

NY Times 9-27-74

Kissinger Said to Rebuke U.S. Ambassador to Chile

By SEYMOUR M. HERSH
Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Sept. 26—Secretary of State Kissinger rebuked David H. Popper, the United States Ambassador to Chile, after Mr. Popper had discussed torture and other human rights issues during a meeting on military aid with Chilean officials, Administration sources said today.

Mr. Kissinger's action has provoked a bitter dispute among officials in the Bureau of Inter-American Affairs at the State Department, some of whom say that his rebuke was a demonstration of the Administration's unwillingness to press fully the human rights issue with the junta now ruling Chile.

Sources close to Mr. Kissinger insist, however, that the Secretary's complaint was based only on his objection to Mr. Popper's efforts to link unrelated issues such as human rights and military aid in high-level diplomatic talks.

Kissinger Anger Reported

In recounting the incident, the sources said that Mr. Kissinger reacted angrily after having learned from a State Department cablegram that Mr. Popper had initiated a discussion of human rights during a meeting on military aid in Santiago last July 22 with Oscar Bonilla, the Chilean Minister of Defense. Also present at the meeting was Secretary of the Army Howard H. Callaway, then visiting Chile.

"Tell Popper to cut out the political science lectures," the sources said Mr. Kissinger scrawled over the cable, a step that led to a formally drafted State Department letter of complaint to Mr. Popper, a career diplomat.

The Ambassador and others in the United States mission in Santiago were "amazed" and angered by the Kissinger rebuke, the sources said, as were some officials in the Bureau of Inter-American Affairs of the State Department.

Mr. Kissinger could not be reached to discuss the issue but high-level State Department officials subsequently confirmed the gist of his written comment to the Ambassador. The officials, who were familiar with Mr. Kissinger's involvement, explained that the Secretary only was complaining about Mr. Popper's attempt to link proposals for additional military aid to Chile to the human rights issue.

Question of Behavior

"It was more a question of how Ambassadors are to behave," another official said. "We can't have an Ambassador going into a meeting with the Defense Minister for one issue and discussing something else."

The official sources said that Mr. Kissinger had privately urged Ambassador Popper on at least three occasions in the last year to raise the human rights issue with the appropriate officials in the Chilean Government.

Other Administration sources, however, characterized the State Department's explanation as misleading.

"That's the name of the game," one Administration official said. "You tell these guys that if they want something—like more arms, they've got to behave."

"It's not only perfectly appropriate to raise the issue during meetings about other matters," the official added, "but the legislation requires that you must keep the human rights issue right up in the junta's face, particularly when you're talking about aid matters."

The official was referring to amendments in the 1973 foreign aid bill that called on the Nixon Administration to request that the Chilean Government "No Objection To Declassification in Full of all in-

ment also linked the granting of aid money to Chilean guarantees of safe conduct for refugees and the humane treatment of political prisoners.

The military junta that overthrew President Salvador Allende Gossens in a bloody coup last year has been criticized as making systematic use of torture and imprisonment. In a report made public earlier this month, Amnesty International, a private agency, charged that torture of 6,000 to 10,000 political prisoners was continuing. The London-based organization said it was regularly receiving reports that prisoners were being subjected to beatings, electric shocks and psychological torture.

Junta Reacts to Pressure

In recent weeks, the junta—responding to worldwide pressure—has announced that it was willing to free most of its political prisoners if the Soviet Union and Cuba did the same. No such releases have taken place.

Liberal members of the Senate and House are opposed on humanitarian grounds to the Ford Administration's pending aid request of more than \$80 million for Chile. The Senate Foreign Relations Committee already has set a \$65 million aid limit on the Administration proposal with the House Foreign Affairs Committee yet to act. And a number of amendments are still pending that would sharply reduce the economic aid and eliminate all military aid to the junta.

It was in the face of this threat that a number of Administration officials expressed anger at Mr. Kissinger's directive to Mr. Popper.

"It came as a shock," one official recalled, "because we've been trying to tell everybody that what could sink the aid program in Chile and for all of Latin America are the actions of the junta."

"The aid proposals this year just aren't going to fly if these people don't change their public image on human rights."

"Popper's been doing a pretty good job in telling them privately that this isn't going to work, that it isn't going to sit well with Congress," the source said. "Maybe they didn't like it, but they're not supposed to like everything the American Ambassador tells them."

Fewer Complaints Now

Since receiving the rebuke, sources said, Mr. Popper has quency and intensity of his private complaints to Chilean leaders about human rights.

"There used to be a cable a week on the issue," one official said, "telling us how he was complaining" to [Gen. Augusto Pinochet, the Chilean President]. "I don't see that he's doing it any more," he added.

Other reliable sources said that Mr. Popper had been distressed by the letter of complaint, which was forwarded to him by Jack B. Kubisch, the former Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs, who now is Ambassador to Greece.

The sources said Mr. Popper had told members of his staff in Santiago that he had been "giggled" by Mr. Kissinger and had expressed surprise that the complaint was over his human-rights efforts. He told his staff, the sources said, that he had expected to be criticized for his public efforts to support the Junta.

In testimony July 23 before the Senate Judiciary subcommittee on refugees, Harry W. Shlaudeman, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Inter-America Affairs, said the Administration was aware of the allegations of torture in Chile but had concluded that such actions do not warrant "a systematic or deli-