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Memorandum From the Deputy Director for Coordination, Bureau of Intelligence and Research (Coerr) to the Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs (Meyer)

Identificador Archival:	frus:frus1969-76v21/d60
Agencia Emisora:	Departamento de Estado
Fecha del Documento:	1970-09-04
Colección / Serie:	FRUS 1969–1976, vol. XXI: Chile, 1969–1973

Nota de Archivo: *Washington. Source: National Archives, RG 59, Chile–ITT–CIA 1963–1977, Lot 81D121, Documents Requested by the Department of Justice, 1970–1977. Secret. A copy was sent to Cline. Printed from the unsigned carbon copy received by Cline. A handwritten notation by Cline at the end of the memorandum states: "As I have made clear before, I do not agree with this analysis; I think Mr. Coerr is hung up upon the emotional overtones of the word 'subornation.' In the world of realpolitik sensitivities are not so tender and people are more concerned with who wins power rather than with morality. I believe the shock in the entire Western Hemisphere at the election of a genuine extremely articulate Communist in a major Latin American country—the first advent to power by the ballot anywhere—will cause more alarm about security and strategic problems than about the morality of U.S. trying to exert influence."*

Chile—Post-September 4 Operations: A Personal View

1. Our basic problem, if the popular election of September 4 places Allende in close competition for the presidency in the congressional election of October 24, is to weigh the alternative risks to the U.S. that would be posed by

a) an Allende government, and

b) our attempt to block his presidency by purchasing the votes of Chilean legislators in their electoral capacity.

2. The case for subornation has been well argued. In essence: Allende hopes to establish a Marxist state, to expropriate U.S. investment, to follow a foreign policy friendly to Cuba and inimical to the U.S. I believe we have not given enough weight to forces in Chile that might frustrate his plans—an intact military that has not oppressed or been defeated by the people (unlike Cuba when Castro took power); and powerful groups in labor, business and industry and on the land. Nevertheless, the penalties of an Allende victory would obviously be heavy.

3. In attempting to assess the penalties of being caught in our presently proposed operation, I believe it helpful to compare them with our hitherto most costly Latin American failure in covert operations—Pigs' Bay. The American President was able to assume responsibility for that operation. I doubt he could do so for subornation of the Chilean Congress and electoral system. Such action is beyond the pale, and evidence of our involvement would hurt our prestige and effectiveness in Latin America (not to mention the United States Government's reputation with its own citizens) even more than did Pigs' Bay. I assess the potential penalties of subornation as greater than those of an Allende victory.

4. As our chosen instrument for bribery, [name not declassified] is excellent. He has demonstrated discretion over the years, but in the comparatively minor leagues of covert propaganda and political support, and under comparatively benign governments. Our proposed subornation is far more dangerous to him, and to us in this matter. So would be an Allende

government. [5 lines not declassified]

5. We can always deny accusations, whether false or true, but if accusations in this case were supported by evidence our denials could not avert the heavy penalties involved. The only sure way to do so is to refrain from subornation.