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ITT Case Phone Calls Told

Washington

The former head of the Securities and Exchange Commission asserted yesterday he had received what he considered improper telephone contacts from President Nixon's principal domestic affairs assistant and from Senator Edward Kennedy during last year's investigation of a major business merger.

William J. Casey, former chairman of the securities regulatory agency and now undersecretary of state for economic affairs, was testifying before the House Commerce subcommittee, which is looking into various aspects of the merger between the International Telephone and Telegraph Corp. (ITT) and the Hartford Fire Insurance Co.

Casey said the White House call came from John Ehrlichman.

The government official said Kennedy telephoned last June to tell him that a family friend, whom he later identified to reporters as Andre Mayer, a trustee of the Kennedy family's charitable foundation, was a leading member of a firm that the regulatory agency was bringing to court in a civil action.

Kennedy, according to Casey, said Mayer had been a great help to the Kennedy

foundation.

Casey testified that he merely thanked the senator for his information and did not pursue the matter further—but added he thought it was an improper call.

Ehrlichman, who had called him several months

earlier, had asked Casey whether the agency's pursuit of certain ITT documents was necessary.

Casey said he thought the Ehrlichman call was "clearly improper if he was suggesting not to take evidence." *Reuters*