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Refugees to
Enter U.S.

Washington

The United States is preparing to admit a sizable number of political refugees from Chile, the State Department announced yesterday.

A high-ranking U.S. official said the number could reach 1000, or even higher, and would include Chileans now held in prison or detention camps by the military government in Santiago as well as some Chileans who are in exile in Peru.

There has been discussion in the U.S. government about giving Chileans political asylum ever since a junta overthrew the elected government of President Salvador Allende in September, 1973.

But until now, only 119 Chileans have been admitted to this country as refugees, while more than 1500 Chileans have been resettled in 15 different countries. About 1200 additional Chileans remain in Peru.

According to American estimates there are 4000 to 5000 Chileans being held in jails or prison camps in their country.

Last September the Chilean military leadership offered to release and deport prisoners who could be resettled in other countries and, this year, the category was broadened to include Chileans convicted of "internal security" crimes.

According to William D. Rogers, assistant secretary of state for inter-American affairs, the State Department

took a "strong initiative" last March to respond to the Chilean government offer by arranging to resettle a sizable number of detainees and exiles in the United States.

In testimony Thursday before the Senate Judiciary Committee, Rogers said that in offering asylum, the United States was also responding to an appeal by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, whose office will run the

new resettlement problem.

Rogers said "It is inconsistent to seek cooperation from international organizations and other countries on the Vietnamese refugee problem if we refuse to lift a finger to help the Chileans."

Rogers testified at a closed session of the Senate committee. The text of his remarks was leaked to reporters by assistants of Senator Edward M. Kennedy, who attended the hearing.

New York Times

See also SFChronicle 19 Jun 75,
"Refuge, but Not for Terrorists."