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Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon

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Chilean Elections

The first electoral test of the Popular Unity (UP) Government of President Salvador Allende indicates significant gains for both his Socialist Party (PS) and the Leftist Coalition of which it forms a part. Returns are incomplete but it looks as if the UP will win about 48–49 percent of the total vote, considerably above the 36 percent Allende gained in the presidential elections last September, and above the 44–45 percent level which would have reflected the traditional constituencies of the UP parties. An approximate percentage breakdown on the basis of returns thus far is as follows:

President Allende has called the results a mandate for the UP program. He explained the strong showing of the Socialists by pointing out that it is his own party, and especially mentioned the Communist vote as "a positive sign." Allende also commented that the Christian Democrats would have to "change their ways" and that elements in the PDC would press for more support for the UP government.

Initial assessments are that Allende is probably correct in regarding the outcome as a personal victory for him and, to some extent, a mandate for continuation of his government's policies. He is probably also right that the good showing by the Socialists is a sign of his rather than their popularity. His mention of the Communists was meant to minimize their failure to improve their relative standing. Other significant facts about the election are that:

—The UP showing exceeded the 44 percent which Allende had previously set as the mark beyond which he would consider the results a victory.

—The UP fell short of the 50 percent it hoped for.

—The Communists did not increase their share of the total vote from that won by them last September despite the marked increase in the vote won by the UP coalition.

—PDC remains the largest single party in the country with 25 percent of the vote, and the two opposition parties together continue to hold about 47 percent of the vote.

In the three-way race for the senatorial seat vacated by Allende when he became president, Socialist Party candidate Adonis Sepulveda leads with about 47 percent of the vote on the basis of an incomplete count. The PDC was unable to persuade the third-party candidate to withdraw from the race, which is a significant one because it is the only test of

strength above the municipal level.

This represents a preliminary analysis. I will shortly send you fuller comments after we have had a chance to study the results further.