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Memorandum From Viron P. Vaky of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)

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Chilean Elections—Another View

My memo of June 23 commented on Korry's proposal for political action funding which is now up for consideration.

This memo is intended to suggest a line of analysis that has not, to my knowledge, been surfaced in this context.

So far everyone has focussed on the immediate problem of the election and the objective of keeping Allende from being elected. But achieving that objective does not automatically get us out of the woods; in fact, it might only give us a worse problem later. The point is that what happens to keep Allende from being elected is important in the long run, and could be good or bad.

Next to no thought—to my knowledge—has been given to the long term problem and trend in Chile, and therefore to the perspective of operating now in terms of the long-range. The long-term problem is two-fold; (a) the center of political gravity in Chile is left of center; and (b) there is no existing political force of reasonable permanence that can preempt the Communists/Socialists' base on a sustained basis except the Christian Democrats.

Keeping the Communists/Socialists out of elected power over the long-range depends on one or more of several things happening—erosion of the Communist political base; existence of strong competitive non-Communist political parties; and/or forging of a viable center-right political party (which is difficult now because of (a) above and because there is no good nucleus at the moment).

There is an easy assumption that Allesandri's election would be best for us, based on the superficial circumstance that he is moderate, conservative, well-known and has come to be thought of as representing stability. But I posit the hypothesis that Alessandri's election might be the worst "anti-Allende" solution for us from a long-run point of view, even though satisfactory for the time being.

Alessandri represents no political movement or force; he would be elected as a person and on a personalistic basis. He can therefore be no more than a temporary bulwark. He is old (in his seventies) and Korry and Frei describe him as having "extraordinary debilities, intellectual as well as physical". Korry says (Santiago 2361):

"He has no program; he has no organization; he has no understanding of modern problems, not even what the threat of the Marxists represents; he is consumed by a desire to vindicate his actions in his previous administration and to avenge the barbs and the triumphs of the Christian Democrats . . ."

If all that is true, it seems to me that an Alessandri administration might well make a Communist victory in 1976 inevitable—for it would hardly seem able to construct the kind of political base and force that could compete with and preempt the Communists over a sustained period.

One of two things seems likely to happen under Alessandri:

—He would be inept; cause the discontent to swing left and either lead to greater electoral victories by the far left or (less likely) to a military government, which in Chile would have a hard time sustaining itself except by repression; or (and most likely)

—The Communists/Socialists would make a political deal to support Alessandri in the Congress in return for a free hand to eliminate the Christian Democrats politically—an end Alessandri is likely to support. If this occurred it would give the Communists an electoral advantage in 1976 and perhaps fatally weaken Frei's base—Frei being the only person with the charisma to unite the country against Allende in the next election.

All of this suggests rather tentatively that we should think of an anti-Allende course that would have its positive side. Perhaps we should aid Tomic to at least come in second. With Alessandri slipping anyway, this would have the advantage of strengthening Tomic to pick up the defection from Alessandri rather than Allende; a Tomic victory or better still a second place over Allende would be satisfactory to us.

Thus, if we combined a political action plan of anti-Allende activities with pro-Tomic funding, we might increase the effectiveness of our effort.