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Memorandum From William J. Jorden of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)

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Nota de Archivo: *Summary: In this memorandum, Jorden informed Kissinger of an assassination threat against Allende and examined the potential political crisis looming on the horizon. Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 776, Country Files, Latin America, Chile, Vol. VII. Secret; Sensitive. Sent for information.*

Threatened Assassination of Allende; Political Crisis Looms in Chile

You should be aware of the following:

We have a report that outbreaks of violence may occur in Chile beginning tomorrow (May 19) culminating in an attempt to assassinate President Allende on Sunday (May 21). The information—which comes from two sources, [2 lines not declassified]—is too detailed to be ignored. It may, of course, be exaggerated. However, rumors of impending violence—and even civil war—have begun to spread through Santiago.

The plot is attributed to leaders of the Movement of the Revolutionary Left (MIR), a group dedicated to revolutionary violence. They are reportedly disillusioned with Allende because of his failure to move Chile faster and farther toward leftist totalitarian rule. They are opposed by the Communist Party of Chile which supports Allende in his policy of gradualism in building a socialist state. It is the Communists who reportedly have disclosed the MIR plot to Allende.

The MIR plan appears to be: to foment serious civil disturbances in southern Chile. This would draw significant elements of the Army to the south and away from Santiago. Then, on Sunday May 21, when Allende is scheduled to open the new session of the Congress, the MIR would strike in Santiago—with terror and murder and massive violence.

Allende has taken the threat with enough seriousness to triple his own bodyguard. He is also reported to have put Chilean Army units in the south on special alert. We also have a report that he has called a special emergency session of leaders of Popular Unity (UP), the government coalition, to consider how to deal with the problem.

The Communists are said to have threatened to withdraw from the ruling coalition unless Allende takes forceful action to oppose the MIR promptly. The Communists are reportedly demanding an immediate confrontation with MIR. They are also insisting that Allende remove some 700 MIR members or sympathizers from government jobs. Our intelligence sources indicate that Allende is not the only intended victim of attack. Apparently there may also be attempts made on the lives of some Communist Party leaders and even some foreign diplomats (especially Communists). The purpose of these actions is said to be to "prove" that rightists are responsible for the violence. Once violence erupts, the MIR would use the resulting confusion as a pretext for revolution and violent take-over of authority.

There is no indication in any of the intelligence reports of anything more than coincidence between the alleged plotting of violence in Chile and President Nixon’s departure for Moscow.