ALLEGED ASSASSINATION PLOTS INVOLVING FOREIGN LEADERS

AN INTERIM REPORT
OF THE
SELECT COMMITTEE
TO STUDY GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS
WITH RESPECT TO
INTELLIGENCE ACTIVITIES
UNITED STATES SENATE
TOGETHER WITH
ADDITIONAL, SUPPLEMENTAL, AND SEPARATE VIEWS

NOVEMBER 20 (legislative day, November 18), 1975

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Although most of the Station officers in Santiago did not know of Track II, the Chief and Deputy Chief of Station were knowledgeable and the Chief of Station initiated contacts on his own with Chilean officers. The COS has testified that he regarded Track II as unrealistic:

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* * * And one of the reasons certainly for my last recall [to Washington] was to be read the riot act—which was done in a very pleasant, but very intelligible manner. Specifically, I was told at that time that the Agency was not too interested in continuously being told by me that certain proposals which had been made could not be executed, or would be counterproductive. (Chief of Station (Felix), 8/1/75, p. 10)

The Chief of Station’s objection to Track II did not go unnoticed. The following instruction to the COS was sent on October 7: “Report should not contain analysis and argumentation but simply report on action taken.” (Cable 612, Hq. to Sta., 10/7/70) Very simply, Headquarters wanted the Station to take orders quietly as was the Agency itself.

Three examples of the Chief of Station’s reporting bear out his claim to have dissented:

Bear in mind that parameter of action is exceedingly narrow and available options are quite limited and relatively simple. (Cable 424, Sta. to Hq., 9/23/70)

Feel necessary to caution against any false optimism. It is essential that we not become victims of our own propaganda. (Cable 441, Sta. to Hq., 10/1/70)

Urge you do not convey impression that Station has sure-fire method of halting, let alone triggering coup attempts. (Cable 477, Sta. to Hq., 10/7/70, p. 2)

4. CIA EFFORTS TO PROMOTE A COUP

(a) The Chilean Conspirators

Anti-Allende coup plotting in Chile centered around several key individuals. One of these was retired General Roberto Viaux, the General who had led the “Tacnazo” insurrection a year before. Following the “Tacnazo” revolt, and his dismissal from the Army, Viaux retained the support of many non-commissioned and junior officers as well as being the recognized leader of several right-wing civilian groups. (CIA Briefing Paper, “Special Mandate from the President on Chile,” 7/15/75) Another individual around which plotting centered was General Camilo Valenzuela, Commander of the Santiago Garrison, who was in league with several other Chilean officers. (CIA Report on Chilean Task Force Activities, 11/18/70) These officers, with one possible exception, were in contact with Viaux as well.

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 Chilean senior officers were privy to what was going on * * * they were all talking to one another

1 This revolt was engineered by Viaux ostensibly for the purposes of dramatizing the military’s demand for higher pay, but was widely interpreted as an abortive coup.

2 The record of meetings between Viaux and the active duty military officers is incomplete. The record does show, however, that several met with Viaux during the Track II period. One high ranking officer may have been a member of Viaux’s inner circle of conspirators. Although a distinction can be made between the Viaux and Valenzuela groups, as CIA witnesses did throughout their testimony before the Committee, the principal distinction between the two was that the latter was led by active duty military officers. The two groups were in contact with each other. The record also indicates that they worked together in at least two of the three Schneider kidnap attempts.
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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, 11/18/70), 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 Prats, 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. 1 (Cable 611, Hq. to Sta., 10/7/70) This effort began in earnest on October 5 when the attache informed both an Army General ("Station's priority contact") and an Air Force General of the pro-coup U.S. policy. (Santiago 469, October 5; Santiago 473, October 6.) 2 Three days later the Chief of Station told a high ranking Carabinero official that "the U.S. Government favors a military solution and is willing to support it in any manner short of outright military intervention." 3 (Task Force Log, 10/9/70) The official informed the COS that there was no chance of a coup by the Chilean Army high command. (Task Force Log, 10/10/70)

On October 7, the attache approached members of the War Academy in Santiago who in turn asked him to provide light weapons. This was the attache's first contact with the Army officer to whom he would ultimately pass three submachine guns on October 22. 4 At this meeting, the Army officer told the attache that he and his colleagues were:

** * * Trying to exert forces on Frei to eliminate Gen. Schneider to either replace him, send him out of the country. They had even studied plans to kidnap him. Schneider is the main barrier to all plans for the military to take over the government to prevent an Allende presidency. (Cable 483, Sta. to Hq., 10/8/70)

The next day, October 8, Headquarters cabled the Station in re-

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1. 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." (Cable 075517, Hq. to Sta., 10/7/70)
2. According to the CIA's wrap-up report on Track II, between October 5 and October 20, the CIA Station and the attache—for the most part the latter—made 21 contacts with key military and Carabinero officials. (CIA Report on Chilean Task Force Activities, 11/18/70)
3. In his testimony, the attache indicated that the Army officer was affiliated with an Army general. (U.S. military attache, 8/4/75, p. 62) In a cable sent to Headquarters on October 18, in which the Army officer's request for three submachine guns was made, the Station indicated that the attache believed the officer, and his companion, a Navy officer were in league with a Navy admiral. (Cable 562, Sta. to Hq., 10/18/70) At another point in his testimony, the attache stated, "There was Valenzuela here and the Navy officer and the Army officer and the Air Force General over here." (The attache, 8/4/75, p. 107) The Committee has been unable to determine the exact affiliation of the Army officer. However, as previously stated, both the Army general and the Navy admiral were affiliated with General Valenzuela and the Navy admiral was in contact with General Viaux.

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sponse to the attache-Army officer meeting. Headquarters took note of Schneider's resistance to coup plans and stated:

* * * This would make it more important than ever to remove him and to bring this new state of events . . . anything we or Station can do to effect removal of Schneider? We know this rhetorical question, but wish inspire thought on both ends on this matter. (Cable 628, Hq. to Sta., 10/8/70)

During the first week of intensive efforts chances of success looked bleak. The Chile Task Force Log commented:

* * * the highest levels of the armed forces unable to pull themselves together to block Allende. The Chilean military's tradition of non-intervention, Frei's reluctance to tarnish his historical image, General Schneider's firm constitutional stand, and most importantly, the lack of leadership within the government and military are working against a military takeover. (Task Force Log, 10/8/70)

The following day the Station made reference to the "rapid(ly)waning chances for success." (Cable 487, Sta. to Hq., 10/9/70) This pessimism was not dispelled by their simultaneous judgment: "Station has arrived at Viaux solution by process of elimination." (Cable 504, Sta. to Hq., 10/10/70) Three days later the Task Force agreed: "We continue to focus our attention on General Viaux who now appears to be the only military leader willing to block Allende." (Task Force Log, 10/13/70)

If Viaux was the CIA's only hope of staging a coup, things were bleak indeed. His own colleagues, including General Valenzuela, described him as "a General without an army." (Cable 495, Sta. to Hq., 10/9/70) Yet in the first two weeks of October he came to be regarded as the best hope for carrying out the CIA's Track II mandate.

Although the U.S. military attache was instructed not to involve himself with Viaux because of the high risk involved (Cable 461, Sta. to Hq., 10/5/70), he served initially as a contact to Viaux through a military attache of another country. This attache reported on October 5 that Viaux wanted several hundred paralyzing gas grenades to launch a coup on October 9. (Cable 476, Sta. to Hq., 10/6/70) Headquarters turned down the request, concluding that a "mini-coup at this juncture would be counterproductive" and Viaux should postpone his plans, "while encouraging him in a suitable manner to maintain his posture so that he may join larger movement later if it materializes." (Cable 585, Hq. to Sta., 10/6/70)

The primary purpose of the CIA agents who posed as third country nationals was to contact Viaux, and they very rapidly relieved the attache of his indirect role in that task. Viaux reiterated his demand for an air drop of weapons to one of these CIA agents, and again the response was the same: reject the demand for arms, but encourage him to keep planning. In essence the Agency was buying time with Viaux: "We wish to encourage Viaux to expand and refine his coup planning. Gain some influence over his actions." (Cable 689, Hq. to Sta., 10/10/70) To achieve this latter purpose, Headquarters authorized passing $20,000 in cash and a promise of $250,000 in life insurance to Viaux and his associates, as a demonstration of U.S. support. (Cable 729, Hq. to Sta., 10/13/70)

On October 13, Headquarters again indicated its concern over Schneider by asking: "What is to keep Schneider from making statement in early hours which will freeze those military leaders who might
otherwise join Viaux?” (Cable 729, Hq. to Sta., 10/13/70.) The Station's response later that same day was “Viaux intends to kidnap Generals Schneider and Prats within the next 48 hours in order to precipitate a coup.” (Cable 527, Sta. to Hq., 10/13/70) This Viaux kidnapping of Schneider was reported by the Station “as part of a coup that included Valenzuela.” (Cable 529, Sta. to Hq., 10/13/70)

At about this time the Station began to receive encouragement from its other contacts. On October 14, ten days before the Chilean Congress was to vote, the Task Force Log concluded:

Now we are beginning to see signs of increasing coup activity from other military quarters, specifically, an Army General [deleted] and Admiral [deleted], and the forces in Concepcion and Valdivis * * * (Task Force Log, 10/14/70)

(c) October 15 decision

To summarize, by October 15 General Viaux had advertised to his contact a desire to proceed with a coup, had indicated he would deal with the Schneider obstacle by kidnapping him, had met at least once with General Valenzuela and had once postponed his coup plans.1

On October 15 Thomas Karamessines met with Henry Kissinger and Alexander Haig at the White House to discuss the situation in Chile. According to the Agency's record of this meeting, Karamessines provided a rundown on Viaux, a meeting between two other Chilean military coup conspirators, and, in some detail, “the general situation in Chile from the coup-possibility viewpoint.” (Memorandum of Conversation/Kissinger, Karamessines, and Haig, 10/15/70) A decision was made at the meeting “to de-fuse the Viaux coup plot, at least temporarily:”

It was decided by those present that the Agency must get a message to Viaux warning him against any precipitate action. In essence the message should state: “We have reviewed your plans and based on your information and ours, we come to the conclusion that your plans for a coup at this time cannot succeed. Failing, they may reduce your capabilities in the future. Preserve your assets. We will stay in touch. The time will come when you with all your other friends can do something. You will continue to have our support.” (Memorandum of Conversation, Kissinger, Karamessines, Haig, 10/15/70)

The meeting concluded, according to the Agency's record, “on Dr. Kissinger's note that the Agency should continue keeping the pressure on every Allende weak spot in sight—now, after the 24th of October, after 5 November, and into the future until such time as new marching orders are given. Mr. Karamessines stated that the Agency would comply.”2

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1 The reason for Viaux postponing his coup plans was the subject of a cable from Santiago to Headquarters:

We discount Viaux's statement that he had called off his coup attempt because of the CIA agent's impending visit. Other reporting indicated Viaux probably not able or intending move this weekend. (Cable 499, Sta. to Hq., 10/10/70)

There is also reason to believe that General Valenzuela was instrumental in persuading Viaux to postpone. According to the Chile Task Force Log:

Station reported that on 12 October General Valenzuela met with General Vlaux and attempted to persuade him not to attempt a coup. (Chile Task Force Log, 10/14/70)

2 Secretary Kissinger's recollection of the October 15 meeting is not in accord with that of Mr. Karamessines or the cable (Headquarters 802) that was sent the following day to the Station in Santiago. This matter will be discussed in Part V of this report.
The following day CIA Headquarters cabled the results of the White House meeting to the Station in Santiago:

2. It is firm and continuing policy that Allende be overthrown by a coup... We are to continue to generate maximum pressure toward this end utilizing every appropriate resource.

3. After the most careful consideration it was determined that a Viaux coup attempt carried out by him alone with the forces now at his disposal would fail. Thus it would be counterproductive to our Track Two objectives. It was decided that CIA get a message to Viaux warning him against precipitate action. (Cable 802, Hq. to Sta. 10/16/70)

The message was supplemented by orders to “continue to encourage him (Viaux) to amplify his planning; encourage him to join forces with other coup planners.” (Cable 802, Hq. to Sta., 10/16/70) The message concluded: “There is great and continuing interest in the activities of Valenzuela et al and we wish them optimum good fortune.” (Ibid)

(d) Coup planning and attempts after October 15

The decision to “de-fuse” General Viaux was passed to a Viaux associate on October 17. The associate responded that it did not matter because they had decided to proceed with the coup in any case. (Cable 533, Sta. to Hq., 10/17/70) At the final meeting of the CIA agent and the Viaux associate on October 18, the Agency was informed that the coup would proceed on October 22, “and that the abduction of General Schneider is the first link in chain of events to come.” (Cable 568, Sta. to Hq., 10/19/70) An “emergency channel” of communication with Viaux was maintained. (Report on CIA Chilean Task Force Activities, 11/18/70, p. 21)

As previously stated, by mid-October things suddenly looked brighter for a coup being mounted by the high-level Chilean military contacts.¹ A CIA overview statement on Track II stated:

Coup possibilities afforded by the active duty military group led by General Valenzuela and Admiral [deleted] had always seemed more promising than the capabilities of the Viaux group. These military officers had the ability and resources to act providing they decided to move and organized themselves accordingly. (CIA Briefing Paper, “Special Mandate from the President on Chile,” 7/15/75, p. 5)

By mid-October the Chilean military officers appeared to be moving in this direction.

On the evening of October 17, the U.S. military attache met with the Chilean Army officer and the Navy officer. They requested 8 to 10 tear gas grenades, three 45-caliber machine guns and 500 rounds of ammunition. The Navy officer said he had three machine guns himself “but can be identified by serial numbers as having been issued to him. Therefore unable to use them.” (Cable 568, Sta. to H., 10/18/70) The attache and the Chief of Station have testified that the officers wanted the machine guns for self-protection. The question, of course, is whether

¹ Two coup plotters, both Chilean generals, made one last attempt to persuade General Schneider to change his anti-coup position on October 15. The Station reported that the meeting turned out to be a “complete fiasco. Schneider refused to listen to their eloquent presentation of Communist action in Chile * * * and [remained] adamant in maintaining his non-involvement stance.” (Cable 548, Sta. to Hq., 10/16/70)
the arms were intended for use, or were used, in the kidnapping of General Schneider. The fact that the weapons were provided the Army officer and the Navy officer and that Viaux associates were convicted of the Schneider killing suggests that the guns were not involved.

The machine guns and ammunition were sent from Washington by diplomatic pouch on the morning of October 19, although Headquarters was puzzled about their purpose: "Will continue make effort provide them but find our credulity stretched by Navy officer leading his troops with sterile guns. What is special purpose for these guns? We will try send them whether you can provide explanation or not." (Cable 854, Hq. to Sta., 10/18/70) The first installment was delivered to the Army officer and the Navy officer late in the evening of October 18 and consisted of the six tear gas grenades intended originally for Viaux.1

That same day, General Valenzuela informed the attache that he and three other high ranking military officers were prepared to sponsor a coup. (CIA Report on Chilean Task Force Activities, 11/18/70) Their plan was to begin with the kidnapping of General Schneider on the following evening, October 19, at a military dinner being given for Schneider.2 after which Schneider would be flown to Argentina, Frei would resign and leave Chile, one of Valenzuela's colleagues would head the military junta, and dissolve Congress. With respect to the kidnapping of Schneider, the cable reported:

General Viaux knowledgeable of above operation but not directly involved. He has been sent to Vifia to stay with prominent physician. Will be seen in public places during 19 and 20 October to demonstrate fact that above operation not his doing. Will be allowed to return to Santiago at end of week. Military will not admit involvement in Schneider's abduction which is to be blamed on leftists. (Cable 566, Sta. to Hq., 10/19/70)

The kidnapping of the evening of October 19 failed because General Schneider left in a private vehicle, rather than in his official car, and his police guard failed to be withdrawn. The Army officer assured the attache that another attempt would be made on October 20. (Cable 592, Sta. to Hq., 10/20/70) The attache was authorized to pay Valenzuela $50,000 "which was the price agreed upon between the plotters and the unidentified team of abductors," but the attache insisted that the kidnapping be completed before he paid the money. (Task Force

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1 As previously stated, after October 15 CIA efforts to promote a coup in Chile focussed on the active duty military officers—Valenzuela, et al.—rather than Viaux. An example of this shift in focus was the decision to provide the Army officer and the Navy officer the tear gas grenades originally intended for Viaux. A cable from Santiago explained the purpose of this action:

Station plans give six tear gas grenades to the attache for delivery to Armed Forces officers (deletion) instead of having CIA agents posing as third country nationals deliver them to Viaux group. Our reasoning is that the attache dealing with active duty officers. Also CIA agent leaving evening 18 October, and will not be replaced but the attache will stay here. Hence important that the attache credibility with Armed Forces officers be strengthened. (Cable 592, Sta. to Hq., 10/18/70.)

2 The CIA agent who was in contact with Viaux at the time the Valenzuela plan was given to the attache apparently understood that Viaux was involved in the October 19 attempt. He stated:

Q. Were you told any of the details of how the (Viaux) kidnapping would be carried out?

Mr. Sarno. They indicated it was going to be at some sort of a banquet which the General (Schneider) would be attending. (Sarno, 7/29/75, p. 37)
Log, 10/20/70) At the same time General Valenzuela assured the attache that the military was now prepared to move. (Task Force Log, 10/20/70) The second abduction attempt on the 20th also failed and the Task Force concluded

Since Valenzuela's group is apparently having considerable difficulty executing even the first step of its coup plan, the prospects for a coup succeeding or even occurring before 24 October now appears remote. (Task Force Log, 10/22/70)

(e) The Shooting of General Schneider

In the early morning hours of October 22 (2 a.m.), the attache delivered the three submachine guns with ammunition to the Army officer in an isolated section of Santiago.¹

At about 7 am that day the group that intended to kidnap General Schneider met to discuss last-minute instructions. According to the findings of the Chilean Military Court which investigated the Schneider killing, neither the Army officer nor the Navy officer were there. Shortly after 8 am, General Schneider's car was intercepted on his way to work by the abductors and he was mortally wounded when he drew his handgun in self-defense. The Military Court determined that hand guns had been used to kill General Schneider, although it also found that one unloaded machine gun was at the scene of the killing.²

The first Station reports following the Schneider shooting said "Military Mission sources claim General Schneider machine gunned on way to work" (Cable 587, Sta. to Hq., 10/22/70) and "Assailants used grease guns. (Cable 589, Sta. to Hq., 10/22/70) The submachine guns had previously been described by the Station as "grease guns."

Thus the initial reaction of the Station was that Schneider had been shot with the same kind of weapons delivered several hours earlier to the Army officer. Santiago then informed Headquarters "Station has instructed the attache to hand over $50,000 if Gen. Valenzuela requests" (Cable 592, Sta. to Hq., 10/22/70), thus indicating that the Station thought the kidnapping had been accomplished by Valenzuela's paid abductors. Later that day, the Station cabled Headquarters:

Station unaware if assassination was premeditated or whether it constituted bungled abduction attempt. In any case, it important to bear in mind that move

¹ Although the attache's testimony and the cable traffic do not clearly establish the identity of the group to which the Army officer was affiliated (see page 240 of this report) two CIA statements on Track II tie the weapons and therefore the Army officer, to the Valenzuela group:

* * * The only assistance requested by Valenzuela to set the plan of October 19 into motion through Schneider's abduction was several submachine guns, ammunition, a few tear gas grenades and gas masks (all of which were provided) plus $50,000 for expenses (which was to be passed upon demand). (CIA Report on Chilean Task Force Activities, 11/18/70, n. 22)

* * * Three sub-machine guns, together with six gas cannisters and masks, were passed to the Valenzuela group at 2 a.m. on 22 October. The reason why they still wanted the weapons was because there were two days remaining before the Congress decided the Presidential election and the Valenzuela group maintained some hope they could still carry out their plans. (CIA Briefing Paper, "Special Mandate from President on Chile," 7/15/75. n. 7)

² The Military Court determined that those who participated in the shooting of General Schneider on October 22 were part of the Viaux-led conspiracy. The Court also found that this same group had participated in the October 19 and 20 kidnap attempts.

In June 1972 General Viaux was convicted for complicity in the plot culminating in the death of General Schneider. He received a 20-year prison sentence for being "author of the crime of kidnapping which resulted in serious injury to the victim," and a five-year exile for conspiring to cause a military coup. General Valenzuela was also convicted on the latter charge. He received a sentence of three years in exile.
against Schneider was conceived by and executed at behest of senior Armed Forces officers. We know that General Valenzuela was involved. We also near certain that Admiral [deleted], Army officer and Navy officer witting and involved. We have reason for believing that General Viaux and numerous associates fully clued in, but cannot prove or disprove that execution or attempt against Schneider was entrusted to elements linked with Viaux. Important factor to bear in mind is that Armed Forces, and not retired officers or extreme rightists, set Schneider up for execution or abduction. * * * All we can say is that attempt against Schneider is affording Armed Forces one last opportunity to prevent Allende's election if they are willing to follow Valenzuela's scenario. (Cable 598, Sta. to Hq., 10/22/70)

(f) Post October 22 events

The shooting of General Schneider resulted immediately in a declaration of martial law, the appointment of General Prats to succeed Schneider as Commander in Chief, and the appointment of General Valenzuela as chief of Santiago province. These measures, and others taken, caused the Chile Task Force to make the following initial judgment:

With only 24 hours remaining before the Congressional runoff, a coup climate exists in Chile. * * * The attack on General Schneider has produced developments which closely follow Valenzuela’s plan. * * * Consequently the plotters’ positions have been enhanced. (Chile Task Force Log, 10/22/70)

On October 23, Director Helms reviewed and discussed Track II:

It was agreed * * * that a maximum effort has been achieved, and that now only the Chileans themselves can manage a successful coup. The Chileans have been guided to a point where a military solution is at least open to them. (Task Force Log, 10/24/70)

Although it was not immediately clear to CIA observers, the Station’s prediction of October 9 that the shooting of Schneider (as a result of an abduction attempt) would “rally the Army firmly behind the flag of constitutionalism” was correct. (Cable 495, Sta. to Hq., 10/9/75) On October 24 Dr. Allende was confirmed by the Chilean Congress. General Schneider died the next day.

5. CIA/WHITE HOUSE COMMUNICATION DURING TRACK II

The testimony given to the Committee by Henry Kissinger and General Haig conflicts with that given by CIA officials.

Kissinger and Haig testified that on October 15, 1970, the White House stood down CIA efforts to promote a military coup d’etat in Chile. Both testified that after that date they were neither informed of, nor authorized, CIA Track II activities, including the kidnap plans of General Schneider and the passage of weapons to the military plotters.

By contrast, CIA officials testified that they operated before and after October 15 with the knowledge and approval of the White House.

The conflict pertains directly to the period after October 15, but it bears on the degree of communication between the White House and the CIA in the earlier period as well. For instance, Henry Kissinger testified that he was informed of no coup plan which began with the abduction of General Schneider. He was aware of General Viaux’s plan—which he and Karamessines decided on October 15 to try to
forestall—but did not know that it was to begin with Schneider's abduction.

CIA officials, especially Thomas Karamessines, stated that there was close consultation throughout Track II between the Agency and the White House. Karamessines testified that he met with Kissinger some six to ten times during the five weeks of Track II (Karamessines, 8/6/75, p. 66); and that he kept Kissinger generally informed of developments. (Ibid., p. 56) The Committee has records of two meetings between Karamessines and Kissinger and of one telephone conversation between Karamessines and Kissinger's deputy, General Alexander Haig. Karamessines' daily calendar indicates that three other meetings with General Haig took place—but does not establish with certainty that the topic was Track II. The calendar also suggests that Karamessines and Kissinger met on three other occasions and so might have had the opportunity to discuss Track II.

Henry Kissinger's testimony before the Committee differs from Karamessines in two respects: he believed Track II was "turned off" on October 15, 1 and, after that date, he was informed neither of the coup plans of the Chilean conspirators nor of the passage of weapons to them. He said that Track II was:

In the nature of a probe and not in the nature of a plan, * * * no plan for a coup was ever submitted to the White House. So my recollection of events, this was a request by President Nixon for Track II which led to two or three meetings which then on October 15th led to being turned off by the White House, after which Track II was dead as far as my office was concerned, and we never received another report on the subject. (Kissinger, 8/12/75, p. 15)

In my mind Track II was finished on October 15th and I never received any further CIA information after October 16th on the basis of any records that I have been able to find. (Ibid., p. 59)

General Haig's testimony generally coincided with Kissinger's recollection:

I left [the October 15th meeting] with the distinct impression that there was nothing that could be done in this covert area that offered promise or hope for success. I had the distinct impression that was Dr. Kissinger's conclusion, and that in effect these things—and I wasn't even really familiar with what these two groups were to do and how they were to do it, but they were to cease and desist. (Haig, 8/15/75, pp. 26-27)

My recollection would be that we had no hope for a viable, covert plan of action. That is the impression I got. (Ibid., p. 29)

The following pages present the Committee's record of communication between the White House and the CIA from September 18 through December 21, 1970:

(a) September

September 18

Helms and Karamessines met with Kissinger at the White House. As Helms' notes of the September 15 meeting indicate, Kissinger wanted a plan within 48 hours. In the meeting on the 18th, according to CIA records, there was little discussion of a military coup. Rather

1 Secretary Kissinger, in a written response to a Committee question, stated that he had not been able to find any "written instruction from the President to discontinue efforts to organize a coup. The President did, however, convey this decision to me orally in mid-October, 1970." To date, the Committee has been unable to question former President Nixon on this point.
the conversation focused on “what economic leverage could be exercised in the Chilean situation.” (Memorandum/Meeting with DDP, 9/18/70) The efficacy of economic pressure continued to be a subject of concern during the last days of September. Apparently that pressure was viewed as another inducement to Frei to opt for the “Frei gambit.”

**September 21**

The 40 Committee met. The Committee has no confirmation that Chile was on the agenda at this meeting. Karamessines’ calendar confirms that he attended; presumably Kissinger, the 40 Committee chairman, also attended, although the Committee has not been able to review his calendar. All that can be said about this meeting—and the meetings of the Senior Review Group, which Kissinger also chaired—is that the meetings afforded Karamessines and Kissinger an opportunity to meet privately and discuss Track II if they desired. In all these instances save the 40 Committee meeting on September 22, the Committee has no evidence to confirm that such a private Kissinger/Karamessines meeting actually took place. That the CIA prepared a memorandum of conversation for the private meeting on the 22nd but has been able to find none for other meetings may provide some support for the argument that no other such private meetings occurred.

**September 22**

Kissinger asked Karamessines to stay behind after a 40 Committee meeting called to discuss Track I. The two men also discussed Track II actions. According to the CIA record of the meeting, Kissinger told Karamessines that “our handling of the problem during the earlier meeting had been perfect and he added we were doing fine and keep it up.” (Karamessines Memorandum for the Record/Chile, 9/22/70)

**(b) October**

**October 5**

A cable sent to Santiago, released by Karamessines, requested a report on how the Station planned to contact the three Chilean Generals, including Valenzuela, named in a cable of September 30. (Cable 449, Hq. to Sta., 9/30/70) The October 5 cable indicated that the report was needed for a discussion with Kissinger on October 6.¹ (Cable 556, Sta. to Hq., 10/5/70) Karamessines presumed such a meeting had taken place, although he had no specific memory of it. (Karamessines, 8/6/75, pp. 69–70) His calendar for October 6 indicates that he attended a 40 Committee meeting on Chile. (Karamessines calendar.) Kissinger chaired that meeting.

**October 6**

The Station reported that General Viaux was “ready to launch golpe evening 9 October, or morning 10 October.” (Cable 472, Sta. to Hq., 10/6/70) In response, CIA Headquarters labeled the prospective coup one “with scant chance of success which will vitiate any further more serious action.” The Station was directed to try to “stop

¹ In a written response to a Committee question, Kissinger stated that he was never informed that these contacts had been made.
ill-considered action at this time.” (Cable 585, Hq. to Sta., 10/6/70)

Kissinger testified he had not been informed of the Viaux plan, supporting his recollection with the fact that the CIA memorandum of an October 10 conversation between Karamessines and Haig (see below) makes no mention of any previous plots. (Kissinger, 8/12/75, p. 24) Similarly, Kissinger did not remember having been informed that the CIA had called off a coup it regarded as premature. He stated:

My perception at that period was that if they had a coup they would come * * * back to us before triggering it * * * at no time during the period did they, in fact, tell us * * * that they had a coup that might be ready to go. And, indeed, they generally told us the opposite. (Kissinger, 8/12/75, pp. 25-26)

As Karamessines’ calendar indicated, there was a 40 Committee meeting on October 6. He attended this meeting, along with Richard Helms and William Broe of the CIA. According to the minutes of that meeting, CIA efforts to promote a military coup in Chile were not discussed. However, in an exchange with Charles Meyer, who was then the State Department’s Assistant Secretary for Latin American Affairs, Dr. Kissinger stressed the desire of “higher authority” (President Nixon) to prevent Allende’s assumption of office. According to the minutes:

Mr. Meyer pointed to the need to determine a post-Allende position such as proposed in NSSM 97. It was agreed that an early NSC meeting was desirable on that subject. Mr. Kissinger said this presumed total acceptance of a fait accompli and higher authority had no intention of conceding before the 24th; on the contrary, he wanted no stone left unturned. (Memorandum for the Record/Minutes of the Meeting of the 40 Committee, 10/6/70, 10/7/70)

October 8

Karamessines met for lunch with General Haig. (Karamessines calendar.)

In his testimony, Haig recalled being aware that the CIA was in touch with two different groups of military plotters. He believed there must have been another meeting in which the CIA informed him of its on-going contacts.

It seems to me, although the records don’t reflect it, that there was a meeting in September, a very brief one, in which I must have been told that there was a specific program going underway. That probably would have been by Henry (Kissinger) and perhaps with Karamessines there. I am not sure. (Haig, 8/15/75, p. 12)

October 10

Karamessines discussed the Chilean situation by telephone with General Haig. He indicated that the Station had “made direct contact with a number of the senior military officers, especially those who had been reportedly very activist-minded and had received pessimistic reactions from all.” (Memorandum/FUBELT, by William Broe, 10/10/70)

Haig recalled the telephone conversation with Karamessines on the 10th. His recollection accords with the CIA memorandum of conversation.

I do know, and I know that from looking at the record this morning, that Karamessines made a telephone call to me in which he gave a progress report. I recall that, it was in effect a negative progress report, that they were just not coming up with it. (Haig, 8/16/75, p. 12)
Haig indicated to the Committee that he would have passed along the substance of that conversation to Kissinger, and that in general his role at the time was one of a conduit to Kissinger:

I am quite confident that, given my own conception of my role at that time, that I would have conveyed that information to Henry. * * * (Haig, 8/15/75, p. 13)

Q. If Mr. Karamessines was unable to see Dr. Kissinger, and talked to you, what degree of latitude did you have concerning what you would pass on to Dr. Kissinger?

General Haig. At that time I would consider I had no degree of latitude, other than to convey to him what had been given to me. (Id., p. 15)

October 14

A cable to Santiago for the attache, ostensibly from General Bennett, authorized the attache to select two Chilean general officers and convey to them the following message: "High authority in Washington has authorized you to offer material support short of armed intervention to Chilean Armed Forces in any endeavors they may undertake to prevent the election of Allende on October 24." (Cable 762, Hq. to Sta., 10/14/70) Karamessines testified that in this case "high authority" would have been Kissinger or the President, for no one else could have given the attache such broad authorization. Karamessines presumed that the message had been drafted in, or at least cleared with, the White House. (Karamessines, 8/6/75, p. 91)

However, Kissinger did not recall having authorized the October 14th cable. He found the sequence of events puzzling; having been told on the 10th that little was happening, he would have expected in the meeting on the 15th (see below) to have discussed the results of the October 14th message. But the CIA record makes no mention of any such discussion. (Kissinger, 8/12/75, p. 53)

The 40 Committee met to discuss, among other topics, Chile. In addition to the 40 Committee principals (Kissinger, John Mitchell, David Packard, Alexis Johnson, Admiral Moorer), the meeting was attended by Karamessines, William Broe and General Robert Cushman of the CIA, Charles Meyer from State, and Ambassador Korry, who had returned to Washington from Santiago for a short period of consultation.

According to the minutes of that meeting, Kissinger asked Karamessines to give a rundown on the latest developments and present situation in Chile. Karamessines pointed out that "a coup climate does not presently exist." He noted that "the unpredictable General Viaux is the only individual seemingly ready to attempt a coup and * * * his chances of mounting a successful one were slight." Ambassador Korry agreed with Karamessines' assessment and stated that "as of now it seemed almost certain that Allende would be voted into office on October 24th." Kissinger then observed that "there presently appeared to be little the U.S. can do to influence the Chilean situation one way or another." Other participants at the meeting concurred. (Memorandum for the Record/Minutes of the Meeting of the 40 Committee, 10/14/70, 10/16/70)

October 15

Karamessines met with Kissinger and Haig at the White House to discuss Track II. According to the CIA memorandum of conversation,
Karamessines gave a run-down on Viaux, a meeting between two other Chilean military conspirators and "the general situation in Chile from the coup-possibility viewpoint." It was concluded that Viaux did not have more than one chance in twenty—perhaps less—to launch a successful coup. Kissinger ticked off the list of negative repercussions from an unsuccessful coup. The CIA record of the meeting continues:

5. It was decided by those present that the Agency must get a message to Viaux warning him against any precipitate action. In essence our message was to state: "We have reviewed your plans, and based on your information and ours, we come to the conclusion that your plans for a coup at this time cannot succeed. Failing, they may reduce your capabilities for the future. Preserve your assets. We will stay in touch. The time will come when you with all your other friends can do something. You will continue to have our support."

6. After the decision to de-fuse the Viaux coup plot, at least temporarily, Dr. Kissinger instructed Mr. Karamessines to preserve Agency assets in Chile, working clandestinely and securely to maintain the capability for Agency operations against Allende in the future.

The meeting concludes on Dr. Kissinger's note that the Agency should continue keeping the pressure on every Allende weak spot in sight—now, after the 24th of October, after 5 November, and into the future until such time as new marching orders are given. Mr. Karamessines stated that the Agency would comply. (Memorandum of Conversation/Dr. Kissinger, Mr. Karamessines, Gen. Haig at the White House, 10/15/70)

Kissinger, in his testimony before the Committee, regarded the CIA memorandum of conversation as substantially correct, although somewhat more detailed than he would have remembered. (Kissinger, 8/12/75, p. 52) He believed the Agency had been told to "stand down and preserve your assets."

Kissinger believed that the gist of the October 15th meeting as recorded in the CIA memorandum was incompatible with the order the CIA issued to its Station the next day, an order ostensibly based on the October 15th meeting. And, he noted, in writing its memorandum of the meeting of the 15th, the CIA had a "high incentive to preserve the maximum degree of authority." (Ibid., pp. 55–56) The October 16th order indicated that Track II had been reviewed at "high USG level" the previous day, and stated:

2. It is firm and continuing policy that Allende be overthrown by a coup. It would be much preferable to have this transpire prior to 24 October but efforts in this regard will continue vigorously beyond this date. * * *

4. There is great and continuing interest in the activities of Valenzuela et al. and we wish them optimum good fortune. (Cable 802, Hq. to Sta., 10/16/70)

Kissinger recalled the October 15th conversation as "turning off the coup plans rather than giving a new order to do them." (Kissinger, 8/12/75, p. 56) Haig agreed in his testimony.

The conclusions of that meeting were that we had better not do anything rather than something that was not going to succeed. * * * My general feeling was, I left that meeting with the impression that there was nothing authorized." (Haig, 8/15/75, p. 13)

October 10–October 22 (approximate)

Karamessines and one or two others went with Kissinger to speak with the President, after a larger meeting. Karamessines believed this meeting took place between October 10 and 24. (Karamessines, 8/6/75, p. 89) According to Karamessines, the "President went out of his way to impress all of those there with his conviction that it was absolutely essential that the election of Mr. Allende to the presidency be thwart—
ed.” As they were leaving the Oval Office, the President took Karamessines aside to reiterate the message. (Karamessines, 8/6/75, p. 8)

October 19

Station cabled Headquarters early in the morning, advising that the tear gas had been passed and outlining the Valenzuela coup plan, beginning with the kidnap of Schneider. In testimony before the Committee, Karamessines indicated he certainly would have reported the Valenzuela plan to Kissinger “very promptly, if for no other reason than that we didn’t have all that much promising news to report to the White House. * * *” (Karamessines, 8/6/75, p. 72)

In the afternoon of the 19th, Karamessines met with General Haig at the White House. (Karamessines calendar.) By then, Karamessines would have had in hand the cable outlining the Valenzuela plan, since the cable had arrived that morning. However, General Haig had no recollection of the meeting with Karamessines on the 19th. Nor did he believe he had been informed of the Valenzuela plan. “This is all very new to me. I hadn’t seen any of this, and I was not familiar with this particular plan * * * or $50,000, or any of the characters that are described in here.” (Haig, 8/15/75, pp. 38-39)

Similarly, Kissinger testified that he had not been informed of the Valenzuela plan. He said he “was informed of nothing after October 15th. (Kissinger, 8/12/75, p. 65) He indicated that, according to his daily calendar, he had no conversation with either Karamessines or Helms between the 15th and the 19th. (Ibid., p. 53) He indicated that he never knew that the CIA was in the process of passing guns and tear gas to Chilean military conspirators. He said “there was no further meeting on that subject. In anybody’s record, mine or theirs [the CIA’s], none of the information from the 16th on was familiar to me.” (Ibid., p. 62)

Kissinger further testified he did not know that the United States was dealing with Chilean officers who plotted a coup which involved the abduction of General Schneider:

Senator Hart of Colorado. I am not sure that the record clearly shows your answer to the direct question of whether you knew or did not know that we were negotiating with military officers with regard to a plot that did involve the abduction of General Schneider.

Secretary Kissinger. I said I did not know. (Kissinger, 8/12/75, p. 86)

Nor did General Haig believe he had been informed of any abduction plans before the fact.

Q. Were you aware during that period of time of the plans to kidnap General Schneider?

General Haig. I was aware after the fact. . . .

Q. But you were never informed prior to his attempted abduction?

General Haig. I don’t believe I was at all.

1 If the meeting with the President occurred after October 15, that would lend credence to the testimony of CIA officials that they were not directed to end their coup efforts in the October 15th meeting. Unfortunately, the Committee has not had access to the daily calendars of President Nixon or Secretary Kissinger, which might pinpoint the date of the President’s conversation with Karamessines.
October 20

A cable to the Station indicated that "while awaiting word on whatever events may have occurred 19 October, please let us know what you can on interim basis. * * * Headquarters must respond during morning 20 October to queries from high levels." (Cable 883, Hq. to Sta., 10/20/70) Karamessines testified that the references to "high levels" in the cable of the 20th meant White House officials, probably Kissinger. He felt quite certain that Kissinger would have been briefed in advance about Valenzuela's plan for the 19th and so would have been expected to ask what happened on the morning of the 20th. (Karamessines, 8/6/75, p. 73) In contrast, Kissinger interpreted that cable in precisely the opposite light. He felt it indicated that he had not been informed of the Valenzuela plan in advance. When news of the Schneider kidnap reached the White House, Kissinger believed he would have had "somebody pick up a telephone and say, 'What is this all about?'" (Kissinger, 8/12/75, p. 68)

October 22

Karamessines met with Haig at the White House. (Karamessines calendar) General Haig remembered that word of the shooting of Schneider came as "a great shock" to him, and he believed that Karamessines had told him about it in their meeting on the 22nd. He thought that Kissinger either was present at the meeting or that he, Haig, had gone immediately in to Kissinger's office to relate what Karamessines had told him. (Haig, 8/15/75, p. 36)

(c) December

December 2

A memorandum, dated December 2, 1970, from Helms to Kissinger stated that Helms had given a recapitulation on Track II to Attorney General Mitchell, who would deliver it personally to Kissinger. A handwritten note on the memorandum read: "sent to Kissinger via DCI [Helms]." (Memo, Helms to Kissinger, 12/12/70) The report, which was dated November 18, 1970, contained a full account of CIA activities during Track II, including the several plans to kidnap Schneider and the passage of weapons to the Chilean conspirators. (Report on CIA Chilean Task Force Activities, 15 September to 3 November 1970, 10/18/70)

In his testimony to the Committee, Kissinger did not recall receiving the report, although he doubted that he would have read such an "after action" report in any case. He testified that he could not find it in his files, in contrast to his finding a CIA report on Track I, dated November 19, 1970. Kissinger was puzzled by a number of aspects of the memorandum and report: why there were two reports, why the report of the 18th apparently was only called to his attention on the 2nd of December, and why it was to be delivered through Mitchell. (Kissinger, 8/12/75, pp. 71, 74)

(d) Did Track II end?

The Committee also received conflicting testimony about whether Track II ever ended, formally or in fact. As noted above, Kissinger indicated that Track II was supposed to have ended, as far as he was
concerned, on October 15. It was formally terminated, according to Kissinger, by a new Presidential marching order issued prior to the October 24 vote of the Chilean Congress. The Committee does not have this new "marching order" in its possession. However, CIA officials from whom the Committee took testimony believed that there had been no such definitive end to Track II. It merely tapered off, to be replaced by a longer-term effort to effect a change of government in Chile. Karamessines' testimony was most explicit:

Mr. KARAMESSINES. I am sure that the seeds that were laid in that effort in 1970 had their impact in 1973. I do not have any question about that in my mind either. (Karamessines, 8/6/75, p. 26)

Q. Was Track II ever formally ended? Was there a specific order ending it?

Mr. KARAMESSINES. As far as I was concerned, Track II was really never ended. What we were told to do in effect was, well, Allende is now President. So Track II, which sought to prevent him from becoming President, was technically out, it was done. But what we were told to do was to continue our efforts. Stay alert, and to do what we could to contribute to the eventual achievement of the objectives and purposes of Track II. That being the case, I don't think it is proper to say that Track II was ended. (Ibid., pp. 128–129)

When informed of Karamessines' testimony that Track II was never ended, Kissinger testified:

The CHAIRMAN. Would you take issue with that, with the [Karamessines] testimony?

Secretary KISSINGER. Totally. * * * It is clear that * * * after October 15th that there was no separate channel by the CIA to the White House and that all actions with respect to Chile were taken in the 40 Committee framework. There was no 40 Committee that authorized an approach to or contact with military people, no plots which I am familiar with, and all the covert operations in Chile after Allende's election by the Congress were directed towards maintaining the democratic opposition for the 1976 election. And that was the exclusive thrust, and if there was any further contact with military plotting, it was totally un-authorized and this is the first that I have heard of it. (Kissinger, 8/12/75, pp. 75–77)
IV. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

In evaluating the evidence and arriving at findings and conclusions, the Committee has been guided by the following standards. We believe these standards to be appropriate to the constitutional duty of a Congressional committee.

1. The Committee is not a court. Its primary role is not to determine individual guilt or innocence, but rather to draw upon the experiences of the past to better propose guidance for the future.

2. It is necessary to be cautious in reaching conclusions because of the amount of time that has passed since the events reviewed in this report, the inability of three Presidents and many other key figures to speak for themselves, the conflicting and ambiguous nature of much of the evidence, and the problems in assessing the weight to be given to particular documents and testimony.

3. The Committee has tried to be fair to the persons involved in the events under examination, while at the same time responding to a need to understand the facts in sufficient detail to lay a basis for informed recommendations.

With these standards in mind, the Committee has arrived at the following findings and conclusions.

A. FINDINGS CONCERNING THE PLOTS THEMSELVES

1. OFFICIALS OF THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT INITIATED PLOTS TO ASSASSINATE FIDEL CASTRO AND PATRICE LUMUMBA

The Committee finds that officials of the United States Government initiated and participated in plots to assassinate Patrice Lumumba and Fidel Castro.

The plot to kill Lumumba was conceived in the latter half of 1960 by officials of the United States Government, and quickly advanced to the point of sending poisons to the Congo to be used for the assassination. The effort to assassinate Castro began in 1960 and continued until 1965. The plans to assassinate Castro using poison cigars, exploding seashells, and a contaminated diving suit did not advance beyond the laboratory phase. The plot involving underworld figures reached the stage of producing poison pills, establishing the contacts necessary to send them into Cuba, procuring potential assassins within Cuba, and apparently delivering the pills to the island itself. One 1960 episode involved a Cuban who initially had no intention of engaging in assassination, but who finally agreed, at the suggestion of the CIA, to attempt to assassinate Raul Castro if the opportunity arose. In the AM/LASH operation, which extended from 1963 through 1965, the CIA gave active support and encouragement to a Cuban whose intent to assassinate Castro was known, and provided him with the means of carrying out an assassination.

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2. NO FOREIGN LEADERS WERE KILLED AS A RESULT OF ASSASSINATION PLOTS INITIATED BY OFFICIALS OF THE UNITED STATES

The poisons intended for use against Patrice Lumumba were never administered to him, and there is no evidence that the United States was in any way involved in Lumumba's death at the hands of his Congolese enemies. The efforts to assassinate Castro failed.

3. AMERICAN OFFICIALS ENCOURAGED OR WERE PRIVY TO COUP PLOTS WHICH RESULTED IN THE DEATHS OF TRUJILLO, DIEM, AND SCHNEIDER

American officials clearly desired the overthrow of Trujillo, offered both encouragement and guns to local dissidents who sought his overthrow and whose plans included assassination. American officials also supplied those dissidents with pistols and rifles.

American officials offered encouragement to the Vietnamese generals who plotted Diem's overthrow, and a CIA official in Vietnam gave the generals money after the coup had begun. However, Diem's assassination was neither desired nor suggested by officials of the United States.

The record reveals that United States officials offered encouragement to the Chilean dissidents who plotted the kidnapping of General Rene Schneider, but American officials did not desire or encourage Schneider's death. Certain high officials did know, however, that the dissidents planned to kidnap General Schneider.

As Director Colby testified before the Committee, the death of a foreign leader is a risk foreseeable in any coup attempt. In the cases we have considered, the risk of death was in fact known in varying degrees. It was widely known that the dissidents in the Dominican Republic intended to assassinate Trujillo. The contemplation of coup leaders at one time to assassinate Nhu, President Diem's brother, was communicated to the upper levels of the United States Government. While the CIA and perhaps the White House knew that the coup leaders in Chile planned to kidnap General Schneider, it was not anticipated that he would be killed, although the possibility of his death should have been recognized as a foreseeable risk of his kidnapping.

4. THE PLOTS OCCURRED IN A COLD WAR ATMOSPHERE PERCEIVED TO BE OF CRISIS PROPORTIONS

The Committee fully appreciates the importance of evaluating the assassination plots in the historical context within which they occurred. In the preface to this report, we described the perception, generally shared within the United States during the depths of the Cold War, that our country faced a monolithic enemy in Communism. That attitude helps explain the assassination plots which we have reviewed, although it does not justify them. Those involved nevertheless appeared to believe they were advancing the best interests of their country.

5. AMERICAN OFFICIALS HAD EXAGGERATED NOTIONS ABOUT THEIR ABILITY TO CONTROL THE ACTIONS OF COUP LEADERS

Running throughout the cases considered in this report was the expectation of American officials that they could control the actions of dissident groups which they were supporting in foreign countries.