

25X1

Approved For Release 2006/05/25 : CIA-RDP85T00875R001100160038-8

Approved For Release 2006/05/25 : CIA-RDP85T00875R001100160038-8

25X1

**Secret**



DPSD



DIRECTORATE OF  
INTELLIGENCE

# Intelligence Memorandum

*The Chilean Elections*

**CIA  
DOCUMENT SERVICES BRANCH  
FILE COPY  
DO NOT DESTROY**

**Secret**

84  
1 March 1973  
No. 1630/73

25X1

Approved For Release 2006/05/25 : CIA-RDP85T00875R001100160038-8

Approved For Release 2006/05/25 : CIA-RDP85T00875R001100160038-8

SECRET

25X1

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
Directorate of Intelligence  
1 March 1973

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

The Chilean Elections

Summary

The outcome of the congressional elections in Chile next Sunday will have a bearing on the pace of socialization, but it is unlikely to change the balance of political forces significantly or to relieve the growing tension between President Allende and his opponents.

There is little question that the opposition coalition will win a majority of the vote; the questions pertain to the size of its margin and how it is interpreted by the parties and other interest groups.

The President takes the public position that success would be any vote above the plurality (36.3 percent) he got in 1970. If candidates associated with him get over 40 percent, as he and the Communist Party anticipate, he will claim a mandate for more rapid socialization. As a precaution, however, he is formulating plans to adapt his tactics to a return as low as 33 percent. Such an outcome would fuel animosities between the Socialists and Communists that already weaken the Popular Unity coalition.

Members of the opposition coalition, led by the Christian Democratic and National parties, are encouraged by the widespread economic discontent and hope to get over 60 percent of the vote. They would portray this as a repudiation of Allende, but in fact they need that much of the vote to maintain their present simple majority in congress.

Regardless of the outcome, Allende will try to broaden his power base for the remaining three-and-a-half years of his term and thus reduce his dependence on his quarreling Popular Unity coalition. He has benefited by bringing the military into his government, and he will probably seek to prolong this arrangement. The military, in turn, is likely to see continued involvement as a means of ensuring political order and perhaps reducing economic dislocations.

Beginning on page 7 we examine several possible outcomes.

*NOTE: Comments and queries regarding this publication are welcome. They may be directed to [redacted] of the Office of Current Intelligence, [redacted]*

25X1

SECRET

25X1

SECRET

25X1

### Changes on the Election Scene

Four and one-half million Chileans, nearly half the population, are registered to vote on 4 March for all 150 members of the Chamber of Deputies for 4-year terms and 25 of 50 senators for 8-year terms.

The electorate this year is at least 40 percent larger than in 1969 and 17 percent larger than in the last nationwide elections, the municipal contests in April 1971.

For the first time illiterates and those 18 to 21 years of age can vote in other than local elections.

Each voter can cast a ballot for only one deputy, whether his district has two or eighteen, and for one senator, if it is his district's turn to elect its quota of five.

Other major election changes will alter the effects of the complicated proportional system of vote computation used in previous elections:

- All but one of the political groups running candidates are combined into two coalitions, each comprising two strong rival parties and ambitious lesser groups.
- Each coalition is limited to the number of legislative seats open.
- Surplus votes for a strong candidate in a district will accrue to his coalition list as a whole and to its best-running candidates, rather than to candidates from his own party as in the past.
- A vote may be cast for a list or an individual, but not both, an innovation that may produce many nullified ballots, clouding the post-election atmosphere.

25X1

SECRET

25X1

### How They See It

Chileans will go to the polls on 4 March to elect all 150 members of the Chamber of Deputies and half the 50 senators. The chief question about the elections is the size of the majority the opposition emerges with and the interpretation given that margin by the opposing sides. Victory will be in the eye of the beholder. Most Chilean politicians, President Allende and leaders of his Popular Unity coalition included, are already offering their interpretations.

The President maintains publicly that he would be pleased with any vote above his own 1970 plurality of 36.3 percent and 17 supporters, a "blocking third," in the 50-man senate. By retaining a blocking third, he would preclude his impeachment, which he claims is the real goal of the opposition. Since nine of the 25 senators not running this year are pro-government, a blocking third is probably within reach.

If Popular Unity candidates get over 40 percent of the vote, he would consider it an "absolute victory," a mandate for more rapid transformation of Chile into a socialist system. Allende and the Communists now are estimating a vote of 40 percent or more, although the President is formulating plans for a return as low as 33 percent.

As for the other leading figures in the Allende coalition, they will measure their success by the showing made by the candidates of their individual parties. The Communists, for example, savor the possibility of winning 20 percent of the vote, more than ever before. To them this would be incontrovertible proof that theirs is a major party. The Socialists, coalition partners but rivals of the Communists, recognize that they may lose their position of primacy in the coalition. If so, extremists may leave the party to set up a radical front. Coalition leaders are disparaging their chances, a tactic that, as in the past, may be lulling the opposition into over-confidence.

The general climate of discontent is indeed lifting the expectations of the opposition coalition (CODE) led by the Christian Democratic and National Parties. The two parties label the vote as a referendum on Allende, and they hope to get 60 percent of the vote. This, they claim, would amount to a repudiation of the Popular Unity government, although the opposition needs a vote of at least this size just to maintain its congressional majority. Even the most sanguine of Allende's opponents recognize how slim is the possibility of raising their legislative majority to two thirds, which could be used to override presidential vetoes, limit Allende's ability to manipulate the constitution, or even impeach the President.

**COMPOSITION OF ELECTION COALITIONS  
FOR 175 LEGISLATIVE SEATS**

			Number of Candidates
Government	Federated Party of Popular Unity	PFUP	158
	Communist Party of Chile	PCCh	39
	Socialist Party	PS	44
	Radical Party	PR	30
	Christian Left	IC	14
	Unified Popular Action Movement	MAPU	20
	Independent Popular Action	API	11
Pro-Government	Popular Socialist Union	USP	32
Opposition	Democratic Confederation	CODE	170
	Christian Democratic Party	PDC	76
	National Party	PN	57
	Radical Left Party	PIR	18
	Democratic Radical Party	PDR	15
	National Democratic Party	PADENA	4
Total			<u>360</u>

**SECRET**  

25X1

The reluctant creation of the CODE Confederation was tacit recognition by Allende's uncongenial opponents that they had no other choice if they were to mobilize dissatisfaction with the government and defeat it by a significant margin. Chilean politicians usually avoid committing themselves when faced with hard decisions, but this time, once the hassling over composition of the single slate was over, the party leaders have worked surprisingly well in concert.

CODE candidates themselves are proving less practical; many of them are putting more energy into competing with each other than with their Popular Unity opponents. Another negative factor is the Popular Unity's apparently greater diligence in registering new voters. It is probable that most of the newly eligible voters have a greater natural affinity for the Popular Unity than for the more conservative opposition. The extent to which CODE can overcome these deficiencies by bringing out disgruntled but cynical Chileans to vote for its candidates will have a large impact on the outcome.

The only group competing outside the two big coalitions is the pro-government Popular Socialist Union. Neither the union nor the small parties in either coalition are expected to fare very well. The contest is essentially between the pairs of major parties that dominate each coalition. In a few cases, the personal popularity of minor party members in certain legislative districts may help.

The existence of only two slates epitomizes the extent to which Chile has polarized since Allende's election. In the last legislative elections in 1969 there were eight slates. This polarization is also reflected in the intensely political media and in the persistent efforts of "ultras" on both right and left to incite violence on the grounds that it is the only way to defeat their enemies.

#### **BACKGROUND: ELEMENTS IN THE EQUATION**

##### **New Factors**

The armed forces and the economy, which is in bad shape, are casting a far longer shadow over this election than over previous ones.

Last November, to end a prolonged opposition strike, the three service chiefs accepted Allende's invitation to place three officers in his cabinet. They reasoned their presence would help ensure public order and fair elections. Since then, the military's political role, if not always its influence, has expanded.



**SECRET**

25X1

The government's extension of control over most aspects of economic life has enhanced its power, at the cost of severe disorganization and pervasive shortages. The situation affects most Chileans and has aroused strong anti-government sentiment among some Chileans. Even the low-income groups which benefit most by the administration's actions are impatient over shortages and inflation.

Allende has moved, not very successfully, to reduce the impact of economic problems by appointing military officers to organize the distribution of large stockpiles of scarce food just before the election. This was, nonetheless, a shrewd political move bringing practical political advantages. So was his recent series of hardhitting talks to workers. Only a small percentage of Chileans are members of any political party, but most people at all social and economic levels identify strongly with certain interest groups. The Communists and Christian Democrats, the only parties with extensive political organization, are devoting their greatest efforts to such groups—soccer and mothers clubs, as well as professional, neighborhood, student, and worker organizations.

#### **The President**

Allende gambled that he could socialize Chile by using broad presidential powers and flexible constitution, even though he had a minority mandate and the legislature was controlled by the opposition. He has already achieved many of his socialist goals, albeit at the expense of pervasive economic dislocations. He apparently realizes that he must take strong measures if he is to get Chile in working order.

The congressional elections at this juncture are for him an inconvenient test of public acceptance of his programs. Allende's response to the challenge proves again that he is, above all, a canny politician. He has admitted his administration's faults; openly castigated supporters he blames for weakening him, his program, and his coalition; imposed a program to step up food supplies just before the elections while blaming shortages, the rampant black market, and Chile's many economic woes on his opponents; and lent his still very considerable prestige and popularity to Popular Unity candidates.

#### **The Popular Unity**

The Communists are waging their usual well-organized and dogged campaign to secure the highest vote in the Popular Unity, which they consider their own creation. The Communist Party is the most stable force in the coalition, and Allende depends on and agrees with Communist leaders

25X1

SECRET

25X1

more often than with the leaders of his own Socialist party. On the other hand, the Communists basically mistrust him, and he in turn is suspicious of letting them acquire too much power. Although they make the most of their long-sought role in the administration, party leaders are painfully aware of the widespread aversion to communism as an alien force and conduct themselves with this in mind.

Despite mutual antagonisms, the Communists accepted the military's presence in the cabinet as necessary. They even work reasonably well together, thanks to the discipline in both groups. Frictions could develop after the elections if either considers the other's influence is becoming too great, but every effort would probably be made to set aside differences in order to combat any violence that might develop from the ultras of the right or left.

The Socialists, Allende's own party, are intensely nationalistic Marxist Leninists. They are even more disorganized than usual, and their campaign reflects this. The 22.4 percent share of the vote they received in 1971 came more from nationalistic appeal and Allende than from hard work. Despite this, extremists controlling the party's top leadership have pulled no punches in attacking Allende and the Communists, both of whom they regard as compromising reformers whose aversion to violence is scuttling the revolution. The Socialists' rantings reflect the deep animosities that are at the root of much of the government's inefficiency. It is heightened by the Socialists' corruption, irresponsibility, and sheer ineptitude, traits that are equaled by their extreme leftist allies. The Socialists and their friends have several times brought the Popular Unity to the brink of open rupture.

The Radicals have weakened so obviously since joining the Popular Unity that they are no longer the useful non-Marxist facade they once were. The party's influence, which has always been limited, is now minimal. Half its legislative bloc defected to the opposition in 1972 and the masons, white collar unions, and other pockets of Radical support reportedly are moving in that direction.

The Christian Left and Unified Popular Action Movement have been dominated by Marxists and extremists since their founders split from the Christian Democratic Party. Disenchanted by this trend, many of the original leaders of these parties are estranged, while the revolutionary bigots who replace them make common cause with the extremist Socialists and the Movement of the Revolutionary Left. The combination is the source of unwelcome pressure on Allende to move toward violence and class warfare in order finally to defeat the "enemies of the revolution."

SECRET

25X1

SECRET

25X1

### **The Opposition (CODE) Confederation**

The Christian Democrats remain the largest party in the country and their expectation of electing as many as four fifths of their 76 congressional candidates has been bolstered by a string of successes in recent student and union elections. Former President Eduardo Frei, who is expected to draw more votes than any other candidate, is campaigning on behalf of most of them. The hope is that his image as the champion of Chilean democracy will carry many to victory. The campaign has resuscitated parts of the extensive party organizational network that in 1964 and 1965 rolled up election victories unequaled before or since.

The present Christian Democratic optimism over the party's prospects ignores several real problems. Frei's administration was weak, and it made many enemies and lost many of its original supporters. The Allende government's largesse seems almost certain to have eroded the Christian Democrats' hold on slum areas that were once party strongholds. Many leftist voters are disillusioned by Allende, but they may prefer not to vote rather than give approval to the Christian Democratic alliance with the conservative National Party. Moreover, at the peak of the campaign, strong internal animosities that have always plagued the Christian Democrats are surfacing as are those between the party and the Nationals.

The National Party, an amalgam of conservatives, expects to win about a fifth of the vote. It may reach this goal, or close to it. The Nationals have been hard-hitting opponents of Allende. Although they appeal to right-of-center voters, they have resisted the trap of close association with rightist terrorists. As the 1970 three-way presidential election proved, National Party support would be necessary to the success of any opposition effort to overcome Allende's basic strength.

The Leftist Radicals and Democratic Radicals will draw their votes from the Radical Party, of which they were once a part, but like it they now have too little support to be a real political force. Personal following, rather than party affiliation, will be the basis for the election of Radical candidates, and they will be few.

### **The Armed Forces**

The legal responsibilities of the Chilean armed forces to ensure fair and orderly elections gives them special broad administrative powers at election time. Public security measures are already set up for every district, military

SECRET

25X1

**SECRET**

25X1

computers checked the registration of new voters, and military communications will carry official voting results. With army chief Prats as interior minister and with other officers in civilian posts, the military is more deeply involved in politics than during any election for many years.

In fact, the enlarged political role of the armed forces almost overshadows the elections. To date, the participation of the officers in the administration has been an advantage to Allende. It strengthens his constitutional image and reassures the public that extremists are being held in check.

Allende's opponents, although reassured by the military's guarantee that elections will be honest, also see disadvantages. The officers' association with the administration implies support for controversial government programs, which the officers are increasingly responsible for executing. It is also harder for the opposition to maintain it has military sympathy.

Military leaders recognize that Chile is at a crossroads and that they are playing a significant role in national life for the first time in 40 years. Many officers are as reluctant to turn their backs on the flattering responsibilities Allende has entrusted to them as Allende would be to lose the advantages of their participation. Four months as ranking minister, including a two-week stint as acting chief executive in Allende's absence, have by all appearances convinced General Prats that he is both fitted and destined to play a major role in guiding Chile out of its political and economic morass. The other military ministers have been frustrated in their posts, but there is no indication that the air force or navy commanders would not go along with Prats if he were to decide the military should stay.

### **SOME POSSIBLE OUTCOMES**

Allende's Popular Unity coalition most likely will garner somewhere between 33 and 43 percent of the popular vote. Allende and various Chilean interest groups will be re-examining their options in the wake of the vote. The outcome is highly uncertain in this year when a number of new factors have been introduced. The range of the vote Allende could get is broad enough to give him a variety of post-election options.

#### **The Low Range**

*President Allende's coalition receives 36.3 percent, his own plurality in the 1970 presidential election, or less.*

In these circumstances, the President would probably take the position that the Popular Unity had let him down. This would make it easier for him

-7-

**SECRET**

25X1

SECRET

25X1

to resist its conflicting pressures and seek a broader base of support, possibly precipitating an open break with extremists who are convinced there must be violence to realize the revolution. He could advance his socialist policies by continuing his astute use of existing legislation; by working within legislative vacuums; and by shading, evading, or ignoring the law. Having solicited the larger political role of the military in the first place and improved his personal position thereby, Allende probably would again ask officers to fill high civilian posts, including cabinet positions. The service chiefs might well agree, interpreting a low vote for the government as reason to sustain or even increase their pressure on Allende to moderate his administration.

The opposition parties probably would interpret a vote of 64 percent or more as a signal to increase the pressure on Allende--and the military--to slow the extension of governmental power. Opposition party leaders probably would reject suggestions that they join the administration, but individual politicians, especially moderates, might agree to serve, and arrangements with some opposition factions in the legislature are possible. Even former president Frei, a Christian Democrat, shares his party's penchant for accommodation. In the unlikely event that the opposition were to win a two-thirds majority in the Senate, the Christian Democrats probably would not join the National Party in an impeachment move against Allende unless he changed his tactics radically.

### **The Middle Range**

*Allende's coalition receives from 36.3 to just short of 40 percent of the vote.*

Allende would be faced with about the same balance of political forces as he is now, but he would feel less need to slow the socialization process in response to public opinion or opposition pressure. In this middle range outcome, essentially the same considerations would exist for interaction among power groups as at the lower range. Both Allende and the Communists would see returns in the high thirties as reason to consolidate their gains and to resist extremist pressures for more rapid measures that might provoke counteraction, possibly in the form of economic shutdowns by opposition elements or a military move against the government.

### **The High Range**

*Government candidates get 40 percent or more of the vote.*

Allende would take a vote of this size as a mandate to step up the pace of socialization. He would make more determined efforts to change the constitution, to adopt a one-house legislature based on revised voting rules,

25X1

**SECRET**

25X1

and to reform the judiciary to make it more amenable. He would seek further controls to deal with the mounting economic chaos that is the most serious threat to the government's viability.

Paradoxically, military commanders might see in such a result good reason to stay on in the cabinet and other high posts, on the grounds that the Popular Unity still would be incapable of restoring economic or political order. Allende is likely to seek continued military participation even with a reassuring vote. He probably would also try to recruit technicians, independent politicians and others from groups outside the Popular Unity to improve administration efficiency and avoid crippling internal coalition squabbling. Some of them would feel justified in accepting official posts since they would be getting a share of the action and, hopefully, exerting some influence.

Should the opposition fall short of 60 percent of the vote, hardliners on the right probably would renew arguments that the only way to get rid of Allende is through force. They might get a more sympathetic response in some quarters. There is little indication at present, however, that they would do better than in the past in rallying the necessary support from a committed military to force Allende out.

**SECRET**

25X1