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TRACK II

I. Situation:

Yesterday morning at 0815 hours unidentified gunmen shot and seriously wounded Chilean Army Commander General Rene Schneider. He was rushed to a military hospital for emergency surgery. An Army high command communiqué said he was in serious condition and the latest medical bulletin last evening stated his condition had worsened and that he would have to undergo further surgery. The shooting came just 48 hours before Congress was to vote on confirming Salvador Allende as President. As a result of this assassination attempt the following developments have taken place in the past 24 hours.

II. Developments:

A. General Carlos Prats assumed the position of Army CINC.

B. General Camilo Valenzuela assumed the position of Jefe de Plaza for law and order in Santiago Province.

C. State of emergency declared throughout Chile.

D. Armed Forces and Carabineros confined to barracks.

E. Military given responsibility for investigating the assassination attempt.

F. Rigid curfew imposed.

G. All exits from Santiago under close control.

H. Information media instructed not to publish or broadcast information which could alarm or incite the public.

I. Retired General Emilio Cheyre designated Chief of Investigations and Socialist Rene Paredes (pro-Allende) named Sub-Director.

J. The UP issued a statement blaming the attack on rightists supported by foreign elements.

K. Chilean Confederation of Workers called an emergency meeting to discuss the assault on Schneider.

L. Technical Students planned a demonstration for yesterday afternoon.

M. Government investigating recent arrival of foreigners in Chile.

N. General Viaux, retired Lt. Col. Jose Cabrera and six unidentified persons, including members of Patria y Libertad, reportedly have been arrested.

O. The three Armed Forces Commanders in Chief, General Prats, Admiral Tirado, and General Guerraty, issued a communiqué condemning the attack on Schneider and announcing their support for the constitution.

P. Allende met with President Frei yesterday afternoon and asked Frei to adopt drastic measures to crush a "seditious plan."

Q. General Valenzuela addressed the nation over radio last evening concerning measures to be taken under the state of emergency.

R. President Frei spoke over nationwide radio expressing his profound indignation over the attempted assassination and explained the steps taken under the state of emergency.

III. Analysis:

With only 24 hours remaining before the Congressional run-off, a coup climate exists in Chile. The assassination attempt against General Rene Schneider has set off a train of events that has started Chileans talking about a coup and has raised the expectation that something significant will occur today.

The attack on General Schneider has produced developments which closely follow Valenzuela's plan: Schneider has been removed, a state of emergency has been declared, General Prats has replaced General Schneider, radicals have been arrested, and General Valenzuela has assumed control of Santiago Province. [2 lines not declassified] Although the plotters may have second thoughts about a coup, they nonetheless are irrevocably committed to executing the plot—even if Frei refuses to resign—since it can be assumed that their plotting would eventually surface under an Allende government. Hence they have no alternative but to move ahead.

The state of emergency and the establishment of martial law has significantly improved the plotters position: a coup climate now prevails in Chile, and military officers have replaced civilians at the provincial level. This condition greatly inhibits any future effort by Allende to counteract the coup. The next step in Valenzuela's plan, which is the most important one, calls for the resignation of Frei and his cabinet. Thus far, President Frei shows no indication that he intends to resign. If Valenzuela has advised Frei of his plan and Frei has concurred, then Frei certainly would be compelled to resign. Should Frei not be advised—as appears to be the case—a confrontation between the plotters and Frei can be expected before the Congress meets tomorrow.