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Memorandum From William J. Jorden of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Haig)

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Nota de Archivo: *Washington. Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 776, Country Files, Latin America, Chile, Vol. VII. Secret; Sensitive; Outside System. Sent for information. A copy was sent to Kennedy. Across the first page of the memorandum, Haig wrote, "Bill shouldn't we consider WSAG now to be sure we're on top of this—what does Kennedy think?"*

Contingencies in Chile

We had an ad hoc meeting this afternoon (Charlie Meyer, ARA types, INR, CIA) to discuss developments in Chile. CIA has studied all incoming reports and concludes that the chances are 60–40 against military intervention or a coup. (My experience is that 60–40 means you are certain something won't happen, but you don't want to be too wrong if it does.)

The specialists believe that things will have to go considerably more sour, or that there would have to be much loss of life and violence, before the Chilean military felt compelled to intervene. It is also widely believed that they will not move against the government itself unless there is some flagrant violation of constitutional norms. The time frame for the above estimate is the next week or so.

However, if things continue to go downhill, or if there were a "wild card" event (massive violence, bombings, etc.), the military might reach the conclusion that only by acting could they save their country or prevent total disruption or massive loss of life. In that case—if they decide to intervene or to carry out a coup—the estimate is that they would not seek or direct assistance in that action. It was also the consensus that it would not be in their interest, or in ours, to have any direct U.S. participation or complicity.

Other possible contingencies are:

—if they decide that action is required, the military might well simply assume that they could count on U.S. friendship and cooperation after the fact;

—they might decide to act, but come to us first to inquire what our policy would be if they took power;

—or they might come to us, say they were ready to act, but felt they could not do so without having assurances of help from us. (We think that any request for help would focus first of all on: food, loans, arms, especially spare parts and transport.)

It was agreed to do more thinking on these and other possibilities. It was agreed that an early SRG meeting might be useful for all concerned.

Meantime, we should be aware that there are limitations on what we could do to help Chile under the above circumstances. There are heavy demands on our grain supplies. We have limits on funds for all purposes. Moreover, there are restrictions—in the form of the Hickenlooper and Gonzalez amendments—because Chile has not made any payments for nationalized properties (especially copper). Also, there is no provision for grant military aid to Chile.

A group of specialists from State, Defense and other agencies began work today surveying just what we could and could not do to help Chile if there were a sudden change of government and a policy decision here to do all we could to help.

That is the current state of play. I am following it closely.