

**Conversation No. 245-006**

**Date: April 6, 1971**

**Time: 10:05 - 11:03 a.m.**

**Location: Executive Office Building**

**Participants: Richard M. Nixon, Henry A. Kissinger**

*Following the resounding victory of the Allende bloc in the Chilean municipal elections (49.5% of the total vote), Nixon and Kissinger surveyed the damage and ruminated on future developments.<sup>1</sup> Although Allende had come to power legally, Kissinger opined that he would follow the “German strategy” of gradually eliminating dissent in order to create a “fascist” state. Kissinger then lamented the position of the State Department, which had doggedly supported the Christian Democrats at the expense of conservative candidate (former President Jorge Alessandri), even though the only thing that distinguished Allende from his predecessor, Eduardo Frei, was that the latter was a Catholic, i.e. a Christian Democrat. Nixon concurred and laid some of the blame for Allende’s election on the U.S. Ambassador to Chile, Edward Korry, who, Nixon charged, had allowed his “liberal Democrat” biases to color his judgment in favor of Frei.<sup>2</sup> Ironically, although Korry had played no role in the CIA operation to prevent Allende’s election, the Ambassador was fanatically opposed to Allende, cabling Washington after the election that, “There is a graveyard smell to Chile, the fumes of democracy in decomposition. They stank in my nostrils in Czechoslovakia in 1948, and they are no less sickening today.”<sup>3</sup> Rather than risk having Korry (a former journalist) speaking out, however, Nixon advised buying his silence by reappointing him to another ambassadorial post.*

[...]

[245-006\\_Clip1](#) (2.2m, 2:16)

**Nixon:** What’d 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 [unclear]—

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<sup>1</sup> Juan de Onis, “Allende’s Coalition Victor in Local Elections in Chile,” *New York Times* (April 5, 1971), 1.

<sup>2</sup> Eduardo Frei was allegedly assassinated during the regime of Augusto Pinochet, who took over after the 11 September 1973 *coup d’état* against Allende. Alexei Barrionuevo, “6 Accused in 1982 Poisoning Death of Chilean Leader,” *New York Times* (December 7, 2009), A6.

<sup>3</sup> David Stout, “Edward Korry, 81, is Dead; Falsely Tied to Chile Coup,” *New York Times* (January 30, 2003), B9.

**Kissinger:** No, but he has—This is like the German strategy.

**Nixon:** He's been playing it smart.

**Kissinger:** He controls all the media now.

**Nixon:** Oh, yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Good.

**Kissinger:** 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 [unclear] —

**Kissinger:** And—And the left-wing of his—

**Nixon:** You, you, 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, uh—

**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:** [Unclear]—

**Kissinger:** —Frei is now on the right-wing of his party. The left-wing of Frei's party [unclear] is practically on the Allende-side. But, last year, when the State Department was trying to keep us from joining his side—I don't mean [Secretary of State] Bill [Rogers], because he was addressing this through Charlie Meyer<sup>4</sup>—that time they were telling us if we could string Allende along 'til the provincial elections, they could knock him down then, because the economy would be bad by then.

**Nixon:** Yeah. Incidentally, [*I put down this argument*] to 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?

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<sup>4</sup> Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs, 1969-1973.

**Nixon:** [Unclear].

**Kissinger:** They're not getting any loans [*through the Paris Club yet*]. He's played a masterful game, that Allende—

[Unclear exchange]

**Kissinger:** I—I don't know. I can have my staff pull together all the [*papers and recommend that to the Committee*][unclear]—

[Unclear exchange]

**Kissinger:** Because our people were almost as opposed to Alessandri as they were to Allende.

**Nixon:** Oh, sure.

**Kissinger:** And if the Soviets turned them—

WITHDRAWN ITEM

[National Security]

[Duration:13s\_]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

END WITHDRAWN ITEM NO. 2

[245-006\\_Clip2](#) (389k, 0:23)

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

**Kissinger:** That was [*necessary at the time*]—

**Nixon:** Where's the ambassador? Look, he was for Frei, wasn't he?

**Kissinger:** He was for Frei.

**Nixon:** Well, I know. That's why I never had any confidence in him. I—With all of his damn riding around, 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?

BEGIN WITHDRAWN ITEM NO. 4

[National Security]

[Duration:26s\_]

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

END WITHDRAWN ITEM NO. 4

[245-006\\_Clip3](#) (262k, 0:16)

**Nixon:** Maybe he'll write a bestseller.

**Kissinger:** He writes well.

**Nixon:** Well—Oh, right. I'll say. All right, tell him you'll give him another post. Tell—

**Kissinger:** [Unclear]—

**Nixon:** Tell Flanigan to find any post that he can, preferably one in Asia.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Peter M. Flanigan, Assistant to the President, 1969-1973; Assistant to the President for International Economic Affairs, 1972-1974. Korry was not reappointed to another ambassadorial posting.