

Pinochet refuses extradition of officials without proof *FPost* 8/3/78

SANTIAGO, Chile (AP) — President Augusto Pinochet said Wednesday that murder indictments in Washington against three former Chilean security officials are only accusations and nobody will be extradited without proof of guilt.

The president's comments at a breakfast meeting with reporters apparently were part of a government effort to head off public alarm and were made before the U.S. House of Representatives voted to cut off all American arms shipments to Chile until the government turns the three men over to the United States.

The Chilean government ordered the arrest of the accused army men at the request of the American Embassy a few hours after a grand jury in Washington issued indictments Tuesday in the 1976 murder of exiled Chilean socialist Orlando Letelier.

The U.S. Congress already has restricted arms shipments to Chile because of human rights violations, and Wednesday's action was aimed at stopping all U.S. arms shipments there. Several House members said that by cutting of the supply of arms, the United States would make it clear it is serious about wanting the three delivered for trial.

Retired Brig. Gen. Juan Manuel Contreras Sepulveda, chief of the security unit known as the DINA until its dissolution a year ago, was placed under house arrest, with policemen and a security guard posted outside his suburban Santiago home.

Lt. Col. Pedro Espinoza Bravo, former director of DINA operations, was placed under house arrest in the southern city of Punta Arenas where he commands an infantry regiment. Capt. Armando Fernandez Larios, a former DINA agent, was said to be detained in a military hospital.

The indictment says Contreras ordered the assassination and that Espinoza passed the order on to Fernandez and Michael Townley, an expatriate American who worked for DINA. Townley was deported in March at the request of the United States and cooperated with U.S. Justice Department officials preparing the case.

The indictment says Townley affixed the remote-control bomb to Letelier's car about two days before the killing and that he had the help of four Cuban exiles in putting the bomb together. The Cubans also were indicted on the same charges as the three Chileans. Townley is charged with conspiracy.