MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

PARTICIPANTS: President Ford
Brent Scowcroft, Assistant to the President
for National Security Affairs
Congressman G. V. (Sonny) Montgomery (D-Miss.)
Congressman Benjamin Gilman (R-New York)
Congressman Paul N. (Pete) McCloskey (R-Calif.)

DATE AND TIME: Thursday, December 17, 1975
12:00 p.m.

PLACE: The White House
The Oval Office

The President: I understand you had a good trip to Paris and that you are
planning to go to Hanoi to pick up the bodies and talk to the North Vietnamese.

Montgomery: Yes, but we have heard there is a change. They want us to get
the bodies to Bangkok.

The President: [Reads the cable.]

Montgomery: When we said we would accept the remains, we said we would
do it in Hanoi -- then they said Bangkok. The UN High Commissioner for
Refugees today called and said they would do it in Hanoi, but in a UNHCR
plane. We would go from Bangkok into Hanoi Saturday night. At noon Sunday
we will receive the bodies in a ceremony. They asked for an expert to identify
the bodies. We would hope to talk to the Vietnamese about other MIA's. We have
good files of people we knew were alive.

They will want to talk about the development of our relations.

Gilman: The MIA families reacted very favorably to what you brought back
from China. They think things may be gearing up. We would hope you would
indicate that our government is considering a further gesture. We think
that would be helpful -- perhaps oil drilling.
The President: I would remind them of my Hawaii speech [Dec. 7], we will look to the future. But I think we need to see that they deliver -- if they do it as a gesture. But I don't think I can say ahead of time that we will open up on oil, trade or something. Let's get some performance. We know their performance heretofore has been damned little.

McCloskey: I told Brent I would be the hardliner. There are two points: Our committee ends in September, so we are in a bigger hurry than State.

Montgomery: We will wrap it up in a report. It may be a sad one, but we will try to ease it off.

McCloskey: They clearly know the difference between words and actions. I told them I would try to get the trade embargo lifted. They released the nine Americans last October. They said they would return the three, the two Marines, and search for MIA's. I think that our success will depend on simultaneity. I know State is preparing a list. I would like you to announce beforehand -- a strong step -- that if they do what they promise you will lift the embargo. There is a Bingham bill to do it, but I think it should be your initiative, not the Congresses. Brent is worried about the political effect, but I think it would be a good decision now.

The President: Without seeing the NSC list, I would think oil might be more beneficial.

Gilman: I heartily agree. They have been probing oil companies and I think this is the right move. I think it is our move.

The President: My quick reaction is that you go over and get the bodies, get a promise of what they will do and what quid pro quo they want.

McCloskey: Could you make some sort of statement between now and Saturday?

The President: I would want to think of that.

Scowcroft: Why can't you refer to the Hawaii speech and say the President stands behind it? We want to start a new relationship, not on the basis of suspicion.

The President: Tell them to forget performance; start from scratch. "You don't have any performance either." Let them show what they will do; then we can act.
Montgomery: I don't have any trouble with what you are saying. Your Hawaii speech was right on track. Pete would like to offer something, but if we could tell them you are favorably disposed.

We are hoping to get an aircraft to get us out there.

Gilman: The North Vietnamese Ambassador said if their actions remain unilateral and we don't reciprocate, they would have a problem with their public opinion.

The President: How many sites did you say you had?

Montgomery: When we narrow it down we will have only about 14-15 good alive cases, and maybe 250 bodies.

McCloskey: We could perhaps get 100-200 bodies they have buried.

Gilman: Kissinger left 80 case files out there in '73. If we could just get information on cases like that.

The President: I hope you will shoot down the Fat Man. Grivas is the name. He is a fraud and a crook. [Described the cases].

Montgomery: We will have a problem with some of the families, but I think most of them will accept it if we do a good job. Some of them get edgy when we say North Vietnam says it has no more prisoners, but we can handle them. Your China trip helps, because some of the families think they may have marched them over into China.

McCloskey: We have to be more friendly than you, to get results. I hope if we get something you could respond quickly.

The President: I will be here after 30 December. Let me think out loud. Maybe I could give you a letter.

Montgomery: That would be great.

The President: Or I will call you. When do you leave?

Montgomery: Thursday night at the latest.

Gilman: Can we say when we are talking to them that there is interest in all?
The President: I would like to think about that and see the NSC list of things we could do.

Montgomery: I think the Vietnam thing has quieted down some and even in my conservative district there won't be an outcry.

Can we tell the press you stand by your Hawaii speech and you support efforts on MIA's?

The President: Yes.

Montgomery: Is it fair to say that you will match their actions?

The President: There must be reciprocity.
DECLASSIFIED

E.O. 13526, SEC. 3.b
NSC MEMO, 11/24/08, STATE DEPT. GUIDELINES
BY: ________________ NARA DATE: __________

P.S. I understand you had a good time in Rome, but you are planning to go to N.H. And I wish you all the luck in the world.

The last time I heard there is a Trump - but no, there is a Trump, Trump, Trump, Trump thing in the United States.

Ben and I are both in London. He is in London, and I am in New York. We are both planning to go to N.Y.C. later on this week. We will be happy to talk to you about whatever is on your mind. We are in good shape of people and businesses as well. I am sure we will talk about the future of the United States.

The N.S.C. families wanted to express their thoughts to you from China. They think things may be getting up. I hope that as we approach Christmas and in the coming new year, we can try to understand the Chinese and their position on the situation. We think that we can be helpful in the future.

I was in Hawaii just a few days ago. We will talk about future. I do think we need to see that they deliver. They do it in a gesture. But I don't think it can be easy and that we will have one and, I will say something.

Hopefully, we can all do something. We have been together since we have been here.
We shall have to work in a hurry. It may be in a few days, but we will try to get it all done. They already have a plan, but much as a....

In the meantime, I would like to see the working papers. They have a. I feel that our moves will depend on circumstances. I hope that is going well. I would like to see a plan...

Beforehand, it is a worry that, if they do what they promise, you will lift sanctions. This is a big undertaker. Will they keep to your instructions over the long term? I think that's unclear. It is very political stuff, but I think it would be a good idea to move... I am saying a NUC test, I would think might be more beneficial.

A feasibility study. They have been going on for a year. I think that is a wrong move. I think it is one error.

My point is that you should... If a leader is... a major setback, they will do whatever they want. In that case, would you move some part of the... but move? It is... I am writing & Chair of that. In the future, I cannot go to teacher Mr. Phillips, please... We stand united. I want to...
I stand a new relationship, and in a sense of recognition.

P. Forget me now. Start from scratch. I don't have any property within. But there's some other work they will do. They can act, I don't know the truth of what you say about this. I'm not sure. If we could tell them, we could tell you. We could tell them other things.

C. The NUN can stand in their act. Can you understand? They have been to vary their performance.

P. How many cases are you going to take?

C. When we learned what we could financially, about 15-1500 cases advised to them, and maybe 2000 decisions.

W. We could perhaps get 200-2000 more to advise them, if we wanted.

C. It's not clear what and what we've done? A few could just yet work on cases like that.

P. I hope you will want them - Fort Union.

C. Agreements - Canada? We're a country. How do you want it done? (Described a case.)

W. We will have a point of view of a family, and I think most of them will accept it. If we do a good job. Some of them yet 1950, when we get NUH they'll have to work more, but we can handle them. Your advice may help, because some of them think they may have married them men into China.
Mr. We may have to be more friendlier. 

Chen, I am not sure. But I hope if we can find something you could we may 

P. Trust be here after. Am I. But we think 

out from. Maybe we could your ignorance letter. 

Mr. That would be great. 

P. On don't sell your. Am I you know don't have an idea. Might at latest. 

G. Come on. Any where we telling. I think the 

you are is much less in our 

P. I would like to think about that. See this 

NSC and stop and we could do. 

Mr. I think the UN thing has been down now. 

to what in my idea. The question is what 

there isn't been an entry. 

Mr. Can we talk — from — you know. By 

Hawaii should we — subject to an 

Mr. B. 

But isn't four to say that you will match their 

actions? 

P. These must be unnecessary.