

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

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OSD Ltr 11/9/09
MR 01-126 #3: Otd to Review 3/11/04

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

BY dal **NARA DATE** 3/26/09

PARTICIPANTS: Charles Whitehouse, U.S. Ambassador to Thailand
Lt. Gen. Brent Scowcroft
Robert Miller, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for East Asia
Thomas J. Barnes, Senior Staff Member, NSC

DATE, TIME & PLACE: September 16, 1975
11:00 a.m.
General Scowcroft's Office

After an exchange of pleasantries, General Scowcroft commented that things seemed to be looking up in Thailand.

Whitehouse: The situation has changed remarkably.

Scowcroft: There appears to be an entirely different atmosphere. Is it just appearances or are the Thai settling down?

Whitehouse: The Thai were like new kids in March (when Prime Minister Khukrit Pramot took office). It was just like Joe Alsop taking over the American Government. (Khukrit was Thailand's most prominent journalist.) A 14-mule hitch. Then came the fall of Cambodia, the second belt from the collapse of Vietnam, and finally the Mayaguez. The Thai naively thought they could romance North Vietnam. They now know how hard it is to deal with the North Vietnamese. They have become more prudent, and they are spending their own dough on 16,000 M-16s. The usual temptation for countries like these is to buy an aircraft carrier.

From their perspective we have arrived at a reasonable solution in that there will be no American combat-types in Thailand after March. The political acceptability of the U.S. forces that remain

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will depend on Thai-izing them. By that time we could be well down the pike in Thai-izing Ramasun (the 7th Radio Research Field Station). Kokha (Air Station) could become a Thai base. We could call it the "Joint U.S. -Thai Space Research Center". There is no reason why the Thai Commander couldn't come in, read all the fancy graphs on missile flights, and pass the word to the Prime Minister of the things in the air. The Thai themselves can run the seismic thing (Detachment 415 at Chiangmai).

I like to avoid the words Diego Garcia. I believe we can work out an aircraft transit agreement for Utapao. The words "re-entry rights" scare the Thai. So I prefer to use the term "transit". The planes could be in transit to anywhere -- not just to Diego Garcia. Perhaps 200 to 300 fellows at Utapao would be enough. They would man the TACAN (Tactical Aid to Navigation), and ALS (Approach Landing System), and supervise a contract for mess facilities. I think the Thai would be perfectly willing to have gaggles of aircraft come in to Utapao if there was a typhoon.

Scowcroft: The decision will be forthcoming on the withdrawals.

Whitehouse: When Khukrit talks about combat forces, there is no heartburn if a few guys are left behind nailing up crates after March 20. On the other hand, it would be unfortunate to fiddle around too long before getting a decision on the withdrawal of combat forces. I would love to get instructions early in October. The Thai have a lot of problems in relation to our withdrawals. They will be inheriting a lot of real estate. They have to make arrangements to mow the grass.

Scowcroft: What is the attitude about occasionally rotating squadrons in?

Whitehouse: I raised this question in the context of exercises. Khukrit asked why we would want to send in American planes. He said the Thai aircraft would probably run into them.

We held a joint naval exercise with the Thai this summer. Hanoi screamed about it. The Thai are not going on their knees to Hanoi, but they do not want to appear truculent. They have recently chucked out the Lao leaders who took refuge there. They want to avoid anything that causes trouble with their regional neighbors.



Scowcroft: I had the impression that the Thai are relatively satisfied with their Chinese neighbors.

Whitehouse: It is hard to explain. The Thai came back from Peking convinced that the atmosphere of their talks, particularly those with Mao, was highly favorable. Khukrit is not naive. He is not taking the Chinese word that the radio station (the Voice of the People of Thailand) is no longer emanating from Chinese soil. It has been fixed at Kunming (capital of Yunnan Province) since Marconi. But the Thai came away from China with a great sense of reassurance. For one thing, they share Peking's perception of Hanoi as the bad boy on the block.

Scowcroft: It seems as though the Chinese relaxed them a little about us, too.

Whitehouse: We don't have any evidence.

Scowcroft: It seems to me...

Miller: There have been some Chinese statements that the Thai might want to keep some U.S. forces in Thailand, that the Chinese understand Thai motives.

Barnes: There was also the Chinese parable about not letting the tiger in the front door while you're letting the wolf out the back.

Whitehouse: The great word in Asia is hegemony. The Chinese talk about Russian hegemony. The Russians talk about Chinese hegemony. They both talk about North Vietnamese hegemony. I would like to get the troop withdrawal thing settled. The kaleidoscope is fixed right now. I would like to get the Thai pinned down before it moves, so we can operate our gas station and hotel at Utapao.

Scowcroft: I will see whether I can pry that paper loose from Defense. Defense professes to be in a hurry to draw down, but the paper is two months overdue.

Whitehouse: It is hard to keep the boys busy in Thailand. Also, the Thai have a sense of some uncertainty because of speculation that the U.S. is abandoning the mainland of Asia, and retreating to island



defense. I recommend that we include references to the Thai, along with Singapore and other countries, in Presidential speeches.

Scowcroft: There was the time he mentioned Taiwan when he shouldn't have. We want to do what we can to reassure the Thai.

Miller: They seemed to be pleased with our stand on SEATC.

Whitehouse: If New Jersey Zinc comes in with a \$90 million smelter south of Chinag Mai, that will help. The Thai were told after Saigon's fall that they were the next domino.

Scowcroft: We will do what we can. Jack Nicklaus did not go to Thailand because he feared for his life. The Association called us two or three times. We said there was no reason why he shouldn't go.

Whitehouse: Instead of Nicklaus they are about to have Flip Wilson. I would like to get the key issue of troop withdrawal resolved. A minor item that might come up is that if everything (all residual forces) falls under MAG, we would have to have MAP financing. No reason why (Brig. Gen.) Heine Aderholdt (JUSMAG Commander) couldn't be two-hatted, and given court-martial authority (over forces outside JUSMAG). The feeders and keepers at Utapao will not need a super-duper command. I will talk along these lines at Defense.

Miller: My feeling after discussion with Bill Crowe and Mort Abramowitz (ISA) is that this is more a technical arrangement.

Whitehouse: Perhaps he could be double-hatted as MAG Chief and Defense Attache'.

Thai forces are a pretty flimsy outfit. I think we should lean on the austere side in terms of residual presence so we don't have too much to evacuate in the event of military necessity. If we can get along without Kokha, let's do so.

There is not much hope for a U-2 program. The U-2 has the spy plane tag hung on it.

Scowcroft: I think we can survive on that one.



MEMORANDUM

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

6249

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ACTION
September 16, 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR: GENERAL SCOWCROFT
FROM: THOMAS J. BARNES
SUBJECT: Memorandum of Conversation

Attached at Tab A is a memorandum of conversation covering your meeting with Ambassador Charles Whitehouse on September 16, 1975.

RECOMMENDATION:

That you approve the memorandum of conversation at Tab A.

APPROVE DISAPPROVE

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WJ 6/3/04



NSC CORRESPONDENCE PROFILE

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SOURCE/CLASS/DESCRIPTION

TO: PRES _____ FROM: BARNES KISSINGER, H _____ REFERENCE: _____ CIRCLE AS APPROPRIATE

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SUBJECT: Memorandum of Scowcroft mtg w/ Amb Charles Whitehouse on 16 Sep 1975

DISTRIBUTION/INITIAL ACTION ASGMT

INTERNAL ROUTING AND DISTRIBUTION	ACTION	INFO	REC CY FOR	ACTION REQUIRED
ADVANCE CYS TO HAK/SCOWCROFT				MEMO FOR HAK (_____)
STAFF SECRETARY				MEMO FOR PRES (_____)
FAR EAST <u>Barnes</u>			<u>X</u>	REPLY FOR (_____)
SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA				APPROPRIATE ACTION (_____)
MID EAST / NO. AFRICA / SO. ASIA				MEMO _____ TO _____ (_____)
EUROPE / CANADA				RECOMMENDATIONS (_____)
LATIN AMERICA				JOINT MEMO (_____)
UNITED NATIONS				REFER TO _____ FOR: _____ (_____)
ECONOMIC				ANY ACTION NECESSARY? (_____)
SCIENTIFIC				CONCURRENCE (_____)
PROGRAM ANALYSIS				DUE DATE: _____
NSC PLANNING				COMMENTS: (INCLUDING SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS)
CONGRESSIONAL				
OCEANS POLICY				
INTELLIGENCE				

SUBSEQUENT ROUTING/ACTIONS

DATE	FROM	TO	S	SUBSEQUENT ACTION REQUIRED (OR TAKEN):	CY TO
9/16		Scowcroft	X	Approval (9/25)	
9/22		NSC/B	C	Scowcroft approved NSC/B	

NSC/S DISP INSTR

DISPATCH _____

CY RQMTS: SEE ABOVE PLUS: _____

NOTIFY _____ & DATE _____ BY _____

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