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Objet: SECRET CIA REPORT: Pinochet "Personally Ordered" Washington Car-Bombing
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SECRET CIA REPORT: Pinochet "Personally Ordered" Washington Car-Bombing

PRESIDENT REAGAN INFORMED THAT PINOCHET'S ROLE WAS "a blatant example of a chief of state's direct involvement in an act of state terrorism"

National Security Archive Seeks Declassification of CIA Assessment in the Letelier-Moffitt Assassinations

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Washington D.C., October 8, 2015 — The CIA concluded that there was "convincing evidence" that Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet "personally ordered his intelligence chief to carry out the murder" of exiled critic Orlando Letelier in Washington D.C., according to a SECRET memo prepared for President Ronald Reagan in 1987. "Pinochet decided to stonewall on the US investigation to hide his involvement," the CIA review also noted, and as part of the cover-up considered "even the elimination of his former intelligence chief," DINA director Manuel Contreras, who had overseen the assassination plot.

The CIA intelligence review remains classified. But it was quoted in a dramatic report to President Reagan, dated on October 6, 1987, from his Secretary of State, George Shultz, as part of his efforts to convince the president to cut U.S. ties to Pinochet and press for the return of democracy in Chile. "The CIA has never before drawn and presented its conclusion that such strong evidence exists of his [Pinochet's] leadership role in this act of terrorism," the Secretary of State informed the President.

The National Security Archive today said it would file a Freedom of Information Act petition to secure the declassification of the CIA assessment and the raw intelligence reports it was based on. "This document is clearly the holy grail of the Letelier-Moffitt case," said Peter Kornbluh who directs the Archive's Chile Documentation Project. Kornbluh called on the agency "to release this document to complete the Obama administration's special declassification project on Chile."

Letelier, a former minister in the Allende government, and his 25-year old colleague, Ronni Karpen Moffitt, were killed by a car-bomb planted by agents of the Chilean secret police on September 21, 1976, as they drove to work down Massachusetts avenue in Washington D.C. Moffitt's husband, Michael, was the sole survivor of the bombing.

"It is not clear whether we can or would want to consider indicting Pinochet," Shultz wrote to Reagan. "Nevertheless, this is a blatant example of a chief of state's direct involvement in an act of state terrorism, one that is particularly disturbing both because it occurred in our capital and since his government is generally considered to be friendly."

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