

Conversation No. 460-027

Date: February 26, 1971

Time: 5:47 - 6:08 p.m.

Location: Oval Office

Participants: Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger

The earliest mention of Allende on the taping system concerned the possibility of having the U.S.S. Enterprise make a port of call at Valparaiso, Chile.¹ In spite of the fact that Allende had been in office for less than four months, relations between the Chilean and U.S. government were already abysmal. Nixon curtly dismissed Allende's offer to show U.S. sailors "authentic democracy" as being used for the "worst, damn propaganda purposes."

[...]

[460-027_Clip1](#) (1m, 1:04)

Kissinger: I have two item—three items, and one other thing. One is the [U.S.S.] *Enterprise*—

Nixon: Oh, yeah.

Kissinger: [Secretary of State William] Rogers—Allende went on national television yesterday saying—

Nixon: It was nonsense.

Kissinger: —it was coming—

Nixon: That son-of-a-bitch—

Kissinger: —and that he wanted to show the American sailors "authentic democracy." Rogers still feels that we ought to cancel it. And, we'll take a little flak.

Nixon: Oh! He's already been on television? "Authentic democracy?" See, it shows that he's using it for the worst damn propaganda purposes.

Kissinger: And he had, uh—Laird has already announced, today, that it would be operationally difficult. And, Laird said he'll take the heat for it this time—

Nixon: [*I'd rather Laird take the heat*]. Laird can say, "[Unclear]. We have to delay it for awhile." Why don't we put it that way? I wouldn't cancel it.

Kissinger: No, we'll just say we'll do it some other time—

¹ Benjamin Wells, "U.S. Declines Chile's Invitation for Visit by Warship," *New York Times* (February 28, 1971), 3.

Nixon: Yeah. Yeah. “We will, but we—We’d be glad to do it, but we, from an operational standpoint, we’ve got some—we’ve got the various operations.” [*It’s a*] very good point, that we can’t do it, do it at this time.

[...]