MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

PARTICIPANTS: Secretary Elliot Richardson, Secretary of Defense
Dr. Henry A. Kissinger, Assistant to the
President for National Security Affairs
Major General Brent Scowcroft, Deputy Assistant
to the President for National Security Affairs
Amb. Daniel Murphy, Military Assistant to
Secretary Richardson

DATE AND TIME: Saturday, March 3, 1973
8:30 a.m. - (Breakfast)

PLACE: The Pentagon

SUBJECTS: Richardson testimony; NSSM's; MBFR; SALT;
China; Vietnam

Richardson: What about my testimony?

Kissinger: You don't have to orate on the State of the World. Just say
you will review the DOD business.

You can put out a purely defense report.

Richardson: I have to testify March 20 to Mahon.

Kissinger: We will give you our views by the middle of next week.

Richardson: What about NSSM's? We do a lot of studies.

Kissinger: The fact that there is a DOD study can't preclude a NSC study.

Richardson: I just wanted to demonstrate that I was getting things going.
Kissinger: We are now free to put out NSSMs?

Richardson: We are not interested in Systems Acquisition and Manpower; but we will go on Security Assistance, etc.

Kissinger: I will show the draft NSSMs to Murphy. Keep it among the four of us.

The Europeans are sabotaging MBFR on the grounds that we have a private deal with the Soviet Union. Our deal was only on the timing.

I think it's better to have Hungary out than Italy in.

We need some DOD proposals on how to handle the substance.

The military's proposals will be formalistic. Symmetrical cuts all leave us weaker. Asymmetrical cuts are better, we in the areas they fear most and vice versa.

We need to develop some concrete proposals. We need a comprehensive study on what our alternatives area. Not a vague set of platitudes.

There are incongruities in NATO which we can't continue to live with—for example, the level of supplies, both in US internal levels and within NATO.

(Long discussion)

We should use MBFR to educate the Europeans.

I will put high priority on MBFR. We must be careful in articulating to Europe. McNamara just scared them with raising doubts about using nuclear weapons.

Some of the SALT proposals are childish. The Soviet Union will demand a quid pro quo. We must be serious about what we are willing to give up.

We could go to a 2500 ceiling. That would just ratify the present -- which may be what we want.

Richardson: The big problem is what we want more.
The objective of forestalling MIRV might jeopardize a longer-range solution on numbers and throw weight which could include big missiles on our side.

One option is to freeze at the current equivalencies—our MIRV advantage and their throw weight advantage.

But from here it is harder to see how you would move from here to reductions on both sides.

**Kissinger:** The question is that with MIRV, a first strike has tremendous advantage.

You don't ease the problem by letting warheads run free and hoping for reductions. The real problem is the gap between first and second strike capability.

**Richardson:** The key question is where to move. What is it we most want restricted? It would be to our advantage if the Soviet big missiles were not MIRVed. But what could we realistically pay? Nothing except that ten years ago each side took its own path of development and we now are equivalent and should stop there.

This is the Rush position.

**Kissinger:** There are many possibilities. Rush wants a freeze while something else is being negotiated. The Soviet Union won't go that route—we have to give up something. I can believe in a position which would balance off throw weight and MIRVs. The Soviet Union might do this, but they won't buy this plus unrestricted US technological development while they are frozen. We couldn't go on to Trident, etc., while they are frozen.

**Richardson:** There are two courses. This freeze, and one which would establish a limit on numbers and throw weight, with phased reductions over time.

The disadvantage is it ratifies the Soviet advantage in throw weight and permits them to MIRV. Congress wouldn't let us catch up.

But over the long term, it would keep the balance within limit, and let us over the long term determine which are the better systems.
Kissinger: I don't follow. Freedom to mix could go with any option. It is a separate question.

Richardson: But freedom to mix would permit us to retire one bomber and build a big missile.

Kissinger: This makes sense only if we have decided this switch is desirable on other grounds.

Even if we go this route, it could be dangerous because it could give a first strike advantage.

If both sides have one invulnerable element, what difference does it make if you have a vulnerable element?

We haven't even analyzed what it is about Minuteman vulnerability which bothers us.

Richardson: We must also consider what Congress would let us do.

Kissinger: Without ABM and MIRV we would be dead in SALT. The military told us they couldn't produce a new sub before 1979, so we had nothing but a bluff base.

Unless we have some programs to offer, we are at a big disadvantage.

It has become axiomatic that we must be calm, cool, and collected. It's true, perhaps with the Soviet Union, but it's not true about the Chinese.

In June I went to China and Chou started talking about Laird talking about force improvements. I started to apologize, and he said Laird was great in this respect. He said this last time that he was sorry Laird left because he understood.

If McGovern had won, the Chinese would have been wild opponents. Chou wanted me to take care of Japan, visit them on an equal basis for face, and not make them mad.

So remember when you make a defense statement, the Chinese have a vested interest in our strength.
They don't want us out of Asia. They will give us problems only if they think we are on the run. They can play with us or capture the left wing of the world Communist movement and force the Soviet Union into a contest against us.

The Chinese have a vested interest in a strong US defense posture.

Vietnam: (Discussion of infiltration and how to stop it.)

Richardson: You sent a draft State/Defense cable to me to protest some of the GVN violations.
Dear Mr. Secretary

March 3, 1968

8:30 AM

The White House
Washington

Re: Request for an Official Study

I am happy to receive the follow-up from the NSC Study. I am aware of the potential for US military involvement as a result of the

20,000 Defense Volunteers will be in place by the middle of the month.

As you have noted, the study recommends the establishment of a NSC Study. As you know, I have been informed of the

We have four major options:

1. To prepare for an immediate call for reinforcements.
2. To prepare for an immediate call for reinforcements.
3. To prepare for an immediate call for reinforcements.
4. To prepare for an immediate call for reinforcements.

I am not sure if I was right in not calling for reinforcements.

We are not interested in strings attached, but we will need to consult.

I will ask the Chief of Staff to consult with you. Keep me informed.

Sincerely,

[Signature]
MGR-R.

Europeans are essentially anti-MOS. Our friends are basically anti-MOS. Our friends are very much aware of the United States, better to have a strong NATO than 0.0.

Korea and some other proposals have been tentatively developed. These proposals will be examined in detail. NATO countries will examine all these proposals. They are all interesting. Some countries may face more than one choice. We need to develop some concrete proposals.

The G-20 ministers and an informal alliance are not a major set of plotters.
The White House
Washington

K - There are misgivings in NATO which we can't continue to live with. E.g., lack of cohesion both in U.S. and within European NATO allies.

We should have MABER and drill in Europe.

If we plan to use MABER, we must be careful in articulating its European purpose.

Some idea of what Mr. X will do.
THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

SAHIT

1. Since SA recommendations of child care

SN 0 will determine final remarks.
We want to discuss whether we need
a letter in your name.

2. Could go again either that or

other present at which may be

with no letter.

R: Big problem is what we need now.

Objective of fact finding. More people

are interested since people want

to be other things which would

include key people now and

R: Could possibly be free at Warren

Cooperative (With Mike Schoon &

their team work).

But from here it depends. To see

how we would move from here

to resolution in both sides.
THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

K: Question is that W/M/H/V, a
partition track that Remington
advantage.

Some client needs a portion by telling
where they have the ability to deliver
the real private line guys only to this
capability.

K: Key question is where to announce
what it at we most want noticed. Would it be an advantage of such big
members were than not this real. But
what could we realistically pay?

Nothing except that to yes and such
read back its own just if the is us
we were equivalent should
stay there.
THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

R: This is absolutely

K: There are many possibilities. One

which is a true or false which something

idea, being something. So write that

write, and do it for my society.

I will be in a position in which

would balance off them. Any + MEX

NV wants 40-40, but they aren't in this

point. Unmarried US 51 to all illegal while

they are for you. We couldn't pass

Trent, etc. while they are for you.

R: There are 2 courses. This is one

which we would not have, limit an

4 or there ought all physical

dimensions and time.
R: Further, Eisen I'm not of this

บาท, it could be anywhere between

It would give us a real strike advantage.

R: If both sides had one invariable

element, what difference does it

make if you have an unvariable

element?

We've seen how it works, what it

is about now.

R: We would also consider what Congress

would let us do.

R: If a B-47 at 65,000 feet, it would be

able to fly 5 A.M.

We'll tell you they wouldn't interfere

with us—uh, before 7 A.M., we

had nothing but a bluff.
The White House
Washington

Under our broad area program in office, one of the foremost is, 

Central 

K. Yet has become apparent that 

must becalm our, related. 

True, perhaps, but not this 

about China. 

For from I went to China, I then started telling about holding 

about proposed. I started to 

apology, f. the total hand was 

but in this event, said the 

least time. They had left more 

understanding 

If I knew, that was, China
THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

would have been well advised. China wanted me to notify China, I want China to send troops for fear, I will make them bring them.

So remember when you make a definite statement, the Chinese will have a vested interest in our strength.

They don't want us out of Asia.

They will give us problems only if they think we are anemic.

They can play us, we can't play ours. I kept using the correct word to place 80,000 troops instantly.
THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

Through fresh and robust interest in a strong US defense posture.

VN
- Discussion of injection + arm-
  r + spy + M

R = sent a State/Def/CIA memo for T
  matter + some info. for CIA evaluat.