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## 15 U.S.-made Helicopters Delivered To Chilean Army

*by John Neagle*

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The Chilean Army recently took delivery on 15 helicopters purchased from Enstrom Helicopter Corp. of Menominee, Mich. According to US Ambassador Charles Gillespie, the transaction did not represent the end of a US ban on military sales to Chile. He said the helicopters had a "civilian configuration" not designed to be mounted with weapons and were not prohibited under the ban imposed by Congress 13 years ago. A Chilean Army spokesperson said the helicopters were light utility helicopters being used for training. He said they carry a pilot and two passengers and have a maximum speed of 100 mph. Military relations between the US and Chile were effectively terminated by a law sponsored by Sen. Edward Kennedy (D-Mass.), and approved in 1976. The law was later tightened up as a result of political killings and other abuses committed against opponents of President Augusto Pinochet. A revision in the law demanded progress in resolving the 1976 murders in Washington of Orlando Letelier and Ronni Moffitt, as a condition for lifting the weapons ban. Letelier served as foreign minister, defense minister and ambassador to Washington during the 1970-73 government of Salvador Allende. Moffitt was a co-worker of Letelier's at the Institute for Policy Studies. Two retired army officers who were top officials of the former Chilean intelligence police (DINA), were indicted by a grand jury in Washington on charges of sending Michael Townley, a US citizen who worked for DINA, to the US to arrange the Letelier assassination. The Chilean Supreme Court has rejected extradition requests for the two men. Gillespie said lack of progress on the Letelier case was the one remaining roadblock to lifting the ban. He said there had been "substantial" improvement in political democracy and observance of basic human rights that had been the original reasons for the passage of the prohibition by Congress. The US government argues that despite the Chilean Supreme Court's refusal of the extradition request, the two men accused of organizing Letelier's assassination should be tried in Chile. Washington has also requested that the Chilean government to offer a financial settlement to the families of the victims on the basis of a \$12 million civil judgment ordered by a US court. (Basic data from New York Times, 10/01/89)

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