MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

PARTICIPANTS: President Ford
Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew of Singapore
Dr. Henry A. Kissinger, Secretary of State
and Assistant to the President
for National Security Affairs
Lt. General Brent Scowcroft, Deputy Assistant to the
President for National Security Affairs.

DATE AND TIME: May 8, 1975;
12:00 - 1:00 p.m.

PLACE: The Oval Office

[The press was admitted.]

President: Did you go up to Harvard during the difficult days?
Lee: Yes, in '67 and '68.

President: Did they give you a hard time?
Lee: Not any worse than they would an American holding similar views.
Moyanban is giving me a dinner. I don't know why.

President: We are putting him in at the UN.

[The press was dismissed.]

Lee: Yes, I have read of the appointment.

Quiet. Like the Saturday Review said.

Kissinger: He has made a study of you, Mr. President. He doesn't come
unprepared.
President: I know of your vast knowledge of Asia and that you have just come from the Commonwealth Conference.

Lee: You must have gotten a hilarious account.

Kissinger: You baffled them with your Chinese proverbs.

Lee: Four thousand years of history leave a storehouse on which one can draw when it is apt.

[Secretary Kissinger spoke of how the Chinese think -- Tangtze and the Chinese Wall.]

Lee: There is one proverb which says when a country becomes confused, large matters become small ones and vice versa. We must get things into proportion.

President: I would appreciate your unvarnished views of the situation and what to do. Don't worry about being frank.

Lee: My immediate reaction is one of astonishment and alarm at the rapidity with which the situation fell apart. The present nervousness is reflected in the press like the planted question to Schlesinger which was then relayed to Thailand. Then the Thai blew his lid and said the U.S. has no morals. The press is having a carnival. We must restrain ourselves. The Thai didn't go through an election campaign -- they are intoxicated now and feel they must say these things. The two-party coalition won't last, I don't think. The Indonesians are digging their toes in and Suharto, through Lon Nol, committed himself to Cambodia and said boo to us and to the Third World. That is good. Marcos reacts to the mass media. You are doing a reassessment so he has to do one.

Kissinger: Do you think the bombing halt in Cambodia in 1973 made him cancel his trip?

Lee: No doubt about it.

Kissinger: If we had kept the right to bomb and there had been no Watergate, could we have kept North Vietnam from attacking?

Lee: No doubt, but what is the good of saying it?
There was no inevitability it would fail. If these things hadn’t happened and the emphasis could have been on reconstruction, there is no doubt.

But if I said it, the press would just say I am inflexible. I told Thieu he couldn’t rely on the one-for-one replacement and had to build a self-generating society.

President: Could they have become a viable society?

Lee: If he had turned from leopard spots to competing economies, he could have won. But not just shooting it out.

Kissinger: If we had given one-for-one, could he have held?

Lee: Yes, with the threat of bombing. But he would have faced it in '77. But we shouldn’t waste time on this.

Hanoi may see this as a moment of destiny. They may want a master-servant situation with Cambodia and Laos and put pressure on the Thais. Laos will last through Souvanna. Cambodia, I am worried. It is like the Warsaw uprising.

Kissinger: Won’t they start the same thing eventually in South Vietnam?

Lee: Sure. Those who won’t bend must be destroyed. They will put up this sham government. Here is Whitlam wanting to send aid and Ghandi writing to send a telegram of congratulations. There is a Chinese proverb: same bed, different dreams -- someone must be wrong.

President: What should we do? Substantively we intend to do whatever is necessary.

Lee: I will speak frankly. I spent time yesterday with a number of Congressmen. It would not be a realistic forum to... I could put forward proposals which would stiffen Southeast Asia, Japan....

Kissinger: There is a problem in Japan too.

Lee: Sure. If I hear these things, the Japs do too.
President: From the Congress?

Lee: Mostly the House. Strong, established members. Not so much in the Senate.

President: That is a change.

Lee: Maybe because I didn't see Mansfield. I probed to find out what could be your policy and intentions. Given what could be a veto-proof Congress, the maximum achievable is not to lose any more big pieces. Just calm it down. The Thai are not in immediate danger. Laos is a goner. Cambodia is a struggle between China and Hanoi. The Khmer Rouge never would have succeeded had Sihanouk not swung Cambodia to them.

Kissinger: We told him for two years.

Lee: Yes. He should have gone to Phnom Penh, or at least stayed in Paris.

President: We can't do anything?

Lee: No. China will do its best to see that Hanoi doesn't control.

President: The Soviet Union?

Lee: They will support Hanoi. This is an Asian Yugoslavia. It's Albania in reverse. The Soviet Union is backing the Titoists who are independently-minded people.

Kissinger: And arrogant. Their monomania is unbelievable.

Lee: Even more so after this route of a million-man well-equipped army.

We need to calm the Thais down.

Kissinger: How should we handle our withdrawal, fast or slow?

Lee: Khukrit is surprised he is Prime Minister. He is writing his own press articles. He is acceptable to the military. They don't knock him down because they think the King is not ready and it would be messy.
The Chief of Staff is openly contemptuous. I told Khukrit that you have a Congress which can block the President. But then there will be a new Congress and by then remorse and regret will have set in. I said "Don't lose your cool. Say what you have to say to the students, but keep your options open until November 1976. If it's a McGovern, throw the Americans out. But I don't think it will happen that way. So don't throw out the baby with the bath." The Chief of Staff is saying just the opposite -- he wants Utapao open, but he is too simple also. He thinks if he keeps it open he will get more aid for the insurgency. The military is contemptuous of Khukrit. The Government won't last a year, so you can discount sixty percent of what he says.

Kissinger: Won't the Army take over?

Lee: After the King wants it and the civil population has had a belly full.

Chatchai has had experience as Thanom's deputy. He says they have to have the Americans out because they promised. But once they're out, you can't get them back. I played this way with the British. I kept delaying things. It is foolish preemptive statements which are trouble. Whitlam has a penchant for it -- it looks good for the moment.

Say nothing at the moment. I have a not very optimistic view. A situation is created where the other side has such a psychological advantage, and the credibility of U.S. aid being sustained over a long period is not good. Thailand will fight 3 to 5 years with your help, but won't want to go through the Phnom Penh and Saigon mangling machine. They will come to terms with China. I spoke to Chatchai and to the middle levels in the Foreign Ministry. I have a real input to their thinking through our Ambassador.

Kissinger: Do you think the Chinese will work with Thailand to block Hanoi? Should we cooperate?

Lee: No. Because it would look like an American pIa:. You should delay it by stepping in and doling out aid until they say the insurgency can't be solved that way, but only by reforms. This government won't last and will be replaced by a government sympathetic with the Army. The number three Army man is being groomed for the top job.

I would be dishonest if I said Thailand would be a happy peaceful place. The thinking of the middle level in Thailand -- they have seen Cambodia
and Vietnam. They will try to stop it in the northeast, but if they can't
they will come to terms with China. China is their insurance agent. The
North Vietnamese Army and Chinese Army won't come down -- they will
pass arms and pamphlets and encourage subversion.

Kissinger: Can Indonesia keep stable?

Lee: With the oil, yes. There is no danger from the outside.

Kissinger: Will he take out an insurance policy?

Lee: He has no need. He can't be overthrown from outside. You can work
with Suharto but don't back foolish policies. Don't support building a big
military machine because that could lead to his overthrow from within. The
people will get disgusted.

Indonesia wants to be a great military power. They can't be, but they
can be a stable force.

Kissinger: Can Malaysia hold out?

Lee: If they don't fall for Indonesia saying "You need help, we will come in."

Kissinger: Mr. President, he told me two years ago what would happen if
Watergate continued.

Lee: Yes. But it has happened and now I move on. I am angry, frustrated,
but we must move on from where we are.

It is not lost, provided the economic side in Southeast Asia is kept going.
Protectionism here and isolationism going abroad.

Kissinger: What are you saying about Malaysia?

Lee: Malaysia has to get more queasy before you can be effective. Razak
has made a move to Habib. We want joint training in counterinsurgency,
the way you learned it in Vietnam. But he can't do it alone, only with me.
But I can't do it like the British in Malaysia. I have to lance the cancer.

Kissinger: Korea?
Lee: They won't move if they think you will bomb. The Senate knows this; they want Japan so they know they can't scare Japan by losing Korea. But it takes more than the White House -- Congress has to say the U.S. will move if there is open aggression.

Kissinger: What move will China make?

Lee: They will be wistful they didn't take advantage of the confrontation Congress, the Middle East, Cyprus.

Kissinger: How could they take advantage?

Lee: Not very much. They don't want to destroy Taiwan. They know they will get it eventually. One price the Thais must pay is to move from Taiwan to the PRC.

If I may emphasise one point. There is a tendency in the U.S. Congress not to want to export jobs. But we have to have the jobs if we are to stop Communism. We have done that, moving from simple to more complex, skilled labor. If you stop this process, it will do more harm than you can every repair with aid. Don't cut off imports from Southeast Asia. If you start closing down plants in Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, you do great damage.

President: Thank you for coming, Mr. Prime Minister.
Dear Mom,

I spent Sunday at home. I needed some rest.

Monday I had to go to the hospital for my annual check-up. The test results are good, so I'm relieved.

Tuesday I had to go to the doctor for a follow-up appointment. The doctor said my blood pressure is within normal range.

Wednesday I had to go to work. It was a busy day, but I managed to finish all my tasks before the end of the day.

Thursday I had to go to the dentist for a routine check-up. The dentist said my teeth are healthy.

Friday I had to go to the gym for a workout. It was a tough day, but I managed to stick to my workout schedule.

Saturday I had to go to the mall for some shopping. It was a fun day, but I had to spend a lot of money.

Sunday I had to go to the church for a service. It was a peaceful day, but I had to stay for the whole service.

I'm looking forward to my next week.

Love,

[Signature]
press is having a carrawl. We must listen.

ourselves. The press dictate from electric cameras
they are congenial, must feel they must say
those things. The press should not get lost.

I don't think. The Americans are dizzying.

The press, Scientists. The bound, unabled being

to campuses and that we are to read world. That

means, we too. Mann and his r. Open mind -

assumption. As he too to do one.

I. Deputy Chief, a buying bill (Continued) made him

enroll to try.

L. He hurt about it.

K. If we had kept up right to hand & to another

could have kept 1 N XR from attack.

L. He hurt, but what good of saying it.

There was no uncertainty. It would fail.

If they had kept bigger and insincere and

have been subsequent, they were doubt.

But, if I had it, I just would put it right.

I felt, time he couldn't rely on...I fail & had
to build a self-organizing society.

C. Could they have become a credit society.

I. If he had learned from legal gets & making

discussion, he could have won. But not just

shooting it right.

K. 2nd trial opinion. I fail we could be here today.

L. Yes, the trial of hearing. But be well heard

fail at all? But we shouldn't waste time

on this.
I'm not sure on this amount of ciphering. They may want a certain sort of enigma. The enigma has a formula that has held them secret. Enigma has a

2. Avoid anything that might be damaged.

1. Since those who want land must be destroyed, they will get up their thin seat. Then if we

2. Written note of my new and Othello writing to send love if there is. Some sort of

3. What should we do? Understand, as intended.

2. I will speak quickly. I spent this whole

3. No. and Commander. It will not in the

4. I could put second thoughts which would scatter E.A. Sea

5. Act in Japan too

6. Sure, if I have asked thing, c.J.p de to.

7. From the E.A.

8. What's the case? Story, set of scissors. Just


10. I found it difficult to even understand. I

11. I need to find out what could be your plan

12. From what could I satisfy

13. My way achievable is not to try

14. Their not in common danger, has a

15. 1
gover. Cambodia is a strong bet for K & Kh. give me more info. K & Kh. might have succeeded and没问题 not sure Cambodia to... We told him to be yes. he should immigrate to PP or at least stay in France. wait can be anything? he still wants to F. C. will do it but has... few direct contact. re. F? they will support him. France's Asia guys. FB Alliance in recent. Su is lurking. T is going... as an infatuated minded fight. K and arrogant. France's mission is subtler. Earn some of the. This write of a to within... well enjoyed any. We need to catch a train as soon. K how shall we handle one of them? Fast or slow. K. K. is surprised. He is F. He wrote... his own press articles. He is a negotiable... wedding. They don't want him. Cause they think they will win. I don't think they will win. Or it would be sense. L.S. is again. Controversial. So I told K that... your times. Bury which can help a long. Then... a good long. But then second... direct call Don't be your end. Say what... your forces try to assist him, but bring your... others. you tell her? 2. If a. The learn...
there is a chance but I don't think it will happen that way, as don't have a lot of air left. I've been just a part of the journey, but I'm not sure how it will end. The trouble is the tension of the situation. I think he will have to wait a while and see how it goes. I've been 60% of what he says.

K. Can't carry on.

A. Often it's not to a civil population. It's a bad feeling.

Chatthai has had experience in Phananjy. They say we have to have one more cross-hatch forward. I once cut down and put them back. I played this way without. I kept changing things. It fits with previous statements about truth. Whether this is fortunate or not - it looks good.

Say nothing for a moment. I have a lot of very optimistic views, but credit where other sides have much better advantage and they have sustained enough period in the past. They will fight. I agree with you fully, but cannot agree with them.

PP + Sayon + Senan + Sayon = Chandani. They will want it. Unless we say I support Chaundani + middle line in F.M. Therefore not urgent.

The thing that came out, K. I think Chandani will work.
Should the war come to a head?

A. Because it would look like a Cold War, it should delay it by setting an unclear and delayed goal. This could result in a prolonged arms race. This may in turn lead to a prolonged and costly war.

B. It would be easier if the US involved the US Army. The US Army is being trained for a war.

C. I don't think US involvement will be easy. People want to stay out of Vietnam. Still, if the US is involved, it will come to an end of the South Vietnamese government. The NVA will then come in. They will have a communist government. The US Army will face a communist enemy. They will have more difficulties. They will face more difficult enemies.

K. Can Indonesia being stable?

A. I think yes. There is no danger from outside.

B. It would be better if we had an armistice policy.

C. It would be better if we had a communist policy. But it's not clear. It's not clear how the people will react. The people will get disoriented. (Source: Material on Indonesia's revolutionary project)

K. Is Malaysia brilliant?

A. It's a great military power. They can do it, but they can be a stable force.
K: Help, you will come in.

H: Tell me why you want to continue.

K: Yes, but it has happened. I must go on. I am ready, prepared, but I must continue. What are we?

H: It is not that I am not ready, but I am in China now.

K: I am not back. I am not sure. It is not clear. I am not sure about the Continuance, but I am sure about China.

H: Take a decision.

K: I must take a decision. I must take a decision to get more energy. I have to understand, I have to reflect. Please take me up.

H: We can't do it now. We have to talk. We can't do it now. We have to talk. We can't do it now. We have to talk.

K: What will I do?

H: I can't do it now. I can't do it now. I can't do it now.

K: What will I do now?

H: I can't do it now. I can't do it now. I can't do it now.

K: Take care. I can't do it now. I can't do it now. I can't do it now.

H: I can't do it. I can't do it. I can't do it.

K: I can't do it. I can't do it. I can't do it.

H: I can't do it. I can't do it. I can't do it.

K: I can't do it. I can't do it. I can't do it.

H: I can't do it. I can't do it. I can't do it.

K: I can't do it. I can't do it. I can't do it.

H: I can't do it. I can't do it. I can't do it.

K: I can't do it. I can't do it. I can't do it.
If I may emphasize one point. Things are changing in US and not to just jobs. But we also have to have jobs if we are to stop brain. As a recent past that means from simple to more complex, skilled labor. If you stop this trend it will be more harm than good. Don't cut off the from EEA. About 10 more jobs, we have. If you start closing them plants in Indiana, Wisconsin, Philadelphia, you...