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## **Chile: Report On Divisions Within Political Opposition**

*by John Neagle*

*Category/Department: General*

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Chile's 16-party opposition coalition, which defeated Gen. Augusto Pinochet's bid for another eight years as president in October, is currently feuding over whom to nominate for president. In the words of Genaro Arriagada, executive secretary of the coalition, "We are caught in a big mess." The Christian Democrats are divided over four presidential contenders: Patricio Aylwin, party president; Andres Zaldivar, a party vice president and former cabinet minister; Eduardo Frei, Jr., whose father was president of Chile from 1964-70, and Gabriel Valdes, who served as Frei's foreign minister. Meanwhile, many of the other 15 parties are irritated over what they perceive to be Christian Democrat arrogance. They are threatening to abandon commitments to support the party's nominee as a "consensus" candidate for the Dec. 14 elections. On Feb. 4-5, the 309 members of the Christian Democratic Committee will convene in Talagante with the objective of selecting a nominee. In March, the opposition coalition will decide whether or not to support the CD candidate. Arriagada, a Christian Democrat who supports Frei for the nomination, told the New York Times that the dispute occupied all his waking hours. He predicted that his party would resolve its differences and then reach accommodation with allies. However, he added, it would require "tons of cigarettes and hundreds of gallons of coffee and blood." "The problem is that everyone thought the democratic transition would be easy after the triumph of Oct 5," Arriagada continued. "I never thought it would be." (Basic data from New York Times, 01/30/89)

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