

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

SECRET/SENSITIVE/GDS

DECLASSIFIED
E.O. 12356, Sec. 3.4.

MR 91-16 #12 NSC ltr 8/20/92
By KBH NARA, Date 9/28/92

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

PARTICIPANTS: The President
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
Dr. Henry A. Kissinger, Secretary of State and
Assistant to the President for National Security
Affairs
Dr. James R. Schlesinger, Secretary of Defense
Lieutenant General Brent Scowcroft, Deputy
Assistant to the President for National
Security Affairs

DATE AND TIME: Monday, April 14, 1975
3:30 p. m.

PLACE: The White House
Washington, D. C.

President: I would hope we could consider this an executive session so we could have this a free and open session.

Sparkman: We just came from one.

President: We put a great deal of time and effort into the speech. There was unanimity in the Administration with what I said and the policies I recommended. I was therefore able to speak with conviction about where we should go.

Sparkman: I thought the first 30 minutes of your speech, which covered the world -- I don't know who wrote it but it was the best word structure I have seen and a great delivery.

I would like to hear from the two Secretaries.

President: Henry.



~~TOP SECRET~~
CLASSIFIED BY: HENRY A. KISSINGER

SECRET/SENSITIVE/GDS

Kissinger: Perhaps I should talk about the political situation and Jim will discuss the military situation and the figures we are requesting.

It is clear the military situation in South Vietnam is extremely difficult. North Vietnam has the military superiority. They have occupied much of the territory. It is caused in our view by too little assistance and incompetent management of the retreat. But whatever the reason, we are trying to bring about a political situation and a negotiation which would exploit the new balance of forces. We have thought that the U.S. should not be a principal agent in these negotiations but should rely on the South Vietnamese or others such as France. We are prepared to support negotiating efforts and the elements that are prepared to negotiate. This is a process which will take a few weeks to sort out in Saigon.

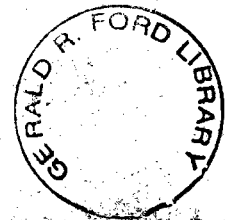
With respect to the legal situation on evacuation. We want to reduce the number of American citizens as soon as possible but not so fast as to precipitate a panic. The Embassy has resisted evacuation, but we have ordered it to get down to about 1,250. I would appreciate no mention of it.

President: We had a similar problem in Cambodia. We started with over 400 and had reduced it to about 75 when the time for evacuation came. We were prepared for 600 Americans and 300 Cambodians. We had few, because the gutsy Cambodians chose to stay and die rather than leave. So we got it down in an orderly manner to a manageable figure.

Kissinger: We offered the Cabinet members in Phnom Penh a chance to leave and without exception they stayed even though they were on the assassination list.

The total list of the people endangered in Vietnam is over a million. The irreducible list is 174,000. This doesn't mean we could get them out; it would be just those in overwhelming jeopardy. We would have to assemble them where we could get to them and have conditions where we could move them.

There are two Acts of Congress: the War Powers Act and the Indochina proscription. We think under the War Powers Act the President has authority with respect to evacuating American citizens; with the Indochina Act we would appreciate clarification. We think there is no authority for evacuation of Vietnamese.



Schlesinger: Henry has touched the high points. There has been some improvement in the past few days. They have been fighting well in Xuan Loc and the Delta but whether it is temporary depends on North Vietnam and President's request. In the military area the North Vietnamese have eight divisions and the GVN seven. They are doing well but they are dipping into stocks of ammunition. Generally speaking, if the North Vietnamese bring up their forces they will have preponderance, but the South Vietnamese know the terrain and have their backs to the wall.

We have requested \$722 million which reflects the results of the Weyand mission. The difference reflects the hope on the GVN side to equip four infantry divisions. That is \$140 million. To convert the four ranger groups is \$120 million. For general munitions, \$190 million. If you would like more detailed data, General Weyand is here.

President: Let's see what the Committee wishes. The \$722 million is designed to meet the current situation and is totally different from the \$300 million. Fred's report reflects a different situation.

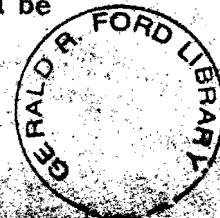
Case: You are very good to see us, especially on such short notice. The reason for the meeting is that the Moose Mission just came back and briefed us. We have a consensus on the immediate actions: There should be urgent action to reduce American personnel to the point where they could be lifted out in one lift. We feel there is grave danger if this reduction is not being done in a timely manner. We fear the people on the ground would panic so we are not moving rapidly. We would go to them frankly and say this is how we would do it. Stew suggests a sea evacuation.

Kissinger: We waited to press him until the President's speech so it would not be in the context of pulling the plug. We now have a cable saying it is underway.

President: Not to be critical, Stew, but 4,000 on one ship would pull the plug. We could have taken over 600. I don't know how many more could be handled.

Percy: Couldn't we give orders for every plane outgoing to be full?

Javits: There are orders and orders. We think you should be sure through someone other than Martin that your orders are being carried out. Within any context of aid, the first priority must be to get Americans and deserving South Vietnamese out. It is your problem, but we think you should be sure that your orders should be carried out.



President: I assure you my orders will be carried out. This is a two-way street. We will do our part but we think we have a good schedule and program and want your cooperation. I think we have an obligation to do whatever we can for the people to whom we are obligated.

Baker: We felt an evacuation of the American citizens was so urgent that everything else -- legality, Thieu's incumbency, everything else -- was secondary to that. We appreciate your forthcoming attitude toward this problem in your speech. We wanted to tell you our concerns and hear from you your concerns. We hope when we have, we will have established a new era of negotiation between the Executive and Legislative branches. We will talk with you on the amounts, which should be designed to facilitate the evacuation of Americans.

Sparkman: How is the report?

President: I have read it. I don't agree with all of it but it is a forthright report.

Sparkman: The Cambodian evacuation went well because of planning. We hope there is some planning going on in Saigon.

Schlesinger: The situations are not parallel. The Viet Cong infrastructure, the congestion, the high potential levels of violence -- it could be complicated.

Case: We appreciate this. That is why we are concerned.

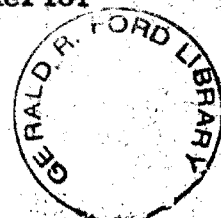
Percy: Could we get clarification on the 1,200 -- when they will be there and could they be pulled in one lift?

Kissinger: I don't have that today. I will have it tomorrow and I will let you know. On Thursday, the Ambassador was told to take it down as soon as possible, and to tell Thieu immediately.

Percy: Is 1,200 the immediate minimum? It sounds like a vast number. The reason it was easy in Cambodia is that we put a ceiling on.

President: If there isn't some indication of aid, the situation could disintegrate rapidly.

Javits: I will give you large sums for evacuation, but not one nickel for military aid for Thieu.



Church: I would think that if money is required to facilitate getting the Americans out, that can be worked out. What has not been worked out is the Vietnamese evacuees. Secretary Kissinger has said maybe there are 175,000. Clearly there is no legal inhibition to bringing some out along with Americans, but 175,000, with American troops involved, could involve us in a very large war. This raises the specter of a new war, thousands of American troops holding on in an enclave for a long period.

President: It is not envisaged that this would be for a long period but as quickly and precisely as possible.

Biden: What concerns us is that a week ago Habib told us we would be formulating a plan. A week has gone by and nothing has happened. We should focus on getting them out. Getting the Vietnamese out and military aid for the GVN are totally different.

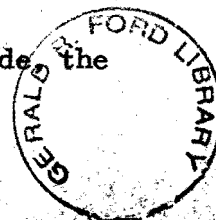
Kissinger: The plan for American evacuation is in pretty good shape. But we had a report that if we pulled out and left them in the lurch, we may have to fight the South Vietnamese. It was that we were concerned with and that is why we waited to go to Thieu so we didn't do it in the context of a bug out. The second problem is getting American citizens out in an emergency. Third is the Vietnamese to whom we have an obligation. This is infinitely more complicated and large-scale. It requires cooperation from the GVN and maybe the North Vietnamese.

Biden: I feel put upon in being presented an all or nothing number. I don't want to have to vote to buy it all or not at all. I am not sure I can vote for an amount to put American troops in for one to six months to get the Vietnamese out. I will vote for any amount for getting the Americans out. I don't want it mixed with getting the Vietnamese out.

President: There are three operations that are intertwined. There is getting out 4,500, the last 1,800 and the Vietnamese. The worst way to do it is to label it evacuation aid.

Symington: I am very familiar with Vietnam. In 1967 I decided it was hopeless. My people are asking if we are asking if we are holding Americans hostage for more aid. We know that is not so, but what worries me is the feeling we have been wrong so many times. We are all surprised at the collapse of South Vietnam. Why did we leave the 6,000 there so far? Where are the 175,000 going? Who is going to take them? These could all be dealt with if we could get the Americans out.

Pell: We could put these people in Borneo. It has the same latitude the same climate, and would welcome some anti-Communists.



President: Let me comment on where they would go: We opened our door to the Hungarians. I am not saying the situation is identical but our tradition is to welcome the oppressed. I don't think these people should be treated any differently from any other people -- the Hungarians, Cubans, Jews from the Soviet Union.

Clark: Is the request for military assistance primarily to arrest the situation and bring on negotiations, or for something else?

President: I think I stated it clearly: We wanted the sum to stabilize the military situation in order to give a chance for negotiations and to permit evacuation of Americans and deserving Vietnamese.

Sparkman: Do we have any obligations under the Paris Accords?

President: We signed with the understanding we could uphold it. The means were taken from us.

Sparkman: But our obligations....

Kissinger: The Accords had not obligations but authorities, that is, Article 7. President Nixon and others judged that permitting the United States to extricate itself would permit the United States to provide aid and enforce the agreements. Under the Paris Accords we have no obligation. To the GVN we said that if they let us get our forces out it would enhance our chances of getting aid for them and enforcing the agreement. It was in this context, not that of a legal obligation. We never claimed an obligation; we never pleaded an obligation. But some of us think there is a moral obligation.

Mansfield: My position is well known and I won't change. The caucus was concerned about the pace of the evacuation. Also that the witnesses should be the highest members of your Administration. We are trying to comply with your request as soon as possible. If Hugh [Scott] agrees, we will not meet Tuesday and Wednesday so we can process these requests rapidly. There was concern about humanitarian aid and the desire to send it through non-governmental agencies and the UN.

Scott: I agree to the proposal. One thing we haven't discussed is the amounts. I think we need to discuss a figure.

Biden: I don't want to commit myself to any precise number. How much money depends on how many we try to get out.



Kissinger: This is a matter of extreme delicacy. We can't take them under crisis conditions. No one is thinking of a long period of time to get people out. We are thinking of ten days to two weeks.

Church: I think we should establish an emergency fund to allow you to deal with the situation and carefully draw the language about troops so as to insure there are limits.

President: We are not wanting to put American troops in but we have to have enough funds to make it look like we plan to hold for some period.

Glenn: The idea here is very different from what I envisioned. I and most Senators thought of a surgical extraction, not of a ten-day to two-week operation with a bridgehead. This is a re-entry of a magnitude we have not envisioned.

I think we have to keep this very quiet. I thought it was a one-shot airlift.

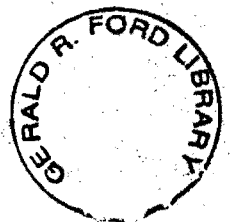
Case: This was essential to have been said. The only way we could do an operation of this kind is through negotiations between the North and South.

Glenn: I can see North Vietnam deciding not to let us get these people out and attacking our bridgehead. Then we would have to send forces to protect our security force. That fills me with fear.

Javits: Tell the press we are thinking of \$200 million.

President: If this is a meeting to plan an evacuation, this will panic the GVN totally.

[The meeting ended]



✓ P/SFRC/K/Schlesinger
14 Apr 75

P I would hope we could consider this an open session
so we could have this a full & open session.

Speaker We first come from one.

P We put a great deal of time & effort into speech. There
was unanimity in the Admin as to what level &
a political document. I was there. I was to
speak as/ execution about where we should go.

Speaker I think it's 30 min from speech of you ~~speech~~ & how
it covered a world. I don't know who wrote it but
best word structure I have seen & great delivery. I would
like to have from a & Schlegel.

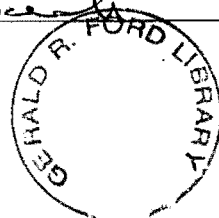
P Henry -

K Perhaps I should talk a job set & give a mid set &
a figure for requesting.

It was the mid set and was extremely dig. NUN has
mid separately. They have overzied much of this
caused by too little cost & incompetent management
of a retreat. But for whatever reason, we are trying
to bring about a job set & report which would reflect
a new look of power. We know that that a US should
not be a principal agent in these report but should
ally on SOW or others such as F. We are prepared
to support report efforts & elements prepared to report. This
is process which will take a few weeks to set out in
Sargan.

As respect to legal set on issue. We want to submit
#1 of US ASAP but not so as to precip. panic.

Embassy has resisted issue but we have advised
it down to about 1250. Would appreciate



no mention of it.

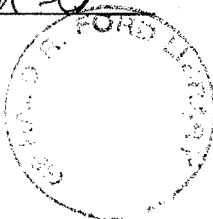
P We had similar part in Cambodia. We started w/ over 400 & reduced it to about 75 when some came. We were prepared for 600 Americans + 300 Cambodians. We had fear because a guy Cambodian chose to stay & die rather than leave. ^{So we got it down to} ~~it~~ manageable figure.

K We offered the cabinet chance to leave & w/1 inspection they stayed even though they are ^{assess} ~~on~~ list.

The total list of endangered is over 1 mil. The irreducible list is 174,000. This kind of maneuver could get them out, just those in overwhelming majority. We would have to assemble them where we could get them & have conditions where we could trace them.

There are 2 acts: w/P + Indochina prescription. We think w/P is for US but ~~is~~ on Indochina would operate clearly. We think no ambiguity for evac of VNees.

Schles K has trouble high points. Some movement in past few days. Have been fighting well in Kwan Lee & delta but whether it trig depends on NVN & Request for aid area NVN have & dis & GOV? They doing well but dipping into stocks of ammo. Generally speaking if NVN bring up focus they will have preference, but SVN know terrain & have backs to wall. We have requested 722 mil ref & Weyand mission the by up to hope on GOV side to equip 4 inf divs. That is 140 mil. Count range groups - 120 mil. General mentions \$190 mil. If detailed data, Weyand is



how

P Let's see what units involve. The 722 is designed to
maintain current set + is totally lif from 2000 mil.
Field's report reflects a diff situation

Cue You may need to see us, esp on such short notice.
Reason for unit is base/missions just cancelled
& brief us. We have concerns on minid actions:
urgent action to reduce OI personnel to point they could
be lifted in 1 ppt. We feel there grave danger this
reduction not being done in timely manner. We plan
a prophetic ground plan since we are not moving
rapidly. We would go to them promptly + say this is how
we would like it. Stew suggests see base.

K We wanted to pass him to P. speech so it would not
be in context of pulling a plug. We have a cable saying
it under way.

P Not to be critical, Stew, but 4000 on one ship would pull
a plug. We could have taken down 600. I don't know how
many more could be handled.

P

Couldn't we give orders for every plane outgoing to be
full

points

These are orders & orders. We think you should be sure
there is someone other than mention that your orders are
being carried out. W/in any context of air, a 1st
priority must be to get bases + deservng some out.
It's your prob but we think you should be sure
that your orders should be carried out

P I assume you say orders will be carried out.
This is a 2 way street. We'll do our part but we



think we have a good record & prog + want your
comp. I think we have an obligation to do whatever we
can for a people to whom we are obligated.

Baker We felt some of US was to urgent everything else -
loyalty, Thier involvement, everything else secondary
& that. We appreciate your factoring attitudes toward
this part in your speech. We wanted to tell
you our concerns & how far you your concerns.
We hope when we have we have estate a year
~~it~~ we forgot but esp + legis. ^{we will take w/ you on} ~~aspects~~, designed to
facilitate some of US

Sparkman A is a report

P I have read it. I don't agree w/ all of it but it is
a thoughtful report.

Sparkman Conclusion even more will be wise planning. We
hope some planning in Saigon

Ehler. Situations are not parallel - VC infrastructure, corruption,
high potential ~~and~~ levels of violence. It could be
complicated.

Coxe We agree this. That is why we concerned -

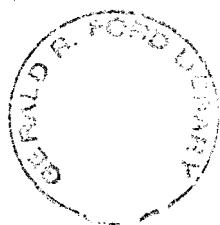
Percy Could we get clarification - 1200 - when letters + records
they be published in 1971

K I don't have that today. Will have it tomorrow & I
will let you know. On this, Bob will take it
down ASAP, tell Timmer ~~that~~ minimal.

Percy 12/200 a midweek mission. Sounds like a visit
to. Reason easy in Cambodia is we put a ceiling on.

P If there isn't some indication of aid, a sit could
be disadvantageous equally.

Jants I will give you large sums for sale, but not



one nickel for mil. oil for Truman.

Church

I would think if money required to facilitate getting US out, that can be worked. What has not been worked out is UN resources. K has said maybe 175 tons. Clearly there is no legal inhibition to bringing some out along w/ arms, but 175 tons, w/ US troops involved, and involve us in a very large war. This raises a specter of a new war, 1000's of GI troops holding an enclosure for a long period.

P It is not envisaged this would be for long period but as quickly & precisely as possible.

Biden

What concerns me is that with eyes Habick told me we would be formulating a plan, a week has gone by & nothing has happened. G's should focus on getting them out. Getting UN resources out & mil. oil for GUN are totally diff.

K

The plan for US war is in pretty good shape. But we had report that if we pulled out & left them in a lurch we may have to fight S. Korea. It was that we were concerned w/ & that why we had wanted to go to Truman so we didn't do it in context of a budget. 2nd job is getting US out in emergency. 3rd is Vets to whom we have an obligation. This is infinitely more complicated & larger scale. Requires help from GUN & maybe UN.

Biden

I feel put upon in being presented one after another #. I don't want to have to vote to buy it all or not at all. I ~~don't~~ want some I can vote for out to put US troops in for 1-6 months to get VN out.



I would vote for my aunt for getting arms out, I don't want it mixed w/ getting VN out.

P There are 3 ops. They are intertwined. There is getting out 4500, about 1800, and VN. The worst way to do it is to label it arms aid.

Spanghan I saw families of VN. In 67 I decided it was hopeless. They people are asking if we are asking if we are holding arms hostage for some aid. We know that not so, but what worries me is feeling we have been wrong so many times. We all surprised at collapse of S. VN. Why did we leave them there & so far. Where are the 125,000 going? Who going to take them? These could all be dealt w/ if we could get arms out.

Pell We could put these people in Borneo. At some latitude, some climate, & would welcome some anti-Comm.

P Let me comment where they would go. We spread one door to Hungarians. Don't say it is identical but our tradition is to welcome oppressed. I don't think these people should be treated any diff from any other people - Hungarians, Cubans, Jews from S. U.

Clark So request for military primarily to arrest it & bring negot or for something else.

P I think I ~~stated~~ stated it clearly. We wanted some to stabilize ~~and~~ until set in order to give a chance to ~~do~~ for negot & to permit some of arms & closing base.

Spanghan Does not have any obligations under Paris Accords.



P We signed w/ understanding we could withhold it,
It was taken from us.

Sparky But our obligations - - -

K The accords had not obligations but intentions, ie, art
2. P. Nix & others judged that permitting US to
exercise itself would permit US to provide aid
& enforce agreements. Under Paris accords we have
no obligation. To Galt we said if they let us get our
funds out it would enhance our chances of getting
aid for them & ~~for~~ enforcing agreements. ~~But~~ It
was in this context, not that of legal obligation.
We were claimed an obligation, were pleaded an
obligation, but ~~we~~ some of us think there is
a moral obligation.

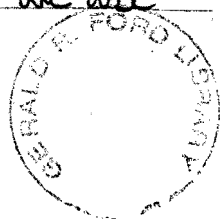
Unaffected

My position is well known & I won't change.
The concern was concerned about pace of work. Also
that witnesses should be highest members of your
admin. We ~~are~~ are trying to comply w/ your
request ASAP. If H. Nix agrees we will not meet
Tues & Wed so we can process these requests rapidly.
There was concern about humanitarian aid & desire to
send it thru non-governmental agencies & UN.

Scott Agree to proposal. One thing we haven't discussed
is a cost. ~~But~~ I think we need to discuss a figure.

Brian I don't want to cut myself to any precise #. How
much money depends on how many we try to get out.

K This is a matter of extreme urgency. We can't take the
unfavorable conditions. There is thinking for
~~the~~ long period of time to get people out. We are



Church
Group

thinking of 10 days - 2 weeks.

~~then~~ I think we should establish our own fund to allow you to deal w/c sit + eventually draw a language to ~~the~~ about troops so as to ensure there are limits.

P We not wanting to put Am troops in ~~in~~ But we have to have enough funds to make it look like we plan to hold for some period

Allen The idea here is very different from what I envisioned. I + most Senators that for surgical extraction, just of a 10 day - 2 week op w/a budget. This is a reality of a magnitude we have not envisioned. I think we have to keep this very private. I think it was a 1 shot airlift.

Case This was essential to have been said. The only way we could do an op of this kind is thru negotiation w/ S.

Allen I can see ~~the~~ NUN deciding not to let us ~~go~~ get these people out and attacking our budget. Then we would have to send forces to protect our security force. That fills me w/ fear.

Joan Tell the Pres are thinking of \$200 mil.

P If this is a meeting to plan w/ee, this will force S/N. Totally.

