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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 Chilean loan problem. Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Tapes, Conversation 652–17. Secret. According to the President's Daily Diary, Nixon and Kissinger met in the Oval Office from 6:08 to 6:36 p.m. (Ibid., White House Central Files) The editors transcribed the portion of the conversation printed here specifically for this volume.*

Nixon: Now, we have to get to the bottom of that goddamn Chilean loan. You heard about it, didn't you?

Kissinger: Yes. Yes. Well—

Nixon: That Connally came in—do you know how Connally found out about it?

Kissinger: [less than 1 line not declassified]

Nixon: [less than 1 line not declassified] And then, the thing that worried me, though, Henry, without—that I—I don't want you to get your bowels in an uproar about it, but my attitude—I [unclear] Al [Haig] this: "Did you know [less than 1 line not declassified] And I said. "Now, Goddamnit, how does Connally have the [less than 1 line not declassified] thing, and we don't?" Al says, "We get them, too." Do we?

Kissinger: Yes.

Nixon: Why then didn't somebody on our staff find what this fellow—I don't know Weintraub, whoever he was—

Kissinger: Yeah.

Nixon: Somebody at the State Department?

Kissinger: [Unclear]

Nixon: The son-of-a-bitch said—he apologized! He said we—he said that there were the Christmas holidays or we would have had it earlier. And Goddamnit, that's in violation of my orders.

Kissinger: We'd better get—

Nixon: And when Connally came in, I was embarrassed about it, because I—you know, because usually we're up on such things. And he said, "Well, gee whiz, [less than 1 line not declassified] and he says, "I just want authority to be the chief of the negotiating team." I said, "Of course you're chief of the negotiating team."

Kissinger: Absolutely—

Nixon: But what in the hell happens over there on that?

Kissinger: Well, these guys—

Nixon: That's the Goddamnedest thing I've ever heard of.

Kissinger: —they are sucking around, and—

Nixon: They're for economic steps: go over and help make another loan to Chile—when Allende's in trouble!

Kissinger: That's right. And when—well, it's putting him into trouble—

Nixon: The economic thing?

Kissinger: What you've worked out with the Brazilians.

Nixon: Is that right?

Kissinger: Dick Walters told me that Médici—that some of the stuff that's happening in Santiago—

Nixon: Hm-hmm.

Kissinger: —is exactly what the Brazilians did to Goulart: the women rioting in the streets.

Nixon: Right.

Kissinger: You know, Allende just suffered—

[Unclear]

Nixon: Oh, he suffered [a] tremendous defeat in the elections.

Kissinger: Two—two tremendous defeats.

Nixon: Now my view is, if we just cool that off, that [there] would be a coup probably.

Kissinger: Plus, today he dismissed his cabinet. I don't know whether that means he's getting ready for a coup—

Nixon: Yeah.

Kissinger: —but the military may move against him if he—

Nixon: The other point that I was going to make is this: Connally thinks we ought to try to make some trouble in Cuba. I know it's tough. I know it's risky. But Goddamnit—

Kissinger: And the Russians, also—

Nixon: —if we're going to fart around, though—well that's the point, though. Well, tell him—what I'm getting at is you tell Dobrynin tomorrow, "Now look, the President has taken a hard look at Cuba." Just let him know. And it won't be—we—"If you're going to screw us in Vietnam—." We've got to do it that way; that's the way we're going to play. Why don't you do that?