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Backchannel Message From the Ambassador to Chile (Korry) to the Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs (Johnson) and the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)

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SITREP—October 7

1. Separate message reports on Mil Aid and responds to your questions.

2. Your suggested reply to Ossa arrived after I had followed sympathetic line in opening of our talk but subject of money never came up. It has now been broached in post-November 4 time frame to Embassy officer working under my close control from Ossa's number one PDC operative Deputy Jorge Santibanez. When I asked Ossa in course of conversation if there was anything he wished from U.S., he replied negatively explaining that either Chileans stopped Allende themselves for themselves or it not worth anything.

3. Santiago 4139 (EmbTel #23518), Para 7 of 7 October contains six of Ossa's points. But most important was that he felt that combination of circumstances might yet persuade Frei to act. He said he had agreed with Frei not attending Junta since narrow victory at best for Frei forces would have demonstrated weakness of Frei within party and left Frei impotent to play any other cards. Ossa said he thought President might do the following:

a. Make speech to the nation.

b. Talk privately to General Schneider to work out agreed plan for joint action to block Allende.

c. Go forward with plan to have civilian ministers resign, bring in military and shift Schneider to civilian portfolio. I suggested that in extremis that Freista ministers provoke the crisis by resigning themselves and forcing the President's hand.

4. Ossa said in reply to my repeated questions he could not say what Frei would do, but that he knew Frei very affected by tremendous unprecedented standing prolonged ovation from 80,000 at national stadium last Sunday (which I confirmed with leftist U.S. newsman present for the Brazil–Chile match and which has not been printed in single paper Santiago nor mentioned by other media). Also sudden change in character of Mrs. Frei moving Frei, according to Ossa. Ossa counselled against any action my part with Frei at this point, stating Frei counted on me and U.S. Government as friends and did not need anything from us at this time. Moreover Frei knew our position fully.

5. Ossa did not know at that time, and I only learned today, that following my talk with Lleras last Saturday night, the ex-Colombian President called Frei and went to visit him late that night to urge that Frei intervene in Junta next day (Sunday). Lleras argued strongly that Frei do whatever possible to block Allende which is a 180-degree switch.

6. I concluded Ossa only wished to see me last night to alert me to the outside possibility that Frei might yet act and that the critical decision is whether he will take to the air nationwide as his first step. Frei wants the country to know beforehand how the PDC–U.P. negotiations go. He believes that Prado and company are now so confident that they will leave themselves vulnerable by accepting only what the U.P. is willing to give. Ossa (read Frei) also wanted to test scenario and hear advice. Since Frei had told me Sunday he wanted me to see Ossa again, I suspect that Frei and Ossa have been at least talking over the scenario, although Ossa is extremely loyal and discreet operative who never commits Frei and matches my own style with him on most matters.

7. Ossa said main purpose of his meeting with generals and admirals (Santiago 4139, Para 7–B) was to make known to military fact that the three service chiefs had drafted the language of the PDC secret (until last Friday) condition re the Armed Forces. He said meeting had been very difficult for him since in the room were four generals (Montero, Poblete, Buzeta and Sepulveda) and some admirals who had met with Allende and/or Teitelboim. He had to be extremely careful to say nothing that would provide the U.P. with the basis for suspicion of incitement.

8. He said Senate President Pablo had caused him great embarrassment at the Junta when he read document from Chilean Embassy in Budapest. It was not a Foreign Ministry report as we had stated Monday but a Chilean DefAtt secret report. Pablo had been given it by Ossa for use without sourcing, but Pablo had laid it on the desk of Prado at the Junta. Now Ossa was having a terrible time explaining to the military, at U.P. prodding, how Pablo had access to secret Defense documents. I told him to blame it on Viaux.

9. I told Ossa I would be replying to a routine note from him re Chilean air training with a personal letter stating all MAP courses in Panama and CONUS were in abeyance. He welcomed the action.

10. Since talking to him, today’s Mercurio publishes the text of the New York Times interview with Allende in which he says that Communist governments are democratic. I have promptly gotten word to Ossa that this faux pas by Allende should be seized upon as the moral justification for Frei’s intervention and for a renewed effort within the PDC to block any acceptance of Allende’s promises. Taken together with the ideas I had Rosenstein-Rodan provide Frei and those Raul Saez has given to Lleras since my talk with the latter, Frei has plenty to chew on. The question is only if he has teeth.

11. As you know Time magazine is planning an Allende cover this week and I have made a maximum effort by providing mass of facts to their correspondents who are incredibly ignorant (e.g., one told me today that Frei had swung the Junta to Allende via last minute intervention with Valdes and company). Time stringer here is 100 per cent Allendista and correspondent speaks no Spanish. I would hope we use every conceivable asset to affect story since Frei feels U.S. press by and large welcoming an Allende who has very honestly and sincerely told world via New York Times he intends to create a structure that is as democratic as Czechoslovakia’s, China’s or the USSR’s.