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Backchannel Message From the Ambassador to Chile (Korry) to the National Security Council

Identificador Archival:	frus:frus1969-76v21/d65
Agencia Emisora:	NSC / Casa Blanca
Fecha del Documento:	1970-09-07
Colección / Serie:	FRUS 1969–1976, vol. XXI: Chile, 1969–1973

Nota de Archivo: *Santiago. Source: National Security Council, Nixon Intelligence Files, Subject Files, Chile, 1970. Secret. A notation on the first page reads, "Rec'd Sept 7 6:30 p.m."*

Part I.

1. In the past 48 hours, the following pertinent events have occurred:

A. Alessandri campaign headquarters has issued statement that emphasizes the constitutional process has not yet ended and that implies questioning of voting results.

B. Alessandri has agreed privately to avoid any gesture of cession or of recognition of Allende as President Elect.

C. Alessandri supporters mounted a noisy but modest-sized rally in Santiago last night to support the foregoing, to spread the rumor that the vote-counting might have been fraudulent or erroneous and to start creating a spirit of combativeness.

D. Frei first designated ex-Interior Minister and PDC Deputy Bernardo Leighton (who headed congressional investigation of "Campaign of Terror") to be his representative in dealings with Alessandri forces to study constitutional processes by which Allende triumph could be overturned. Subsequently because of Nacional Party mistrust of Leighton, Senator Duran, an Alessandri dissident radical, supplanted Leighton. He is dealing with ex Interior Minister Perez-Zujovich (PDC) and Senator Bulnes (Nacional) who possesses one of most distinguished names in Chile.

E. Sunday separately I called US correspondents of NY Times, Washington Post, Washington Star, Los Angeles Times and Baltimore Sun (after having been called Saturday by CBS from Washington) to give my reaction to Szulc story page 3 NYT on US Navy. Aside from giving detailed rejection of story I emphasized to each for the record that I had two weeks ago told GOC I was prepared to request Dept to issue worldwide circular halting all military and civilian official travel to Chile for indefinite period and if desired to advise US tourists as well. GOC had rejected both stating it wished normal travel. NYT man Novitski confessed to others later his total surprise that he had this interview with most relaxed US Amb in between golf shots yesterday morn and that I was accompanied by DCM. We have successfully so far persuaded very doubting US press that we mean it is a Chilean problem and that while we do not welcome Allende prospects, we intend to deal with it realistically. Also we continue to downplay to press negative consequences in hemisphere for US of Allende.

F. Christian Democrats are displaying more than their usual state of decomposition. Gabriel Valdes telephoned Allende his congrats before midnight Friday. Tomic promptly went Saturday to embrace Allende at his home, to recognize the victory as final, to address him in the familiar tu, and he was followed quickly by some of the key Tomicistas. All TV channels including GOC's last night carried entire Allende press conference where he revealed himself as a pathetic tinplate of

Castro and where his particularly unattractive qualities dominated. Significant that quite a few domestic and foreign newsmen addressed him as “Senor Presidente” and thus help the Marxists in determined effort to create the popular impression of finality.

G. A nominally PDC friend of Frei found the President in an extremely dejected and disorganized frame of mind. As I tried to convey to Valenzuela, we have no illusions about Frei’s “cojones”; the man positively delights in playing Hamlet in moments like these. He lamented that he had been abandoned by his party, that no one aside from our informant had even come to see him from the PDC’s congressional representation or party leadership, that Tomic and his friends had the ball and were trying to carry out a deal with Allende, that he was worried about his place in history and that he wished the military would have a coup. While he stressed that military “had to do something” and that the “something” had to be sooner rather than later, he felt he could not approach military. Moreover in discussing constitutional alternatives, Frei avoided focus on himself but instead speculated about Leighton or Perez-Zujovich as potential runoff candidates.

H. Our much esteemed ARMA reports from weekend social contacts that change of mood has occurred with officers. They are much more perturbed, much more combative in spirit than in pre-election euphoria. This mood is matched in part by a comfortable upper and middle class that is horrified not so much by Cuba but by a Bolivian model where the “people” come to power to destroy the values of this country. Typical example is that most golf caddies stayed home this weekend in expectation they would soon be given homes of wealthy and food. At first, universal Alessandrista reaction was panic; of fear for lives and property, of capital flight and visa requests. Now some are beginning to rationalize the situation, encouraged by the Tomic example, while others are just getting down to the serious business of thinking through the problem and how to fight back.

I. Gen Valenzuela met Saturday with CINC Schneider, Carabinero CINC Huerta, Air Force CINC Guerraty, Chief General Staff Prats and on Sunday with retired Gen Viaux. Valenzuela asked and received their support of plan whereby constitutional processes would be followed so that new elections would be held between Frei rpt Frei and Allende. Valenzuela’s scenario is that the PDC and Nacionales would do a deal to elect Alessandri who would accept the nomination, form a military cabinet and immediately resign Nov 4th. New elections would be held in 60 days that Frei would win. The military and Carabineros would move troops and tanks into Santiago by Oct 22.

J. Valenzuela requested our excellent ARMA Sunday to inform me of the foregoing and to try to ascertain my reaction before he met with the top Army generals today. He also asked that I use my influence with Frei to gain acceptance of his plan.

K. I had ARMA inform Valenzuela promptly last night that I was very satisfied to know that the Armed Forces of Chile shared my rpt my conviction of what would be consequences for the Armed Forces and for Chile of an Allende Presidency. Valenzuela was also told that I found it encouraging that “Chilean Armed Forces had begun the process of planning the location in Santiago before the 24th of October of units effectively prepared to control the situation and to maintain law, order and respect for the traditional Chilean democratic liberties.” He was told that I had known about the constitutional possibilities but that I wished to point out that in the remaining 48 days before the congressional runoff Frei would be subject to many pressures, from those sharing Valenzuela’s views and from those opposed. However I was convinced that Chileans, particularly those who represented so professional and so respected an armed force could find a correct and democratic solution for a problem that signified so much in terms of Chile’s future and that of the hemisphere.

L. I have also had Political Counsellor return to his contact (para 1 G) who was supposed to see Frei again this morning to deliver my prompt comments on his information. First he was told Frei’s attitude comes as no surprise; he is no Lleras Restrepo; he will wring his hands and feel sorry for himself but he has not the guts to act to save his country, his name in history or even himself. Secondly, Chile can save itself with relative ease if men such as Perez Zujovich, our informant and

others keep their heads and cold-bloodedly plan what is essential. Thirdly, the US is not going to intervene in any way to save their chestnuts; it is either a Chilean action or nothing. Fourthly they should try their best to infuse some spine into Frei and to create a climate which can help bestir Frei to action. Fifthly instead of worrying about stories (such as informant had related to Pol Counsellor) that Valdes had permitted 2000 guerrillas from other parts of country to infiltrate Chile past few weeks, they should remember that there are only a few hundred key opponents that form the opposition organization and that all could, if necessary be sent to Cuba with Castro's famous words (re Americans) of "good-bye y good luck." Finally I noted my personal confidence in Perez Zujovich, whom I had not seen for some weeks because I did not wish to intervene in Chilean political situation, and that my advice to informant would be to consult him rather than Frei. Informant left his home immediately to see Perez Zujovich whom he had first telephoned.

Part II.

1. I have acted promptly invoking only my name and always carefully stressing that the US will not intervene in any way. Also I have deliberately created a climate of Embassy inactivity and of official relaxation. I have done so because of my profound conviction that if something were not done promptly there would be no rpt no hope whatsoever. The Chilean propensity for transaction and for shifting responsibility to others—as evidenced by Frei looking for the military to come to him and the military looking to me to go to Frei—is so great that the Communists would have had Allende universally regarded as the unalterable victor and the Oct 24th Congressional meeting would have become a formality. Indeed my British colleague is already figuring out how to snuggle up to Allende via his new and "charming" friend Pablo Neruda, the French are of the same frame of mind and many of our allies will not be left behind. The panic that seized the Alessandri camp and that has made my life intolerable the past 48 hours because of Chileans assailing me for visas had to be stemmed and converted into some degree of hope.

2. I want to be very clear. I have very little confidence that any of this Phase Two action will be successful. The PDC is ready to rationalize; Allende and the Communists are already diligently mending fences with the Christian Democrats of whom there are many only too anxious to enter that kind of transaction. The military unless given some sound advice is capable of depending only on the President and that is a very weak reed indeed. What I am striving to do is keep some flexibility in the situation and to sting Frei—and if not him then the next best—into behaving like men should in moments of crisis. Also I am unalterably determined that we do everything reasonably possible to keep alive the possibility of reversing the great setback to US interests.

3. There are some actions that I would urgently wish handled in Washington:

A. That the Department promptly act to persuade LatAm and Western European and Asian govts not to take any action that would imply that Allende is already President of Chile.

B. That the USG in all its comments seek to parallel ours and so buttress the view of sorrow but non-intervention while we await the results of the constitutional process.

C. That despite my pessimism you urgently provide me with the best possible advice drawing from past experience of the kinds of political action (rumors, economic measures by Chileans that could create panic or could upset the Communist plans for smooth victory Oct 24th or any other suggestion) that would be of value. It occurs to me that at the proper moment, if the military were to prepare themselves and if some political support could be mustered, that a close-down of businesses here could even panic the workers. We already have a mild bank run and a flight of capital, plus halting of some private construction activities.

D. It is self-evident that we need gestures indicating continuing support for advancement of Chilean Army's professional role. Valenzuela is extremely grateful for the prompt and to him surprising efficiency with which Armed Forces requests

for purchases of mil equipment were handled this year. I would recommend therefore that immediate steps be taken to restore five selected FY 71 MAP-funded CONUS training slots eliminated in latest overall LatAm reductions. They are courses in command, and general staff and advanced infantry, artillery, armor and engineering schools for individual field grade officers. They are highly prized in Chilean Army and their restoration to the MAP program would have favorable impact on officer corps as a whole. Total cost, according our understanding, would be only U.S. dollars 23,180. I am confident that Secretary of Defense can devise prompt transfers of funds to comply with this recommendation and that I be authorized in next few days to inform Chilean Army of restoration.

E. There is critical personal factor involved in entire problem. Our only tested and reliable channel of communications to Chilean Army is ARMA Lt. Col. Paul Wimert. He has the complete confidence and trust of the key officers; they have known him and feel comfortable with him. Wimert is scheduled for rotation in November but I find it unthinkable that we would deprive ourselves of this vital asset at a time when so much is riding on our relations with the Chilean Army. It would take many months for a new officer, however well qualified, to begin to develop the kinds of relationships Wimert enjoys. I request therefore that he be extended here for a period of nine months.

F. The [less than 1 line not declassified] with [name not declassified] cited in Part One of this message raised the question of funds to support political action in his first conversation with Pol Counsellor who quite rightly told him to forget it. However it is obvious that contingency funds will be needed by US although I am already aware that some US companies are sympathetically considering requests from Alessandri’s camp for monies destined for same purpose. Obviously many of our past mechanisms will not be employable at this time but it would be extremely helpful to know that standby funds are available. I would request [dollar amount not declassified] be set aside now pending further study of most effective use and later submission of plans for their use.