



SUPPLY ARTERIES'

Washington

straw poll among Thieu and six possible challengers.

The alternative candidates included Vice President Nguyen Cao Ky, former Prime Minister Tran Van Huong, who ran third in 1967, opposition Senator Vu Van Mao, and General Duong Van (Big) Minh.

In addition, some of the questions were rather detailed. Question number one-hundred and sixty-nine, for example, asked "What issue would you consider most important in voting in 1971?" The options were national unity, social reform, organization of a loyal opposition, a stable economy, anti-communism and a coalition government.

Other questions tested the image of a presidential candidate most favored, and included the chance to vote for a "neutralist" as well as a "man independent of the U.S. and North Vietnam." When some of the U. S. "political reporters" asked about the novel survey, they were told by their C.O.R.D.S. chief the idea originated in a conversation between President Thieu and high U.S. officials in Saigon and were designed to help Thieu get re-elected.

It would be extremely important to Thieu, the explanation went, to know not only in which areas he was weak and strong, but also how his opponents ran. In addition, the information on voter attitudes would be helpful in planning his campaign. It was made plain to the "political reporters" that this purpose of the poll was to be kept secret from hamlet and village chiefs (and, of course, from the American public).

Thieu's re-election was important, the political reporters were also told, in order to continue the government's stability, and to keep intact the administrative structure of province, village and hamlet chiefs which Thieu has built up.

Here in Washington, high U. S. officials say—and there is no reason to doubt them—that the U.S. has not yet made up its mind whether to support Thieu's re-election bid or whether to signal its willingness to elect someone else. In Saigon, not for the first time, Ambassador Ellsworth Bunker has apparently decided not to wait for Washington to make up its mind.



William F. Buckley, Jr.

Chilien breakdown

SANTIAGO, Chile.—We have climbed to almost 5,000 feet, rising rung by rung up the thermals that shoot up fitfully from the foothills of the lower Andes that peter down to the outskirts of Santiago, marking it a joy for those who love to glide. The pilot is constantly talking, while he maneuvers to stay in the geyser. "When Allende was voted in," he says, "I decided to split. So I called my accountant and I said to him, Tell me exactly how much money I am worth. A few days later he told me. You are worth, he said, \$150,000."

"Well," he said, diving down now to escape the spiral, and beginning a long glide towards Los Curro, where the national observatory is, and Allende's private residence (we must turn away, by regulation, before reaching a bomb dropping relationship to it) "I sat down and asked myself a few questions. I said, Look: I own a membership in this gliding club, where I am a part-time instructor. I have my little business. I have a small airplane. I go 15 times a year to ski at Portillo, with my wife and son. I have a sailboat at the lake. We have two cars, a swimming pool, and a house. Where else can you have all of that with capital of only \$150,000? So — I decided — I'll repose my faith in the army."

Chile, by the way, is not the ideal incubator of Marxist revolution. There is spectacular poverty, but among a very small percentage of a population which, by the way, is almost wholly literate. The more general poverty is urban, not rural. Only 20 percent of Chile's nine million people work the land.

As one historian has noted,

if you need to draw a picture of the quintessential victim of Chilean economic torpor, it wouldn't be the land-serf, or the miner. Rather it is the shop clerk, poorly paid, bored, apparently immobilized, suffering from inflation, high overhead, a politicalized environment within which his enumerated rights are meaningless.

This is not to say that the situation is frozen for the sales clerk. The last three presidents of Chile came from utterly humble backgrounds. The thing of it is, not enough Chileans conceive of rising up the ladder — except through politics. Thus politics becomes the substitute, for the young Chileno, for almost every avenue of social or material advancement a young American might consider: a substitute for the professions, for industry, for the army, the arts; even the church.

The Chile of this moment, half way between Allende's inauguration and the municipal elections of April, is composed of roughly three lots of people. The first are those who are wildly excited by the revolution. And it is important to remember that revolutions can be fun, particularly for those for whom the alternative is merely another day in the shop. Second there are those — like the glider-sportsman — who feel that they have few practical alternatives, and just enough of a stake in the country, whether material or romantic, to edge them over towards a decision to stay, — and to hope that the legalistic tradition of Chile, or if not that the Army, or if not that the Catholic church, or the

anti-Communist tradition of the people, will singly or together restrain the Allende government.

And then there are those who are in the active opposition. They are, technically, a majority of the parliament, and a majority of the voters, though the April municipal plebiscite may change the latter datum. They want to stay and fight. But the odds in their favor diminish. There is the persecution of the principal opposition newspaper, *El Mercurio* and of the publishing house, Zig Zag. The black-out of opposition on television, which is owned either by the government, or by government-oriented

government-oriented universities. There are 29 radio channels, of which only three are anti-government, and there is a question how long they can hold out.

Allende swears there will be elections (parliamentary) in 1973, and (presidential) in 1976. By that time, however, elections may prove to be as significant as Mexico's, where the embarrassed party in power, as secure as Queen Elizabeth on the throne, practically has to subsidize the opposition, in order to put on the period's charade. The differences however are considerable, because the economic program of Mr. Allende, unlike that of Mexico's PRI, is based on chimera. And when that happens, the government is either transpires that you cannot eat chimera. And that happens, the government is either overthrown, or else it rules by the lash.

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