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Backchannel Message From the Ambassador to Chile (Korry) to the 40 Committee

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Following was drafted at Ambassador's instruction as additional input for 40 Committee deliberations. Ambassador is in Vina del Mar today in connection meeting there of OAS Education-Scientific Council. Any amendments or additions he may have to this message will be forwarded promptly.

1. Ambassador had three separate, unannounced visitors at residence evening of September 11, each coming alone and leaving before the next arrived: Min Def Sergio Ossa, Senate Pres Tomas Pablo and former Min Finance Raul Saez. First two had same message: Saez has been designated as channel between Amb and group in GOC/PDC (including Frei) who are working to bring about anti-Allende vote in Congress and new Presidential election. Saez prepared to transmit ideas and information to and from. He is old and close friend of Amb's with whom frequent contacts are only natural. He is also man of unquestioned rectitude who, interestingly enough, has not spoken to Frei for two years as a result of the dispute that arose at the time he left GOC. It was agreed that further meetings with Ossa, Pablo or other prominent figures in the group would be restricted to essential occasions and would only take place under most careful security conditions, [less than 1 line not declassified]. (Amb will be meeting with Frei today in Vina. Min Education Pacheco, a notorious unguided missile, insisted on arranging call by Asst. Sec. John Richardson on President with Amb accompanying. Initiative was entirely Pacheco's.)

2. Current line up. Ossa told Amb that Frei is committed to formula, all-out to make it work, and prepared offer himself as candidate for Presidency if it does. All of Cabinet is with President except Justice Min Gustavo Lagos and Pacheco. (Former indicated his leanings by leaking to leftist media data on passport applications of El Mercurio repeat El Mercurio publisher Agustin Edwards and family; latter described by Ossa as "floating off in space".) Ossa and Pablo confirmed that 38 PDC parliamentarians are now lined up to vote for Alessandri, with 17 prepared back Allende and 19 undecided (see Embtel 3640. We will send separately actual breakdown by names.) Organization of anti-Allende PDC forces is apparently rather complex. There is committee of Lower House Deputies, including such stalwarts as Carlos Sivari and President's nephew Arturo Frei. There is also a working committee of individuals not directly connected with Congress or GOC. Key man in congressional effort is Deputy Jorge Santibanez (whose contacts with Embassy have now been terminated). Others, including Deputy Emilio Lorenzini who has strong ties to Campesino organizations, will play important roles in creating support for anti-Allende position among party bases. (This latter is an essential element if the formula is to work. As explained in our previous message, the party junta repeat junta must take a favorable decision. That body will be heavily influenced by rank and file attitudes.) We will provide more later on organizational and tactical details.

3. U.S. input. On his own initiative Ossa spelled out what he needed from us: (A) Above all, those participating in this effort who are the most firmly committed and/or the most vulnerable to retaliation from the left, want assurance that there will be a way out of the country for them and their families if they fail. Amb pledged that he personally would do everything possible to arrange that sufficient commercial air transportation is available out of Santiago during Oct 25–Nov 4 period. Red tape problems currently hindering quick exits would, of course, be up to GOC. (B) Ossa has little confidence in the intelligence he is receiving on attitudes and maneuvers among his own military. He is fearful—with some reason—that armed forces will strike a bargain with Allende which would close the door on his group and its formula. Ossa said he wanted info from us, the only source he considered reliable. Amb explained our limitations in this field, but indicated we would do what we could on very discreet basis to help keep Min Def abreast of developments in military. (C) Ossa believes it important that the lawyer son of Anaconda's Guillermo Carey be taken out of Chile ASAP. Latter, an indiscreet bumbler, is egging General Viaux on, feeding his pathetic Peronist ambitions. This feeble maneuver muddies the military waters and poses the gravest risks for the Anaconda (and US) position in this country. Amb said he felt Carey's early departure could be arranged.

(D) Ossa asked for help in listing and locating those key individuals in the Marxist camp whose absence from Chile might be desirable if it comes to point of possible violent leftist reaction to congressional decision against Allende. Amb made no commitment.

(E) Of prime psychological importance, particularly in terms of PDC junta repeat junta action, is getting the word to the Chilean people as to what is really happening here: e.g., aggressive FRAP moves to grab levers of local and institutional power in advance of Oct. 24; intimidation of non-Marxists in the media, universities, campo, local organizations, etc.; financial panic, rising fear of the Marxists and their intentions, etc. This picture can best be fed into the country from abroad; reports from abroad unfavorable to Popular Unity are easier for the domestic media to handle under present circumstances and have a considerably greater impact than stories originated locally. In Ossa's opinion we could be of great help in this exercise. Amb said he would look into how we might discreetly assist, while pointing out that the information itself must come from Chilean sources.

(F) Finally, Ossa passed on rumor "from university" that two Cuban ships are bound for Chile with arms. Amb skeptical, but said we would check.

4. Question of future U.S. posture. For his part, Pablo told Amb that question of USG aid relationship with an Allende govt is critical factor affecting the choice PDC'ers must make. Tomic is saying that U.S. assistance will not be cut off; that world now changed and old Cold War standards no longer apply; that he—Tomic—has the connections in U.S. Congress (Fulbright, Kennedy, et al.) To assure a reasonable attitude and continued aid. Those not convinced by this siren song are deeply preoccupied. They fear U.S. will allow Chile sink into oblivion as economic troubles pile up. Prospect of substitute Soviet aid is another element being weighed in the balance. Amb made it clear that he personally would oppose any initiative for a U.S. bail-out of Chile under Allende, and reminded Pablo of continuing Soviet efforts lighten their Cuban burden, preferably by transferring some of it to the U.S. He also recalled that Soviets responded to Peruvian approach on aid with advice to make it up with the U.S. Hopes for substantial support from that quarter should be regarded as very thin indeed.

One final point on Pablo conversation: he reported from personal observation that Tomic was summoned to the telephone election night to take a call from the "State Department." We can add that rumor is all over town that Tomic has received some kind of direct message from the Dept. Any light you can shed will be appreciated.

5. The U.S. role. Amb sees possibilities for meaningful political action on the ground here in support of the formula as presently limited to the exchange of the kind of ideas, impressions, information and the like which the Saez channel will

make possible. Pablo, Ossa, Saez—all are in agreement that the USG must stay completely in the background; any showing of our hand would be disastrous in terms of reactions from such key PDC nationalists as Renan Fuentealba and as confirmation of Marxist line that effort bar Allende is an imperialist plot. Saez and those he will be communicating with on the other end can be trusted. It is the most discreet possible kind of relationship, but also one which will enable us to monitor this effort closely while exerting influence and providing counsel. By keeping in close touch we can also determine when and if the contribution of U.S. resources and/or political action mechanisms might prove decisive. In meantime, remainder of this Mission will hold to line of absolute non-involvement in the Chilean political process, restricting our activities to normal information collection.