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Harlan, Sonnyfeldt  
briefing on Europe and CSCE  
July 23, 1975

This Copy For \_\_\_\_\_

B A C K G R O U N D   B R I E F I N G

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AT THE WHITE HOUSE

WITH U.S. OFFICIALS

AT 3:10 P.M. EDT

JULY 23, 1975

MR. NESSEN: The briefing is for use on a back-ground basis. You should refer to these gentlemen in your copies as U.S. officials.

QUESTION: Is there going to be a transcript?

MR. NESSEN: I am not sure.

THERE SHOULD BE NO DIRECT QUOTATION, but only paraphrase what the gentlemen say. After the briefing, if there is some particular quote you would like to use, you can check with them or with Bob Funseth at the State Department.

There is no embargo on this. You can use tape recorders, but only for the purposes of your own notes and not for broadcast.

The thought was that this would be limited to the CSCE. You can see how this goes, and if at the end perhaps there are other questions, there might be time for that.

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I think I have covered it all about the ground rules. With that I will turn you over to the U.S. officials.

QUESTION: Can I ask a question about the ground rules? On the ticker we have, we have in our office, this morning the names of these gentlemen appeared on the UPI ticker, and it is not going to be any great mystery to anybody who is conducting this briefing.

MR. NESSEN: That was a notice to correspondents. I am talking about the use of attribution to U.S. officials in your written stories. Hopefully, this briefing will be more for your own background and understanding of the trip than for printing stories, but if you do write stories, you should attribute it to U.S. officials.

One other item. We gave out this morning a briefing paper on the CSCE. We are getting additional printed material on this trip. I would hope that by the end of the day tomorrow we would have the actual document to be signed.

Don't hold me to that. It may be early Friday morning as opposed to late tomorrow afternoon, and we will be having other printed materials so you can brief yourselves up on the trip.

U.S. OFFICIAL: I would like to keep this as brief as possible because I know you have questions, and we would like to give you as much opportunity as possible to raise those.

I will make some general introductory comments, and my colleague will review the contents of the document that is to be signed in Helsinki.

I am sorry you don't have the full text yet, but the final, corrected version with commas in place is just coming on an airplane from Geneva today, I think, and we will get it to you as quickly as possible.

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You do have a fact sheet, I believe.

As many of you know, the idea of a European conference, European Security Conference, an all-European security system, whatever it was called, goes back to the period 1953 to 1954 when the Soviet Union advanced proposals on the general subject in the context of the entry into NATO of the German Federal Republic.

At that time, the stated Soviet purpose was to prevent that entry of the Federal Republic into NATO, and indeed to dissolve NATO and substitute in its place a so-called all-European security system or security pact.

It got nowhere at the time, obviously. It was one-sided and of no interest to any Western country.

That general proposal for all-European security arrangements continued to be reiterated from time to time over the next several years, with no particular echo in the Western countries.

At that time, there also was no particular place in the proposal for neutrals or nonaligned countries in Europe. There was a revival of it in a somewhat different form in the mid-sixties, and at that time, the chief objective seemed to be, on the part of the Soviets and some of the other East Europeans, to find a substitute for the peace treaty ending World War II.

That approach also had no appeal in the West, although in some West European countries there began to develop a bit more interest in having some sort of an all-European meeting. Nevertheless, nothing came of those proposals.

Then later still, in 1969, the proposals were revived by the Eastern side and were considered by NATO, which at that time -- I am talking about 1969-1970 -- concluded that there were many concrete issues in Europe between East and West, which would be much better dealt with in normal bilateral negotiations and that any conference that might be called between East and West, as well as for Europe generally, should be very carefully prepared with the issues carefully delineated and moved on to as concrete a plan as possible.

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The Soviets, and the Eastern countries, in making their proposals, at that time seemed to be principally interested still in such matters as recognition of frontiers and issues that would have normally been associated with a peace treaty. As you know, what happened after that was that the negotiations on Berlin went forward and eventually were completed in 1971.

The Federal Republic of Germany proceeded to negotiations with the Soviet Union and Poland in that period, also -- and later on with the German Democratic Republic -- and settled various outstanding issues between itself and those countries. It was only after those matters had been resolved that the Western countries agreed to proceed to an exploration of what a Security Conference might do.

It was always clear on the Western side that there would be no interest in merely having certain declarations concerning borders and things of that kind, but that any conference dealing with the improvement of East-West relations in Europe, with a stabilization of East-West relations in Europe, had to take into account the human aspects of the problem, the division of Europe, and all sorts of more specific potential areas of cooperation.

It was a Western view from the beginning, shared widely also among neutrals in Europe, as well as among some of the smaller countries in Eastern Europe, that there was no purpose in having a conference at all if it was simply to produce some general principles duplicating what was already essentially embodied in the UN charter or in bilateral agreements that had been previously reached between various West European countries and East European countries.

Also, as this process of preparations got underway, the Western countries stipulated that it had to be brought into some kind of parallelism with negotiations on forced reductions in central Europe. As you may recall, the actual agreement on the date in 1973 to proceed with the first stage of the European Security Conference, was tied to an agreement to begin the talks on troop productions in Europe -- the so-called MBFR negotiations.

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So, the original concepts or purposes that seemed to underlie the Soviet proposals for this conference were substantially modified as a result of events, as well as as a result of Western insistence.

I may say here, from our standpoint, one of the gratifying aspects of this whole operation from 1969, when we discussed it in detail here at a NATO meeting, you may recall, in April of 1969, through the present, has been the very substantial measure of agreement that has existed between the NATO allies in how to handle this conference.

This is of some importance because various allies did not necessarily approach this project from the same standpoint and with the same interests. For us, this particular venture in multilateral diplomacy has never had the significance that it has had for some of our allies, particularly the smaller countries, or for that matter for some of the countries in Eastern Europe.

We have had our own contacts with the Soviets and with some of the other East Europeans. We have had major negotiations that we have had over the years on arms control and other issues. So this has never been, for us, as crucial a vehicle for doing business with the East as it has for some of the other countries that don't have the channels or the issues to talk about that the United States has.

Nevertheless, despite these somewhat different vantage points, it has proved possible for the NATO members to stay very close to each other on all the issues and on tactics, as well as on strategy, in dealing with this conference. The mechanism that we devised for carrying on this coordination both in Brussels and in Geneva, and before that in Helsinki, at the site of the Conference, in some respects are pioneering in their efforts to harmonize Western positions in this rather unique exercise in multilateral diplomacy.

I think that is something that ought not to be overlooked, particularly when questions are raised about this or that unilateral American action with respect to this conference. Everything that we have done in this conference and about this conference has been in consultation and in harmony with our allies and the President is going to Helsinki as a result of consultation and very close coordination with every one of our allies.



This is really quite an important achievement.

Just a couple of words and then we will go on with some more details. The results of this conference are embodied in a document that you will be getting, called the final act. It is very long. It is a negotiated document. When you get 35 countries as varied in size and history and with as divergent or at least different interests as these, it is obviously going to be negotiated and there are going to be compromises and there are going to be formulations that are not ideal from this or that country's standpoint. That is the nature of a diplomatic effort.

So that is one thing to bear in mind in looking at this and in finding this or that imperfection that you may find as you look at the text.

Secondly, it was always understood that this was not going to be a treaty or a jurisdictional instrument but rather an outcome essentially of political significance. That is to say an effort to set certain political guidelines for East-West relations in the period ahead, to set certain political standards for this period against which conduct can be measured; to provide political incentives for restrained, and wherever possible cooperative conduct in the further evolution of East-West relations.

Since this is essentially a document of political significance, it cannot -- and as explicitly stated does not -- affect anyone's legal position or legal views of the situation with respect to Europe. As you know, there are different views concerning certain aspects, legal aspects of frontiers and so on in Europe, but none of these things are affected or changed by this document; nor, equally important, are, for example, such things as our Western rights with respect to Berlin, with respect to Germany as a whole, affected by this particular document and by the outcome of this conference.

The proof of the pudding in this is going to be in the eating, if I can coin a phrase. (Laughter) In other words, in some sense this is a pioneering effort of setting forth a comprehensive set of political objectives, political standards, political rules of the road among these 35 participants and they are going to have to be implemented in practice and at least, however, there will be some standards against which to measure that implementation.

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I think that will be of some importance in judging people's performance over the future. It also imposes certain obligations on this. It is not as though all the obligations in Basket 3 -- the ones that deal with human contacts and freedom of information, and so on -- as if all of those are going to have to be implemented by one side.

Those aspects of this document that can be readily translated into concrete action -- which is mostly the material in Basket 2 and Basket 3 -- will have to be implemented over a period of time by all the participants.

In many instances, countries will find it highly desirable to follow these general guidelines with specific negotiated agreements that will, in fact, carry legal commitments. This one does not but you can take this as a basis and begin to negotiate additional bilateral agreements in which you translate the political terms of this document into more binding reciprocal terms and arrangements in this or that field, and that applies very largely to the economic and technological and so on provisions in Basket 2, and these other ones on movement of people and freedom of information and human rights in Basket 3.

So it would be, I think, inaccurate to see this document as drawing a line under a period, as terminating a period, but it should be seen rather as a takeoff point in which behavior can be more explicitly measured, performance can be more explicitly measured against the understandings reached here.

So if you can think about this operation in those terms, I think perhaps you might avoid some of the pitfalls of interpretation that I have encountered in my reading in recent weeks on this, and to assist you further in that direction I will turn this over now to another U.S. official to go through the Baskets.

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U.S. OFFICIAL: I will do this very briefly because I think it is easier to answer your questions and see where the difficulties lie on the basis of specifics.

You have a fact sheet which describes the four parts of the document. The first part is the statement of principles and it is really that statement of principles that is the part that has been of greatest interest to the East, to the Soviet Union, in the early consideration of this kind of conference.

However, what has happened in the statement of principles is that rather than focusing on the kind of principles that could be directly related to something approaching a peace treaty which would fix borders and fix political status for all time, in achieving balance and in achieving what the West wanted to put into this document, the Soviets accepted other principles which give some balance to the document.

For example, there has been much talk about the principle on the inviolability of frontiers and that one, I may say, is one of the examples of less fortunate language. It comes out in English that people are going to refrain from assaulting frontiers or borders. But against the inviolability of frontiers you have principles that deal with sovereign equality and in the principle on sovereign equality there is a provision for peaceful change of frontiers.

You have a principle on self-determination which again relates to the question of frontiers indirectly, and aspects of these principles that might relate to a peace treaty.

I can list through the principles -- sovereign equality, nonuse of force, inviolability of frontiers, territorial integrity, peaceful settlement of disputes. This is something that is of interest to some of the smaller states.

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The Swiss, for example, have come up with a charter which would provide for the special handling of disputes. Some of the Eastern European countries, for example, have been very interested in the nonuse of force. The Romanians have pushed the nonuse of force opinion very strongly.

In addition to the principles in the first part of this agreement, of this text, are certain modest confidence-building measures in the security field. Any serious measures in this area would probably come in the MBFR talks, but it was clear the neutrals in some of the smaller countries, particularly, were anxious to have something in these texts that would give some step toward dealing with the security problem that they would participate in.

Well, the modest step was a notification on a voluntary basis of maneuvers. Now the maneuvers are set with rather large numbers -- 25,000 men, 250 kilometers. Actually, what that means is it covers all of Europe and it is 250 kilometers into the Soviet Union, and 21 days notification period.

Now it is also provided that smaller maneuvers can be notified. The fact it is voluntary does not have that much significance. All of these things have really kind of moral obligation and it even looks to us as though the Soviets are getting ahead of this because about the time we were agreeing on this particular provision they announced for the first time a major maneuver in Western Russia.

There is also a provision for reciprocal exchange of observers on maneuvers and a spoken desire that other measures should be considered in the future, but I think mainly this is a symbolic thing that they want to try, and the smaller countries are very anxious to have on the record.

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The second major area is the one that relates to economic relationships, science and technology and environment. These statements are essentially statements of desire to increase relations on the economic and commercial side. Provisions are made for taking steps to prevent exchanges from becoming a burden on relations; that is, for cheap goods to be going too much into one area. The safeguards concept, in other words, was mentioned in there.

The fact that there are different trading systems and that different ways of trading have to be formulated is alluded to, and ways of studying the problem to see how, for example, equality in trade can be worked out between state trading systems and free market economies.

There is also a provision for arbitration of disputes, facilitating business contacts, and so forth. Science and technology, again, mainly increased cooperation. Certain fields are identified where they would like to see further work and progress.

There is a natural body for some of this work to be done in the UN Commission, the ECE in Geneva, where all the parties are members and much of this work can proceed in that body.

There is then, not within any particular part of this text but put in because it did not really fit in any other place, a special reference to the Mediterranean area. This was pressed by some of the Mediterranean littoral states who wanted to have an acknowledgement by the other states in Europe of the close security and economic relationships of those states to the mainland of Europe, and favoring greater economic ties. This was pushed by the Maltese Prime Minister and some of the others -- the Italians -- and it refers also to the desirability of limiting arms in that area.

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The third large area is the humanitarian category, and there it is divided mainly into the human contacts and exchanges and information. And on the human contacts the effort here is to try and get standards that are more concrete so that when we go in or other Governments go in and say, "We have this list of people who in our country are anxious to have family reunification, are anxious to have relatives immigrate," that you can point to something which says that these applications are to be looked at by the Governments. They are to be in principle favorably received.

There are to be no measures put in the way of this kind of family reunification or immigration. The standards are not specific down to what you can take with you or how long you have to sell your property, but it refers to these matters and it certainly makes it possible for countries to then go on and have more detailed bilateral agreements on these matters, and this just sets out the overall standard. Also for increasing travel and contact and tourism, and that kind of thing.

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On the information side, again, hortatory language, but with specifics in terms of the desirability of increasing the flow of publications, newspapers, periodicals, of cooperation in these exchanges; with specific respect to journalists, we hope you are all duly appreciative that there is something in there about multiple entry visas that we used to have a lot of complaints about that people could not be sure they could get back in; eased travel conditions within the country where the correspondent is accredited and a statement about the no expulsions for legitimate activities.

These are statements of policy, and there is no court you are going to be able to take anybody into to get these statements of policy enforced, but they do give us this standard and they will enable us, when occurrences happen -- and occurrences will be inevitable -- to come in and say to the Government, "Now, look, you signed on to this document, you accepted these obligations. Now, why aren't you living up to them?"

The cultural exchanges are again specifically referring to artists, musicians, works of art. The French were very anxious to get some reference to their language, desirability of studying languages, and spreading national cultures, educational exchanges and so on.

The last area is the follow-up, and here the only agreement reached -- because there were differing views -- was that there would be a meeting in 1977 to examine the implementation of these policy statements and to see whether further meetings should be held.

Originally, the Eastern countries wanted some kind of institutionalized process, and the Western countries, by and large, did not want to see that. They wanted to see whether in practice these declarations were going to lead to progress.

So, the compromise was that there would be this meeting that would examine the situation without establishing an institution that would specifically follow the implementation of the agreement.

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I think we will take questions.

QUESTION: Can you tell us if this changes the American position that they do not formally recognize Soviet occupation of the Baltic?

ANSWER: No, it does not change the American position. There is nothing in this text -- first, the text is not a legal text. Secondly, there is nothing in the text that deals with recognition of borders or States. The inviolability principle talks about respect for frontiers, but it is also coupled with the idea of peaceful change and it is directed at the use of force to upset frontiers.

The American position on the nonrecognition of the incorporation of the Baltic States has not been changed by this document.

QUESTION: Is there anything in this agreement that you believe or that the Administration believes would actually restrain the use of the present doctrine in Eastern Europe?

ANSWER: Let me try and answer that. There is nothing in there that in any sense, even in a political sense, endorses it. Secondly, there are many formulations, principles and statements in this document which, if objectively read and interpreted, are contrary to anything that has been in the past associated with the Brezhnev doctrine.

Thirdly, the issue of the Brezhnev doctrine itself was one -- as some of you may know who were in Geneva -- that was not far beneath the surface in the deliberations of the conference.

While it obviously is not mentioned explicitly, it is quite clear from the legislative history of the outcome that, not only was there no thought of endorsing it, but the whole thrust of what was being done was to deny the validity of any such thing as has been called the Brezhnev doctrine.

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Whether it restrains the behavior of States when they perceive interests to be at stake, I can't tell you that for certain. But certainly the political thrust, the moral thrust, the psychological thrust of everything associated with this runs counter to the kinds of behavior associated with what has been called the Brezhnev doctrine.

QUESTION: Specifically, if I could follow up, the principle on nonintervention in internal affairs, do you regard that as counter to the Brezhnev doctrine specifically?

ANSWER: Yes, the principle of nonintervention in internal affairs of States. It goes even beyond that because it has a formula that says you can't use any present text to intervene. I think Bob Froelich -- isn't that right -- there is a phrase like that.

So. I think the language is pretty clear. Plus, I am reminded, of course, there is strong affirmation of the principle of self-determination.

QUESTION: The last part of these negotiations reminded some of us of the last days and the last hours of the Illinois State Legislature. Could you explain the unseemly haste?

ANSWER: If you had been in Geneva, I don't think you would have had the sense of unseemly haste. I think you would have thought you were on a slow boat to China.

QUESTION: I am talking about the last days of it, not the 22 months.

ANSWER: I think the last days of it had to do with a very technical matter. The document was virtually agreed. The problem was whether the last two phrases, none of which were of major significance to the West or the East, could be settled in time so that people could go on vacation in August.

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In other words, the choice was between getting a conference in at the end of July or waiting until some time in October. But the issues involved were not issues of any consequence to us or, for that matter, to the Soviets.

It had to do with a phrase the Maltese wanted to put into the text, and three or four other things of that kind. That was what the impatience was about, not that there was unseemly haste in dealing with the gut issues of this negotiation.

Wouldn't you say that?

ANSWER: Yes.

ANSWER: And we got propelled into that when the Secretary was in Geneva. So, I don't think that is a fair description as far as the major thrust of this whole operation is concerned.

QUESTION: Have you very much lost sight of the MBFR in connection with this?

ANSWER: Have we lost sight of this? In what way?

QUESTION: The parallelism. When you first began talking about it, there was a definite link, and now that has been lost.

ANSWER: No, the parallelism was always between the opening of these meetings. It was always known that the MBFR issues were going to be extremely complicated and technical, in some respects more so than in the case of SALT, and that there was going to be a very difficult negotiation, so the matter of having the outcomes in terms of time simultaneously, I don't think that was ever contemplated.

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The MBFR negotiations are going forward. They just recessed now for a few weeks, as they periodically do. There is an active consultation going on in NATO on them, so I don't think that the organic link between political negotiations about the state of relations in Europe and negotiations on the military aspect -- that organic link has been maintained and exists even though this particular exercise is now going to come to its completion.

But I certainly would not say that the MBFR negotiations have been lost sight of.

QUESTION: To follow that up, if I may, how then would you assess the future of MBFR now that we have finished this?

ANSWER: It is speculative. Some people feel it will move faster. But there are complex technical issues and we will continue to make a very intense effort to get those talks moving constructively, and we will have to see. But certainly it is not going to be dropped, and it won't be dropped by the allies.

QUESTION: According to you, do you gentlemen feel that this will really hasten the progress on MBFR, reaching this agreement?

ANSWER: I can't predict it, but if you look at the amount of attention that has been given to CSCE by foreign offices and Governments over the last several months, the last year or two, for that matter, and NATO, and every other place, that particular preoccupation will be set aside and this will be the single major multi-lateral negotiation about the center of Europe that is going to be on the agenda right now, and I think that fact alone may speed up that process, but I don't want to underestimate the complexity of the problem.

QUESTION: Why do you think the Soviet Union attaches so much importance to this document and the signing of it?

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ANSWER: Joe, I think it is speculative, obviously, and I think their own view of that -- the exercise has changed over the years, as I was trying to say in my introductory comments. I think they have attached most recently a certain symbolic significance to it.

I think it also figures in the general timetable of events and activities that the Soviets would like to see accomplished before the next party Congress, which is the 25th, and that has some special significance for them.

I think that the Soviets, as has been pointed out, have always been more interested in the kinds of things that were in Basket 1 than in the others. In fact, one might even say their interests with respect to the others has not been overwhelming.

So, I think that they have been interested in the symbolic and the political significance of it. But, obviously, everybody is going to have an interest of some kind and the fact that one side has an interest does not vitiate the fact that others might also have an interest.

That is how you get a balance of interests and ultimately an outcome.

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QUESTION: I think you were being a little defensive before about the Western concessions. You said it is not a legal document and therefore it did not accomplish everything. Both of you were, actually, but you used the phrase "takeoff point".

Is there any real prospect for bilateral negotiations with the Communists on these supposed concessions they made that you know and we all know are not binding?

ANSWER: In some respects, we are ahead of other countries because we have a number of bilateral agreements, not so much dealing with Basket 3 issues but with Basket 2, although with some Basket 3 issues as well. I think you are going to have to see what happens.

The Canadians, I think -- I don't want to speak for them -- but the Canadians have a great interest in family unification because of the large Ukrainian population in Canada. I think they regard this -- insofar as anything in writing can be -- as a helpful step forward that will make it possible for them to deal with an issue that is of considerable human emotional and political significance in Canada.

So I think that it varies, really, from country to country, how and in what form these things may be translated into further actions and further agreements. But I think a presumption has been created, and I don't think any country is going to feel itself free of some of the pressures generated and presumptions generated by this to push ahead into performance.

QUESTION: Is the Soviet involvement Portugal now consistent with letter and spirit of this final act?

QUESTION: What was the question?

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ANSWER: Whether Soviet involvement in Portugal is consistent with the letter and spirit of this document.

Let me say first, I think the press and some others have been somewhat more certain and specific in their knowledge of what the Soviets are doing in Portugal than we have been able to be, which is not to deny that there is some Soviet involvement. I think that non-intervention is clear, and we would certainly deplore Soviet intervention in the internal affairs of Portugal.

I think that in the end every government is going to have to search its own conscience and practices insofar as its fidelity to these principles is concerned. We will all have to observe behavior and we will all have to adjust behavior to conform ourselves to the political principles and precepts set forth here. But there is no question that we would deplore and object to Soviet intervention and interference in the internal evolution in Portugal.

QUESTION: I don't read anything in there as answering the question. Respectfully, does their intervention in Portugal, to whatever extent it exists, violate the letter and spirit of this agreement?

ANSWER: I just said that I have a little of a problem with the question because you would have to define "intervention," but I am perfectly plain, I hope, in saying that if there is Soviet intervention and interference in the domestic processes of Portugal, then this would have to be regarded as not compatible with the principles contained in this document.

QUESTION: How much intervention is there now?

ANSWER: I don't want to discuss now the precise forms of Soviet involvement or intervention -- because I don't want to start splitting hairs -- we may regret a pravda article about Portugal and think it is unhelpful, or unwise. I think there will be some question whether that can be legitimately defined as intervention.

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There are other forms of intervention which have been referred to by Senators and in the press, and on that question, if it turns out that that is in fact correct I would say that that would not be compatible with the principle of non-intervention.

QUESTION: Are there several million dollars going into --

ANSWER: I can't answer that question because I personally cannot be that precise. I just can't.

QUESTION: I have a follow-up on that. I just came from a luncheon addressed by Mr. Vernon Walters, the Deputy Director of the CIA. He confirms Senator Bentsen's charges saying that the figure of \$10 million being pumped into Portugal by the Soviets is probably in the ballpark, that it is hard to count because it is in cash. So the Soviet involvement in Portugal is certainly beyond one Pravda article.

My question is: Have we raised this with the Soviets, and if we have not raised it with them, how can this be a document being solemnly signed having considerable moral and political force?

ANSWER: It has not been signed yet, first of all. The question of what we raise and what we don't raise with the Soviets gets into the question of diplomatic exchanges that I am not prepared to discuss today.

QUESTION: Can I ask, on the other side of this, if the West Germans and the Swedes through their social democratic party funnel money to the socialists in Portugal, is that intervention?

ANSWER: I am not going to parse this, Bob. First, we are not going to be the ones that sit in judgment and make unilateral judgments, necessarily, on this.

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I think countries are going to have to, as I said before, search and examine their own practices and consciences, if necessary, and we will be consulting with our allies as this unfolds, and as we look at the implementation and as we look at how people conduct themselves once this thing has become part of the body of international political standards -- and we will have to address those problems as they arise.

The problem of non-intervention, definition of aggression, have been problems that have been labored over in the League of Nations in the United Nations for years, for generations, with problems that many of us are familiar with.

And so I am not going to stand up here this afternoon and give you a simple, flat answer on that kind of a contingency or any other, for that matter. I think that the principle of one government -- and, under whatever guise -- attempting to influence political evolution in another country, to determine the outcome of political struggles and conflict in another country, to establish paramount interest of its own or whatever you may want to say, I think could not be construed as compatible with the kinds of principles enunciated here. There are many gray areas and I just cannot go into that in detail.

QUESTION: Did the United States acquiesce or agree or go along with what is being done or will be done in Helsinki in order to further along aspects of its detente with the Soviet Union, in regards to, for instance, SALT? In other words, what part did the detente, the U.S. bilateral relations with the Soviet Union play in the U.S. agreement to go along with this in Helsinki?

ANSWER: First, the agreement should not be construed as one as between us and the Russians to go to Helsinki. The agreement was a collective one that we shared with our allies.

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QUESTION: But why a unilateral decision?

ANSWER: I think the whole CSCE exercise, and now its consummation, is part of the process commonly known as detente. That has many facets to it -- some of bilateral negotiations, some of maintaining your own defense strength. That is all part of the detente process so this is one facet of it. And we would hope it gives additional impetus to the more constructive elements in East-West relations that have appeared.

Now whether it helps SALT or hinders SALT or has no particular impact on SALT, it is very difficult to say. SALT has many of its own complexities. On the whole, I think if we take this Helsinki step now with maturity and sobriety, and approach the future -- as regards the implementation of this -- with no illusion but with some reasonable hope, then I think it ought to help the other hopeful aspects of the detente process.

QUESTION: Can you give us any guidance on President Ford's pace or the schedule when he is in Helsinki? Do you anticipate he will have a number of bilateral meetings or are they reserving great chunks of time for meetings with Brezhnev?

ANSWER: Most of the time will be spent in the conference session by the President, because I assume all the leaders will want to show each other the courtesy of listening to their remarks. There will be some additional bilaterals, and I assume the White House will be announcing those.

QUESTION: Will all 35 heads of state or governments speak?

ANSWER: Yes.

QUESTION: Does the U.S. Administration feel that this agreement is ready to make any noticeable change, not in the principles but in the practice now being applied in the Soviet Union and other East European countries regarding exchange of ideas, freedom of movement, entry of newspapers and so on? I am speaking now of practice and not of principle.

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ANSWER: I think we have measured hopes it will contribute to that, but we will have to see in practice.

QUESTION: There was some criticism, particularly recently, that the United States yielded on the voluntary part of the advance notification on troop maneuvers, that we did it because we were in a hurry to get the conference over with.

Was there at any time the thought here that that could have been strengthened so there would have been some requirement on the other side to give notification of troop maneuvers?

ANSWER: I can answer that. As far as we were concerned from the beginning -- because this is a non-binding document, because this is not in any way a treaty or agreement -- we had never thought that these provisions with respect to the security and confidence-building measures would be other than voluntary.

There may have been some states at the conference who thought it should be more binding, particularly some of the neutrals. But we have been proceeding on the basis of agreed positions among the NATO countries, and it was an agreed position that we all took with respect to the voluntary nature of these notifications.

QUESTION: To avoid the pitfalls of what you call interpretation, what do you say to the criticism that the language of these documents is so ambiguous, fuzzy, elastic, that any signatories can read into them whatever it so chooses?

ANSWER: I think that is an excessively harsh description of the language of these materials, these documents. I think some of it is compromise and may come close to meeting that description. Some of it, I think when you read it, is surprisingly crisp and straightforward and not just the parts that you might think are the ones desired by the other side.

MORE





So I think that is not a fair description of this in its totality. Now, of course, you do run into the problem of interpretations. But I think if we handle this thing well, then it ought to be possible to avoid the most excessive interpretations of some of the more ambiguous formulations that inevitably come into a compromise document.

That is to say it ought to be possible to marshal the force of opinion for a rational and reasonable interpretation. I don't think we should take a defeatist attitude about that.

QUESTION: Do you think this will help deter the Soviet Union from another adventure such as the Czechoslovakian engagement, and do you think this document will also help liberalize Soviet Union immigration policies?

ANSWER: I think, on the first question, it may contribute to the general political climate in which such events will not recur. I would hesitate to say what nations will do when they see their interests ultimately engaged, but I think that if it is implemented, if it is followed by further actions in the bilateral realm and in other areas, it should contribute, as I say, to a general political climate in which that regrettable and unfortunate and tragic kind of action will not occur.

On the second question, I would hope that in some of the areas specified in the documents, some of which have been mentioned: family unification, others like that -- I would hope that it will make a contribution in that area.

THE PRESS: Thank you.

MR. HUSHEN: Gentlemen, for those who came in late, let me state a couple of things.

Secretary Kissinger's briefing at 11:00 on Friday is available for live coverage, and Ron Nessen's briefing will be delayed until after Secretary Kissinger's briefing is over with.

END

(AT 4:05 P.M. EDT)

THE WHITE HOUSE

11-29-75

WASHINGTON

Connie:

Is there any reason to save the attached material? It is a transcript of a backgrounder that Henry Kissinger gave on April 10, 1975, just prior to the surrender of South Vietnam. The transcript should ~~not~~ not have had HAK's name on it, and we ~~corrected~~ corrected a copy (also attached) to reflect that the briefer was a "White House official."

As far as I know, these are the only two copies in our office of this material.

  
Jack Hushen



This Copy For \_\_\_\_\_

BACKGROUND BRIEFING

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AT THE WHITE HOUSE

WITH HENRY A. KISSINGER  
SECRETARY OF STATE

7:15 P.M. EDT

APRIL 10, 1975

THURSDAY

SECRETARY KISSINGER: I thought that the most useful thing that I could do is to explain what those who were discussing the speech, and above all the President, had in mind, what problems they were considering and what they were trying to achieve with this speech. Then we can answer specific questions on the meaning of the speech.

There obviously are two parts to the speech. There is the tragic problem of Vietnam, and there is the conduct of foreign policy in the face of the difficulties and, indeed, the disasters that have been encountered in Vietnam.

Those of us who are concerned with the conduct of foreign policy and the President feel that we have two problems: One is to manage the existing situation in Vietnam, but secondly, to keep in mind that the purposes of the Nation go forward, that the long-term interests of the country have to be preserved, and that our foreign policy has to be carried out with design and with conviction and with purpose and, therefore, we are trying to say that whatever happens in Vietnam, there is a design in our foreign policy that will become more difficult as a result of what has happened in Vietnam, but that as a united people, we can carry forward and whose essential objectives can be realized, and we will do our utmost to realize. This is the basic thing.

Now, let me turn to Vietnam. You have to remember that in talking about Vietnam at this moment we face many audiences, and what we say can produce its own consequences. We have a domestic audience, we have a Vietnamese audience, and we have an international audience, and each of them have their own requirements and their own consequences.

MORE



It is quite possible -- in fact, it is very likely -- that what we say charts not only a policy but produces immediate consequences. We know, for example, we are aware of the public opinion polls with respect to military assistance to Vietnam, but there is also the fact that if the President tonight announces certain conclusions that reflect these convictions of that majority, that this would produce immediate consequences in South Vietnam that in turn would lead to results that I would seriously question that majority could live with because we are dealing in Vietnam at this very moment also with the lives of 6000 Americans.

Also, there is the problem of the international perception of the United States, how it comports itself in the face of an undoubted disaster.

I am not asking you to agree with our conclusions. I am telling you that these were complex considerations that were as prayerfully considered as any Presidential speech that I have seen in the six years that I have been associated with this level of the government.

Let us take the situation in Vietnam. If the United States were to announce what many Congressmen have recommended, that we would stop all military assistance, there are foreigners here who will be able to judge on their own what the foreign perception of this problem would be, but there is no question what the result in Vietnam would be.

It would lead to an immediate collapse of the situation under the most chaotic conditions imaginable.

What the President is attempting to say in this speech is not rested on legal obligations by themselves; even less does it rest on alleged secret commitments that nobody ever claimed, nobody ever tried to implement as a commitment.

The attempt is raised on the basis that when the United States has been engaged for over a decade with a people, whatever the judgment may be of the original decision, there are literally tens of thousands of these people now whose physical existence, as well as that of their families, is tied up with us and, therefore, as we examined our choices, it became clear that whatever we did, whatever conviction one has about the ultimate outcome of the struggle in Vietnam, unless we were going to do nothing, the conclusions that we could reach were not really all as varied as might appear.

MORE

Whatever our convictions may be about the American obligation towards the Americans in the country and towards the Vietnamese who have been associated with us or towards the possibilities of a political solution, a degree of stabilization of the military situation is an essential prerequisite.

The Administration is as capable of counting up the number of North Vietnamese divisions against a maximum number of South Vietnamese divisions as anybody else, and it is highly probable that the South Vietnamese will also do this counting, but for the immediate problem that we face, a degree of stabilization of the military situation seemed to us an objective that we had no right to reject.

MORE



Now, then, a one-step basic decision had been made. Once it had been decided that we would not do anything, we were in the position that there was no sensible figure short of the figure that had been given to us by the mission sent by General Weyand.

Any one of you or any one of us could invent any other figure and it would have the status of a guess. It was the President's conviction that if he put forward any figure, it would be a figure on behalf of which he could testify before the Congress or his senior advisers could testify before the Congress.

Whether there is enough time to implement this entire program; whether this figure will in fact be enough, can be shown only by events, but if he is to level with the American people, then he had to give the figure for which there was some objective basis.

It is a figure, moreover, which I would like to stress that is important, regardless of what your estimate is of the probable outcome of military operations because it permits a discussion with the government of South Vietnam with respect to some of the contingencies that could arise since no outcome of any battle is ever for a day.

And this was the basis at which the particular figure was achieved.

Let me make two other points. The first is, it seemed imperative to the President, and to all of us, that this debate not be infinitely protracted -- one, because the situation in Vietnam does not permit it; and secondly, because the requirements of American national security do not permit it, either.

We believed that it was extremely important that we state our case, that we put it before the Congress and that we then get a clear decision as to the Congressional and public will. So, that we can then turn one way or the other to the essential agenda which, in any case, remains and which, in any case, must be carried out and which, in any event, will be carried out.

I want to say on behalf of the President that it is not the intention of the Administration to look for scapegoats, that once the decision is made, it will not be used to start a national debate on who lost or who was responsible, but precisely because we do not wish to do this and precisely because we owe it to the rest of the world to continue our international responsibilities as a united people.

MORE

Precisely for this reason, must we now be honest and state what we think is needed to have a chance to stabilize the situation, to save the lives that can be saved, to permit an orderly negotiation and to conduct ourselves in this tragic moment with dignity and purpose.

Now, this is what we attempted to do in this speech and I would point out again that we have no intention, whatever happens, of letting Vietnam paralyze the basic obligation of the United States which in the entire postwar period, has preserved the global peace and has attempted to lead other countries towards common objectives.

This, we will continue, but how we conduct ourselves in this tragedy will play an important role in it. This is the purpose of the speech. This is what was uppermost on our mind.

There were many possibilities. I can give you, for example, one possibility that was very seriously considered. The figure of \$300 million that was put forward as necessary under conditions in January would have been an absurdity to put forward under current conditions and would have had almost the same effect in Saigon as to put forward nothing at all. But we did consider the proposition of putting forward the figure of \$300 million and warning the Congress that if that helped we would come in with another figure in a few weeks.

The President's judgment was that the country should not have an endless debate every four weeks on the same basic set of facts and on the same fundamental issues and he, therefore, decided to take the route of asking for the amount which he considered the minimum amount that could achieve the objective that he had described, but we are prepared to discuss with the Congress other methods and we are not approaching the Congress with an attitude of finding scapegoats. We are approaching the Congress with an attitude that we absolutely must find national unity now in the face of the other problems that are ahead of us.

Now, this is what was the thinking behind the speech. I will be glad now to answer questions.

Q Mr. Secretary, when you speak of negotiations to South Vietnam, you are in fact talking about surrender, aren't you?

SECRETARY KISSINGER: I am not talking about surrender. I am talking about what the negotiations will produce depends very importantly on the military situation that exists and the terms that can be achieved in negotiations will depend importantly on our own actions. But obviously, the terms are not brilliant.

MORE

Q Mr. Secretary, when you come to the Congress with a \$722 million aid request when they, in turn, had rejected, in effect, the \$300 million, aren't you actually putting the monkey on the Congress' back despite all of your disclaimers about not looking for scapegoats or not engaging in the recriminations?

SECRETARY KISSINGER: Peter, whether they reject \$300 million or \$722 million does not change that basic principle. Whether we are going to put the money on anybody's back depends on what we will do after the decision has been taken. We strongly urge this as being in the national interest under the current conditions that we face.

I believe that when the Congress addressed the question of the \$300 million, it faced totally different circumstances, it did not have to confront the question of the possible evacuation of maybe tens of thousands of people, and it was then dealing with what seemed like a totally different set of facts.

Q How do you want the law revised to take care of those Vietnamese that have become associated with us and are endangered if worst comes to worst?

SECRETARY KISSINGER: There are two legal issues. One has to do with the extraction of Americans and the other has to do with the extraction of Vietnamese.

Under a literal reading of that Indochina amendment, some lawyers argue that we do not have the right to use American military forces in any hostile action for any purposes in Indochina or in any situation where hostile action may result.

Other lawyers hold the point of view that the President has the residual constitutional right to protect American lives and that overrides a literal reading of existing legislation.

We would like the Congress to clarify this constitutional point, and frankly, we have no question that the Congress will support the constitutional point that the President does have the residual powers to use American forces to evacuate Americans. We consider this a relatively simple point.

The second question is that under the Indochina resolution, there is no doubt that we do not have the right to use American military forces under conditions in which they could become involved in hostilities for purposes of evacuating South Vietnamese or third country nationals which could also arise.

MORE



In this case, if the Congress went along with us, we would have to be given explicit authority for perhaps a limited period of time, and clearly defined purposes to do this.

So, we need two kinds of Congressional action. The first one we can probably do without, but given the situation and the sensitivities, we would prefer to happen. The second one is, if there is to be an evacuation, we must get --

Q Mr. Secretary, you referred several times to negotiations.

SECRETARY KISSINGER: Yes.

Q As far as we know, there are no negotiations going on.

SECRETARY KISSINGER: No.

Q The PRG says they will not negotiate as long as Thieu is in power. Do you expect him to remain in power?

SECRETARY KISSINGER: I don't think it is for me to speculate what the political evolution in South Vietnam may be. I believe that under the conditions that now obtain, some sort of negotiation is probable and that the terms of this negotiation can be importantly affected by the military situation.

Q What sort of negotiations?

SECRETARY KISSINGER: I would rather not go into that at this point.

Q Mr. Secretary, are you conditioning that on getting the \$722 million when you say some sort of negotiation is probable?

SECRETARY KISSINGER: We have seen in Cambodia what happens when one side achieves total predominance and the other side is deprived of the most elementary physical means, and it appeared, of course, in Cambodia that even the departure of Lon Nol did not produce a negotiation.

Based on my own experience with the North Vietnamese, any negotiation with them will reflect the existing balance of forces to a considerable extent and, therefore, it is difficult to predict what the negotiation will be in the abstract.

MORE

Q Mr. Secretary, if I understand you correctly, and I realize there are some problems of subtlety, and perhaps deliberate ambiguity here. If I understand it correctly, you are not really saying give us the \$722 million and we are promising it will save South Vietnam.

What you are saying is it will give us stability and a chance to get out in a somewhat orderly fashion. Is that a correct understanding?

SECRETARY KISSINGER: I am saying the judgment of General Weyand seems to be that the \$722 million could stabilize the situation perhaps on a permanent basis. I am saying that even if this is not correct -- and, after all, not every military judgment in the Vietnam war has invariably been exactly on the mark, but not every diplomatic judgment, either, not every journalistic judgment (Laughter) -- but even if this is not achievable, I would say the other purposes that America has would still be best served by the granting of this sum, and in that sense you have correctly summarized my views.

Q Mr. Secretary, the last sentence on page 2 of the President's speech deals, I believe, with a very basic premise. What evidence is there to support the statement that there was universal consensus in the United States in 1973 that the United States would continue to provide adequate materials to support South Vietnam,-- an impliedly open-ended basis.

Q I can add to that the Democratic platform in 1972 specifically called for the end to all military aid, and that certainly is a part of the national debate.

SECRETARY KISSINGER: Yes, it is also true that they only got 38 percent of the votes.

I think this is subject to research. The general impression that many of the critics of the war in Vietnam left was that their major objection was to the endless involvement of American combat forces in the region which sooner or later would have to stand on its own feet, and the impression that was widespread was that if the United States could withdraw from the war and reclaim its prisoners, that it would be prepared to assume the same responsibilities or at least with respect to material help toward Indochina that it did toward South Korea, for example, in similar circumstances.

We have never claimed a legal obligation. We have always stated that we thought it was a moral obligation. I have stated at press conferences, and I repeat it now, that we told the South Vietnamese that we believed that the Congress and the American people, in gratitude for being relieved of the nightmare of the prisoners and the loss of life, would be generous in its assistance.

MORE

We do not claim this is a legal obligation, and we do not claim there were secret commitments, nor have we ever claimed it, nor have we ever invoked it to oppose any particular legislation.

Q Mr. Secretary, do you suppose 6000 Americans are in danger of losing their lives in Vietnam? Could they not get out on Pan American in nine days by the time this bill is considered?

SECRETARY KISSINGER: We are going to make an effort to reduce the number of Americans in Vietnam. We have to consider that if the United States precipitously pulls out of Saigon, it will also produce the very consequences, with respect to all its other concerns, that it is attempting to avoid. But, we are reducing the numbers of Americans to the minimum that is considered necessary to perform the functions that remain.

Q Are they in grave peril, as the President says?

SECRETARY KISSINGER: Whether they are in grave peril or not depends on possible evolutions that can be foreseen. If there is a collapse produced by despair and a sense of abandonment, you have one situation.

If you have a relatively, even temporarily, stabilized military situation and a government that appreciates that fact, you have another situation. If you have a negotiation, you have yet another situation. So, the exact status of both the Americans and the endangered Vietnamese cannot be stated in the abstract, it depends on a whole set of circumstances.

Q Mr. Secretary, you have said several times tonight that what is important now is that we make this decision on the \$722 million, and then what is important is what we do after that decision is made.

SECRETARY KISSINGER: That is correct.

Q From all indications, Congress has shown no inclination to pass \$300 million, and you perhaps agree that it is not reasonable to expect them to pass the \$722 million either, so my question is twofold. Number one, do you agree with that assessment; and number two, what will we do if they reject this additional aid request?

MORE

Q Question?

SECRETARY KISSINGER: The question is, that since Congress in effect, rejected \$300 million, it is almost certain to reject the larger figure. Do I agree with this assessment and what shall we do if this assessment turns out to be correct? Is that a fair statement of your question?

The \$300 million were put forward as a supplemental appropriation under conditions that were totally different from the circumstances that we face today, both within Vietnam and in terms of our international consequences.

We did not ask the Congressional leadership yesterday about any particular figures because we did not think it was fair to them nor did the President think it was fair to him to get into a debate about a figure in which he felt he had to make the preliminary decision of what was necessary.

I had the impression, however, from the leadership that they were approaching this issue in a prayerful and serious manner and not in a contentious manner. And if the Congress looks at this not in terms of an old debate, but in terms of something of a transition to a new period of cooperation, then I would not make a prejudgment of what they will vote and I believe that something can be worked out with them.

Now, if it turns out that they will not vote it, I have stated that the Administration will do its absolute utmost to prevent an orgy of recrimination and will attempt to focus the American people on the duties and obligations we now have which have not ended.

We have been the central power in preserving the peace and many of the initiatives of the postwar period have been due to our leadership. That is what we must maintain under now more difficult circumstances, but we can attempt to do it with a united people.

Q Mr. Secretary, is the President planning a conference in the Pacific with the leaders of our --

SECRETARY KISSINGER: No, all of these leaders that I mentioned will be coming to Washington.

Q The NATO?

SECRETARY KISSINGER: No, we are now talking about the Asian leaders. All of those have been scheduled to come to Washington.

MORE



Q In the near future?

SECRETARY KISSINGER: Over the next three months, beginning in the near future.

On the NATO meeting, no precise date has been set and the surest way to keep a precise date from being set would be for me to try to try to interfere with the prerogatives of the permanent representatives of the NATO Council, but I think it is a reasonable assumption that it will take place -- if you speculate on that on your own -- sometime between the end of May and the end of June, and more in the earlier part than in the later part of the period. But it really has not been set.

Q The President refers to \$722 million as being for very specific purposes. Can you tell us what those specific purposes are?

Secondly, can you tell us how many Vietnamese are contemplated in the description of those whose lives may be dependent upon us?

SECRETARY KISSINGER: On the first question, there is a very precise list which we looked over in San Clemente -- in Palm Springs, and which will have to be -- (Laughter)

Q Will you stand on that statement, please?

SECRETARY KISSINGER: Will you put that on the record, Murray?

-- which we looked over in Palm Springs and which I do not have with me, but I am sure the Defense Department witnesses before various committees can testify to that.

With respect to the second question, we have tried to make as careful an analysis as we could. If you make a list of all of those whose lives could be endangered, you come up with horrendous figures because in Vietnam, the whole family is involved, it is never a question of just saving an individual. There is always the question of his entire family.

The figure of those that are endangered that we could put together amounts to something like 1.5 million. The figure of those that are endangered, we have some obligation to, but this is beyond our capabilities. The figure that we think we have a special obligation to is between 150,000 and 200,000, but that is a massive logistic effort whose feasibility depends entirely on the conditions in which it will have to be executed and therefore, an important concern of ours is to provide conditions in which we can at least think about it.

MORE

Q How many Americans might be required to evacuate 150,000 to 200,000 South Vietnamese?

SECRETARY KISSINGER: You will have to get this from the Defense Department, but it is not an insignificant figure.

On the other hand, it is not a very extended operation, either.

Q When you get these Vietnamese out, don't you have to negotiate either with the South Vietnamese regime or the Communists?

SECRETARY KISSINGER: Or both.

Q What circumstances do you envisage? The South Vietnamese, so far, have indicated they would not allow this to happen.

SECRETARY KISSINGER: We are not talking under conditions now. We are not saying this will happen. We are saying we have an obligation to consider the worst contingency and we are trying to create circumstances where we can talk with a South Vietnamese government about the worst contingencies.

Barry?

Q Excuse me. Just a technical point, maybe. It is not clear to me.

Is there a remaining aid request for Cambodia? What is it or are you just abandoning any hope now?

SECRETARY KISSINGER: It is very probable, as the President has indicated, that the fate of Cambodia will be decided in the next few days and that therefore we are not, tonight, in a position to make a plausible request to the Congress.

But if that should turn out to be wrong, we will then do it but we do not want in Vietnam a similar situation to arise in which there is an endless debate while there is a constant deterioration of a situation over which we lose progressively any capacity to exert influence.

Q Dr. Kissinger, is the use of American air power considered in any way in your proposals?

SECRETARY KISSINGER: The President has pointed out that this contingency, that the introduction of American combat forces was a theoretical possibility which is, one, proscribed by law, and secondly, will not be requested by the President except for the limited purpose of refugee evacuation.

MORE

Q Mr. Secretary, what about troops on the ground?

SECRETARY KISSINGER: It depends, really, entirely on the situation under which this takes place and the degree of cooperation and indeed, whether it is feasible at all.

Q Did you get a range of figures?

SECRETARY KISSINGER: We had a very rough guess, but we have not made a detailed study of this.

MORE

Q Mr. Secretary, to take that point a little further, do you contemplate the need to put in enough American troops to draw a protective ring around Saigon if that becomes necessary to evacuate?

SECRETARY KISSINGER: Right. I hope you ladies and gentlemen realize we are now talking about the absolutely worst contingency which has, if you analyze it, many nightmarish aspects to it and, therefore, depends to a very important degree on the degree of cooperation that is achieved by the South Vietnamese government, the kind of negotiation that might be going on at this moment, the kind of cooperation that could be achieved from the North Vietnamese.

Therefore, it is very difficult -- and also the degree to which it is possible -- to assemble ahead of time those whose lives might be most endangered. All of these are factors on which I think it would be dangerous to speculate, but they are being considered.

Yes, sir.

Q Mr. Secretary, some of us were told today that the tone of the President's speech this evening would be optimistic, yet you presented anything but that. Can you cite something optimistic in the outlook for U.S. foreign policy?

In the President's speech we were also told that the President was sounding a conciliatory note in this -- Carl Albert, Speaker of the House. I was wondering if you would cite what is conciliatory in the President's speech?

SECRETARY KISSINGER: I think the President considered it his duty to present the situation as he saw it, and I do not think the President should be asked to be optimistic or pessimistic.

The President should be asked to explain the situation as he sees it to the best of his ability.

Secondly, what is conciliatory in the speech is his repeated expression that this is not an attempt to begin a period of recrimination, that at his repeated insistence that the duties before America remain constant, whatever setbacks we may suffer in Vietnam, and that he will work with the Congress and with the public to try to achieve a united approach to this.

This is his attitude. He did point out those things that have to be remedied in order to get the forward momentum, but the spirit of this speech and the spirit of the man is conciliatory, it is not vindictive. It is not bitter, and it is not accusatory.

MORE



It is also serious because it is a serious situation which we cannot escape by pretending that it is not serious or by pretending that it does not affect international affairs. We can master them, but we cannot explain them away.

Mr. Osborne?

Q Mr. Secretary, two clarifying questions. Would it be intended to bring the endangered Vietnamese to the United States, number one. Number two, there is a reference on page 3 to diplomatic notes being sent to members of the Paris Conference. That is a reference to the January notes?

SECRETARY KISSINGER: No. We have sent a new set of notes tonight. The destination of these individuals has not yet been decided, but we will be approaching other countries and we, without any question, will have to take a substantial number of them.

Q Sir, as I understand the reading of this, you will not only have to get the money, but you will have to get -- isn't it two laws on the books now that you will have to have taken off the books? You will have to go back and say we want to nullify these two laws in case the Church-Case law and continuing resolutions --

SECRETARY KISSINGER: No. We are asking for the money, and we are asking with respect to the law, for a clarification of one point, which I believe will present no difficulty whatsoever; namely, the President's legal authority to use American forces to extract American citizens.

We could probably do that on a unilateral interpretation. We simply would like to get this clarified. I am confident from consultations that this is no problem.

The second is not to take the Church-Case off the books, but rather to get an exception for a limited period of time for a specific purpose for a one-time operation.

THE PRESS: Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

END (AT 8:00 P.M. EDT)

JANUARY 27, 1975

INTERVIEW WITH ROBERT T. HARTMANN  
COUNSELLOR TO THE PRESIDENT  
BY SARAH McCLENDON  
AND OTHER MEMBERS OF THE PRESS

THE ROOSEVELT ROOM

3:10 P.M. EST

Q We are just so pleased that you could give us the time. We know you are very busy.

MR. HARTMANN: I thought we had all the tapes removed from the White House.

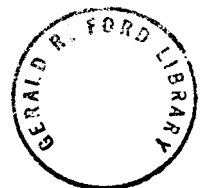
Q We thought you might need them again so we thought we would bring them along.

We will go right to questions. Who wants to have the first question?

Q I would like to have the first question. I am going to ask you what I think is going to be the really gut issue this year and that is jobs. How do you plan to handle that?

MR. HARTMANN: Well, first of all, contrary to your answer, I agree with your premise that, at least at this point, it looks like one of the major issues, if not the major issue, and it is going to be the issue of jobs and the economy, which is kind of interlocked.

I think that the question is not limited just to jobs but to how one goes about trying to make more jobs. At least, judging by the President's State of the Union and related Messages and Senator Muskie's reply, it would seem that they have drawn the issue line rather clearly as to whether the best way to get more jobs and get them quicker is through direct Government action or through using the Government's powers to stimulate action in the private sector.



I think that the debate will certainly go on for some time on that point and may even be the major issue of the campaign, although I hate to pick the major issue right now any more than I hate to pick the Democratic candidate. I will be glad to speculate about who the Republican candidate will be.

Q Who do you think the Democratic candidate will be?

MR. HARTMANN: Well, I have been saving just in order to have an answer when this question is asked me, and at the moment I would have to say Senator Humphrey, but I say that without a whole lot of conviction because people who pick candidates six months before the convention are very frequently wrong.

Q Some months ago you were quite sure it was going to be Senator Kennedy. I gather you have changed your mind about that?

MR. HARTMANN: I switched some months ago when I began to feel that Senator Kennedy's protestations were genuine, and I would not want to be in the position of not taking the gentleman at his word.

Q What made you switch?

MR. HARTMANN: I just became convinced that when Senator Kennedy said he was not a candidate and didn't want to be that he would not.

Q Do you think that Governor Wallace has a chance to be on the ticket with Senator Humphrey?

MR. HARTMANN: I am not a great expert at Democratic conventions. My last experience in that respect was in 1960 when I covered the convention at -- was it Chicago? No, it was Los Angeles, and so it has been a long time. I did pick the winner there, but I was wrong on the Vice President.

Q Bob, have differences between the President and Governor Reagan disappeared pretty much? That is how I see it.

MR. HARTMANN: Well, I would not say the differences have disappeared. I don't think that they have been as profound as the differences between either of them and anybody who is likely to be the Democratic nominee, but there are differences as to the degree in which we want the Federal Government to go out of business and the speed with which you want this to be accomplished and the ways in which you want to have it done and those differences being fairly clearly delineated by what Governor Reagan is saying and what the President is saying.

Q Who do you think is going to win the New Hampshire Republican primary, and also Florida, between Reagan and Ford?

MR. HARTMANN: Would you say that again?

Q Who is going to win, Ford or Reagan, in New Hampshire and in Florida?

MR. HARTMANN: Well, I think it is bad for me to guess about those things. The easy out would be that the President is going to win in them all, but I mean that is --

Q What do you really think? You surely have said this is the primary issue now, isn't it?

MR. HARTMANN: Well, I don't have any better crystal ball than anybody else does. Many of you have actually been there and I haven't. The President's campaign people are putting on a good battle and actually he hopes to win, but as to my guess as to who will or by what proportions I don't think that is very profitable because I don't really know.

Q Didn't you get any readings? I mean truly you are engaged in terms of what is happening in New Hampshire and voter psychology and so forth. Do you have any indications to think that Ford is not going to win in New Hampshire? Is that valid?

MR. HARTMANN: Well, I think he is going to win them all and that is my state of mind. My factual knowledge is not very good. I will say for the record that, naturally, I hope and expect him to win, but if he does not win, he is going to go on to the next one.

Q What is the main reason why you think he is going to win them all?

MR. HARTMANN: Well, that is just my general optimistic attitude.

Q What about incumbency? To what degree do you think that that is important?

MR. HARTMANN: Well, I think there are certain advantages to an incumbent President and there are certain disadvantages. In many ways Mr. Reagan is well-known to the general public through his previous career and through his Governorship of California and he is better known as a public figure than most people would be who are running for President for the first time, so that that, to some extent, makes up for some of the advantages.

Q Do you think the advantages outweigh the disadvantages so far as the incumbency are concerned?

MR. HARTMANN: I would have to say that the President enjoys an edge in any contest.

Q Bob, I believe you referenced in the differences between Ford and Reagan that "Federal Government to go out of business" -- I think was your term --

MR. HARTMANN: Well, that is a little extreme.

Q Isn't that what you said?

Q Yes, that is what you did say.

MR. HARTMANN: The degree in which you want to get to increase the role of the Federal Government, would be more precise.

Q What I wondered, in connection with that statement --

MR. HARTMANN: Get out of certain businesses.

Q Sure. Then there is Mr. Callaway's statement about throwing people out in the snow and so forth and so on. Considering the fact --

MR. HARTMANN: I didn't know about that one.

Q Yes.

Considering the fact that the Ford campaign has said that the common cause standards' willingness to appear on the same platform, among other things, with other candidates, and considering the President's own statement in the press conference when they asked about debating Reagan he said, "I am not afraid of anybody," why is it that as one of his principal political advisers you have not advised him to take on Reagan? He certainly could hold his own on the \$90 billion issue, couldn't he?

MR. HARTMANN: Well, first of all, you are stating an assumption as to what I may or may not have advised him.

Q No, no, I didn't assume anything. I said, why don't you in the future?

MR. HARTMANN: Well, I might do that but, you know, I don't feel that what I advise him is something that I ought to go out and tell the world or what I intend to do in the future or whether even he ever asks me.

All I can tell you is that in the past the President has in his election campaigns always debated his opponent up in the Fifth District of Michigan in spite of the Council of the Elders saying that he should not give the exposure to an unknown candidate. So on the record, that is what he has done.

I won't go into the future because I think that is a question you ought to ask him.

Q I will try. I have tried. I have asked Mr. Nessen, I think seven times, on this. Mr. Nessen kept saying, "Well, is Reagan a candidate?"

Q Mr. Nessen is not holding this briefing. Mr. Hartmann is.

MR. HARTMANN: The next time the President has a press conference, which I assume won't be too long from now, that is a question to ask him. I can't answer it for him.

Q You say he might do that. Does that mean that this is in the consideration?

MR. HARTMANN: No, the question was, would I advise him to do that, and I said I might.

Q Because to win you have to have a background organization, the bell ringers who go out and get the people to get the votes because without the votes you are not going to win. How strong is your organization in the 50 States as far as really going out to compete with Mr. Reagan?

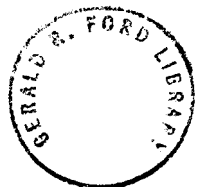
My second question, to follow up, is, the issues that Mr. Reagan has used to attract this large segment of the population, millions of people have studied those issues to see why those people gravitate to him and not to the President?

MR. HARTMANN: Well, let's start on the first question.

Q The organization, yes.

MR. HARTMANN: I am not trying to duck the question but I have not been around the 50 States and I really can't answer it because I don't know. That is a question we ought to ask Stu Spencer or somebody in the Campaign Committee.

The second question -- have we studied the issues and have we studied the way Governor Reagan stands on the issues --



Q Why does he attract those people?

MR. HARTMANN: I don't know. Until we get a vote somewhere I don't really know how many he does attract vis-a-vis the President. Of course, I have studied the issues. I have not studied the issues specifically vis-a-vis Governor Reagan because I have been too busy with the issues on the merits. Again, the campaign committee people are, I am sure, comparing the Governor's positions with the President's but I personally have not gone into it in great detail.

Q Bob, did you advise the President on the firing of Schlesinger?

MR. HARTMANN: I don't think it is right for me to say what I advised him on and not advised him on.

Q Can you say if you had any advance notice or if you had any contribution to that or anything?

MR. HARTMANN: I didn't receive any contributions for a long time.

Q I mean have you had any contribution to the thinking around the President that contributed to this?

MR. HARTMANN: Well, if I say, Sarah, that I have no contribution to the President's thinking, that will be a bad thing -- there would be no reason for me to be here. If I said I did, I just don't think I ought to talk about that.

Q Can you explain this matter? It is sort of a very important thing.

MR. HARTMANN: I can't explain it any more than the President has explained it for himself. He has explained it as fully as I know anything.



Q Bob, what weapons will the President use in his battle for New Hampshire? Will Susan go up and campaign for him or ski in New Hampshire?

MR. HARTMANN: You know, you are asking questions that you ought to be asking Callaway or Stu Spencer or Jim Cleveland.

Q We think you are important in politics, Bob, that is why we ask you.

Q If you would explain to us, please, how you function.

MR. HARTMANN: I have been preoccupied with the State of the Union and these other messages and things, and while I am, I find politics very fascinating. I really have not been dealing with these matters in terms of a campaign confrontation.

Q Bob, has your function changed in the last year and a half or so since the Ford Administration has been in? For example, I recall at the beginning, I believe, that you were supposed to be the political adviser; now, of course, we have Rog Morton. Then there were to be speeches and we have Bob Morgan under your direction. Has your function changed any or could you explain to us what you did do and what you are doing now?

MR. HARTMANN: I don't think it has changed very much. It never was very well-defined. People used to ask me what do I do and I say I do what the President wants me to and I guess that is still as good a definition as any.

Q Bob, who was the chief author of the State of the Union speech?

MR. HARTMANN: The President.

Q And who next?

Q Who was his chief assistant?

Q Mr. Hartmann --

MR. HARTMANN: Let me finish.

Q It was different from the others, that is the reason I am asking.

MR. HARTMANN: Generally, the President directed me to handle the mechanical process of putting the elements of the speech together and pulling it all together and coming up with something on paper on which he could start to work, but in the end, and after the long process, the speech was the President's own and very much more of the President's own than the one a year ago.

Not only more of it was in his own words, in his own language, but he was a part of the process of making the budgetary and programatic decisions over the whole year's period than he was the previous time. This time he didn't have to turn to an expert and take his word for it as to whether this sentence accurately represented what he wanted to say, he knew what it accurately represented or not because he had been part of the process of developing programs and priorities right from the beginning.

So it was very much more his speech and his program than it was a year ago. I am not just being modest, for which I am not noted, but I am being honest in saying he really was the author of the speech.

Q Bob, how did that State Department decision come about?



MR. HARTMANN: The briefing on the budget?

Q Yes.

MR. HARTMANN: He knew more about the budget than anybody else did so he decided to do it himself.

Q Was that his decision?

MR. HARTMANN: I guess so.

Q Now Elaine has a question.

Q Yes. I took this 70 issues in the budget document with me to the HEW press briefing and the Office of Education official told me not to use the education part because it was full of inaccuracies, but it is still being distributed. I wonder what is safe to use and whether you are going to get out a revised edition?

MR. HARTMANN: Well, that is, I think, a question you ought to ask Mr. Lynn or the Secretary of HEW. You know, I have not gotten down to the nitty-gritty of the details like that.

Q Bob, I think we need to know here just what you do so why don't you tell us in your own words what you do so we won't be floundering around asking you things you don't know.

MR. HARTMANN: Well, Number one, I do whatever the President assigns me to do and this varies from day to day.

Q Like what?

MR. HARTMANN: Well, it could be that he wants me to work on a certain speech or a certain statement or it might be that he wants me to handle a certain problem of an individual who he has not got time to spend all the time with getting the details, but he does want to keep personal --

Q You have some of the contacts with the people out over the country who are politically important or important as citizens, do you not?

MR. HARTMANN: Well, yes. You know, there is a lot of old personal friends that I know and he has known over the years and maybe they want to talk to the President and maybe they do, but he does not have time to call them back six or seven times about little details so he tells me to look into this and come back with the answer. It is impossible to describe these things in detail because they are never the same, and in that sense I suppose I do about the same thing I used to do up on the Hill.

Q Do you make policy?

MR. HARTMANN: No, I don't make policy. The President makes policy.

Q Do you often discuss policy?

MR. HARTMANN: Well, I sit in on the Cabinet meetings and various other meetings at which the President discusses and asks others to give their views and I give mine.

Q Do you think the President has an image problem, and, also, what is being done to correct it because it seems to be a general feeling that he is coming off as bumbling because that is the way some of the news magazines have described it. Do you think this will hurt him?

MR. HARTMANN: I don't think that is true and I don't think it will last long if it is the current thing. It does not concern me. I think that the perception of the President over the long haul will be fairly close to an accurate perception and I don't believe that he is bumbling or clumsy.

Q Bob, what is the President's position on abortion?

MR. HARTMANN: Well, that is one that I can't exactly answer.

Q Has he ever, to your knowledge, taken a stand on it as Mrs. Ford has taken?

MR. HARTMANN: Back in the Congress he, I think, was a co-sponsor or the author of some legislation to leave it to the States, but I can't remember all the details of that. Abortion has never been much of a problem.

Q Well, Reagan has just endorsed a constitutional amendment. I am wondering if, on that basis, you might have studied it?

MR. HARTMANN: The constitutional amendment which leaves it to the States?

Q Reverses the Supreme Court.

MR. HARTMANN: Reverses the Supreme Court decision.

I have not been involved in that problem and I can't speak with any authority.

Q Is it possible to get one? We asked the other day when there were 60,000 demonstrators, but Ron --

Q I thought Ford had twice stated in his early days in the White House something on abortion.

MR. HARTMANN: All I recall is what is in his Congressional record and that is a matter of record. I don't remember the dates of it with any great precision, but I have no recollection of his having stated the position since he became President. Maybe he has, but I don't remember. You should remember that better than I can. It is not a subject that I have been involved in.

Q Do you think this is going to be one of the big issues in the campaign?

MR. HARTMANN: I don't know. I mean I am at a time in life when it is a matter of no personal concern.

Q Bob, to get back to your duties, when you came over here everyone had the impression that you were the chief adviser to the President and now there has been some indication that some of your power, if you could describe it as that, has been cut down a little bit, the one being the speechwriting functions -- one of the speechwriters was fired -- and the other being your political advice on and your liaison with the committee has been, or will be, removed. I wonder if you have any feelings of hurt or resentment or if you would like to address yourself to that?

MR. HARTMANN: Well, I find the comments in some columns and so forth entertaining. It is ridiculous, all of you people that I have known over the years and know very well, that no President ever relies on a single adviser for political advice or anything else.

It is impossible for the President to get along with a single adviser. It is impossible for the President to have a single adviser. All Presidents have numerous advisers. If the President is running things the way most Presidents do, nobody ever knows exactly who is on first, and if they think so, they don't stay there very long. So I am flattered by having been referred to in the early days in that respect -- that it really has not been so.

Am I hurt? The answer is no. I continue to do what I have always done and the best I can and I don't really feel that very much has changed.

Q The President really trusts you? You have known him longer than anyone.

MR. HARTMANN: That is a very good question to ask the President. I suppose he does or I would not be here. If he doesn't trust me, he certainly ought to get rid of me.

Q What I am saying is, would you be categorized like Harry Hopkins, for instance? Would you be that close?

MR. HARTMANN: I hope not. I mean, that close. I have not moved into the second floor of the White House as Secretary Hopkins did.

Q He was close. You can talk to him with your shoes off and that sort of thing.

MR. HARTMANN: The President has lots of people he can talk with. I have not noticed him removing his shoes but --

Q You know what I mean. Not actually taking them off but comfortably talking without being --

MR. HARTMANN: This President has dozens of people that he is comfortable with and I hope I am one of them.

Q How much campaigning do you think he will do?

MR. HARTMANN: He is much less of a remote person than most Presidents that I have observed, and he is comfortable with a lot of people, both within his official family and outside of it. Yes, I hope that he is comfortable in my presence. I certainly am comfortable in his presence but I don't think that is a particularly unique position.

Q Are you going to be sending any of your staff out to make speeches and contacts during the campaign?

MR. HARTMANN: Well, we all keep pretty busy. This is the first the thought has occurred to me.

Q The first time you thought of it?

Q Four speechwriters have left the White House. Did they do it on their own? Did they have help to find jobs?

MR. HARTMANN: Well, the speechwriters have been turning over ever since the start -- have always been coming or going. As you know, this place burns people out and they work very hard. The last bunch of stories--actually we didn't have four speechwriters leave. We had one resign and we had one go back to the detail from which he had been dropped for trial purposes and we had one transferred over to the First Lady's staff -- she had been doing that kind of work anyway for a while, and so we just got her off of my numbers and onto somebody else's.

Q How could you let Paul Theis go when he knows so much about politics and the Republican Party and all that?

MR. HARTMANN: You know, I wondered when I read Nessen's transcript who asked that question and now I know.

Q I don't know whether I did or not, but it has been bugging me for some time.

MR. HARTMANN: Paul had a very good job offered to him and we are happy that he was able to get it.

Q He could not have gotten it unless you all wanted him to go. He would not have left if you had not wanted him to go.

MR. HARTMANN: He had been working very hard and --

Q Is there a difference here of philosophy or something about speechwriting or new Republicanism that you are trying to try out that is different?

MR. HARTMANN: No. There was not any philosophical difference; just some changes made in the organization in which we thought we would work more efficiently and --

Q Bob, the presentation of the medal to Mr. Colby yesterday, could that be interpreted as the President admitting he made a mistake in firing him?

MR. HARTMANN: Now you are in an area that is completely outside of my purview and I really don't know anything about it and I can't answer it.

Q Is it true you don't get along with Mrs. Ford?  
(Laughter) And what does that date back to?

MR. HARTMANN: As far as I know, I have always gotten along with Mrs. Ford, whom I greatly admire and I hope she admires me.



Q Well, did you endorse the Equal Rights Amendment, too?

MR. HARTMANN: My wife has had more than equal rights as far as --

Q We are not talking about your wife. We are talking about all the other women. Tell us, Bob, are you for it or against it?

MR. HARTMANN: Sure, I am for it. What the heck.  
(Laughter)

Q I just wondered how important you think humor is to the success of a speech?

MR. HARTMANN: Well, I think that the President has always had a good natural sense of humor and extemporaneous conversation that comes out very well. His formal speeches sometimes may be deficient in that respect and this goes back to when he first became conscious of this, I guess, and was called upon to be the Republican spokesman at the grid iron opposite Vice President Humphrey in 1968, I think it was -- 1967-68.

At that time I was working on a speech and I missed a lot of help from all the fine people I knew -- Buchwald and Ken Abel and George Murphy, who was then in the Senate who had a pretty good sense of humor. George said, "Hey, I will put you in touch with a very funny man I know out in Hollywood," and so he put me in touch with Bob Orben and that was the beginning of our association and his association with the President.

We worked on that grid iron speech together and I don't know if he hardly ever met the then Minority Leader because it was mostly done by telephone and by mail. I guess he did come back at one point and meet the boss but that was the beginning of that association.

Then when he became Vice President he had another occasion to make a grid iron speech and this time he called Bob Orben and Guy down here and really worked it over.

When Ford became President we put him on the staff and he has contributed.

He is a very able and thoughtful guy and much more than just a joke writer. He is an excellent student of word of mouth communication of all kinds and he has done some very fine serious things as well as funny things, but he has helped bring out the President's own sense of humor and has given him the self-confidence he needed, like when he fell down the last two stairs in Austria he got up, brushed himself off and said, "Well, I am sorry I tumbled in" -- pure ad lib.

Q Do you think the President has changed in the White House?

MR. HARTMANN: Has what?

Q Changed. You have known him a long time.

MR. HARTMANN: I have no benchmark to compare with because I have not seen this process in any other person.

Q Well, you have, too. You have seen everything this man has done.

MR. HARTMANN: No, no. I mean, I have not known any other Presidents well before and after.

Q We are only talking about one President here now; we are talking about Ford.

MR. HARTMANN: All right. Let me answer. Yes, Presidents always change, I assume, but as far as the human being is concerned, as far as his personal relations with other people and his subordinates and so forth, I would say he has basically changed very little. If anything, he is a little more conscious of time and has to cut off the conversational talk a little quicker than he used to, but otherwise, at the same time, he maybe is a little more conscious of the way people knock themselves out in his behalf and never fails to thank people for just doing what they are paid to do. Maybe up on the Hill he was less conscious of the need to say thank you to the secretaries but as President he is unfailingly considerate not only of your time but of your effort.

Q Bob, why doesn't he get along with Congress? Doesn't he like Congress any more?

MR. HARTMANN: Sure. They get along personally.



Q Why is he always picking a fight and saying something nasty about them?

MR. HARTMANN: I think that is the nature of the system set up by the Founding Fathers; that they have to fight each other a little in order to keep you free.

Q Bob, did he make a statement about the override of his veto on the labor Health, Education and Welfare which was about one-third of his, no doubt about it?

MR. HARTMANN: What was the first part of your question?

Q Well, has he made a statement about the override of his veto of the labor HEW appropriation bill?

MR. HARTMANN: I am not aware. Is this something that happened today?

Q Yes. The House overrode.

MR. HARTMANN: I have not been in touch with what has happened since then. I didn't know they overrode it, but I thought they probably would.

Q Do you think that Reagan is acceptable as a number two spot or would it be too much of a one-sided ticket?

MR. HARTMANN: Would he be acceptable as a running mate?

Q Yes, or would it be too conservative?

MR. HARTMANN: That is another question you will have to ask the President. I don't think that is my prerogative.

Q After the State of the Union there was a story describing how long has been the process, nine months or so, and how far ahead it had been gotten ready and that sort of thing. One of the network reporters came on that evening and said there was utter chaos in the White House, the speech had just been finished on Friday and there were still last minute changes being made, yet they came an hour and a half early to the Hill which is the first time anybody can remember that.

What was the real story on the conflict of the State of the Union or non-conflict?

MR. HARTMANN: Well, the State of the Union is something like the budget done in words instead of numbers and the process of reconciling everybody's special interests in the final document is somewhat the same. Everybody makes appeals and last minute efforts to run around the end and all that to get their little thing in the message. The process, I am sure, is always the same although I have only been through it twice. To anybody peeking through a window it looks like chaos but I don't know any other way to do it.

Q How did it compare with other years?

MR. HARTMANN: It was in my orderly process this year that the President was more completely in command of it because he too had been through it once before.

Q Bob, do you give any advice to Ron Nessen about how he arranges press conferences or any of the format? Do you give any advice to Ron on how he conducts his office?

MR. HARTMANN: When he asks me and sometimes when he does not.

Q That is what I --

MR. HARTMANN: Well, we all meet with the President almost every day, if not every day, and discuss a range of problems including whether we are going to have a press conference or not and where. Yes, I suppose I get my two bits' worth in there.

Q Does the President like the press?

MR. HARTMANN: You know that as well as I do.

Q I mean --

MR. HARTMANN: Generally speaking, I would say yes, he likes the press.

Q Bob, could I follow that up by asking this: You have mentioned that you read the transcript or at least you read one -- do you read them regularly and how often does the President read them?

MR. HARTMANN: I think the President reads them rather faithfully.

Q What is that -- twice a week, three times, once a week?

MR. HARTMANN: I think he reads them every day.

Q Every day?

MR. HARTMANN: Well, I would not say never misses.

Q Then I would like to ask this question: One of the nicest people in the press corps, as far as I am concerned, is Dick Lerner of UPI. Twice in one day he asked Ron to recognize him for a question and Ron looked right through him and looked at somebody else. Now that, to me, is discourtesy and I asked the question the second time he did it: "Can you imagine the President of the United States treating a reporter like this?" And he said no.

Now I just wondered, why is this done?

MR. HARTMANN: The transcript would not show that?

Q That is right. It does not.

MR. HARTMANN: It just says: Q. Not having this to second guess Nessen, I don't want to answer that question.

Q How did Elliott Richardson get that favorite seat next to Mrs. Ford up in the Gallery? Did they have to draw lots or fight for it?

MR. HARTMANN: I can't answer that question either. The First Lady's Gallery --

Q Was that arranged by the President?

MR. HARTMANN: I don't know.

Q Well, it certainly did him a lot of good. I have heard a lot of comments on it.

Q If the President does not do well in the primary -- in other words, if he does not make a good showing in a series -- can you conceive of any circumstances under which he would withdraw?

MR. HARTMANN: I not only can conceive but have been told in no uncertain terms that if anybody thinks that I am going to get out of this race until the votes are counted, they are out of their minds.

Q How much of a setback do you believe it would be if the President lost either New Hampshire or Florida?

MR. HARTMANN: Well, how much of a setback is a hard question to answer. Of course, any time you lose is a setback. The bigger you lose, the more the setback. I think the President's attitude in general is very much that of the old football player that some plays you lose ground and others you try to make it back and at the end you get your net yards gained from pushing.

Q Do you think he would have to go out and campaign harder in the Midwest, then?

MR. HARTMANN: Whether his exact tactic would be to come back and work harder on it, I don't know, but I don't think he is going to pull out as a result of one or two or three early setbacks. Votes are counted on the Floor at the convention.

Q What is going to pay in the campaign? I mean, is it wise to continue the negotiations into the campaign? Can you win votes with a more cozy relationship with the Soviets?

MR. HARTMANN: Well, now we are getting into Henry's territory and that is a dangerous place to tread.

Q No, that is not Henry's territory. We are asking a political aspect.

MR. HARTMANN: I would say the President's conduct of foreign relations, including those, or national defense questions which that embraces is done without regard for the campaign insofar as it is humanly possible for a person to comport themselves, that the personal political considerations would be the last thing he is considering and those are very important matters.

I think that I would have to say that anybody who holds the office of President would probably have to say that -- they are not worthy of the office.

Q Bob, you have not answered very many of our questions directly and I am wondering whether --

MR. HARTMANN: I am used to framing questions.

Q -- there are any areas you think perhaps we should be interrogating you in or is there anything perhaps that you would like to get across?

MR. HARTMANN: No. I have answered them as directly as I can. I really was not told that there was any specific area here and I was --

Q There isn't.

MR. HARTMANN: I was simply scolded by Sarah for having put her off this long. I managed to put her off until I was through with the State of the Union speech and I could not put her off any longer.

Q Bob, is Mr. Ford a hard man to work for? Does he put a lot of limitations on what you can say and do?

MR. HARTMANN: He doesn't even know I am saying anything.

Q I know, but has he told you in the past what you can say or do?

MR. HARTMANN: No.

Q Anybody around here that is quoted in the paper, do they get clobbered here the next day?

MR. HARTMANN: Well, he has been known to say that "You would have been smarter if you had not said it."

Q Well, does he put any limitations on people, say, on their bad drinking? Does he say how many martinis they can have for lunch or how many cocktails?

MR. HARTMANN: No.

Q Does he do much drinking himself?

MR. HARTMANN: You have observed his conduct in public which is about the same as in private.

Q I have not seen him drinking that way but some of my colleagues apparently said they did. I had a query on it and I told him that I had not seen anything like that.

MR. HARTMANN: I think he gets his work done and a good deal more than most people his age do so I don't think that is any kind of a problem.

Well, to answer the first part of your question, is he a hard man to work for, I think was the question -- he is a man that makes you work hard but he is an easy man to work for.

Q Does he ever lose his temper? There was a report he did during the State of the Union message.

MR. HARTMANN: He has been known to have a little flash of temper but it never lasts very long and it is more for effect than it is real.

Q What do you think his main problem is with Reagan? Between Reagan and Ford, what is going to be the determining factor really among the Republican voters? Reagan does have more charisma according to most people and he is a better speaker and so forth. Will these things weigh against Ford?

MR. HARTMANN: Well, if I could answer that, I could make a lot more money than I am making now. That is one of the great mysteries of our political process -- why do people pick one guy over another. They set them up against their image of what the President ought to be and I suppose that image varies quite a lot among individuals, and how do you know what their image is? Each one has his favorite idea of a good or perfect President and they compare these people who want to be elected or --

Q We are trying to find out how the President is going to knock off Reagan. I mean, it is as simple as that. Is there any strategy?

MR. HARTMANN: Step-by-step. (Laughter)

Q You write the speeches and you must have something to guide you as you write those speeches.

MR. HARTMANN: I will answer that.

Q Where he is vulnerable?

MR. HARTMANN: He is going to, if he does -- and I think he will -- by being himself, by trying to get across to people what kind of a man he really is, what he really believes and what he really hopes for the future of this country; and if that perception is in accord with what the people want, he will be elected both over Reagan and over whoever else he may run against. I don't know how to define it any better than that.



Q Aren't you seeking to persuade people to come to your way of thinking when you write these speeches? What is guiding you?

MR. HARTMANN: What is guiding me is that the message be as nearly what he means to say and wants to say and it will be understood accurately as a way of his communicating directly with people who are listening.

Q Have you analyzed why he went ahead of Reagan in the NBC polls today on several points?

MR. HARTMANN: I didn't know he did.

Q Yes.

Q 50 to 30.

MR. HARTMANN: The polls at this point seem to be flipping back and forth and they seem to reflect the last action of one or the other. The linkers in the person's mind that is being called and I just -- they are very volatile and he may gain because Reagan made somebody mad or he may lose because Reagan made somebody glad or vice versa.

Q Something can be said about the President not being out meeting people and staying back here until the polls look better.

MR. HARTMANN: I don't know that we can make that correlation. The circumstances have dictated his being here and working hard. Whether you can make that correlation I think it is a little soon to say.

Q Does anybody talk around the White House about the fact that New Hampshire and Florida may not be considered typical of the United States?

MR. HARTMANN: Does anybody around here talk about that?

Q Yes, does anybody talk about that?

MR. HARTMANN: Well, the electoral process in this country is done by giving due respect to every State.

Q I know. I am not saying they don't, but I am saying they do and --

MR. HARTMANN: Well, what State is typical? No State is typical.

Q Florida, because these States are becoming so critically important, especially since New Hampshire is such a small State.

MR. HARTMANN: No State is typical. How do you find a State that is typical?

Q Well, I would think one out in the Midwest would be more average.

MR. HARTMANN: It does not matter because you don't run on a national referendum. You run one State-by-State and so they are not supposed to be typical and you have to consider each one as it is.

Q You mentioned that you tried to put in words what the President meant, and it seems to us who are not down here all that much that it is difficult to find out what he does mean. First, he runs all around the country and then he stays in Washington. First, he says he is going to sign the situs picketing bill and then he does not. It seems that there is not any real firm foundation on which he is grounded. Would you like to comment on that?

MR. HARTMANN: No. (Laughter)

Q Bob, you are something. You are something.

MR. HARTMANN: All I am saying is that in terms of the President's speeches and communicating that way our standard is to as clearly as we can convey what he really wants to say and what he really believes and let people be the judge of that.

Q You know, if you are a newspaper man -- and you have always been a very good newspaper man as I have seen -- but you have written a very good story here today --

MR. HARTMANN: Well, I manage to appear before the National Press Club without anybody being able to find a lead in it. (Laughter)

Q Bob, the President in his last press conference on the 31st stated that among his New Year's resolutions he wanted to raise the spiritual level and so forth, and they asked him how and he said, "I want to participate with spiritual leaders."

Now right down here there was a three-day conference of the spiritual leaders -- a cross-section of Protestant, Catholic, Jewish and so forth -- where seven candidates showed up and they answered questions. The scheduling office said that the President was too busy and he ended up going out to a ~~cross~~ Presbyterian Church much further away where nobody could ask him questions.

Now, how does he intend to participate and why did he not go there but go out there where they could not ask him questions?

MR. HARTMANN: I cannot answer the first part but I think I can answer the second part.

Dr. Elson has been running that thing on the opening day of Congress ever since I can remember and the boss has been going to it ever since I can remember, and he did again this time. The other part I cannot answer.

Q It is too bad Mr. Nessen didn't answer that question like that when he got it.

Q I would like to get back to the jobs question that I asked originally.

MR. HARTMANN: This is the last question.

Q Do you folks have any thinking going on or any plans whereby you might be able to get people into jobs quicker than through the mechanism that appeared to be presented in the budget and the State of the Union message where it appears as a sort of trickle down kind of thing where, first of all, business has to have its incentives before it can take people on-board? Do you have anything on-stream whereby you might be able to pick up people faster in the private sector and provide more jobs in the private sector?



MR. HARTMANN: I don't know of anything except what you have seen, but let me point out this plan for quick depreciation of investments in areas where unemployment exceeds 7 percent, advantage has to be taken of that tax break within 12 months so that means that you are saying to the businessman, "If you want to get this break you have got to start your project right now." It is not going to take long to get carpenters and cement mixers and all that to work."

This is not a change in the tax liabilities forever; they have to do that plant expansion, they have to buy the new lathes and all that within 12 months after the law is enacted so it would not be as slow as you might think. If they want to get that break, they have got to start the project right away.

Q Bob, thank you very much for taking time out of your busy work. Thanks a lot.

MR. HARTMANN: Thank you, Sarah.

THE PRESS: Thank you very much.

END (AT 4:09 P.M. EST)