

ROUTING AND TRANSMITTAL SLIP

Date Jan. 3

TO: (Name, office symbol, room number, building, Agency/Post)		Initials	Date
1.	Dick Schifter		
2.	Jim Montgomery		
3.	Leo Moser		
4.	George Lister		
5.			

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REMARKS

Chile: Valasco Letter

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January 3, 1986

To: Dick Schifter

Subject: Chile: Velasco Letter

This afternoon Eugenio Velasco of the local Chilean democratic opposition brought over the attached letter. Velasco had already mailed it to Elliott Abrams, but he wanted to make sure both you and Harry Barnes saw it. I will give Elliott a copy for Harry.

When Velasco gave me the letter I only glanced at it and made no comment. Now that I have read it I feel it is unfortunate, but not terribly important. ASA and HA can easily meet with Eugenio and his friends, and talk things out.

Velasco says Ted Kennedy is scheduled to visit Chile around the 15th of this month. Velasco will brief Kennedy on Chile Monday, and I assume he will provide the Senator with the attached analysis, orally or in writing.

George Lister

2

cc: JT-MG
Elliott Abrams

Washington D.C., December 30, 1985.

Mr.
Elliott Abrams
Assistant Secretary of State
for Latin American Affairs
Department of State
Washington D.C.

Dear Mr. Abrams:

We have taken the liberty to send this letter to you because we hope it will be helpful in the clarification of events which, in the last weeks, have produced a climate of scepticism and doubts regarding the policy of the Department of State towards the Chilean Military Government. We strongly believe that a firm, steady and consistent U.S. policy in favor of the re-establishment of democracy in Chile, can be an important factor of encouragement for the people of Chile. At the same time, the appearance of support for a harsh dictator who is subjugating the citizenry may have a serious effect on the sentiments of the Chileans towards the U.S. Government.

It is evident that, until a few months ago, the Department of State maintained an attitude of quiet and careful support of General Pinochet's regime. Cautious and sporadic criticisms issued for human rights' violations are not enough to modify this conclusion. Pinochet himself appears to have been aware of this policy and liked to boast of the friendship existing between both governments, "the best in the history of Chile and the United States", as he said in an interview with an American journalist. With a cruel sense of timing, Pinochet chose to re-establish the state of siege the day following President Reagan's re-election. In doing so he unleashed a brutal wave of repression and took the violations of human rights back to their lowest level. You may remember the facts. Pinochet had hinted of this measure some weeks in advance, as we personally told you two weeks before President Reagan's re-election. Pinochet gambled on a very mild reaction from the Department of State, and he was right.

Surely, the culminating point of this policy was Assistant Secretary Motley's visit to Chile, when he referred to alleged philosophical and ideological coincidences between the American and the Chilean governments. Pinochet never received so warm a signal of support from a Western democratic government.

During the last few months, we observed a clear change in the policy of the Department of State regarding the Chilean dictatorship. Because of new circumstances we do not wish to evaluate, the Department of State changed its policy and moved towards a clear support of and sympathy with a present transition to democracy in Chile. Particularly indicative of this new posture were: the vigorous public statement supporting the "National Accord for the Transition to Full Democracy", signed by eleven democratic parties of the opposition to Pinochet and sponsored by the Catholic Church; the public statement to declare that General Schweitzer's opinions did not represent the American Government's when this General, Chairman of the Inter-American Military Board, paid a warm homage to Pinochet's policies; the official speech made by Ambassador Burns when he presented his credentials to Pinochet; and the permanent activity of this Ambassador during November and December of 1985. As part of this same orientation we want to remember Ambassador Schifter's initiative to seek for changes in the drafting of the annual resolution to be presented to the Gen-

eral Assembly of the United Nations concerning Pinochet's regime for its violations of human rights in such a way that they allowed the United States to vote it favorably. The same at the Organization of American States.

Up to this point, everything confirmed the adoption of a new policy towards the Chilean Military dictatorship, committed to helping a rapid transition to democracy. But something seems to have happened, and the Department of States appears headed back to the old contradictory policy. What is the reason? Believe us that we feel unable to understand the change, among other motives because now you are in charge of the relationships with the Latin American countries, and your record as former Assistant Secretary State for Humanitarian Affairs and Human Rights, was one of great concern with human rights and democracy in Chile.

When the negotiations aimed at the implementation of Ambassador's Schifter initiative started, we found a very helpful reception both among the governments Mr. Schifter recommended we should get in touch with as well as among the Chileans who come to New York to lobby for the resolution on human rights in Chile. Unfortunately, the U.S. representatives to the United Nations played a very passive role at the beginning of the conversations, role that became negative a few days later. Most of the amendments Ambassador Schifter wanted were accepted, but the wording continued to be considered inappropriate. The U.S. Delegation eluded mention of concrete changes to make the draft adequate. The U.S. representatives limited their participation to insisting that the draft needed more changes, but never sought with real interest a satisfactory final version. In the end, despite the new text and to the surprise of representatives from different friendly delegations, the U.S. voted once more against the resolution concerning Pinochet's Governments for its violations of human rights. The countries that agreed to amend the preliminary resolution approved a few months ago in Geneva by the Human Rights Commission, solely to satisfy U.S. suggestions, have been forced to observe a sad spectacle: the U.S. joining again a few dictatorships such as Chile (that votes even when there is an ethic impediment), Haiti and Paraguay, while all its friends and allies in Europe voted for the condemnation.

In Cartagena, Colombia, at the General Assembly of the O.A.S. the U.S. managed to give another signal of support of Pinochet's Government. The majority of the member states approved the Report prepared by the Inter American Commission on Human Rights, but the U.S. Delegation decided to abstain. This decision promoted other abstentions, and at the end the Report missed being approved by only one vote. Only Chile and Haiti voted against.

Finally and most unfortunately, your own public statements have been interpreted as endorsing the present course of events in Chile. You said during a press conference that Chile's Government was moving in the "correct direction" towards democracy and praised the alleged progress made in the direction of democratic transition.

The effects of these American attitudes have been very important. The Chilean dictatorship has understood them as a change of the U.S. Government in its favor. The Minister of Foreign Affairs has officially declared recent signs of American support mean "the opening of the road towards the truth". That is, "quiet diplomacy" does not seem to be persuading Pinochet to move towards democracy and respect for human rights. Rather Pinochet contends now that he has finally convinced the United States of "his truth" on human rights violations and on the transition to democracy.

Chile's Government has been acting in this belief. Immediately after the votes in the United Nations and in the Organization of American States, the Minister of Internal Affairs dismissed the National Accord and refused to

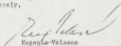
discuss it (the same Accord the Department of State applauded and supported). Furthermore, Pinochet treated the Cardinal (who had pioneered the Accord) in a harsh manner and told him that "his" itinerary would be maintained without changes. In other words, the recent actions of the Department of States have allowed Pinochet display intransigence and ignore the National Accord in a way he never dared to before.

We are very aware that the final destiny of the military dictatorship in Chile will depend on the efforts of the Chilean citizenry and not on the policies of the Department of States. Further more, we reject any foreign intervention in the Chilean political problems. But we believe in the existence of some juridical and moral principles which are part of the Western civilization and cannot be denied by governments. Hence, opinions expressed about those problems and votes in international organizations on those matters, by democratic states are perfectly licit and necessary. It/in this realm that the policies and opinions of the Department of States have great influence on de facto military governments of the developing countries. What has just happened in Chile is the best evidence.

Therefore, it is not an exaggeration to say that recent actions by the Department of States have strengthened the military dictatorship in Chile and weakened the possibility of a negotiated return to democracy. Strange paradox: the first democracy in the world appears as supporting a dictator who brutally subjects the Chilean people and has committed terrorism in the very capital of the United States.

Should yo be interested in further discussing this matter with us, we would be delighted to meet you.

Very sincerely,



Eugenio Velasco

Democratic Alliance
Coordinator
in
Washington D.C.

c.c. Ambassador Barnes
Ambassador Schifter