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## Canadian Observers Find Major Negative Impacts of Military Rule in Chile

by LADB Staff

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According to a recent report by an 18-member observer team sent to Chile by the Canadian Department of External Affairs, the effects of 16 years of military rule on the living standards of millions of Chileans were disastrous. In 1988, about 23% of the population lived in poverty, defined as receiving incomes inadequate to purchase minimum nutritional requirements. In 1989, there were 300,000 fewer children enrolled in primary school in Chile than in 1973. Chile's population in the interim increased by three million. According to Chile's College of Physicians, 80% of Chileans have no access to basic medical services.

The report said, "The deteriorated social and economic conditions, plus the 1990 national budget already imposed by the junta with heavy emphasis on repaying foreign debt, leaves the new government little room to invest in domestic social development and to achieve the reforms it had promised during the election." The observer team also pointed out that president-elect Patricio Aylwin's government, to be installed in March, will face off with a congress comprised of a large number of members appointed by the military junta, rather than selected by the Chilean electorate. A separate national security council controlled by the military and the police retains power to veto any congressional legislation including constitutional amendments.

Next, the governing military junta has passed numerous laws that limit the new government's ability to direct economic and social programs. [Aylwin and party spokespersons from the Rally for Democracy running from the left to the political center have on numerous occasions publicly criticized the military junta's apparent attempt to legislate the incoming civilian government into a straitjacket.

For instance, on Jan. 19, Aylwin described numerous items of legislation approved recently by the junta as "unacceptable and a serious affront to the elected president." He was referring to legislation affecting congressional procedures and public education. The former will obstruct congressional oversight of military and executive activities, and the latter effectively subordinates the future Education Minister to decisions made by a Superior Council of Education.

Aylwin pointed out that numerous decisions considered appropriate for the presidency and the cabinet during the military regime are now being placed beyond their reach by the same military junta. He added that because of the junta's penchant for using the last months and weeks of its discretionary powers to "tie the hands" of the incoming government, it will be "very difficult" to implement many of the Rally for Democracy's campaign pledges.

On Feb. 2, Interior Minister designate, Enrique Krauss, addressed Chileans in a brief speech broadcast by several TV and radio stations. First, Krauss rejected the military government's

summary of the "state of the nation" to be turned over Aylwin government, i.e., that Chile poised to become "the first developed nation of Latin America." Krauss said Aylwin will soon deliver a report on the state of the nation he is to govern. He acknowledged several macroeconomic accomplishments by the military regime over the past 16 years, but emphasized their high social costs, both in humanitarian and moral terms.

According to the designate Interior Minister, the outgoing regime intends to place blame before the fact on the Aylwin government for the difficulties it will inevitably encounter. These difficulties, said Krauss, have been exacerbated by the "multiple restrictions on the new government's sphere of action imposed by the regime in its final days." The junta, he added, has exercised its legislative powers to approve legislation "directly opposed" to the priorities articulated by the incoming elected government.

Krauss mentioned restrictions imposed by the 1990 budget, already approved and executed by the junta. He added that the budget does not reflect the Aylwin team's priorities, which include increasing fiscal revenues via a tax hike. The minister designate pointed to one of the most "flagrant" restrictions imposed by the junta on the next government changes in public administration legislation which prevent the new president and cabinet members from selecting their own personal assistants, including office chiefs, spokespersons, and private secretaries. The new legislation prevents Aylwin, Krauss and fellow ministers from replacing office personnel who share the military regime's ideological preferences. (Basic data from Toronto Globe and Mail, 02/07/90; Notimex, 01/19/90, 02/02/90)

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