

NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION
Presidential Libraries Withdrawal Sheet

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REASON FOR WITHDRAWAL National security restriction
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Rumsfeld
DATE WITHDRAWN 06/16/2004
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MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

DECLASSIFIED w/ portions exempted
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OSD Ltr 6/2/10; Date 9/3/10
By dal NARA Date 10/2/10

SECRET/NODIS/XGDS

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

PARTICIPANTS: President Ford
Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld
Brent Scowcroft, Assistant to the President
for National Security Affairs

DATE AND TIME: December 11, 1975 -- Thursday
9:34 - 10:57 a.m.

PLACE: The Oval Office

Rumsfeld: I had good bilateral meetings with the Defense Ministers. The sessions went well -- with pluses and minuses.

[He gave the President a Leber memo]

MBFR was discussed almost not at all.

Scowcroft: Did you see Drew Middleton's article in the New York Times? It discussed Option III and the DPQ.

Rumsfeld: No.

President: I did. It is very interesting. It talks about all these things.

Rumsfeld: [discussed nuclear modernization, etc., and the dangers of giving the impression of denuclearizing Europe.]

I have felt for years that we needed to get our own tactical nuclear strategy put together here and presented to the Europeans on an orderly basis. Haig has the same fears as Henry, Brent and I are having.

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President: Portugal.

Rumsfeld: I talked to the new Air Force Chief of Staff. He is 34 and is purging the Communists. He says he is ahead of the Army and Navy in that respect.

Leber said the US forces were better than two years ago, but not the French forces. The Communists are infiltrating the French Army. There is unionization in the cells.

About half of the countries are increasing their budget and the rest are reducing. The US decision on the budget will have an enormous impact on Europe.

We will discuss the budget later. The JCS meeting shouldn't be specifically budget. It is the annual meeting with the JCS. I think they want to be responsible on the budget. Weyand, especially, would rather have smaller forces fully equipped, than a larger force poorly equipped. They would rather have a smaller tough force than a shell which is soft inside.

On Angola -- [REDACTED] We are moving now but there apparently was a lack of coordination for a while.

Did you see the Stein article in the Wall Street Journal? There is danger in saying that Defense needs a certain percentage of the GNP. What we should say is we need enough to defend our interests. The GNP argument can be used subsidiary to that, but we should always provide what is needed and what is perceived to be needed.

New subject -- force posture, the State annual review, and NSC policy review. The Defense contribution requires integration of Defense and State's foreign policy objectives.

Will there be a State of the World message?

Our strategy study should link foreign policy and the defense structure.

Al Hall is resigning. I am trying to get the leaks plugged up.



The Europeans are gaining the impression of denuclearization.

We planned a paper for the NPC which should be revised -- maybe into a paper for improving nuclear strategy. If we can agree on what we want to do and then start talking to NATO, we could defuse the Congress (Pastore, Nunn, etc.) over nuclear weapons in Europe. We could present it to NATO bilaterally, through Haig, or by me in June in Hamburg.

President: What would this do to MBFR?

Rumsfeld: We would have to handle it in a way it would have no adverse impact on MBFR.

President: If we tabled Option III, and the Soviet Union accepted, what would be the reaction in NATO countries?

Rumsfeld: I have stayed out of the tactics. That is Henry's turf. Defense is involved in developing the US position, but it is up to Henry and you to decide on the negotiations.

President: We talked MBFR at Rambouillet and Wilson brought up the point about reducing German forces in the first or second phase.

Scowcroft: [Discussed the play on manpower reductions and phases]

Rumsfeld: The DPC went well. Mason said in their defense reductions, they would try to preserve the NATO commitments.

There was some talk of standardization, but the Foreign Ministers will deal with that. I stayed pretty well out of the French and Euro-group situation. That is Henry's problem. Standardization is a hot political and emotional issue. Each country and service wants to preserve its own, but it is wasteful and inefficient.

Sancar said he had specific ideas on Cyprus.

Forlani was impressive. He talked about Spain. There was a feeling that the first contacts with Spain should be through the EC and not the military. The Europeans sort of said that they didn't think they should limit their contacts to Government. I think we should start working the military first, but that is not the way they see it.



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