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UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Memorandum

INR/B

TO : ARA/SC, INR/IAA/SA, DCM - Mr. Jones, DATE: July 11, 1986
POL - Mr. Keane, DAO - Capt. Mickle and Col. Carpenter

FROM : Ambassador *[Signature]*

SUBJECT: Summary Notes: Conversation with Vice Chief of the
Army, General Santiago Sinclair, July 10, 1986, 4-5 pm

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

This was the General's and my first lengthy discussion since mid-March, though we had seen each other at the time he attended the reception I gave for the National War College in late April. My efforts to see him before I left for the States in late May had not worked out.

U. S./Chilean Army Relationships: I conveyed to General Sinclair General Wickham's continuing hope that he would accept the invitation to visit the U. S. before General Wickham turned over his command, and gave him three specific possibilities - one in late 1986 and two in the first half of 1987. General Sinclair was clearly very pleased by General Wickham's continuing interest, said he didn't see how he could make a visit still in 1986, but would see what could be worked out in the possible periods for early 1987. He promised to be back in touch as soon as he could.

I then turned to the current Pegasus exercise, mentioning that I had just been briefed that morning on it. He said he had had a chance to observe the war-gaming a few days earlier and had been pleased with what he saw. He now felt that it would be well to move onto a division rather than stay with the battalion-level exercise, and I mentioned that the same point had been discussed with me and that we would see if a new game at that level might be planned for next year. I also touched on the forthcoming visit of General Galvin; and he said he looked forward to a chance to talk with him, though he clearly was not familiar with the program at this stage.

Human Rights: I then reverted to one of the subjects he and I had discussed at both our first and second meetings; human rights - and told him I thought the decision to set up a human rights commission was a positive one. He responded by saying he felt it important to note that the quality and reputation of the members of the new Commission was extremely high and a guarantee that no one could influence their good judgment. He was particularly strong in his praise for former ambassador to the U.S., Enrique Valenzuela, and for the president of the Commission,

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Ricardo Martin, whose decisions in the days he was a supreme court justice were in Sinclair's words models of the highest judicial standards. He expressed some doubts however as to whether the "other" human rights commission (the Chilean Human Rights Commission headed by Jaime Castillo and Maximo Pacheco) would perhaps not try to hamper the work of the government's body. I told him from my conversations with the CHRC that though they were skeptical whether the government's commission would indeed be able to carry out its mandate, they were quite prepared to collaborate with it and hoped that it would succeed. I also touched on the fact that the government had responded to UN special rapporteur Volio's report and saw that as a good sign, given the reservations the government had expressed publicly about the report. I added that we would of course be interested in analyzing the contents of the government's reply.

Transition to Democracy: I reminded Sinclair of my earlier impression from the U. S. that progress toward democracy was very slow and told him that that same impression remained if anything more strongly after my June visit in the U. S. He limited himself to noting what I was saying.

Pinochet's Plans: I tried unsuccessfully to draw him out on what Pinochet might be thinking about his own future, noting that another impression from the U. S. with which I returned was that as seen from that distance, it looked as if Pinochet had clearly decided to continue after 1989. By way of recent "evidence," I cited the extracts that had appeared in the press that same afternoon of a speech in Concepcion where Pinochet was quoted as talking about the next eight years (after 1989) as the period of "our" putting into force all the structure that would have been set up by 1989. Sinclair had not seen the full text and said he doubted if Pinochet was saying anything more than that the military regime's policies would continue. When I asked him if he thought my stated assumption was off base, he replied "yes"; because no one but Pinochet knows what he intends to do. He, Sinclair, could conceive of a situation in 1989, whatever the election mechanism might be (he listed a regular election as well as a plebiscite as possibilities). It was quite likely that one of the candidates would be someone who espoused the present government's policies, but he could not say at this point whether it would be Pinochet. Pinochet is just not talking, he added.

When I mentioned the TV coverage earlier this year at the time of Pinochet's birthday, showing him doing sitting-up exercises and jogging, Sinclair said he had asked Pinochet about that same coverage and been told it was at the insistence of the TV reporters who wanted something "different." Besides, commented Sinclair, Pinochet has been campaigning ever since 1973.

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Rojas Case: When I started to mention the effect produced in the U.S. by the death of young Rodrigo Rojas, Sinclair interrupted me to say he regretted that I had put myself in a position where my presence could be exploited by the communists. (He was referring to my attendance at the Rojas funeral service.) I told him that I was surprised that people who knew the United States couldn't tell the difference between what motivates Americans and what motivates communists, that my presence had reflected humanitarian factors including strong interest in our own country and condemnation of the burning that led to Rojas' death. I also told him of my strong objections to the coverage in the government's newspaper La Nacion which implied that my arrival at the ceremony had somehow provoked the disturbances that took place, as well as the attempts to link my presence with the communists' exploitation of the event. I told Sinclair that if he worried about my presence there being exploited by the communists, La Nacion was doing its best to make sure that that is exactly what happened.

Sinclair went on to describe how he had, immediately after the reports of charges that the army had been involved, called in his senior generals and ordered them to make a thorough investigation of the activities of all troops in the area where the burning of the two young people took place. On the basis of this preliminary investigation, he had a statement issued disclaiming any army responsibility; subsequently his staff told him that the investigation had included literally every unit and that there was no evidence of any army involvement whatsoever. Still, because the crime was so barbaric and so un-Chilean, he called the minister of the interior and urged that a special investigating judge (ministro en visita) be appointed, which was since done.

Government of Chile Self-Confidence: We left for a future discussion another subject (probably in early August after his series of meetings involving the Military Council terminate). This had to do with a further impression I told him I brought back from the U. S.; namely, that the government's actions in May (sweeps of the poor areas and the cordoning off of the central city), which he said complicated his own getting back into town because of trucks and buses that had been abandoned, tended to create an impression that the government was over-reacting and therefore losing some of its self-confidence. For his part, he said he wanted to talk about what he called "coincidences" between some of the events in Chile and events outside, including the interception of arms coming from Central America for use in Chile.