DECLASSIFIED // SECRET; PRIORITY; ROGER CHANNEL

Telegram From the Embassy in Chile to the Department of State

Identificador Archival:	frus:frus1969-76v21/d48
Agencia Emisora:	Departamento de Estado
Fecha del Documento:	1970-08-04
Colección / Serie:	FRUS 1969–1976, vol. XXI: Chile, 1969–1973

Nota de Archivo: *Santiago. Source: Department of State, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, INR/IL Historical Files, Chile Chronology 1970. Secret; Priority; Roger Channel. A stamped notation on the first page reads: "Special Handling."*

2979. For Asst Secy Meyer from Korry.

1. Before addressing myself in other channels to critical questions in NSSM contingency paper (on which I am awaiting cable per my Washington conversations last week) and to phase two possibilities, I must confess my conviction that such cerebrating is largely meaningless because of the restrictions the Department has imposed. Perhaps I am interpreting your guidelines too stringently and the purpose of this message is to get some clearer sense of what is tolerable and what is not.

2. The central figure between Sept 4th and Oct 24th will be Frei. By direction or indirection he can exercise very significant and perhaps decisive influence over his party, over the military, and over public opinion. The manner in which he chooses to affect these crucial sectors is central to the most basic if unstated question of the contingency paper—how to stop Allende from becoming or remaining President. And that is, of course, what Phase Two is all about.

3. The injunction is: "no one in the Embassy should deal with anyone outside the Embassy including Frei on any aspect of Phase Two." This prohibition encompasses the "setting up" or "conditioning" of anyone including Frei for an eventual role in carrying out Phase Two.

4. We have adhered scrupulously to this prohibition. You will have noted, I am sure, Santiago 2881, para 5 which reports my total rejection to the attempt by Perez Zujovic to draw me into a discussion of possible military intervention of some kind. I have taken other (reported) actions to keep the US in the public posture of treating all candidates even-handedly. Thus far US media in its totality and the Chilean media with the expected exception of the Marxists-Leninists have kept us out of the campaign and even the Allendistas are focusing on US companies rather than the USG.

5. But the fact remains that there is no rpt no way that I can realistically address myself to Phase Two or to contingencies without knowing Frei's thinking. There is no practical way of gaining essential insights by playing the role of an innocent observer. Politics, said Lord Cecil, are impossible to follow unless you are in constant touch with all their developments. It is to fly in the face of this self-evident dictum to eliminate the most knowledgeable by far politician in the country and the man who holds all the decisive levers.

6. I am in full accord with your concerns about the manifold dangers of exposure to the United States. I can only assure you that I would not run risks that would jeopardize the US; I can only cite as evidence my performance of the past eight years as Chief of Mission to support that general assurance. In dealing with the Anaconda negotiations last year, which were not quite as "explosive" as this issue, my critical decision came when the direct talks between GOC and company were heading for breakdown and public confrontation. At that point I went to Frei. I did not rpt not go to seek to negotiate

with him; rather, it was to get his appreciation of the situation including what role he would prefer I play and with whom.

7. I am not suggesting an analogous scenario. But I am emphasizing that paper exercises have no validity unless they are based on the real world. To run through hypothetical contingencies without know-ing the true intentions of the controlling figure is not only intellectually dishonest but it courts real disaster in that it raises the possibility of Washington decisions based on the logic of what should be as distinct from what is.

8. It may be suggested that we have other instruments for assessing the situation. My experience of the past three years leads me to an opposite conclusion. As a consummate politician Frei convinces every visitor to his office that he agrees with them which is one reason he is so extraordinarily popular now. And the quasi-totality of Chilean military and politicians, with the notable exception of the Communists, have a political perception level that is so mediocre that only fools would tread on their projections of Frei's intentions. Churchill said that "true genius resides in the capacity for evaluation of uncertain, hazardous and conflicting information." I would have to aspire to far more than genius to evaluate and to recommend while isolating myself from the most essential information and to offer appreciations uniquely based on the most hazardous of information.

9. It will again be suggested that I am an "activist" who proposes action for the sake of action. Let me dispose of this kind of type-casting in which the Dept invariably indulges and which is at the root of the troubles flushed out in some of the recent task forces. The report I did on Africa converted US policy from activism to restraint; the low profile arguments I made to the previous administration from here and which I have executed here are the antithesis of activism; the paper I did for UnderSec Richardson on the future relationships of the US with the LDCs was criticized for its retreat from helter-skelter activism; the recommendations I have been discussing for the sharp reduction in official US presence here is being opposed by bureaucrats who want to be active in everything. Neither low profile nor the careful matching of real US interests to US resource availability was intended to be passivism. A Chief of Mission should bide his time and his resources for those rare occasions when US interest is very definitely at stake. I believed and I believe that the election of Allende is very possible and that it will have tremendous impact on US interests in Latin America and elsewhere; I believed that the highest levels of the USG would also come to that conclusion; I believed and I believe that the USG did not rpt not have to become involved in any great effort to elect another candidate and we have not. Therefore I do not rpt not see any conflict between Phase One or Phase Two and my comments on Parkinson's pitch to you.

10. A final word about "conditioning". For me that word has only one meaning insofar as Frei and the present problem is concerned. It was and is to make Frei feel that he has an awareness of history, that he consider most carefully the judgement of history if Chile were to lose its freedom for a long stretch. Obviously a President of his stature, of his acuity and of his devotion to democracy, will consider history's judgments without prodding. But the pressures to accept the democratic decision of an Allende Presidency are no less strong than the pressures to prevent Chile's conversion into another Cuba. As the US Ambassador I happen to be one of the few people with whom he can discuss such questions dispassionately and whose responses he considers very carefully. But it has to be a discussion not a deadpan interview in which I seek information and give nothing. I would guess that he is puzzled by our passivity; I would guess too that it is weakening his never-strong capacity for action; I would also hazard the incidental judgement that the US aloofness is serving to encourage Valdes in his Cuba policy for it reinforces the feeling that the US no longer gives a damn what happens in Chile. Now there are safe ways of transmitting to Frei my interest. And that is what I had in mind when I talked on this channel of the question of confidence.

11. I have indulged in frankness and wordiness because I want you to understand the problems we have in responding to the NSC and to the Phase Two requirements. I did not wish to refer in other channels to the gutting nature of your inhibitions without checking back with you first. Hence I seek your counsel and request your approval to permit me and me alone (while all your ground-rules would continue to apply to all others in this Mission) to try to determine directly

from Frei what are his real intentions. Because I shall, of course, wish to make such soundings in the most subtle manner possible, there may be indirect methods of communications between us in the interim. I wish to reiterate that there will be no rpt no risks of any kind since there will be no rpt no suggestions of any kind offered by me without further consultation with you. The purposes will be to elicit information via a logical and justifiable expression of interest in Chile’s future.