

Conversation No. 022-006

Date: March 23, 1972

Time: 5:33 - 5:34 p.m.

Location: White House Telephone

Participants: Nixon and Ronald L. Ziegler

The Administration was forced into damage-control mode following revelations of collusion between the CIA and International Telephone & Telegraph (ITT) Company to prevent the election of Allende in 1970.¹ Over the course of brief telephone conversation with Press Secretary Ronald Ziegler, Nixon confirmed that Ambassador Korry “had received instructions to do anything short of a Dominican-type [intervention].”² Korry’s great sin, in Nixon’s mind, was that, “he just failed, the son-of-a-bitch. That’s his main problem; he should have kept Allende from getting in.”

[022-006](#) (1.1m; 1:07)

Nixon: Yeah?

Operator: Mr. Ziegler.

Ziegler: Yes, sir?

Nixon: What did you—Have you said anything, Ron, with regard to the ITT and Chile? How did you handle it?

Ziegler: The State Department dealt with that today.

¹ In a story published on March 21, 1972, columnist Jack Anderson referenced two confidential ITT memoranda, one of which stated that a CIA official had tried unsuccessfully to get members of the Chilean military to stage an “uprising,” while the other detailed a conspiracy between ITT executives to put economic pressure on Chile, presumably because they feared that Allende would nationalize ITT’s holdings in the Chilean Telephone and Telegraph Company. “Anderson Alleges Plot Against Allende By I.T.T. and C.I.A.,” *The New York Times* (March 21, 1972), 23. (ITT’s interests in the CTT were, indeed, nationalized in September 1971. Michael Jensen, “Chile Says it Will Nationalize I.T.T. Unit in Days,” *New York Times* (September 16, 1971), 13.) In a follow-up story published on March 22 (“ITT Pledged Funds in Chile”), Anderson claimed that ITT had approached both the CIA and the Nixon White House with an offer to spend as much as “seven figures” to prevent Allende’s election. Although the CIA had been receptive to ITT’s overtures, the response from the White House had been “polite but cool.” Finally, Anderson mentioned that, according to an ITT intelligence report, Ambassador Korry had “received a message from the State Department giving him the green light to move in the name of President Nixon.” “I.T.T. Said to Seek Chile Coup in ’70,” *New York Times* (March 22, 1972), 25; “I.T.T. is Accused of Having Tried to Influence U.S. Policies in Latin America,” *New York Times* (March 23, 1972), 16.

² Following a *coup d’état* by “Constitutionalist” army officers in April 1965 supposedly aided and abetted by local and Cuban Communists against a right-wing dictatorship led by elements of the Trujillo regime (which had themselves come to power following a coup against Trujillo’s democratically elected, left-wing successor, Juan Bosch), President Lyndon Johnson ordered the occupation of Dominican Republic by a mixed force of U.S. and O.A.S. troops. Fighting lasted until the end of August, after which U.S. troops gradually withdrew.

Nixon: Oh, they did? **Ziegler:** Yes, sir.

Nixon: What did they do? Deny it?

Ziegler: They denied it, but they were cautious on how they dealt with the Korry statement, because they were afraid that might backfire.

Nixon: Why? What did Korry say?

Ziegler: Well, Korry said that he had received instructions to do anything short of a Dominican-type, uh—alleged to have said that.

Nixon: Korry did?

Ziegler: Right.

Nixon: To what? How the hell did that get out? He put that out?

Ziegler: Well, Anderson received that from some source. Al Haig is sitting with me now.

Nixon: Oh, yeah.

[Ziegler briefly conferred with Haig in the background.]

Ziegler: It was a report contained in an IT&T—

Nixon: Oh, yeah.

Ziegler: —thing, but—

Nixon: Well, he was. He was instructed to.

Ziegler: Well, but

Nixon: I hoped that—But he just failed, the son-of-a-bitch. That's his main problem. He should have kept Allende from getting in. **Ziegler:** Well, in any event, State has denied today—

Nixon: [Unclear]

Ziegler: —and they referred to your comments about Latin America and Chile.

Nixon: Yeah, fine.

Ziegler: And, so you just refer to that on that one.

Nixon: Fine. Ok.

Ziegler: Yes, sir.

Nixon: Right.

[End of Conversation]