

EXTERNAL (item one)
INTERNAL (items two to four)

AI Index: NWS 01/09/86
Distr: SC

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To: All Sections
From: Press and Publications
Date: 12 March 1986

WEEKLY UPDATE SERVICE 09/86

1. AMR 22/WU 01/86/External
12 March

CHILE

OPPOSITION POLITICIANS IMPRISONED FOR CRITICISING THE GOVERNMENT

Amnesty International is calling for the release of three politicians and a journalist imprisoned since February for publishing opinions critical of the government and calling for its departure.

The politicians, Andres Palma, Alejandro Toro and Manuel Sanhueza, were arrested on 18, 19 and 27 February respectively after the Ministry of Interior requested their prosecution under the State Security Law, which makes it a crime to incite others to subvert public order, to organize unauthorized meetings or demonstrations, and to slander the President or other government authorities.

The articles which led to the prosecutions were published in Analysis, a weekly current affairs magazine. An interview with Andres Palma, President of the youth branch of the Christian Democratic Party, was published on 21 January. Manuel Sanhueza, a jurist, former government minister and President of the Intransigencia Democratica, Democratic Intransigence, (said to be a group of politicians from the right and left of the opposition) published a statement on 28 January entitled "The Intransigencia Democratica, the unity of the people, and the struggle for democracy". On 3 February, a manifesto of the Central Committee of the Communist Party was published with an introductory note by Alejandro Toro, leader of the Communist Party and former member of parliament. He said in his note that he had requested publication of the manifesto because he considered it could make a contribution to debate and dialogue about the national crisis.

The articles called for mass mobilization to demand the departure of the military government headed by General Augusto Pinochet. Demonstrations and a national strike were mentioned, but none of the articles called for violent action. The articles were published at a time of widespread public debate about the political, economic and human rights situation, and growing public demand for a return to elected government.

Analisis journalist Fernando Paulsen was also detained and charged in February in connection with material published in the magazine. He had been acting editor in August 1985, when an issue of Analisis carried a photograph of carabineros (uniformed police) on its cover. The photo was captioned "Murderers - at least 12 are the perpetrators....", which was a reference to a statement on 1 August by an investigating judge that members of carabineros had been responsible for abducting a number of suspected government opponents in March 1985, three of whom had been found dead, their bodies mutilated. Senor Paulsen, who was arrested on 26 February, has been charged under the code of military justice, which makes it a crime to make offensive or slanderous remarks about members of carabineros.