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MERRIAM TESTIFIES ON ITT-CIA COLLABORATION

JOHN CHANCELLOR: The International Telephone & Telegraph Company, IT&T, was in the news again today. Company officials testified before a Senate Foreign Relations subcommittee about charges that the company tried to influence the election in Chile in 1970. A company official said today that IT&T had tried to get the White House and the State Department to threaten Chile with economic reprisals because its Marxist President, Salvador Allende, was threatening to take IT&T property without compensation.

Paul Duke covered the hearings.

PAUL DUKE: William Merriam, an ITT vice president, said the company only wanted to keep its property. But he admitted company officials met with White House and other government bigwigs to discuss the Chilean election. And ITT memos showed the company worked closely with the CIA to stop Allende by economic pressure and other means.

WILLIAM MERRIAM: We, at this point, had begun to talk to the Kissinger office and the State Department about what might happen when Dr. Allende was elected, if he was elected.

SENATOR FRANK CHURCH: And you also were talking to Mr. Broe at the CIA in recommending a course of action, which he approved.

MERRIAM: The memorandum was recommending it, yes.

SENATOR CHURCH: Yes. And the memorandum came from ITT.

SENATOR EDMUND MUSKIE: Now, that memorandum to me is a statement of collaboration between ITT and CIA on its face. And I think the burden of proof is on you and ITT to discount that implication. And you haven't done it.