

1059

BACKGROUND ON MILITARY

Basic objective is to erode general feeling of acceptance and resignation among military leaders toward future ALLENDE regime.

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Unidad Popular forces and Salvador ALLENDE fully realize that armed forces represent only remaining institution which stands between them and assumption of political power on 4 November. ALLENDE and UP are therefore handling with extreme care their military contacts. Basic UP objective is to create an atmosphere of tranquility among armed forces personnel.

The UP is particularly playing down its Marxist image, emphasizing the plural political nature of its government. Contacts with military leaders and the UP are being handled mainly by radical party and Socialist Party representatives, with the Communist Party staying carefully in the background.

Under the Chilean military promotional system, once a new commander in chief of a service is named all senior officers are automatically retired. Such a system breeds both a feeling of job insecurity at the high command and also a reluctance to take bold actions. The ALLENDE managers are playing on both these emotional factors in their relations with the Chilean military leaders. They have floated the widespread rumor that ALLENDE intends to retain the present commanders in chief of the three branches during the first year of his government. Such an act however would be contrary to Chilean military custom and political reality, and is intended to lull present chiefs into a feeling of complacency.

While the ALLENDE regime can be expected to continue to treat carefully the military until it has established firm control over the Carabineros and other civilian sector security forces, it is well known that they intend to conduct a thorough housecleaning among the military personnel. The UP has already drawn up an individual by

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individual political evaluation of the entire officer class in terms of their reliability from the standpoint of the ALLENDE regime. Special officers have been singled out for immediate removal or isolation. The general timetable for establishing complete control over the military forces is set at three years.

Confronting this prospect Chilean military officers are torn between their historic role of political non-intervention and their professional and moral role as defender of the constitution and the guarantor of Chilean democratic institutions.