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Memorandum for the Record

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Nota de Archivo: *Washington. Source: National Security Council, Nixon Intelligence Files, Subject Files, Chile 1970. Secret; Eyes Only. Drafted on September 9. Copies were sent to Mitchell, Packard, Johnson, Moorer, and Helms. Attached to the Department of State's copy of these minutes is a note from Jim Gardner (INR/DDC) to Meyer and Crimmins. Gardner noted, "Bill McAfee, who was there, feels that minutes much understate Helms' pessimism about influencing Congressional vote, and that they overstate passivity of State representatives in face of prospects of an Allende government. We can ask that minutes, insofar as they relate to State position, be corrected if you wish." Crimmins wrote on the note, "This is accurate, but does not reflect the fine line as to 'whose civil war.' Alex did not make clear the distinction between a 100% Chilean military action and one inspired by or based upon U.S. support. I think the mi*

Minutes of the Meeting of the 40 Committee, 8 September 1970

Mr. Kissinger, Mr. Mitchell, Mr. Packard, Mr. Johnson, Admiral Moorer, and Mr. Helms

Mr. Charles A. Meyer, Mr. Viron P. Vaky, Mr. William McAfee, Mr. Thomas Karamessines, and Mr. William Broe were also present.

Chile

a. The Chairman opened the meeting with a reference to Ambassador Korry's excellent cable of 7 September 1970 and asked for an analysis of where prospects now stand for taking any kind of action which might successfully preclude Allende assuming the presidency of Chile following his garnering of a plurality of the popular vote in the elections on 4 September.

b. Mr. Broe summarized the situation and highlighted some of the points in Ambassador Korry's cable. He noted that Korry is attempting to maintain flexibility and that there is some, but not much, fluidity in the situation. He pointed out that Frei is an essential cog to success in any action, congressional or military, to frustrate an Allende take-over and that Ambassador Korry is very pessimistic about the prospects of Frei doing much more than deploring Allende's electoral victory. He concluded that it is still too early to decide on a given course of action and suggested that the Embassy and CIA field elements be requested during the next week to probe all possible aspects of feasible actions and forward recommendations as to what might be done.

c. In the lively discussion which followed, there was general agreement that more time to assess the situation was essential. It was also agreed that there is now little likelihood of success in the previously proposed operation to influence the 24 October congressional run-off election against Allende.

d. Mr. Helms, noting that congressional action against Allende was not likely to succeed, offered his personal observation that once Allende is in office it is predictable that the Chilean opposition to him will disintegrate and collapse rapidly. He

expressed the view that Allende will quickly neutralize the military and police after which there will be no effective rallying point for opposition against him. Without advocating it as a course of action, he observed that a military golpe against Allende would have little chance of success unless undertaken soon. He stated that even then there is no positive assurance of success because of the apolitical history of the military in Chile and the presence of Allende supporters in various military elements.

e. Mr. Packard was also strongly of the view that any effective military action to prevent Allende from assuming the presidency would have to occur in the very near future. He expressed the hope that the Chilean military leaders would undertake such action soon on their own initiative.

f. Messrs. Johnson and Meyer pointed out that if Allende's election is frustrated by a military take-over, there is a strong likelihood that his supporters would take to the streets and plunge the country into full-scale civil war. They felt that Allende was possibly the lesser of two evils. They suggested that Frei should be strongly counseled to start immediately building an effective political opposition for the future before important individuals who would constitute that opposition might decide to leave the country.

g. The Chairman and Mr. Mitchell expressed considerable skepticism that once Allende is in the presidency there will be anyone capable of organizing any real counterforce against him.

h. In accord with the agreement of those present, the Chairman directed that the Embassy be immediately requested for a cold-blooded assessment of:

(1) the pros and cons and problems and prospects involved should a Chilean military coup be organized now with U.S. assistance, and

(2) the pros and cons and problems and prospects involved in organizing an effective future Chilean opposition to Allende.

i. The Chairman stated that these assessments and recommendations should be available in time for 40 Committee consideration in a meeting to be convened on 14 September.