

BRIEFING ON CHILE DISTURBS LATIN

White House Official Said 3
Nations Might Turn Red

By TAD SZULC

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Sept. 22 —

White House speculation that Argentina, Bolivia and Peru might join Chile if she turned Communist has deeply disturbed Latin-American diplomats here, who fear that such statements may be playing into the hands of revolutionaries as well as military dictatorships in the hemisphere.

The predictions, made at a news briefing by senior Administration officials in Chicago last Wednesday, also appear to be at variance with views held by the State Department.

At the Chicago briefing, top officials said that it was fairly easy to predict that if Dr. Salvador Allende was elected President of Chile by Congress on Oct. 24, a Communist government would emerge in Chile.

Argentina, Bolivia and Peru might follow Chile in forming Communist governments, the briefing officials said. They said that even without the impact of the Chilean election, the situations in the three other countries had been moving in difficult directions.

Split on Policy Seen

The State Department has intentionally kept silent on the situation in Chile, where Dr. Allende, a Marxist, won a plurality in the Sept. 4 presidential elections and faces a run-off in Congress against a conservative candidate.

The White House official's comment at the Chicago briefing suggested to diplomats and some United States officials that a split might be developing in the Administration's handling of the Chilean situation.

Some officials acknowledged privately that the frequent background briefings on foreign policy by President Nixon's associates tended to confuse policy lines and to create diplomatic problems with foreign governments.

Under White House rules the briefing officials cannot be publicly identified, and therefore their remarks cannot be formally considered Administration policy statements. The remarks, however, receive wide

publicity, and the State Department finds it difficult to interpret them when it receives inquiries from foreign diplomats.

Latin-American diplomats, many of whom were startled by the remarks about Chile it attest Wednesday's background briefing take the view that predictions encourage Communists and other leftists in the hemisphere and at the same time push the military governments in Argentina, Bolivia and Peru into harsher measures against all forms of dissent.

U.S. Caution Urged

A Latin-American diplomat, commenting today on the predictions made at the briefings, said: "Those are gratuitous remarks that, when published, do not help us or the United States."

State Department officials believe that the over-all situation in South America, aside from the uncertainties surrounding the Allende election, is so tense that the United States Government should be extremely careful in its public pronouncements.

This is particularly so, they said, because the Chilean developments have once more aroused the fear of United States intervention even though United States officials forcefully deny any such plans.

Officials consider the most dangerous situation in South America to be in Bolivia, where the Government of Gen. Alfredo Ovando Candia appears to be on the brink of an open showdown with the leftists, the Roman Catholic Church and La Paz University.

Split Grows in Bolivia

The Bolivian situation, described as serious in diplomatic reports, results from a deepening split between the Ovando Government and the general's former leftist allies.

The Bolivian Army, which has been fighting guerrillas on the northwestern plateau and contending with urban terrorism in the cities, has been pushing the Ovando Government further to the right. Last week the Government deported four radical Roman Catholic priests and a Protestant minister.

In an attempt to gain their return, university students in La Paz captured four policemen as hostages last weekend. Yesterday, the United States embassy in La Paz was attacked with stones and gasoline bombs.

Urban guerrilla activities, notably bombings, are also increasing in Uruguay, Argentina, Guatemala and Brazil.

See 24 Dec 69