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

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1. We greatly appreciate your two-part message (Santiago 3824 and 3828) describing the fast-moving situation in Santiago and how you see the various possibilities which Frei is turning over in his mind. Your complementary message of September 22 in this channel put the other two messages in helpful perspective.

2. We have noted the several possible ways you describe that the political forces might move so as constitutionally to block Allende from taking power. We conclude, however, that both you and Frei have virtually abandoned the hope that Alessandri could get enough votes to be elected on October 24.

3. Your reporting, including both the two-part message and others from your DAO, indicate that the military seek, above all, a constitutional way out and hope somebody else will provide the means. They appear at the same time to be edging toward some “moral” justification for thwarting Allende. We are unclear, however, as to the relationship of this new military awareness of the danger of Allende taking office to the scenario which would result in entry of military officers into the cabinet. How do you visualize a military-dominated cabinet, oriented toward constitutionality, frustrating an Allende assumption of power on October 24? Would not Frei and his lieutenants then be up against the same wall mentioned in the paragraph above—that is, lack of votes in the Congress—or is there some other formula which could be worked out whereby “constitutionality” could be maintained while preventing Allende from taking over? We would appreciate any thoughts you have as to the scenario which might be involved in such a formula.