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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

September 4, 1975

Larry:

Attached are draft responses to the Church Committee questions to the Secretary on Chile. Brent has gone over them and made three changes in the answer to the first question which have been cranked into the attached.

Concerning the first question on the President's legal authority for his instructions to Helms, the Office of the White House Counsel believes that the response should be a simple statement to the effect that "The President's instructions were issued under the authority granted to him as Chief Executive under the Constitution and in accordance with the laws of the United States to include the National Security Act of 1947."

Please let me know if I can help further.

Brent

DECLASSIFIED UNDER AUTHORITY OF THE INTERAGENCY
SECURITY CLASSIFICATION APPEALS PANEL.
E.O. 13526, SECTION 5.3(b)(3)
ISCAP No. 2010-009, document 21

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Q: What dangers are involved in mounting a major covert action but excluding from knowledge the Government's senior coordinating committee for covert action -- the 40 Committee -- and a major source of advice on the course of foreign events -- the Department of State and the Ambassador?

A: The 40 Committee, with the full participation of all members, thoroughly deliberated the feasibility of organizing a military coup in Chile as a means of preventing Salvador Allende's accession to power, as well as specific U.S. activities which might contribute to such an outcome. The Committee undertook a study of the pros and cons, problems and prospects of organizing a coup following its meeting of September 8, 1970, and continued to evaluate this possibility and U.S. actions which might further it during September and October. Accordingly, it is misleading to label particular operations by elements of the community -- for example the so-called Track II activities -- as exclusive or circumventing the process. On September 15, 1970, the President made clear to Director Helms the depth of his personal concern and interest in preventing the installation of the Allende Government. He affirmed that he expected the CIA to explore every avenue that might facilitate that outcome, but without prejudging his ultimate decision on what course might eventually be approved.

This seems clearly to have been the intent of the President's guidance. This is further borne out by the President's subsequent

decision to discontinue efforts to urge the Chilean military toward an attempted coup. In sum, the President's guidance and the CIA investigation of possibilities pursuant to it represent an extension of the activities of the 40 Committee and were not intended to be inconsistent with them.

It is my judgment that had the efforts of the CIA developed a realistic possibility of organizing a military coup, such a plan would have been weighed with all views taken into account. In fact, a realistic possibility was not developed and no approval for a coup plan was ever given.

Q: Was Secretary of Defense Laird informed of TRACK II?
Secretary of State Rogers? If not, why not?

A: I cannot confirm personally what information was known to Secretaries Rogers and Laird. Here again, the exploration of possibilities of organizing a military coup was well known to Defense and State representatives on the 40 Committee.

Q: How often did you see President Nixon on this matter?

A: During the period in question I talked with the President on several occasions. I have no record of those conversations but I am confident that in view of the President's interest in the matter, he was kept informed.

Q: What decisions were made by President Nixon after the initial one?

A: As stated in the response to question 2, the President's guidance of September 15 did not prejudice his ultimate decision which was in fact to discontinue efforts to organize a coup.

Q: What instructions did the President give you to pass on to CIA?

A: I have no recollection of receiving instructions from the President other than those reflected in the responses to questions 2 and 5.

September 28, 1970 ...

Q: Lieutenant General Philpott met with DDCI Cushman at CIA. Signed suggested message to be sent to Army Attache in Chile from General Bennett, Director of DIA. Said: "From this date I wish you to work closely with CAS chief... in contacting and advising the principle military figures who might play a decisive role in... (denying) the Presidency to Allende." (Memorandum signed by Philpott)

Were you aware that the U. S. Army Attache was involved in TRACK II? Did you know of higher DIA involvement and authorization? Would such involvement have been a contravention of the order not to inform the Defense Department?

A: I have no personal recollection of the detailed role of individual representatives of the Defense Department. I do not recall any proscription against informing the Defense Department.

E.O. 13526, section 3.3(b)(1)

Q: September 30, 1975 ... Cable sent to Santiago. Station informed that following a review of Chief of Station discussions at Headquarters, [redacted] Chilean military officers had been picked as key figures in military planning. Station instructed to make "priority effort... to contact and influence: [redacted] [redacted]... General Valenzuela... and [redacted]" (Headquarters cable to Station, 30 September 1970, 449)

Were you informed that Headquarters had picked [redacted] Chilean military officers "as key figures?"

A: No.

Q: Was there any written instruction from President Nixon to halt TRACK II? If so, please identify the document as to date and to whom it was directed. If not, was there a verbal instruction to that effect from President Nixon? To whom was this verbal instruction communicated? Through what means or channel was such instruction communicated?

A: I have found no written record of the President's decision to discontinue efforts to organize a coup. I recall the President conveying this decision to me orally in October, 1970 although I cannot fix the precise date.

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Q: In your testimony before the Committee, you referred to meetings of the 40 Committee on September 8 and 14, 1970 at which time consideration was given to the possibility of a coup to prevent the accession to the Chilean presidency by Dr. Allende. Did anyone on the 40 Committee express opposition to U.S. support and/or encouragement of such a coup? Who expressed such opposition?

A: The positions of the members of the 40 Committee were reflected in the minutes which have been provided separately.

Q: October 7, 1970... Through CIA channels, the following message was sent to Ambassador Korry from Dr. Kissinger and Alexis Johnson: "1. Highest levels here continue to be very concerned that, with October 24 rapidly approaching, anti-Allende forces in Chile do not seem to be coalescing around any effective action to block his election. We understand from your previous messages that military are entirely aware that if Allende is elected they can expect no further MAP or other support from us. If there is any doubt whatever in their mind in this regard, you should use the channels available to you to make this clear... You have also previously been authorized to inform the military that if the effort to block Allende from taking office is successful, the Chilean military will not be ostracized, but rather can continue to count on us for MAP support and maintenance of our close relationship. 2. In addition to the foregoing, you are now authorized to inform discreetly the Chilean military through the channels available to you that if a successful effort is made to block Allende from taking office, we would reconsider the cuts we have thus far been forced to make in Chilean MAP and otherwise increase our presently programmed MAP for the Chilean Armed Forces. In addition to material chargeable to MAP, we also have in mind increased ship loans. If any steps the military should take should result in civil disorder, we would also be prepared promptly to deliver support and material that might be immediately required." (Headquarters to Station cable, 7 October 1970)

What other communications did you have with Ambassador Korry concerning his contacts with the Chilean military? Who authorized you to send this cable to Ambassador Korry? What response did you receive from Ambassador Korry in relation to this cable?

A: The communications flowing from 40 Committee deliberations and Ambassador Korry's responses have been provided to the Committee separately.

Q: October 5, 1970... Santiago response to Headquarters request for "how and when" contact would be made with three generals. Station suggested that "for purposes of briefing higher authority you henceforth qualify ARMA (Army Attache) contacts as direct." (Station to Headquarters cable, 5 October 1970, 446)

When were you informed that these contacts had been made?

A: I was not informed.

E.O. 13526, section 3.3(b)(1)

Q: October 5, 1970... Cable sent to Santiago. Requested "A report as soon as possible on how and when you plan to make personal contact with [redacted] generals named (ref: September 30 cable 449, see above). Needed for discussion with "higher authority". (Kissinger) 6 October." Message sent by Karamessines. (Headquarters to Station cable, 5 October 1970, 556)

Do you or anyone in the White House request this information? If not, how would you explain this reference to "higher authority?"

A: I do not recall having requested the information in question and it is unlikely that I would have sought it. At the same time it is not unreasonable to assume that the Agency would have sought to be fully informed by its field Representatives by way of preparation for the 40 Committee meeting which was to take place on October 6.