

# U.S. Sells Fighters To Chile

## Santiago Said To Fear Peru's Arms Strength

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Associated Press

SANTIAGO, Chile, Oct. 6 — Chile is buying supersonic jet fighters and close air support attack planes from the United States in a multi-million dollar arms deal, it was learned today.

Diplomatic and other sources said the military government is buying the aircraft and looking for additional weaponry because of concern that Peru, which has purchased a large number of Soviet tanks, may eventually go to war against Chile.

A high source in the Chilean air force confirmed the arms deal, but said he is "optimistic" about future relations with the Peruvian military government.

State Department officials in Washington said the contract for sale of the planes was signed in the spring. They said the United States decided two years ago to sell F-5E Freedom Fighters to Latin America, and Chile was one of five countries authorized to buy the jets in June 1973. They pointed out that Chile is the only major country in South America that does not have supersonic jets.

Peruvian officials have denied that they want to wage war on Chile, and Chilean officials also have said they maintain cordial relations with their northern neighbor.

Nevertheless, there is concern here that there are a number of Marxists in the Peruvian military who are unfriendly to Chile.

The Chilean military overthrew the government of left-

ist President Salvador Allende and imposed a dictatorship 13 months ago. Thousands of Allende supporters went into exile or were rounded up and imprisoned.

Foreign observers who have visited Chile since the change of government have reported widespread repression, including torture of political prisoners.

Although Chile is in a state of siege, foreign sources say the aircraft purchases are being made with an eye to defense and not for use against Chilean opponents of the government.

They said the bulk of the Chilean armed forces are now stationed in and around the capital, for internal security reasons, leaving border areas undermanned.

The sources said the Chileans are paying \$60 million for 18 F-5E Freedom Fighter jets, the latest model of a fighter especially produced for developing countries by the Northrop Aviation Co. of Hawthorne, Calif.

Delivery of the first units is expected in about two years and in the interim, Chilean air force pilots are flying training models in the United States.

They said Chile has paid an initial down payment of \$6 million for the Freedom Fighters, and the balance will be paid over eight years.

In addition, Chilean air force and other sources said 36 A-37B close air support attack planes, manufactured by

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Cessna and used by U.S. pilots in Vietnam, are being purchased. Each aircraft is worth about \$300,000. The first units are expected to arrive in March.

Chilean military officials have had less success in obtaining ground equipment to replace obsolete tanks and other armor, according to foreign observers here.

They are vigorously pushing for sales by the United States of modern M-60 tanks and antitank missiles, but no accord has yet been reached.

"The Chileans have no tactical arsenal to defend themselves against a foreign attack right now," said one source. "They have old U.S. M-41 and M-48 tanks which are no

match against Russian armor.

"And the old British Hawker Hunter fighters they now have would fall out of the air before they could reach Peruvian Canberra jet bombers if they appeared over Santiago. The Chilean don't have any bombers themselves.

"The Freedom Fighters would be used as interceptors to destroy the bombers and the A-37Bs would be used to knock out tanks and ground units if they ever came over the wall, so to speak."

[Sources in Washington said the other four Latin American countries authorized to buy F-5Es in 1973—Brazil, Argentina, Colombia and Venezuela—had not done so, although Brazil was still considering a purchase.]