

NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION
Presidential Libraries Withdrawal Sheet

WITHDRAWAL ID 010807

REASON FOR WITHDRAWAL National security restriction
TYPE OF MATERIAL Memorandum of Conversation
CREATOR'S NAME Ford/Haig/Rumsfeld/Scowcroft

CREATION DATE 03/27/1975
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Haig, Donald Rumsfeld

DATE WITHDRAWN 02/01/2000
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MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

SECRET/NODIS/XGDS

DECLASSIFIED w/ portions exempted

E.O. 12958 (as amended) SEC 3.3

MR # 10-119; #16

State Dec 9/3/10; OSD Dec 2/17/04; CIA Dec 4/19/05

By del NARA, Date 10/12/10

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

PARTICIPANTS: President Ford
General Alexander M. Haig, Supreme Allied
Commander, Europe
Amb. Donald Rumsfeld, Assistant to the President
Lt. General Brent Scowcroft, Deputy Assistant to
the President for National Security Affairs

DATE AND TIME: March 27, 1975
5:15 p.m.

PLACE: The Oval Office
The White House



[Photographers were admitted briefly and then dismissed]

President: Why don't you fill us in?

Haig: I have good news and bad news. The good news is that the United States forces have really turned around. They still need a little more training but things are very good. The Allies are better, too, except for Canada. The Dutch service is doing a lot of breast beating, but the British and the Danes are up five percent. The Norwegians are fine.

In Germany, I expect to see a wave of anti-Sovietism even in the SPD. They expect an erosion of their political situation with detente.

The French are coming around. We have force commitments from them; they have switched their strategy to conventional defense and they are willing to have private joint nuclear planning.

The Brits are spongy. Their White Paper is not reassuring.

President: Who is their Defense Minister?

SECRET/NODIS/XGDS

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EXEMPT FROM GENERAL DECLASSIFICATION

SCHEDULE OF EXECUTIVE ORDER 11652

EXEMPTION CATEGORY 5 (B) (1, 3)

AUTOMATICALLY DECLASSIFIED ON Imp. to det.

Haig: Roy Mason. Healey is the villain. They will do a bit more in the Mediterranean through rotation. The real problem is on the flanks. The Army Chief of Staff in Portugal was 41; he spent 15 years in Angola and he was totally brainwashed. The Air Force Chief of Staff is 36 and was a major three months ago. The Navy guy is an opportunist but an old hand. I think the Marxists are in control but it isn't a lost situation. I have heard that the coup was a set-up to get Spinoza. The problem is there are only two options: keep the lines open or squeeze them. Most of the military are moderate but 10 to 15 percent are in charge. I'm not sure we don't need a show of force. We need some visits; there have been some by Europeans.

President: Do we have any plans for that?

Scowcroft: Not now.

President: Should George Brown go there on his way to Saudi Arabia?

Scowcroft: I will look into it.

Haig: NATO is going to get into it as best they can. The key is whether Moscow goes for broke. Most signs are that they are urging caution. If they go for broke, we have a problem. The Italians are very worried [REDACTED] The Dutch are, too.

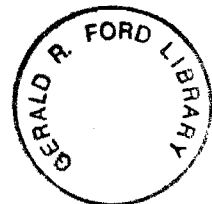
Spain is a real problem. On one hand they have a middle class and a solid military. On the other hand, there is unrest, some infiltration in the military, and a potential power struggle.

President: We have a pretty good Portuguese-American group. Can anything be done?

Rumsfeld: Baroody has said those groups have tended to dissipate.

President: Let's look into it.

Haig: I think we need a review of Spain -- not with a view to get Spain into NATO, but to insure a moderate transition. The Europeans are moderating on the Spanish issue. The word I get [REDACTED] is that the Spanish situation is very volatile.



The big problem is the Greek-Turkish situation. It is tied totally to the aid problem. The biggest problem is the risk that they will raise tension by using the Aegean problem. That is a pretext. They are getting desperate for spare parts. They don't want a waiver -- they want to go for broke.

President: We are having great problems with the Congress. I had a meeting last week and they threatened to raise the bill if we moved first in the Senate. They wanted me to use the waiver, after talking principle to me. They now suggest a Sense of the Senate resolution to use the waiver.

Haig: If I know the Turks, they will never move under blackmail.

President: Rosenthal may be a little soft but Brademas and Sarbanes are hard as rock.

Haig: Henry's visit there and my visit bought us a little time. But we have to be honest with them.

President: If there was some action like a base closure, it might scare them.

Haig: There is no way to turn it off, I fear. Once it got started, it would run.

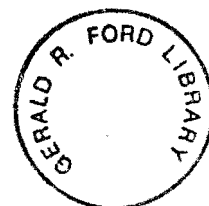
If they turn on the Greeks, they will rue the day.

Southeast Asia is having an impact in Europe, despite their lousy attitude toward our policy there. Especially in Germany -- questions like, "Will the U.S. fight for Europe?" The Germans appear to have made a conscious decision to try to lead in Europe. If we don't keep our hand in in Europe, I can see them breaking off as a third force. I have been arguing that the modern threats -- socio-economic -- require unified action.

Some Pentagon actions are worrisome -- dealing directly with the components rather than through me, the unilateral withdrawal of nukes.

President: How about MBFR?

Haig: The Dutch don't like it. The best thing about it has been that it's a unifying action. I think we should back it for that reason and if something comes of it, fine. If Southeast Asia continues to erode, there will be an odd reaction -- like when China fell. They will go for scapegoats and it will lessen the pressure for force cuts.



President: Were you there when the Mideast talks broke up? What was the reaction?

Haig: There was some alarm, but it wasn't attributed to the United States. The Brits are up-tight about the threat of Egyptian attack Saturday or at least moving forces into the demilitarized zone.

Scowcroft: We have similar reports.

President: What was the reaction to Vladivostok?

Haig: Generally good. They usually think of this as a US-Soviet issue, but they do like to carp about it. They are schizo about detente -- they like it but like to bitch about it.

President: Is MBFR possible in '75?

Haig: The Soviet Union has put a tough guy back in Berlin. Their feelings on Portugal are mixed. If they move in Portugal and Italy, then we have major problems, and detente is down the drain. On the other hand, they could move on MBFR.

Rumsfeld: I think a lot of people wonder if detente is oversold. NATO is saved every ten years or so by a Soviet flare-up which scares them.

President: What is the reaction to the CIA and the Azorian?

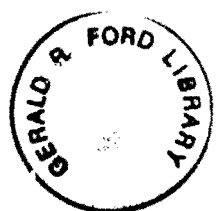
Haig: Very bad. They think we are out of our minds. They see it's an extension of Watergate. They are concerned about legislative anarchy here.

President: You thought the last Congress was bad -- this one is beyond comprehension. There is no leadership structure. There are numbers of competing power groups.

Haig: It looks frightening from Europe. But there is a reservoir of common sense and strength there.

President: Do you have any advice?

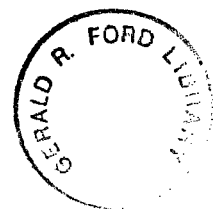
Haig: I think we have to think whether additional money will solve Vietnam. If so, it is a slippery slope. There were two ingredients on which the agreements are based: the level of aid and that major violations would call for action. I think you should explore setting these out to the Congress and



let them know what the facts are -- and to the American people, so that the use of force is not discredited. It needs careful thought, but right now it looks like we may be pouring money down a rathole.

President: We are exploring a joint session speech in prime time. Weyand is there now. We will review it next week and probably make some serious decisions.

Haig: My worry is that the mess will be tied to the tail of the Executive Branch. You are coping with your problems very well.



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