

The Washington Merry-Go-Round

2 Chilean Aides Get U.S. Red Carpet

By Jack Anderson
and Les Whitten

Chile's controversial military dictatorship appears to have an inside track in Washington.

At least two top-level representatives of the junta have paid recent visits to the nation's capital, where the red carpet was rolled out for them. A third delegate is expected to hit town this week.

The most notorious of the Chilean visitors was Col. Manuel Contreras-Sepulveda, head of the infamous National Intelligence Directorate, known as DINA. It is this military organization — a Latin American version of the CIA, FBI and Defense Intelligence Agency all lumped together — which has been directly responsible for the arrests and torture of hundreds of political prisoners over the past two years.

Before coming to Washington, Contreras stopped off in New York. He paid a quiet visit to the United Nations, where officials are preparing a report on violations of human rights in Chile.

Three months ago, a U.N.

working group on human rights attempted to visit Santiago for an investigation, but the junta abruptly canceled the invitation. In his talks with U.N. officials, say our sources, Contreras attempted to convince them the U.N. group was barred only because it consisted of Marxists, assorted leftists, and troublemakers.

Contreras then hopped down to Washington, where his goings-and-comings were considered so secret that even the Chilean embassy was kept in the dark.

We have learned, however, that the colonel stopped off at the CIA where, say our sources, a private chat was arranged with the deputy director, Lt. Gen. Vernon Walters.

The State Department, meanwhile, was unofficially asked to suggest a few people Contreras might see. The department cooperated but recommended the colonel visit some members of Congress who are critical of the junta.

On Capitol Hill, Contreras faced his only unfriendly audience. He wandered into the offices of Sen. Frank

Church (D-Idaho) but could find no one to talk with. Staffers recall him as a "short, round" man who appeared "blase and somewhat disoriented."

Contreras also visited the House International Organizations Subcommittee, headed by Rep. Donald Fraser (D-Minn.). There he was sternly interrogated by a subcommittee staff member about human rights violations in Chile. The colonel responded with the familiar claim that reports of the killing and torture of political prisoners were a Marxist plot to embarrass the junta.

Another prominent Chilean who passed through Washington, shortly before Contreras, was the junta's press attache, Federico Willoughby. He suffers from a chronic kidney problem and came to the United States primarily for medical tests at Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore.

During his 10-day stay, however, Willoughby visited the CIA, the State Department, and several members of Congress. He managed to see Church, who told our associate Joe Spear that he gave the

Chilean a long, stiff lecture on human rights.

On Friday the junta's Minister of Justice, Miguel Schweitzer, is scheduled to arrive in Washington. His main mission, say our sources, will be to lobby in favor of a resumption of U.S. military aid to Chile, which was cut off by Congress last December.

Meanwhile, Sen. Edward Kennedy (D-Mass.) has informed the Senate CIA committee of the Contreras trip and has requested it be investigated. We have learned independently that committee staff members are preparing written requests for information concerning the visit.

Our own inquiries at the CIA about the Walters-Contreras meeting, meanwhile, produced only a curt "No comment."

Footnote: The Chilean visitors are not the only controversial people who have been able to gain access to top U.S. officials. Giorgio Almirante, the Italian neo-Fascist leader, came to Washington in September and met with two officials of the National Security Council.

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