

Shootout Increases Tension in Chile

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SANTIAGO, Chile, Sept. 8—Chilean air force troops fired on a factory occupied by leftist workers last night, in an action that further strained relations between the armed forces and the government.

President Salvador Allende held urgent conversations this morning with leaders of the six parties which make up his People's Unity coalition, and also called in the commanders of the three armed services.

In last night's incident, which took place in the industrial San Miguel district of Santiago, air force troops machine-gunned the Sumar nylon factory, wounding three workers and causing damage to the building and machinery. The air force reported that a non-commissioned officer was also wounded.

A statement from the air force command this morning said that the troops, who were investigating reports of a cache of weapons in a house near the factory, were fired on from a passing car, from a nearby building and from the factory itself. The statement added that after the two-hour gun battle, 23 civilians were arrested.

The air force command also reported that it found large quantities of "helmets, pointed sticks and Socialist propaganda" inside the raided house. The Socialist Party is the largest in the government coalition and the party of President Allende.

Workers at the Sumar factory this morning were vehement in their insistence that no shots were fired from the plant and that no arms were hidden in the building.

Several thousand workers gathered outside the plant this morning and tempers were running short as the workers met with several government officials and Socialist leaders.

Jaime Faivovich, a former Under Secretary of Transport, angrily declared, "The armed forces are provoking the workers. They want to give the impression that they are the supreme authority of this country."

According to Faivovich, "the military coup is already under way" in Chile, and the workers "must mobilize to stop this."

Well-placed observers here feel that last night's affair has ramifications which go much

further than the events themselves. The action by the air force betrays a continuing nervousness, which the air force shares with the army and the navy, these observers believe. The armed forces clearly fear that factories and working class districts throughout the country have been turned into veritable arsenals for use in any future armed conflict.

The government says that the armed forces are making "partial and unjustified" use of the arms control law which the government itself introduced eight months ago at the suggestion of the conservative leadership of the opposition Christian Democrats.

Sources close to the president explained that this law was intended to enable the armed forces to defuse the tension between opponents and supporters of the government

by cracking down on extremists of both right and left who were using or storing arms.

Since then, however, these sources say, the armed forces have used the law almost exclusively against suspected leftist militants and have done little or nothing to move against extremists of the right.

Leftist leaders also reported today the death of a farm worker who they said was tortured after troops carried out a search for arms earlier this week. During that search, a Socialist deputy alleged, another farmworker was hung from a helicopter in midair for more than an hour.

These incidents are seen by Allende's supporters as part of a process under which the armed forces are taking the law into their own hands and operating as a virtual autonomous body within the state.