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Transcript of a Telephone Conversation Between Secretary of State Rogers and the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)

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[Omitted here is discussion unrelated to Chile.]

R: Okay. On Chile, CIA has prepared a paper with general conclusions which I think are pretty good—our people agree. But whatever we do, I think there are two things we should take into consideration: one, we want to be sure the paper record doesn't look bad. No matter what we do it will probably end up dismal. So our paper work should be done carefully. I hope there aren't any CIA backchannels we don't know about. I talked with the President at length about it. My feeling—and I think it coincides with the President's—is that we ought to encourage a different result from thebut should do so discreetly so that it doesn't backfire.

K: The only question is how one defines "backfire."

R: Getting caught doing something. After all we've said about elections, if the first time a Communist wins the U.S. tries to prevent the constitutional process from coming into play we will look very bad.

K: The President's view is to do the maximum possible to prevent an Allende takeover, but through Chilean sources and with a low posture.

R: I have been disturbed by Korry's telegrams. They sound frenetic and somewhat irrational. I know that he's under pressure but we ought to be careful of him. He's got tender nerve ends. I don't know if you saw his telegrams.

K: Yes, I did.

R: And I think we've got to be sure he acts with discretion. He's a high-strung fellow.

K: I think what we have to do is make a cold-blooded assessment, get a course of action this week some time and then get it done.

R: I talked to John E . I think it's important that he understand that what he's doing is not his doing but encouraging the Chileans to do what they should. If it's our project as distinguished from Chilean it's going to be bad from [for?] us. I'm not sure he's the best man to do it. I'm not sure he's the most discreet fellow. But we want to be sure CIA is not dealing with him through backchannels.

K: Is it?

R: Not that I know of right now. We ought, as you say, to cold-bloodedly decide what to do and then do it.