MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

PARTICIPANTS:
- President Gerald R. Ford
- Graham Martin, U.S. Ambassador to Republic of Vietnam
- Lt. General Brent Scowcroft, Deputy Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs

DATE AND TIME: Saturday, February 15, 1975
10:30 a.m.

PLACE: The Oval Office
The White House

The President: I wanted to chat a few minutes before you go back to that hot spot. How about your evaluation?

Ambassador Martin: It depends on what happens now. If we can pursue your Chicago Tribune proposal of a three-year appropriation, I think we can do it. Grants will be difficult in the recession. Until the ammo cut back in May, the initiative was clearly with the GVN. Thieu sensed the Washington mood better than I did. The initiative thereafter started to slip to the North. I think Hanoi didn’t decide on the offensive until after the vote on the $700 million. There has been some unravelling and they have cranked up a massive propaganda offensive including the January 27th demonstrations here. Our information indicates the focus here is on the 27th activities and on the Congress. If we could show the foreign connection to these demonstrations it would be very useful.

If we could get this Congressional trip out there I think it would be good. I haven’t lost a visitor yet except Abzug. But we need some of the leadership, and I gather they are opposed.

The President: Jack Marsh told me that Mansfield is opposed and gather the Speaker also.
Ambassador Martin: Flynt is good. I'm sorry that Case and Fascell backed out.

[The President discussed Case and Turkey aid with General Scowcroft.]

Ambassador Martin: It would be good if you could talk to Symington.

The President: I think it would be bad if I do. If they turn it down and go public, it looks bad. I don't know Stuart on a very personal basis.

This is not a bad list.

Ambassador Martin: I think it would be a mistake to cancel the trip.

The President: I agree with that. Cambodia looks bad.

Ambassador Martin: Yes, but don't count them out. Even if they do collapse, it won't make that much difference in Vietnam.

It won't even be the end if we don't get the $300 million. But they will be using bodies instead of ammunition.

The President: What would be the effect of a Saigon bombing of Hanoi?

Ambassador Martin: There would be a short-term psychological benefit -- like Doolittle said -- but no lasting benefit.

The President: What about the Toan appointment? I've been reading about that.

Ambassador Martin: His predecessor hadn't had that much experience and he was getting cold feet. I thought he should be replaced, and Thieu said Toan was the only one he had. He is aggressive.

The President: What about the charges of corruption?

Ambassador Martin: Yes, in the context of that area. He is a bit excessive, but what we need is victories. He can do that.

The President: I talked to Sam Nunn. I plan to read his report.
Ambassador Martin: He has a variant of your plan. I think your idea is better so we don't get accused of gimmickry. I think the synergistic effect of a big program like this is great. I haven't even taken account of oil, and the finds look good.

There is some debate among your advisors about anything which might cause trouble. But Thieu is an attractive personality and I think he would refute the opinions about him if he came back here.

The President: I entertained him here on his last trip. Is there any danger of a coup?

Ambassador Martin: No. It is well in hand. But he would get 80 percent of the vote.

The President: I will talk to Henry. What about Ky and Minh?

Ambassador Martin: Ky is a farmer north of Nha Trang. He is not in politics any more. Minh is a rallying point, but he is very indecisive. A coup would come out of the army.

The President: What about the problem of demonstrations?

Ambassador Martin: This is a moderate non-Communist group which has its own arms and Thieu feared they might be co-opted into a neutralist movement. It is not a serious problem.

If the GVN could get assurance of supply, the North Vietnamese would have a serious problem. They are not getting all the aid they want. Kissinger's diplomacy has been successful there. The Chinese don't want Hanoi to dominate the whole area and greatly fear Soviet influence on the North Vietnamese. But the Soviet Union doesn't want to contribute to a PRC-dominated Hanoi.

In the 1973 ceasefire, they had 20 times the arms and supplies the GVN had, because we had ruined the supply lines. So even if they didn't get resupplies they are far better off.

On the economic side, we could see the kind of advance Taiwan and Korea had. Inflation now is only nine percent. They have cut imports.
drastically and have to import now only oil and fertilizer. They could export a million tons of rice in three years -- for $900 million. Modernizing the fishing fleet would bring in $150 million more. Timber more. There is also a big pool of skilled educated labor. Other countries, once the economy starts moving, will start to fill the gap. That is why we can stop after three years.

So if we could take $6.5 billion and divide it, $4 billion for the military and $2.2 billion for the economy, we could walk away in three years.

The President: We keep being pressed -- is there anything new on MIAs?

Ambassador Martin: No. Only when the North decides it can't use them for bargaining.

The President: It is a tragedy.

Ambassador Martin: I think we should encourage them to keep pressure on Hanoi.

The President: Maybe we could use them to help get our program through. Maybe Thieu's trip could be generated by the Congressional group. Jack Kemp could ask Thieu to come back here to tell his own story.
I wanted to check a few minutes before
we go to the table but got back late.

I have a question about the game today. Is it possible that we can have a game?

I'm not sure what time it will be.

I think it was decided.

I'm thinking of a move. It's

I think the move was

I think it was 700 or so. Then

I think it was 700 or so. Then

I think it was 700 or so. Then

I think it was 700 or so. Then
Never stand on a very personal basis.

This is not a bad hit.

I think it could be a mistake to

stand.

I disagree with that. Cambodia later fell.

It's hard to predict what will happen in the days ahead. It seems that much
depends on VN.

Don't seem to end if we don't get a cease.

But they will be running before winter.

What would be the effect of a serious bombing

of Hanoi?

short term pay benefits like...bold and...but

the long term benefit. 20 years.

What about...Sept.

The lack of much experience in

the war is getting old but I think that he should be

upgraded. I think that Thieu was a very

clever man. He is very resourceful.

What about evasion?

Yes, in context of that event. He is a bit

experienced but what can we do within the

capabilities.

I talked to Saigon. I am not real sure.

He was of a view of some place. I think you

were better to do it and get around.

Apparantly, I think the symmetrical effect of a...size...like...this to...not

I haven't taken account of...on...a kind of both.
In the crowd debate among your advisors about anything which might cause trouble. But I think it is an attractive personality. I think he would stimulate opinion about him if he were forthright.

I don't think he's foreboding. So there's every danger.

Mr. L. It's well intend. But he wouldn't 

A: Yes I vote.

I must talk to K. What about K. + Bunk?

Mr. R. I am a fan of music. What a song.

But I'm not think Bunk is a compelling point, but he is very insincere. A long wait

I. What about Jack of Bunk?

A: This is a little bit of inexact group which he can stay in. I think Frank could be accepted into a substantial moment. It not a simple task.

If G. is right get evidence of every. Now would have serious job. They won't go. The rest, they might be.

A: They won't have the evidence which must be quite from S. U. influence on Chinese. But S. U. don't want the evidence the evidence from K. evidence.

He z.: They had to think a second. Again it's G. U. that because we feel that second very

A: There is if they didn't get anywhere they can neither.

On Evan 8:00 we don't know kind of some

Tommy + Kate had.
Any time except 12:30. They have cost
12.60 for 60 bars. A hand to 11 now only and
2 for 12. Everything I say and do.
Yes, I'm 70. I need glasses in a 2.5 lens. For mail. You're going fishing
but I don't have one. I'm not sure. I want to be
more. There's also a big pool of
estilled educational loan. Other demersals,
and this money starts earning will start
to fill in gaps - that why we can stop getting
3 yrs.
So if we could take it 6.5 last a decade at
4 - I feel 2 for 2. For 2. For every, we could
worth among 15 or 2 yrs.
P- We keep being pressed - do they say the
year on NLM?
We are. Only when North decides it cannot
and then for beginning
P - I get a long way.
M - I think we should encourage them to keep
preservation here.
P - Maybe we could use them to help get anyway
there. Maybe I can't hop can be generated
by a Campus group. Jack King could ask them
I come back to tell him more there.