

Conversation No. 654-001

Date: January 24, 1972

Time: Unknown between 4:55 and 6:09 p.m.

Location: Oval Office

Participants: Nixon, Haldeman, and Peter M. Flanigan

The question of what do with Edward Korry vexed Richard Nixon. On the one hand, he would have been more than willing to reappoint him to another ambassadorial posting, had it not been for the vehement opposition of Secretary Rogers. On the other hand, the Administration could not afford to leave Korry feeling disgruntled, not only because he had intimate knowledge of “how we screwed up Chile,” but also because of Korry’s powerful right-wing media friends, such as William F. Buckley and Irving Kristol. According to Haldeman, Kissinger considered it vital that Korry be reassigned at least until after the 1972 Election, after which, “he [Kissinger] couldn’t care less.”

And yet, this transcript reveals that Nixon and others in the Administration had some regard for Korry’s abilities. Korry had proven himself a valuable asset after leaving Santiago, as a part-time consultant with the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC). Rather than “waste” an ambassadorial posting on him (and risk Rogers’ opposition), Nixon suggested that Korry be detailed to assist Connally in the drafting on important study on “how do we get the raw materials of the world all lined up for the United States?” Nixon seemed genuinely eager to retain Korry on the payroll since, “You’ve got to admit that he’s smart as hell. Very imaginative...he’s articulate, and somewhat emotional, and so forth. But, he’s way above the average State Department [ambassador],” whom Nixon dismissed “as dumb as hell.” Flanigan then broached the idea bringing Korry onto his staff while leaving him on the OPIC payroll.

[...]

[654-001_Clip1](#) (209k; 0:12)

Flanigan: Do you want Korry to get a post badly enough to force it down Rogers’ throat?

Haldeman: We’ve got to force it. Korry’s got to have a job.

Flanigan: I got him a job at—as a—

Nixon: Why?

Flanigan: —a consultant to OPIC—

BEGIN WITHDRAWN ITEM NO. 9

[National Security]

[Duration:14s.]

INTELLIGENCE

END WITHDRAWN ITEM NO. 9

[654-001_Clip2](#) (3.1m; 3:16)

Haldeman: He's also, though, strongly backed by the right-wing, for some reason.

Flanigan: That's right.

Haldeman: Irving Kristol—

Flanigan: Bill Buckley.

Haldeman: Bill Buckley, and people like that.

Flanigan: Yeah.

Haldeman: A lot of the conservative intelligentsia.

Flanigan: Well, we can either do something with him like let him be a consultant to the Overseas Private Investment Corporation, which we'll just tell 'em that they got to keep him on as a consultant through the end of the year, which is a nothing-job. Or, if we wanted give him something like Ceylon, which is open, you'd have—you would just have to lean on Bill, because Henry can't do it, and I can't do it. He's just—Maybe Bob can do it, but he [Rogers] said, "No."

Nixon: You'll have to do it.

Haldeman: Bill has flatly said, "No"?

Flanigan: He's told this fellow he's out. They're not going to fight it. Time is up.

Nixon: Why? Because Korry—?

Flanigan: I guess because Korry loused this up. He thinks that since he was a Kennedy fellow and brought in by Kennedy, we don't have any obligations, and because he's—I'm told—he recommended, oh, taking some of these economic things out of State when he was asked to, some time ago, and [unclear]—

Nixon: Yeah. Well, Korry—Korry's the guy who writes memoranda, and all that sort of thing, and he raised hell when he was in Ethiopia about the State Department's Africa department; he was right.¹

¹ Korry was the U.S. Ambassador to Ethiopia from 1963-1967.

Haldeman: The problem is if he isn't given gainful employment for the next year, he's going to turn to his trade, which is writing. And the best thing for him to write is something we just—

[Unclear exchange]

Nixon: How we—how we screwed up Chile?

Haldeman: We just don't want him to write until after the election.

Flanigan: Well, if that's all it is—

Haldeman: Henry's viewpoint is we've got to keep the guy employed through the election. After the election, he couldn't care less.

Flanigan: Well, supposing I tell Brad [Bradford] Mills he's just got to keep him on as a consultant, but get him out of town?

Haldeman: Will Korry stay as a consultant? Will he? Is he willing to accept that?

Flanigan: Brad Mills runs this Overseas Private Investment Corporation—

Nixon: Yeah, I know. Yeah.

Flanigan: —and he's got him now 'til April 1st, at our request. He likes Korry; he thinks Korry's good.

Nixon: Well, Korry is [unclear]—

Haldeman: If Korry'll keep it, then, if [unclear]—

Nixon: I'd rather keep him there.

Haldeman: If he'll settle for that, that's better.

Flanigan: All right.

Haldeman: There's no point in wasting—

Nixon: Yeah.

Haldeman: —an ambassador's post on him—

Nixon: And then we don't have to press with Bill, if we can do that.

Flanigan: Right.

Nixon: And tell him to make it helpful. I'll tell you what you do. Have him make a study in there of that business of what Connally's thinking about: How do we—how do we get the raw materials of the world all lined up for the United States? Brilliant.

Flanigan: Sure.

Nixon: Why not? You ever meet Korry?

Flanigan: Never met him.

Nixon: You've got to admit that he's smart as hell. Very imaginative, very—I mean, he's articulate, and somewhat emotional, and so forth. But, he's way above the average State Department [unclear]—

Flanigan: Maybe the thing to do is—?

Nixon: Most of the ambassadors are as dumb as hell.

Flanigan: Maybe the thing for me to do is to let Brad Mills pay him and use him? Since I have to get people—

Nixon: [Unclear].

Flanigan: —detailed to me. If he's good enough, then and—

Nixon: He could be [unclear]—

Flanigan: —reliable enough, ask him to work for me.

Nixon: He could. He could. I think he could work for you. I think he can certainly come up with some grand, damned imaginative stuff.

Flanigan: All right—

Nixon: Damned imaginative stuff. But you meet him first.

Flanigan: All right.

Nixon: You get him in, and you better meet him sometime, because he's damned impressive.

Flanigan: All right.

Nixon: Korry is no slouch. I know him well.

Flanigan: Good.

[...]