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Chronology Prepared for the Washington Special Actions Group

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Nota de Archivo: *Summary: This chronology, titled "Chile: Chronology From DDC Files—1970," summarized the U.S. covert actions undertaken to prevent Allende from coming to power. Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H–94, WSAG Meeting, Chile, 9/14/73. Secret. Marginalia for the June 18 entry are not declassified. Several handwritten additions have been incorporated in the published text.*

CHILE: CHRONOLOGY FROM DDC FILES—1970

March 25—Minutes of 40 Committee Meeting. The 40 Committee approved a proposal that [dollar amount not declassified] be committed to the Chilean presidential campaign; the assistance should not go to any specific candidate; rather the covert effort should be confined to spoiling operations undertaken against the UP. It was recognized that recommendations might later be advanced for additional action, possibly including even direct support to one particular candidate.

April 10—[less than 1 line not declassified] pressed Meyer very hard on the need for USG to make a large contribution to the Alessandri presidential campaign. He promised to go as high as necessary in the USG to ensure that this was done. [2 lines not declassified]

April 29—Santiago 1538 (SECRET/NODIS)—Korry recommends rejection of [name not declassified] proposition, stating that Alessandri had enough money, that our assistance would become known and that even if there were an Alessandri victory, the climate in Chile would not be propitious for capitalistic enterprise.

June 18—Korry reported over CAS channels that trends could well culminate in election of Allende. He advised substantial strengthening of the USG covert anti-Allende effort. He asked for approval of: [dollar amount not declassified] chiefly to be used in an anti-UP propaganda campaign, for the pre-electoral period; [dollar amount not declassified] for the post-electoral period to buy congressional votes. [2 lines not declassified] The 40 Committee decided to approve Korry's proposal for [dollar amount not declassified] for pre-electoral anti-Allende activities but decided to defer for later consideration the proposal to buy congressional votes. [1½ lines not declassified] No positive action was to be taken on the congressional matter without further deliberation by the Committee. Communicated to Korry (7/2/70) with this caveat emphasized.

August 5—Crimmins told Korry through CAS channels that as Korry considered the three options transmitted him in other channel, he should consider the "fourth option"; i.e., the overthrow of Allende or prevention of his inauguration. Korry was asked to comment on the prospect that Chilean military and police would act, their chances of success, and the importance of the US attitude to the initiation or success of such an operation.

August 11—CIA discussed in annex to NSSM 97 the “fourth option” in terms of capability of military to overthrow Allende or prevent his taking office.

August 11—Korry replied to Crimmins that he did not consider the “fourth option” as very realistic. It could only be considered after the elections and prior to the inauguration. If Allende were inaugurated by constitutional process it would be unlikely that there would be a military move. If Allende should win the popular vote by less than 100,000 the army perhaps could assure an opportunity for the congress to block his election. After examining the various possible permutations of the electoral finish, Korry concluded that he could conceive of no supportable scheme for a US role that was strictly limited to the military. Korry reiterated the importance of influencing the congressional vote after 5 September.

August 17—Exploration of the extreme (“fourth”) option under NSSM 97 by ARA, which recommends against as being very risky regarding our exposure and unlikely of success.

August 21—Korry once more informed over CAS channels he should not go outside of Embassy in considering feasibility of so-called phase 2—the covert actions to be taken after the general elections (buying congressional votes).

August 24—Korry speculated over CAS channels on various actions that might be taken depending on who finished where in the popular vote. Speaking of the possibility that Allende would win this vote, Korry said that in this case he would have to concentrate on the congressional vote. He spoke of pressure on foreign statesmen, copper prices, etc., suggested any USG reaction should be limited to that which does not injure U.S. prestige (money and information).

August 29—CAS Santiago outlined at length steps that might be taken, including a suggestion [2½ lines not declassified]. Any US role will be auxiliary.

August 31— ARA and INR/DDC, in a memo to J commenting on a CIA paper to the 40 Committee, recommended intensifying propaganda action in Chile, but against buying congressional votes, on grounds risk is prohibitively high. Mr. Cline noted in an addendum that if there were assurances that the operation would be secure, he would advise authorizing the [dollar amount not declassified] that Korry requested for buying congressional votes.

September 4—Mr. Cline, commenting in a note on a memo from Coerr advising against buying congressional votes, reiterated his position that such purchase should be employed if necessary.

September 5—Korry asked through CAS channels how election affects Phase II. Korry responding, expressed pessimism about the possibility of buying congressional votes.

September 8—40 Committee agreed there was little likelihood of success in buying congressional votes. Helms said military coup would have little chance of success. Packard said military leaders would have to move quickly were there to be any chance of a successful coup. Johnson and Meyer said that Allende was probably less of an evil than full scale civil war in Chile. The Chairman asked for an assessment of the pros and cons of US helping to organize a Chilean military coup.

September 8—INR/DDC and ARA recommended against attempting to buy congressional votes and against actions that could be interpreted as inciting the Chilean military to take action.

September 9—CAS Headquarters, in a message to Santiago, asked for an assessment of the possibility of any action by the Chilean military. In introducing its message, CIA stated that the 40 Committee on 8 September, in considering “the possible manipulation of Chilean congressional and military action, decided to give serious consideration only to the latter possibility”. CAS was authorized to make appropriate contacts to obtain information but was instructed that it was not to incite or organize at this point. (NOTE: The military action contemplated was, according to the message, either coup d’état

or action along lines of Korry's "Labor Organization telegram"—which is not available in INR/DDC).

September 9–10—In an exchange of NODIS telegrams with Washington, Korry indicates he is sending telegrams on two levels, one for general consumption; one for more privileged reading. State's belief that future of Chile lies in hands of Frei, apparently through "Rube Goldberg" Alessandri/Frei ploy. Korry says he "worked on" Frei's (Alessandri?) statement.

September 11—The Secretary reminded Korry that there had been, in a [handling restriction not declassified] telegram [number not declassified], a reminder that there was no decision authorizing a program of political action to prevent Allende from being elected. He spoke of the importance of keeping information collection from becoming interpreted as encouragement or support to a course of action that the USG had not in fact adopted.

September 11—Ambassador reported over CAS channels his contacts with PDC dignitaries, who speculated on the effective help that the US might give to prevent an Allende election.

September 12—Korry stated over CAS channels that it was clear that Chilean military would not move to prevent Allende's accession, barring national chaos and wide spread violence. He noted also that the Alessandri/Frei formula had acquired new life. The military would probably support the gambit if Frei issued the necessary orders. The military would not take significant action on its own, even though it knew that it had US blessings if it did so. He added that he and CAS were maintaining a very low profile.

September 14— ARA, in a comment on a CIA memorandum, recommended to Johnson that Korry should continue to encourage the Frei re-election ploy; that covert activities and propaganda campaigns should be undertaken to encourage Frei but not open diplomatic effort; and that discreet contacts with the Chilean military should be maintained for information purposes only.

September 14—Korry reported over CAS channels that the army attaché had spoken to General Valenzuela, Santiago Garrison Commander, who told of having spoken to President Frei, who had said he would resign on September 18 so as to permit new elections to be called. Senate President Tomas Pablo, who then would be interim president, would name a military cabinet which would neutralize the communist party and then, after the country was cleaned up, Frei would run for the presidency.

September 12—Crimmins submitted a memo to Johnson that argued against stepping up US support for the Frei/Alessandri election campaign, on grounds revelation U.S. involvement would be worse than Allende victory.

September 14—40 Committee instructed Korry through Secretary Johnson to find out to what degree Frei was committed to the re-election gambit and to tell him that the US would support him in a suitable and discreet way. Korry was reminded of his contingency fund of [dollar amount not declassified] for support of projects which Frei thought important and was informed that more could be made available, for this line of action. Korry was told that military contacts by appropriate mission members should be intensified in order to assure that the requisite intelligence was available regarding military determination to back the campaign. Korry was told his role was a delicate one; US would not want to get out in front yet would not wish Chilean will to flag for lack of support.

September 15—Korry reported that [name not declassified] had reported through a "trusted intermediary" that Viaux would issue a statement saying that he was a firm anti-marxist at the disposition of his country.

September 16—Korry, through CAS channels, replied to Johnson that he was extremely grateful for the confidence and support of the President and the 40 Committee. He said he was aware of the delicacy of his situation. That through an intermediary, he had now informed Frei that the US was prepared to give appropriate support if Frei would only act. That

there was little hope that the military could be galvanized into action; they were toy soldiers. Korry reminded Washington that he had been deprived over the past three years of all means of influencing the military.

September 16—Korry asked that moves be made to keep [less than 1 line not declassified] from pressing El Mercurio, [1½ lines not declassified].

September 17—Meyer affectionately requested Korry to write shorter cables.

September 18—Meyer told Korry over CAS channels that because he understood that Korry had already approached [name not declassified] no further action would be taken in Washington. [1 line not declassified]

September 19—CIA circulated to 40 Committee principals a 17 September CAS report from Santiago reporting that the Chilean armed forces might shortly stage a coup.

September 20—An NSC memo to the 40 Committee explored the questions that would arise from a Chilean move to prevent Allende from taking office. It said there was a 60 per cent chance that in such case that there would be violence but that there was less than an even chance of long term insurgency. If the coup succeeded, the resulting government would have a very difficult problem in maintaining law and order; if it failed the military would be destroyed; external assistance would probably be necessary.

September 21—Korry told USCINCSO, General Mather, that he proposed to tell the Chilean military that all MAP military training was to be suspended—this in an effort to get the Chilean military to move.

September 21—General Mather recommended against Korry's proposed action.

September 21—Korry reported through CAS channels that Economics Minister Figueroa had not challenged the Ambassador's observation that Frei should let General Schneider know that in their view a favorable parliamentary solution was no longer in the cards.

September 21—Korry reported that Ossa agreed to pursue Korry's suggestion that Frei should be persuaded to either quit the country or to invite military participation in the cabinet and that, if necessary, Schneider would have to be neutralized even if by displacement.

September 22—Over CAS channels, Korry argued that the US ought to suspend MAP training.

September 22—Johnson informed Korry that today "we (apparently the 40 Committee) had considered the concept the military take over the government, control the militant leadership of the UP, and offer a general election with Frei as candidate." Korry was authorized to let Frei know that if such a course—which must be entirely Chilean—was taken, Frei could count on US financial support and that; if Allende were blocked from office, the Chilean military could continue to count on US support and maintenance of its close relationship with the US. Korry was requested to keep his profile low and operate strictly within his instructions.

September 23—Meyer asked Korry over CAS channels how he visualized a military-dominated cabinet; would not Frei still lack votes in congress or was there some other formula that could be "worked out whereby constitutionality" could be maintained?

September 23—State informed Korry over CAS channels that MAP should not be suspended.

September 24—Johnson told Korry over CAS channels that Korry's message was puzzling, that the assurances Korry had been authorized to give (presumably Johnson's 22 September message) would serve the end of persuading the Chileans to block Allende; if Korry did not believe so he was to come in with recommendations soonest.

September 24—CIA, in a memo to the chairman of the 40 Committee, reported that Frei had ruled out a political solution and that he was now working for a breakdown in PDC–UP negotiations in order to impress the military that Allende wanted a Marxist State in Chile and thus trigger it to military intervention.

September 24—Korry reported:

Frei had ruled out cabinet resignations for the time being on the grounds that if the military supported the government they would do nothing more than assure a constitutional process that would elect Allende. Frei had told Schneider that it was the military or nothing. Perez Zujovich had informed his key party workers in the PDC that he was disengaging from their works, on the grounds they had used his name and had sought money from the US Embassy, and that he and Frei were furious over these indiscretions with foreigners.

Frei had told a good source a day before that he had had to abandon the congressional formula because of Tomic's activities.

[less than 1 line not declassified] told Korry that only a fast down-turn in the economy could affect the military outlook and provoke it into a move. He suggested: that US banks cease renewing credits to Chile; that US companies should foot drag to the maximum possible on orders, deliveries, credits and so forth; that word should be passed that some of the building and loan associations were near bankruptcy; that a few businesses should close their doors in the next three weeks; that word should be spread that rationing was probable; and that the business down-turn should aim at affecting the provinces as well as Santiago.

September 24—Referring to Santiago NODIS 3872, Korry over CAS channels said that there was no necessity for him to give assurances of any kind to Frei since he, Korry, had emphasized from the start that whatever he did would be Chilean. Embassy profile, Korry said, was at zero level and no risk had been taken. Korry still had his doubts about a coup. Embassy was operating under strictest orders to seek no contacts of any kind. Korry said he would welcome a reversal of the Department's position of diplomatic non-action with our friends, especially the British.

September 24—Korry explained that the DAO cable "Chilean military looking for way out" was based on information given to MAP by the Chilean Air Force Commander. Korry explained that he could not cut off this kind of reporting even though the reporters in this instance were not aware of what was going on under the surface.

September 25—Korry reported that Frei would welcome the US doing his dirty work for him by seeking to provoke a military coup, but Korry said that he was convinced that we could not provoke one and that we should not run any risk simply to have another Bay of Pigs. He therefore had instructed strongly his military and CAS to engage in no encouragement of any kind. Korry commented that [name not declassified] advice (see above) was directed not only to stopping Allende, but also to providing a survivable climate for the opposition should Allende become president. Korry said he saw no risk in pursuing [name not declassified] suggestions with US companies in the US, particularly if one totally discreet leader [name not declassified] were selected. Korry suggested a number of steps: stop bank credit; give wide distribution to the bleak Zaldivar analysis; have one large company fold up—he suggested Ford or Bank of America; the business community should mention specifics in any propaganda it spread in order to push savings and loan associations over the edge; and persuade Anaconda to accede to union demands. The rest of Korry's message was devoted to procedures that should be followed if Allende became president.

September 25—Korry took back his recommendation that Anaconda accede to union demands, and reported speaking to FNCD manager about credit actions.

September 26—At the conclusion of a long message, Korry noted “the economic lever is the last card” and urged the Department to be more swift and purposeful than it had been up to now. Beyond suggesting economic pressures by working with our European friends and by the use of press leaks about the sort of economic measures Chileans might expect if Allende were elected, Korry did not dwell on specifics.

September 28—Korry reported hearing from Anaconda representative that a group of military persons was prepared to launch a coup if it could get appropriate assurances from the USG. Korry noted that he had given no answer to this approach.

September 30—Johnson told Korry that certain steps had been taken in the economic field; they included deferring an SLC loan on cattle; deferral of an EXIM Bank loan to a steel company; EXIM Bank reclassification of Chile from “C” to “D”; deferral of any new IDB loans; suggestions to the Bank of America that its future would not be bright in Chile; and Meyer conversations with Ford. Johnson said also that Meyer would talk with Geneen about uncertainties in the private sector, that DOD was taking action to suspend MAP sponsored trips and training, that Washington was doing its best on external press coverage, and that VOA treatment, about which Korry had complained on 26 September, would be better balanced.

September 30—40 Committee: Johnson said that Alessandri–Frei gambit was dead, as was a cabinet resignation with military replacing it. Johnson said that provoking the military to act by economic crisis was questionably constitutional. Vaky said what we were talking about was a coup. Packard said action was imperative. It was emphasized that there would be no military action unless economic pressures brought it about. Karamessines named various pressures that could be applied. Johnson said that this sort of economic warfare amounted to a change in foreign policy. Karamessines said this was all we had left and Mitchell asked what was there left to lose. Meyer observed that even if Allende came to power he would not be around forever. Helms said that his experience indicated that if Allende did come in, Chile would have no more elections—we should take Allende’s statement at face value. Johnson noted the adverse effect on US interests in the rest of the hemisphere were the US to attempt to use economic pressure to frustrate Chilean constitutional processes.

The Committee agreed that the MAP program should be stopped, [4½ lines not declassified]. Karamessines emphasized Korry’s and Frei’s belief that economic pressure should be undertaken. Meyer noted that US private and public sectors not always in concert in thoughts or actions.

October 1—Johnson informed Korry of the Committee’s decision that MAP training and travel should be suspended and that the Chilean military should be informed.

October 5—Korry suggested that MAP deliveries be “held in abeyance” since the term “suspension” might cause a reaction favorable to Allende.

October 6—McAfee minutes on 40 Committee noted that the Committee was faced with a problem since higher authority would not accept the fact that Allende was likely to be President although Meyer and Korry apparently did. Meyer, according to the minutes, took a less catastrophic view of possibility of Allende’s succession than did some others.

October 6—Korry reported over CAS channels that the last paragraph of his 4087 offered the only remaining constitutional hope, and that it was the slimmest. Korry said the economic situation was continuing to bite but that nothing spectacular had happened.

October 6—In a message to Korry, apparently from Johnson, Korry was notified of the Committee’s decision to hold MAP training and visits in abeyance. He was requested also to reopen his information-gathering channels with the military.

October 7—Kissinger and Johnson told Korry over CAS channels that highest levels in Washington were much concerned that anti-Allende forces in Chile did not seem to be coalescing around any effective action to block his election. Korry

should reconfirm to the military that if Allende was elected, it would expect no further MAP or other support from the U.S. He was reminded that he had been authorized to tell the military that if the effort to block Allende was successful, the Chilean military would not be ostracized but could rather continue to count on MAP support "and maintenance of our close relationship." Korry was informed that he was now to inform the Chilean military discreetly that if there were a successful blocking effort, MAP would be renewed and increases made in the presently programmed aid for the armed forces. Increased ship loans also were possible. If military steps should result in civil disorder, the USG would be prepared to deliver promptly support and material that was needed. Support of American personnel was of course not envisaged. The message said that we did not wish the military to be deterred by any feeling of ambiguity with respect to US attitude toward election of Allende.

October 8—Korry reported that he had notified the Minister of Defense of the decision to hold MAP training and travel in abeyance.

October 9—Korry reported that he had taken every appropriate measure to make the points made in the message from Kissinger and Johnson of 7 October known to the military. He said, however, that he was "unalterably persuaded" that the US could and should do nothing to encourage coup action. The odds were, he said, overwhelmingly against a successful coup without the compliance and commitment of Frei and/or Schneider. Any attempt to encourage a coup could lead to a Bay of Pigs failure. He said he had been appalled to learn that there was liaison for coup plotting among Pablo Rodriguez, Viaux, Major Marshall and discredited rightists. Korry said he had not been consulted or informed of what if any role the US may have had in the financing of Rodriguez.

Korry emphasized again that a coup would be a disaster for the USG and the President. It would, he said, be disastrously risky and recommended that the US should disassociate itself promptly from any association with Rodriguez, and that all indirect contacts with Viaux, Marshall, et al should be ended.

October 9—Korry reported that all elements of the Mission believed that Allende was assured of the Presidency and that the problem now was to construct a policy to deal with that fact. Said he told U.S. businessmen at meeting Oct 9 that US prepared maintain pragmatic relations with Allende, and businessmen agreed.