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Minutes of a Meeting of the Senior Review Group

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Middle East, Chile

Chairman—Henry A. Kissinger

State

Under Secretary John N. Irwin

Mr. Joseph J. Sisco

Mr. Alfred L. Atherton

Mr. Thomas Thornton

Defense

Mr. David Packard

Mr. Armistead I. Selden

Mr. James S. Noyes

CIA

Mr. Richard Helms

Mr. David H. Blee

JCS

Adm. Thomas H. Moorer

Adm. Elmo R. Zumwalt, Jr.*

R/Adm. Wm. R. St. George

NSC Staff

Col. Richard T. Kennedy

Mr. Harold H. Saunders

Mr. Arnold Nachmanoff

Mr. D. Keith Guthrie

* Present for Chile discussion only.

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

[Omitted here is conclusion 1. on “Strategy to Israel.”]

2. Chile. Following a poll of SRG members and consultation with the Secretary of State, the question of a visit by the carrier Enterprise to Valparaiso will be referred to the President for decision.

Dr. Kissinger: We have two subjects to take up today—the Middle East and Chile. I asked Admiral Zumwalt to drop by about 3:15 to give his views about having the carrier Enterprise make a visit to Chile. The President himself wants to consider this question. We will certainly have an answer by tomorrow morning. If an answer were requested right now, it would be no.

[Omitted here is discussion unrelated to Chile.]

(Messrs. Sisco, Atherton, Thornton, and Saunders left the meeting at this point. Adm. Zumwalt and Mr. Nachmanoff entered.)

Chile

Adm. Zumwalt: Our Chile visit was extremely cordial. The military obviously wish to maintain contact. The Embassy considers that Allende’s present problem is to consolidate his position. The Military Group believes that the Chilean military are still a substantial force for moderation. It is clear to me that the military are highly pro-US.

We went to Valparaiso to see the fleet. In the course of our conversations the Navy people told us that the Chilean military is dedicated to constitutional processes. They want close ties with the US and want to keep the Soviets out. The Navy officers said: “We are willing to support you and provide tanker facilities.” I mentioned that the Enterprise was in the area and said that it was possible I could get a government decision approving a call in Chile.

We then had a one-hour meeting with Allende. It was arranged on such short notice that we did not have an opportunity to inform the Embassy in advance. Even though you know what sort of a person Allende is, he comes through as a fascinating, charming, charismatic individual. In the presence of the Chilean CNO he talked about the needs of the Chilean Navy. He said he desired to continue and increase the Milgroup. He brought up the Enterprise visit and said that he would be glad to have the carrier visit Valparaiso, that it would provide an opportunity for those aboard to see what Chile was really like, and that he himself would be pleased to go aboard. He stressed the value of visits of all kinds in correcting misunderstandings about Chile. He was concerned about the Chilean image in the United States and asserted that he had never been a non-democrat or a Sovietizer.

On the nationalization issue, Allende said that adequate compensation would be provided and the companies would have legal redress. He commented: “Even your people agree that the courts are not subject to my bias.” He said that Anaconda had taken out $9.4 billion in profits while leaving Chile poor and not training any Chileans.

Allende showed us his plans for the development of Valparaiso harbor. He said he hoped for continued help from the US along with others in financing this venture. The key was a mutually satisfactory arrangement on nationalization.

We mentioned the US concern about a fair settlement, and he replied by talking about past exploitation by the companies. He emphasized that he wanted a fair deal and that he was making an effort to have good relations with the US. He pointed out that he had said nothing about the removal of AFTAC even though this deprived Chilean peasants of weather reports. He also noted that he had allowed the Peace Corps to remain. He commented on the libelous stories about him which he said had appeared in the US press.

Mr. Selden asked about the presence of Soviet technicians. Allende said that if the US provided aid, it would want to have its technicians present; the same was true of the Soviets. He said he would not permit a permanent Soviet presence and added that the US has first call for providing assistance if it wishes to do so. He commented that the US Ambassador had never been to call on him.

The Chilean Navy have an arrangement with Allende they believe will protect their interests. As an indication of this they point to the fact that Admiral Montero refused to fire a navy officer by the name of Lopez who was implicated in anti-Allende plotting.

The military do talk among themselves about the problem of communist penetration. They want to continue FMS and are resentful about the cutback. The Army and the Air Force asked if this signified some favoritism toward the Navy.

We think that Allende will continue to consolidate his strength but that the military are still a moderating influence. Our view is that the military offers us the only prospect for influencing events in Chile while increasing our options. Our recommendation is that a recognized, prestigious individual be appointed to negotiate with Allende and that he be provided with a top-notch team of experts to provide support.

In the meantime, we need a decision on the Enterprise, which is moving rapidly up the west coast.

Mr. Kissinger: Could it move more slowly?

Adm. Zumwalt: Yes. If the Enterprise fails to go to Chile, Allende can tell the military: “I took your advice and got slapped in the face.” I also think we ought to loosen up a bit on providing spare parts to the Chilean military.

Mr. Kissinger: Does anyone have any views? Jack [Irwin]?

Mr. Irwin: The question is how much Allende can make of the visit. Would the benefit be greater to him than to the military? I gather that Admiral Zumwalt thinks the military would derive the greater advantage. I am not specifically opposed to the visit, but I think there is a real danger that Allende can play this politically to a greater degree than we might think. I would like to contemplate the matter a while.

Mr. Kissinger: We don’t have to make a decision right now. We can talk; then I can poll the members later and go to the President.

Mr. Helms: Where is the ship at the moment?

Adm. Moorer: Coming up the west coast of Chile.

Mr. Selden: I have no illusions about Allende; I think he is a communist. But I do think the military is trying to keep contact with us. Allende is catering to them. Maintaining contact with the military is the only thing we have in Chile.

Mr. Kissinger: If I can draw a distinction here, we have always supported contact with the military. Last week we approved FMS and M–41 tanks for them. The issue is whether a carrier should visit Chile three weeks before provincial elections which might register an anti-Allende vote. We have already had a four-star admiral and a four-star general visit Chile. We

are not cutting ourselves off from the military.

Mr. Selden: Ambassador Korry said there was no way Allende could get less than 50% of the vote in the elections.

Mr. Kissinger: Could it make a difference whether he got 51% or 57%?

Mr. Selden: Not much.

Mr. Helms: If the Enterprise were to visit Santiago as well as Rio, we would be giving even-handed treatment [to both right and left-wing regimes].

Adm. Zumwalt: On our trip we talked to Campos while in Brazil. He says that it will be one to three years before the economic impact of Allende's policies hurts the Chilean people. In the meantime, the prospects are that he will enjoy a wave of popular support.

Mr. Kissinger: (to Adm. Moorer) What is your view?

Adm. Moorer: The visit is entirely feasible. The question is whether it will help the military or Allende more.

Mr. Kissinger: What is it that we can't do for Allende?

Mr. Selden: We are trying to enhance the position of the military.

Mr. Packard: I see two dangers. First, a visit might encourage popular support for Allende. People who would otherwise be against Allende might interpret a visit as evidence that he has the tacit blessing of the U.S. The second danger is that anti-US actions might be undertaken. This sort of visit is not likely to have a significant impact on the military's position in Chile although it might strengthen US-Chilean military ties. Right now I think the negative aspects outweigh the positive. I don't see any strong reason to favor the visit, and I see some strong reasons against it.

Adm. Zumwalt: We need to keep in mind the long as well as the near term. I think what Allende has in mind is the near-term advantage, that is, the elections. In the long term we will need to get a settlement for American capital. The visit would be a downpayment of good faith on our side. It also gives the military a chance to keep the pressure on Allende.

Mr. Kissinger: Ever since September 1 it has been argued that if we turn the screws on Allende, he will only be strengthened. Yet he has only gotten stronger.

Adm. Zumwalt: We may be getting some bad judgments out of our embassy in Chile.

Mr. Packard: This visit is different from providing aid. It is a publicity measure.

Mr. Kissinger: This would be a gesture of national good will toward Allende. He wants to go aboard; he wants to have people see Chile.

Adm. Zumwalt: I think our policy of putting the screws on Allende is proving counterproductive. He may turn the other way, and the military will support him.

Mr. Kissinger: Because a nuclear carrier failed to visit Valparaiso?

Adm. Zumwalt: Because it was suggested that the carrier could visit Valparaiso and then it failed to do so. I realize I have been Peck's bad boy in all of this.

Mr. Kissinger: I think we ought to think about this. I'll talk with the Secretary of State and will check with all of you. I can't see a Presidential decision before tomorrow morning. I can tell you he is not wild about the idea.