MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

PARTICIPANTS: Senator Strom Thurmond (R.-S.C.)
Senator William L. Scott (R.-Va.)
President Ford
John O. Marsh, Jr., Counsellor to the President
Max Friedersdorf, Assistant to the President
William T. Kendall, Deputy Assistant to the President
Lieutenant General Brent Scowcroft, Deputy Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs

DATE & TIME: Monday - January 27, 1975
12:42 - 1:20 p.m.

PLACE: The Oval Office
The White House

SUBJECT: Report on the Senators' Trip to Asia

Senator Thurmond: We want to talk principally about our trip, but there are a couple of other items.

First. This black man, Johnson. He is a great speaker and wants to help. I pass it on to you for whatever it is worth.

Next, the Voter Registration Act. We are against it. But if you are going to do it, it should be based on the 1972, not the 1974, figures.

Senator Scott: It seems unreasonable to us to continue to punish -- for punish is what it really is -- jurisdictions like Virginia and Maryland.

The President: I remember we tried to modify it earlier. Is there any better chance with the present complexion of Congress?

Senator Thurmond: I think so. I think we could get extended debate on it.
Senator Scott: I have mixed feelings because it helped get me elected. But if you could get the '64 figures knocked out...

The President: Why doesn't the Congress do it? I will consider it.

Senator Thurmond: This is confidential. Make Jim Mann an Assistant Secretary of our office services. I will give you another report.

The President: How about [Ed] Young?

Senator Scott: Stan Parrish would like an Assistant Secretaryship.

Senator Thurmond: There's Palmer Gaylord(? ), Mayor of Charleston -- he would like an Assistant or Deputy also. He's a good supporter. I am a senior Republican, and no assistants are my recommendation. I would like one.

The textile industry is in trouble. Just keep it in mind.

Now on the trip -- I think South Vietnam can be saved if they can get the ammo. If we could get $1 billion a year for three years, South Vietnam could take care of itself. It would be best if they could get it on a multi-year basis -- then they could plan. Just ask for three years and that's all. Our sacrifice there is bad enough, but we would lose tremendous face in Asia. Also, it would be followed by many others. You need a good leader for the fight -- I suggest Humphrey.

There is nothing more important than for you to get these people down here and talk to them. It might save it -- it would break my heart to lose it and it would hurt our nation badly. It would damage our position throughout Asia. They are waiting to see what we are doing in South Vietnam. If South Vietnam goes down, they will think the U.S. doesn't stand by its friends. They will turn to the Communists. We will have to spend much more in that case.

Senator Scott: I won't support it because I took a poll and the people of Virginia are overwhelmingly against it.

The President: I agree with Strom. If we don't vote the money, South Vietnam is lost.

Senator Scott: I agree.
The President: And if that happens, the ultimate cost to us will be much higher.

I used to get polls just like this. I was convinced it is in our national interest to do what we did, and I am convinced now.

In the long run, I think the people of Virginia will support you on this.

Senator Scott: I am for strong defense. But we are talking out of both sides of our mouth. We talk detente but the Soviets are pouring supplies in. The Viet Cong have quit; it is the North Vietnamese, backed by the Soviets and China. Isn't it as important to other countries?

Senator Thurmond: Martin says the stories about political prisoners are wrong -- there are not 25,000. And corruption there is no worse than elsewhere.

Senator Scott: The same with Korea.

Senator Thurmond: That's right. Park showed us a map of the tunnels which the North Koreans dug.

The President: We saw that.

Senator Thurmond: Park is going to have a referendum. If the people don't support him, he will resign. This will prove what the people want.

I don't know what your policy is about recognizing Peking. But if you do, you will disappoint your friends in Asia. Taiwan is a good friend. If you could put pressure on Peking and the Soviets to stop putting equipment into North Vietnam, South Vietnam could whip North Vietnam without the outside help.

Japan and Indonesia can help more. Indonesia has oil and has discovered materials like copper. They are moving along.

Nothing would help more than bringing foreign military officers here for training. Everywhere I go, these people are strong supporters of the U.S.

The President: I will look into it.

Senator Scott: I want to support you wherever I can. It will be a rare occasion that I do otherwise. I would not have selected Levi [for Attorney General] but I will support you.
Senator Thurmond: I feel the same.

The President: He has a good record and he handled the student problems very well.

Senator Scott: Most of the nations in Southeast Asia are our friends. But should we recognize Peking, it would affect them. It would be a shame if we would desert the Taiwanese. It would be good if you, the Vice President, or Kissinger would visit there.

The Japanese really appreciated your visit there.

I agree with Strom's analysis on South Vietnam, but others should help, and I don't think they can take care of themselves in three years. Whenever we get out, I think they will fall. We can't be the world's policeman.

Last, let me raise a local item -- to hurry Route 66. I feel strongly it must be built. With a new Transportation Secretary coming it, I don't know how he would feel.

The President: I see no evidence which would change my mind on I-66. Jack, let's check.

Marsh: You have a paper coming in on it.

Senator Scott: All Virginia officials are for it except the new man in the 10th District.

The President: It's gone on too long now, and I'm in favor of it.

Senator Scott: Excessive government controls, spending, and environmental controls have contributed to the recession. The Congress will reduce taxes but not spending. They will spend and spend.

The President: We are trying to do what we can -- we have legislation on the Hill on all these things.

Senator Scott: We need your people up there working with us.

The President: They will be.

Senator Scott: We need to stimulate business, not the government. We should use taxes to get more energy and keep the oil coming in until we get it.

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The President: We are trying to modify the environmental controls.

[The conversation ended.]
THURMOND CONCLUSIONS FROM VISITS TO SOUTH VIETNAM AND CAMBODIA

J. Key Findings:

A. Military advances by Communists will continue so long as we fail to make it clear that we will support both countries with sufficient military aid to insure their ability to successfully defend themselves. Aid request should cover two-year program.

B. U.S. should adopt policy certain of extricating ourselves from Vietnam, over a 3 to 5 year period. Ambassador Martin feels that aid level of $1 billion annually for three years would put South Vietnam in position where U.S. could probably end military grants.

C. North Vietnam's policy is to seize more province capitals and land to further weaken Thieu government. All-out attack unlikely as Hanoi fearful of U.S. airpower being used again.

D. Viet Cong no longer sizeable military threat, North Viet-regiments leading fight now. Many new weapons, men and ammo stocks introduced in violation of Paris Agreement.

II. Other Initiatives Needed:

A. Detente should permit us to put more pressure on Soviets and Chinese to reduce aid to North Vietnam.

B. We should call on other nations in Asia to help more as they have more to lose if Communists gain in Indochina.
C. Suggest President call Ambassadors Martin and Dean to appear before Appropriations Committees.

D. U.S. needs to think about possible consequences of loss of Indochina:

1. Rice Bowl of Asia in Communist hands will mean U.S. may have to feed the free countries of that area.

2. Pressure on Thailand and South Korea would be great; other countries may fall under domino theory.

3. Japan, trading with Red China, may shift policy to keep trade markets open.

4. Foreign policy defeat would weaken U.S. around world.

5. Other allies would question our will to help.

6. If Cambodia falls, South Vietnam would be under even greater pressure.

Justification for Aid:

A. Military setbacks not due to lack of will to fight or government corruption but rather to lack of ammo and fuel.

B. 50,000 lives lost, 300,000 wounded, spent $150 billion. These sacrifices would be lost if South Vietnam falls.

C. Less aid means more killing of the people of South Vietnam.

D. If U.S. commitment at Paris not met, U.S. would lose face with other nations.

E. Soviets & Red China are supporting attack by Hanoi on people of another government.

F. Oil exploration could make Vietnam self-sufficient.
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I was told generally about one thing, but there are a couple of others.

First, the black men Johnson and several others requested me to help. I promised
for whatever it was.

Next, other things. We agreed, I hope,

Seems unnecessary to continue this stuff.

Seems we need to study it carefully. Any

I think we could get them to debate on it.

Seems we need to discuss it further.

I don't think we could get them to debate on it.

Confidential: We should warn some more.

On another note:

Please report to me as soon as possible.

The matter is important, just bring in once.

I think this could be useful if we got a chance.

Then, if we get a chance, it could be

best for everyone. The rest of it would get

in a minute, your sooner than they could plan.

Just ask for help to the others. Our success

there is both now, but one would look forward

much of it. Also, several people who would

The
many others: you need a good deal of
light - don't worry about it.

...there is much more money than you need. If we can-
not afford it, we would be breaking down in the
end. We would be over by certain limits. It
would always be in front of them. We
would get the idea, and we would be in
front of them.

I don't suppose it is because we really
ought to be in our own business. I don't
think so.

P. 5: 

I don't think this will happen, but whenever it will
be much better.

I should get pretty fast. We have moved
it in our suits without half what we did,
I cannot more.

I don't know what we think. There is a view of
us, will support you on this.

5. I am going abroad. but we can join by both
end of the month. We take delight but the
issue may pay in. Nothing the part,
It is a N.Y.P. handle by some R.C. that
don't it any important business contains?

I must see the state dont fool. This is
wrong. not 25,000. any thing we can
then elsewhere.
5 Some of Karon
4 Front right. Park showed me was my friend.
3 He told that -
2 I was going to hear supervision. If people don't
1 support him, Leonard. There will be no

5 Paul knows about every. But
4 I was going to see you with express your
3 My friend in Asian. Taiwan is a good kind.
2 I was going to prepare on PRE 4 5 6 To
1 stop putting rage in NEHI SWKew like
2 NUN's -a inside half.
3 Suppose insurance can help me. Suppose
2 has not - has though one mistake like eager.
3 They are going along.
2 Writing would help more then bring foreign
1 modify office too faster. Everwhere
2 for these people are strange to appoint in

4 P doesn't know where
3 He said leave same company in Asia
2 for while. Especially in Thailand.
1 Last, if Kashi. And then it would be

5 I want to support you whenever I am. It will
4 be one occasion. Among. I would not have selected
3 here but I will support you.
2 I feel a sense
1 It has a great need be knowledgeable student
2 work very well

5 Must of contacts in S.E. A are very kind. But
4 Well we met P.R.C. It would not
It would be a shame if we would desert a team, we. Would be part of going C.P., a
4/4 would be there.

I agree we really appreciated you most then.
I agree we enjoyed you as S.R., but others
should help. I don't think they can take care of
twelve or twenty. We will have to

Peter, are we certain which would change any mind
on 5:16, 1/6, etc., etc.

P: I'm sure a group would change my mind.

We have a group coming in on 5.

We all agreed, so far he's got a new mom on a

12/16 spirit.
P: Can't talk any more, so far.

5: Take expressive data outside, speaking, summarizing
and contributed to a discussion. Carry until where

They will stay or speak. They will stay or speak.
P: We are trying to do what we can to help keep on a

12/16 in the other thing.

S: We need your help to make it.
P: They will do.

S: We need to stimulate learning, we want.

We should

P: Can we try to put all cards on a prize and earning with

we get in.
P: Can we try to make a decision outside.