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CHILE: THE PRISONER RELEASE PROGRAM ANNOUNCED LAST MONTH BY
CHILEAN PRESIDENT PINOCHET REMAINS MORE A PROMISE THAN A REALITY.

FREEDOM HAS BEEN SLOW IN COMING FOR THE VAST MAJORITY OF PRISONERS,
BUT THE PROGRAM IS STILL ALIVE

THE QUESTION OF WHO QUALIFIES FOR RELEASE HAS GIVEN RISE TO CONSIDERABLE SPECULATION AND SOME CONFUSION. PINOCHET. IN HIS ANNIVERSARY SPEECH ON SEPTEMBER 11. REFERRED SPECIFICALLY TO THOSE ARRESTED UNDER THE STATE OF SIEGE.

ON OCTOBER 4. INTERIOR MINISTER BENAVIDES DECLARED THAT 1.134

PERSONS FELL INTO THIS CATEGORY AS OF SEPTEMBER 11. HE SAID THAT

BL ALREADY HAD BEEN FREED AND THAT ALL OF THE REMAINDER. EXCEPT

THOSE AGAINST WHOM THERE WAS SERIOUS CHARGES. WOULD BE RELEASED SOON.

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PINOCHET HAD SAID THAT THE RELEASE PROGRAM MIGHT BE EXTENDED IN CERTAIN CASES TO PEOPLE ALREADY SENTENCED. BUT BENAVIDES CAREFULLY LIMITED THE RELEASE TO DETAINEES AGAINST WHOM NO CHARGES HAD YET BEEN BROUGHT. BENAVIDES WOULD THUS APPEAR TO EXCLUDE AN ESTIMATED AND ALREADY TRIED AND SENTENCED. OR CHARGED AND AWAITING TRIAL. THIS LARGE GROUP APPARENTLY WILL NOT BENEFIT FROM THE INITIAL STAGE OF THE RELEASE PROGRAM. BUT MANY MAY EVENTUALLY BE FREED. PERHAPS IN CONJUNCTION WITH A PROGRAM OF PARDONS AND A LIMITED AMNESTY. HEN EARLY THIS MONTH. THE GOVERNMENT PROMISED THAT ALL PERSONS THEN UNDER DETENTION WOULD BE FREED OR CHARGED BY EARLY NOVEMBER.

IN ANNOUNCING THE RELEASE PROGRAM, PINOCHET IMPLIED THAT ONLY
PERSONS WHO AGREED TO LEAVE CHILE WOULD BE FREED. IT APPEARS, HOWEVER, THAT MOST OF THOSE NOW BEING RELEASED ARE, IN FACT, BEING
ALLOWED TO REMAIN IN THE COUNTRY. ALLENDE REGIME OFFICIALS WILL
PROBABLY BE EXCEPTIONS. ORLANDO LETELIER, FORMER AMBASSADOR TO
THE US HAS ALREADY BEEN RELEASED AND EXPELLED.

WHEN THE GOVERNMENT BEGINS RELEASING PERSONS ALREADY CONVICTED OR CHARGED WITH "SERIOUS OFFENSES" IT IS LIKELY TO REQUIRE MANY TO

ORIG:

LEAVE. EUROPEAN AND LATIN AMERICAN DISINCLINATION TO RECEXVE MORE
CHILEAN REFUGEES COULD IMPEDE RELEASE OF INDIVIDUALS THE GOVERNMENT
WILL NOT ALLOW TO REMAIN IN CHILE

PINOCHET COUPLED HIS ANNOUNCEMENT WITH A DECLARATION THAT THE
MILITARY GOVERNMENT HAD A "MORAL DUTY" BEFORE IMPLEMENTING ITS

PROGRAM TO DEMAND THAT THE USSR AND CUBA OFFER THE RIGHT TO EMIGRATE

TO AN EQUAL NUMBER OF ARRESTED PERSONS OR CONVICTED PRISONERS. IT

IS CLEAR THAT HE HOPED TO REAP A PROPAGANDA HARVEST FROM THE CHALLENGE

BUT THAT POSITIVE SOVIET AND CUBAN RESPONSES ARE NOT PRECONDITIONS

FOR THE RELEASE OF CHILEAN PRISONERS

IF THE FIRST STAGE WINDS UP NEXT MONTH AS SCHEDULED AND IF THE GOVERNMENT BY THEN DETERMINES THAT IT HAS MILKED ITS CHALLENGE TO THE CUBANS AND SOVIETS FOR ALL IT IS WORTH. THE PROGRAM MAY GET UNDER WAY IN EARNEST WITH SUBSTANTIAL PROGRESS BY CHRISTMAS.