

An Admiral Takes Command

Chilean Embassy Diplomat Replaced by Ruling Junta

By John Saar

Washington Post Staff Writer

Generals of Chile's new ruling junta have ordered an admiral to take command of the embassy here over the heads of civilian diplomats.

In the aftermath of the overthrow and death of Salvador Allende last week, the Chilean press attache in Washington has resigned, calling the military takeover "a betrayal."

Vice Admiral Luis Eberhard, the ranking military attache who is 19th on the embassy's protocol list, said his elevation over career diplomats was temporary and would end when normal conditions returned to Chile.

Flanked by two diplomats who translated and assisted in many of the 56-year-old admiral's responses, he explained his new role during an interview yesterday: "Due to the special circumstances facing the new government, the senior military officer has taken a new and special position . . . to completely overlook and control the work of the embassy."

Eberhard, whose last sea-going command was captaincy of a 26,000-ton oil tanker, is a contemporary of Chile's new ruler, Gen. Augusto Pinochet.

Among his new duties, he said, would be responsibility for personally approving all diplomatic communications from the embassy.

The coup d'etat, which cast the admiral in the unfamiliar role of diplomat, also shattered his friendly relations with the former press attache, 31-year-old Andres Rojas-Wainer.

A professed Marxist and an Allende appointee, Rojas handed in his resignation at the embassy last week after first warning a friend to take action if he did not return within five hours. "If I'd been in Chile, I'd be dead, in prison, or trying to get out of the country," he said.

Rojas said the admiral was "a very lovable man" but he feared him because the military "are members of a club and men of elastic conscience."

The admiral's face stiffened when he was asked about the man he used to have pleasant talks with on their shared interest in sailing. "I would have asked for his resignation because I would not have confidence in him. He is a member of the Communist Party."

The admiral said that there was no plan to request Rojas' return to Santiago but if an investigation produced any charge against him, "that would be made known."

"It depends on his position in the United States . . . If he stays within bounds of behavior, we don't want to take action against anyone . . ." he added.

The impact of a coup unprecedented in Chile's recent history has been traumatic for both men. Rojas who had worked for Allende since 1958 found his death "the most painful in my experience—more even than family deaths."

Sipping Colombian coffee at the chic apartment he shares with his American wife Catherine, and their 18-month old

daughter, Rojas said he was shocked and torn apart by events of the last 10 days.

"Allende did not mean anything out of this world in terms of romanticism, but he did represent a very cherished dream . . . Allende was the symbol for a scheme to replace a ruling class without violence . . . I feel his death in my guts."

Without his \$18,000-a-year embassy salary, the former journalist says he is reducing his standard of living. The Italian sports car is up for sale, much of his furniture is sold already and the family plans to move to a low-rent hotel. Rojas also fears reprisals from the Chilean military regime and possible attempts to extradite him.

"I'm selling everything because I want to be ready," he said. "We have a small suitcase packed with our plane tickets and passports."

Adm. Eberhard showed flashes of temper and emotion in defending the military ac-

tion. The generals broke no ment.

"On the contrary," he said, "80 per cent of the Chilean population are supporting the armed forces. The other 20 per cent we shall respect their lives, their property and their opinions—a custom lost in the last few years."

Asked whether the military role might be prolonged indefinitely, the general wagged a finger at a visitor: "You show a complete lack of understanding of the quality and moral force of the Chilean armed forces. The military doesn't like to intervene in politics and did so in this situation with extreme reluctance. The internal and external security and the life of Chile itself was in danger."

If the admiral showed little pleasure in diplomacy, Rojas faced his future as an exile with apprehension: "In Paris I met Spaniards who've been exiles for 40 years. Can you imagine the amount of bitterness and frustration those people

have? I'm not going to be an exile; he is somebody pathetic."

Determined to pursue his career as a journalist, Rojas—probably unrealistically—said he hoped to return to Chile within six to eight months.

Though the two men have moved from a working amity to polarized opposition in a matter of days they still are united in their anger with elements of the western press.

Adm. Eberhard alleged "a well-orchestrated campaign to give a false impression by people who supported the former government."

"I telephone Santiago and tell them what the papers are saying and they say, 'Oh my God, this is not true.'"

The admiral smote his forehead in exasperation.

Rojas feels Allende also was victimized by a slanted press. "The manner of his death was important. There were many articles denigrating him as a fool or a clown. By his death he showed he meant business."