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

Identificador Archival:	frus:frus1969-76v21/d289
Agencia Emisora:	NSC / Casa Blanca
Fecha del Documento:	1972-01-20
Colección / Serie:	FRUS 1969–1976, vol. XXI: Chile, 1969–1973

Nota de Archivo: *Washington. Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 776, Country Files, Latin America, Chile, Vol. VII. Secret; Sensitive; Eyes Only; Outside System. Sent for information. A stamped notation on the memorandum indicates the President saw it. Under a January 17 covering memorandum to Kissinger, Hewitt recommended that Kissinger send this memorandum to the President. Hewitt characterized the triumph of the anti-Allende politicians in Chilean congressional elections of January 16: "Their victory arises in part from the unity the opposition parties were able to generate, but must represent some degree of turning away from the Allende government and its policies on the part of the electorate. Your memo notes our contribution to the victory in providing some clandestine support to the opposition parties to assist them with campaign expenses." Hewitt concluded, "it is importa*

Allende Suffers Major Defeat in Chilean Elections

President Salvador Allende's Popular Unity (UP) coalition suffered a stunning defeat in two by-elections held on Sunday. In the race for a vacant Senate seat the opposition candidate, a Christian Democrat (PDC), received 77,000 votes or about 53% of the total, as opposed to 68,000 or about 46% for his opponent, a member of the Socialist Party (PS). In another area the Nationalist Party (PN) candidate garnered 30,000 votes or a whopping 58% while defeating the UP candidate, nominally an independent, for a vacant seat in the Chamber of Deputies. The UP candidate got 21,000 votes, or 41%.

Percentages like this are extremely rare in Chile with its multi-party system and middle-of-the-road tendencies. President Allende himself only got 36% of the vote in the 1970 Presidential elections which carried him and the UP to power. The best his leftist coalition has been able to do was slightly more than 50% in last April's municipal elections, which Allende hailed as a major victory for his Government and a popular endorsement of his policies. Right up until election time on Sunday both the Government and the opposition were cautious about making predictions, and neither was willing to describe the elections as a plebiscite. It was generally agreed that whoever won, the results would be close. Hence, the virtual landslide in favor of the opposition comes as a surprise. A major factor in the result was the unity shown by the two opposition parties, which are ancient enemies, in pooling their resources. However this alone cannot explain the proportions of the victory, which must represent some turning away from the Government and its policies.

While internal factors were the chief ones in determining the results, we provided [dollar amount not declassified] in funding through clandestine channels to the opposition parties to assist with campaign expenses in Sunday's elections. These funds made it possible for the opposition to bring its message to the voters and offset to some extent the very determined campaign being carried out by the Government.

It is too early to assess the impact of the elections on the public and political parties. It will almost certainly increase the polarization of Chilean society and political life which has been developing quite rapidly in recent months. The outcome

will increase the confidence of the opposition parties and should demonstrate to them the benefits of cooperation. The results may also lead to a schism in Allende's UP coalition. The Socialists are likely to insist that the Government turn away from the democratic path it has followed up until now and take the reigns of power into its own hands in order to impose a socialist revolution, by force if need be. However, the other two major parties in the UP, the Communists and the Radicals, as well Allende himself, will probably be reluctant to do this out of fear of the Armed Forces, which have remained neutral and apolitical thus far but made clear that they will react sharply to any violation of the Constitution. In any event, Allende's often voiced assertion that it is possible to carry out a socialist revolution by democratic means has been called seriously into question by the outcome of this weekend's elections.