EL OBSERVADOR

Chilean Protest Ends Violently

(AP) — Violence that lasted through dawn in Santiago on the 30th anniversary of the military coup led by Gen. Augusto Pinochet left 24 policemen wounded, authorities said Friday. About 300 demonstrators were also detained.

The violence broke out Thursday night in several working class neighborhoods after a day in which at least 32 ceremonies related to the coup anniversary were held peacefully.

Chilean workers shout slogans and hold a portrait of a dissident who was killed during the dictatorship of Gen. Augusto Pinochet. (AP photo)

Police director Gen. Alberto Cienfuegos said police moved in "to protect peaceful citizens threatened by violent protesters," whom he described as "mainly young troublemakers, even common criminals," without real political motivations.

A number of shops were looted and several city areas were still blacked out after the demonstrators threw chains on power lines.

Cienfuegos said two officers sustained bullet wounds, one of them in the face, and one suffered burns caused by a Molotov cocktail.

The coup-related ceremonies, including remembrances for Salvador Allende, the Marxist president toppled by Pinochet, were held peacefully, including one in which President Ricardo Lagos called Allende a martyr.

Allende committed suicide in his presidential palace in flames under air and ground attack, rather than surrender to Pinochet's soldiers.

The anniversary was marked by appeals to unity from all sectors, but the separate ceremonies and conflicting speeches reflected the deep divisions the coup still causes in the Chilean society, especially for the painful legacy of the human rights violations during Pinochet's 1973-90 reign.

Some 3,200 people were killed for political reasons under Pinochet, including 1,200 who remain unaccounted, according to an official report by the first post-Pinochet civilian government.

Peruvian Rebel Lays Down Arms

(AP)—The imprisoned leader of a Peruvian rebel group that was once involved in a lengthy hostage drama says his group has given up armed conflict and now wants to become a political movement.

In an interview published in a Peruvian newspaper, Victor Polay acknowledged that the Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement has been defeated.

"The moment has arrived for the MRTA to actively join the political fight, within the framework of democracy," said Polay, using the group's initials in Spanish.

He said he would like authorities to grant amnesty to imprisoned MRTA guerrillas.

Hispanics Keep Up Explosive Growth

Most gains in South and West, including Oregon

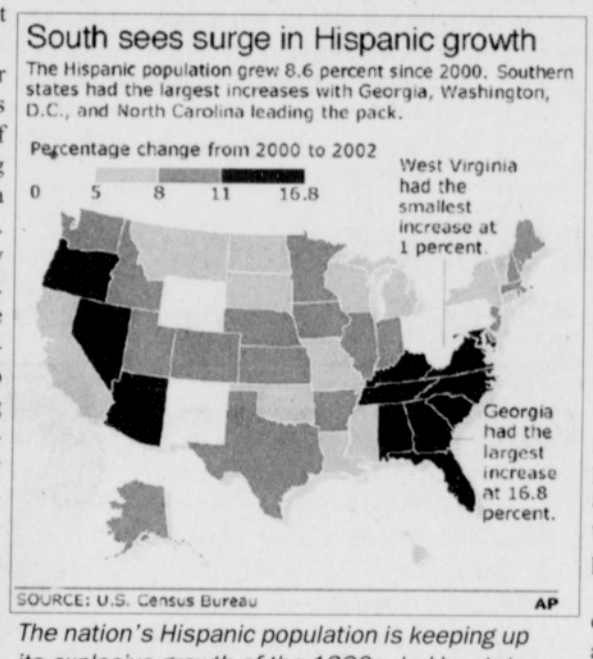
(AP) — The nation's Hispanic population is keeping up its explosive growth of the 1990s, led by states in the South and West, including Oregon, the first detailed Census Bureau estimates since the 2000 national head count show.

Analysts cited higher birth rates for Hispanics and a continued influx of new immigrants looking for jobs - even during a period when the U.S. economy slowed - as key reasons for the increase.

Georgia topped the list of states with the fastest-growing Latino populations, adding nearly 17 percent between July 2000 and July 2002 to reach 516,000 residents, according to Census Bureau estimates being released Thursday. North Carolina's Hispanic population grew by 16 percent, while Nevada, Kentucky and South Carolina were next.

"Hispanic immigrants are coming here for jobs and quality of life," said University of Georgia demographer Douglas Bachtel. "They are taking jobs that a lot of Americans don't want, like construction, landscaping and in the service economy."

California still has the largest number of Hispanics with 11.9 million, about one-third of its total population, followed by Texas, New York, Florida and Illinois.



The nation's Hispanic population is keeping up its explosive growth of the 1990s, led by states in the South and West, the first detailed Census Bureau estimates since the 2000 national head count show. (AP graphic)

Los Angeles County had the largest population of Hispanics among counties (4.5 million), and Webb County, Texas, on the U.S.-Mexico border, which includes Laredo, was the county where Hispanics comprised the highest proportion of the population (95 percent).

Hispanics are the nation's largest minority group. The Census Bureau released a report in June that found the Latino population stood at 38.8 million, an increase of almost 9 percent in the two years ending July 2002. That was four times the growth rate for the U.S. population overall and about 14 times. greater than the rate for non-Hispanic whites.

The government considers "Hispanic" an ethnicity instead of a race, so people of Hispanic ethnicity can be of any race. In 2000, the Census Bureau for the first time allowed people to identify themselves by more than one race.

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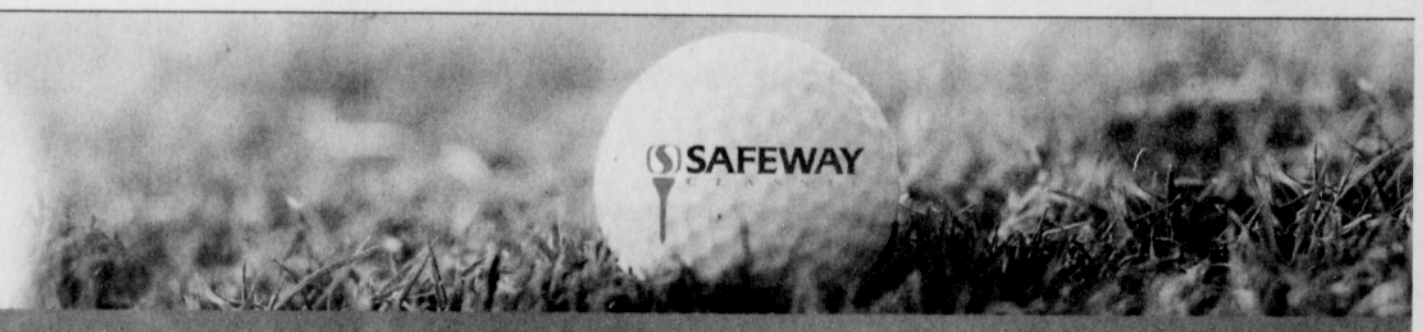

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