



## “This Is Treason”

**Date:** 1968-11-02

**Conversation:** WH6811-01-13706

**Participant:** Lyndon B. Johnson

**Participant:** Everett M. Dirksen

**Start Time:** 21:18

**Duration:** 02:14

**Place:** LBJ Ranch

SCENE SETTER: Three days before the 1968 presidential election, President Johnson contacted Senate Minority Leader Everett M. Dirksen [R-Illinois] to inform him that the White House had received hard evidence from the Federal Bureau of Investigation that the campaign of Republican presidential candidate Richard M. “Dick” Nixon was interfering with Johnson’s efforts to start peace talks to end the Vietnam War. In this call, Johnson referred to contacts between Nixon’s campaign and South Vietnamese president Nguyễn Văn Thiệu that urged Thiệu to thwart any such negotiations.

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**President Johnson:** And here is the latest information we got. The agent says that she’s just—they just talked to the boss in New Mexico.

**Everett M. Dirksen:** Uh-huh.

**President Johnson:** And that he says that you must hold out . . . that just hold on until after the election. Now, [*snorts*] we know what [Nguyễn Văn] Thiệu is saying to them out there.

**Dirksen:** Yeah.

**President Johnson:** We’re pretty well informed on both ends.

**Dirksen:** Yeah.

**President Johnson:** [Richard M. “Dick”] Nixon’s man traveling with him today said, quote, “that he did not understand that Thiệu was not aboard.”

**Dirksen:** Yeah.

**President Johnson:** Did you see that? Did you see that . . . ?

**Dirksen:** No, I don’t think I did. Who was that? [Bryce N.] Harlow?

**President Johnson:** We don't know. We have no idea. [*Snorts.*] He speaks through these unknown people.

**Dirksen:** Yeah.

**President Johnson:** Now, we told Nixon, as we told you, that . . . well, let me get the transcript. [*paraphrasing*] "While this was going on, we went out to Thiệu and talked to him and all of our allied countries. And they all tentatively agreed."

**Dirksen:** Yeah.

**President Johnson:** "Now, since that agreement, we have had problems develop. First, there's been speeches that we ought to withdraw troops."

**Dirksen:** Yeah.

**President Johnson:** That was [Hubert H.] Humphrey [Jr.] and [McGeorge "Mac"] Bundy.

**Dirksen:** Yeah.

**President Johnson:** "Or that we stop bombing without any . . . obtaining anything in return."

**Dirksen:** Yeah.

**President Johnson:** "Or some of our folks, including some of the old China Lobby, are going to the [South] Vietnamese embassy and saying, 'Please notify the President that if he'll hold out till November the 2nd they could get a better deal.'"

**Dirksen:** Uh-huh.

**President Johnson:** Now, I'm reading their hand, Everett. I don't want to get this in the campaign.

**Dirksen:** That's right.

**President Johnson:** And they oughtn't to be doing this. This is treason.

**Dirksen:** I know.

*End of excerpt.*

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