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Memorandum From Arnold Nachmanoff of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)

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Chile

Secretary Laird has written a letter to you (Tab B) referring to a message from Ambassador Davis (Tab C) on policy toward Chile. (We briefed Davis' message for you on December 16.) Secretary Laird refers to a previous letter to you from Deputy Secretary Packard (Tab D) and particularly calls attention to paragraph 16 of Davis' cable, which suggests that if we need top flight people or sophisticated equipment for programs deemed of high priority "we had better not long delay in implementing our plans. Not only may time come when we need to be well prepared, but introduction of men and matériel may become increasingly difficult."

In his letter, Packard noted that increasing dissent in Chile may provide us with new opportunities for both overt and covert action, and suggested that the 40 Committee be alert to any opportunities or options that could further our objectives. Secretary Laird, however, recommends that "the 40 Committee undertake as a matter of top priority the preparation of an action plan with special attention to the Ambassador's recommendations for both overt and covert courses of action."

Coincidently, Admiral Zumwalt called General Haig last week to draw his attention to the same paragraph in Ambassador Davis' cable.

As you know, the SRG and 40 Committee have maintained a continuous review of our policies and programs with regard to Chile. The ad hoc Group has prepared a Next Steps Options Paper on the copper situation for SRG consideration, and expects shortly to have an options paper with regard to Chilean debt rescheduling. These will be circulated to the SRG members and agency views on the options will be solicited, as soon as the debt rescheduling paper is available. We can then decide whether to staff these issues to the President or hold a SRG meeting—which may not be necessary if there is little agency disagreement. You will recall, of course, that the 40 Committee has had Chile under consideration quite recently.

Neither Laird nor Packard's letter offers any specific recommendations. Paragraph 16 of the Davis cable is similarly a general plea that the agencies assign top-flight people and sophisticated equipment so that we can be "prepared" for the tests ahead. Obviously, if someone has specific recommendations for action, the SRG or 40 Committee, as appropriate, should consider them.

I suggest that you thank Laird for his letter, note that the SRG and 40 Committee are keeping continuing watch over Chile policy in accordance with NSDM 93, and suggest that any specific proposals would be given prompt and full consideration

by the appropriate committee. A suggested reply to Laird is at Tab A.

Recommendation

That you sign the reply to Laird at Tab A.