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Chile Project (#S199900030)
U.S. Department of State
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TO : The Ambassador

THROUGH : DCM - George Jones

FROM : POL - Ron Godard

SUBJECT : Your meeting with former Ambassador Jose Miguel Barros in your office (Friday, January 20; 1130)

Richard Jarvis will sit in on your meeting with Jose Miguel Barros, a former career diplomat and Ambassador to the United States (1977-1978). Barros entered the Chilean Foreign Service in 1945, at the age of 21, and served with distinction for 38 years and under seven administrations. He was Ambassador to the Netherlands (where he met his wife), the United States during the Carter administration, and Peru. He was abruptly recalled from Lima in 1983 (by then Foreign Minister Miguel Schweitzer) and left to walk the halls of the Ministry for eight months (it was rumored he would be offered the position of Minister). He subsequently resigned realizing that Pinochet had no use for someone who professed to represent "all of Chile" and not just the military regime.

He arrived in Washington, as Ambassador, just after the Letelier killing. He professes to have known nothing about his government's involvment until after the FBI investigation results were presented in 1978 and has said publicly many times that he had warned his government that the USG "would never abandon the case". (As you know, the latest round of Letters Rogatory are designed to specifically give him an opportunity to tell what he knows about the case.) He called his early withdrawal from Washington "humiliating".

Since his resignation, he has been very critical of the military regime (especially its human rights record) and was touted as a possible "consensus candidate" for the October 5 plebiscite. He maintained his independence from political affiliation, working instead with Sergio Molina's Committee for Free Elections last year.

He is a history buff and a lawyer who, he says often, has had only one client in his career - the State of Chile.

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THEMES FOR DISCUSSION

-- How do you think the transition to democracy is progressing? Do you expect the government or military to raise any obstacles to the process?

-- There seems to be a crowd of potential presidential candidates; occasionally even you are mentioned. How does the race look to you at this time?

-- What do you see yourself doing under a democratically elected government? What would you like to do?

-- When do you expect to be responding to the Letelier Case Letters Rogatory? How do you see the case evolving over the next couple of years?

Drafted: POL/RJarvis