

Chile Junta Deals Democracy

By Joseph Novitski

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SANTIAGO — The Chilean military junta, after governing for 10 months with improvised policies and structures, has settled down for a long stay in power.

The junta, which replaced President Salvador Allende after the coup in which he died last September, began its tenth month by reordering the country's government, burning the national voter registry and breaking off relations with Chile's largest political party, the Christian Democrats. It all added up to a declaration that the military plans to govern for an indefinite span, without elections or organized civilian political support.

Government spokesmen, when asked how long military rule may last, answer, "We have plans, not deadlines."

The plans are for the long term and on a large scale.

"If we don't do big, lasting things, we might as well go home now," an adviser to the junta said recently.

Thus far, in what it calls "the second stage," the junta has made known its intention to rebuild the economy, to make it grow

with the help of foreign investment, to reduce and reorganize the government bureaucracy and to enforce a total ban on civilian political activity by continuing the detentions and military-court trials that have been the rule since last September.

The first step of government reorganization came late in June, when the armed forces agreed to shift from a four-man junta to a one-man presidency. Since the military overthrew Allende and uprooted his Marxist-oriented government, the commanders of the army, the navy, the air force and the *carabineros*, Chile's national police force, had exercised the powers of the presidency. They also took over the law-making power of the Congress, which was closed last year.

Now, Gen. Augusto Pinochet, commander-in-chief of the army and leader of the junta, has been named president for an indefinite term with the formal title of "supreme chief of the nation."

The point of the change, government sources said, was efficiency. The four-man junta had been slower in reaching decisions than one man would be they said.

the commanders of the army, navy, air force and police have retained the role of drawing up laws for promulgation by decree.

Pinochet's rise also represents and ascendancy of the Chilean army over the navy, air force and police. Some civilian observers, believing that the army officers in government had shown more moderation than air force and navy officers, thought this might mean an easing of repression. This has not yet been the case.

The police, carrying out anticrime sweeps, reported this week that they had detained 10,000 people in two days last weekend. A large minority turned out to be drunks, and were released. The rest were held for investigation.

Chilean families report that men and women are still disappearing for days and sometimes weeks. A businessman told friends recently he had been arrested,



AUGUSTO PINOCHET
... 'supreme chief'

held for four days alone in a tiny cell and then released without charges.

While Gen. Pinochet was forming a new Cabinet of 14 military men and 3 civilians, two of them technocrats with international reputa-

Out of Long-Term Plans



EDUARDO FREI
... reported critical

tions, the government burned the national voter registration records. A government spokesman explained that the lists of 4 million voters were "notoriously fraudulent." No plans were announced for

making new lists or reregistering voters.

The remote expectation that the junta might call elections to carry out its announced aim of restoring Chilean democracy disappeared with the electoral records. There remained another possibility, suggested to the junta by leaders of the Christian Democratic Party. The party leadership, who opposed Allende and publicly accepted the coup as a necessary evil, had hoped for a return to civilian government within three to five years.

That hope, according to Christian Democrats familiar with party affairs, disappeared when the junta publicly broke off its semipublic relations with the party last week. Formally, there has been no political party activity in Chile since the junta outlawed the country's Marxist parties and declared the others, including the

Christian Democrats, in recess.

During the recess, Christian Democratic leaders continued to meet privately. Last January they presented a memorandum to the government that criticized the military's treatment of prisoners and its disregard for legal and human rights. Also in January, former Sen. Patricio Aylwin, recognized by the junta as the party's president, suggested privately to a military minister that Christian Democrats saw no need for more than five years of military dictatorship in Chile.

It was not Christian Democratic political opinions, but censorship imposed on a Santiago radio station owned by the party that caused the party's complete break with the junta.

After an exchange of letters, the government called the party an "instrument of international Marxism" and

told Aylwin bluntly to keep a respectful tongue in his head when he spoke to the military government.

Christian Democrats said the government's move looked like a signal from the army that its contacts with Christian Democrats were at an end.

Some party leaders said the break helped the party overcome the reputation of having helped in the coup. Even former President Eduardo Frei, the grand old man of Chilean Christian Democracy who had gone, with other former presidents, to a thanksgiving Mass with the junta last year, was reliably reported to be critical of the military government now.

"In the end it's probably better this way," said a Christian Democratic lawyer. "They tell us to shut up and we stop arguing. It shows everyone that this is a dictatorship and that's that."