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Backchannel Message From the Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs (Johnson) to the Ambassador to Chile (Korry)

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Nota de Archivo: *Washington. Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 774, Country Files, Latin America, Chile, Vol. II. Secret; Sensitive. On September 15, Johnson transmitted telegram 151170, "Strictly Eyes Only" to Korry. In it, Johnson informed Korry that he would receive instructions regarding the "Allende election problem" in a backchannel message and noted that, "In carrying out and interpreting this instruction, I want you to know that its language has been very carefully considered and approved at the highest levels, including the President. Few Ambassadors have been given a more difficult or delicate assignment; the keynote of which is contained in para 6 of the instruction. Good luck." (Ibid., RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, POL 14 CHILE)*

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1. Meeting of 40 Committee Sept 14 covered at length and in some detail the changing panorama in Santiago and focused on the Frei re-election gambit via the scenario by which Congress elects Ales-sandri who resigns leaving Frei constitutionally free to run for the presidency.

2. You should ascertain from Frei whether and to what degree he is committed to this line of action. You may indicate to him that if he is, we are willing to support his efforts in suitable and discreet ways. You should report his precise words to us as promptly as possible. If he has suggestions as to how we might support these efforts, please report those fully as well.

3. You have at your discretion the contingency fund of [dollar amount not declassified] previously requested for covert support of projects which Frei or his trusted team deem important. More can be made available. If in your judgment Frei is willing to commit himself to this course of action, you may in your discretion inform him of this availability. (This fund may be disbursed as agreed between you and the Station Chief.)

4. The Agency has begun and will continue a propaganda campaign outside Chile on the danger of an Allende take-over. This will be expanded to include support of the Frei re-election gambit.

5. Military contacts by all appropriate members of the Mission should be intensified for the purpose of assuring ourselves that we have the requisite intelligence to enable independent assessment of the military determination to back the Frei re-election gambit.

6. Your role is thus very delicate one and you will be required to walk fine line. We do not want to get out in front and we do not want to "take over." Yet we do not want their will to flag for lack of support.

7. In this regard we ask that you keep us currently and continuously informed of the attitude and plans of the Chileans involved together with your recommendations so that we can jointly make judgments on how far we want to go.