

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

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MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

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

DATE AND TIME: Friday, March 16, 1973
7:45 a.m. (Breakfast)

PLACE: The Pentagon

SUBJECTS: Military Aid; Vietnam; SALT

Richardson: I met with State yesterday on aid. Should military assistance be moved from the aid bill into the defense budget?

Kissinger: That is where the President wants it.

Richardson: One must factor in where MASF goes.

Mahon has said Congress won't continue MASF in its present form, now that U.S. forces have withdrawn. If MASF has to move into the Foreign Assistance Act we will have an impossible problem. Rogers wants to try MASF one more year.

Buzhardt has proposed a device. It would propose a delivery ceiling system, which would price things at their reduced value.

Kissinger: The key is Stennis and his agreeing to move aid to the defense appropriations bill.

CLASSIFIED BY Henry A. Kissinger
EXEMPT FROM GENERAL DECLASSIFICATION
SCHEDULE OF EXECUTIVE ORDER 11652
EXEMPTION CATEGORY 5(b) (1, 3)
AUTOMATICALLY DECLASSIFIED ON Imp. to det.

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DECLASSIFIED

E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.5

NSC Memo, 11/24/98, State Dept. Guidelines

By UK, NARA, Date 11/18/00



Brent should check with Timmons and Lehman on the possibility.

Richardson: It's a delivery ceiling to the extent you make deliveries out of existing stocks; you don't involve procurement, and you can price at reduced values.

I will testify a week from Monday.

Kissinger: Can I have Part I of your testimony?

Richardson: Yes. I have a rough draft.

Laos infiltration. Our warnings are loud and clear.

Kissinger: Our thinking is: Military action, whatever it is, will not be decisive.

[Discussed North Vietnam's options.]

We can't permit a total flouting of the agreement within weeks. We will have lost all we won in the last four years.

The idea is to get a pause and get the thought into their head that the President is hair-trigger.

The President wants a strike next week, while they still have the POWs. A strike Thursday and Friday (Hanoi time) along the Trail right up to the passes.

Richardson: How about the ICCS?

Kissinger: They have only one legal checkpoint.

This is a high-risk strategy, but we can't let them get into a pattern where they can predict our reactions.

Murphy: How about the Soviet Union and the PRC?

Kissinger: We will send strong notes to both.



I have told Dobrynin that if there is a new offensive in Vietnam, it will have a serious impact on U.S. -Soviet relations. Because there is no excuse in terms of aid to a beleaguered fraternal country.

Dobrynin told me 240 tanks had been lost in China.

Richardson: South Vietnam ought to be able to handle anything North Vietnam can throw this year.

If we plan to hope to stop the Laos resupply routes, we need to think about insuring legal resupply for the North.

The RVN's resupply system is operating pretty well. We are resupplying everything, except the 16 tanks they lost.

So if we bomb the trail for 48 hours, it will do little good.

Kissinger: That is not the point. It's a psychological point we must make.

Richardson: The point is, what happens then? They won't stop resupply.

Kissinger: They must stop in four weeks anyway. The point is will they restart in November and start an offensive?

Richardson: After the strike, we must either paper it over in a way both sides can live with, or it will deteriorate further.

Kissinger: What can they do?

Richardson: They can say "Screw you."

Kissinger: We let them build up last spring and maybe we gave them a wrong signal.

Richardson: We think the Four-Party Commission should be extended.

Kissinger: Could you do an analysis of what the military situation will be like over the next year -- in the worst case, and what South Vietnam could do? By the end of next week?



Richardson: I am thinly staffed. Between my studies and the NSSMs, I am stretched thin and we have to establish priorities.

SALT

Kissinger: On SALT. The JCS is getting sloppy. You can't use SALT to build up forces.

If we can get agreement on the theory of what we are trying to do, we can make progress. If we just throw positions at them, we will have no sense of direction and may end up with something ingenuous.

Richardson: Rush's approach is to try to preserve the equivalence achieved in SALT I. Another approach is equal aggregates with the freedom to mix.

Kissinger: They can be blended.

Richardson: If you proposed an extension of status quo -- no MIRV's of the SS-9, and we cease MIRVing at the present status -- how do you move into a long-term position? How do you make then progressive reductions?

The trouble with equal aggregates and throwweight at present levels is we won't build up. If you could freeze so we could build up to equal aggregates, then we reduce symmetrically.

Kissinger: The President has not decided anything. We must have on-going strategic programs. We got a submarine agreement because I told Dobrynin that if we didn't get a submarine limit, we would start a massive sub building program.

The modern dilemma is we might be getting into a first strike capability on both sides.

We don't know the significance of Minuteman vulnerability. It may be an obsession which is not decisive. If it is not decisive, then the urgency of doing something on MIRVs is not pressing.

I don't like a temporary test ban. They will just break when they are ready. It must be linked to a specific agreement.



I don't like phony tradeoffs. Using bomber payload in throwweight is bad unless we can transfer it into missiles. Bombers are second strike; missiles are first strike.

I may visit SAC on my way back from California.

We don't have a rationale for SALT II.

I think the Soviet system is such they are incapable of making a proposal. Their Defense Minister can't make a political judgment; their Foreign Minister can't make military judgments.

Richardson: The only long-term agreement which makes sense is one of simple elements -- aggregates, throwweight, and reductions.

Kissinger: Where does this get you?

Richardson: It limits investment. The question is how each would use the freedom to mix.

Kissinger: Reductions don't necessarily enhance stability. It depends on what the goal is -- reduced investment or a better strategic balance.

Richardson: I worry over an agreement which stresses limitation of qualitative moves. We would lose in that because of our technical edge.

Kissinger: An agreement can have equal aggregates and technical limits. Technical restraint makes sense only in areas they don't now possess -- like MIRV's. Something short-lived works for them.



7:45 Breakfast mtg

HAK/Richardson

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Tue, 16 Feb 73

Military Aids

R - Mtg w/ Staff yesterday on aid
should not necessarily be moved from
aid bill into def budget

K - Threat is where Pres wants it

R - One must factor in where MASF
goes.

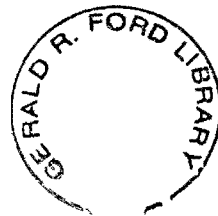
Moham has said ^{Langdon} we won't continue
MASF in its present form, now that
US forces have withdrawn.

If MASF has to move into For Ass Act,
we will have an impossible problem

Rogers wants to try MASF one more year

Buzhardt has prepared a device. It
would propose a ceiling delivery ceiling
system, which would price things
at their reduced value

~~K~~
K - Key is Stennis + his agreeing to
move and to def aspect bill.



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→ K. Beant to check as/terminus, Cuban
on possibility

R - Delivery ceiling - to extent you make
delivers out of existing stocks, you
don't involve procurement, & you
can price at reduced values.

~~the~~

R - I will testify a case for boundary

K - Can I have part I of your testimony.

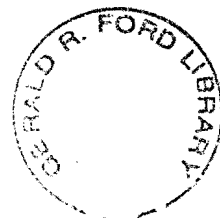
R - Yes. Have a rough draft

R - have infiltration.

Warnings set level & use

H - Clear thinking. Military action,
whatever it is, will not be
discussed.

(Discussed ~~the~~ NVA options)
We cannot prevent total planting



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of a government w/ or wks. we will
have lost all we won in last 4 yrs.
Idea is to get a parcel + thought
that P-10 is hair trigger. week
P-10 wants strike next week,
while they still have POW's.
Strike Thurs + Friday (at time)
along trail right up to pass.

A - How about ICCS?

K - They have only 1 type of check
point.

This is high risk strategy, but
we can't let them into a pattern
where they can predict our
reactions.

M - How about SOF/PRC

K - We will send strong notes to both



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K - I have told D that if a new offensive in VN it will have serious impact on US-Sov relations, comes no excess in terms of aid to belonged protestant country.

D told me 240 tanks had been lost in PRV.

R - ~~SON~~ SON ought to be able to handle anything NVN can throw this year.

I have plan to hope to stop Laos supply routes, and need to think about insuring legal supply for North.

RVN supply system is



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operating pretty well. We
are supplying in every thing, except
c 16 tanks they lost.

R - So we think the trail for US has,
it will do little good.

R - That is not point. It is psychological
point we must make.

R - Point is, what happens then?
They won't stop working.

R - They must stop in 4 weeks
anyway. Point is will they
restart in Nov & start
an offensive.

R. After strike, we must either
paper over in a way both



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side can live with, or it will
deteriorate further

K- What can they do?

R- They can say screw you

K- We let them should say last
spring & maybe not give them
a wrong signal

R- We think 4 party system should
be extended.

R- Could you do an analysis
of what kind situation would
be like over next year, what
case, what SON would do,
by end of next week.

R- I am thinly staffed. Between
my studies & CASSMs, I am



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stretched thin & will have to
establish priorities.

K- SALT

~~to~~ JCS getting slippy. You
can't use Salt to build
up force.

If we can get agreement on
theory of what we are trying
to do, we can make progress.

If we just throw positions
at them, we will have
no sense of direction and
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~~cost~~ ingenious.



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- R - Rush approach - try to preserve the
equivalence achieved in SAIT I.
- Another approach - equal aggregates
w/ freedom to mix.
- R - They can be blended.
- R - If you proposed extension of
status quo (no MIRV of 559, &
no case MIRV at present status)
how do you move into
long term position? How
on the ^{then} ~~other~~ professional
reduction?
- Trouble w/ equal aggregates
+ I've at present built it
we would build up. If you



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could freeze so we could
build up to equal opportunity,
then we reach symmetry.

K- President has not decided
anything

We must have on going
strategic programs. We
got sub. agreement because
I told D that if we didn't
get sub. limit, we would
start massive sub
building prog.

K- Modern dilemma is
we might be getting into



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It strikes capability on
both sides.

We don't know significance
of M. I. vulnerability. It
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decisive, then the
of doing something on
M. I. is not pressing.

I don't like temporary test
bars. They will just break
when they are ready. It must
be linked to a specific
agreement.

I don't like phony tradeoffs.
Being broader payback in TW,



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is bad unless ~~it~~ we can
transfer it into missiles, ~~the~~
Bombers 2nd strike, missile
1st strike.

K- I may visit SPC on
way back from Calif.

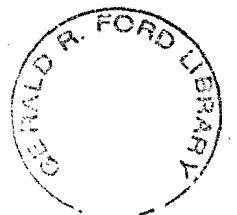
K- We don't honor rationale
for SPT II

I think SC system is
such they are incapable
of making a proposal. They
can't make political judgment,
For them can't make military
judgments.



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- R - Only long term agreement which makes sense is one of simple elements - aggregates, T, W, & ^{indicators}
- K - Where does this get you?
- R - Not limits investment, the question is how each would use freedom to mix.
- K - Restrictions don't necessarily decrease stability. Depends on what goal is - reduced investment, or better strategic balance.
- R - I worry over an agreement which stresses limitation on qualitative ~~ag~~ needs.



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We would lose that because
our technical terms.

K - Management men have equal
appreciation of tech. limits.
Tech restraint makes sense
only in cases they don't now
possess (MIRV)
Something that had worked
for

