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EXCISE P 31

(RA 50

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Chile Project (#S199900030)
U.S. Department of State Washington, D.C. 20520
Release ____ Excise X Deny ~~December~~ 15, 1969
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MEMORANDUM Exemption(s) 31

Not submitted — Basic memo [illegible] for revision

TO: J - Ambassador Johnson
THROUGH: INR/DDC - Mr. Wymberley Coerr
FROM: ARA - Charles A. Meyer

SUBJECT: Chile: 1970 Presidential Election and Related Political Action

Attached is a memorandum that asks for 303 Committee endorsement of certain covert political actions in Chile designed to reduce the prospect of a Communist-Socialist coalition (FRAP) victory in next year's presidential election.*

The memorandum, prepared in CIA, anticipates that there will be three principal candidates: former President Jorge Alessandri of the conservative National Party (PN); Radimiro Tomic of the Christian Democratic Party (PDC) and an as yet unselected Socialist and Communist coalition candidate, probably Salvador Allende, the popular 3-time candidate of the pro-Castro, rigidly doctrinaire Socialist Party. At the moment, according to the memorandum, Alessandri appears to be the leader, but a joint Communist-Socialist candidate would be a formidable contender. The potential of such a candidate has been improved by the defection of a splinter of the PDC, the United Popular Action Movement (MAPU), to the FRAP, and by the likelihood that the Radical Party (PR) leadership will support the FRAP candidate.

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* Past USG Special Group and 303 Committee interest in Chilean election issues has included approval in 1962 [redacted] to strengthen the Christian Democratic Party; [redacted] also in 1963 [redacted] to Radical Party, Democratic Front candidate Senator Duran to attract votes from FRAP in the 1964 presidential elections; $3 million to support Frei's candidacy in the 1964 presidential elections; $175,000 to selected candidates in the March 1965 elections to help them against FRAP candidates; [redacted] and in 1968 [redacted] help selected moderate candidates in the 1969 congressional elections, to conduct a broad-spectrum anti-FRAP propaganda operation, and to help a break-away group of the Socialist Party.

Dept. of State, RPS/IPS, Margaret P. Grafeld, Dir.
( ) Classify as (✓) Extend as (S) Downgrade to ____
Date 1/31/01 Declassify on ____ Reason 25X1

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The current proposal for action, which has been approved by Ambassador Korry and has ARA support, is aimed specifically at weakening FRAP. It involves activity with moderate former members of the PR who have been purged from the PR and have formed a new anti-Marxist party, the Democratic Radical Party (PDR), and with a propaganda mechanism that was utilized successfully in the March Congressional elections.

Some [ ] has already been given to the PDR during the past six months, partly for election activity [ ] The anticipated over-all cost of the PDR assistance is expected to run to some [ ] Funds have been provided for publicity, for organizing meetings, and for a successful campaign to get the 10,000 signatures needed for legal recognition of the PDR.

The propaganda mechanism [ ] is staffed with propaganda experts with access to influential outlets. According to the Agency, its effectiveness and security in conducting anti-Marxist campaigns was demonstrated in the March elections. The Agency has budgeted [ ] for this organization for the presidential campaign. Because we do not wish to support any particular candidate in the 1970 elections, but only to reduce the FRAP vote, it has been made clear to the men who have put together the propaganda mechanism that our interest is solely in supporting anti-FRAP propaganda and not in supporting Alessandri, who is their own personal preference. The money budgeted will be paid for specific services over the next months and will not be at the free disposal of the propagandists.

It is difficult at this point to say whether Alessandri or Tomic will benefit more from the program. The PDR leaders intend to throw their support to Alessandri; on the other hand, votes that might have gone to FRAP but for the propaganda effort are more likely to be deflected to Tomic rather than to the conservative Alessandri.

From a technical point of view

The security risks involved appear low. [ ] The propaganda mechanism was tested in the March elections and CIA is confident of its security. It should nonetheless be recognized that Chile is currently sensitized to charges of CIA intervention in its political processes. Even though recent allegations of such intervention have failed to take hold, a compromise in either aspect of the proposed operation could have an abnormally destructive effect on our position in Chile and in the area generally.

RECOMMENDATION

I recommend that you support the proposal for political action to weaken FRAP prospects in the 1970 Chilean presidential elections.

INR/DDC:JRGardner:ksm