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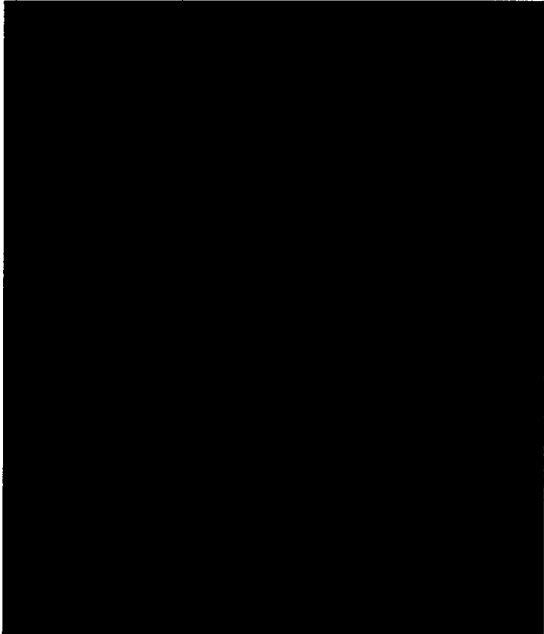
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CHILE: OPPOSITION LEADER DENIED REENTRY [REDACTED]

President Pinochet's refusal to allow Christian Democratic Party leader Zaldivar to return home from a trip abroad is typical of his heightened aggressiveness toward critics since his victory in the constitutional plebiscite in September. The ban may encourage younger party members to become more active against the regime.

The government first accused Zaldivar of making seditious remarks in an interview with a Mexican newspaper. The paper later retracted the misquoted statements, but Chile maintained the ban, claiming that Zaldivar's past "provocative" remarks justified it.



Christian Democrat leader Zaldivar

[REDACTED] The politically moderate Zaldivar, whose party is demoralized by its plebiscite defeat, was no immediate threat to the regime. Yet Pinochet demonstrated his insensitivity to public opinion by refusing to lift the ban even after the Mexican paper's retraction, thus passing up an opportunity to defuse international criticism without appearing to have been in the wrong.

Pinochet was willing to risk damaging Chile's international standing over the Zaldivar incident. Several governments--plus the Vatican, which has close ties to Chilean Christian Democrats and currently is mediating

*The source of the above copyrighted photograph is United Press International, October 1980. [REDACTED]

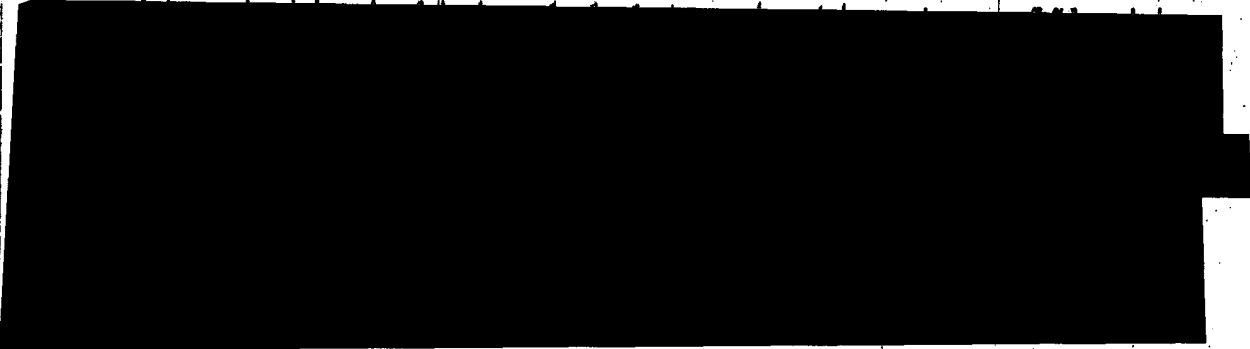

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the Chilean-Argentine dispute over the Beagle Channel-- have privately protested to Chile. The move also has prompted considerable criticism in the Organization of American States, although no member has yet presented a formal anti-Chilean resolution to the OAS General Assembly now under way. Moreover, the incident has occurred during a time of toughened security measures imposed following the assassination of a senior military officer several months ago and has added to the general impression that human rights are deteriorating in the country.



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President Pinochet casts his vote in the constitutional plebiscite

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[REDACTED]

The feeble Christian Democratic response to Zaldivar's forced exile will not encourage Pinochet to temper his actions. The party initially said nothing--apparently hoping that behind-the-scenes negotiations would gain Zaldivar's reentry--and then issued a mildly worded protest. No street demonstrations or solidarity meetings are known to have followed. [REDACTED]

The Christian Democrats have been reevaluating the party's position in the wake of the plebiscite. Some believe that, given the support for the regime shown in the plebiscite, the party should adopt a pragmatic policy of cooperating with Pinochet. Others feel that the results of the voting indicate the party has little to lose by joining forces with the parties of the extreme left. [REDACTED]

Younger Christian Democratic members, irritated by the ineffective role of Zaldivar and other party leaders in the plebiscite campaign, are chagrined at the party's failure to protest the ban more vigorously. If the ban continues indefinitely, it probably will undercut the position of party moderates and could lead young members to attempt to unseat older leaders and to urge confrontational tactics in dealing with the regime. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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