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FM AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO
TO USIA WASHDC 8160
SECSTATE WASHDC 6907

UNCLAS SANTIAGO 03978

USIAC

USIA FOR AR; P/G
STATE FOR ARA/SC; INR/IAA

E.O. 12356: N/A
SUBJ: "EL MERCURIO" EDITORIALIZES ON NED FUNDING,
HEAVY PRESS COVERAGE CONTINUES

Chile Project (#S199900030)
U.S. Department of State
Release Excise _____ Deny _____
Declassify: In Part _____ In Full
Exemption(s) _____

1. SUMMARY: EDITORIALIZING ON THE NATIONAL
ENDOWMENT FOR DEMOCRACY (NED) FUNDING OF CHILGAN
PROJECTS HAS BEGUN WITH THE LEAD EDITORIAL IN
SUNDAY'S CONSERVATIVE DAILY "EL MERCURIO." THE
NEWSPAPER PROTESTS THAT THE CHILEAN SITUATION IS NOT
COMPARABLE TO THAT OF COMMUNIST COUNTRIES, "BECAUSE
THE WHOLE CHILEAN PROCESS IS DESIGNED TO BRING ABOUT
DEMOCRACY." OTHER DAILIES CARRIED HEADLINES ABOUT
NED FUNDING OVER SPANISH NEWS AGENCY "EFE" STORIES.
END SUMMARY.

2. JUNE 5 CONSERVATIVE DAILY "EL MERCURIO" LEAD
EDITORIAL "AID FROM THE NED" DEVOTED SEVERAL
PARAGRAPHS TO DESCRIBING THE NED PROGRAM IN OTHER
COUNTRIES AND LISTED THE CHILEAN ENTITIES WHICH HAVE
RECEIVED FUNDS TO DATE. THE EDITORIAL THEN COMMENTED:

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"...THE GOVERNMENT HAS DONE THE RIGHT THING IN NOT TRYING TO OBSTRUCT THIS INITIATIVE, IN THE CERTAINTY THAT IT WILL BE THE CHILEANS WHO WILL JUDGE ITS LEGITIMACY. NEVERTHELESS, IT CAN BE SAID THAT, FROM NED'S PERSPECTIVE, THESE INVESTMENTS IN CHILE MERIT SEVERAL OBJECTIONS. IN THE FIRST PLACE, THE CHILEAN SITUATION IS NOT COMPARABLE TO THAT OF COUNTRIES UNDER COMMUNIST REGIMES, GIVEN THAT THE ENTIRE CHILEAN PROCESS IS DESIGNED TO BRING ABOUT A TRANSITION TO DEMOCRACY. NEITHER IS THE ECONOMIC STRUCTURE (THE SAME) IN BOTH CASES. IN CHILE THERE EXISTS A FREE ECONOMY AND NOT ONE CONTROLLED BY THE STATE. THE PRESS AND POLITICAL FORCES HAVE THE POSSIBILITY OF RECEIVING ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE FROM CHILEANS, AND IF THEY DO NOT GET IT, IT IS NOT BECAUSE THE GOVERNMENT IMPEDES IT, OR EXERCISES A MONOPOLY, SUCH AS HAPPENS, FOR EXAMPLE, IN CUBA OR NICARAGUA.

"THE ASSISTANCE GIVEN TO THE ORGANIZATIONS WHICH FIGHT FOR THE TRIUMPH OF THE 'NO' IN THE PLEBISCITE IS NOT A NEUTRAL OR IMPARTIAL OPTION IN ORDER TO 'PROMOTE DEMOCRACY.' RATHER IT TENDS TO FAVOR ONE OF THE POSSIBLE ROUTES, WITHOUT IT HAVING BEEN PROVEN TO BE THE MOST PROMISING ONE. IN TRUTH, IT ACTS IN FAVOR OF A DETERMINED ELECTORAL POSITION. IRONICALLY, IT DOES NOT ALLOW TO HAPPEN WHAT THE U.S. CONGRESS APPROVED THE FUNDS FOR...THEY WILL BE USED NOT ONLY FOR THE DEMOCRATIC PARTIES, BUT ALSO FOR THOSE OF MARXIST INSPIRATION, ALL UNITED IN THE COMMAND FOR THE 'NO,' WHICH HAVE A CONCEPTION OF DEMOCRACY VERY FAR FROM THAT PROPOSED BY THE NED AND CLOSER TO THE POLITICAL SYSTEMS WHICH THE FUNDS ARE

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COMBATTING IN CUBA AND NICARAGUA."

3. JUNE 4 "EL MERCURIO" HEADLINE OVER SPANISH NEWS AGENCY "EFE" RELEASE: "IN THE LAST THREE YEARS, SAID A SPOKESMAN FOR NED...U.S. GAVE U.S. 2.6 MILLION DOLLARS TO THE CHILEAN OPPOSITION."

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4. OTHER JUNE 4 HEADLINES:

POPULAR TABLOID "LA TERCERA:" "IN THE PAST THREE YEARS...U.S.: 2.6 MILLION DOLLARS FOR THE OPPOSITION."

GOVERNMENT OWNED "LA NACION:" "THE OPPOSITION HAS RECEIVED 2.6 MILLION DOLLARS FROM THE U.S."

POPULAR TABLOID "LAS ULTIMAS NOTICIAS:" "U.S.: FUNDS TO 'PROMOTE DEMOCRATIC VALUES' IN CHILE."
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