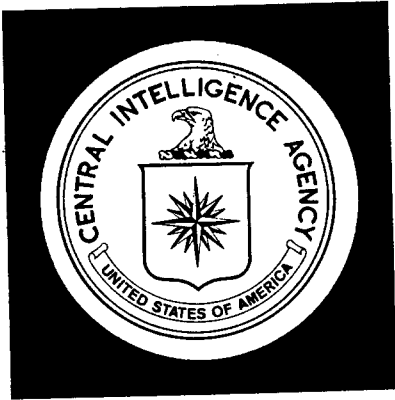


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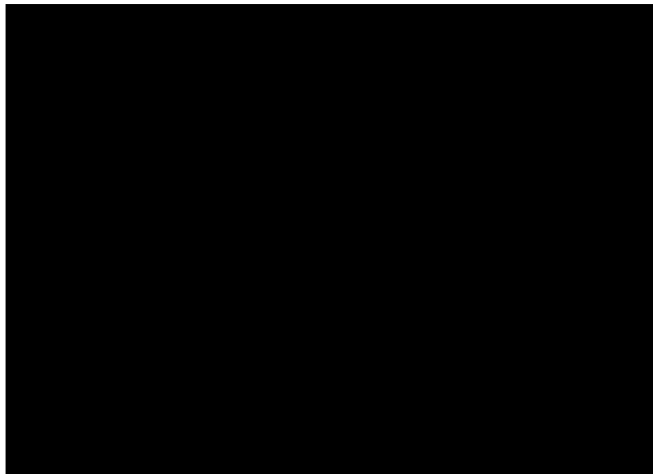
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CHILE: WIDENING CRACK IN THE JUNTA

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The friction between President Pinochet and air force commander Leigh, a key junta member, has become public. In an exclusive interview published in the newspaper *El Mercurio* last week, Leigh said the government's economic policies are having a greater adverse effect on the poor than had been expected. He also acknowledged that unemployment is higher than had been estimated. The criticism is mild, but it reflects both dissatisfaction with the way the Pinochet government is handling the economy and Leigh's irritation that junta members like himself are not being consulted on most important policy decisions by Pinochet and his coterie.

A recent example was Pinochet's unusual gesture of meeting with a group of 20 labor leaders for a lengthy private session to hear their grievances. Leigh has general oversight responsibilities in the labor sector, but on this occasion he was evidently bypassed—a clear move by Pinochet to extend the presidential presence to this area also.



Leigh's candid views will do little to improve relations between the two men. Additional economic relief for the poor would ease Leigh's concern and give him a sense of making his weight felt. Scaling down internal security measures—a move which the government says it intends to make known shortly—would improve Chile's poor international reputation.

Readjustments of this nature would have little real effect on the unity of the junta, however. Pinochet's problems will continue, and may even increase, as long as he arrogates to himself powers that the other members, particularly Leigh, believe should be shared by all four. Pinochet can ill afford open discontent in the junta; military unity is extremely important to the survival of the government.

[REDACTED] that Santiago may be planning to relax some of the curbs it has imposed on civil liberties. The President is said to have approved in principle measures such as releasing 150 prisoners arrested under the state of siege, eliminating the curfew, and restoring the right of ultimate judicial appeal to the Supreme Court. This week, however, the regime took steps to tighten its internal security law by imposing stiffer prison sentences for a newly defined series of offenses. These crimes range from inciting members of the armed forces to disobey government orders to "sending abroad false information aimed at disturbing constitutional order." Since the military seized power in 1973, several thousand Chileans have been jailed under a less stringent version of this law.

Meanwhile, the government, concerned about being suspended from the UN, is trying to head off the anti-Chilean move that seems to be gathering momentum among General Assembly members. For instance, Chile's UN delegation has been authorized to inform Secretary General Waldheim about plans to restore civil liberties even before the details are made public. Chile plans to rebuff the expected campaign by undertaking a counteroffensive against its communist detractors.

[REDACTED] the government will extend an invitation for Waldheim to visit Chile to observe at first hand the human rights situation; it is unlikely, however, that such a visit could be arranged before the UN convenes. [REDACTED]