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Document dated 29 SEPT 1970

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July 2000

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29 September 1970

MEMORANDUM FOR: Chief, Western Hemisphere Division

VIA Chief, WH
DC/WHD

SUBJECT : Chilean Crisis

1. The following is by way of amplification of my remarks made orally to Chief, WH on 28 September 1970:

a. There are many differences between Chile on the one hand and Cuba and Eastern Europe on the other hand which should be kept in mind when attempting to evaluate - and perhaps to counter - the events we are confronted with in Chile.

1) Santiago cannot be compared to Prague or Budapest of 25 years ago. There is no Red Army in Chile nor at its borders.

2) Chile has not been devastated by war.

3) Chile has not been scourged for years by a tyrant like Batista.

4) Chile has not just gone through a civil war.

5. There are important indications that Allende will be hard for the Communist Party and for Moscow to control.

1) Allende was not favored by the Communists as common candidate but finally appeared to be the only solution. Allende knows this and will not forget it.

2) The Communists will make every effort to control Allende as President. Allende also knows this, for he saw the example of Gonzalez Videla,

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elected with Communist support in 1946, who less than two years later had to turn against the Party in order to preserve his own regime and integrity.

3) The Argentine CP has quoted the Chilean CP as expressing doubts as to whether the CP can control Allende.

~~4) Certain Soviet officials have this year expressed their dissatisfaction with Allende and even predicted the election of Alessandri. We have surfaced this in the [redacted] operation and think it likely that Allende has heard it in other quarters.~~

c. Allende is no blind follower of Fidel Castro nor do they and their followers agree on everything by any means.

1) Castro once told Allende to his face that he was no revolutionary and that his guerrilla suit should be made by Christian Dior.

2) Castro predicted Alessandri's victory and said he would vote for him if he were a Chilean.

3) Castro's magazine, Punto Final, steadily attacked Allende as a useless candidate playing patsy for the Chilean Establishment. This series of attacks ended only in about March 1970, probably under Soviet pressure. Anyone who reads Punto Final (do enough of us?) knows all this.

d. Allende is going to have unusual problems in governing. For the first time a Communist-backed regime is going to find that it has opposition from quarters to its own left and independent of any international Communist connections. I refer to the MLR and to certain pro-Castro elements. These young elements have the desire for power and violent revolution, not for reform. It is very possible that Allende will find he has a great problem in curbing them. In the pages of Punto Final they have often enough attacked him as a mere bourgeois reformist. As for the PCCh, it is going to find itself in an unusual position having to cope with opposition from the far left, as above noted. The PCCh is therefore going to be in the position of a vested power interest for the first time and will be saddled with a new type of responsibilities and problems, many of them occasioned by ultra leftists having a vested interest in violent revolution.

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e. For the above reasons I believe that hasty and ill-advised steps to interfere with the election of Allende will be worse than useless. It is unlikely that anything we can do will affect the election in congress, but any indication that we are behind a legal mickey-mouse or some hard-nosed play will exacerbate relations even further with the new government. I am afraid that we will be repeating the errors we made in 1959 and 1960 when we drove Fidel Castro into the Soviet camp. If successful for the moment in denying the UP its candidate, we would bring upon ourselves a much more dangerous civil war in Chile (probably resulting in the final installation of a much more hostile government than that of Allende) and a much worse image throughout Latin America and the world.

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f. 

g. Our operational stance towards the Allende regime should be to work to limit or split it from its Communist and Soviet ties. I do not regard this as impossible.





