DECLASSIFIED // SECRET; SENSITIVE; EYES ONLY

Memorandum From Winston Lord of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)

Identificador Archival:	frus:frus1969-76v21/d87
Agencia Emisora:	NSC / Casa Blanca
Fecha del Documento:	1970-09-14
Colección / Serie:	FRUS 1969–1976, vol. XXI: Chile, 1969–1973

Nota de Archivo: *Washington. Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 777, Country Files, Latin America, Chile, 1970. Secret; Sensitive; Eyes Only. Sent for information. A copy was sent to Haig.*

Chile, Vietnam, and Elections

There are many powerful arguments against U.S. meddling in the Chilean internal scene to thwart an Allende victory in the congressional run-off. With most of these you are undoubtedly thoroughly familiar—the risk of exposure and the damage to our policy throughout Latin America, doubts whether effective actions are possible, the general repugnance of our trying to arrange the political structure of another country, etc.

There is however another compelling reason against our interference, which you may not have fully focused on: It could completely undercut our policy on Vietnam.

Revelation of our directly moving to reverse the unpalatable electoral outcome in Chile would make a mockery of our stance on South Vietnam, would make hollow the following tenets of our policy:

—We are for self-determination of the South Vietnamese people without foreign interference;

—We think this can best be accomplished through free elections;

—We will abide by the outcome of elections, even if this means Communist influence or control.

It would be most difficult to sit across the table from the North Vietnamese and assure them that we are not trying to trick them through elections while the newspapers are describing U.S. attempts to thwart the outcome of the electoral process in Chile, a country where we have not lost some 50,000 American lives.

It would mercilessly expose our Vietnam policy of self-determination, elections, and acceptance of the political outcome to attacks not only by American doves, but also by middle-of-the-roaders. And it would signal to the present South Vietnamese government that they need not take us seriously when we press them for political compromises.

As for the argument that Allende "only" won about 38 percent of the electoral vote, this proportion is almost precisely what Thieu–Ky received.