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STAFF NOTES:

Latin American Trends

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Chile: Uncertainty on Human Rights Commission

Conflicting statements by Foreign Minister Carvajal and President Pinochet indicate that the military government is still undecided whether to allow the United Nations Human Rights Commission to send a study group to Chile in late June.

Carvajal last week met with the Chilean diplomats who attended the commission's recent meeting in Geneva. These "observers" worked hard to fend off a Soviet-sponsored condemnation and secure passage of a resolution creating the study group instead. Carvajal told them that the government was waiting for an official message from the UN so that Chile can send its "written acceptance" of the visit. Speaking in Punta Arenas the following day, however, Pinochet [REDACTED] declared that the group would be welcome only if similar investigations were first undertaken in Cuba and the Soviet Union. This is in line with his announcement late last year that the government no longer would routinely allow outside probes of the human rights situation and that those who would judge Chile's performance must demonstrate equal concern with Communist abuses.

The foreign ministry appears to be at odds with influential conservatives within and outside the government on this issue. Carvajal's statement that acceptance of the investigators is a "sovereign decision" that serves as an example to other countries will not placate those who have come to look upon such missions as insults to Chile.

Pinochet probably did not intend his statement to be taken literally, but Carvajal's declaration seem to have been premature. Pinochet might decide to delay the study group's visit by conditioning it on consideration of similar complaints against the

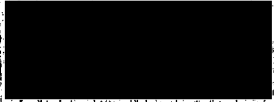
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Cubans and Soviets. He undoubtedly realizes that chances of a commission vote to send a study group to either country are nil. Such a ploy by Chile probably would soothe some hurt feelings at home, but it would also subject the military government to a new round of international condemnation.

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