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Memorandum From Viron P. Vaky of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)

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Chile—Our Modus Operandi

This is to confirm and elaborate on my oral recommendations to you on mechanisms to carry out the 40 Committee's decisions on Chile.

Unless some tight control and guidance is established, the action program that was approved will not work. It is going to be a long-shot as it is; we cannot afford the additional handicaps of unprofessional activism, of lack of coordination and of bureaucratic resistance. Unless we are to be professional and efficient about this and run it all very tightly, we should stop mucking around.

The troubles are these:

—State is timid and unsympathetic; it will provide neither the imaginative leadership nor the tight coordinated overview we need.

—Korry is imaginative, but he is an unguided missile. It is professionally bad from an intelligence-operation point of view for the Ambassador to be the project chief. He is too exposed; it is too dangerous.

—But Korry does not trust his staff to do this, and feels he must take the responsibility—and credit—for the operation. The Station Chief cannot operate in these circumstances.

—CIA is unhappy, but does not feel it can impose discipline on Korry; it certainly cannot do it through its present Station Chief.

—There is neither enthusiasm nor consensus among agencies up here for doing any overall planning and thinking. Hence we tend to react to what happens in Santiago, and ideas about new things to mesh into the operation are neither forthcoming or—if they are—are implemented adequately.

—The 40 Committee does not have the time for this kind of close supervision, and the long-lag would make it impossible anyway.

The result is that although no one particularly wants him to have it, Korry has the ball and is running. Yet there is a curious lethargy and muddled confusion with regard to doing anything about it. Everyone just seems to have his fingers crossed hoping that no leaks or exposure occur and that it all works out. We are not really sure if what we are doing is

professionally sound as possible or what more we might do technically to improve the plan's effectiveness.

I think this is a dangerous situation because (a) our risks of being found out are maximized this way, and (b) our efficiency is cut.

There are only two alternatives it seems to me:

1. Establish an action task force here to run things; this would meet on a daily basis, make decisions, send out directives, keep tabs on things. It would coordinate activities on several fronts and be able to think up and plan various operations to implement the program. There are precedents for this. For it to succeed, the task force would have to have the necessary authority to instruct the Ambassador; it would have to work fast and in utmost secrecy—not through normal bureaucratic procedures. It would need to be run essentially by CIA, because it is the professionality of a covert operation that we seek. It would need a chairman of the authority of someone like Karamessines.

While this idea is infinitely better than our present situation, it still suffers from the time lag that would necessarily be involved. In a fast moving situation operational decisions may have to be made on the spot.

For that reason, I prefer the following course:

2. Send to Santiago an expert to take over the program and to implement it under the Ambassador's (and Washington's) broad guidance. The Ambassador would oversee and approve, but would draw back from personal operations and involvement to protect himself. The activities would be planned and run by the professional under the parameters established. The expert would report to the Ambassador, but would generally be the field general for our activity. (This is about what we did in 1964.)

The argument against this is that Korry will never let it happen. He will still insist on doing it himself. That is probably true if CIA or State take the initiative; he will just think it is the bureaucracy kibitzing. But if the White House gives him the directive, he would do so—he would have no choice. Even if his feelings are somewhat hurt, I see no alternative. The risks are too great otherwise.