

MEMORANDUM

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

ACTION  
April 10, 1972

SECRET/SENSITIVE/EYES ONLY

MEMORANDUM FOR: HENRY A. KISSINGER  
FROM: WILLIAM J. JORDEN *WJJ*  
SUBJECT: 40 Committee Meeting - CHILE  
[April 11, 1972]

CIA has come up with a new proposal for additional support for El Mercurio, the largest newspaper--and loudest opposition voice--in Santiago. The new tranche would be for [redacted] It breaks down as follows: 25x(1)



25x(1)

BACKGROUND

In September 1971, we decided to support El Mercurio in the amount of [redacted] We provided an additional [redacted] between October and December. 25x(1)

DISCUSSION

You are aware--probably painfully--of the background on this one. [redacted] 25x(1)



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*71*

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The heart of the argument for continuing support is the following from the CIA paper:

"The Ambassador and the Chief of Station indicate that El Mercurio is a significant element in promoting the opposition cause. In our view El Mercurio's continued existence as an independent voice, highly respected both inside and outside Chile, is deemed essential in the forthcoming period leading up to the Congressional elections which, if Allende wins, will permit him to govern on his terms...."

CIA and State favor the proposal. The general feeling appears to be that we have little choice. El Mercurio is important. It is a thorn in Allende's side. It does help give heart to the opposition forces. Without it, the Allende Government would have much clearer sailing. And if it goes down the drain because of government pressure--as opposed to financial failure--we have an excellent "freedom of the press" issue to use there and in the Hemisphere.

Thus, I reluctantly conclude that we should go along with this. But before casting a final vote, [REDACTED]

25x(1)

There is one discrepancy in the paper. On page 12, it says Ambassador Davis thinks we could get by with [REDACTED] It is not clear where the difference is.

25x(1)

[REDACTED] But I understand that El Mercurio is about to run out of credit. And without ink, a newspaper is not a newspaper--it is just paper.

Talking Points (attached) follow above general line.

Attachment:  
Talking Points

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