MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

JOINT LEADERSHIP MEETING

DATE: Early April, 1975
PLACE: The Cabinet Room
PARTICIPANTS: President Ford
Secretary of State Kissinger
Lt. Gen. Brent Scowcroft
Senator Hugh Scott
Rep. George Mahon
Rep. Broomfield
Rep. Anderson
Rep. John Anderson
Rep. Thomas O'Neill
Rep. Philip Burton
Rep. Thomas Morgan
Rep. Elford Cedarburg
Rep. Curtis
Rep. Robert Michel
Rep. Wilson
Rep. Barber Conable

The President: I can only say it will be a strong, frank speech. It will be justified, as I see it, on the facts. I will not recommend a phony.

I think we are at a serious turning point in foreign policy. We have some excellent successes and serious setbacks. I think if we cooperate we can move forward from past successes to the future. But in doing this, I have to be perfectly frank.

This country has too great a destiny for us to allow finger painting between the Executive Branch and Congress. There will be recommendations for humanitarian aid.

I would be glad to hear from any of you.
Scott: Are you leaving the door open for the step-by-step approach in the Middle East?

The President: I would prefer you wait until the speech. What do you recommend?

Scott: I would leave the door open because I think they all think they have something to lose at Geneva.

The President: When we were working on a step-by-step, everyone wanted to go to Geneva. Now everyone doesn't want to go to Geneva. That's what we tried to say.

O'Neill: We just came from there. Sadat said he is willing to go back, but what have they got to offer? Israel said the same -- they can't offer more. Both of them said they would go back, but had no more to give.

Anderson: I didn't observe any disinclination from either side about going to Geneva.

The President: Perhaps I might add something on the Mediterranean. There has been a long struggle on Cyprus and Greece and Turkey. We hear the situation between Greece and Turkey is going beyond Cyprus. That ain't good, fellows. That ain't good.

Kissinger: One problem is Turkey's incentive to do something before their spares run out. The Greeks are putting forces on islands for the first time. Turkey now has a government, so they may be willing to take action.

Scott: All of the Europeans are worried about U.S. troop reductions. With the situation in Portugal, we can't do this.

The President: Nobody had any sympathy for 50 years of dictatorship. But it is no help going from a dictatorship of the right to a dictatorship of the left. There is an impact on NATO, Spain, Italy, Cyprus, and the Middle East. I don't want to paint a bleak picture, but we have serious problems and what is required is a strong partnership with you. What could be an era of peace and strength could also be an era of great seriousness.

I will say in the speech that we need a strong defense budget. We need the strength to meet any of these contingencies.
Michel: Would you emphasize the need for strength to back up negotiations?

Burton: Can you tell us what steps you are taking with respect to the 6,000 Americans left in Vietnam?

Kissinger: We have two problems: Not to trigger a collapse or anti-American riots. We are laying plans. After the President speaks, our Ambassador is to tell President Thieu what it is we intend. If he did it before, it could trigger panic and jeopardize lives. We will accelerate Friday, but don't say anything now.

The President: I have ordered a thinning-out in Cambodia and we are now down to the bare minimum. The situation is bleak, to say the least, but they are still fighting.

O'Neill: What about the 150,000 -- 200,000 friends we have in South Vietnam?

The President: That will in fact be a serious problem. I will bring it out in my speech but it is too sensitive to discuss the details now.

Broomfield: I support Hugh Scott's statements, but I think we have to stress the need for bipartisan foreign policy. That is where our problem is.

Burton: The dilemma on the Defense budget is that individuals see the way to save their pet projects by cutting defense. I don't know what the solution is.

The President: I certainly understand that problem. But as we look at the problems of the world, now is not the time to cut it. It is a lot of money, but it clearly is the main interest now.

Please say the least you can. Don't talk Greek-Turkey problems. Don't discuss contingency plans. The least said the better.

Conable: One thing which scares me is the threat of anti-American actions in Vietnam. The aid is in enough trouble without some anti-American action -- that would really turn off the American people. What can we do not to accelerate the sense of frustration?

The President: If you went out and said the situation was hopeless and were pulling Americans out, that would trigger it. If they think we have given up, that will set them off.
Mahon: I think we shouldn't talk about the danger to the 150-200 people. My final hearing on the supplemental is scheduled for tomorrow. This is the time for an addition if we are going to -- there is not much chance.

The President: Can you delay until Friday? If not, do it on the floor next week.

Cedarburg: Has any assessment been made of our inability to help 150,000 in Vietnam and what it does for our credibility? It must be near zero.

Kissinger: It is not near zero, but it has hurt. It has had an impact on the Middle East situation. We have seen signs in Japan. But there is nothing we can do about that. If we can salvage something, move forward and not load things like the Turkish amendment on us. It is nonsense to say we lose credibility only if we say so. We have suffered a setback.

Cedarburg: People say we should go to the North Vietnamese and talk.......

Kissinger: We should stay out of this. However it comes, it should not be an American achievement. We can be in touch about evacuation, humanitarian aid.

Cedarburg: It would be a disaster to have 175,000 people massacured.

Kissinger: We can't say anything before the President speech because we have no chips with which to negotiate.

Morgan: I am surprised at people now who say they would vote for additional aid. Is it hopeless?

The President: It is less than 50-50. They are trying to put together their broken forces and upgrade their regional forces. It is potentially salvageable. I would not rule that out.

Anderson: Fraser said he is willing to vote aid to stabilize the situation if we would move to install a leader in Vietnam who might have a chance to negotiate.

The President: There is much milling around right now trying to find someone who might fill the bill. No one has appeared as yet.
Kissinger: Without a stabilized military situation, North Vietnamese demands are in fact to turn over the GVN to the North. On the other hand, the logic of the negotiation will be home in upon the people in Saigon. All we have to do is to stand aside. If we can stabilize the situation, the possibilities of something being developed in Saigon is great. The new Cabinet is supposed to contain all parties. Within the next 2-3 months I think something will happen.

Cedarburg: Why should North Vietnam negotiate?

Kissinger: If they see our executive and legislative pulling together, they may think it's better to talk. It wouldn't be a brilliant solution.

Wilson: General Weyand said if we give aid there was a chance; if not there was no chance; It is up to us.

Michel: In an up and down vote, there is no way to get it through the House. Maybe by a circuitous route.

The President: We will make a plea for humanitarian aid. One point -- there are refugees behind North Vietnamese lines. It strains my credibility to give aid to North Vietnam to free themselves to pursue the action which started the refugees. The refugees tried to flee North Vietnam. I can't see giving North Vietnam aid in light of this.

Michel: Or through the UN who haven't done a tinkers damn.

Curtis: What about these secret commitments?

The President: You have read the press statement we made. These communications coincide precisely with the substance of the US/GVN communiques. There is no commitment beyond what was said publicly.

Kissinger: There were two kinds of assurances: a reaction to violations and to give them adequate aid if the GVN let us take our forces out.

While Nixon objected to the bombing halt, he did not do it on the basis of a secret commitment. He never invoked a secret commitment. So with aid, it was a moral commitment and we have argued it at length but it was not a secret commitment.
Joint Leadership Meeting
March 14th

P. I can only say that we are all trying, and we will
work to get rid of some facts. I will
not dismiss a change.

S. And we at some time, work in P. to have
some small number of small, but
large, changes that could help.

J. I think if my way were open, I would
have some smaller, but better.
Just make this, in my mind this,

J. I want to be perfectly frank.

S. In this way, and the great driving force, for
this great difference. In my view, this,

J. To be completely free.

S. I want to be completely free, for
this great driving force. In my view,
this great driving force.

P. I needed you, and I need to speak. What you
needed.

S. I would have been open, because I think all
that is to be done, and that I love.

P. When we were in the big, long, many years until
the great change, how many do not want
to change. This is what I tried to say.

T. We just came back. So, not with what he
has written, even though I try
to write, but because I have, and they really don't want
not to have to.

Anderson. I don't think any discussion prevent risk
about going to Sweden.

P. Perhaps we might at the moment. We have
seen this many times, but the present year.

G. I am sure.
In our past, we've grown beyond our past. That's where we are. That's where we're going.

Our past is informative to the present, especially when we're dealing with the future. We've come too far to throw away our achievements.

Scott

We're unsure about our future, but we're helping to create it. We're not just a part of a larger whole. Together we create our future. It's what's required to stay committed.

What could be a moment of peace and strength could also be a moment of great uncertainty. We will require a speech that we need a thing of beauty, one that's strength to meet any of these contradictions?

Finkel

Would you emphasize the need for strength to be the only condition?

Bette

Can you tell me what stage you think we are going to? (1992)

K

Sure, have a plan. Not to take college six months. We have plans. After I speak to our friends in Texas about it is crucial. So let's do it before it ends. Begin planning the project immediately. We will evaluate finding and take any other way.

I have a deal for him, and in combination with our resources to make money. So it is
I think it's a good idea, but they are still fighting. What about 150,000 - 200,000 francs in 5 yrs.

That will in fact be a large gift. I would try to explain what I mean, but it too severe.

Frankly, I suggest 150,000 francs at once. I think 5 years will be too long forASHINGTON. I don't think ven

What is a solution in.

I certainly understand that idea. But now look at the idea. If we use it, we want to use it.

It's a difficult question but it clearly is... (incomplete)

Please say a bit more. What is G-I-Jook.

G-I-Jook is the obvious answer, but the answer.

One thing which seems reasonable is that if anti-US action in CH. And is one reason why we're favor.

And US action that would really trouble people. What can we do to accomplish.

It's a question of protection.

If you want to end it you have to have a clear line. You are pulling a man's coat, that would trigger it. If they think we have given up, that will set them off.

While I think we shouldn't walk about longer than 150,000 francs.

Very some money find having as supply.

Western should tomorrow. It time in China for
An addition of your going to - not much chance.

I can only say that Friday, 1, 2, 3, do it as often

Goodbye for any appearance been made of our inability

Is only that 15,000 in 94 of what it was for

We all think that must be around you

But may you find it too useful, let your skill

Impression Rex, etc. We have several in for

But there is nothing we can do about that. We can

can do something more favorably not

behind things like that anywhere, however if

they are loved only if we say so. We have

Suffered a setback

Suffered, Frank says, we should go in with 94 to talk

We should stay out of this. How can it come, it

should not be an American advantage. We

can be in touch about some, humanitarian aid.

It would be better to have 15 or 20 

men involved.

If we can say any thing before I speak because

have our things of which to say.

Frank, are you with people near you say they would

will for additional, do it together?

At least 10-10. They say, I put together

their lesson plans to my school. Their required face.

It is potentially valuable. I would not make that

out.

Frank, was not, you to write aid to Adelphi.

sent if we would want to install a beetle.
VNM VNM might come down to negot.

Then to math meeting around 7 might come 8 or 4
found someone who might fill a bill. Will try not to
delay!

Yes. Eulogies not said, VNM doesn't come back.
Khim and C.V. meet. On 9:30 rush line.

Kentucky will be there on again a fight in Everson.
All we have to do is to find a ride. Government
Jenkins, e just left a company this night.
So many, is great. He was called to respond
to connect all possible. Vol's meet 2-5 and I think
somewhere with boggs.

Cornelia: Did Kent all VNM want?

K: If they are ever in league together, they may
think it better to talk. It would be a brilliant
situation.

Wilson: Weyn said if we go out of there now a chance
if Kent there now clear. Stas suggest.

Mike: America is a damn worthy there is no way to put it
than a house. Have a council meeting write.

P: We will make plan for hurricane train ride. One joint
that an expedition behind VNM line. If then my
inability is gain aid to N.W. & free interval to
person 1 a train which start 2-3 company. Trip
exped. need to the N.W. Build on your. VNM
and in light of this

Yonekta: Or then VNM who board down taken done.

Gerts. What about Benten closer.

P: (Read gets attention)
These communications involve generally all solutions of US TV communication. There is no content regarding what was said publicly.

If there were no kind of communication, we tried to:

- Communicate adequate aid of GOM let us take some present.
- While G. decided to break fast, he did not do it on basis of content. Social aid is via a mental
  content. We had argued at length, but it not a short content.

- Problem: Don’t from Elizabeth no argument for aid. Make a case for television got away.
  Scott 
- We take any communication of help from others
  We got help at Barings, who brought improved representation.