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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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September 4 Presidential Elections in Chile

Ambassador Edward Korry has sent us his analysis (Tab A) of how the Presidential campaign in Chile is progressing. He estimates that at present Alessandri may have about 38% of the vote, Allende 33% and Tomic 25%. The cable is long, but very literate and worth reading.

According to Korry, conservative 74-year old Alessandri has been the primary beneficiary over the past month of: (1) the increased polarization in Chilean politics resulting from recent episodes of violence and the consequent injection of the theme of law and order into the campaign as a central issue, and (2) the popularity and influence of President Frei. Alessandri's recent gains have been largely at the expense of Christian Democrat (PDC) candidate Tomic, who, according to Korry, is now increasingly held to be a poor third by all sectors.

Allende, (candidate of the leftist Popular Unity, a coalition of the Communists, Socialists and Radicals) has been hurt by recent episodes of violence. His supporters are divided on the question of the use of violence, and he has alienated some of his moderate supporters by the more radical and openly Marxist posture which he has assumed recently.

Tomic, who has equivocated on the issue of violence in an attempt to woo the left, has also been hurt by injection of law and order as a campaign issue. He has blundered in the management of his campaign by attacking the popular Frei government, thereby contributing to a widening gap between President Frei and his party's candidate (Tomic) and platform.

Alessandri has benefitted from Frei's actions to ensure law and order and from his stress on liberty and democracy. Alessandri, who has based his campaign on the issue of law and order, emerges as a patriarchal figure of tranquility.

Korry feels that if Alessandri does not become overconfident, if Tomic does not change his strategy, and if no chance event upsets the present pattern, Alessandri may be able to get the sizeable vote he needs to be named by Congress and assume office without undue difficulty. There is still time for considerable shifting in the order, however, before the September 4 elections.