

Conversation No. 262-005**Date: July 19, 1971****Time: 3:00 - 5:05 p.m.****Location: EOB****Participants: Nixon and John Connally**

In order to facilitate Nixon's policy of handling "friends" in Latin America differently than recreants such as Chile and Bolivia, Connally suggested that Nixon eventually consider a policy of divide-and-rule, whereby the United States would withdraw from the Organization of American States [OAS] in favor of establishing stronger bilateral ties with individual republics. That way, the United States could "put the screws" on expropriating nations such as Peru, Chile, and Bolivia, without "offending" other nations.

[...]

[262-005_Clip1](#) (1.7m, 1:44)

Connally: I think you probably ought to, as soon as this China thing is behind you, and the Vietnam thing, you probably ought to come with an announcement that you're withdrawing from the Organization of American States. And maybe I wouldn't put it that bluntly, but, in effect, say to all the Latin American countries that you're no longer going to deal with them as being under one umbrella. And this does them no great service; it's not in their best interests; they're great nations; and, that you're gonna develop a series of bilateral arrangements between us, and so forth. That, now, we've in effect, put all the Latin American countries in one box.

Nixon: Hmm.

Connally: And what you do to one, you do to all. When you rebuff one, you rebuff them all, because—It's because of the mechanism through which we deal with them, the Latin American policy, is through the Organization of American States. Well, Panama's interested in the Canal. You've got a crazy little colonel that runs around with a goddamn pistol on his hip down there.¹ He's extremely powerful. Well, their problems with Costa Rica and Honduras are totally different from Brazil's. We ought to be really dealing directly with Brazil, directly with Argentina. Then we can—Then we can put the screws on Peru and Brazil—

Nixon: [Unclear]—

¹ Omar Torrijos, Commander of the Panamanian National Guard and *de facto* dictator of Panama, 1968-1981.

Connally: We can put 'em on Chile and not offend Argentina.

Nixon: And put 'em on Bolivia [unclear]—

Connally: Right. And put 'em on Bolivia. So—But we've got to divorce, we got to start separating those countries.

Nixon: Good idea. Good idea. And, have you talked to anybody about this?

Connally: No, this is, uh—

Nixon: I like it. I like it.

Connally: But it's—

Nixon: I like it. I like it.

Connally: [*It lets us*] please the South American countries. We got to.

Nixon: The OAS, I mean, it's obviously behind the times; really, an anachronism.

Connally: So, yeah, we can move on that.

[...]