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Telegram From the Embassy in Chile to the Department of State

Identificador Archival:	frus:frus1969-76v21/d68
Agencia Emisora:	NSC / Casa Blanca
Fecha del Documento:	1970-09-08
Colección / Serie:	FRUS 1969–1976, vol. XXI: Chile, 1969–1973

Nota de Archivo: *Santiago. Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 774, Country Files, Latin America, Chile, Vol. II. Secret; Immediate; Limdis. Repeated to USCINCSO. This telegram, sent in two parts as two cables, is also attached to the September 9 memorandum from Vaky to Kissinger, which summarizes the cable and recommends that it was "worth skimming." See footnote 1, Document 67.*

3537. Subj: No Hopes for Chile (Part I of II Parts). Ref: Santiago 3499.

1. My electoral night pessimism is strengthened as the chances improve hourly of Allende being confirmed as President. Neither the political nor the military forces opposed to Allende's accession have more than the slimmest reeds of hope. Hence, however reluctantly, the US must begin to plan now for the reality of an Allende regime.

2. In what seems light years ago, I wrote last month that civility is the dominant characteristic of Chilean life. Civility is what controls aggressiveness. And civility is what makes almost certain the triumph of the very uncivil Allende. Neither the President nor the Armed Forces have the stomach for the violence they fear would be the consequence of intervention. Each wants the other to act to assume the historic responsibility for the bloodshed that would, in their view, flow and that might reach the proportions of a civil war.

3. As in the elections, the Popular Unity forces are fully prepared for all contingencies including that of victory. As in the campaign, their opponents are as bumbling, disorganized, naive and impotent as ever. The military talks and talks; the President and his cronies talk and talk; but the Communists, who have prepared themselves so diligently for this opportunity, act and they act with dexterity, determination and the dread they inspire. The New York Times editorial yesterday called Christian Democrat candidate Radomiro Tomic the architect of Allende's triumph at the polls; they could have added he is also the designer of his ascendancy to the Presidency.

4. Tomic promptly recognized the Allende victory last Saturday. His vocabulary for the past year had legitimized the Marxist goals; on Saturday he gave flesh to his words by embracing Allende in full view of TV cameras. Since his only contribution to Christian Democracy in the campaign was to maintain the unity of the party and since his men run the party, he provided the initial impetus that will almost inevitably bear Allende to the highest office. Tomic is de facto working to eliminate any contest in congressional runoff scheduled for Oct 24.

The facts are that the PDC intends to hold a party junta in October to determine tactics and policies, including the stance on the congressional runoff. In the interim the PDC is seeking a "negotiating" position by stating that the electoral process has not been ended. As a negotiating team, they have named three Tomic stalwarts led by Deputy Luis Maira. The four "conditions" they have presented to the Popular Unity forces are, in my judgment, completely acceptable to the Marxists and such acceptance will provide the escape hatch that the PDC seeks and that the Communists feel will seal Chile's fate. The conditions include autonomy for the universities (a favorite Communist slogan), continued professionalism in the

Armed Forces (as Allende himself has stressed), freedom of the press interpreted as the freedom of each newsman to report objectively but excluding control by the great economic interests (an Allende formulation) and finally, a guarantee of democratic election (as the Popular Unity insists there will be).

5. Equally significant is that Tomic was asserting his control of the PDC, was isolating Frei from the party the President founded and swept to power. Pacing the floor of his office and bemoaning his fate, Frei is discovering he has only a few Ministers on whom he could count, a few Senators and Deputies who are willing to consider alternatives, and some party wall-flowers of the past. They have mulled the political alternatives of over-turning Allende and the military options. Both appear to be built on sand.

6. The political options hinge on a majority of Congress voting for Alessandri; he, in turn, would name a military cabinet, then resign after being inaugurated. The military would call new elections for a popular runoff against Allende. In his discussions with Chilean politicians, Frei has avoided mentioning himself as the alternative, proposing such non-starters as either of his ex Interior Ministers, Bernardo Leighton or Edmundo Perez Zujovic. But everyone knows it must be Frei, yet he will not burn his bridges and admit the obvious because he knows he has no power over his party and because he wants to maintain maximum flexibility as the unsullied President of all Chileans. His caution permitted Tomic, an all-time loser, to win Frei's party. A man without pants does not feel the shirt being removed from his back.

7. The Alessandri forces have played along with this scheme that some weeks ago I described as far-fetched and that increasingly looks like some Rube Goldberg contraption. Alessandri has kept his si-lence; his headquarters said they would not recognize Allende as the President-elect; they have organized a few unimpressive demonstrations and they have spread the rumor of electoral fraud and of impending massive challenges of individual votes before the National Electoral Board rechecking the ballots. The Alessandri "Independents," the National Party and the Freistas have formed a working group to coordinate their "planning" but they simply cannot hack the knot of impotence in the Congress.

8. Frei, no less convinced today than before the elections, that Allende signifies an "irreversible road" to a Communist state in Chile, is awaiting the military's move. A good many of the higher officers of the three services talk tough but objective analysis compels the conclusion that they will not act effectively. They want a moral justification. A request from Frei might be sufficient; a breakdown of law and order would be more persuasive.

9. They hold meetings and the whole town knows about them including the Allende camp. The latter have contacted Generals and Admirals who are promised key jobs in the new era; they have assured the mass of younger officers that neither they nor their privileges will be touched; they have solidified their support among the Army non-coms, the men who really control the troops.

10. The military never had a contingency plan. They never had any prior agreement among themselves; they never lost their mistrust of each other's intentions. To give one example, Gen Valenzuela, the Jefe de Plaza of Santiago, is consulting civilians on how to deal with the commander of the Second Division, whom he has just discovered is quite close to the Allende forces (and which we and most interested parties have known for a long time). The Navy CINC talks tough in the meetings with the confreres but speaks softly and reassuringly to his own subordinates. They talk. They wait. They wait for someone to create a propitious climate.

11. There had been some expectations among the Alessandri forces that economic conditions might provide the essential provocation. When the banks opened Monday there was a mild run and American newsmen received 47 and even 60 escudos to the dollar. But today things quieted down as Frei's Central Bank President Carlos Massad moved swiftly and effectively to provide the necessary liquidity and as the full panoply of both PDC and Popular Unity forces—political as well as informational—orchestrated a soothing message to the Chilean public. Finance Minister Zaldivar who is totally loyal to Frei put the mint on three shifts so the bank notes will be in ample supply in a few days time thus removing what

might have been a very serious problem by next Saturday. Allende called on Frei yesterday to discuss the economic threat and to ask for recognition as President-elect. Frei received him icily and refused to preempt the constitutional process. However he did agree to have Allende's nominee, Pedro Vuskovic, ultra-left Director of Economic Institute of University of Chile, serve as liaison to Zaldivar in the anti-panic activities. Frei refused to cede to Allende's demand that similar liaison be established in the political sphere between the GOC and his people. The point is that while Frei yearns for Allende's defeat, his govt acts to prevent economic conditions that might set in motion the politico-military forces to defeat Allende. (End Part I)