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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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1. I have taken every appropriate measure to make known to Chilean military the points contained Paragraph 1 of your message of 7 October. My dual purpose was, as you will recall, to provide Frei with additional leverage as long as there was any hope of his taking any action and at the same time to improve our bargaining position with Allende if he were to come to power. It would appear from the latest CAS reports that the Frei hope is almost dead. As for the possibility of a coup from any quarter (see Paragraph 7, etc., of this message) I am unalterably persuaded that we can and should do nothing to encourage such an action in the circumstances that prevail today.

2. Carabinero head General Huerta called me today to inquire if my letter to Ossa yesterday applied to all courses and if it represented my own decision. I replied affirmatively to first and said that second decision was Washington's. I added that until we knew what were new government's policies we could neither afford to continue our "military programs of any kind" nor put Chilean military in position of being punished for associating with U.S. military. It would be imprudent for both. Huerta said he understood perfectly.

3. However you should also know that DAO has informed me that U.S. military deliveries are continuing to arrive by air and sea and therefore very difficult for military to believe fully our actions although I think my letter will assist in conveying the idea that we are serious.

4. You should also know that it is likely that now that my letter is being transmitted to the services by Ossa that the Chilean media may soon be on our backs accusing us of tendentious effort to provoke coup. There are a number of ambitious Chilean officers who would want to gratify Allende.

5. You will note too from DATT Chile message 0279 that Chilean Air Force General Carlos Toro Mazote is in the process of preparing a letter to USAF officers concerning future relations between the two Air Forces. Toro apparently discussed subject with these officers (unidentified here) during very recent visit to U.S. and now, following secret meeting with Allende, considers himself authorized to confirm that relations will continue as before. It is equally likely that similar actions will be taken by Naval and Army officers.

6. Turning to your Paragraph 2. I have again consulted our DEFATTs and MilGroup to ascertain mood of the military. They, like I and Ossa, are unanimous that any effort to block Allende by offering more MAP would be totally ineffective and might even produce a contrary reaction. Our view is that the Chileans opposed to Allende wish to act on their own for

their own motives or not at all; they would either be unimpressed by or would resent an effort to provoke their action by bribery. We are also agreed that:

a. The majority of Chilean military feel that unless Frei and/or General Schneider make the critical moves the Armed Forces will not act in any purposeful and united way.

b. The Chilean Army is far from united and that a significant percentage of officers are ready to adapt to Allende, however watchful of his actions they may be in the future.

c. There is only the slightest possibility that a coup effort launched by ex-General Viaux through his supporters in the Army could spark enough of the military to produce a chain reaction.

7. My own view and that of my senior State associates is that the odds are overwhelmingly against a successful coup without the complicity and commitment of Frei and/or Schneider. The military will not carry out a coup to put Viaux in power. Nor is there a public mood that would provide a moral justification for a coup. The action of the PDC majority at the Junta Sunday followed by yesterday's announcement of a quick agreement between the PDC and the U.P. negotiators on the so-called guarantees sharply diminish whatever potential climate of public support there may have been. And I have just been informed by the station that the rightist National Party is making its deal with Allende.

8. In sum, I think any attempt on our part actively to encourage a coup could lead us to a Bay of Pigs failure. I am appalled to discover that there is liaison for terrorist and coup plotting among Pablo Rodriguez, leader of the post-electoral Patria y Libertad organization, Viaux, Major Marshall and several well-known discredited rightists (e.g. Ricardo Claro). I have never been consulted or informed of what if any role the U.S. may have in the financing of Rodriguez. But you should take most seriously the fact that PDC Party President Prado this week accused rightists and "foreign agents" (by which he clearly meant CIA) of being behind the infantile efforts to stir a reaction through bombings. You should also recall that PDC Senator Fuentealba accused the U.S. of being responsible for Viaux's uprising last October.

9. An abortive coup, and I and my chief State colleagues are unalterably convinced that this is what is here under discussion (if not more, unbeknownst to me), would be an unrelieved disaster for the U.S. and for the President. Its consequences would be strongly to reinforce Allende now and in the future and do the gravest harm to U.S. interests throughout Latin America if not beyond.

10. Even before receipt of reftel I have for days been giving much thought to how to communicate to you my growing concerns over what I sensed was becoming a disastrously risky undertaking for the prestige of the President. Hence you should [consider] this message as not simply being a response to yours but a carefully considered view that I have tested in different ways with the most competent of Chileans and Americans.

11. Finally, you should bear in mind that:

a. I have repeatedly told the Chilean Government that I and I alone (as the President's representative) assume the responsibility in Chile for all actions of all U.S. agencies including the CIA if it were here.

b. I have repeatedly assured Ossa and Frei that I have told them fully of all our activities with respect to anti-Allende actions. It was clear to me that one of Ossa's primary purposes in seeking me out night of October 6th was to learn what if anything we had to do with Army or Viaux plotting and was awaiting some disclosure from me.

12. I am confident that you are sufficiently aware of my views to know that I would give the fullest backing to any action program if there were any reasonable chance of its success. There is no longer any basis for such hope.

13. Action recommendations:

a. Disassociate ourselves promptly from any association we might have with Pablo Rodriguez and his organization.

b. End all indirect contacts that may exist with Viaux, Marshall, Claro, et al, even if it signifies an informational sacrifice.

c. Request the DOD to identify officers to which General Toro may have spoken during visit, to whom he may be writing and to monitor any correspondence on this subject. Toro must be made clearly aware in any responses from his USAF colleagues that the Chilean Air Force cannot look forward to normal relations if Allende comes to power and carries out his announced programs. I would appreciate opportunity to review both Toro's letter and proposed responses.