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Memorandum for the 40 Committee

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Nota de Archivo: *Summary: The paper attached to this memorandum, titled "Chilean Media Under a Marxist Regime," outlined the various types of media in Chile and the corresponding political connections of each. Although there were a number of opposition media outlets in Chile after Allende took power, the CIA report was pessimistic that the Allende regime would continue to allow an independent media to flourish. Source: National Security Council, Nixon Intelligence Files, Subject Files, Chile, 1970. Secret; Eyes Only.*

Chilean Media Under a Marxist Regime

1. Attached for your information is a paper entitled "Chilean Media under a Marxist Regime" which describes the influence of the Popular Unity (UP) coalition in Chilean media prior to and following the inauguration of Salvador Allende as President of Chile.

2. This paper, which was requested by the Chairman of the Committee, reflects the views of both our Station in Santiago and the local USIS office and the Embassy. The gist of the report is that Popular Unity political and economic pressures and a related decrease in advertising revenue are forcing a major portion of Chilean mass communications media towards receivership and ultimate UP control. However, note is taken in conclusion that some newspapers and radio stations directly associated with opposition political parties are continuing to wage an aggressive anti-Communist campaign and merit encouragement and support.

Chilean Media Under a Marxist Regime

1. The Chilean media complex includes over 190 daily newspapers (12 in Santiago); approximately 140 radio stations (29 in Santiago); a national, government-controlled TV network plus three university owned and operated channels; and magazine, textbook, and other publishing companies. This complex has been financed primarily by commercial advertising, which has decreased dramatically since Salvador Allende's election as President of Chile. Its ability to maintain any substantive freedom of expression under the new Marxist government appears dubious.

2. The Popular Unity (UP) coalition which backed Allende's successful bid for the Presidency controlled a substantial segment of this media complex even before the popular elections of 4 September 1970. Much of this Marxist influence among media began in the School of Journalism at the University of Chile, whose graduates control the Colegio de Periodistas (Journalists' Union). Another source of Marxist leverage was their control of various key radio unions, including the Radio Broadcasters' Union (estimated 80% controlled), Radio Journalists' Union (estimated 90% controlled) and the Radio Operators Union (estimated 80% controlled). Control of these key unions enabled the UP to exert pressure on vocal non-Marxists in the media field and to create UP media workers' committees at the working level in media owned by the anti-Marxist right. Prior to the election the UP Parties had direct control over some outlets, such as the Socialist Party's Ultima Hora and the Communist Party's El Siglo, and UP supporters directed the programming of media such as

the University of Chile's television Channel 9 and Radio IEM, Catholic University's Channel 13 in Santiago and Channel 4 in Valparaiso, and State Technical University's Radio UTE. The UP could also count on the assistance of other ostensibly non-UP organs such as Clarin, the largest mass circulation daily. But the UP's greatest strength lay in the heavy concentration of UP supporters at the grass-roots level.

3. The UP electoral program included a vaguely defined promise to turn all media outlets into workers cooperatives. Immediately after the election, on 9 September, Allende stated that "ownership and direction of communications media should be turned over to workers in the media." Concurrently, the UP began a campaign to gain control of key opposition media organs in order to "prevent right-wing maneuvers to steal the elections." Journalists and newscasters who refused to support Allende were threatened with assassination and other forms of physical violence; UP leaders such as Communist Deputy Jorge Inzunza delivered ultimatums to radio stations demanding placement of station newsrooms under UP management and the assignment of UP staff members as news and political commentators; non-Marxist newspapers were told to choose between supporting Allende and being taken over by workers cooperatives. This bullying was short-lived, however, and was less important than long-term infiltration and growing UP influence from the working level upwards. The emergence of a UP government was all that was needed to permit leftist forces to consolidate influence and control over a broad spectrum of Chilean media whose owners and management have been all too willing to fall into line with the new government. Even El Mercurio, Chile's leading conservative newspaper which had successfully resisted an attempted take-over by the leftist-controlled Union of Journalists, modified its editorial policy and ideological emphasis. By the time of Allende's inauguration on 3 November the UP had extended or consolidated its control over numerous key radio stations, including the Radio Portales network which has the highest listenership in the country. It also assumed control of the government-owned daily La Nacion and the government-owned national television network on inauguration day.

4. The Allende government has not spelled out its media policy in detail. Allende has not followed through on his harsh campaign threats against the media which opposed him and has announced his intention to take action only against those media which follow a "seditious" line. The plan to turn media outlets into workers cooperatives appears to have been shelved for the time being in view of the complex financial and managerial problems such a transformation would entail. PDC financiers have expanded their media holdings since the election in an effort to counterbalance UP domination of the media field, particularly radio, which is the most effective mass medium in Chile and is regarded by the UP as the most effective tool available for transforming Chilean society. Allende will probably try to avoid repressive action which would tarnish his "democratic image" at home and abroad.

5. Nevertheless the outlook for non-Marxist Chilean media is bleak. A sizable portion of the industry could be wiped out if advertising revenue falls below operating costs. All media are therefore susceptible to pressures exerted by UP members holding patronage positions in the ministries concerned with labor, taxation and social security, and there are recent indications that such pressures are already being brought to bear on newspapers under PDC control. For instance, government internal revenue inspectors are pressuring Chilean businessmen not to advertise in PDC media and the Communist-controlled union at Zig-Zag, a PDC-controlled publishing company, went on strike from 6 November to 4 December in an apparent attempt to force Zig-Zag into government receivership. These pressures, plus the voluntary transformation of media content and stress which has been evident for some time in many outlets which formerly opposed Allende, indicate that the UP is likely to be successful in establishing control of the Chilean media complex without resorting to drastic measures or openly repressive action.

Media organs clearly associated with opposition parties remain as independent voices. Particularly noteworthy are PDC-run newspapers La Prensa and Pueblo Libre, both of which are following strong anti-Communist lines and are enjoying a steadily increasing circulation. Ultimas Noticias of the El Mercurio chain appears to be pulling away from the bland political line of its parent paper, also as a result of the influence of PDC journalists. Radio Mineria, whose owner is

PDC oriented, is the strongest of the anti-Communist radio outlets, while Radio Cooperativa, which supported Allesandri's campaign, is virtually apolitical but still carries one anti-Communist commentator. All opposition outlets will clearly need encouragement and support.