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By abm, NARA, Date 12-11-06

1-24-75

George - This is a great  
memo. Explain to  
me why it is so  
sensitive. R

~~Confidential~~ - Eyes Only

To: Mr. Rogers

From: George Lister 2

Subject: Additional Information on Poblete Visit

Bill -

You might be interested in the following additional information on the Poblete visit. Because the following is pretty candid I decided to make it Eyes Only, typed it myself and made a copy for my files. Please either destroy this or hand it back to me.

Poblete is a good friend of mine and of the USG, with a viewpoint and information which badly needs to be heard here. He also strongly supports human rights and a liberal parole program for Chilean refugees, and he's soundly anti-Communist. For these reasons I tried to make as much use of his time here as possible, lining him up with appointments with Fraser, Kennedy, our refugee people in S/R/ORM, Brad Morse and Arthur Schlesinger, but without giving a blanket endorsement of his views or identifying him with us. I even planned out some of the meetings with him ahead of time. He did well.

1. Father Poblete praised our Santiago Embassy but expressed deep concern over the performance of the Consulate, which is housed in a nearby building. He said there is much criticism among Chileans and that the general attitude of the Consulate personnel, plus the long lines and lengthy interrogations, make a very poor impression. I had heard the same from other Chileans but thought it might reflect leftist anti-U.S. prejudice. In any event, Poblete brought it up with Don Fraser.

2. Poblete had never heard of Fraser and I briefed him at length. It was possible to arrange the lunch with Don on very short notice. It went very well. Renato began by expressing sincere gratitude for all Fraser's good work on human rights. Among other things, he said he was glad the GOC had succeeded in smashing the MIR, for that deprived the Junta of another justification for continuing with a heavy hand. Poblete covered all or most of the points he made with you, plus a few more. Don was appreciative and thanked Poblete and me warmly at the end. One thing Fraser asked was what should the USG attitude be if there is significant liberalization in Chile and release of prisoners, but a freeze on political activity and free press continues.

3. I arranged the Kennedy meeting with Mark Schneider, but was not present. Before Renato went up I called Mark and asked that he not keep him waiting (as he usually does). Poblete said it went very well. He had never met Kennedy/<sup>or Schneider</sup> before and was very impressed by the Senator, all the more since the latter took the time to meet with him despite the abortion hearings and demonstration (about 25,000 people) that day. Poblete was struck by the Senator's coolness under sharp questioning from a delegation of Massachusetts Catholics. During their private talk Poblete suggested to Kennedy (with Silva's approval) that he write a friendly personal, private letter to Pinochet, as one Catholic to another, urging a more liberal course in Chile but without excessive criticism. Poblete said Kennedy seemed to like the idea but thought such a letter might be premature.

4. Poblete got back from the Hill just in time to make the S/R/ORM/<sup>meeting</sup> I had laid on with Kellogg, Wiesner, and other supporters of a liberal

parole program for Chilean refugees and detainees. Renato was eloquent and to the point, and made an excellent impression. One of his listeners asked whether he was speaking for "Bishop" Silva. He said he was indeed speaking for the Cardinal. Kellogg then remarked to me that it would be good if Ed Loughran, the most active opponent of the parole program idea, could hear Poblete. Loughran is the top staffer of the Judiciary Committee, on the Immigration Subcommittee, and Sen. Eastland's main source of information on this subject. He is an old INS hand and has been in his present job for about a year. I urged that such a meeting be arranged immediately, and explained its importance to Poblete. He promptly agreed to delay his departure for New York. We took off in a cab for Georgetown University Hospital, to obtain the results of Renato's physical checkup (favorable), and then took another cab over to Loughran's office, sharing a sandwich en route. While we munched I pointed out to Poblete that Loughran's name was Irish, that he might well be a Catholic, and, if so, Renato might have an opening on that basis (by the way, I am an agnostic).

5. Loughran, a large, thick set man of about 60, was late coming in. I had never met him before. He gave us the briefest of greetings and fastened a beady eye on Poblete, ignoring me almost completely. Renato began the presentation we had planned and Loughran listened in silence. Suddenly he interrupted. "Are you a Chilean?", he asked. Poblete said he was, and continued. After a couple of more minutes Loughran interrupted once again: "Are you a Jesuit?". Somewhat flustered, Renato said he was, and continued on. After a few more moments Loughran broke in once more: "Are you telling me you want us to go into the jails of Chile and get people

to come to our country, people who have been put in jail by their own Government?". Poblete paused. Loughran turned to his assistants and said: "I've never heard anything like this in my life. This is weird, weird!" Poblete gently remarked that he was not suggesting we take terrorists or <sup>M</sup>arxists, but that there were others who were in trouble and deserved our help. Many of these would be in halfway houses, not in jail. Loughran kept barking out questions, hardly giving Renato time to reply. Finally Poblete said he wanted to ask a question, but Loughran ignored him. Then <sup>R</sup>enato leaned forward and pointed his finger at Loughran: "Now you answer my question. Didn't good people have to leave Ireland when they were in trouble?" Loughran was taken aback, stared at Poblete and finally said: "It wasn't that kind of trouble; there was a potato famine". I asked Loughran if he was telling us there had not been political oppression in Ireland. He hesitated and then admitted there had been a lot of that, too. Well, said Poblete triumphantly, then you can understand how good people can be in trouble in their own countries.

At that point I emphasized that Poblete was pro-U.S. and had studied <sup>at</sup> ~~in~~ Fordham (an institution which has produced many recruits for the Justice Department). That impressed Loughran, but the big break came when Poblete added that he had also studied at Woodstock Seminary, near Baltimore. It turned out that one of the men Loughran admires most had been a teacher of Poblete's. When Renato mentioned that Loughran's friend was the one who had first brought him to the U.S., Loughran warmed visibly. "You must have been a pretty smart kid to have him pick you out", he remarked, smiling for the first time.

There was one more moment of danger, though. Suddenly Loughran tensed up again, leaned over close to Renato's face, and asked: "Do you know Father Drinan?" Poblete said no. "Never talked with him?", Loughran persisted. Poblete again said no - and Loughran relaxed.

When the meeting ended Poblete took Loughran firmly by the shoulder and asked: "Now, my son, are you going to do the right thing, are you, are you?". Loughran smiled sheepishly.

I was told that after we went out Loughran confided that he liked Poblete but that he was "going to check up on him at the Vatican".

On Friday a friend of mine, Herman Will, an activist at the local United Methodist Church, called me up to say that someone in S/R/ORM had told him that there had just been a great breakthrough on the Chilean parole program. He asked for confirmation. I told Herman I sure hoped so.

I introduced Poblete to Brad Morse a year or two ago, and they got along well then. Brad was glad to hear that Renato was coming up again just now, partly I think because he wanted to consult with him about the scheduled U.N. Human Rights Commission debate on Chile.

The meeting that encouraged Poblete ~~xx~~ the most was the one with you. He came away feeling you are our best chance in years. I am grateful for your giving him that much time from your busy schedule.

Typically, Renato gets criticism from both the Chilean right and left. While in Washington he stayed with Mario and Gloria Artaza, good Chilean friends of mine. Artaza, a career diplomat with the

Christian Democratic left, was dismissed from his service soon after the coup. He had been in charge of the Washington Embassy. I have since helped him obtain a position with the World Bank. Poblete said Mario had kept him up for hours, accusing him of playing the role of a Petain.