

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

PARTICIPANTS: President Ford
Republican Congressional Leadership Meeting
and Five Cabinet Members

DATE AND TIME: Tuesday, March 18, 1975
8:00 a.m.

PLACE: The Cabinet Room

SUBJECTS: Cyprus; Indochina

Cyprus

Senator Scott: Because Hartman and McCloskey were unable to give us the latest information on possible compromises, we decided to wait until Secretary Kissinger returns to talk with us.

The President: The situation gets more dim all the time. The Greeks aren't going to get the Turkish troops out of Cyprus. And if we say we will keep the pressure on until they evacuate, you can see their reluctance to move.

Senator Scott: Our debate took place under the eyes of two invitees from the House who are part of the Greek lobby and absolutely intransigent. It's like the man going down the road. He says "I don't know where I'm going, but I know I'm late because everybody else is coming back."

[There was some discussion of the tax bill and agriculture. The President then turned to Secretary Schlesinger to brief on Indochina.]

Indochina

Secretary Schlesinger: The situation in Cambodia is mixed. It is better than last year around Phnom Penh and better than last week. The biggest

DECLASSIFIED

E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.5

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

By let, NARA, Date 1/21/2000

CONFIDENTIAL

~~TOP SECRET~~ - XGDS (3)
CLASSIFIED BY: HENRY A. KISSINGER



problem is the erosion of morale about the lapse of US support and the withdrawal of foreign embassies. The situation along the Mekong is deteriorating.

Let me turn to Vietnam. Until last weekend, it was the judgment of the intelligence community that the North Vietnamese would chip away this year and not mount a major offensive. Two things happened: The government reviewed its supply situation and decided to shorten its defensive lines. They are withdrawing from the Central Highlands -- they were not forced out. The second flows from this -- the North Vietnamese, seeing this opportunity, may make a major attack this year.

In Thailand, two governments in a row have said they would ask US forces to withdraw. They are always a sensitive weathervane.

The President: The Philippines also are indicating they may reevaluate their policy. It is the best indication of the truth of the domino theory.

Congressman Broomfield: Bipartisan foreign policy has completely broken down in our committee. The only way to get the bill out of the committee appears to be to embrace fully the amendment and not ask for more funds.

Senator Scott: That letter was dropped into our midst and disposed of any chance to do anything but the Hamilton amendment.

The President: We were asked for such a letter. I approved it personally but I can't accept or support a cutoff. The letter was phrased just to get it to the floor. If the Congress wants to vote it down and take the onus. We will not give in on the cutoff.

Senator Scott: The Democrats also made hay with the \$21 million that was suddenly found.

Congressman Broomfield: Do I understand there is no chance of modifying the letter?

The President: I haven't talked yet with Schlesinger and Scowcroft, but I can't accept a cutoff. It is wrong.

Congressman Stephens: How long can they last?



Secretary Schlesinger: Their ammo will last through April, but the morale erodes every day.

Senator Scott: The unspoken assumption in the Congress is that the Government will fall.

Secretary Schlesinger: The North Vietnamese dispatches now characterize the US Government as impotent and they are acting on that basis.



Reuben papers -

Leadership Mtg 3/18/75
8:00 a.m.
+ 5 Cabinet Mbrs

Scott, Because Hartman & Mc Closkey were unable to give us the latest information on possible arrangements, we decided to wait til K returns to talk w/us.

P The situation gets worse day after day. The Greeks aren't going to get T troops out of Cyprus. And if we say we will keep pressure on until they evacuate you can see their reluctance to move.

Scott One debate took place in under a eye of 2 minutes from House who are part of a Greek lobby and also pretty interested.

~~What~~ I don't know where I'm going but I know I'm late because every body else is coming back.

(Tax bill discussion)

(Appreciation)

Schlesinger Sit in Cambodia is mixed. Better than last year and P.P. + better than last week. Biggest problem is morale about US support w/ demand of ambassadors. The sit along w/ making is deteriorating.

VN. Until last weekend, it - judgment of unit army that NVN would chip away this year + not major offensive. 2 things happened: Govt refused its supply sit + decided to shorten its offensive lines. They w/ changing from central inland - were not paid out. The result flows from this - NVN seeing this opportunity may make a major attack this yr.

Int'l has 2 govt have said they would ask US for w/ demand. They are always a sensitive weather vane.

P The Philippines also indicating they may reevaluate policy. It's best indication for months of a downward change.



Brownfield Republican foreign policy has completely broken down in our letter. Only way to get hold out of vote appears to be to embrace fully a commitment to not ask for more funds.

Scott That letter was dropped with our mist & disregard for any chance to do anything but a Hamiltonian commitment.

P We were asked for such a letter. I approved it personally but I can't accept or support a cutoff. The letter was phrased just to get it to a floor. If a Congress wants to vote it down & take a course, we will not give in on the cutoff.

Scott The Dems also made hay w/c 21-million

Brownfield Do I understand there is no chance of unifying the letter.

P I haven't talked yet w/ Sch. & Sco. but I can't accept a cutoff. It is wrong.

Stephens How long can they last

Schles. Assume thru April, but would make very deep

Scott The unspoken assumption in a Congress is that a cut will fall.

Schles The NUKI dispatches now characterize US Govt as important and they are acting on that basis.