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Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon

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Nota de Archivo: *Washington. Source: National Archives, RG 59, Chile–ITT–CIA Files, Lot 81D121, Interview with Secretary Kissinger, Monday, January 10, 1976. Secret; Sensitive. Sent for action. Although no drafting information appears on the memorandum, the text is largely based on Vaky's September 16 memorandum to Kissinger, printed as Document 95. An attached note, September 21, reads: "Back from President Chile Program Approved (Haig has seen)."*

Chile

Unless we establish tight control and professional guidance, the covert action program approved by the 40 Committee for Chile will not work. It is going to be a long-shot as it is; if we have to face the additional handicaps of well-meaning but unprofessional activism, of lack of coordination and of bureaucratic resistance, we will be dangerously exposed.

The situation is as follows:

—State is timid and unsympathetic to a covert action program; it will not be able to provide either the imaginative leadership or the tight coordinated overview we need.

—Ambassador Korry is imaginative, but he is an "unguided missile." He is acting now as his own project chief and is trying to con-struct an operation all by himself. This is dangerous from a professional intelligence-operations point of view, and inefficient because there are so many inhibitions on his capacity to operate. He is too exposed and visible to do this kind of thing, and it may even affect his objectivity and analysis.

—But Korry does not trust his staff and will not use it; most of his key officers, including the CIA Station Chief, have been cut out of the operation.

—Only Korry is doing any real reporting, and while it is voluminous, it is inconsistent and contradictory. We cannot be sure of what the situation really is and how much Korry is justifying or camouflaging.

—CIA is unhappy at the modus operandi, but does not feel it can impose discipline on Korry; it certainly cannot do it through its present Station Chief.

—There is no consensus among agencies here concerning the full scope of operations and some lack of enthusiasm for overall planning. Hence, the bureaucracy is simply reacting to what happens in Santiago.

—The 40 Committee does not have the time for this kind of close, detailed supervision, and the time-lag would make it impossible anyway.

Thus, in effect, although no one particularly wants him to, Korry has the operational ball and is running, with everyone just hoping there are no leaks or exposures. We are not really sure if what is happening is professionally sound as possible or what more we might do technically to improve the effectiveness of our actions. Thus our risks of being “found out” are maximized, and our efficiency is cut.

To rectify this situation, I recommend the following:

1. Establish an action task force here in Washington to run the program. This would meet daily, make decisions, send out directives, keep tabs on things. It would coordinate activities, and plan implementing actions. It would work fast and in secrecy—not through normal bureaucratic procedures. It will need your authority to do this, and to be able to instruct the Ambassador.

2. Send to Santiago an expert professional to take over the operational program under the Ambassador’s and the task force’s broad guidance. This would enable the Ambassador to draw back from personal operations and involvement. In addition, it will help with the time-lag problem. In fast-moving situations some operational decisions may have to be made on the spot.

Recommendation

That you authorize the establishment of this kind of mechanism.