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Backchannel Message From the Ambassador to Chile (Korry) to the Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs (Johnson) and the Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs (Meyer)

Identificador Archival:	frus:frus1969-76v21/d110
Agencia Emisora:	Departamento de Estado
Fecha del Documento:	1970-09-22
Colección / Serie:	FRUS 1969–1976, vol. XXI: Chile, 1969–1973

Nota de Archivo: *Santiago. Source: National Archives, RG 59, Chile–ITT–CIA 1963–1977, Lot 81D121, Documents Requested by the Department of Justice, 1970–1977. Secret; Sensitive; Eyes Only.*

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1. I have received following message from General Mather on my proposal to inform Chilean military that we are suspending MAP training pending review after October.

a. “I very much appreciate your message and the opportunity to comment on the proposal contained therein. Similar actions taken in comparable situations have proved ineffective and counterproductive. In this particular instance, I would anticipate that the threat of our ‘reviewing’ MAP training would not weigh too heavily on the Chilean military as they contemplate intensely grave issues with respect to an Allende government. From our suspensions of MAP in other countries, they can probably forecast suspension and even termination of the program eventually from one cause or another after an Allende accession. Our suspension now as you suggest, however, could be taken either as a sign of our abandonment of Chile’s military or as pressure upon them to do what they have apparently decided not to do; viz: rise against Allende’s taking office. I do not believe that our MAP program offers enough leverage to compensate for either of those conclusions. Moreover, we have to contemplate possibility that word of such action would become public knowledge and thereby bring U.S. Government into more active role in present crisis than I had understood to be envisaged in current guidance.

b. “I recommend in any case that the action you describe not be taken without consideration and approval of State/Department of Defense.”

2. CINCSO’s arguments are obviously well considered and carry considerable weight. However, following points also bear on issue: (a) proposal originated with my military advisors who are of unanimous view that Chilean Armed Forces have yet to understand with any degree of clarity what an Allende government would mean to them and their interests. Attachés and Military Group gave detailed study to question and concluded that notice of suspension MAP train-ing would have most favorable impact of anything we could do in terms of awakening Chilean military to the prospects before them. (b) Minister of Defense Ossa and all those in Frei’s most intimate group concur that Armed Forces must be prodded out of current somnolent state if there is to be any chance to block Allende by any means. Ossa believes, after checking with Frei, that proposed notification on training would be highly effective and I respect their judgment, particularly if we did it with finesse. (c) As General Mather suggests, such a move could have some damaging impact on our future relations with Armed Forces, but I believe it need not if we communicate our decision in an appropriately elegant way. Question here comes down to judgment as to whether these relations would be really damaged, whether such relations would have

significance under Allende, and if so whether any damage that might result could be repaired. I doubt that Allende and PCCh would allow relationship to continue in meaningful form and am also most dubious regarding military's capacity or will to brake the slide to totalitarianism. As for repairing the damage, there should be no difficulty in dividing the action of an individual ambassador, that most dependable of objects. In sum, as far as the Armed Forces are concerned, I think it is probably now or never. (d) As General Mather also points out, leverage in our scanty MAP training program is indeed limited. However, a larger message is involved. Armed Forces all dependent to a critical degree on FMS and U.S. commercial sources for spare parts, supplies and new equipment. If shut off from us, Navy and Air Force would literally grind to a halt. Army is somehow less dependent but has been interested in such items still in FMS pipeline as 106 recoilless rifles. By signaling through MAP training that relationship with U.S. is truly imperiled, we can draw attention to these important factors. We know from reliable sources, including Ossa, that military in surprising numbers believe that it will be business as usual with U.S. Government under Allende. They should be disabused of this notion.

3. There appears to me to be persuasive arguments in favor of going ahead with notification. I do not contend, however, that such would produce miraculous conversion to anti-Allende cause. In fact, there might be little if any impact and perhaps some irritation; I simply say that is worth the small risk involved, there is very little to lose and perhaps something to gain.

4. One very important point made in my first messages after the election that I wish to stress in this context: we must always seek to increase our bargaining position with a President Allende even while hoping he will not accede to the highest office. The military indirectly can add to the pressures abuilding from many other quarters designed to remind Allende that he cannot be totally disdainful of U.S. power nor can he carry out his electoral program in any effective way if he seeks to impose his will on us. (I am indirectly addressing this question in an overall evaluation that will be transmitted via State today.)

5. One final point on operational detail: message would be carefully delivered by Military Group Section Chiefs in sorrow rather than anger. Their line would simply be that coming of Allende to power . . . (garble) . . . Armed Forces, including assignments of personnel, and that it seems best to us to wait until situation can be carefully examined before proceeding with training that may be inappropriate or unwanted by the individuals involved. I do not expect in any way that this message would become public knowledge since keeping it quiet would be in interests of both Allende and Armed Forces.

6. Will appreciate your reactions and instructions as soon as possible.