MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

PARTICIPANTS: President Nixon
William P. Rogers, Secretary of State
Elliot Richardson, Secretary of Defense
Dr. James R. Schlesinger, Director of Central Intelligence
Dr. Henry A. Kissinger, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs
James Parley, Deputy Director, ACDA
Amb. Donald Rumsfeld, US Ambassador to NATO
Admiral Thomas H. Moorer, Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff
Kenneth Rush, Assistant to the President
Brent Scowcroft, Deputy Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs

DATE AND TIME: Thursday, April 12, 1973
10:00 a.m.

PLACE: The Cabinet Room

SUBJECT: NSC Meeting on MBFR

The President: We are faced with a situation where any reduction is probably to our detriment. If we don't show some movement, the structure of NATO will come apart because of the lack of U.S. support.

We will have a hell of a time maintaining the military budget against Mansfield and the others.

We are keeping one step ahead of the sheriff. We can't say any agreement is better than none, though.

We have got to show movement; we have got to have something come of it.
SALT is somewhat like that. It may be good on its own -- although there are lots of problems, like cheating, military cutback, etc. But the mood of the country is such that if we don't move in this context, we will cut unilaterally.

We still have some hawks; the polls are good. I talk hawkish, but let's face it.

Let's analyze the realities coldly, then see what it is we can live with.

Jim?

Schlesinger: (Briefs)

The President: Elliott?

Richardson: With Congress, we have devoted a lot of effort to show that NATO forces are capable.

The President: On the trip wire thing, say that if there is a confrontation, it will be nuclear. That is the best argument for a conventional capability.

Henry?

Kissinger: This is a superficial analysis. The Germans were inferior in two wars and nearly won. We should not kid ourselves that we have a balance.

Richardson: The Soviets have the same sort of interest in stability in Europe that we do. But we have to show that we don't have to depend on the trip wire.

Rogers: Henry's analysis, if you believe it, would indicate that our leadership is worse than the Warsaw Pact.

Kissinger: Elliott is correct about the Congressional presentation of the situation. But as things stand, we do not have a cohesive alliance. We have the dilemma of MBFR versus force improvements.

Rush: Europe is afraid we are leaving NATO. NATO is making force improvements and we should push for more, but not tied to MBFR.

Rogers: NATO is afraid we have already made a deal with the Soviet Union.
The President: I don't think the Soviet Union is too keen on MBFR.

Rogers: There is agreement in the government on how we should proceed.

The President: Henry?

Kissinger: (Begins his briefing at 10:33 a.m.)

The President: Let's have no illusion -- the whole thing fails if we don't keep our contribution level. We must show that if we keep strong, we can reduce later; and Europe must do its share.

Richardson: Arends has a study that is favorable to NATO and against unilateral reductions.

Kissinger: (Resumes his briefing, which is completed at 10:58 a.m.)

Rogers: I think we are generally agreed. We want to get going, show seriousness, and show that we haven't made a deal.

I like the two proposals, plus implicit linkage and the force improvements.

Richardson: I think we should present both, but express a preference for reduction of stationed forces at as high a percentage as is negotiable.

We can also introduce the nuclear component, as an illustrative approach.

The President: Tom?

Moore: We should have in our minds how we want to come out.

On the Soviet side, all the stationed forces are Soviet; on ours they are British, Canadian, and U.S.

The first step should be a U.S. cut of ten percent and a Soviet cut of eighteen percent. We shouldn't get into the structure of the forces to be withdrawn.

Richardson: Collateral constraints could be important, like stationing of observers.
Farley: There will be lots of discussion.

Rumsfeld: We should say we may have a preference, but our final preference will depend on the final alliance consensus.

The President: Good point.

Kissinger: Agreed.

The President: We must recognize we must take the lead, without appearing to sell our position.

Rumsfeld: It should include the nuclear option, and collateral constraints.

Kissinger: With Hungary in, you can't have a common ceiling cut, only a percentage. A percentage cut is detrimental to NATO.

The President: We have no illusion but that improvement of forces must go along with MBFR. It is essential for support here at home. We have a tough selling job here. I have yet to talk to a NATO leader who talks in terms of selling to his people a strong NATO. There is no guts in the European elite.

Heath has problems. He wants to be strong, but has economic problems.

Brandt has problems. Look at their attitude toward our troops. Brandt is a muddle head anyway.

In Europe we have a bunch of ward heelers, not international leadership. They would want to be but their public won't allow it.

The old bipartisan leadership has gone. It's lost its guts. Unless we step up to the problem, no one will.

Rumsfeld: The argument that cuts leave us only with a nuclear option should be persuasive. Even peaceniks shouldn't want to be on that side of the argument.

The President: Kennedy had an overwhelming superiority. He didn't need other options. Now we have parity -- so now we need an option other than all or nothing.
Dear Mr. Secretary,

I am writing to bring your attention to an important issue that requires our immediate action. The defense agency recently recommended a large increase in funding for the next fiscal year. This recommendation was based on a comprehensive analysis of our current and projected needs.

I have reviewed the details of this recommendation and believe that it is essential to ensure the security of our nation. The increased funding will allow us to purchase new equipment and personnel that are necessary to meet the challenges we face.

I understand that there are budget constraints, but I believe that the potential benefits of this investment are significant. The increased security will make our nation more resilient and better prepared for any potential threats.

I urge you to consider this recommendation seriously and take the necessary steps to allocate the additional funds. I believe that this investment is crucial for the safety and prosperity of our country.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]
Ranu: Senate has the same sort of interest in stability in Europe that we do,
but we have to show that we don't have to depend on any one.

Roy: Hegel's approach, if you believe it would
indicate that our leadership is worse than
Winston.

H: Ebert is correct about long-term factors.
But as things stand, we do not have certain
rhythm. We have doubts about the
importance.

Both Europe is afraid we are leaving NATO.
NATO is making free arrangements that
should work for everyone, but not just for NATO.

Roy: NATO is afraid we have already made a decision.
P: I don't think so in the terms MABP.

Roy: There is separation born we should proceed
HAR stated 10:33

P: With how we will—what the sells?—if we can't
keep our contribution level, we must then—
that we keep strong, we must reduce levels
and Europe must adapt.

Roy: Can the new study group for NATO against
European countries?

HAR agreed.

1958: HAR talked
Roy: But we are generally agreed. We won't
put pressure other—summarize them with a
mutual deal.

I like the proposal for joint decision to
free arrangement.
I think we shoule present both, but express a preference for a bilateral solution as high.

Are you clear on our current position, or am I understanding it?

More - We should have an answer to how we will engage.

Our Sue side, all strategic forces are a sign that we need to look more.

First step - should be a cut of 13%, 25%.

We should get into a position to face talks.

While collective statements would be important-like

Foreign - They will be lot of drama in Rome - We should keep our message effective, but

Our joint position will depend on a joint allusive stance.

P: Good point.
K: Agreed

P: We want recongizing our current talks - lack,

who appear to sell off positions.

Rumors should include source option, collective

investigations.

K: I believe in this, you cannot have a common

ceiling cut only on 10%. It is important to

NATO.

P: We still need that movement from forces must

go along with NOS. It is essential for support

time at home. We have a tough selling job here.

I have agreed to talk to a NATO leader who talks
In terms of selling to the public at large
NATO. There is no question in the European
elite.

Health care problem - want to stay, but does

Brexit has further - hurts at their current trend

own terms. Britain is a

middle class anyway

In EU we have a brand of world leadership, not
with leadership. They could want to be but
their public want absent.

Are old-fashioned leadership. Has gone - lost
its grip. Unless we step step up we

putting one on will

Run - argument that we've both done in any

by nuclear option should be precluded. If now
peaceful shouldn't want to be on that side of
argument.

P. Kennedy had character - example. We -
our linearity - to move and middle option
other than - after nothing.