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Memorandum From the President's Military Assistant (Scowcroft) to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)

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Nota de Archivo: *Summary: This memorandum provided a chronology of White House involvement in covert efforts to influence the Chilean political situation from September 14 to November 8, 1970. Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 778, Country Files, Latin America, Chile, Coup Cables. Top Secret; Eyes Only. The tabs are attached but not published.*

White House Involvement in Chilean Election

The attached folder contains special channel messages between Ambassador Korry and the White House (or Alex Johnson in 40 Committee role) during the period September 14, 1970 to November 8, 1970. This covers most of the period between Allende's victory in the popular election (September 3) and the Congressional run-off (October 24) and Inauguration (November 3). These messages have been examined for evidence of White House involvement in actions which might prove embarrassing. Also included is a summary cable from Ambassador Korry outlining various instructions he received and messages he sent during the period January 19 to September 13, 1970 (Tab A), provided in response to a Presidential request on November 7 for a history of evidence leading up to the "present situation in Chile". The document focuses primarily on the Ambassador's conflicts with State which apparently he had earlier discussed directly with the President. The Korry summary (Tab A) is, therefore, slanted to the problem of key concern at the time as to whether enough had been done to prevent the emergence of a freely elected communist regime in Latin America.

This sample of messages indicates the extent of White House involvement during this period, which was primarily in a 40 Committee context.

—On March 27 Ambassador Korry was notified that a limited program directed against Allende had been approved by the 40 Committee. This included funding to foster radical party dissidence (Tab A).

—On July 3, Korry was notified that Phase I of his program for political action had been approved by the 40 Committee. (Tab A)

—Your back channel message of September 12 expressed the President's appreciation of Korry's perceptive reporting and efforts. It asked for recommendations as to courses of action. This was at a time when State was trying to hold Korry down (Tab A).

—Korry made a lengthy back-channel report to you on recommended political actions, mostly of a propaganda nature designed to help Allende's opponents within the constitutional framework and at the same time improve the bargaining position of his opponents if Allende should win (Tab B).

—On September 26, Korry reported to you and Secretary Johnson that the Minister of Defense had informed military leaders in Chile that Korry had authorized him to say that there would be no military assistance or any other military connections with the United States if Allende won (Tab G).

—In a report to you, while you were abroad, Director Helms indicated that the 40 Committee on September 29 accepted some of Korry's ideas for bringing economic pressure (Tab M).

—A September 30 message from Johnson to Korry reported some limited steps being taken in the economic and financial fields which would indicate concern about Chile's long-term financial stability. He stated thatMAPtraining was being suspended with 40 Committee approval (Tabs L, M).

—An October 1 message from Johnson gave Korry authorization to inform military leaders that we would suspend MAP matériel deliveries. Export license requests by the Chilean military were also held up at that point.

—In a message to you and Johnson on October 1, Korry reported he had informed the Defense Minister that if Allende wins, the U.S. will not be in a position to provide any financial support of the PDC for any activities. Korry spread several unsettling stories about the consequences of a communist regime (Tab P).

—On October 7 the Defense Minister was informed privately by Korry that training and FMS and MAP deliveries would be held in abeyance until the policies of the new government were established (Tab W).

—On October 8, the Defense Minister was informed in writing that the training program was being held in abeyance (Tab W).

—In an October 9 message (Tab X), Korry referred to a message of October 7 (not in files) which apparently discussed points he should make to the Chilean military and also discussed the possibility of offering more MAP as an incentive to block Allende. The message to Korry apparently asked his evaluation of a proposal for a coup received from a group with whom Korry had not been involved. Korry was very negative about any coup attempts at that point and stated there was no longer a basis for hope of the success of any action program.

—On November 6, Korry requested the use of a small amount of funds to influence decisions within the PDC in favor of particular PDC candidates for President (Tab AA).

In practically all of the above cases the messages were transmitted through 40 Committee channels and the appropriate representatives of the bureaucracy apparently participated in the decisions. It would appear that the action program amounted to rather restrained and limited political interference. Korry took some authorized actions to try to influence the vote and had a number of direct and indirect consultations with Allende's opposition and the military leadership. The Ambassador also had many contacts with company representatives but appears to have been cautious and discreet in his dealings with them. There are no references to ITT. There is, however, evidence of a certain free-wheeling quality to his style of operation during this period and he obviously was frustrated by State's reluctance to take vigorous action, particularly in the early stages before the popular election in early September.

There are no indications that the U.S. fostered a coup attempt to circumvent Allende's coming to power. In a cable of September 25 (Tab E), Korry reported he had instructed his military and CAS people in very strong terms not to give encouragement of any kind to potential coup plotters. He reported on September 28 a questionable offer of a coup by a military group in return for certain financial assurances (Tab I) This obviously was not accepted. The only indication of some Washington interest in evaluating a coup is in the message referred to above (Tab X).

The picture drawn from these cables cannot be considered complete since it is only a limited sample. It would appear that a number of Korry's messages were not immediately answered but this could also reflect some missing exchanges. A full report on White House involvement would require examination of minutes of 40 Committee meetings, MemCons of appointments by Korry with you and the President, front channel cables between State and Chile, TelCons, memoranda received from the agencies and sent to the President, activities with other foreign governments, etc. This examines only a narrow time frame; a full understanding of the problem would require examination of both the period before and after the one encompassed by these cables. In the post-Inauguration period, for example, there are a number of direct back channels with Korry and numerous SRG/NSC meeting records which might provide insights on activities prior to November.

If you wish a fuller examination, we could proceed in one or all of the following ways:

—Obtain the book compiled by Nachminoff which should have a complete file of cables, as well as providing many other sources.

—Review the minutes of 40 Committee deliberations and records of decisions.

—Make a complete study of all source data available on the entire period.

You may wish to wait to see the results of the study you requested from Jim Schlesinger before directing further White House research by your office or Jorden.