MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

SECRET/NODIS/XGDS

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

PARTICIPANTS:

President Ford

Dr. Henry A. Kissinger, Secretary of State

and Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs

Lt. Gen. Brent Scowcroft, Deputy Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs

DATE AND TIME:

Monday, May 12, 1975

9:15 a.m.

PLACE:

The Oval Office The White House

SUBJECTS:

Campaign; Mayaguez; Cyprus; Cuba;

Panama Canal: OAS

The President: The campaign part of the effort will be outside the White House. But I am setting up an informal group within the White House consisting of me, Nelson, Rumsfeld, Hartmann, and Morton. I would like you to be a part of it so we can keep foreign policy meshed with the political thing.

Kissinger: Will it be known?

The President: No. I think we need a foreign policy input.

Kissinger: I could come out constantly making speeches, so it couldn't be charged as politicizing foreign policy. I think your election is essential. These Latins, who are mostly leftists, are worried about the Congress.

The President: I want you to be a part of it.

Kissinger: This election is one of the most crucial ever.

The President: Look at the alternatives. Reagan would be a disaster.

Kissinger: He is incompetent

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The President: Any Democrat from Kennedy on down would be a disaster.

<u>Kissinger:</u> Especially the people they would bring in. Kennedy brought on most of our problems.

[Discussing his speeches -- General Scowcroft left for a bit]. 1

There is one controversial part on raw materials which I will settle with Seidman. There is no dispute on agriculture or energy. The issue is commodity agreements or trading rules. Treasury has agreed to discuss it. Enders is so overpowering that people agree but have second thoughts afterwards. Part of the problem is jurisdictional.

The President: Probably 90% is.

<u>Kissinger:</u> Simon's problem is not substantive. I am not sure what Seidman....

The President: Don't worry about him.

<u>Kissinger:</u> The Cambodians have seized a U.S. ship 100 miles from their coast. It's a SEALAND ship, the Mayaguest. It's 450 feet, 10,000 tons.

We have no data on the gunboat -- There was no English-speaking person among the Cambodian boarding party. It was probably within the 12-mile limit, which we don't recognize. Our closest vessel is at Subic.

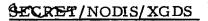
<u>Kissinger:</u> A U.S.-Soviet deal on the Middle East would be attacked by the Jews as a sellout to the Soviets.

Portugal is in part, our fault. The Soviets moved in after the revolt. We did nothing, because Nixon was on his last legs. After you came in, Chile had blown up and we were paralyzed.

I think it is better to have people snipping at detente than us returning to the Cold War and have the liberals move back to the left of us.

The Baltimore Sun now is saying we gave up on-site. That never came up and it wouldn't work. The SS-18 we maybe can get them to declare.

The President: How about the ship?



Scowcroft: [Described the situation].

<u>Kissinger:</u> We should send a staff note through the Chinese and see what options we have.

[Discussion of Cambodia, the Indochina force prohibition, and the War Powers Act.]

Kissinger: I think we need to show some movement on Turkey.

The President: I think we need to bring the top leadership down here. Can we talk specifically about our installations and what we will lose? I think we must lay it on the line, even if it leaks.

Kissinger: I agree. But we can't promise too much on the negotiation. Things may move. Makarios said he would settle for a bizonal solution and 30%. You should meet with the Greek and Turkish Prime Ministers [at NATO]. Maybe have a lunch or something. We can improvise that. But if your prestige gets too involved, the Greeks may think they can use you.

The President: I am willing to meet with the Turkish Ambassador and have a leadership meeting.

<u>Kissinger:</u> The alternatives would be lifting it, using a waiver, or lifting the prohibition on sales and credit.

The President: We could have the four leaders here first: Mansfield, Scott, Sparkman, Case. Give me some talking points. Set something up. [A meeting was set up for Mansfield from 6:00 to 7:00 Wednesday.]

Kissinger: On Panama there are two issues -- the duration of the treaty and the duration of the Canal defense arrangement. Defense will buy a 25-year treaty with a 50-year defense arrangement. The JCS may buy 40 years. If these negotiations fail, we will be beaten to death in every international forum and there will be riots all over Latin America. We maybe could work out the signing the end of this year, submit it to the Senate with the understanding there will be no action until '77, or not submit it. Panama could then ratify it first. If it collapses we will have massive problems. If you sign it you will also have massive problems.



The President: Will the Thurmonds and floods go crazy?

Kissinger: Yes. I think there are no terms they would accept.

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