF NOTES

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Chile: Running The Gauntlet

The Pinochet government continues to face a stiff offensive from foreign and international organizations bent on highlighting charges that it has failed to observe basic human rights.

15c The International Commission of Jurists is the latest to weigh in with an unfavorable judgment. It has informed Chile that recently announced measures intended to protect prisoners do not in fact provide sufficient guarantees to prevent torture or maltreatment. The commission has urged the Chilean regime to modify its practices and permit detainees to be examined by a physician of their choice on the day of arrest, at least every 48 hours thereafter, and every time the prisoner is interrogated. The Pinochet government probably believes it has gone far enough on this issue and is unlikely to budge beyond its promise to provide medical examinations by its own authorities before, during, and after a prisoner is confined.

Chile's difficult international predicament is exemplified in Western Europe, which continues to be a major focus of anti-Chilean sentiment. Swedish dockworkers [REDACTED] have agreed to a total boycott of Chilean trade for three months beginning in March. An international congress of transport workers now under way in Oslo is scheduled to hear a proposal supporting a boycott by European transport workers unions. If the move wins approval, the Chilean economy may be in for another jolt.

The Pinochet government's stand on human rights also came in for criticism [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] They have recommended that the matter be taken up within the framework of the UN Human Rights Commission that is currently meeting in Geneva. There is a strong possibility that this group will issue yet another sharp attack on Chile [REDACTED] Judging from the atmosphere created by allegations of torture in the case of British physician Shelia Cassidy, Chile is likely to come out of this with an even blacker image.

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The Pinochet regime moves across the world scene like a metal duck in a shooting gallery. Its assailants have plenty of ammunition based on the excesses accompanying Salvador Allende's overthrow and the alleged abuses that still mark Chile's security and detention practices. While there have been a few encouraging signs that the junta may be easing up and becoming less inflexible, there is little chance that its actions thus far will go far in satisfying its critics. For now, the best the government can hope for is that some of its detractors will tire of the sport or be diverted to other targets.

The government is, nevertheless, waging a brisk-- and so far successful--struggle against efforts by some nations to move the UN Food and Agriculture Organization's regional office from Santiago. Although the proposal is expected to be raised at an upcoming FAO session in Lima, it appears that it will be brushed aside, as have earlier suggestions that the UN pull out the headquarters of its Economic Commission for Latin America situated in Santiago. [REDACTED]

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