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Telegram From the Department of State to the Deputy Secretary of State (Irwin) in Paris

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Todep 3/219389. Subject: Conversation with President Allende.

Following is a memorandum of conversation between President Allende and Ambassador Bush, USUN:

Quote: I met with President Allende, Amb Santa Cruz and Amb Diaz Casanueva and one interpreter for about 40 minutes on December 3. Amb Diaz Casanueva called me at 10:25 p.m. and said that the President would be willing to receive me “now”. I had no time to get an interpreter or notetaker.

We met in the small sitting room at the end of the 26th floor of the Waldorf at 10:30 p.m. President Allende, speaking through an interpreter, appeared relaxed. We exchanged pleasantries. He commented that he could not stay longer in our country because of the law in Chile, stating that a chief executive officer must have permission of the Senate to be out of the country more than 15 days, and that he himself was leader of the Senate when President Frei was turned down on a request to be away more than 15 days. He mentioned that he would go to Algeria. I asked about his itinerary, saying I understood it was “Algeria, Moscow and home.” He said, “No, Algeria, Moscow, Cuba, probably Venezuela, and then home.”

He said he would like to have a frank discussion and he then mentioned several of the difficulties between us. One was the “Easter Island incident.” He said that four days before he took over as President certain instruments important to Chile were removed from the weather station. He felt this was an unfriendly act. He mentioned the Enterprise incident stating that the Admiral had said that a visit would be in order and that it would have been good for the Enterprise to stop in Chile; but then the plans had been cancelled.

The 3rd incident he mentioned involved statements by certain government officials. He said that those officials would not go to Chile because the Government of Chile would fall within six months.

I asked him if it would be all right to talk frankly, recognizing that I was an Ambassador and he was a Chief of State. The President explained that he would like to have a frank dialogue between equals. He was direct and quite persuasive on this point. I said that since he had mentioned the difficulties as he saw them between the United States and Chile that I would like to mention one principal difference. I told him that I had lived in various parts of the United States, that I found an affection for Chile on the part of our people all over the country and a desire for more friendly relations. I told him that we did not consider ourselves “imperialists,” that we did not recognize that people were correctly identifying us when we were termed imperialists, and that we still had a deep conviction that our free enterprise system was not selfish but was the best

system—certainly for us, though we had no intention to insist on it for others. And when it went abroad it did not "bleed" other people. I said there may have been excesses from time to time but basically the American people believe deeply in free enterprise and in capitalism and in investment, not in a selfish sense but because we felt that it was the best way to provide a better standard of living for all. Thus we felt that, though any country was free to have whatever kind of system it wanted, in my opinion the main stumbling block between our countries was the question of just compensation for expropriated properties.

The President did not seem irritated. He said—I would like to take exception to what you have said, and he said I would like to refer you to Senate hearings held by a Senate Subcommittee which indicated that what you have said is not correct. I asked him who the chairman of this Senate Subcommittee was and he said these hearings were held in 1952.

He also mentioned that he had a letter from Nelson Rockefeller giving him credit for a health plan for all of South America. (I was not quite sure what this had to do with anything.)

During our talk there was no mention of any specific company. The President did say that the government was one thing, the people were one thing and the corporations were something else. He never used the word "multinational" but it was clear that he was differentiating between the Government of the United States, the people of the United States and the multinational companies. I told him that because of our deep conviction in the free enterprise system, the people, the government and the system were all interlocked, and that in my own personal opinion it was impossible to separate them out because of our conviction that our system was right for us.

Ambassador Casanueva interpreted and asked me to repeat to President Allende the toast he, the Ambassador, had given to me at a dinner given by Ambassador Vinci in which he had called me his "favorite imperialist." (The Spanish at the time was "sympatico imperialista.")

I repeated this to the President and at the same time said that as long as he permitted me to be frank, I should tell him that one of the most difficult parts of my job since coming to the UN had been recognizing that it was our country people were talking about when they talked about "imperialists." We did not want to impose our system on others. I made clear that I was flattered by Ambassador Casanueva's toast which he had delivered in a friendly vein, but at the same time I told the President that many countries labeled us imperialists and we Americans did not accept this definition of ourselves. Casanueva then made some reference to Abraham Lincoln whom he was going to quote tomorrow before the General Assembly.

The President again encouraged me to speak frankly and I told him in my judgment one of the main irritants was the question of compensation for properties expropriated. I told him that I thought the question of expropriation was one thing, but that the main irritant was the question of failure to compensate promptly and fairly. President Allende did not reply to this nor did he want to go deeper into the question of multilateral corporations. I told him I was honored to be received by him and that I wished him a good stay in our country. He thanked me for the arrangements and for the details on the visit.

During the walk down the hallway, there was some reference to his speech tomorrow in a conversation between him and his Ambassadors. One of the Ambassadors said to me: "Are you going to have a right of reply?" This was then taken up by President Allende. I said there had been precedence for rights of reply to Chiefs of State, but they were exercised under most unusual circumstances. The President said jokingly, "I will send you a copy of my speech tonight. Then you can prepare your right of reply." I indicated that I hoped his speech would not require a right of reply on the floor. There seemed to be a nodding of heads and an agreement of Ambassadors on this point.

At that minute the interpreter started to translate, but Santa Cruz interrupted and translated instead. The interpreter told me that Santa Cruz said that he is familiar with this and therefore he would translate. The President rather notably did not

make any comment about the forthcoming bilateral talks at all. During part of the conversation when the President referred to the difficulties and mentioned Easter Island, the carrier Enterprise and statements by government officials, Amb. Santa Cruz or Amb. Casanueva (I can't remember which) mentioned the word "Herrera," presumably referring to the unacceptability of Herrera as a candidate for Secretary General. Even though it was mentioned to the President by the Ambassador, the President did not choose to raise this matter with me.

Allende gave me several very firm handshakes, looked me directly in the eye, seemed to go out of his way to be warm and friendly.

I particularly think back now to his discussion of dialogue between men, that he liked frank discussion and that he wanted me to be very frank with him. I made the obvious disclaimers about being a mere Ambassador while he was a Chief of State, at which point both Ambs. Santa Cruz and Diaz Casanueva gave me quite a build-up. Allende then replied that he knew a good deal about me, how old I was, etc., etc. I am sure this reflects somewhat on their briefing process.

The President wore a "quasi-Mao" jacket. As soon as we sat down, somebody passed out scotch. The President took a scotch on the rocks with a little bit of water. He did not smoke during the interview. He looked well, and mentioned with some satisfaction his hectic, but I gather satisfying, trip to Mexico.

In the beginning of the conversation I made some opening comments about friendship of the American people for Chile, wanting better relations, and the hope that this would result in better times ahead. I mentioned specifically the upcoming December bilateral talks, saying I was not up to date on the details of all the issues involved between our countries, and that, like Amb. Diaz Casanueva, we concentrated on UN matters.