

Those ITT Bugs In the Chile Case

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Much longer column, same date, filed ITT.

Jack Anderson

WE HAVE gotten ourselves into another brouhaha with International Telephone and Telegraph.

This has caused the State Department to seek a criminal investigation of the multinational, multibillion-dollar conglomerate.

On October 2, we reported that ITT had placed a bugging expert inside the late President Salvador Allende's palace in Chile. Our story was based on ITT evidence, which was slipped to my associate Les Whitten.

Whitten double-checked the facts in the documents and then called ITT for comment. Without waiting for the story to appear, ITT's press chief Robert Sykes wired denials to many of our client papers.

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LET'S TRY to sort out the facts. In 1971, ITT plotted with the Central Intelligence Agency to keep Allende out of office. When this failed, the conglomerate tried to bring about Chile's economic collapse.

We reported that ITT had conspired with Chilean militarists. Sykes objected that the CIA, not ITT, had done the plotting. This was followed by a second wire from Sykes, retracting the charge against the CIA and laying the blame instead upon "unidentified persons."

ITT was in the midst of its skulduggery against Allende in 1971 when it dispatched John Ragan, a master bugging technician, to Chile with a load of electronic gear.

ITT has now come up with the astonishing explanation that Ragan was sup-

posed to help Allende de-bug his palace and two residences.

This would have been an odd mission for ITT to undertake while it was trying to foment a military uprising against Allende.

Sykes, meanwhile, claimed that Ragan had been sent to Chile by ITT "at Dr. Allende's request." Fine, we said. Show us a copy of the request with Allende's signature. ITT backed down again.

We got into another hassle with ITT by insisting upon a certified signature. "Ridiculous," protested the company.

Ridiculous? A few days later, The New York Times accused ITT of chemically altering vital documents in a \$12 million suit, a charge that the conglomerate was obliged to admit.

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IN FLYING the bugging equipment to Chile, we have now learned, ITT failed to get a State Department license. Bugging equipment suitable for military use requires a license, subject to a fine of \$25,000 and two years in jail.

In its own letters, ITT has conceded that "offensive bugs" — in other words, devices used for bugging rather than debugging — were "taken to Chile by Ragan." In Chile, according to these documents, Ragan worked with the army and police.

Ragan has also acknowledged that bugging equipment was left in Chile for army and police use. Clearly, therefore, the bugs were suitable for military use. After we pointed this out, the State Department asked for a criminal investigation of ITT.