MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

PARTICIPANTS: President Gerald R. Ford
Hugh Sidey, TIME Magazine
Brent Scowcroft, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs
William I. Greener, Jr., Deputy Press Secretary

DATE AND TIME: Friday, December 12, 1975
11:35 - 12:25

PLACE: The Oval Office
The White House

Sidey: Has the world improved over the past year?

The President: I inherited a fine foundation. We had to build from there. We had to convince our NATO allies I stood for American strength. Now the Alliance is stronger and our relations bilaterally are better than ever.

Also it was time to solidify our relations with Japan. U.S.-Japanese relations are now the best ever. My trip and the Emperor’s trip here.

The Middle East -- the aftermath of the October war. We need to keep moving. We were disappointed in March but we have it now and the situation is better. There were some problems in the UN. The Sinai agreement lowered the danger threshold, but we can’t rest.

In Southeast Asia, we have lost Indochina, but my trip in December was very helpful in convincing them that the U.S. continues to be an Asian power and we will resist expansion.

In Portugal, the situation is moving toward a solution. It is much better than several months ago.

In Spain, there appears, with Juan Carlos and the new Cabinet, to be a movement toward moderation. This will be a help in reentering Europe.
With the USSR we have a chance for a SALT II agreement. We made headway in other areas. The five-year grain deal was good. There are many exchanges. But we do have serious differences: Portugal, Angola. Kissinger has spoken strongly on the Soviets in Angola and I support him.

Sidey: Are the Soviets cheating on SALT?

The President: I don't believe they are cheating. There are ambiguities and we have sent them to the SCC. There is an inevitable gray area.

Sidey: Is your relationship with Brezhnev good?

The President: I think it is a good candid working relationship.

Sidey: Does he have the people's interest at heart rather than just his personal power?

The President: He appreciates the danger of confrontations with the U.S. I think there is realization on both sides that we must try to find a way to avoid confrontation.

Sidey: Are you encouraged by the attitude of the Western Alliance leaders?

The President: Yes. They have their differences, but they are honest ones.

Sidey: Now do you see the outcome of U.S.-Soviet competition other than military?

The President: Aside from the military, I think our country can more than hold its own in economic or other competition with our free system.

Sidey: What are your foreign policy nightmares?

The President: The danger of some miscalculation by some nuclear power which could start a nuclear conflict.

Sidey: What if Israel should become a nuclear power to stabilize the Middle East?
The President: It wouldn't be helpful.

Sidey: Won't nuclear weapons inevitably be used? Kennedy thought so.

The President: I am not pessimistic from the leaders I know; it doesn't have to happen.

Sidey: Do you have enough power in foreign policy?

The President: There are frustrations. [Off the record] Angola is very frustrating -- it is so useless.

Sidey: Your religion. What has all this power done to that?

The President: I still pray. I think there is a higher order of things.

Sidey: Where does the U.S. stand in terms of power?

The President: In economics, the U.S. has proven our system works.

Sidey: Do you use the Hot Line?

The President: We have good means without that. I haven't used it.

Sidey: Does our agriculture power give us a blue chip advantage?

The President: It is helpful for others to know we have these reserves to help -- our friends and our opponents. I don't think we should use it in a crass powerseeking way.

Sidey: Can you trust these foreign leaders?

The President: No one has violated my trust thus far.

Sidey: How about the third century?

The President: The first hundred years stabilized the government structure. The second gave us the industrial corporation. Now we have new problems. Everything is big -- it tends to smother the individual.

Sidey: Have the attacks on Kissinger been unfair?
The President: In many instances, unfair, inaccurate and harmful.

Sidey: You are hard to parse. You are conservative in budgetary terms, yet pursue detente. How do you define yourself?

The President: I grew up in an isolationist, Fortress American environment. World War II showed us that the world was different. I became convinced of the role of the U.S. in the world.

Sidey: Why this foreign policy revolt?

The President: I think it is an outgrowth of Vietnam.

Sidey: Why do you have to see these leaders personally?

The President: I think it very important to have a personal relationship so you know what the words mean, what the matters mean, etc.

Sidey: What is the most encouraging thing?

The President: The incidents: Vladivostok, Sinai, Mayaguez. Otherwise the growth of personal relationships.

[The above are informal notes.]
I also want a good deal more food.

P. I am weights a fine foundation. I had a build

on this. Need to examine NATO within the

area along the border. Now Germany is strongest

in relation of militarily cost and later than

some

also trying to really stick it with us.

1. US-Japan within one heart area

2. No longer directly tied as.

NRA - Aftermath of 72 an. One heart to big

progress is not hit but now 0 at

the heart. This puts us in this. Some have a

stronger that we could set.

In S.E., we have had Japan, but by thing

we're being helped in learning. But we remain

very strong which we will start of Tunisia.

The S.E. situation that trend will

be more toward a solution with sales

then toward something.

In Spain, this appears, of course, too

her. We must find modern and modernize help in

Helicopter Era.

ORD try we have in Europe. Sattie, back

living in the area. Were asked to good.

Those heavy sites and phases that are a

hard enough already. Anyway, Bhas

always strongly on Sep. Some are not

capable.

S. Are some cheating on Sattie.

P. Jut just means some cheating. Then we

cannot invest so as have send them A.S.C.C. Then

two hundred they case.

S. 2000 pounds, 6/3 bug proof? 
I think it is a good candid working relationship.

S. Does this leave some people in that at least some of the post is shared power? As appears to happen in some of the cases in Western Europe. I think there is room.

P. Both sides that we find yourself agreed a way to avoid confrontation.

S. Are you encouraged by a relationship with Western other leaders.

P. Yes. They have their differences, but they also respect each other.

S. How do you see the outcome of U.S.-Soviet negotiations?

P. I think some unity in European will bring in demand.

S. Soviet Union primary.

P. Danger of some mutual by some nuclear forces which could start a World Con.

S. Should I assume a new form of stability. How can it help you?

P. What was your intention to reneal? Known that to.

P. I am not familiar with a Russian thinking. I think it doesn't have to happen.

S. Danger of long problem in Europe.

P. Soviet Union primary. Offered. Yugoslav very

S. For emphasis. What are all the power changes that

P. I think there is a king and a

S. Who does US stand in terms of power.

P. Even a U.S. does palace one region works.
S. Do you mean a hot case?
I. We have good news when that we haven't met.
S. Personages given in a line that advantage.
I. This helps for them to be more attractive to help them fix some reference. I don't think
we shall use it in a gross misunderstanding...
S. Ever trust their foreign leaders.
I. Do you know your two populations. We can have
sanitized any less than this.
S. How do you do.

P. (To Bill) I think we should get started out on that statement.
S. Yes, yes... we should take care. How we have
two parts. Everything is by—tends to another

divide.
S. Have you been a house in.
P. In many instances, some are not... stick up.
S. You can lead to peace. You can express
in budgeting, yet peace exists. How do you
defend yourself?
P. I grew up in another... public announced that
we'll thing for a world as only... I became
unmatched for what we can say.
S. Why this important?
P. In that we can understand it.
S. Why do you think of this, leader yourself.
S. It looks it very important to have personal relations.
S. You know what it would mean, what exactly,

What is important now?
In their: Next, saving energy. And
Another is a period of personal relations.