3

Pinochet in Power: Building a Regime of Repression

There are three sources of power in Chile: Pinochet, God, and DINA.
—Chilean intelligence officer to the U.S. defense attaché, February 6, 1974

The advent of the Pinochet regime was both violent and vicious. In the days following the coup, the military’s bloodshed was so widespread that the CIA’s own sources could not accurately tally the casualties. “Thus far,” the Station reported on September 20, “4,000 deaths have resulted from the 11 September 1973 coup action and subsequent clean-up operations.” Four days later the Station cabled estimates of civilian “death figures from 2,000 to 10,000.” The new military government admitted to only 2,446 killed but the U.S. intelligence community knew that number was false. “These figures will not be recorded and, therefore, there will never be an accurate tally of the total deaths,” the CIA Station advised on the rampage of repression that followed the military takeover. “Only the Junta members will have a really clear idea of the correct death figures, which they will probably keep secret.”

In late October, the CIA did obtain a “highly sensitive” summary on post-coup repression prepared for the new military Junta. The document became the basis for a special secret briefing paper titled “Chilean Executions” prepared for Secretary of State Henry Kissinger. (Doc 1) In the six weeks following the coup, according to the report, the military had massacred approximately 1,500 civilians. Of those, some 320–360 were summarily executed by firing squads while in custody or shot on sight in the street.

The summary estimated that more than 13,500 Chilean citizens had been quickly rounded up through raids and mass arrests aimed at officials of the deposed Popular Unity government, political activists, labor unions, factory
workers, and shantytown dwellers. They were being held at approximately twenty detention camps scattered throughout the nation, “only a few [of which],” the CIA reported, “are known to the general public.”

By far the largest and most infamous known sites were two converted sports arenas—the National Stadium and the smaller Chile Stadium in Santiago. According to statistics compiled in the secret report for the new Junta, a total of 7,612 prisoners were processed through the National Stadium between September 11 and October 20. All were held incommunicado; many subjected to intense interrogation in locker rooms and luxury skyboxes that the military had transformed into torture chambers.

After savage abuse, numerous prisoners were executed, their bodies buried in secret graves, thrown into the Mapocho River, dropped into the ocean, or dumped at night on city streets. The acclaimed Chilean folk singer, Victor Jara, met such a fate after being imprisoned at the Chile Stadium. His body, discovered in a dirty canal “with his hands and face extremely disfigured, had forty-four bullet holes,” according to an inquiry conducted by the Chilean National Commission on Truth and Reconciliation in 1990. Two American citizens, Charles Horman and Frank Teruggi, seized by military squads at their homes following the coup and detained at the National Stadium, were similarly executed.

During a ruthless seventeen-year dictatorship, the Chilean military would be responsible for the murder, disappearance and death by torture of some 3,197 citizens—with thousands more subjected to savage abuses such as torture, arbitrary incarceration, forced exile, and other forms of state-sponsored terror. The majority of the killings and disappearances took place during the first several years of the regime, as it consolidated and institutionalized its repressive rule. Within weeks of the coup, Pinochet created a special police force empowered to eliminate any and all enemies of his regime. The Junta quickly banned all political activities, closed Congress, suspended political parties, nullified electoral roles, took over the universities, and shut down all but the most right-wing, pro-putsch media outlets in a clear effort to impose a military dictatorship. “Severe repression is planned,” the CIA Station bluntly reported on September 21. “There is no indication whatever that the military plans any early relinquishment of full political power in Chile.”

Pinochet Ascends

Augusto Pinochet was the last general to sign onto the coup; but after September 11 he quickly positioned himself as Chile’s preeminent leader. Originally, the military Junta—formed from heads of the army, air force, navy, and Carabineros—was intended to be a commission of equals, with a rotating presidency. Pursuant to protocol, the Junta named Pinochet, the oldest member and head of the army, as its first chief. “I was elected [Junta president] because I am the oldest,” as Pinochet told the press shortly after the coup. But, “after awhile, Admiral Merino will be, then General Leigh, and so on. I am not an ambitious man,” he added. “I would not want to seem to be a usurper of power.”

In fact, Pinochet moved methodically to distinguish himself from the rest of the Junta and usurp powers the coup plotters had intended to share. His dual role as army commander in chief and head of the Junta afforded him a base of institutional support and concentration of force that he wielded to an autocratic advantage. With the army behind him, Pinochet soon discarded the rotation concept. By June 1974, he had pressured the other Junta members into signing Decree Law 527 naming him “Supreme Chief of the Nation.” On December 18, 1974, he assumed the mantle of “President of the Republic”—a title he held until January 1990 when his dictatorship ended.

Both the U.S. intelligence community and the State Department appeared to underestimate Pinochet’s individual ruthlessness. A secret post-coup Defense Intelligence Agency Biographic Data report characterized the Chilean general as quiet; mild-mannered; very businesslike. Very honest, hard working, dedicated. A devoted, tolerant husband and father; lives very modestly. Drinks scotch and pisco sours; smokes cigarettes; likes parties. (Doc 3)

In an October 12, 1973 cable to Washington, Ambassador Nathaniel Davis described a “gracious and eloquent” private conversation with the budding dictator. “If the Junta government fails, Chile’s tragedy [would be] permanent,” Pinochet told Davis, seeking U.S. economic and military assistance. When Davis pointed out that human rights issues—the Horman and Teruggi murders high on the list—were already creating political problems, Pinochet responded: “the Chilean government shares fully [your] concern for human rights, and is doing its best to prevent violations and loss of life.”

Only three days after this conversation, Pinochet set in motion a series of massacres that came to be known as “the Caravan of Death.” He dispatched General Sergio Arellano Stark, a coup leader and chief enforcer of the new regime, to “expedite” justice in the cases of political prisoners—regional representatives of the Popular Unity government, mayors, police chiefs, prominent trade unionists, and civic leaders—in the northern provinces. Between October 16 and October 19, Stark and a death squad of five officers traveled to the provincial centers of La Serena, Copiapo, Antofagasta, and Cal-
ama in a Puma helicopter. During each stop, Stark identified prisoners, most of who had turned themselves in after an official summons. They were removed from their cells, taken away, brutalized, bayoneted and shot. In La Serena: fifteen dead; in Copiapó, sixteen. In Antofagasta, fourteen taken from their cells and executed in the middle of the night; in Calama the next day, twenty-six prisoners shot and stabbed. Over four days, the Caravan left a death trail of sixty-eight individuals. Most of the victims were unceremoniously thrown into common graves; their families denied permission to bury them. Fourteen bodies were never recovered and are considered among the first groups of “desaparecidos” at the hands of the new military regime.

U.S. intelligence knew of these massacres, but reported on them only in vague and incomplete terms. In its biographic report on General Arellano, the DIA noted that he was “considered close to Gen. Pinochet” and part of the “hard line in months after the Sept. 1973 coup because of his summary executions of leftists.” The CIA Station generously described Stark’s operations as part of a campaign to “neutralize extremists”—although most victims of the Caravan of Death were upstanding civic officials and well-known members of their communities. “The military will continue to act against any person taking belligerent action against law and order,” according to a heavily redacted October 25 CIA intelligence report on Pinochet’s harsh measures:

As an example of this type of action General Sergio Arellano gave instructions during a recent trip to the South of Chile, to deal harshly with extremists. As a result of these instructions, six extremists who had been captured were executed. Arellano gave the same instructions in the North and already 15 have been executed there.

Stark himself was acting on instructions. Indeed, more than any other atrocity during his reign, witnesses and evidence tied Pinochet directly to this massacre. When the provincial military commander in charge of the Antofagasta region, General Joaquín Lagos (who was not told of the delegation’s true mission) confronted General Arellano and denounced this “monstrous and cowardly crime,” Arellano showed him a document signed by Pinochet designating him the official delegado—official delegate—to “review and accelerate” the judicial process on political prisoners in the north. When Lagos complained directly to Pinochet, he was summoned to Santiago on November 1. After turning in a report attributing dozens of deaths to the “delegate of the Army Commander-in-Chief [General Arellano],” Pinochet sent his assistant to give Lagos the following order: rewrite the report eliminating all references to Arellano’s involvement.

As an act of official savagery, these mass executions clearly defined the character of the regime Augusto Pinochet intended to establish. The Caravan of Death reflected a decision at the highest level of the Junta to take vengeance on even nonviolent, civilian supporters of democratic governance. At the same time, it appeared designed to weed out “soft” commanders such as General Lagos—who was forced into retirement within a few months—and dramatically reconstitute Chile’s traditionally law-abiding, constitutional officer corps for fighting a dirty war. “The official and extraordinary character of this delegation’s journey to the north and its degree of authority—from the commander in chief—to-coupled with what it left in its wake in the form of executions without trial and the blatant impunity with which it operated,” as the Commission on Truth and Reconciliation noted, could “only have given officers of the armed forces and the police one signal: there was only one command structure, and it was going to be used with severity.”

The Directorate of National Intelligence (DINA)

The murderous mission and message of the Caravan of Death portended the creation of a Chilean secret police agency, DINA. In some respects, DINA represented the institutionalization of the Caravan—a roving instrument of repression, accountable only to Pinochet, intended to eliminate enemies of the state, circumvent civil, legal norms, and strike fear into the populace and less aggressive military services. Initial personnel derived from the caravan team. General Arellano Stark, as the U.S. intelligence learned, was appointed to an elite military commission “tasked by General Pinochet” with preparing a plan for the reorganization of Chile’s intelligence agencies that resulted in DINA’s creation. Four members of his Caravan death squad were transferred to the new intelligence agency after it was secretly authorized. One, Colonel Pedro Espinoza, quickly became DINA’s deputy director, overseeing repressive operations inside the country and acts of international terrorism abroad. A second member, Armando Fernández Larios, played a key role in DINA’s most infamous external operation—the Washington, D.C. assassination of Orlando Letelier and Ronni Moffitt. Aside from Augusto Pinochet himself, DINA would become the main pillar of power for the military dictatorship—and its most representative and enduring symbol.

DINA was officially created by Junta decree no. 521 on June 14, 1974. The new law described it as a “specialized agency which can provide systematic processed information...in the areas of National Security and Development.” Eight published articles of the decree mandated “a military agency of a professional technical nature,” composed of personnel from the armed forces, and when necessary, civilian officials. Three final sections remained
rounded up and held by the new military regime under the state of siege. Portrayed as a mechanism to provide "regular, permanent and coordinated attention" to the plight of thousands of imprisoned Chilenos, in reality SENDET provided clandestine cover for DINA, which operated as its so-called "intelligence department." This department, according to the decree establishing SENDET, would have as its responsibilities the fixing of norms for interrogations or re-interrogations of the detained; determining the degree of danger (which they pose for the nation); maintaining a permanent coordination with the Intelligence Branches of the Armed Forces, Carabineros and Investigaciones, with the object of exchanging and maintaining current information which they are able to give about the detained.¹⁹

From the start, DINA became notorious for its brutality, even among the other violent intelligence units in the Chilean armed forces. Agents not only coordinated and conducted interrogations, but also carried out systematic clandestine raids and arrests, while building a network of secret detention and torture centers to extract information from supporters of the former Allende government, terminate and disappear them. In late January 1974, the CIA reported that DINA was committing "incidents which have been the source of embarrassment to the ministry of defense" including secret detentions that the ministry was unaware of and had denied. "[A]s originally predicted," the U.S. defense attaché Col. William Hon reported back to Washington, "it seems as though [DINA] is developing into a KGB-type organization." The rival services were referring to DINA as "the monster." Hon cabled again on February 5, 1974, "reflecting their apprehension about its growing power and size.²²

At that point, DINA had an estimated 700 agents and officials drawn from ranks of the police, army, and the paramilitary legions of the civilian neofascist group Patria y Libertad; by April 1975, it had, in the peculiar parlance of DIA reporting, "blossomed to approximately 2,000 regular members" with an additional force of 2,100 civilian personnel deployed throughout the nation. With funds approved by Pinochet, in 1975 DINA constructed a new twenty-four-story headquarters at the end of Belgrano Street in Santiago to house its massive expansion.

The agency’s mission went beyond decimating the left in Chile. DINA also infiltrated a network of spies inside the military government to insure full loyalty to the Pinochet regime, as well as posted its own agents in policy positions to influence the direction the regime took. Operating at every level of the regime served to enhance DINA’s power of repression, which Con-
treras implemented extrajudicially, circumventing the courts and ignoring the legal rules and regulations. "No judge in any court or any minister in the government is going to question the matter further if DINA says they are handling it," one source told Hon in early February 1974. The CIA characterized DINA as "an all service (military gendarmerie) intelligence organization," but with Pinochet's blessing, it would become essentially a government-within-a-government. "There are three sources of power in Chile," the informant told Col. Hon: "Pinochet, God, and DINA."14

Large as it was, the secret police personnel, organizational structure, resources, and operations remained largely unknown to the Chilean public. They were, however, known to U.S. intelligence. The CIA began collaborating with DINA soon after it was covertly created.15 The DIA routinely reported on DINA's continuing institutionalization. In June 1975, a high-level source handed an officer of the U.S. Military Group—the unit of American officers at the embassy known as the MIlGroup—a comprehensive organizational diagram on Chile's "largest and most influential intelligence organization." (Doc 5) The structural chart showed a vast apparatus, with numerous operational divisions both inside and outside the country. Key "brigades" included: the Metropolitan Intelligence Brigade—known as BIM—which conducted all raids, arrests, and detentions in Santiago; the Economic Brigade "responsible for field operations related to the monitoring of public and private sector business/economic activities;" and the "Citizens Brigade" of informers throughout the country. The diagram also identified a "secreta"—a secret brigade close to the director whose function remains unknown.

Col. Contreras devised and supervised all these operations. In late 1973, Pinochet handpicked him as DINA director; U.S. intelligence dated his appointment on February 24, 1974. Contreras had no formal military background in the field of intelligence; he had spent much of his career as a professor and administrator at Chile's military engineering academies. (From September 1966 to September 1967 he attended the U.S. Army Career Officers School at Ft. Belvoir, Virginia, ostensibly taking engineering courses.) But his U.S. Department of Defense biographic report recorded that he had taught a course on "strategy and intelligence" at the Chilean Army War College in the mid-1960s, where then Lieutenant Colonel Pinochet was deputy commander. The two apparently established a close friendship that enabled Contreras to become Pinochet's closest advisor and ally after the military coup.

A DIA biographic assessment would describe Contreras this way:

Strong character, with intense loyalty to President Pinochet. Apparent designer, and certainly implementer, of hard line policy. . . . A very intelligent, observing officer with a keen sense of humor. . . . Strongly anti-Communist and anti-Marxist to the point that he envisions leftist plots behind every action which seems to him to be counter to Chilean best interests. . . . Extremely capable performer, who is intensely disliked by many, both superiors and peers, because of his ruthless means employed by DINA. While he has ability to achieve higher positions, he will advance only with the personal support of President Pinochet, and could be expected to fall from any position of responsibility without this support.16

At the time of the coup, Contreras headed the Military Engineer School at Tejas Verdes, near the port town of San Antonio about sixty miles from Santiago. On September 11, he transformed the engineering school into a detention center known as prison camp no. 2, which became the prototype DINA torture-execution facility.17 His early success in extracting confessions and disposing of victims helped to catapult Contreras over the military hierarchy to become Pinochet's intelligence chieftain and confident, while providing him with a reputation for viciousness that he institutionalized through the DINA.

Under Contreras's command, DINA became notorious for three defined types of gross human rights violations: a web of secret detention camps, the systematic and inhuman practice of torture, and the disappearances of hundreds of Chileans.

In addition to Tejas Verdes, DINA operated at least a dozen other secret detention and torture facilities in Santiago and throughout the country. These included:

- Villa Grimaldi—a walled estate built in 1835 and located in a residential section of the Santiago foothills, which served as the headquarters of BIM, DINA's metropolitan brigade. As DINA's most important facility in the capital, Villa Grimaldi—known within the military as the Terranova barracks—operated around the clock, with hooded prisoners being trucked into the camp at all hours of the night and day, to be abused by rotating shifts of torturers. Victims were housed in small wooden rooms, some no bigger than closets. In a small water tower on the property, DINA guards constructed ten cramped spaces where prisoners were kept after torture but prior to execution. The "tower" proved to be a final station for many who disappeared at the hands of BIM agents.18

- The Discoteque/La Venda Sexy—a house located on Calle Iran in Santiago served as another DINA torture center. Its name derived from prisoner reports that music was played continuously while var-
ious types of abuses took place and that DINA agents used sexual torture as their preferred form of repression at this facility. Many victims were then disappeared.

- **Londres No. 38**—a facility housed in the former Socialist Party headquarters in the Santiago region. DINA maintained up to sixty prisoners at a time here, before transferring them to harsher camps.

- **Cuatro Alamos**—in a section of the Tres Alamos prison in downtown Santiago, DINA secretly controlled a series of holding cells for prisoners, many of them awaiting transfer from one torture camp to another.

- **Colonia Dignidad**—one of the most secretive facilities used by DINA outside of Santiago, Colonia Dignidad was a cultlike German enclave started by ex-Luftwaffe officials from Nazi Germany, located in the Parral province in southern Chile. DINA’s regional intelligence brigade operated out of a house owned by the Colonia in Parral. According to the Rettig Commission, “a certain number of people apprehended by DINA were really taken to Colonia Dignidad, held prisoner there for some time, and some of them subjected to torture.”

All of these facilities shared a similar modus operandi: blindfolded victims were brought to them after being snatched in their homes or on the street by plainclothed agents in DINA’s signature unmarked Ford Falcons. Prisoners were severely abused. One Chilean military officer told the U.S. defense attaché that DINA used a system of interrogation “straight out of the Spanish Inquisition.” Each facility specialized in particular forms of torture. At Londres No. 38, for example, DINA agents often rounded up a prisoner’s family members and sexually abused them with the prisoner present in order to extract information. Villa Grimaldi was known for its “Chile rooms”—wooden isolation compartments so small that prisoners could not kneel nor lay down.

Other forms of torture were commonly used at all DINA facilities. The Report of the Chilean National Commission on Truth and Reconciliation catalogued the horrific methods favored by DINA practitioners to obtain “intelligence” from prisoners:

- **The Grill**: prisoners would be tied to a metal bedspring and electrical current applied to sensitive body parts, including sexual organs.

- **La Parilla**: a bar on which victims were suspended by the wrists or by wrists and knees for long periods of time. While suspended, victims received electric shocks, and beatings.

- **The Submarine**: forced immersion in a vat of urine and excrement, or frigid water.

- **The Dry Submarine**: use of a cloth bag roped around the head to bring victims to the point of suffocation. This practice was often accompanied with burning victims with cigarettes to accelerate loss of air.

- **Beatings**: administered with gun butts, fists, and chains. In one technique, called “the telephone,” according to a survivor, the torturer “slammed his open hands hard and rhythmically against the ears of the victim” leaving the prisoner deaf.28

In some camps, routine sadism was taken to extremes. At Villa Grimaldi, recalcitrant prisoners were dragged to a parking lot; DINA agents then used a car or truck to run over and crush their legs. Prisoners there recalled one young man who was beaten with chains and left to die slowly from internal injuries. Rape was also a reoccurring form of abuse. DINA officers subjected female prisoners to grotesque forms of sexual torture that included insertion of rods and, as tactfully described in the Commission report, “unnatural acts involving dogs.”

Few prisoners who were severely tortured lived to provide evidence of these atrocities. DINA agents murdered hundreds of victims. Many of them remain **disaparecidos**—disappeared. Approximately 1,100 Chileans—and one U.S. citizen—vanished during the seventeen-year Pinochet dictatorship—the majority of them at the hands of DINA. Some were killed and buried in secret graves; others were airlifted in a helicopter and thrown into the ocean by DINA agents “after first cutting their stomach open with a knife to keep the bodies from floating,” states the Rettig Commission report. Making victims simply disappear was a particularly cruel method of terrorizing the opposition, inflicting psychological injuries on surviving family members, while avoiding legal constraints and evidence of responsibility and criminal accountability.29

But many families and human rights workers in Chile did hold the military regime and its secret police accountable, as did the international community. DINA’s involvement in secret detention, torture, and disappearances drew strong and continuous condemnation from around the world. “The Pinochet regime moves across the world scene like a metal duck in a shooting gallery,” CIA analysts lamented in a top-secret report titled, “Chile: Running the Gauntlet,” dated in early 1976. “Its assailants have plenty of ammunition based on the excesses accompanying Salvador Allende’s overthrow and the alleged abuses that still mark Chile’s security and detention practices.”30 Contreras, rather than Pinochet, became a lightning rod for criticism. U.S. in-
Pinochet and DINA

The June 1974 decree that established DINA stated clearly that it would be “a military agency . . . directly subordinate to the government Junta.” Pinochet would propagate this myth for years. “I could never say that I was actually running DINA,” Pinochet argued in his last interview while detained in London. “[They] were under the orders, under the supervision of all of the Junta, the four members of the Junta.”

In fact, the Junta never supervised DINA operations, and from its inception to its closure, Contreras took orders only from Pinochet himself. “The Dina,” as the U.S. defense attaché reported only several weeks after it was formed, “is directly subordinate to Junta President Pinochet.” Another CIA report dated in April 1975 reiterated: “Col. Contreras has reported exclusively to, and received orders only from President Pinochet.” Two years later, a CIA report on DINA’s responsibility for “the recent increase in torture, illegal detentions, and unexplained ‘disappearances,’” stated that “Contreras answers directly to the President, and it is unlikely that he would act without the knowledge and approval of his superior.”

Pinochet exercised sole control over DINA because it provided him with much of his ability to consolidate his authority. Not only did Contreras’s agents severely repress any opposition from the left; DINA also spied on and intimidated anyone who dared to disagree with Pinochet from within his own military. When the head of the Armed Forces Counterintelligence Center (CECIFA), Lt. Com. Raul Monsalve complained about DINA’s operations and Contreras’s relation with Pinochet, other high military officials warned him to “moderate” his objections or “face the possibility that DINA personnel would fabricate an incident which would destroy his career and get him out of their way,” witnesses told U.S. officials. Such threats were made, and carried out, repeatedly during DINA’s tenure. “One of Pinochet’s major sources of power is the National Directorate of Intelligence (DINA), an organization whose principal mission is internal security but which is extending its influence to ever-growing areas of activity,” the U.S. embassy cabled the State Department in mid-1975. “DINA reports directly to Pinochet and is ultimately controlled by him alone.”

Pinochet not only controlled DINA, he empowered its rapid expansion at the expense of other sectors of the military. He gave Contreras carte blanche in establishing personnel levels at the DINA and backed him as he drew agents and staff away from the other services while forcing them to foot the payroll bills. In January 1975, Contreras drafted, and Pinochet signed, an order giving DINA sole responsibility for persecuting the MIR, the regime’s number-one counterinsurgency target. Pinochet also ordered airmen in the intelligence unit, which Contreras considered a particular rival, to disband and turn over its operations to DINA.

As international complaints about Chile’s gross violations of human rights escalated, Pinochet used them in an Orwellian effort to broaden DINA’s power. In September 1975, the CIA Station learned that Pinochet had “conducted a personnel investigation into human rights practices and violations by the armed forces” and determined that prisoners held by some of the intelligence units were being abused. He then ordered the interior and defense ministers “to issue a secret decree to the heads of all the services clearly stating the authorization and procedures for detentions throughout the country.”

Purportedly intended to improve Chile’s human rights record, Pinochet’s secret decree in fact bestowed maximum latitude on the main agency responsible for the majority of atrocities. The September 22 order, obtained by CIA operatives, established DINA as the sole agency responsible for detentions, exempting it from obligation to report its activities to the courts or the other military services:

The directorate of national intelligence, DINA is authorized to conduct detentions of persons suspected of subversion or political activity throughout the country. In any case in the Santiago area in which the armed forces, carabineros or the [deleted] in the course of their patrol duties detain individuals engaged in subversive activity, the detainees must be immediately turned over to DINA . . . DINA will act as the Central coordinator for all detention decrees.

DINA’s monolithic growth created intense rivalries and strains within the regime as other members of the military sought to assert their influence on Chile’s future. Threatened by Contreras’s power, and expressing concern about DINA’s “barbaric” practices, a number of military officers sought out CIA and Defense Department officials and shared stories of efforts to per-
suade Pinochet to reign in DINA operations. In April 1975, several army officers tried “to convince the president that DINA should be subject to the direction and control of a National Security Council type of authority rather than just the presidency,” the DIA reported. “To date, the president has not received these suggestions with enthusiasm.”

Even U.S. military officers began to express concern about the implications of DINA’s power. In comments attached to a detailed intelligence report on DINA’s expansion, U.S. defense attaché, Capt. J.R. Switzer, described DINA’s development as “a particularly disturbing phenomenon”:

The apprehension of many senior Chilean military authorities regarding the possibility of DINA becoming a modern day Gestapo may very well be coming to fruition: DINA’s autonomous authority is great, and increasing. Junta members are apparently unable to influence President Pinochet’s decisions concerning DINA activities in any way. Regarding DINA organization, policies and operations Colonel Contreras’ authority is near absolute—subject only to an unlikely Presidential veto. (Doc 7)

Until the end of 1975, the U.S. MilGroup viewed this phenomenon as evidence that Contreras had taken control—over Pinochet himself. “With the rapid growth of DINA into almost every aspect of the government, this office at times felt that the organization and its leaders had gotten out of hand and that the tail might be wagging the dog in Chile,” the defense attaché cabled Washington. But during a dinner party with “a very senior DINA official”—perhaps Contreras himself—the U.S. air force attaché in Santiago, Lt. Col. Lawrence Corcoran, gathered intelligence on Pinochet’s personal involvement in the operations of his secret police. Contreras met Pinochet every morning at 7:30 A.M., and privately briefed him on “the coming events and status of existing DINA activities,” this official informed Corcoran. “The president issues instructions on DINA; is aware of its activities; and in fact heads it.” (Emphasis added.)

“Brigada Exterior”: The External Section

As DINA advanced its effort at wiping out all opposition to the regime, Pinochet and Contreras decided to expand Chile’s secret police functions. DINA’s mission would not be limited to internal security but would build an extraterritorial operational capability to neutralize threats from abroad—particularly the vocal international solidarity and human-rights network that focused worldwide attention on Pinochet’s atrocities. The organizational diagram of DINA, obtained by U.S. intelligence, listed a “Brigada Exterior.” This section, a Chilean source reported, was made up of “DINA operatives who conduct traditional intelligence operations in foreign countries.” (See Doc 5)

The Exterior Brigade, however, did not conduct “traditional” operations. Instead of gathering intelligence on the military capabilities and attitudes of potentially hostile governments posing national security threats, the DINA’s foreign branch focused on three main missions; forging alliances with other secret police forces, as well as violent anticomunist and neo-fascist groups, in the Southern Cone, United States, and Europe; tracking Pinochet’s critics abroad, and organizing acts of international terrorism against prominent exiles. (See Chapter 6) To spy on exile movements and activities, DINA posted agents and assets in Chilean embassies around the world, and among the personnel serving the national airline, as well as at international airports, including those in New York. Drawing on the CIA’s organizational model, Contreras ordered the creation of DINA stations abroad to facilitate these operations, with agents operating under civilian, rather than military, cover.

In the spring of 1974, DINA established its first station in Buenos Aires. There, according to the Retig Commission report, Chilean agents engaged in the “investigation, surveillance, apprehension, and even elimination of opposition Chileans who had taken refuge [in Argentina].” Subsequently, an undercover agent was based at the Chilean embassy in Madrid, Spain with responsibility for Western Europe. Contreras also tried to insert DINA representatives in France, England, and West Germany to help track the movements of exiled Chilean politicians and more militant groups working across the continent. In 1976, DINA, in collaboration with the secret police services in Argentina and Uruguay, apparently attempted to open a station in Miami, Florida.35

In their contacts and secret calls, DINA agents used a code name, “Luis Gutierrez,” to refer to the international division. The division had a unique communications and computer system, separate from the rest of the directorate. Army Maj. Raúl Iturriaga Neumann oversaw the operations of Brigada Exterior, although Contreras exercised close control of this special unit through his deputy, Pedro Espinoza. The Brigade drew its staff from Chilean military personnel, and recruited a number of civilians from the ranks of violent rightist groups such Patria y Libertad.

But the most famous member of DINA’s foreign branch was not Chilean: he was an American, born in Waterloo, Iowa, named Michael Vernon Townley. Townley was the son of a Ford Motor Company overseas manager. He had moved with his family to Chile at age fourteen and, only four years
later, married a twenty-six-year-old Chilean woman, Inés Mariana Callejas, with three small children. His first job in Chile in the early 1960s was an encyclopedia salesman. In 1967, Townley and his family moved to Miami, Florida where he became both familiar and friendly with the hard-line, and often violent, anti-Castro Cuban exile community. After Salvador Allende was elected in Chile in September 1970, Townley’s anticommunist Cuban friends urged him to contact the CIA and return to Chile to play an undercover role in efforts to undermine the new Chilean government.57

As he prepared to return to Chile, Townley did approach the CIA in December 1970 to offer his services as a covert asset against the Allende government. Two months later, according to records of the Agency’s Office of Security, the Directorate of Operations (DO) requested “preliminary security approval to use Mr. Townley in an operational capacity.” It is not clear how, or if, the CIA employed Townley over the next year, but on December 21, 1971, the DO alerted the Office of Security that the Station had cancelled its interest in him as an agent.86

By then Townley was a fixture at the Santiago embassy—an “embassy barnacle” as one diplomat characterized him. (Townley’s handwritten name, telephone number, and address at 1454 Oxford St. appear on the inside flap of one 1971 embassy telephone directory.) He spent considerable time hanging out with various U.S. attachés and officials—Frederick Purdy, David Stebbing, Jeffrey Davidow among them—passing on information about his anti-Allende activities.

He had stories to share. Townley was now an operative with Patria y Libertad (PL), the avowedly pro-fascist paramilitary group that modeled itself after Hitler’s Brownshirts. He headed a command unit responsible for bombings and acts of economic sabotage using Molotov cocktails. Townley also applied his self-taught skills as an electronics expert to design electronic surveillance equipment that allowed Patria y Libertad to intercept radio transmissions between Allende, his guards and party officials—tapes of which were then provided to the U.S. embassy. He became renowned in the extremist opposition community for building and deploying mobile radio transmitters and illicit, anti-Allende television stations. When the government tried to scramble those transmissions, Townley led a PL raid in March 1973 to disable a jamming device at a TV station in the city of Concepción. During the operation, Townley gagged and hog-tied a homeless man who was using the station as shelter. He was found dead of asphyxiation the next day. Now a fugitive, Townley fled Chile to Miami.

Wanted for murder in Chile, Townley simply waited until the Allende government had been overthrown to return to his adopted country and rejoin his colleagues from Patria y Libertad to celebrate their anticommunist victory.

On October 3, he obtained a fake Florida driver’s license under the alias Kenneth Eayart. On October 5, he received a new U.S. passport using that name. Five weeks after the coup, Townley flew back to Santiago.

Before leaving Miami, however, he met with an old friend from the U.S. embassy, David Stebbing, and provided him with significant information. In a letter to the State Department’s Chile desk officer, Stebbing provided a debriefing of Townley that covered coup plotting, Patria y Libertad, and the murder in Concepción. Prior to the coup, Townley reported, “an assassination squad had been formed by Chilean exiles” to kill up to twenty-five members of Allende’s government.

If there had been no intervening coup, they would have acted in October. The plan was for 6 or 8 people to enter Chile no more than 2 or 3 days before the target date and to pick off as many of their unbodyguard ed targets as possible within a space of 3 or 4 hours.

Now that the coup had been completed Patria y Libertad members were “showing up as key officials or advisors throughout the new government,” Townley advised. “Many of his friends are not at all bothered by the term ‘Fascist,’” Stebbing reported. “Mike” expected to return to Chile within a few days, and “will probably be in contact with the embassy again.” As Stebbing presciently predicted, “he may someday be in trouble again.”

Indeed, Townley returned to Santiago and immediately resumed his quest to work with the United States as an operative or informant. Embassy files record numerous contacts between him and U.S. personnel. Aware that Townley was a fugitive in the Concepción murder case, the American consul, Fred Purdy, nevertheless welcomed him back and provided him with a new, clean, passport in his real name. In December 1973, Townley called attaché Jeffrey Davidow to report that he was “working with the same Patria y Libertad types he knew prior to the coup, and that the group is accepting assignments from military intelligence.” Townley told Davidow that he was “eager to establish an intelligence relationship with the embassy.” In a biographic memorandum drafted in June 1974, Davidow described Townley as an “AMCIT [American citizen] with rather unsavory past with crypto-fascist Chilean groups . . . suggest keeping him at arms length.” But just two months later another embassy officer, Michael Lyons, accepted a dinner invitation with Townley and his wife, Ines, and reported that the expatriate American was still interested in being a “conduit for information” for the United States.

By then, Townley was a DINA agent. In the late spring of 1974, Contreras’s deputy, Col. Pedro Espinoza, recruited him into the service of the
secret police; within several months Contreras had provided Townley with an alias, Juan Andres Wilson, a large home to use as a base, and a fourmember team for operations. As a committed, rabid, anticomunist U.S. citizen, Townley provided DINA with multiple skills and opportunities. "My husband was [not] an imitation James Bond," his wife would write in a lengthy handwritten account of Townley’s DINA career:

But I certainly can state that DINA found his knowledge of electronics, English, and purchasing extremely useful. Add to that the fact that as an American he had free access to the United States at any moment without having the need for hard-to-get visas. My husband, moreover, had qualities that made him especially effective in the intelligence community: a bright mind, an incredible memory, and a fail-safe determination and loyalty. And he was absolutely convinced that the military government and Señor Pinochet were the best things that ever could have happened to Chile.41

Townley became the Brigada Exterior’s leading assassin. In September 1974 he carried out his first major mission—the cold-blooded car bomb attack that killed former Chilean commander in chief Carlos Prats and his wife in Buenos Aires. In the spring of 1975, his DINA superiors sent him to Mexico City in a failed effort to blow up a convention center filled with exiled former members of the Allende government. That September, he arranged an assassination plot in Rome, Italy, that left the exiled leader of the Christian Democratic party, Bernardo Leighton, and his wife critically wounded. And in September 1976, he organized and implemented DINA’s most infamous operation: the car bomb assassination of former Chilean minister Orlando Letelier and his American colleague, Ronni Karpen Moffitt in downtown Washington, D.C. Although his name was not known at the time, in the mid-1970s Michael Townley ranked among the world’s most active—and dangerous—international terrorists.

Project Andrea

From the laboratory basement of his DINA-owned mansion in the Lo Curro district of Santiago, Townley directed another top-secret DINA operation with tremendous terrorist potential: the creation of a biological weapon of mass destruction. Code-named “ANDREA,” the project reflected the Pinochet regime’s desire to possess a secret weapon that could be used in the event of war against Chile’s neighbors, Peru or Argentina. Townley, and a team of chemists, developed, manufactured, and stored a nerve gas with the scientific name Isopropylmethylphosphonofluoridate—commonly known as Sarin.

Sarin is extremely lethal. Even a few drops can bring the quick and painful death of hundreds of people; a military delivery system would kill thousands. The gas, according to an FBI memorandum on Project ANDREA distributed by then director William Webster, “vaporizes on being exposed to the atmosphere, producing droplets that enter the body through the skin or lungs to interdict the neurochemistry that permits the respiratory muscles to function.” The Japanese cult Aum Shinrikyo used Sarin in the Tokyo subway gas attack that killed twelve people and wounded 500 in March 1995. The Bush administration also believed Sarin to be part of Saddam Hussein’s alleged arsenal of chemical warfare weapons in Iraq.

Townley’s mission, as Taylor Branch and Eugene Propper wrote in their book Labyrinth, was to “develop a weapon that [would] be extremely lethal to large masses of people but whose effects [could] be localized within a relatively small area.”42 After studying the chemical work of German scientists during operations in Europe in the summer of 1975, Townley procured laboratory equipment and compounds from a British chemical engineering company, Gallenkamp; he also purchased a large microwave oven and rented gas storage canisters in Miami. The equipment was paid for out of a special DINA account, under the fictitious company Prosin Ltd., at the Southeast First National Bank in Miami, Florida.

By the time of the mission to kill Letelier in Washington, D.C., DINA had manufactured significant amounts of Sarin and Townley was working on a military delivery system that would allow the gas to be deployed in a wartime setting. But he had also opened his nerve gas laboratory to representatives of the Cuban National Movement, a violent anti-Castro organization that collaborated in various DINA assassination missions including the Letelier bombing. The CNM members, as Townley later told his FBI interrogators, “requested that the Cuban Nationalist Movement be furnished a supply of nerve gas to utilize in their terrorist activities.” (Doc 8)43

Townley himself considered the possibility that Sarin could be utilized in a terrorist mission. In preparation for the assassination of Orlando Letelier, he took a small quantity of the nerve gas, put it into a Chanel No. 5 perfume bottle and transported it aboard a LAN-Chile flight to the United States. As Townley would later admit, he considered the possibility that a female DINA agent could get close enough to Letelier to deploy the gas, or that he could toss the Chanel bottle into Letelier’s car at a stop sign or red light. Once in Washington, however, he resorted to his signature weapon—a car bomb—and eventually returned the gas to a secure DINA storage facility in Santiago.44
The National Center for Information (CNI)

The Letelier mission, while accomplishing Contreras’s objectives, brought about DINA’s dissolution. The shadow cast over Chile’s military as an institution strengthened the hand of the Contreras’s enemies in the high command to the point where they convinced General Pinochet to dissolve DINA and reorganize the intelligence service. On August 13, 1977, the Junta issued decree law No. 1876 abolishing DINA, citing the need to restructure “in accord with present circumstances the functions of an agency created during a situation of internal conflict that has now been surpassed.” A second decree, No. 1878, issued the same day, established the National Center for Information, CNI, and authorized it to take over DINA’s staff, properties, and budgets. Whereas DINA reported to Pinochet, U.S. military intelligence advised in a cable, “DINA Dissolved,” the CNI supposedly would report to the Ministry of Interior and would not have the power of arrest and detention of its predecessor. (Doc 9) But Contreras remained as director, meaning that this change in the structure of the secret police was in name only.

Between August and November, Chilean intelligence agents at Contreras’s direction conducted a string of bombings, robberies, kidnappings, and killings, all of which the CNI blamed on “extremists.” In fact, as U.S. intelligence quickly reported, Chilean military agents were attempting to orchestrate a climate of chaos and terrorism, to exaggerate the leftist threat. In one coordinated operation, the Chilean secret police blew up two suspected safe houses, killing several people, and then blamed the explosions on the left. “Arrests and prosecutions would ‘take months,’ ” one Chilean official explained to the U.S. military attaché, but “an explosion would produce speedy justice.”

In early November, high-ranking military commanders met with Pinochet again and demanded that Contreras be relieved of his duties as CNI director. Chile’s international image on human rights, they argued, would never improve as long as he remained. On November 4, Pinochet abruptly removed Contreras—he was promoted from colonel to brigadier general and given a post at the Army Engineering School—and appointed one of DINA’s critics, General Odlanier Mena, as new CNI director. According to a CIA intelligence report filed on November 9, Pinochet realized “that as long as the leadership of the CNI remains basically the same as its predecessor organization, DINA, many critics of the Chilean government will insist that no real change has taken place.” CIA informants claimed that Contreras was “completely shocked” at his ouster. One source compared Contreras, once the most feared and loathed individual in Chile, to “a cuckolded husband who is the last to realize his wife was being unfaithful.”

According to the Defense Intelligence Agency, General Mena would “probably improve Chile’s claims of housecleaning within the security community.” But CNI proved to be qualitatively, if not quantitatively, as repressive as its predecessor. The levels of political killings abated between 1978 and 1980, but as organized protests against the regime escalated so did CNI’s acts of repression. CNI agents would eventually be charged in several of the most gruesome atrocities committed toward the end of the dictatorship, including the killing of trade union leader Tucapel Jimenez in February 1982 and the decapitation murders of three Chilean professors in March 1985. Between 1978 and 1985, the Chilean Commission on Truth and Reconciliation estimated, fatal human rights violations committed by the regime totaled 160 people. “Most of them are attributed to the CNI.”
SECRET - NODIS

TO: The Secretary

FROM: ARA - Jack B. Kubisch

Chilean Executions

You requested by cable from Tokyo a report on this subject.

On October 24 the Junta announced that summary, on-the-spot executions would no longer be carried out and that persons caught in the act of resisting the government would henceforth be held for military courts. Since that date 17 executions following military trials have been announced. Publicly acknowledged executions, both summary and in compliance with court martial sentences, now total approximately 105, with an additional 20 prisoners shot while being held. A report prepared for the Junta shows the number of executions for the period September 15-10 at 325. The latter figure is probably a more accurate indication of the extent of this practice.

Our best estimate is that the military and police units in the field are generally complying with the order to desist from summary executions. At least the rather frequent use of random violence that marked the operations of these units in the early post-coup days has clearly abated for the time being. However, there are no indications as yet of a disposition to forgo executions after military trial.

The Chilean leaders justify these executions as entirely legal in the application of martial law under what they have declared to be a "state of siege in time of war". Their code of military justice permits death by firing squad for a range of offenses, including treason, armed resistance, illegal possession of arms and auto theft. Sentences handed down by military tribunals during a state of siege are not reviewable by civilian courts.

The purpose of the executions is to discourage by example those who seek to organize armed opposition to the Junta. The Chilean military, persuaded to some degree by years of Communist Party propaganda, expected to be confronted by heavy resistance when they overthrew Allende. Fear of civil war was an important factor in their decision to employ a heavy hand from the outset. Also present is a puritanical, crusading spirit - a determination to cleanse and rejuvenate Chile. (A number of those executed seem to have been petty criminals.)

The Junta now has more confidence in the security situation and more awareness of the pressure of international opinion. It may be a hopeful sign that the Junta continues to stall on bringing to trial former cabinet ministers and other prominent Marxists - people the military initially had every intention of standing up before firing squads. How the military leaders proceed in this area now on will be influenced to some degree by outside opinion, and particularly by ours, but the major consideration will continue to be their assessment of the security situation.

At Tab A is a Chile situation report and at Tab B a fact sheet on human rights in Chile.

Attachments:

Tab A - Situation Report
Tab B - Fact Sheet

SECRET - NODIS

XGDS

Drafted: ARA:HM/Shlaudeman:mp
Ext. 23542:11/16/73
FIGURES WITHOUT ASTERISK ARE FROM PUBLIC SOURCES.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total arrested in Chile since September 11</td>
<td>13,700*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arrested originally and held in National Stadium in Santiago</td>
<td>7,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Released from Stadium</td>
<td>6,500</td>
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<tr>
<td>Presently held in Stadium</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detained in Santiago jails</td>
<td>550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detained outside Sanitago</td>
<td>2,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estimated number serving sentence or pending trial</td>
<td>1,500*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executions acknowledged</td>
<td>103 (approx)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executions according to intelligence sources</td>
<td>320</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number killed attempting to escape military custody</td>
<td>40</td>
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<tr>
<td>American citizens detained (of those released by October 17)</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>American citizens dead since coup</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Safeconducts issued to exiles in Bolivia</td>
<td>3,792</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safeconducts issued to others</td>
<td>3,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safeconducts requests not yet acted upon</td>
<td>408</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Departed from Chile (Chileans and foreigners)</td>
<td>2,000 (approx)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreigners registered with USICOR for permanent resettlement</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In safe havens (refugees, camps, etc.)</td>
<td>810</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At home (possibly from under house arrest)</td>
<td>24</td>
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<tr>
<td>In diplomatic missions</td>
<td>372</td>
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<tr>
<td>In G5 detention centers</td>
<td>293</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total number still in foreign embassies</td>
<td>N/A, 369 (approx)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total dead: According to Chilean authorities</td>
<td>600 (approx)</td>
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<tr>
<td>According to Barnes article in October 6</td>
<td>2,375</td>
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<tr>
<td>According to October 23 Washington Post article on CIA Director Colby's statement to Congressional Committee</td>
<td>2-3,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recent G5 source estimate</td>
<td>1,500*</td>
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</table>
VESTIGATIONS (DI, CHILEAN CIVIL POLICE, BECAUSE FIGURES ARE NOT BEING KEPT ON THESE LATTER CATEGORIES.) ENCUMBERED:

A. AN UNOFFICIAL ESTIMATE THAT ABOUT 1,600 CIVILIANS DIED OCCURRED BETWEEN 11 SEPTEMBER AND 18 OCTOBER. WITH NO ESTIMATE OF MILITARY AND POLICE CASUALTIES. IT IS NOT KNOWN IF THE 1,600 FIGURE INCLUDED CONVICTED CRIMINALS. ALSO, IT IS IMPORTANT TO NOTE THE DIFFERENCE IN THE PERIODS COVERED IN THESE TWO REPORTS.

1. OCTOBER: THAT AT HIGH LEVELS IN THE JUNTA GOVERNMENT, THERE IS A REALIZATION THAT THE OFFICIAL DEATH FIGURES WILL HAVE TO BE RAISED. BECAUSE THE PUBLIC DOES NOT BELIEVE THE FIGURE (ABOUT 600) USUALLY QUOTED BY THE GOVERNMENT, IF A DECISION IS MADE TO RAISE THE NUMBER, IT WILL BE PLACED AT SLIGHTLY OVER 1,000. THE MOST ACCURATE NUMBER, HOWEVER, IS APPROXIMATELY 1,500.

2. OCTOBER: BETWEEN 11 SEPTEMBER

1.5 (c)
UNCLASSIFIED
SECRET

INTERNATIONAL: Anti-Communist and anti-Cuban, Gen Pinochet has always spoken favorably of, and desires to keep close ties with, the United States. He has twice travelled to the U.S. He favors the acquisition of U.S. equipment and the training of Chilean military personnel in U.S. service schools. He shares the common concern of most Chilean Army officers over the threat of a possible invasion of Chile by Peru. Pinochet has served as an Instructor at the South Korean Army War College and has travelled to Mexico and the Canal Zone.

DECLASSIFIED

Declassified by DIA
PERSONAL DATA:

(u) **Birth:** 25 Nov 1928 in Vina del Mar, Chile.

(v) **Family:** Wife, Leona Mirta Rodriguez de Pinochet (born about 1935, of French ancestry; Roman Catholic; married about 1958; charming, attractive; socially at ease; family is very close; has long been interested in and directed a Catholic assistance program for illegitimate children; in 1972 allegedly strongly denounced the then Army Commander in Chief, Carlos Prats González, for his "lack of relationship with President Allende"). Children (5): Lucía (f), born about 1954 (married; is an infant-toddler specialist); Eugenio (m), born about 1960 (married; is a computer programmer); Jorge Antonio (m), born about 1967; Carmen Marcela (f), born about 1969. One daughter lived with her husband, an engineer, in Panama.

(w) **Description:** Caucasian. Large build (5'10", 180 lbs); dark brown hair, green eyes, oval face; fair complexion; has a mustache; wears glasses for reading; quiet; mild-mannered; very businesslike. Very honest, hard working, dedicated. A devoted, tolerant husband and father; lives very modestly. Drinks Scotch and pl sto aperitif; smokes cigarettes; likes parties. Sports interests are fencing, boxing, and horseback riding. Member of the Geographic Society of Chile. He is well known as a military geographer and has authored a large atlas of Chile. The country is used as a secondary-school textbook. Enjoys discussing world military problems and would respond to a frank, no-nonsense approach.

(x) **Language:** Native Spanish, some French and English.

(y) **Religion:** Roman Catholic.

(z) **Decoration:** Colombian Order of Merit General José María Córdoba. Ecuadorian Abdo Calderón Star (Gold). Peruvian Military Order of Ayacucho. Chilean Military Star of the Armed Forces (Grand Star for Military Merit, for 30 years of service); Goddess Minerva Medal; Minerva Medal.

CIVIL EDUCATION: Secondary school presumably in Chile. Attended courses on judicial and social sciences at the University of Chile for 2 years (dates not known).

CAREER:

- 1940-1942: Instructor, Army War College, Santiago.
- 1942-1946: Commandand General Staff Course, Army War College.
- 1948: Commissioned to Chilean Coal Mines (merged with Lota Coal Mines in 1960), located near Concepción.
- 1948: Assigned to 5th Infantry Regiment.
- 1949-1951: Commandand General Staff Course, Army War College.
- 1959: Instructor, Army War College.
1. AT COLOMBUS DAY RECESSION TODAY JUNTA PRESIDENT PINECHET SAID HE WOULD LIKE A QUIT MEANING TO TALK - SO I WENT BY HIS OFFICE AT 7 P.M. TONIGHT.

2. PINECHET WAS GRACIOUS AND ELUCAENT IN EXPRESSING DISAPPOINTMENT AT MY TRANSFER. HE SAID CHILE GREATLY NEEDS OUR HELP, BOTH ECONOMIC AND MILITARY. I AGREE. HE ADDED THAT IF THE JUNTA COMES TO POO IN 1762 THE THERMAL QUESTIONS WE ARE ENCOURAGED TO DISCUSS THE KENNEDY AMENDMENT, THE ORGANIZATION OF THE INTELLIGENCE AGENCY, AND THE HUMAN RIGHTS PROBLEM ENSOURED. PINECHET FOR HUMAN RIGHTS, AND IS DOING ITS BEST TO PREVENT VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS. I AGREE THAT THIS IS NOT EASY. AS THE LEFT SNIPING AND ATTEMPT TO KILL OFFICIALS AND SOLDIERS, ENSNARE IN ARMS, PINECHET SAID, ARE STILL AVAILABLE TO THEM, AND NOTES AND UNKINDNESS CONTINUE TO BE ENCOURAGED. IF THE ARMY SHOULD LET TERRORISM SHED THAN CHILE IS PRESENTLY EXPERIENCING, IF OUR LEFT EXTREMISTS HAD THEIR WAY, AND HAD CARRIED OUT THEIR OWN AUTOCROSS PLAN.

3. THERE WOULD HAVE BEEN A MILLION DEAD. NEVER THELESS, CHILE SHARES OUR CONCERN AND IS DOING ITS BEST. THERE IS A CONVERSATION WAS CLEARLY UNDERSTOOD BY PINECHET TO BE PRIVATE AND IN CONFIDENCE.

4. I REPEATED AssuranceS OF THE GOOD WISHES OF THE USA AND WHICH WOULD OBLIGE US TO DEFEND CONSIDERATION OF CHILEAN REQUESTS CERNE. I SAID WE WOULD WANT TO WAIT BEFORE ADDRESSING THIS CONVERSATION UNTIL THE KENNEDY AMENDMENT WAS CLARIFIED THROUGH A SENATE-HOUSE CONFERENCE. REGARDING COPPER, PINECHET SAID CHILE IS BROKE, AND NEED SUPE HELP GETTING ON ITS FEET IF THAT A LARGE PART OF SOVIET AND EAST EUROPEAN AND AMERICAN ASSISTANCE, BUT CHILE HAD TO PAY FOR IT IN COPPER.

5. IN CONCLUSION PINECHET SAID HE WOULD LIKE TO GET TOGETHER AGAIN AFTTER JUNTA'S RETURN, WHEN HUERTA AND THE JUNTA HAD HAD TOWN.
Chile: Violations of Human Rights

Reports of gross violations of human rights in Chile, which had nearly ceased earlier this year, are again on the rise. The Pinochet government is reverting to the practices that have jeopardized its international standing since the 1973 coup. This backsliding comes at a particularly bad time for Chile, since apparent improvement in the human rights situation was helping improve its image abroad. Critics will now have additional ammunition for their attacks on the Chilean regime and their appeals to boycott it.

Chile’s National Intelligence Directorate is apparently behind the recent increase in torture, illegal detentions, and unexplained “disappearances.” The Directorate’s chief, Colonel Manzi Contreras, is a close confidant of Pinochet, who acclaimed the organization in a recent press interview for its “decisive role” in bringing extremism under control. Contreras answers directly to the President, and it is unlikely that he would act without the knowledge and approval of his superior.

24 May 1977

SECRET
This III discusses the developing relationship between the several branches of the Chilean Armed Forces and the Directorate of National Intelligence (DNA); relationship between members of the governing junta and DNA; general comments about the growing personnel strength of DNA; and its new 24-story office building currently being constructed.

NOTE: This information provides updated information to that provided in paragraph D of reference (a).

Rec'd 24 APR 75

a conversation was held regarding the Directorate of National Intelligence (DNA) and its activities. Comments made tended to confirm information received from other sources over the past several weeks. Sources reported that President PINOCHET has established DNA as the sole responsible agency for internal subversive activities. As such, service intelligence agencies are charged with informing DNA immediately when subversive activities have been uncovered within their services, and turnover to DNA any data collections made by the agencies. The sources have stated that the DNA, in turn, can then notify the appropriate agencies of the need to act. The agencies, in turn, have stated that they will not act unless specifically directed to do so by DNA.

Declassified by DIA with redaction per EO 12958

CONFIDENTIAL

DD. IM. 1396

(Confidential and Control Sealing)

2. (CI) Additionally, the original DNA personnel manpower level of 1500 persons has grown to approximately 2000 regular members (the great majority of which are active duty military personnel), augmented by some 200 additional civilian personnel located throughout the country that work on an as-needed basis (most part time but some full time). This 2100 civilians (only some of which are paid for their services) constitutes a subordinate unit to DNA named "Complexo Inteligencia Criminal" (Citizen Intelligence Unit). During operations, members of this civilian unit work in conjunction with regular DNA operators if arrests are to be made. Apparently President PINOCHET has given the DNA Director, Colonel Juan Manuel CONTRERAS, a free hand in establishing personnel requirements for DNA. An example given by sources is that in late 1974, DNA tasked Navy to provide an additional 400 female/clerical personnel to their rolls. When the Navy indicated their lack of personnel assets, DNA independently contracted 40 civilian females for their organization, and subsequently assigned pay and housing responsibilities to the Navy. This rather high-handed measure reportedly received the approval of President PINOCHET, and the Navy's action was in fact the first time that DNA had accepted such an action with such approval.

3. (CI) The relationship between DNA and the several branches of the armed forces is clearly evident. The Army has adopted a rather pragmatic attitude, recognizing that they have neither the monetary, material nor personnel assets to conduct the widespread anti-subversion activities that characterize DNA operations. As a result, they have emphasized themselves with conflicting interests vis-à-vis DNA (the personnel situation discussed above representing an example). Usually, when DNA uncovers subversive activity within the military community, they advise Army Intelligence that they have the situation and wait for the Navy to act. Army Intelligence, headed by a general officer, is responsible for all military security and operations. The Air Force, in an attempt to keep the Army closed to DNA, has established a liaison detachment with DNA's Criminal Intelligence Unit. This liaison officer is responsible for maintaining contact with DNA and providing support to that agency. Army Intelligence has reported that it has not been able to establish a similar relationship with the Marine Corps, which maintains its own security and intelligence operations.

DD. IM. 1396
was given a secondary position under the Director of Air Force Intelligence.

4. CNL Juntas relations with DINA have changed considerably since the early days of the intelligence organizations establishment. When Colonel CONTRERAS was building DINA, he was quick to ensure that the rapport between himself and the Juntas was maintained at a high level. It was during the early days that the Colonel was calling for considerable support from the various services in the form of personnel assets. But since the promulgation of Decree Law No. 521, officially establishing DINA as the national intelligence arm of the government (ref 11), CONTRERAS has reported exclusively to, and received orders only from President PINOCHET. A facade of politeness is maintained with the other three members of the Juntas, but their opinions and/or advice is neither sought nor desired by DINA's Director. This situation has prompted several Army officers to try and convince the President that DINA should be subject to the direction and control of the National Security Council type of authority rather than just the Presidency (ref 12). To date, the President has not received these suggestions with enthusiasm. The original concept that DINA would be an intelligence body to support all of the Juntas members no longer exists.

5. When DINA was first setting-up operations, their headquarters were located in a house on Belgrano Street in Santiago. Now the intersection of Vialia Innsen and Rabassa. Presently, however, they have been authorized funds by the President, and are building a 24 story building at the end of Belgrano Street to serve as their national headquarters. The expected completion date of this new headquarters is as yet unknown.

COMMENTS
DINA's current pattern of growth is not consistent with any form of democratic control or management of its activities. The apprehensions of many senior Chilean military authorities regarding the possibility of DINA becoming a modern day Gestapo may very well be coming to fruition. DINA's autonomous authority is great, and increasing. Juntas members are apparently unable to influence President PINOCHET's decisions concerning DINA activities in any way. Regarding DINA organization, policies and operations, Colonel CONTRERAS' authority is near absolute - subject only to an unlikely Presidential veto. DINA's development is a particularly disturbing phenomenon in view of the Chilean government's desire to enhance their international image. Any advantage gained by humanitarian practices can easily be offset by terror tactics (even on a relatively small scale) on the part of poorly trained and supervised DINA operatives.


disclosure statement

U.S. Department of Justice
Federal Bureau of Investigation

Date: December 9, 1981
To: Administrator
Federal Aviation Administration
800 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20591

From: William H. Webster
Director

Subject: Guillermo Novo Samper; Alvin Ross Diaz; Virgilio Parlo Pas Romero; Jose Dionicio Suarez Esquivel; Ignacio Roberto Novo Samper; Michael Vernon Townley; Juan Manuel Confrenas Sepulveda; Armando Fernandez Larios; Pedro Espinosa Bravo; victims - Orlando Letelier; Ronni Karsh Moffitt
PROTECTIONS OF FOREIGN OFFICIALS - MURDER; EXPLOSIVES AND INCENDIARY DEVICES; CONSPIRACY; OBSTRUCTION OF JUSTICE; PERJURY

Enclosed for each recipient are two copies of a self-explanatory memorandum which contains information concerning the manufacture and projected utilization of nerve gas by components of the Chilean Government. The enclosed memorandum discloses that the nerve gas, which had been manufactured by DINA, the Chilean Intelligence Service, was transported to the United States during September, 1976, by DINA agent Michael Vernon Townley in connection with the assassination of Orlando Letelier. The nerve gas was not used in the Letelier assassination and, according to Townley, it was returned to Chile.

1. Managing Director
Civil Aeronautics Board - Enclosure
1. Assistant Secretary of State
Coc Latin American Affairs - Enclosure
1. Assistant Attorney General
Criminal Division - Enclosure
1. Director of Central Intelligence
Central Intelligence Agency - Enclosure
1. Director, Defense Intelligence Agency - Enclosure
1. Director, U.S. Secret Service - Enclosure
Attention: Mr. E. Lawrence Barcella
Major Crimes Unit - Enclosure
GUILLERMO NOVO SAMPOL, ET AL

letters which were sent from the United States by
self-admitted DINA agent Michael Vernon Townley to his DINA
cut-out, Gustavo Etchepare in Chile. According to Propper
and Branch, Townley made references in several of his letters
to a highly secret DINA undertaking known as "Project
Andrea." Propper and Branch advised that in his letters,
Townley expressed concern that the United States Government
would ascertain details of "Project Andrea," which would be
highly embarrassing to the Chilean Government. Propper
and Branch indicated that Townley also expressed apprehension
that the United States Government would be able to determine
details related to "Project Andrea" through the GallenKamp
Company in London, England, and through companies in Miami,
Florida, that sold a microwave oven to Townley and rented a
number of gas storage cylinders to Townley. Propper and
Branch also indicated that Townley, in his letters, expressed
concern that the United States Government would be able to
ascertain details concerning "Project Andrea" through an
individual in Miami, Florida, identified as Sam McIntoch, who
sold Townley unidentified electronic components bearing the
brand name "Sierra." Propper and Branch reported that
Townley's father, J. Vernon Townley, also assisted his son
and Etchepare in liquidating outstanding bills in the
respective amounts of 350 pounds sterling, $250.00, $150.00
and $325.00 to the GallenKamp Company, the company which sold
the microwave oven to Townley and the company which rented
the gas storage cylinders to Townley and to Sam McIntoch.
Propper and Branch noted that Townley also expressed concern
in his letters that the Federal Bureau of Investigation would
trace payments to the aforementioned companies and McIntoch
through a checking account in the name of Prosin Limited at
the Southeast First National Bank in Miami, Florida, which
Townley utilized in connection with his official DINA
responsibilities.

According to Propper and Branch, "Project Andrea"
involved the manufacture of nerve gas by DINA, which was to
be utilized against Argentina and Peru in the event of
hostilities between these countries and Chile. Propper and
Branch advised that Townley, acting as a DINA agent,
manufactured and stored a quantity of nerve gas at a
laboratory located at Townley's residence in Santiago, Chile,
during 1975 and 1976 and utilized chemicals purchased through
the GallenKamp Company, the microwave oven and the rented gas
cylinders in the process. Propper and Branch advised that
Townley created a substance known as isopropylmethylphospho-
nofluoridate, a clear liquid organophosphate commonly known

-2-
as sarin, which vaporizes on being exposed to the atmosphere, producing droplets that enter the body through the skin or lungs to interdict the neurochemistry that permits the respiratory muscles to function. Propper and Branch advised that Eugenio Berrios, a chemical engineer who was known by his DINA code name "Hermes," worked with Townley and also was involved in a parallel project on behalf of the Chilean Army for the manufacture of the same nerve gas. Propper and Branch advised that when Townley traveled to the United States in September, 1976, via LAN-Chile on his mission to assassinate Orlando Letelier, he carried a quantity of the nerve gas with him on board the aircraft in his shirt pocket in a Chanel No. 5 perfume atomizer. Propper and Branch advised that Townley was considering the utilization of this nerve gas to assassinate Letelier, but decided against using this method. Propper and Branch advised that, according to Townley, Guillermo Novo Sampol and Virgilio Pablo Paz Romero, leaders of the Cuban Nationalist Movement, an anti-Castro terrorist organization, who assisted Townley in the planning and execution of the assassination of Orlando Letelier, were aware of Townley's possession of the nerve gas in the United States and also had witnessed the preparation of the nerve gas at Townley's laboratory at his residence in Santiago, Chile, during the period April, 1976, through June, 1976, when both Novo and Paz visited Townley in Chile.

According to Propper and Branch, the following LAN-Chile personnel assisted Townley and DINA in transporting materials between Chile and the United States:

Ronnie Berger
Alejandro Fornes
Eugenio Herrera
Guillermo Neira
Bernardo Laceria
Ronnie Lowery
Pochu Acevedo
Jorge Nordenflycht

Subsequent to the receipt of the above information from Propper and Branch, arrangements were made to have Townley brought to Federal Bureau of Investigation Headquarters from the place of his incarceration in a Federal penitentiary, where he was interviewed by Special Agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Townley confirmed Propper's and Branch's information regarding the manufacture and intended use of the nerve gas by the Chilean Government. Townley, however, denied that he personally carried the nerve gas with him from Chile to the United States on a LAN-Chile aircraft. Townley claimed to have had the nerve gas sent from Chile to the United States through LAN-Chile flight personnel who were unaware that they were transporting nerve gas. Townley did confirm that the nerve gas was transported to the United States by LAN-Chile flight personnel in a Chanel No. 5 perfume atomizer. Townley advised that Novo and Paz requested that the Cuban Nationalist Movement be furnished a supply of nerve gas to utilize in their terrorist activities; however, Townley claimed that because of the unstable nature of Novo and Paz and other members of the Cuban Nationalist Movement, he refused their request. Townley advised that he insured that the nerve gas transported to the United States by LAN-Chile flight personnel was returned to Chile to the custody of DINA by the same method.
1. **The government of Chile has abolished its Department of National Intelligence (DINA) effective 8 August 1977.**

2. **The National Information Center (CNI), has been created by the junta and placed under the control of the Ministry of the Interior. The CNI will inherit DINA's intelligence collection function and will probably absorb much of the dissolved agency's personnel resources. Unlike its predecessor, however, the CNI will not have the power of arrest and detention; those functions, according to Chilean officials, will now be turned over to the judicial police and the criminal courts.**

3. **Through the repressive measures of its security services, the junta government of Chile has eliminated virtually all potential challenges to its rule. The dissolution of DINA does not lessen the government's capability to continue to suppress political opposition, although the separation of the arrest and intelligence collection functions does indicate a more bureaucratic and perhaps measured approach for responding to perceived subversive threats. Moreover, the security reorganization does demonstrate the government's sensitivity to international criticism and a desire to improve its image, especially with the US -- factors which could portend at least some improvement in the human rights conditions in Chile.**

**Declassified by DIA**