MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

PARTICIPANTS:  
PRESIDENT FORD  
Dr. Henry A. Kissinger, Secretary of State  
Lt. General Brent Scowcroft, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs

DATE AND TIME:  
Thursday, December 18, 1975

PLACE:  
The Oval Office

Kissinger: At NATO I presented detente as a combination of conciliation and firmness.

Giscard invited me to a private dinner. He is concerned about Angola. They will recruit mercenaries, provide gunships, and put mirages into Zaire.

At the very moment when the Soviets begin to blink, the Congress is going to cut our legs off.

Zaire and Zambia were very upset at Moynihan -- who is a laughing stock and a disaster in Europe.

I am purging the African bureau, after the NY Times article [There was further discussion of State and Defense leaks].

The President: How about a veto if they pass the bill? I could say it was hasty action, and make the point they are toying with the national interest.

Kissinger: We are living in a nihilistic nightmare. It proves that Vietnam is not an aberration but our normal attitude. When our critics can complain about the volume of SS-19s and cave in Angola, when they can try to change the Soviet internal structure...
The Soviets have become a superpower. Before World War I, the emergence of Germany as a major power brought about a war. We have to manage the emergence of the Soviets to a superpower status without a war. We are being deprived of both the carrot and the stick. We will lose Angola and then they will want us to cut off grain to the Soviet Union. We are losing all flexibility and we will soon be in a position of nuclear war or nothing.

President: I couldn't agree more.

Kissinger: No one will ever believe us again if we can't do this. How can they believe we will back them?

[Discussion of Woodward article in the Post about the circumstances of the Nixon pardon.]

Kissinger: I would recommend to take on the Congress on the national interest. We have little to lose. It was inevitable there would be a Soviet overture -- now they are laughing at us. We would have had Angola settled by January if these bastards had not been in town.

President: The more I think of it, the more I think I should veto.

Scowcroft: A veto threat is keeping the bill from being passed.

President: But if we veto and get it sustained, we can at least show that one-third of the government is with us.

Kissinger: We have several problems: even if you veto, we are out of funds.

[Discussion of tactics on veto, delay, and getting $28 million.]

Kissinger: If this works, I would send Schaufle to Africa, go to the UN Security Council in January with a program. We have to be careful about withdrawal of foreign forces.

[The President calls Mahon on Angola reprogramming action.]

President: He was wafflie at first, but I got him back on the track. We will get the Subcommittee down here. I think we can make it.

Kissinger: It is not just Angola. I think when you make a decision it is the responsibility of each agency head to pull his department in line. They will do the same thing in SALT.
On SALT, I think we cannot count Backfire, we must have a position on cruise missiles, and I must have negotiating flexibility in Moscow. The Pentagon position is to leave out Backfire, and cruise missiles. They lose both ways that way; it counts Backfire as within SALT and lets the cruise missiles run free. They might as a last ditch effort.

President: I talked to Don and the JCS.

Kissinger: Brent said you were terrific.

President: I talked to Don. He promised to work with the JCS and he says they are committed to coming up with some new sillos.

Kissinger: They must stop treating me as the soft guy. If they take it seriously....

President: Give them a chance.

Kissinger: I think we can get an agreement and sell it.

One other point. Levi is hell bent to bring suits against companies that are doing business with the Saudis. You have to understand the Saudis don't care -- they will shift all their orders to Europe. [Described the boycott Presidential statement.] The Israeli strategy is to defeat you and so embroil us with the Arabs that whoever comes in will be paralyzed.

Scowcroft: There is a big package you approved which was designed to hew to the legal line.

President: Get that paper out and let's look at it.

Kissinger: In substance we are in good shape. Your relations with Giscard are fantastic. With Europe it is great; Angola is no problem with them. We are having a break-through on Cyprus. The NATO meeting was terrific -- they showed a degree of unity which is unprecedented.

President: Are they changing on Spain?

Kissinger: Yes. And Giscard is one of your strongest supporters.

We have a sick press now and it isn't helped by the White House group. They ought to be positive.
K

We are living in a "hardheaded" environment. It means that we are not an alternative but a normal community. When you enter any country, you are supposed to be without ambition, but...

We have to manage a situation of how to improve some status. We are...
Levi and I met at 5:45.

To Senate opposite your home?

(Discussion of Woodrow Wilson's candidacy and its impact on the election).

I immediately went to the Senate as it was important to be on time. It was observed that it would be a San Francisco man, not any one else. We worked hard to have the debate settled by East of three candidates, and not be in town.

The Senate did not feel as much I think it should have.

Said we dug in a bill from being passed.

P.S. I would like to get it next time. It is a point that I wish to stress in my sound.

I have several reports. Even if your vote, we are out of funds.

(Concussion of candidates on vote, delay, getting of funds).

Of the issues, I would send Sherman to Africa, and to USSR in June with a few terms in mind.

(Rodgers, Warren on current foreign policy).

Upgrading options.

P.S. He was careful as he last I got him he is on track. We will get a positive change here.

He is not sure yet. I think when you make a decision it is a very tough; each one of these leads to fall for deep in kind. Well done.

On Senate, I think we must not commit.

Backing is not smart. I want him to fasten on one and get his smart foot on it.

The Kentolian faction is to blame, not Madison at all. They are both very old and very.
Back in my seat & let Emily in full.
They might as lost within itself.
P & I talked to Don, and TC the
K & I went to the room where
P & I talked to Don. He promised to arrange &
TC's to say they wanted to come up at
some tomorrow.

They must stop to being not as a sort
way. If they want it differently...
P. Come there a feature.

K. I think we can get an agreement & tell the
one other point. Here we'll have to be
point against companies. There's business of Sorta.
You think understanding. Some But can't
they will shift all their orders to Europe.
(Down in one very cool place, statement).
The big point is a difficult one and essential
so what & how to get the orders come in will
be complicated.

S. There's a big package your agreement which
has been signed in this morning has
sent that gone out & take back at it.
P.

K. In substance we are in good shape. Your
alliances still bound me fantastic. If we got
is great. Anyone can see we have been back
there on 6 years. NATO unity was this
a degree of unity which is unprecedented.
P. Can they change on Spain.

K. Yes. And Giscard is doing of your thoughts
among.
We have a side pass now & it isn't helpful
any a cut it going to they ought to be giving.