MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

PARTICIPANTS: President Ford
Secretary James Schlesinger, Secretary of Defense
Lt. General Brent Scowcroft, Deputy Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs

DATE AND TIME: Friday, March 14, 1975
11:00 a.m.

PLACE: The Oval Office
The White House

Schlesinger: I am having to see whether there isn't some other way to get some money. I looked at the 814 legislation—it looks tenuous and Nixon used it in Cambodia in 1970. The Hill wants to slither away from this. I say they won't give us the money.

President: The odds are against us. But I want them to stand up to be counted. We have to stand up and keep pushing--make a public record that we meant what we said. The bad results are their responsibility—not ours.

Schlesinger: Another ameliorating factor is this: We have rechecked our records and we found two million. Using it will cause some flak—I didn't want to do so without checking with you.

President: How did it happen?

Schlesinger: It was straightforward. In 1973 we built in an inflation factor which didn't materialize.

President: Do you have a problem testifying to it?
Schlesinger: No. It's only the appearance.

President: But if you don't, word will get out that we had it and didn't use it.

Schlesinger: Yes. But we will be accused of Pentagon shenanigans. I have put a hold on it for now. I would hold it until the votes are out. If it is negative, maybe we shouldn't use it. I could go to Mahon, McClellan and tell them.

President: It never hurts to be honest, even in a tough spot like this. We want to make every effort. We ought to go ahead and use it and tell them what has happened.

Schlesinger: Khmer morale is deteriorating some. Tuol Reap is being attacked and there is some progress. Under these circumstances, if the morale cracks it could crack very rapidly.

You are trying to balance steadfast American support with the safety of American lives.

President: How many are there?

Schlesinger: About 500. We have pulled the dependents. Dean recommends that when the vote comes, he pull out another 225. I think we can wait until the vote on Wednesday, but it is getting dicey. The foreign community is shrinking.

President: Supposing we ended up with 250 Americans there. What would happen?

Schlesinger: It's like Harbin in China. They were held for two or three years and some were killed.

President: Are these military?

Schlesinger: Some. We are on the edge of the law. It is the verge of a combat situation. They are unloading ammo. Congress hasn't complained yet, but it is risky.

President: I don't think Congress knows which way to go. What do you recommend?
Schlesinger: I would be inclined to approve pulling the 250 out and such foreigners as we have on our list. Right now we have no dependents.

We should tell Dean the chances are poor. He has the responsibility. Also tell him from the President that if it's a matter of stability of the American community, he should tell you immediately. You could also tell State to help surrender the city. Or you can tell the GKR that we are with them as long as they want to fight.

[Scowcroft notes: Get Patton quote, how American hate a loser. Sending troops in. Did Truman make an address at the fall of Seoul at the beginning of the Korean War?]

President: I am strongly inclined to the latter. I think we must stick to them. But make contingency plans to withdraw the 250.

Schlesinger: We could also move the Marines to Ubon to increase our readiness.

We also plan to use tear gas.

President: As I recall, our reservations on the treaty [Geneva Protocol] provide for that.

Schlesinger: That is true.

Scowcroft: Gradual attrition might be possible.

President: I like that if possible. And to hold Marines from Ubon, with your judgment if you have to move them.

[Much discussion of contingency planning.]

Schlesinger: Could we have a drawdown of Marines from Okinawa and an F-4 squadron?

President: Can't the Marines find some other way to save money?

Schlesinger: I already ordered the rifle companies out. I didn't think that was a problem. I will recheck.
President: I don't like the visibility of that. I would prefer sending a supplemental up.

How about the F-4's?

Schlesinger: We would pull them back and rely on F-4's in Hawaii. The F-4-B is the oldest model. We don't have to do that now.

President: Let's defer that. And I think I'd much rather do the companies by asking for the $15 million than pulling them out. It is psychologically the wrong time.

Schlesinger: I will go back and check.

The next problem is potentially embarrassing for you. Clements has wanted to go to Saudi Arabia. He wanted to go with Moorer. I agreed, which was probably wrong, but since then this discrimination had made it a disaster.

[Much discussion]

President: If there is a settlement, our relations with Saudi Arabia at that time could be extremely critical. And if we announce now he is not going and we don't get a settlement, we wonder, will that have affected it?

Schlesinger: We could send Jones. It is just that Brown is a red flag.

President: This is a matter of the highest importance. I want to think it over. The situation in Southeast Asia may change the whole thing. I want to think seriously about this. If Southeast Asia deteriorates, the Chairman should be here.

Schlesinger: Change the cable traffic to indicate "senior military man, hopefully General Brown."

President: Don't signal any warning.

Schlesinger: I have something about Dewey J. Bartlett.
President: You mean Joe Bartlett. What about him?

Schlesinger: The letter of recommendation for him to be Brigadier General in the reserves. A disgruntled Colonel has said politics will win and Bartlett will be promoted. General Anderson headed the board. This was unusual. Anderson took the Bartlett file and made a strong speech. There are many coincidences. The Board was properly constituted, but it will be vulnerable to charges of favoritism.

President: The issue is, was the Board honest? Does Joe deserve this promotion -- in comparison with his contemporaries. Would another board come up with the same result.

Schlesinger: Yes, but because of the precedent....

President: Look into it--see about having another board review it.
Joe is a proud marine.
V. P. Schlesinger
14 March 75

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5. Chills may be deleterious, can. Teaching

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5. is being attended some progress. Under this
examined, it would make it much easier.

If trying to determine whether or not something is actual or if they want to

4  How many homes?

5  About 500. We have pulled alphabetized

6  -style roll call with instructions to

7  - We can't count on it too much, but it is

8  being supplied. The foreign community

9  is astonishing.

10  suggesting we build up to 40,000 men

11  back. What would happen

12  2. The Kharkhorin camp. They are held

13  for 1 - 3 yrs, some killed.>

14  Can they hold it?

15  Some, we can win, some lose. It is

16  in a struggle of combat with the modern

17  armies. They haven't complained yet, but

18  it might.

19  I don't think any town which can be. What

20  do you recommend?

21  I would like to suggest building up to 250,000

22  men, perhaps on a scale of some that the

23  rear and rear are engaged.

24  We should all learn from past. We must

25  ever think of how many drift of population.

26  You would think the United States to help

27  the people or town, or they want to

28  fight it.
Did I mean make an address at Fall J Ford? I don't think we need to get more than 25.

We would like to help Marines in their transition back to civilian life.

We also plan to meet you.

On Saturday, our restoration committee will meet.

That is done.

General, attention must be paid.

The cost of fuel, and the supply of fuel, can be a real sticking point.

(Much discussion and pointing)

We ask for donations from everyone.

Can't help if prices are low.

It already existed a little company, and I didn't think that was a fact. I will check.

I don't think I'm ready for that. I would prefer something... a supplemental idea.

Here about the F-45.

We want to pull them back to help an E-46 in Korea.

The F-45 is a little too fast. We don't want to play cat and mouse.

Let's keep that, and stick with it. It won't work.

I would suggest that.

Westpark is potentially undermining for some...
Early in the war, I noticed that, in the morning, the sun would rise behind the clouds. This observation has stuck with me.

(Well, remember)

P: It seems as if everyone was talking about the war.
S: At that time, we tried to keep quiet, but I don't know how long it will last.

S: We could talk about it, but it's not going to get anywhere.

P: This is a matter of highest importance. We must think about it. The war in Europe may change while we're in this country. It's hard to think about it.

S: If S.E.A. deteriorates, Chairman should be there.

P: There were trips to indicate "unrest".

S: We're hoping they will come.

P: Don't speak any more.

S: So what about it?

P: I'm sure we need a leader. What about him?

S: Ideological views. If there is a war, the war will be over. Students will be treated as before.

P: We need careful thinking. It will be undermined by changes of fortune.

S: The issue is now broad enough. Does it have...
Would another bond come up at sea?

S. Yes, but because of a decision.

I thought it was about having another bond come to it.

For is a good man.