MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

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MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION:

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

DATE AND TIME:  
Thursday, February 26, 1976  
9:21 - 10:18 a.m.

PLACE:  
The Oval Office

Rumsfeld: I have a subject. Today they decide on the Defense appropriation in the House. Mahon is still nervous about his committee. I can feel it. He wants to go the old route of cuts. I have told them it is difficult to make any more cuts this year -- it's a bare-bones budget. If he cuts it and the Budget Committee does, we are in trouble.

There are three areas of concern: any pay changes have to go on top; shipbuilding we are reviewing; SALT may need a supplemental. If they want to add on for any of these, it should go on top of the $112.7 billion. I just wanted you to know they may come in over your budget.

The President: That would be a miracle.

Kissinger: My only concern is the Democrats adding to the defense budget. They do it every 16 years.

Rumsfeld: We are protected on all these areas.

Will you meet with the committee leaders - or the full committee?

The President: I would stick to a small group.

I was asked a question about why we failed in Angola. I said we didn't -- that Congress got cold feet.

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How about this Cuban overflight?

Scowcroft: It's a civil airline flight to Canada.

The President: Stop it. There will be no Cuban overflights.

Scowcroft: We'll have to stop our overflights over Cuba.

The President: That's all right, I don't want it.

What is this about Jordan and Syria getting closer?

Kissinger: It is true. We are losing our position.

[Discussed developments, including Rabin saying he wanted a crisis with Syria in November.]

Our plan was to consult with Sadat privately and let him sell it as a peace plan to the other Arabs. Now the Israelis have put it in the papers. Rabin has totally blown our chances now that it is an Israeli public proposal. We maybe should go out with our own peace plan and let the Jews scream. If a crisis comes, we should announce a settlement plan within the first couple of days of the conflict.

[Some discussion of the impact of the Cuban adventure in Angola and need for contingency planning for Cuba and the Middle East].

Rumsfeld: [Discussed his trip to the Middle East. It was agreed he would go in June to Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Egypt and Israel].

[Discussion of contingencies regarding moves against Rhodesia/Namibia].

Kissinger: If they move in Rhodesia, I would hit the Cubans hard and then enforce majority rule in Rhodesia to show that it wasn't our aim to prop up the white regime.

Rumsfeld: I think we've got to get our act together beforehand. Get the Hill behind us.
[Discussion of being sweet or tough on Congress. Don wants to be sweet -- the President tough.]

I would like McAuliffe for ISA. I know he is an FSO, but I really need someone. Jordan can't do it.

Kissinger: It's okay with me.

The President: I have no objection.

Rumsfeld: About unionization of the armed forces. Thurmond is proposing legislation. I don't want to unify the unions on this.
R. Have a meeting today in Defense in Rome.
W. We have a meeting today in Rome. We are meeting this morning to finalize a proposal. I have told them it is by the end of the year—it is how basic budget.

P. Irrelevant to the budget with these smoke stacks. There are two ways of getting our proposal to go on top: shipbuilding. we are writing Salt.

R. 1127. I see 1127. If the variant to add fuel, if they decide yes, it should fall on 1127. I just wanted you to know that they may come in our annual budget.

P. That would be a miracle.

R. My only concern is to add the chaff to the budget. They don't say yes.

R. We are meeting with all these teams. We're going to meet with G.E. and with the small teams.

P. I should stick to a small group.

R. Any additional questions about why we failed in Chrysler? I want to make sure that long-term effort will fall.

S. (Discussion of Chrysler vote)

R. How about this current oversight?

S. (Discuss what happened)

P. Stop it. Time will be no current oversight.

S. Well, that's stop our oversight.

P. That's all right. I don't want it.

R. What is this about failure of scope getting close.

K. It is time. We are doing one part.

(Presumed discussion, including: "We won't go in another way, again, on this."

Ours plan was to... -contact of Sales primarily.
Let him sell it as a place "in the land." Now, I have put it in a purpose. Rabin has totally 20000 armed forces. 

Stark is one of the two partial plans. We may have to go out to any other plan at a later stage. 

Rabin has won over 20000 armed forces as a settlement while 10000 armed forces are left. Some dominant of the impact of certain conditions in Angola, and will be for continuing planning for Continuation. 

R. Trip to MC. Applied by mobilize in June-54.

Jared, E. R. 

Discussions & enquiries regarding some agreement. (Abbeville, Denver) 

R. Stakr, I would have been held to the same purpose, and in Rabin, to know that certain owns own. 

R. Martin in public. I want our act together regardless. 

File black, etc. 

Discussions of being meet to tough on trip. One wants in the part - 2. Tough. 

Discussed with you, Chris. The ESA, I know he is FSA, it will have full knowledge. Other interested. 

R. Of the plan. 

P. Deuce we objection. 

R. Observation of armed forces, Rabin is putting login. Didn't want any more American