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Conversation Between President Nixon and the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)

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Nota de Archivo: *Summary: Nixon and Kissinger discussed the recent elections in Chile. Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Tapes, Conversation 245–6. Secret. According to the President's Daily Diary, Nixon and Kissinger met in the Executive Office Building from 10:06 to 10:35 a.m. (Ibid., White House Central Files) The editors transcribed the portion of the conversation printed here specifically for this volume.*

[Omitted here is discussion unrelated to Chile.]

Nixon: What do you think of the Chilean election? The local election strengthened Allende.

Kissinger: Exactly what I thought. It shows how crooked, you know—

Nixon: Well, I think he's fixed them, too. I don't trust him.

Kissinger: No, but he has this effective [unclear].

Nixon: He's been playing it smart.

Kissinger: He controls all the media now.

Nixon: Oh, yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Kissinger: Look, he's got the television. He's got the press.

Nixon: I know. I got it. There's no press. There's no opposition press. Everything, he's got.

Kissinger: And the left-wing of his—

Nixon: You—you're way ahead of me. I didn't realize that. Of course. Of course. It's a fascist state.

Kissinger: And the left-wing of the Catholic is distinguished from him only because they're Catholic. And this is—you had Frei pegged all along. I—

Nixon: Has he joined him?

Kissinger: No, he hasn't joined him, but he has almost the same program, except that he's a Catholic, so that—

Nixon: Do they acknowledge that?

Kissinger: —Frei is now on the right-wing of his party. The left-wing of Frei's party is already, is practically on the Allende side. But, last year, when the State Department was trying to get us, to keep us, to stay on the sideline—I don't

mean Bill [Rogers], because he was addressing this through Charlie Meyer—that time they were telling us if we could string Allende along till the provincial elections, they could knock him down then, because the economy would be bad by then.

Nixon: Yeah. Incidentally, [unclear] give him a year. We're still keeping our tough policy with regard to Chile, aren't we?

Kissinger: Yeah.

Nixon: Are we?

Kissinger: In a way.

Nixon: Yeah.

Kissinger: But there's no enthusiastic support. Are we doing enough?

Nixon: Well, what's the problem?

Kissinger: They're not getting any loans, Mr. President. He's played a masterful game, that Allende—

[Unclear exchange]

Kissinger: I don't know. I'd like to have my staff pull together all the papers they've written and [have] an analysis made, which also suggests a new policy—a new policy because our people were, were almost as opposed to Alessandri as they were to Allende.

Nixon: No shit.

Kissinger: And they were so determined—for example, Anaconda wanted to put money into the election, and they wouldn't let them do it.

Nixon: For Alessandri?

Kissinger: Yes.

Nixon: Goddamnit.

Kissinger: They wanted to keep the option open for the Christian Democrat [Tomic], who never had a chance.

Nixon: Well, wasn't that the guy the Ambassador [Korry]—?

Kissinger: That was a [unclear] Senator.

Nixon: Where did the Ambassador—? Look, he was for Frei, wasn't he?

Kissinger: He was for Frei.

Nixon: Oh, I know. That's why I never had any confidence in him. I—with all of his damn writing about—Goddamnit, he was for Frei, because he's, basically, a liberal Democrat.

Kissinger: He's been—

Nixon: He's still there?

Kissinger: He's being pulled out.

Nixon: Is he?

Kissinger: Yeah.

[45 seconds not declassified]

Nixon: Maybe he'll write a bestseller.

Kissinger: He writes well.

Nixon: Well—oh, right. I'll say. All right, tell him to give him another post. Tell—

Kissinger: Tell Flanigan?

Nixon: Tell Flanigan to find any post that he can, preferably one in Asia.

[Omitted here is discussion unrelated to Chile.]