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Presidential Libraries Withdrawal Sheet

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Scowcroft file

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

TOP SECRET - XGDS

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

PARTICIPANTS: Dr. James R. Schlesinger, Secretary of Defense
Dr. Henry A. Kissinger, Assistant to the
President for National Security Affairs
Lt. General Brent Scowcroft, Deputy Assistant
to the President for National Security Affairs

DATE AND TIME: Tuesday, April 23, 1974
7:45 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.

PLACE: The Secretary's Dining Room
The Pentagon

Schlesinger: I am going to Iceland.

Kissinger: I think Iceland is willing to delay and string out the talks.

Schlesinger: The British problem is they can't give up the ATAF's.
The strength is in the south, so the attack will come in the north.

Kissinger: I have been saying for years that NATO deployment is
disgraceful.

Schlesinger: The Germans understate their strength. Within 24 hours
they can put 1.2 million men into the field. I think they now believe in
a conventional capability -- the British are fighting it; the Dutch are
with us. Their military posture in the central region is vastly improved.

Kissinger: How about tanks?

Schlesinger: The difference is overstated, and ours are better. The
Soviet Union will never throw away a tank. American forces are good.

Kissinger: Why do we need the B-1? For selective attacks, I would
think we would use missiles.

Schlesinger: No, maybe on the periphery. And use of a missile tears
down the face structure; a bomber can be re-used. It would use an ASM.

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Kissinger: I like the ASM. We need more.

The bomber with standoff missiles is great. And unconstrained by SALT I.

Schlesinger: It will be in SALT II under aggregates.

Kissinger: Only in a permanent agreement.

Schlesinger: I think there is more potential in the near term in MBFR than in SALT.

Kissinger: I don't think our MBFR position is so far off that it isn't more negotiable. This country is completely cynical. As soon as detente is over, the Democrats will move back to the left.

Schlesinger: We can expand our deployment program on short notice.

Kissinger: There are three issues: ABM, TTB and MIRV.

Schlesinger: I am not worried about the first. The only problem is adding it to the treaty. The argument is their one site covers more than ours -- the Hill may make something of this.

Kissinger: Next is TTB at a seismic signal of five.

Schlesinger: That sounds good. In the strategic area, the Soviets will be more constrained than we.

Kissinger: They want it to start in 1976.

Schlesinger: I don't think the TTB does much damage.

SALT doesn't sound so good -- at 1100 versus 1000.

Kissinger: My impression is that the precise numbers are negotiable.

Schlesinger: That is no constraint at all.

Kissinger: Are we better off than without one?

Schlesinger: We have one until 1977. What we want is a constraint on the future force structure.



Kissinger: Your people must stop pissing on SALT I. The constraints on numbers and throwweight come out of our programs.

Schlesinger: There is nothing wrong with the SALT I numbers.

Kissinger: Someone told Les Gelb that I agreed with the JCS on [REDACTED] for support in SALT and welched on the deal. That is totally wrong. I support [REDACTED] the B-1 because it is better than nothing.

Schlesinger: I am prepared to go either with [REDACTED] I defend SALT I.

Kissinger: If this keeps up I will talk back. When we have [REDACTED] to their 2,000 warheads, how are we in trouble? How come we mothball 180 B-52s if the numbers are important? Why not build ASM's which are unconstrained?

Schlesinger: Gelb said you said there was a military-industrial-academic complex. There is sniping coming from State too. I thought I had eliminated the sniping from here.

Kissinger: Who defended the Defense budget with Mel Laird? Laird would ship me a one-third lower budget after publicly supporting a bigger one. Then he would make a deal with Mahon. Did you call Laird about Ford's comment? Sidey said you did.

Brezhnev told me that they couldn't even come close in warheads by 1980. I told him he could take out the [REDACTED] He said, we would still have 7000 left, so what kind of sense did it make?

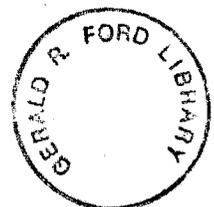
Schlesinger: There's no question that both sides can destroy each other's cities.

Kissinger: We are the only ones who could gain in a first strike because most of their force is land-based.

My guess is they won't have an SLBM MIRV before 1978-79. They are baffled how we got [REDACTED]

Schlesinger: It is the world's best warhead.

Kissinger: Can we boost the yield?



Schlesinger: Yes, but it requires more AEC plants. The AEC and OMB want to cut.

I am not worried about a two-or-three to one throwweight disparity, but a six-to-one does worry me.

Kissinger: If the Soviets took out the [REDACTED] we would lose one million people also. That is bad. That the Soviets would calculate that they could do it, though, successfully and without retaliation, is highly unlikely. More likely is a selective strike, taking out a dam or a factory and leaving critical targets alone. We would be better at that. With the SLBM we can fire from a direction they know couldn't be a massive attack.

Schlesinger: You are giving my speech.

Kissinger: So why are we talking about throwweight? We are talking ourselves into a psychosis.

Schlesinger: I think it is under control. I say a counterforce attack is not reasonable. But to have them with [REDACTED] is not good.

We need a big warhead.

Kissinger: Why, if we are not going to knock out their silos?

Schlesinger: Just so they don't think they are ahead. A discrepancy of [REDACTED] is significant.

Kissinger: What can they do with it?

Schlesinger: Right now we are better off. But the perception is different.

Kissinger: Yes, fed by the Pentagon and Jackson. By the 1980's your successor will be hanging on by his fingertips. What constituency do you have for defense absent the President and detente?

Schlesinger: I don't think the Pentagon is behind it. Simple people look at the difference in numbers and see us behind.

Kissinger: You say we want a big missile.



Schlesinger: I would prefer to restrain their programs. But if we can't, I would like a big warhead.

Kissinger: But it would be as vulnerable as [REDACTED]

Schlesinger: I have never bought the [REDACTED] vulnerability argument. That is the NSC staff -- Wayne Smith.

But the programs they [Soviet Union] have prepared don't constrain their progress.

Kissinger: How about to 1984?

Schlesinger: I would have to look at the numbers.

Kissinger: What it would do is prevent a Soviet breakout. Brezhnev and Nixon won't last forever. We need detente to keep the Chinese and the Europeans honest.

Schlesinger: Even Germany?

Kissinger: The Bahr's in Germany. With detente Leber can keep Bahr under control.

Schlesinger: What went on in Moscow?

Kissinger: I think Brezhnev wants an agreement, but he is having troubles like us.

Schlesinger: Suppose 900 is their program by 1980?

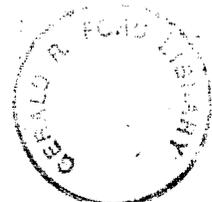
Kissinger: No. Not unless we throw in [REDACTED]

Schlesinger: That is possible. [REDACTED] won't happen by 1980 anyway.

Kissinger: Brezhnev said we are trying to constrain them where they are doing well and leaving them open where they are doing poorly. Brezhnev's obsession on warheads was like Nitze's on throwweight.

How can we sort it out? A SALT agreement is not good politically for the President. He will infuriate the conservatives and not gain the liberals.

Schlesinger: Why does the President go in June?



Kissinger: Because we can't piss away the Soviet relationship. Why do you think the Chinese are playing with us?

Schlesinger: Aren't the Chinese turning on us?

Kissinger: I had a very interesting meeting with the new guy, Teng.

Schlesinger: Why is Chou through?

Kissinger: I think because the number two is vulnerable and he is a victim of Watergate -- he gambled on a strong President. There is no change in their policy, but there isn't an elaboration.

Schlesinger: Throwweight is important. Warheads are too.

Kissinger: If Brezhnev goes down the tube, no Soviet leader will deal with the U. S. Are we better with the Soviet Union having detente with Europe and Japan and us on the outside? Or having us play with the Soviet Union and have Europe and the Japanese worry? What have the Soviets gotten from SALT? Wheat -- and that was our own stupidity.

Schlesinger: Isn't it in the Soviet interest to have good relations with us?

Kissinger: Marginally, but I think Brezhnev is a political idiot and has given us all sorts of gains. What is the constituency of the Democrats? The liberals -- and they will kill us except under detente. Kennedy came in as a tough guy, turned soft and gave us a legacy of problems.

An agreement in SALT only hurts the President. But we need to respond to Brezhnev.

Schlesinger: I am worried about the mid-1980's not 1980.

Kissinger: What do I tell Gromyko?

Schlesinger: Let me give you some ideas!

Kissinger: The best thing would be to set a direction in June and a year to work it out.

Schlesinger: June is bad -- if impeachment starts. We need something concrete to get past impeachment.



Kissinger: I think the Soviet Union is tottering. Gromyko is doing crazy things.

Schlesinger: Can't we throw them a fish?

Kissinger: Maybe we can have Gromyko in Damascus if we first get a deal.

What put the Soviet Union on skids in the Middle East was that they got nothing in two summits, and their own obnoxious behavior. Apparently the Arabs loathe the Russians.

What about military equipment to Egypt? We've got to get them something. Let Wickham and Scowcroft work out a \$180 million package.

Schlesinger: Sonnenfeldt said the British attitude in Europe was not with the U. S.

I want to work out the 2nd and 4th ATAF. Why do you use the Verification Panel?

Kissinger: Because we can't do everything outside the bureaucracy.

Schlesinger: What about Tanks and APC's to Israel?

Kissinger: Hold up for a week or so.

Schlesinger: What will happen to Harry Bergold?

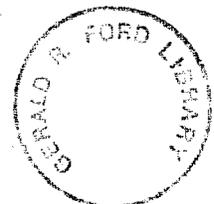
Kissinger: I will try to get it looked at before it gets to me.

Schlesinger: He would have made a good Ambassador.

Kissinger: They all want to be Ambassadors. I don't know why.

Schlesinger: Bergold is a good man. I don't want DOD looked at as a place of banishment.

Kissinger: I'll get him promoted, make him Ambassador.



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