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Transcript of a Telephone Conversation Between the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) and Senator Frank Church

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Nota de Archivo: *Summary: During this telephone conversation with Kissinger, Church expressed concern for the plight of Chilean citizens and foreigners—including U.S. citizens—caught in Santiago in the immediate aftermath of the military coup. Church suggested that the Organization of American States should intervene to facilitate offering political asylum elsewhere in Latin America. Kissinger agreed to raise the issue during a meeting of the Washington Special Actions Group that afternoon. Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, Kissinger Telephone Conversation Transcripts, Box 22, Chronological File. No classification marking. Church was chairman of the Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere Affairs, Senate Foreign Relations Committee. The Senate Foreign Relations Committee voted 16–1 on September 18 to recommend confirmation of Kissinger's appointment as Secretary of State.*

K: Frank, I just wanted to call you to tell you two things—one how much your vote meant to me personally and secondly to reaffirm what I said to the committee during the sessions of my really strong desire to establish a new relationship with the committee—and of course with you personally whom I've known for many years.

C: It's awfully nice of you to do that Henry, I was glad to give you my vote—you knew that and I look forward to working with you.

K: I know you must—it couldn't have been easy in the total context of the pressures in this country right now.

C: You were the most deserving man to be nominated as any I know and I'm sure you are going to make a great secretary. And if we can reestablish an effective working relationship between the State Dept and the Committee, I think it would serve the country—

K: I feel very strongly—and anything I can do I will do, and if you have any suggestions on how we might do it effectively, I'd be eager to hear them.

C: Thank you Henry. I will take that as an opening wedge and I wish that—I will follow them up. There's one thing that's been weighing heavily on my mind and that's the question of political asylum for these large numbers of people that have been taken into custody in Chile and it occurs to me—two things, first I understand there are or may be some American citizens among them and I assume the State Dept is pursuing it at the moment, the other thing is that the OAS as I recall has a council or commission that deals with questions of political asylum—and I am wondering if we have done anything to urge the OAS to look into this question on strictly humanitarian grounds.

K: I don't think—in the last few days, I've not had the chance to follow this as closely as I should—I don't think we have, but I have a meeting scheduled this afternoon—an interdepartmental meeting on Chile—and I will raise this issue and if anything develops, I'll call you first thing in the morning.

C: That'd be fine. I appreciate it if you would. We've been—we've often been the asylum you know for fascist exiles in this country—I don't propose we be an asylum for these Chileans, but I think there are other countries like Mexico that might open up their gates for some of these exiles and the OAS would be the appropriate instrument through which to work, it would seem to me.

K: Let me—first I'm very sympathetic to the asylum idea. I don't know what the best instrument is—I'd like to consult my colleagues, but you can be certain that it will be high on the agenda this afternoon and I'll call you tomorrow.

C: Thank you Henry.

K: Goodbye.