DECLASSIFIED // SECRET // DECLASSIFIED

Annex to the Study Prepared in the Interdepartmental Group for Inter-American Affairs In Response to National Security Study Memorandum 97

Identificador Archival:	frus:frus1969-76ve16/d14
Agencia Emisora:	NSC / Casa Blanca
Fecha del Documento:	1970-08-18
Colección / Serie:	FRUS 1969–1976, vol. E-16: Documentos sobre Chile, 1969–1973

Nota de Archivo: *Summary: This annex to the response to NSSM 97 (Document 13) presented a fourth option not contained in that study. It was premised on the assumption that an Allende government was a threat to the national security of the United States and therefore warranted the overthrow of Salvador Allende by the Chilean military. The annex included possible strategies to encourage the Chilean military to overthrow the government. Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H–48, Senior Review Group, Chile (NSSM 97), 10/14/70. This paper, referred to as the covert annex to the response to NSSM 97, was attached to a copy of the response presented to Kissinger in preparation for a Senior Review Group meeting on October 14. For the minutes of the October 14 meeting, see Foreign Relations, 1969–1976, vol. XXI, Chile, 1969–1973, Document 150.*

ANNEX NSSM–97

Extreme Option—Overthrow Allende

1. Stance—This option would be based on the judgment that an Allende government would be a security threat to the United States sufficiently great to justify a covert effort to overthrow him. This option also assumes that every effort would be made to ensure that the role of the United States was not revealed, and so would require that the action be effected through Chilean institutions, Chileans, and third-country nationals.

It is assumed that the only institution in Chile capable of removing Allende or preventing him from assuming office if he is elected is the Chilean military. However, it is not likely that the Chilean military will act against Allende unless provoked by blatant Allende actions that break abruptly with Chilean traditions. A direct threat to the military itself would be the most pronounced provocation, but acts seen as flagrantly flouting the structure of Chilean political, social and economic traditions conceivably could stimulate a move by the Chilean armed forces. But it must be recognized that the military in Chile traditionally respect the constitution and generally pursue a role of non-involvement in political affairs. We have no information indicating that the military leaders plan to abandon this posture in the event of an Allende victory. As stated in the NSSM, we expect that Allende would move with extreme caution with regard to the military forces. He would improve their pay and perquisites, and by careful use of his powers of appointment and promotion, would put into key spots officers sympathetic to him while isolating opponents. In these circumstances the emergence of a unified bloc of officers dedicated to the prevention of a revolutionary Marxist state in Chile is not a realistic prospect. In summary, we cannot depend on the military for spontaneous and independent action to remove Allende, at least during the early stages of his administration.

It can be assumed that national party leaders and conservative business elements fearing an Allende government would give some thought to involving the military in contingency planning. However, we do not know the breadth and depth of

the contacts maintained with the military or which may be under development by these groups. But even though we thus are unable to make a judgment as to the chances of success of such efforts to stimulate the military, it is still considered doubtful that the latter would move without itself being predisposed by its own conclusions as to the undesirability of an Allende government.

This option also assumes that the Argentine armed forces, although unhappy with the prospects of an Allende government, do not now have specific ideas about an overthrow. Nor do we have any expectation that the Chilean military would respond to an Argentine stimulus. It is possible, although remotely, that the Argentine armed forces would complement a Chilean military effort to overthrow Allende if the latter undertook the step on its own volition.

This option further assumes that U.S. support would be a helpful but marginal factor in the calculations of the Chilean military in an attempt to topple an Allende administration. [7 lines not declassified] If these determinations augured well, steps could be taken toward the objective of ultimately suggesting or sponsoring military action against Allende. Even in this estimate we conclude that the Chilean military must be already conditioned and disposed to move on Allende and that our involvement would not be the decisive influence to push them in this direction.

2. Advantages—Successful U.S. involvement with a Chilean military coup would almost certainly permanently relieve us of the possibility of an Allende government in Chile. The coup would demonstrate the unwillingness of moderate Chilean forces to permit their country to be taken down the path toward an authoritarian Marxist state and would show a degree of concern by Chilean forces for the wellbeing of its neighbors in the hemisphere.

3. Disadvantages—This option plainly involves the highest risks for the United States. The most important disadvantage is that there is little chance that, even with our stimulation, an overthrow of Allende would be attempted, and there is almost no way to evaluate the likelihood that such an attempt would be successful even were it made. An unsuccessful attempt, involving as it probably would revelation of U.S. participation, would have grave consequences for our relations in Chile, in the hemisphere, in the United States and elsewhere in the world. Were the overthrow effort to be successful, and even were U.S. participation to remain covert—which we cannot assure—the United States would become a hostage to the elements we backed in the overthrow and would probably be cut off for years from most other political forces in the country, including the Alessandri and Christian Democrat groups.