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EXCISE

March 19, 1970

MEMORANDUM FOR ARA FILE

Subject: ARA/CIA Meeting - 19 January

Participants: ARA - Mr. Crimmins and Ambassador Korry; CIA [ ] 1.5(C)

INR/DDC - Messrs. Coerr and Gardner.

The discussion centered entirely on the proposal that CIA be authorized to undertake certain covert activities designed to weaken the chances of UP in the September presidential elections in Chile

Mr. Crimmins said that he had some concern about the draft proposal on this matter that had been submitted by CIA in December. He said that this concern centered chiefly around (a) the sensitivity of the situation in Chile following the military mutiny and the allegations that CIA had been involved and (b) fear that our undertakings under the proposal would assume a pro-Alessandri cast -- this especially was so in view of the general expectation in Santiago that the US was indeed pro-Alessandri. Mr. Crimmins went on to say that underlying all this concern was a simultaneous belief that if we were to get into this election activity we should do it quite soon.

There was no question that the proposed activity would in effect be pro-Alessandri. This was bothersome. The central question was what we could do to prevent the communist party from gaining more influence in Chile. Our only real interest in Chile right now centered on this question; the question, that is, whether we were going to get another communist government in Latin America. Compared to this issue, there was no US interest in Chile that was important. Further, CIA was going to get blamed anyway.

Dept. of State, RPS/IPS, Margaret P. Grafeld, Dir.
( ) Classify as (✓) Extend as (S) Downgrade to
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The discussion centered for a few moments on what the Agency had already been able to do to embarrass and frustrate the Communist Party. It developed that most of the CIA activities had been directed to the support of the new Democratic Radical Party (PDR).

In general terms, the Ambassador said, the object of the program was to keep up tension and dissention in the left, to exploit left-wing dissatisfaction with the left candidate.

Mr. Crimmins stated the maximum objective as being to have the left unity effort collapse so that the left-wing candidate would be a candidate really of only the Communist and the Socialist Parties, with the other four parties now members of the UP splitting off and becoming ineffective. The secondary objective, Mr. Crimmins said, would be to arouse dissention within and animosity toward the UP, even if it was ~~about~~ were to maintain its ~~six~~-party composition. To this, Ambassador Korry said, he would add the objective of isolating the Communist Party as much as possible, and to get it as clearly identified as possible in the public eye as a foreign party, ~~and~~ an "outsiders party".

The Ambassador then said that he did not expect the left to win in any event, short of the death or disablement of Alessandri. The Communist Party was potent, but it was not close to winning. On the other hand, it still maintained a powerful capability to do harm, ~~to the~~.

In response to Mr. Crimmins query about the electoral prospects of the three candidates, Ambassador Korry said that Alessandri was now in the lead with an estimated 35 percent of the votes scheduled to go his way. Allende, the UP candidate, had about 30 percent of the votes;

Tomic about 25 percent, although he could raise his percentage to some degree. Tomic was campaigning much more vigorously than was Alessandri, whose speeches were strictly 19th century stuff. Mr. Crimmins went on to say that under this breakdown of the prospective voting, it was clear that there was about 10 - 15 percent of the votes that we could attempt to ~~implement~~ influence. Ambassador Korry agreed, saying that actually it was about 50,000 votes that were vital and that we should be working for. Mr. Broe said that this fact was what made the 303 action that was being requested so vital.

The Ambassador said that an Alessandri victory would be very, ~~v~~ery bad. It could easily produce a military government in reaction. It ~~would~~ could be under ~~the usual~~ left-wing influence. An Allende victory, he said, would be accepted by the military and by the Christian Democrats. The Christian Democratic Party would eventually disintegrate and its left-wing breakaway segment, the United Popular Action Movement (MAPU) would heavily increase its influence. There was of course a real prospect, if the UP won, that the Socialist and Communist would be unable to cooperate effectively in managing a government.

Mr. Coerr said that it thus appeared that an Allende victory would not be tantamount to a Communist Party victory. The Ambassador replied that this was true but that we had to act as if a UP victory would in fact produce a Castro-type regime. It would certainly be a left dictatorship, and there was little question that, for example, Chilean newspapers would be closed down. ~~If Alessandri was~~ Allende could be another Castro, we have to assume that he is capable of the worst.

Mr. Crimmins asked what would happen if we just sat on our hands. Ambassador Korry replied that it perhaps would make a difference of only

10-15 thousand votes. As a matter of fact, he said, he did not believe that our major effort in the 1964 presidential elections actually made a difference of over 1 percent in the popular returns. As far as he was concerned, Ambassador Korry said, he would not be unhappy if we decided to do nothing. But if we did do nothing, and Allende won, he did not know how we could respond to the naturally ensuing inquiries about what we had done to prevent a Communist victory in Chile. To this Mr. Crimmins responded that such concerns were not really the best foundation for building policy. In response to inquiries from Mr. Broe Mr. Crimmins said that we could justify to our Chilean friends our refusal to get mixed up in this on the basis that the risk was too great; it was prudence, not indifference, that led us to abstain. [redacted] said that the operation would be relatively secure, not 95 percent secure, but nonetheless quite secure.

Mr. Crimmins then said that perhaps the situation could be summarized as follows: There is a chance that our efforts would influence a small but possibly critical margin of votes, that the operation could be conducted with justified expectation of considerable security, and that if we do not take this relatively secure opportunity, we are vulnerable to a charge of having done nothing to prevent it were Allende to win.

Ambassador Korry noted that there was no military or economic device open to us that would affect the elections.

Mr. Coerr wanted to know where in this projected operation lay our weakest point. Ambassador Korry said that support to PDR [redacted] was probably the weakest.

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Mr. Crimmins asked how the proposed propaganda operation ~~is [illegible]~~ [illegible]ng. [ ] responded that a [ ] would be issued [

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Mr. Crimmins then shifted the emphasis of the discussion slightly to ask at what point would our operation become less of an anti-UP exercise and more of a pro-Alessandri one. Ambassador Korry said that the operations would have to be carefully monitored to see that this would not happen. Such monitoring, [ ] said in response to Ambassador Korry's query, was quite possible. Ambassador Korry joined in saying that if the [ ] for example, became pro-Alessandri in its tone, our financial help to it would cease immediately. Mr. Crimmins asked if he therefore could assume that the ~~roles~~ rules of engagement were such that if our instruments moved into a pro-Alessandri attitude, our help would stop.

Mr. Gardner wanted to know why, if Allende would be bad for us and if Alessandri in the long run would be almost as bad, why it was that we were not considering assistance to Tomic. The Ambassador replied that in the first place Tomic did not want our aid and that in the second place he was so far behind that no assistance we could give would be in

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any way useful to him or to our own objectives.

Mr. Crimmins ended the meeting by saying that he wished it to be clearly stated in the forthcoming revised version of the CIA proposal to the 303 Committee on the Chilean elections, that there would be a cessation of aid if the groups to whom we were giving help began to work not against the UP but for Alessandri. He said also that he wished this point to be emphasized as well in the cover memorandum that would accompany the Agency's proposal when it went to Ambassador Johnson for consideration.

INR/DDC:JRGardner/sw