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Conversation Among President Nixon, Secretary of the Treasury Connally, the White House Chief of Staff (Haldeman), and the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)

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Nota de Archivo: *Summary: Nixon, Connally, and Kissinger discussed Allende's refusal to pay companies for expropriated property. Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Tapes, Conversation 584–3. Sensitive But Unclassified. According to the President's Daily Diary, Nixon met first with John Connally, George P. Shultz, Paul W. McCracken, and Herbert Stein in the Oval Office at 10:06 a.m.; Haldeman entered the Oval Office at 11. The conversation transcribed here, which the editors transcribed specifically for this volume, began after Shultz, McCracken, and Stein left at 11:59 a.m. and continued until Kissinger left at 12:38 p.m. (Ibid., White House Central Files)*

[Omitted here is a brief exchange on the President's schedule and the Supreme Court.]

Connally: I had something, another thing I've got to tell you: You have to really—the gauntlet's been thrown down to you on Chile, and we ought to move on Chile.

Nixon: What in the hell is going on?

Connally: Well, this guy is—Allende—obviously, now, the columnists are all saying it strongly, even, I think, the [Washington] Post or the [Washington] Star this afternoon or this morning had an editorial that—I guess it's the Star, I guess that's it—just said, "Well, we thought there was some hope, but it's beyond hope now."

Nixon: Well—

Connally: He's [Allende] gone back and said that the copper companies owe $700 million. It's obviously a farce, and obviously, he's a—he doesn't intend to compensate for the expropriated properties. He's thrown down—he's thrown the gauntlet to us. Now, it's our move.

Nixon: Listen, and you—I have decided that you give us a plan, we'll carry it out.

Connally: So—

Nixon: Don't worry. This is a—this is one where I knew he would do it, and we're going to play it very tough with him.

Connally: Well, we've got Peru going now. We've got Bolivia—

Nixon: On our side.

Connally: On our side.

Nixon: That's right.

Connally: We've got Bolivia going on our side. And this guy, Allende, gets away with it. But it's a matter that Henry will have to get into.

Nixon: No, well, [unclear]. But I have, you know—I have decided we're going to give Allende the hook.

Connally: I just think it's awfully important—

Nixon: We're—

Connally: —to drive the point home, because he's an enemy. And this is something that—

Nixon: Oh, of course he's an enemy.

Connally: —[unclear] salvaged. And the only thing you can ever hope is to have him overthrown. And, in the meantime, you will make your point to prove, by your actions against him, what you want, that you are looking after American interests, and this is a, this is—

Nixon: Well, John, he may be the guy that we can kick. You know, you always said, "Let's find someone that—

Connally: [Unclear]

Nixon: —we can kick."

Connally: That's right.

Nixon: And I think we should make a hell of a case out of him. Like you just said, we're not going to take this. We have a—

Haldeman: It wouldn't hurt a bit with the right-wing in this country.

[Laughter]

Nixon: [Unclear] Oh, absolutely. Absolutely.

[Connally left at an unknown time after 11:59 a.m.; Kissinger entered at 12:02 p.m. Omitted here is a brief exchange on Kissinger's schedule and economic policy.]

Nixon: Before we get into that, another subject I want to talk to you about: Allende, according to Connally, is really screwing us now.

Kissinger: That's right.

Nixon: All right, I want, and I hope—I told Connally, I said, "All right, you give us a plan. I'm going to kick him. And I want to make something out of it." That's my view. Now—

Kissinger: I talked to—

Nixon: Do you see any reason that I should not?

Kissinger: No, I talked—in fact, Connally and I talked about it yesterday.

Nixon: Yeah. Yeah.

Kissinger: I would go to a confrontation with him, the quicker the better.

Nixon: Fine. But the point is—

Kissinger: Maybe not in a brutal way, but in a clear way.

Nixon: Yeah. All right, will you work with Connally—

Kissinger: Absolutely.

Nixon: —to figure out the confrontation? Now, is there any, is there any—?

Kissinger: We may have to butter up the Peruvians in order—I think we ought to make a distinction between the Peruvians, who have nationalized—

Nixon: That's right.

Kissinger: —and have been, at least—

Nixon: Bolivia and Peru.

Kissinger: And I forgot to tell you that last night, but I'll work with Connally.

Nixon: That's right.

[Omitted here is extensive discussion of matters unrelated to Chile. As Kissinger left the Oval Office at 12:38 p.m., however, the two men had the following brief exchange: Nixon: "All's fair on Chile." Kissinger: "Good." Nixon: "Kick them in the ass. Okay?" Kissinger: "Right."]