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MEMORANDUM

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

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INFORMATION

June 22, 1970

MEMORANDUM FOR DR. KISSINGER

FROM: Viron P. Vaky

SUBJECT: Prospects for the Chilean Presidential Elections

The candidates in the Chilean Presidential elections scheduled to be held in September are:

- Jorge Alessandri, 74 year old former President, an independent conservative who represents those elements in Chilean society concerned about the unsettling effects of the reforms launched during the outgoing Frei administration. He appeals to those who are looking for normalcy, authority and experienced leadership.
- Radomiro Tomic, candidate of the governing Christian Democratic Party, former Ambassador to the US, represents those who favor continued and even increased reform but who fear the extremism of the Marxists. Tomic's position is somewhat to the left of President Frei's.
- Salvador Allende, Socialist Senator, running for the fourth time, is the candidate of the Popular Unity coalition, the major element of which is the hemisphere's most powerful orthodox Communist Party. Allende is a Marxist, an avowed supporter of Fidel Castro, and represents those elements who want more radical reform.

A reading of the latest assessments by CIA, State and Embassy, Santiago of the prospects for the election indicates general agreement on the following points:

- At this point in time, 12 weeks before the election, support for the candidates is almost equally divided.
- It is likely that the situation will fluctuate and could change between now and the election.

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- It is entirely possible that any of the three candidates could become the next President of Chile. It is probably too close and too early to call now.
- Allesandri appears to be running ahead at this point though he has lost much of the commanding lead he held earlier in the year because of a disastrous television appearance and a fumbling campaign. Embassy Santiago reports that Allesandri may have recovered somewhat by a much more impressive television appearance in mid-June.

The agencies' estimates on a numerical basis are:

CIA: Allesandri 35 to 40 percent, Allende and Tomic about 30 percent each;

State (INR and ARA): All three candidates somewhere between 30 and 35 percent with Allesandri remaining slightly in the lead and Allende having slimmer prospects of winning than the other two candidates;

Embassy Santiago: (as of June 12) Allesandri, 36 to 37 percent, Allende, 33 to 34 percent, Tomic, 27 to 28 percent, with Tomic making a strong run.

A poll is being conducted by the largest newspaper in Santiago, but the final results are not yet in.

If, as it appears likely, no candidate receives an absolute majority of the votes cast, the members of Congress in joint, secret session must choose between the two front runners. There is a slightly tested "tradition" that Congress simply ratifies the popular vote by selecting the candidate with the most votes. This is likely to be questionable if the front runner is Allesandri since he has only 43 nominal supporters in the Congress. Tomic and Allende in contrast have 75 and 82 respectively. If the runoff is between Allesandri and Allende, the decision will be in the hands of the Christian Democrats in the Congress, and it is unclear at this stage how it would turn out.

The Commander of the Army has publicly announced that the military will back the constitutional choice of the Congress. It is possible, however, that some elements of the military which have become increasingly less apolitical, might not accept the Congressional choice.

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The USSR is maintaining a strict and aloof neutrality during the elections, apparently because it is not willing to jeopardize relations with a possible Tomic or Allesandri government, despite the tempting prospect of a Marxist electoral victory.

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MEMORANDUM

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

ACTION

June 23, 1970

~~SECRET/SENSITIVE~~

MEMORANDUM FOR DR. KISSINGER

FROM: Viron P. Vaky

SUBJECT: Chilean Election

Ambassador Korry has recommended increased funding for political action in the pre- and post-election period in Chile:

- \$390,000 for anti-Allende propaganda and to subsidize the campaign of Radical congressmen who are anti-Allende; and
- \$500,000 for a post-electoral operation to dissuade Radical and Christian Democrats from supporting Allende in any congressional vote.

It seems to me we have to ask the following questions:

1. Is there a real possibility that Allende may be elected?

Everyone agrees that his strength is rising, but there is no clear prospect that he will win and a possibility he will not.

2. How serious to our interests would his election be?

Korry's premise is that Allende is a serious threat to the U.S. and that his victory would result in the establishment of a "Leninist state". It is not clear, however, that Allende can ride quickly and successfully over Chilean forces which would fight the establishment of a "Leninist state", or that the Chileans themselves cannot handle that problem. There is no question that his victory would present problems to us. Whether that means a serious threat to US security and national interest requires a better and more systematic judgment, because how serious we deem the threat to our interest to be will determine the risks we are willing to take to insure his defeat. I do not think we have reached sound conclusions yet, and certainly not a consensus.

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3. How effective would Korry's proposals be?

There is no guarantee it would have any real effect, but there is some chance that it may influence a small percentage of voters which could be important in the close race we expect.

4. How serious is the risk of exposure and what is the threat of exposure to our interests?

Korry believes the risk of exposure acceptable, but a significant risk does exist. The Chileans are sensitive to and expect us to be involved and will be alert to it. The Christian Democrats know we were involved last time, since they were the beneficiaries. Moreover, the channels being employed are well-known Alessandri backers with extensive contacts with US business firms in Chile and New York which are already involved in a pro-Alessandri or anti-Allende activity.

Exposure would seriously damage our capacity to have influence in any post-election situation. Exposure of our involvement would strengthen Allende.

5. Do the risks to our long-term interest of an Allende victory outweigh the risks of exposure?

The key question. I am not sure that they do; the problem of an Allende victory may be easier to handle than the election--i. e., we may find it easier to be "involved" if the problem is a Marxist administration than to be "involved" in an internal electoral process.

If we were to be faithful to the prescriptions of our general policy, we should leave to the Chileans the protection of their own interests threatened by an Allende win. There is no real lack in Chile of money or organizational skill. Why should we do for them what they are unwilling to do for themselves? The premise in Korry's proposal is that we cannot count on the Chileans themselves or private US interests to do an adequate job against Allende, and that we cannot afford to let them fail. This is the basic premise and I am not sure it is proven.

RECOMMENDATION: In balance I would go along reluctantly with the pre-electoral phrase which is a stepping-up of what we are already doing. But I recommend against the "suborning" operation in the post-electoral phase. That is too dangerous, too antithetical to the concept of our general policy and of dubious effectiveness.

What I would surely recommend is that we analyze more rigorously the consequences of an Allende victory, the probable developments and what could be done about them.

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MEMORANDUM


NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

SECRET/SENSITIVE

INFORMATION

June 26, 1970

MEMORANDUM FOR DR. KISSINGER

FROM: Viron P. Vaky 

SUBJECT: Chilean Elections--Another View

My memo of June 23 commented on Korry's proposal for political action funding which is now up for consideration.

This memo is intended to suggest a line of analysis that has not, to my knowledge, been surfaced in this context.

So far everyone has focussed on the immediate problem of the election and the objective of keeping Allende from being elected. But achieving that objective does not automatically get us out of the woods; in fact, it might only give us a worse problem later. The point is that what happens to keep Allende from being elected is important in the long run, and could be good or bad.

Next to no thought--to my knowledge--has been given to the long term problem and trend in Chile, and therefore to the perspective of operating now in terms of the long-range. The long-term problem is two-fold; (a) the center of political gravity in Chile is left of center; and (b) there is no existing political force of reasonable permanence that can preempt the Communists/Socialists' base on a sustained basis except the Christian Democrats.

Keeping the Communists/Socialists out of elected power over the long-range depends on one or more of several things happening--erosion of the Communist political base; existence of strong competitive non-Communist political parties; and/or forging of a viable center-right political party (which is difficult now because of (a) above and because there is no good nucleus at the moment).

There is an easy assumption that Alessandri's election would be best for us, based on the superficial circumstance that he is moderate, conservative, well-known and has come to be thought of as representing stability. But I posit the hypothesis that Alessandri's election might be the worst "anti-Allende" solution for us from a long-run point of view, even though satisfactory for the time being.

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Alessandri represents no political movement or force; he would be elected as a person and on a personalistic basis. He can therefore be no more than a temporary bulwark. He is old (in his seventies) and Korry and Frei describe him as having "extraordinary debilities, intellectual as well as physical". Korry says (Santiago 2361):

"He has no program; he has no organization; he has no understanding of modern problems, not even what the threat of the Marxists represents; he is consumed by a desire to vindicate his actions in his previous administration and to avenge the barbs and the triumphs of the Christian Democrats"

If all that is true, it seems to me that an Alessandri administration might well make a Communist victory in 1976 inevitable--for it would hardly seem able to construct the kind of political base and force that could compete with and preempt the Communists over a sustained period.

One of two things seems likely to happen under Alessandri:

- ^{He} It would be inept; cause the discontent to swing left and either lead to greater electoral victories by the far left or (less likely) to a military government, which in Chile would have a hard time sustaining itself except by repression; or (and most likely)
- The Communists/Socialists would make a political deal to support Alessandri in the Congress in return for a free hand to eliminate the Christian Democrats politically--an end Alessandri is likely to support. If this occurred it would give the Communists an electoral advantage in 1976 and perhaps fatally weaken Frei's base--Frei being the only person with the charisma to unite the country against Allende in the next election.

All of this suggests rather tentatively that we should think of an anti-Allende course that would have its positive side. Perhaps we should aid Tomic to at least come in second. With Alessandri slipping anyway, this would have the advantage of strengthening Tomic to pick up the defection from Alessandri rather than Allende; a Tomic victory or better still a second place over Allende would be satisfactory to us.

Thus, if we combined a political action plan of anti-Allende activities with pro-Tomic funding, we might increase the effectiveness of our effort.

MEMORANDUM

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

August 20, 1970

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MEMORANDUM FOR DR. KISSINGER

FROM: Viron P. Vaky
SUBJECT: Chile and Phase 2

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Yesterday the Special Review Group agreed that CIA would present a specific staffed plan to implement Phase 2.

Up to now, the Ambassador and Station have been under explicit instructions not to discuss or explore such an operation with any Chilean asset. The Group yesterday did not specifically address the question of whether the Station should try to gather information or judgments from Chileans for the purpose of the staffing it was asked to undertake.

This morning the Agency told me that they cannot staff a plan well without consulting the man who would be the Chilean cut-out (and who is in fact already our cut-out for Phase 1). They argue that there are a number of things they can only guess at--e.g., how much money is needed, precisely how many people would be susceptible, etc. A good judgment on these things would require probing and exploring with the Chileans who know. The Agency proposed to have the Station Chief contact the cut-out only on an exploratory, no-commitment basis to ask simply how such an operation might be structured and what would be required. Risk here is very minimal; we are working with him now anyway.

State opposes this, and Alex Johnson called me on it to protest. His objection is that this tips our hand to the Chileans before we have really decided if we would do it anyway. He thinks we need not take that chance because we would not be delayed that much if we waited until after the September 4 election to do it. He said we might not want to do it at all. He observed, as an example, that it would make no sense for us to get involved if the Chilean elements were not going to get involved, and that we should act only as the necessary margin to make an operation effective. I pointed out that we could not judge those things until we explored the Chileans' reactions. In any case his arguments seem to me to rationalize his (and State's) basic opposition to the whole idea of a Phase 2 operation, and they underline the fact that the 40 Committee has never decided in principle to undertake such an operation.

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Johnson flatly refused to okay the Chilean contact, and was prepared to appeal to you. To avoid the delay of in-fighting, I agreed to a proposal that the Agency do the best it can in-house in staffing a specific plan by Monday. The idea would then be that this would be immediately examined to determine:

- (a) if it was enough to permit the basic decision on whether to mount a Phase 2 operation; or
- (b) whether we needed to contact the Chilean cut-out now in order to make that basic decision or in order to move promptly on September 5 if necessary.

I agreed to this for the following reasons: (a) I had never really contemplated anything but an in-house staffing now anyway; (b) there is no use in arguing about how much more we need for adequate staffing; we may as well do what we can and prove its adequacy or inadequacy; and (c) we won't be delayed significantly anyway since the in-house staffing ought to be ready Monday or Tuesday.

You should, however, understand the following:

1. State is opposed to the idea of Phase 2: they are hoping we will never have to use it. They do not want to do anything by way of staffing with Chilean assets unless there is a basic policy decision to proceed with this operation.
2. The 40 Committee never made such a policy decision; it is going to have to do so before September 4. While I had hoped that a meeting might be avoided and a telephone poll on the staffed plan suffice, it is clear now that you are going to have dissent and that a meeting is going to be necessary.

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MEMORANDUM

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NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

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INFORMATION

August 28, 1970

MEMORANDUM FOR DR. KISSINGER

FROM: Viron P. Vaky *V*

SUBJECT: Chile--Status Report

You had asked that I do a memo to the President asking him to approve contact with the Chilean cut-out to staff an action proposal in the "Phase 2" operation. I have not done so because it is no longer necessary. Both Ambassador Korry and the Station came back saying not only was it unnecessary, but probably not fruitful to make this contact before September 4. The cut-out will not know enough about the situation until then to provide the kinds of judgments the Station would want.

Ambassador Korry and the Station have--inexplicably to me--revised their sense of urgency; they now say it is not only unnecessary but undesirable to move immediately after the September 4 election. They believe we have at least a week or so to get proper readings and prepare without danger and think we should take that time.

CIA is disseminating to the 40 Committee principals this afternoon a paper outlining possible operational alternatives, to meet specified situations, and posing the question of whether to proceed, how and when. Agency views on the paper will be available Monday.

My reading is that there will be disagreement among the principals on the whole idea. You therefore have two options: (a) a 40 Committee meeting to thrash out the views; or (b) try to staff a paper to the President with the various views embodied.

My own impression is that this is such a delicate and complicated question, and feelings sufficiently deep, that a meeting is very desirable. I do not believe that staffing it as a memo can give you the feel for it you should have, or that it will meet all of the principals' desire for a hearing.

I will know better when I see the paper and learn more of the agencies' views, and will have a firmer recommendation for you later.

Let's have a 40 meeting next week
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