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Backchannel Message From the Ambassador to Chile (Korry) to the 40 Committee

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1. Santiago 2212 of June 12 reported the very strong race Marxist Allende is making in the presidential campaign. Despite the striking similarity with our unscientific analysis of two and a half years ago, the percentage cited in that cable as our reckoning of the respective current strengths of the three candidates are in fact based on the almost complete results of the latest poll [1 line not declassified]. Those results reveal a spread of only four percent between Alessandri and Allende and about the same distance between the latter and Tomic.

2. More significant are the trend lines for the past month: continued decline of Alessandri, stagnation of Tomic and gathering strength of Allende. Moreover the latest poll does not fully reflect the impact of Allende's recently unwrapped package of giveaway pledges. What it does show is a shift of women from Alessandri to Allende.

3. Unless altered, these trends could well culminate in the election of Allende as President and, as a consequence, the inevitable imposition of a Leninist state in South America. An Allende presidency would result either from his winning the first plurality in the September 4 balloting or finishing such a strong second that the Congress might in the runoff prefer his election in preference to that of Alessandri's.

4. My position has rested on these assumptions:

a. No candidate would receive an absolute majority.

b. The critical period would occur in the period between September 4th and October 24th when the Congress would have to choose between the top two contenders.

c. President Frei would re-emerge in that period as the most influential anti-Allende force in the country and in his Christian Democratic Party (PDC).

d. U.S. interests were uniquely concerned with the defeat of Allende.

e. U.S. support of any candidate would be counter-productive.

5. Tactics adopted to suit these assumptions were:

a. A major effort to convince all here, in Washington and elsewhere of our total non-involvement in the campaign. Unless everyone believed it, no one would. Unless the cover of aloofness were firmly established, our relatively modest ongoing program to divide the leftist camp and to finance anti-Allende propaganda might not have been as securely established as it

is. This endeavor has been successful if the current Marxist campaign to blame Anaconda and other private organizations for electoral intervention is any gauge.

b. A major effort to cater to Frei by personal inflation of his ego, by repeated messages through his most trusted lieutenants that he would be the key man come September 5 in the presidential decision and by abstention from any interim conversation with him on the election. This message has been heard and fully understood by Frei.

c. An effort to maintain good contacts with the Army and other services despite the lack of MAP hardware by personal contact and by responding to their minimal needs. (Our ability to satisfy promptly the armed services' request to buy emergency equipment is critical in this regard.)

d. A coordinated effort to exploit on appropriate occasions our much-respected fame here as unmatched electoral seers to propagate the view that Allende is running strong and if his two opponents did not modify their fixation of mutual destruction, Allende would win.

e. A funding of Radical Party dissidence designed to weaken that reed of Allende strength.

6. The Aristotelian injunction that political wisdom consists in the ability to make distinctions prompts me to seek now to reinforce very substantially our ongoing anti-Allende effort. It is the Marxists strength not the weaknesses of their opponents with which we must deal. I say "must" because of our unanimous conviction that the consequences of an impressive Allende polling would be very grave for Chile and South America, sufficiently serious to undermine totally the new Latin policy launched by the October 31 speech of President Nixon and implemented in many subsequent actions. I am also persuaded that it would sap U.S. will to implement our policies in Asia and elsewhere.

7. What we recommend is consistent with our previous submission, with our original assumptions and with our ongoing tactics. We have been awaiting the May opinion poll for six months and have been utilizing that interim time in order to prepare a base for subsequent greater effort if required. The poll simply confirms our original analysis sufficiently to mobilize our latent resources.

8. Our three principal targets in the remaining short time should be Frei, women and Radical Party members. Of these the most critical and immediate are the women who as a group remain least responsive to Allende and most sensitive to the implications of a Leninist state. The Radical Party clientele comprises the largest single "swing" potential in the Chilean electorate; totalling at least twelve percent of the voters, they are not Leninists and despite the inclusion of their party in the Popular Front most have misgivings about the implications of an Allende Government.

9. Recently because of the failure of anyone to launch a nationwide anti-Allende campaign a group of [less than 1 line not declassified] resuscitated a 1964 anti-Allende organism. [1 line not declassified] Contrary to my original assumption, this operation is not known to the Council for Latin America (CLA) and one of [less than 1 line not declassified] ground rules is that the CLA which has a reputation for indiscretion in such matters be kept ignorant. Another ground rule is that [less than 1 line not declassified] will not utilize these [less than 1 line not declassified] private funds for electoral propaganda in favor of a candidate. The private [less than 1 line not declassified] group has pledged [dollar amount not declassified] for the anti-Allende propaganda campaign and their [less than 1 line not declassified] counterparts has promised [dollar amount not declassified]. It is clear to us that a good deal more—in excess of [dollar amount not declassified] according to our calculations—will be required to make this effort, which has begun, successful in the last two months of the campaign.

10. Another effort to subsidize orthodox Radical Party senators and deputies in their underground campaign of disloyalty to Allende has been launched. To name only one likely target of opportunity, [2 lines not declassified]. About [dollar amount not declassified] are required for this undertaking.

11. The Radical Party is being targeted now to produce votes for Alessandri as we recognized would also be the consequence of the political action program approved by the 40 Committee. It has another facet as well. If Allende is to be prevented from gaining the presidency via the congressional vote, ample funds may well be required to dissuade hesitant Radical or Christian Democratic congressmen from indulging their credulity. You will recall that nominally, 82 of the 200 senators and deputies who will decide the runoff in October are pledged to Allende, 75 to Tomic and 43 to Alessandri. Hence the Radical Party operation is the precursor to a second phase for which there is a maximum contingency fund need now of some [dollar amount not declassified].

12. Other pertinent factors include:

a. The Alessandri campaign which projects a deficit (covered by credits) of at least $700,000 by September 4 is sopping all local available funds so that the three operations outlined in paragraphs 9–11 above are out of their ken and their capacity to handle. I anticipate that the Alessandri forces will begin to target more on Allende in the coming weeks but the confusion that reigns in that camp precludes any inclusion of their efforts in our calculations.

b. The Anaconda Company, from indications we have here, has been having second thoughts about contributing directly to Alessandri. Anaconda is a company that has the biggest stake in these elections and could well invest far more than the [dollar amount not declassified] they had in mind only a few weeks ago. However they are not involved in [less than 1 line not declassified] endeavor and their negotiations with Alessandri lieutenants appear to be less than harmonious. Anaconda is so perilously indiscreet and so insistent on the recipient’s awareness of the benefactor that no one is anxious to receive its embrace.

c. [7 lines not declassified]

13. In sum, I am requesting approval for funding of three activities, two during the electoral period requiring a total of what we calculate to be [less than 1 line not declassified] and a third for the immediate post-electoral period of [dollar amount not declassified]. I do so in calm pursuit of unchanged goals and in cold calculation that less than [dollar amount not declassified] is a very small insurance policy to pay when Chile is indebted to the Ex-Im Bank alone for roughly $500,000,000 (M), when Anaconda is counting on receiving at least an equivalent sum, when AID has provided almost that much in loans to the Frei Government prior to FY 69, when U.S. expropriation guarantees are well over $100,000,000, and when we have not signed any loans worth mentioning (total $2,500,000) for almost two years.

14. I am, of course, fully aware that our anti-Allende program might result in benefitting one candidate more than another. But I am persuaded that there are so many extraneous factors beyond our capacity to influence or to manipulate (Alessandri’s physical condition to mention one glaring factor) that the final beneficiary is beyond accurate prediction. Allende and he alone is our target.

15. I am also personally satisfied that there is an absolute minimum risk of exposure in the expanded program we are proposing—a problem which contemplates use of existing mechanism and relationships. [1½ lines not declassified]

16. Finally, the time factor is critical. If our funding is to be used efficiently and effectively with the essential advance preparation, we must have an early decision, at the very latest by July 1.

17. I suppose that one should always apologize for doing the right thing since “nothing wounds people more” but “it is not at all the wicked who do the most harm in this world,” as Paul Valery wrote. “It is the maladroit, the negligent and the credulous.”