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Provenance:

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There was considerable communication among the various plotting elements. As Thomas Karamessines testified: ...I might add here that it seemed that a good dozen or more, maybe 20 Chilean senior officers were privy to what was going on in addition to President Frei and they were all talking to one another exchanging views and trying to see how best to mount the kind of coup that they wanted to see take place. (Karamessines testimony, p. 10) B. Contacts Prior to October 15 The CIA's initial task in Chile was to assess the potential within the Chilean military to stage a coup. It recognized quickly that anti-Allende currents did exist in the military and the Carabineros (police), but were immobilized by "the tradition of military respect for the Constitution" and "the public and private stance of General Schneider, Commander in Chief of the Army, who advocated strict adherence to the Constitution." (CIA Report on Chilean Task Force Activities, 18 November 1970, p. 17) The Agency's task, then, was to overcome "the apolitical, constitutional-oriented inertia of the Chilean military." (Ibid, p. 2) Since the very top of the Chilean military, embodied by General Schneider and his second-in-command, General Prat, were hostile to the idea of a coup against Allende, discreet approaches were made to the second level of general officers. They were to be informed that the U.S. Government would support a coup both before and after it took place.* (Headquarters to Station 611, 7 October 1970) This effort began in earnest on October 5 when Colonel Wimber informed both an Army General ("Station's priority contact") an an Air Force General of the pro-coup *The military officers were told, for example, that should Allende be prevented from taking office, "The Chilean military will not be ostracized, but rather can continue to count on us for MAP support and maintenance of our close relationship." (Hqs. 075517, 7 October 1970)