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Memorandum From Arnold Nachmanoff of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)

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Nota de Archivo: *Washington. Summary: This memorandum for Kissinger outlined the attached CIA assessment of the dissent in Chile, particularly amongst the large landholders. The CIA concluded that the discontent was not channeled in any organized way against the government and that the military would not unite against Allende barring some blatant unconstitutional act or institutional threat to Chile itself. Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 776, Country Files, Latin America, Chile, Vol. VI. Secret. Sent for information. Kissinger initialed the memorandum.*

Discontent in Chile

Attached at Tab A is an assessment of the extent of discontent in Chile made by the Central Intelligence Agency at our request as a result of a series of reports indicating discontent with the Allende Government. The Agency's principal conclusions are as follows:

—Discontent with the Allende Government has become more vocal in recent weeks.

—There is no evidence that discontent is being translated into potential for armed resistance either within the military or outside it.

—President Allende is aware of the extent of discontent and retains the capability of keeping it within manageable bounds. All signs suggest that he will remain in full control for the foreseeable future.

—The military is unlikely to unite against Allende unless he commits a blatantly unconstitutional act, tries to suppress the opposition by force, or makes a move that the military considers a threat against the armed forces as an institution.

Discontent in Chile: Its Extent and Prospects

Summary

Discontent with the Allende government has become more vocal in recent weeks. There is no evidence, however, that this discontent is being translated into any significant organizing for armed resistance, either within the military or among disgruntled civilian groups. Neither is there any indication that discontent is so serious as to permit enemies of the regime to provoke outbreaks of violence, except on a small scale and in isolated instances. President Allende is aware of the extent of discontent and, consummate politician that he is, retains the capability of keeping it within manageable bounds. All signs suggest that he will remain in control for the foreseeable future.

1. The increasingly vocal discontent in Chile is in part the natural welling of criticism that has faced all recent Chilean presidents as they near the end of their first year in office. In Allende's case, it is aggravated by growing economic

difficulties, by the social and economic dislocations brought on by his programs, and by a residual fear of Communism among a minority of Chileans. Chileans are jealous of their traditional right to speak up and criticize the authorities. Since the opposition press, radio, and TV have been enfeebled under Allende, much of the criticism is of necessity by word of mouth.

2. There is no evidence that present discontent is being translated into organized plotting against the government. Observers of the Chilean scene have long noted the Chilean propensity to substitute virulent vocal criticism for action. Discontent may well become even more stridently expressed in coming months, but present indications are that it is unlikely to be translated into concerted action against the regime.

3. Chilean landowners and their allies in the business and industrial communities as well as certain Chilean military officers have figured in recent reporting on alleged antiregime plotting. The first category—men who have lost or stand to lose the most as Allende implements his programs—are still able to engage in some activities through such organizations as the Sociedad de Fomento Fabril, which is currently engaged in a rear-guard effort to defend the interests of the private business community. [name not declassified] a leader of the society, recently asked Ambassador Korry for assistance in getting his family to the United States in case his position in Chile "becomes untenable"—a sign that the organization may be losing faith in its continued viability under Allende. Some elements of the political right last year organized a group called Patria y Libertad to resist the regime. According to unconfirmed reports, Patria y Libertad cells are being armed with smuggled weapons. At present, very little solid information is available on this organization.

4. Chilean landowners probably have weapons in some quantity. Many of them stockpiled arms in 1964 when they feared Allende might win that year's election. They did not engage in concerted resistance, however, during the wave of illegal land seizures early this year. Their numbers and dominion have now been whittled away and, whatever the degree of their anger, they probably feel that the time to act has passed.

5. Some representatives of the Chilean private sector are apparently in contact with like-minded men in neighboring Latin American countries, as well as with Chilean colleagues who moved to Argentina after Allende's election. There is no hard evidence, however, that the Chilean stay-at-homes have secured significant assistance from these sources in the form of money or weapons. Some could be forthcoming, and it is possible to smuggle small quantities of weapons into Chile from Argentina and Bolivia. In the continuing absence of any sizable group within Chile willing and able to use these weapons against the regime, such smuggling would appear to have no immediate importance.

6. Many beleaguered landowners and businessmen probably hope somehow to enlist the Chilean military in an effort to "put things right" in Chile. They do have some contacts among retired or active military officers, but there is no evidence that they have made significant progress in any effort to put things right.

7. High Chilean military commanders have reiterated in the past year that they will not permit Allende to transgress the constitution. These statements may in part be motivated by an abiding suspicion of Communism held by a number of military officers, and their awareness that the Communist Party has a key role in the administration. At the same time, however, Allende is the constitutionally elected president and military leaders often restate their commitment to defend him. Chile's armed forces remain among the least inclined in Latin America to intervene in politics. Many military officers, moreover, are convinced that Allende's programs contain many positive and long-overdue reforms. Allende, for his part, has cultivated the military more assiduously and skillfully than any of his recent predecessors.

8. The recent increase in vocal discontent in Chile has nonetheless had some effect in the military. Chilean military officers, too, have a propensity for grumbling. There is no evidence, however, that opposition to Allende, even on the vocal level, is widespread or cohesive in the armed forces or among members of the well-disciplined Carabineros (national police). There is no information on any conspiracies.

9. Specific reporting on military unrest in recent weeks suggests that it is scattered—as are most military units. None of the officers mentioned in these reports commands units of strength or strategic location. If an uprising were to be attempted by some provincial military unit in the hope of setting off a chain reaction, it could easily be isolated. A rebellion would have to turn quickly to Santiago if it were to be successful, and it would require at least passive support from the Carabineros.

10. Since it came to power over ten months ago, the government has steadily increased its capabilities for monitoring the development of conspiracies within the military. The small group of officers linked to imprisoned General Viaux, the Comite Revolucionario, was probably thoroughly penetrated. Members of this group never got beyond the talking stage, have not been heard from in recent months, and may have disbanded. Four retired generals are currently reported to be under surveillance because of their involvement in antigovernment activity. A clandestine source reports, however, that the generals have not yet been detained because their activities are not considered a threat to the government.

11. As for the near future, nothing has happened to change our judgment of last month (in SNIE 94–71) that the military is unlikely to unite against Allende unless he commits a blatantly unconstitutional act, tries to suppress the opposition by force, or makes a move that the military considers a threat against the armed forces as an institution. Allende recognizes this and will avoid such actions. In the longer term, however, a deterioration of the Chilean economy which brought on severe social unrest could prompt military intervention. Chile is presently a long way from that degree of unrest.

12. Allende is aware of the present discontent with his government. He may be concerned, but he has given no sign that he feels obliged in any way to modify his programs. He has known from the beginning that he must operate within the constraints of the political facts of life in Chile. Moreover, he does not need to go beyond the present constitution to consolidate further his political power and bring about many of the social, economic, and political changes he has in mind for Chile. When he judges the time to be right he will probably be able to change the constitution legally, or at least in ways that will not antagonize the military.