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ACTION ARA-00

INFO	LOG-00	ADS-00	INR-10	SS-00	CIAE-00	EB-00	DODE-00
	NSCE-00	NSAE-00	SSO-00	L-03	TRSE-00	PM-10	SVC-00
	INRE-00	SP-02	C-01	DS-01	P-02	/029 W	
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O 291115Z SEP 88  
 FM AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO  
 TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8379  
 INFO AMEMBASSY ASUNCION  
 AMEMBASSY BRASILIA  
 AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES  
 AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO  
 USCINCSO QUARRY HEIGHTS

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

~~SECRET~~ SECTION 01 OF 04 SANTIAGO 07058

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E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR  
 TAGS: PGOV, PREL, CI  
 SUBJECT: THE CHILEAN PLEBISCITE: SOME THOUGHTS ON  
 THE OUTCOME AND U.S. RESPONSE

1. ~~SECRET~~ - ENTIRE TEXT.
2. SUMMARY: CHILEAN ELECTION PROCEDURES HAVE WON HIGH LEVEL OF ACCEPTANCE BY THE OPPOSITION AND EMBASSY EXPECTS VOTE COUNT TO BE SUFFICIENTLY FRAUD FREE SO AS NOT TO ALTER RESULTS UNLESS THEY ARE EXTREMELY CLOSE. SIGNIFICANT POLITICAL VIOLENCE IS THE ONE THING WHICH COULD STILL CHANGE VOTER ATTITUDES. EMBASSY BELIEVES MOST LIKELY RESULT IS A MODEST "NO" VICTORY, SECOND MOST LIKELY A HEAVY "NO" WIN, AND THIRD A NARROW PINOCHET WIN. WE EXPECT ARMED FORCES TO RESPECT THE RESULTS WHATEVER THE OUTCOME, AND TO BE FULLY

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CAPABLE OF HANDLING POLITICAL VIOLENCE WHICH COMMUNISTS MAY ENGENDER AFTER THE RESULTS ARE KNOWN. EMBASSY IS ORGANIZING TO PROVIDE WASHINGTON MOST COMPLETE AND TIMELY INFORMATION POSSIBLE ON PLEBISCITE RESULTS. EMBASSY IS PROVIDING BY SEPTEL SUGGESTED TEXTS OF STATEMENTS FOR ALTERNATE SCENARIOS.

ONE OF THESE SCENARIOS IS THE "AUTO-GOLPE" - PINOCHET ALERTING THE PLEBISCITE PROCESS. THE WEIGHT OF OPINION IS IN THE SIDE THAT HE WILL HAVE TO ACCEPT A DEFEAT HANDED HIM IN THE FRAMEWORK OF HIS VERY OWN CONSTITUTION. BUT THE UNDERSTOOD WORRY IS THAT PINOCHET IS CAPABLE OF BEING EXPLOSIVE ENOUGH SO HE WOULD RATHER SMASH HIS OWN SCHEME THAN LOSE. IN ANY CASE, THIS IS A POSSIBILITY THAT COULD BE RULED OUT. END SUMMARY.

3. WE ARE NOW IN THE FINAL DAYS OF THE PLEBISCITE CAMPAIGN. AT THIS STAGE, WE DO NOT ANTICIPATE DRAMATIC EVENTS WHICH WILL SIGNIFICANTLY INFLUENCE THE OUTCOME. NOW THAT PINOCHET HAS BELATEDLY RELEASED HIS PROPOSED GOVERNMENT PROGRAM FOR THE 1989-1997 TERM, ANY FURTHER GOC GESTURES ON THE EVE THE VOTE WILL BE PERCEIVED AS CYNICAL MANUEVERS AND COULD EVEN BE COUNTERPRODUCTIVE. NEVERTHELESS, THERE ARE RUMORS THAT TWO FURTHER STEPS ARE UNDER CONSIDERATION IN A LAST-MINUTE EFFORT TO SWAY UNDECIDED VOTERS: AN AMNESTY OR PARDON FOR THE DOZENS OF JOURNALISTS WHO FACE CRIMINAL CHARGES AND THE TWO LABOR LEADERS SUBJECT TO INTERNAL EXILE, AND A PUBLIC PROMISE

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BY PINOCHET TO RETIRE FROM THE ARMY IF HE WINS.

4. STICKING TO HIS STRONG SUIT, PINOCHET IS STANDING ON HIS RECORD OF ACHIEVEMENTS, ESPECIALLY IN THE ECONOMIC FIELD, PROMISING STABILITY AND MORE OF THE SAME. THE PRESIDENT SEEMS TO HAVE PRETTY MUCH ABANDONED EFFORTS TO

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CHANGE HIS IMAGE AND IS FOLLOWING ADVISORS' COUNSEL TO AVOID PUBLIC EXPOSURE -- THE "SI" CAMPAIGN HAS APPARENTLY ACCEPTED THAT HIS PERSONA IS A NEGATIVE FACTOR IN THE ELECTORAL EFFORT. BECAUSE OF THEIR SUCCESS IN THE TELEVISION WARS AND LARGE TURNOUTS FOR THEIR RALLIES, THE NO CAMPAIGN STRONGLY FEELS THAT THEY HAVE THE MOMENTUM WHICH WILL PUT THEM OVER THE TOP, PERHAPS IN A BIG WAY. THEY HAVE ORCHESTRATED EVENTS TO MAINTAIN MOMENTUM THROUGH OCTOBER 2, THE LAST DAY ON WHICH CAMPAIGNING IS PERMITTED.

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POLITICAL VIOLENCE  
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5. THE ONE THING WHICH (#) WHICH WOULD SERVE TO DISCREDIT THE

NOTE BY OC/T: (#) OMISSION IN PARA 5. A CORRECTION WILL FOLLOW.

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	SP-02	C-01	DS-01	P-02	/029 W		

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O 291115Z SEP 88  
 FM AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO  
 TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8380  
 INFO AMEMBASSY ASUNCION  
 AMEMBASSY BRASILIA  
 AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES  
 AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO  
 USCINCSO QUARRY HEIGHTS

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OPPOSITION. EMBASSY CANNOT DISCOUNT THE  
 POSSIBILITY OF GOVERNMENT PROVOKED VIOLENCE IF  
 ELEMENTS WITHIN THE GOC PERCEIVE THAT THE PROSPECT  
 OF DEFEAT AT THE POLLS IS CERTAIN. WE DO NOT,  
 HOWEVER, HAVE SUFFICIENT INTELLIGENCE TO CONVINC  
 US THAT THIS WILL OCCUR. AN IMPORTANT FACTOR  
 IN THE CREDIBILITY OF THIS ELECTION IS THE  
 CONVICTION OF DECISION MAKERS IN BOTH CAMPS  
 THAT THEY ARE GOING TO WIN. THEY THEREFORE DO  
 NOT APPEAR TO BE SERIOUSLY PLANNING DESPERATION  
 TACTICS.

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ELECTION ATMOSPHERE

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 6. WE HAVE BECOME INCREASINGLY CONVINCED THAT  
 THE GOC IS COMMITTED TO HOLDING AN HONEST

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ELECTION. THE ARMED FORCES STRONGLY DESIRE LEGITIMACY FOR THE STRUCTURE THEY HAVE IMPOSED ON THE NATION AND BELIEVE THAT THIS STRUCTURE HAS SUFFICIENT SAFEGUARDS, WHATEVER THE OUTCOME OF THE PLEBISCITE, TO PROTECT THEIR INTERESTS. FACED WITH THE REALITY OF A MASSIVE FOREIGN PRESENCE, THE GOC ATTITUDE TOWARD FOREIGN VISITORS AND THE PRESS HAS BECOME INCREASINGLY HOSPITABLE. THE CHECKS AND BALANCES IN THE ELECTORAL SYSTEM ARE NOT FOOLPROOF, BUT THEY ARE CERTAINLY AS GOOD, AND BETTER THAN COULD HAVE BEEN EXPECTED. MORE IMPORTANT THE ELECTORAL SYSTEM IS WIDELY ACCEPTED IN BOTH CAMPS AS FAIR AND EQUITABLE. THIS IS NOT AN ENVIRONMENT AT ALL PROPITIOUS FOR PINOCHET TO OVERTURN THE RESULTS IF THE RETURNS GO AGAINST HIM. IN TURN, THE "NO" CAMPAIGN HAS CAREFULLY AVOIDED ANTAGONIZING OR THREATENING THE ARMED FORCES. ALL IN ALL, THE INDICATORS ARE THAT THERE WILL BE A FAIR AND HONEST VOTE COUNT. THAT DOES NOT EXCLUDE THE LIKELIHOOD THAT IN SOME VOTING PLACES DOUBTFUL BALLOTS MAY BE COUNTED IN THE GOVERNMENT'S FAVOR, OVER THE PROTEST OF OPPOSITION POLLWATCHERS, OR THAT THERE WILL BE CASES IN WHICH VOTERS ARE OPENLY INTIMIDATED OR PREVENTED FROM VOTING. BUT UNLESS THE ELECTION IS EXTREMELY CLOSE, WE DO NOT SEE THAT KIND OF THING BEING WIDESPREAD ENOUGH TO AFFECT THE OUTCOME.

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SECENARIOS  
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7. IF THE PLEBISCITE IS, AS WE EXPECT, LARGELY FRAUD FREE, EMBASSY BELIEVES THE MOST LIKELY SCENARIOS, IN ORDER OF POSSIBILITY, ARE (1) A "NO" VICTORY WITH A MODEST (3-7 PERCENT) MARGIN, (2) A SIZEABLE "NO" VICTORY (7-12 PERCENT) AND (3) A "SI" VICTORY WITH A NARROW MARGIN (1-3 PERCENT). TWO WEEKS AGO, CERTAINLY TWO

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MONTHS AGO, WE WOULD HAVE ARRANGED THESE PROBABILITIES IN A DIFFERENT ORDER. BUT THE DASHING OF MANY HOPES THAT WAS IMPLICIT IN THE NOMINATION OF PINOCHET, RATHER THAN A CIVILIAN; THE FAILURE OF THE "YES" TO HOLD A SINGLE SUCCESSFUL MASS RALLY; THE ADMISSION OF LIABILITY INVOLVED IN THE DISAPPEARANCE OF PINOCHET FROM THE AIRWAVES; THE DRAMATIC IMPACT OF "NO" PROPAGANDA ON TELEVISION FOR THE FIRST TIME IN 15 YEARS; AND, ABOVE ALL, THE OPINION POLL RESULTS IN SEPTEMBER, CONFIRMING THE IMPACT AND SIGNIFICANTLY WIDENING THE MARGIN OF THE "NO" OVER THE "YES," ALL LEAD US TO PREDICT A "NO" VICTORY.

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NSCE-00 NSAE-00 SSO-00 L-03 TRSE-00 PM-10 INRE-00  
SP-02 C-01 DS-01 P-02 /029 W

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FM AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8381  
INFO AMEMBASSY ASUNCION  
AMEMBASSY BRASILIA  
AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES  
AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO  
USCINCSO QUARRY HEIGHTS

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8. WHY, THEN, DO WE THINK A MODEST "NO" VICTORY MORE LIKELY THAN A LANDSLIDE? PRINCIPALLY BECAUSE THERE ARE STILL A SUBSTANTIAL NUMBER OF PEOPLE - 30 PERCENT IN THE LATEST CERC POLL - WHO ARE EITHER UNDECIDED OR UNWILLING TO STATE THEIR PREFERENCE. ALTHOUGH IT SEEMS MOST LIKELY, AS CERC ARGUES, THAT THIS GROUP WILL DIVIDE SIMILARLY TO THE 70 PERCENT WHO HAVE MADE UP THEIR MINDS - THERE IS NO DEMOGRAPHIC REASON TO INDICATE OTHERWISE - NEVERTHELESS SUCH A LARGE NUMBER OF APPARENTLY SHIFTABLE VOTERS INCLINES US TO CAUTION. THE KEY ON ELECTION NIGHT WILL BE THE METROPOLITAN REGION AND ITS NEIGHBOR, THE FIFTH, WHICH TOGETHER HAVE HALF OF ALL THE VOTERS.

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IF THEY GO FOR THE "NO" BY 60 PERCENT OR BETTER, WE DO NOT SEE HOW PINOCHET CAN POSSIBLY OVERCOME THAT LEAD, NO MATTER HOW WELL HE DOES IN THE OTHER ELEVEN REGIONS. BY THE SAME TOKEN, IF HE DOES MUCH BETTER THAN 40 PERCENT IN THE MAJOR URBAN CENTERS, THE "NO" IS IN TROUBLE.

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EMBASSY REPORTING  
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9. EMBASSY WILL BE CLOSELY MONITORING PLEBISCITE RESULTS AND PROVIDING DEPARTMENT FREQUENT REPORTS ON SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENTS. PERIODIC SITREPS WILL BE SENT ON PLEBISCITE DAY. OUTSIDE SANTIAGO EMBASSY REPORTING OFFICERS WILL BE STATIONED IN THREE MAJOR POPULATION CENTERS, CONCEPCION, VALPARAISO/VINA DEL MAR, AND ANTOFAGASTA BEGINNING SEPTEMBER 30 THROUGH OCTOBER 6. WE ARE PARTICULARLY |HANKFUL FOR DEPARTMENT'S SUPPORT (AND EMBASSIES BRASILIA AND BUENOS AIRES' COOPERATION) IN PROVIDING US ADDITIONAL TDY SUPPORT. IN ADDITION TO THE GOC, WE WILL BE IN TOUCH WITH ALL MAJOR POLITICAL GROUPS, THE CHURCH, AND INDEPENDENT VOTE MONITORING ORGANIZATIONS USING ALL MISSION RESOURCES. EVERY EFFORT WILL BE MADE TO PROVIDE WASHINGTON AS COMPLETE INFORMATION AS POSSIBLE. WE WILL MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO INCORPORATE VISITING OBSERVERS' COMMENTS INTO OUR REPORTING.

10. CAUTIONARY NOTE: THERE WILL UNDOUBTEDLY BE MOMENTS AS THE VOTE BEGINS TO COME IN WHEN WE WILL BE PRESSURED HERE AND IN WASHINGTON TO

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REACT PRECIPITIOUSLY TO INCOMPLETE INFORMATION. PARTIAL RESULTS FROM EITHER THE GOVERNMENT OR THE "NO" OR "SI" CAMPS MAY SHOW A DISPROPORTIONATE LEAD BY ONE SIDE OR THE OTHER. EARLY GOC RETURNS, IN PARTICULAR, ARE LIKELY TO BE VERY FAVORABLE TO PINOCHET. IN THE ABSENCE OF EVIDENCE OF FRAUD, WE SHOULD URGE RESTRAINT AND CAUTION TO ALL CONCERNED TO BE PATIENT AND AWAIT FURTHER VOTING RESULTS TO BALANCE OUT EARLY RETURNS.

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VIOLENCE  
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11. THE COMMUNISTS APPEAR TO BE KEEPING THEIR  
COMMITMENT TO AVOID VIOLENCE PRIOR TO THE  
PLEBISCITE (ALTHOUGH THEY ARE GIVING THE GOC  
SPLENDID AMMUNITION THROUGH ONE INFLAMMATORY

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FM AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8382  
INFO AMEMBASSY ASUNCION  
AMEMBASSY BRASILIA  
AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES  
AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO  
USCINCSO QUARRY HEIGHTS

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E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR  
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STATEMENT AFTER ANOTHER.) WE DO NOT ANTICIPATE THAT THE COMMUNISTS WILL SEEK TO IMPEDE THE PROCESS OR TERRORIZE VOTERS. NOR DO WE HAVE ANY INDICATION OF GOC-GENERATED VIOLENCE FOR WHICH THE OPPOSITION WOULD BE BLAMED. ALTHOUGH WE DO NOT EXCLUDE THE POSSIBILITY IF THE MOOD IN LA MONEDA GROWS DESPERATE. GIVEN THE STAKES, THE CAMPAIGN SO FAR HAS BEEN REMARKABLY NON-VIOLENT, AND ON BALANCE WE THINK IT IS LIKELY TO CONTINUE TO BE SO THROUGH ELECTION DAY.

12. THE NIGHT OF THE PLEBISCITE AND THE FOLLOWING DAY COULD BE ANOTHER MATTER.

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REGARDLESS OF THE OUTCOME, WHETHER TO DEMONSTRATE THEIR STRENGTH BY CELEBRATING OR THEIR DEFIANCE IN DEFEAT, THE EXTREME LEFT IS LIKELY TO TAKE TO THE STREETS. DEATHS ARE A ROUTINE FEATURE OF SANTIAGO'S DEMONSTRATION DAYS -- THERE WERE THREE ON AUGUST 30 -- AND THERE MAY WELL BE MORE. BUT WE BELIEVE THE DEMOCRATIC OPPOSITION WHEN THEY SAY THEY WILL MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO KEEP THEIR FORCES UNDER CONTROL, AND IT HAS BEEN DEMONSTRATED

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TIME AND AGAIN THAT THE COMMUNISTS BY THEMSELVES DO NOT HAVE THE NUMBERS TO THREATEN STABILITY. THE ARMED FORCES, OF COURSE, ARE FULLY PREPARED AND DETERMINED TO MAINTAIN ORDER, AND WE BELIEVE THEY WILL, WITH CASUALTIES.

THE AUTO-GOLPE

13. VERY FEW CHILEANS ATTEMPT TO PREDICT WITH ANY CONFIDENCE HOW PINOCHET WILL REACT TO DEFEAT. IT IS DIFFICULT TO IMAGINE HIM ACCEPTING IT WITH GRACE. BUT GIVEN THE GOVERNMENT'S, AND THE ARMED FORCES', VERY STRONG COMMITMENT OF PRESTIGE TO IMPLEMENTING THE CONSTITUTION AND HOLDING A CLEAN PLEBISCITE, WE THINK THE CHANCES ARE GOOD THAT HE WILL ACCEPT THE RESULT, RESHUFFLE HIS ADVISERS, AND BEGIN PLOTTING HOW TO OBTAIN MAXIMUM ADVANTAGE FROM HIS REMAINING 17 MONTHS IN OFFICE. MANIPULATION OF THE RULES OF THE GAME FOR THE PRESIDENTIAL AND CONGRESSIONAL ELECTIONS, ENSURING A MAJOR ROLE FOR THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL, CONTROLLING APPOINTMENTS TO THE SENATE, AND RETAINING COMMAND OF THE ARMY EVEN AFTER

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LEAVING THE PRESIDENCY ARE JUST A FEW OF THE CARDS HE WILL STILL HAVE LEFT TO PLAY. BUT HOWEVER MUCH THE ODDS ARE AGAINST AN AUTO-GOLPE, IT CANNOT BE RULED OUT, AND WE MUST BE PREPARED TO REACT TO IT, AND SWIFTLY, WHILE THERE IS STILL A CHANCE IT MIGHT BE REVERSED.

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U.S. REACTION  
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14. WHILE AVOIDING PREMATURE CONCLUSIONS, WE SHOULD BE PREPARED BY THE MORNING OF OCTOBER 6 OR 7 TO ISSUE A STATEMENT. IF ALL GOES WELL, WE SHOULD CONGRATULATE THE CHILEAN PEOPLE ON A PEACEFUL ELECTION AND PLEDGE OUR SUPPORT FOR

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CONTINUED PROGRESS TOWARD DEMOCRACY. OUR REACTION WILL POTENTIALLY BE THE MOST IMPORTANT FACTOR IN GUIDING INTERNATIONAL OPINION, AND WE SHOULD SUSPEND JUDGEMENT UNTIL WE ARE VERY SURE OF OUR FACTS. AN EVEN-HANDED APPROACH WHICH REJECTS VIOLENCE AND ENCOURAGES PARTICIPATION BY ALL POLITICAL GROUPS CAN BE A USEFUL CONTRIBUTION TO HELPING THIS TORTURED SOCIETY HEAL ITS POLITICAL WOUNDS AND STRENGTHEN THE CONSENSUS OF SUPPORT FOR THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS. BY SEPTEL EMBASSY IS PROVIDING SUGGESTED TEXTS OF U.S. STATEMENT FOR THREE CONTINGENCIES (1) NO VICTORY, (2) SI VICTORY, AND (3) SEIZURE OF POWER.

BARNES



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