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Memorandum From the Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs (Meyer) to Secretary of State Rogers

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An Allende Government—U.S. Options

It now appears that Allende will be elected President by the Chilean Congress on October 24.

There is attached a brief analysis of the probable internal political situation he would face and of the attitude of his government toward the U.S. The attached paper also describes the two principal options for action open to us: to seek to isolate and harass Allende's Chile from the outset; or to adopt initially a restrained, deliberate posture that would provide us flexibility. The main advantages and disadvantages of each are also described.

ARA believes that the first option is impracticable, especially when viewed against the backdrop of nationalism that is widespread in the Hemisphere. The second of the two policies is therefore preferable. In essence, this policy would enable us (a) to mitigate some of the unfavorable actions affecting U.S. interests that Allende is contemplating and (b) to retain our influence on the Chilean scene for as long as possible. The specific targets of our influence, in addition to Allende himself, would be the Chilean people, the military, and certain political groups determined to prevent a Communist takeover of their country. This policy would entail the following scenario and specific courses of action:

(a) Ambassador Korry would use the period October 24–November 4 (Allende's inauguration) to negotiate as much protection of our interests in Chile as possible. The main objectives are described in the attached.

(b) The U.S. would adopt a "correct" public posture toward the Allende government, i.e. normal diplomatic relations.

(c) The U.S. would send a "normal" delegation to the Allende inauguration, i.e. Assistant Secretary Meyer.

(d) The U.S. would honor its obligations already contracted under FMS credit and cash agreements. On credit, there remains to be delivered 20 M–41A3 light tanks ($852,000) and 25 106 MM recoilless rifles ($516,000). For cash, there remains to be delivered naval ammunition ($1,079,000), naval ordnance spares ($563,000), communications equipment ($794,000), ships' spare parts ($223,000) and torpedo components ($313,000). Combined these total somewhat over $4 million.

(e) The U.S. would continue to hold in abeyance undelivered MAP matériel (a total of $2,526,000) and training programs until Allende's policies are clarified.

(f) The U.S. would continue exchange programs and small local impact projects out of the “Ambassador’s fund” as a means of retaining our contact with the people and Title II program.

The foregoing would comprise the main characteristics of our public posture. We would bolster certain democratic forces opposed to a communist take-over.