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They All Came To Chile's Party, but Nobody Was Talking

By Ymelda Dixon

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Anyone wishing to probe the CIA's role in Chile should have stayed away from last night's reception at the Chilean embassy where Chile's 164th anniversary was being observed by Ambassador and Mrs. Walter Heitmann.

Talk about secrecy. From the ambassador on down, no one would admit to any knowledge of covert U.S. political intervention in their country.

Heitmann, who would not even acknowledge President Ford's assertions that the deposed government of Salvador Allende sought three or four years ago to destroy opposition parties, newspapers and electronic media, finally said. "If there is a problem, it is your problem, not ours."

That was the general staff line.

AT THE RECEPTION where succulent empanadas were passed and spirited guitarists held forth on the staircase landing, American foreign service officers also were leery of political discussion. John Karkashean, the desk director for Chile and Bolivia intoned, "I stand by the President's statement."

Efforts to speak with Rafael Otero, the Chilean right wing Radical Party journalist and now an embassy staff member, met with equally futile results. Otero, who lunched Wednesday with a State Department public affairs officer to whom he gave evidence in support of the President's charges was expected, according to Heitmann. But U.S. public affairs officers who know Otero failed to locate him in the crowd.

GENERAL Washington Sergio Carasco, who commanded the military, district in which the Allende overthrow and death took place, spoke of the ousted government's time as one when the Communists tried to take over and were defeated. He also mopped his brow and talked about the weather.

No one would admit even to having ever known a CIA agent except Egyp-

tian Ambassador Ghorbal, the Chileans' next door neighbor. "Who knows? If we look under a rock in Cairo, we might find one," he said with a twinkle.

Cornelis W. A. de Groot of the political section of the Netherlands embassy was mistakenly identified by a woman as a member of the spook group. "They don't wear raincoats any more," observed de Groot, adding, "Except when it rains."

Chief of Protocol Henry Catto threw up his hands in mock horror when asked about the investigation the Senate Foreign Relations Committee will conduct on CIA operations. "I don't read the papers," said Catto and headed for the door.

Only Canadian Ambassador Marcel Cadieux would talk forthrightly and very diplomatically. "If I told you what I know of such activities, I would be telling you things that are secret and then they would not be secret. Any business or political transaction between countries affect the countries' welfare. Are covert activities worse than open activities such as in Hungary? It takes a big country to finance these operations and from what I have read about Chile, it was a \$7 or \$8 million operation, and that's not so big. As to the President's statement, naturally, I have nothing to say about that."

"It is," said Chilean Ambassador Heitmann, "just our National Day party. We are getting pretty old and it is a nice party, don't you think?"

EVEN THE Capitol constabulary jaded from daily exposure to famous faces did double takes yesterday afternoon as they escorted the guests of Mrs. Russell Long and Mrs. Abraham Ribicoff to Room S-207 and the reception in honor of Mrs. George Aiken, whose husband is retiring from the Senate at the end of this session.

You could have called the roll of the Senate from Abourezk through Beall, Bellmon, Sparkman to Williams and most would have answered "present."

Among the guests was the wife of former Vice President, Mrs. Spiro T. Agnew. Her husband was still in Iran, where one purpose of his trip is to research the novel he is writing, she said.

Wives of senators never make political noises at parties. In fact, Mrs. Adlai Stevenson III told about how she is taking Mrs. James L. Buckley to the mini-repair class at the Woman's National Democratic Club.

Mrs. Harrison A. Williams Jr., the newest Senate bride, told of how, during the wedding ceremony at the home of Mrs. Charles Engelhard, widow of the mineral zillionaire, President Ford called to congratulate the newlyweds. Mrs. Engelhard refused to interrupt and it took Ford three calls to get through.

On Tuesday night while the President gave a stag dinner for members of Congress, Mr. and Mrs. Reginald Jones and the Robert Barries gave a dinner for the Williamses at the George Town Club. One token Senator, Jennings Randolph of West Virginia, went to the White House.

At yesterday's reception for Mrs. Aiken were Cabinet wives, wives of Supreme Court Justices, wives of ambassadors and wives of members of the press. Among them were Mrs. Warren Burger, Mrs. William Saxbe, Mrs. Arthur Burns, Mrs. George Bush, Mrs. Roger Mudd, Mrs. Kenneth Rush, Mrs. Farideh Ardalan, Mrs. Berndt Von Staden and Mrs. Winston Lord.

The guests gathered around the long table centered by an immense floral arrangement of bronze chrysanthemums and pumpkins. "I did not know it was fall yet," commented Mrs. Robert McClory. "If Caroline Long and 'Casey' Ribicoff say it's fall, it's fall," finalized Mrs. Ernest F. Hollings.

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