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Case Number: S199900030

Department of State
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Exemptions(s)

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ACTION ARA-00

INFO	LOG-00	ADS-00	AID-00	INR-10	SS-00	CIAE-00	H-01
	MSC-01	NSCE-00	NSAE-00	HA-09	L-03	LAB-04	TRSE-00
	PM-10	PA-02	OMB-01	INRE-00	USIE-00	SP-02	SNP-01
	C-01	PRS-01	P-02	T-01	/049 W		

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R 031603Z AUG 88
FM AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7649
INFO AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO
USCINCSO QUARRY HEIGHTS
USCINCLANT NORFOLK
SECDEF WASHDC

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 SANTIAGO 05484

CINCSO, CINCLANT FOR INTAFFS

E.O. 12356: N/A
TAGS: KPRP, PGOV, CI
SUBJ: PREPARATIONS ACCELERATING FOR PLEBISCITE
REF: SANTIAGO 2925 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY: AROUND THE COUNTRY, LOCAL ELECTORAL
BOARDS ARE SURVEYING LOCATIONS FOR THE 1200 POLLING
PLACES, CONSTRUCTING AND REPAIRING VOTING TABLES AND
BALLOT BOXES THAT WILL BE NEEDED TO CARRY OUT THE
PLEBISCITE. THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY (PDC) HAS
SWORN IN 27,000 POLLWATCHERS, AND OTHER LEGAL PARTIES
ARE BUSY TRAINING THE REPRESENTATIVES WHO WILL MAN
THE VOTING TABLES AND CHECK THE VOTE COUNTING.
NATIONAL ELECTION SERVICE (SEN) DIRECTOR JUAN IGNACIO
GARCIA INFORMS US THAT THE AMENDMENTS TO THE VOTING
SCRUTINY LAW BEING CONSIDERED BY THE JUNTA WILL MAKE
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IT EASIER FOR HIM TO SET UP THE VOTING MACHINERY IN A 30-DAY PERIOD AFTER THE PLEBISCITE IS CALLED. SIGNS STILL POINT TO AN EARLY OCTOBER DATE FOR THE ELECTION. DESPITE AN UNCERTAIN PRE-ELECTION CLIMATE, THE LATEST SURGE IN REGISTRATION ALSO INDICATES THAT MANY CHILEANS ARE LOOKING FORWARD TO THEIR FIRST CHANCE IN 18 YEARS TO HAVE A SAY ABOUT WHO WILL BE PRESIDENT. END SUMMARY.

2. AS THE TIME FOR THE PLEBISCITE APPROACHES, PREPARATIONS ARE BEGINNING IN EARNEST TO CARRY OUT THE NATIONAL ELECTION. THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY, 68 ELECTORAL BOARDS ARE SURVEYING SITES TO SELECT THE 1200 LOCATIONS (RECINTOS) WHERE THE POLLING WILL TAKE PLACE. FOR THE MOST PART, THESE WILL BE IN SCHOOLS, OR MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS, WHICH ARE EQUIPPED WITH LIGHTS AND TELEPHONES AND ARE EASILY ACCESSIBLE. TOWNSHIPS SUCH AS PROVIDENCIA, WHICH WILL NEED MORE THAN ONE POLLING PLACE, ARE PLANNING TO MAKE THE LOCATIONS AS CLOSE TOGETHER AS POSSIBLE TO KEEP VOTERS FROM HAVING TO TRAVEL LONG DISTANCES IN CASE THEY SHOW UP AT THE WRONG VOTING PLACE.

3. THE LOCAL ELECTORAL BOARDS ARE ALSO IN THE PROCESS OF CONSTRUCTING AND REPAIRING THE 20,000 VOTING TABLES AND BALLOT BOXES THAT WILL BE NEEDED ON PLEBISCITE DAY. IN ORDER TO SPEED UP THE VOTING PROCESS, EACH TABLE FOR THE FIRST TIME WILL HAVE TWO SECRET BALLOT CHAMBERS AND TWO REGISTRATION BOOKS. THIS IS NECESSARY BECAUSE EACH TABLE WILL HAVE UP TO 350 VOTERS. (IN THE PAST, THE NUMBER DID NOT EXCEED 300.) SINCE VOTING IS OPEN FOR NINE HOURS, IT IS ESTIMATED THAT EACH VOTER WILL HAVE ABOUT ONE MINUTE

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AND 48 SECONDS TO COMPLETE THE PROCESS OF PRESENTING HIS/HER REGISTRATION CARD, VOTING, AND HAVING THEIR RIGHT THUMB MARKED WITH INDELIBLE INK.

4. POLITICAL PARTIES ARE ALREADY TRAINING THE POLL REPRESENTATIVES WHO WILL WATCHDOG THE VOTING AND VOTE-COUNTING PROCESS. (UNDER THE VOTING SCRUTINY

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LAW, EACH LEGALIZED PARTY IS ENTITLED TO ONE POLLWATCHER OR "APODERADO" PER VOTING TABLE.) ON THE CELEBRATION OF ITS 31ST ANNIVERSARY THIS WEEK, THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY SWORE IN 27,000 POLLWATCHERS IN 300 TOWNSHIPS THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY. PDC ELECTORAL DIRECTOR ERIC CAMPANA EXPLAINED THAT 22,000 OF THE POLLWATCHERS HAD BEEN TRAINED TO MAN THE VOTING TABLES. THE REMAINING 5,000 WILL WORK WITH THE LOCAL ELECTORAL BOARDS AND REGIONAL VOTING SCRUTINY BOARDS, AS VOTING PLACE SUPERVISORS OR LIAISON WITH THE SECURITY FORCES. THE OTHER LEGALIZED OPPOSITION PARTIES -- PARTY FOR DEMOCRACY, HUMANIST PARTY AND RADICAL PARTY (PR) -- ARE ALSO TRAINING POLLING REPRESENTATIVES AND BACKUP PEOPLE TO MAN THE POLLS. THE PR DID NOT GET LEGALIZED IN TIME TO PARTICIPATE WITH OFFICIAL REPRESENTATIVES IN EVERY POLLING PLACE, BUT WILL QUALIFY FOR THREE REGIONS.

5. THE AMENDMENTS TO THE LAW ON VOTING AND VOTING SCRUTINY ORDERED BY THE CONSTITUTIONAL TRIBUNAL (REFTEL) ARE STILL BEING PREPARED BY THE JUNTA, WHICH IS EXPECTED TO DISPATCH THEM SHORTLY. WE DISCUSSED THE POSSIBLE MODIFICATIONS ON JUNE 29 WITH NATIONAL ELECTORAL SERVICE DIRECTOR JUAN IGNACIO GARCIA. ALTHOUGH PREVIOUSLY WORRIED ABOUT BEING SQUEEZED BY

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THE LEGAL DEADLINES, HE WAS RELIEVED BY THE LATEST CHANGE APPROVED BY THE JUNTA, WHICH CHANGES THE DEADLINE FOR SELECTING POLLING OFFICIALS AND MAKES MORE FLEXIBLE THE SCHEDULE FOR SETTING UP VOTING TABLES.

6. THE SEN DIRECTOR SAID THAT UNDER THE RULES NOW BEING CONSIDERED, HE COULD ASSURE THE ELECTORAL MACHINERY WOULD BE READY WITHIN A 30-DAY PERIOD FROM THE TIME A PLEBISCITE WOULD BE CALLED. THE FINAL STEPS INCLUDE THE CLOSING OF REGISTRATION UPON

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PUBLICATION OF THE PLEBISCITE DATE IN THE OFFICIAL GAZETTE; COMPUTERIZATION OF THE FINAL REGISTRATIONS; DELIVERY OF THE REGISTRATION BOOKS AND VOTING

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MATERIALS TO THE LOCAL ELECTION BOARDS; THE SELECTION OF POLLING OFFICIALS (VOCALES) BY THE LOCAL ELECTION BOARDS 19 DAYS PRIOR TO THE PLEBISCITE; AND THE PUBLICATION IN NATIONAL OR REGIONAL NEWSPAPERS OF THE POLLING PLACES, THE NAMES OF THE POLLING OFFICIALS AND A FACSIMILE OF THE BALLOT.

7. ASKED ABOUT THE RULES FOR THE PARTICIPATION OF INDEPENDENT GROUPS, GARCIA SAID HE DID NOT KNOW ALL THE DETAILS OF THE DRAFT AMENDMENT BEING CONSIDERED BY THE JUNTA. HE THOUGHT SUCH COMMITTEES WOULD BE SUBJECT TO THE SAME BASIC ORGANIZATIONAL REQUIREMENTS AS POLITICAL PARTIES, EXCEPT THAT A SMALLER NUMBER OF SIGNATURES WOULD BE REQUIRED. HOWEVER HE DID NOT EXPECT THE INDEPENDENT GROUPS TO BE ABLE TO MEET LEGAL REQUIREMENTS TO APPOINT OFFICIAL POLL-WATCHERS AND ELECTORAL PROPAGANDA FOR THE 1988 PLEBISCITE.

8. COMMENT: SIGNS STILL POINT TO AN EARLY OCTOBER PLEBISCITE, AND THE ELECTION TRAIN IS BEGINNING TO PICK UP SPEED. REGISTRATION LINES HAVE DOUBLED IN MANY TOWNSHIPS SINCE THE RECENT ANNOUNCEMENT THAT THE COMMANDERS IN CHIEF WILL MEET ON AUGUST 30 TO SELECT A PLEBISCITE CANDIDATE. DESPITE AN UNCERTAIN PRE-ELECTORAL CLIMATE PUNCTUATED BY CONTINUING TERRORIST ACTIVITY, STATES OF EXCEPTION, AND LINGERING POPULAR DOUBTS OVER THE SECRECY OF THE BALLOT, MANY CHILEANS APPEAR TO BE LOOKING FORWARD TO THEIR FIRST CHANCE IN 18 YEARS TO HAVE A SAY ABOUT UNCLASSIFIED

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WHO WILL BE PRESIDENT. END SUMMARY.
JONES

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