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Chile Project (#S199900030)
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INTELLIGENCE NOTE

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
BUREAU OF INTELLIGENCE AND RESEARCH

January 14, 1970

CHILE: TIMES ARTICLE EXAGGERATES APPEAL OF REVOLUTIONARY GROUP

Both the prospects for violent revolution and the appeal of the extremist Movement of the Revolutionary Left (MIR) are far more miniscule than suggested in a recent article by Jose Yglesias. Writing in the January 11 issue of the New York Times Magazine, Yglesias includes assertions by Chileans to the effect that theirs is a highly politicized country which abhors violence; but his lengthy and sympathetic treatment of the MIR indicates that he may have missed the point.

Chileans Proud of Democracy, Abhor Violence. Chile's tradition of regular, free, orderly elections is a source of widespread national pride, and Chileans have long derided the more turbulent politics of their hemispheric neighbors. The Chilean Communist Party, the most influential in the region (outside of Cuba), has steadfastly and scrupulously pursued the electoral path to power, and even the more extremist Socialist Party has, like the Communists, sought power through elections. In general, the democratic process appears to be working in Chile in a way which is satisfactory to the overwhelming majority of Chileans; and the appeal of violence or other non-constitutional methods has been minimal. The beating last June of a newspaperman, an act ascribed to

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MIR leader Luciano Cruz, aroused nothing but revulsion on the part of the public.

MIR Threatens Orthodox Leftists, But Little Else. As a dedicated--and clandestine--organization which refuses to compromise, the MIR does have some appeal. Somewhat ironically, however, this appeal poses a threat principally to the orthodox leftist parties, whose participation in the current political system is scorned by the more zealous and impatient of Chile's youths. The number thus attracted, nevertheless, remains small, and the MIR appears unlikely to exert any meaningful national influence in the foreseeable future.

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