

Scowcroft file

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

PARTICIPANTS: President Ford
Henry A. Kissinger, Secretary of State
Brent Scowcroft, Assistant to the President
for National Security Affairs

DATE AND TIME: Thursday - March 18, 1976
9:35 - 10:15 a.m.

PLACE: The Oval Office

Kissinger: There is nothing in the Soviet letter [the Brezhnev letter of March 17]. They misled us all day long. Voronstov briefed the press that we could have an agreement in two months. He called me and said it didn't meet all our points but was positive. [He describes the letter.] They proposed going back to their January position as a basis.

President: Their idea for reductions has appealed to me.

Kissinger: We have two problems: How to handle the letter so it doesn't do damage next week; and how to conduct our affairs in the government.

I think we are undermining detente. Except for Angola, I think the Soviets are getting a bum rap. I don't believe they have massively increased their forces. It is a gradual trend and will continue no matter what. They have been quiet in the Middle East. Only Angola was out of bounds.

The next thing which will happen is the Democrats will say SALT has collapsed and we have ruined detente. The Democrats may seize the peace issue.

President: Reagan hasn't made headway with his charges as long as we are at peace and moving. SALT is in our national interest. The question is how to proceed.

Kissinger: We could have an NSC meeting late tomorrow. Hand out the letter, warn them against all leaks, and say we want a proposal for the next step within two weeks.

~~SECRET~~/NODIS/XGDS

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EXEMPT FROM GENERAL DECLASSIFICATION
SCHEDULE OF EXECUTIVE ORDER 11652
EXEMPTION CATEGORY 5b(1-3)
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DECLASSIFIED
E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.5
NSC Memo, 11/24/98, State Dept. Guidelines
By LL, NARA, Date 1/24/00

-2-

Scowcroft: It will leak. I would suggest instead that you call in just the principals, show them the note, and tell them you want to think about next steps.

President: I think it should be principals only. Maybe just here in the office -- the three of us, Don, George, and George Bush.

Kissinger: I think Ikle also.

President: Let's have a meeting late Friday with those people. Say it is not to distribute or it will leak. Say start a study the first of next week.

Kissinger: I agree with Brent. Say you just want to think about it over the weekend. Then have an NSC next Wednesday. I would even mention the option of suspending the talks. None of them will want to take the heat for it! [There is discussion of notifying Rumsfeld ahead of the others.]

You could then decide whether to go for one or not. If not, you could respond - - which I don't recommend - - or string out the talks.

President: I see the papers played a tough line on the Jewish meeting.

Kissinger: I don't see how you could have done anything else. [There is some discussion of the meeting, C-130's and transition quarter funding.]

Len Garment says these guys are fund raisers and they need a crisis every few months to keep the money coming in.

I disagree with Don. These guys will not be with you. If you get any, it will be with women like Klutznick.

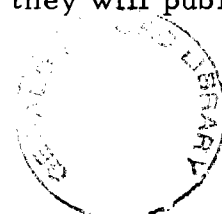
President: I think that is right. And I think I would win in a confrontation.

Kissinger: I met with the Sonny Montgomery Committee. I was tough but I did say we would agree to open talks with North Vietnam. We could send a note through Paris and offer to start talks on outstanding issues -- at a low level.

President: Will it leak?

Scowcroft: Yes. We will have to tell the Committee and they will publish it.

Kissinger: We can say we are discussing MIA's.



Scowcroft: Will the Committee drop the embargo amendment in the Security Assistance Bill?

President: That should be a precondition. Let's go ahead, just with talks.

Kissinger: I think we should trim our sails a bit on the Soviet Union. We should keep clobbering them on Angola -- partly to keep the head on the Congress but . . .



~~Johnson statement for detente -~~
~~by [unclear] - call -~~

P/K



18 Mar 76

K There is nothing in a Sore letter. They missed
as all day long. Veronique bought a press
we could have agreement in 2 wks. He called
me & said it didn't meet all our points and
was very positive.

(Describe a letter)

They proposed going back to their Jan position
as a basis

P Their idea for reductions has appealed to me.

K We have 2 pros: How to handle a letter
so it doesn't do damage next week; how
to conduct our affairs in a govt.

I think we are underlining detente. Except
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on it. I don't believe they have massively
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& will continue no matter what. They have been
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bounds.

The next thing which will happen is a
Demos will say Salt has collapsed & we have
ruined detente. The Demos may seize a
place issue.

P Reagan hasn't made headway w/ his changes
as long as we are at place & moving.
Salt is in our natl interest. Question
is how to proceed.

K We could have a NSC mtg with [unclear].
Handout a letter, warn against leaks, and say
we want proposal for next step in 2 wks.

S It will help. I would suggest instead that
you call in first the principals, show them the

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E.O. 12958, SEC. 3.5

NSC MEMO, 11/24/98, STATE DEPT. GUIDELINES

BY LA NARA DATE 6/16/04



- mtg late Fri.
- Check Bush availability

write, and tell them you want to think about next ~~steps~~ ^{step}.

P I think it should be principals only. Maybe just have in-office - 3 of us, Dan, George, & George Bush.

R I think I like also

P Let's have mtg late Fri. w/ those people. Say not to distract or it will back... say start a study out of next week.

K I agree w/ Brent. Say you just want to think about it over a weekend. There have been NSC mtg Wed. I would want to maintain a option of suspending talks. None of them will want to take a heat for it. (Discussion about notifying Dan ahead)

You could then decide whether to go for one or not. If not, you could suspend which I don't recommend or string out the talks.

P I see see a papers played a tough line on a Jewish mtg.

K I don't see how you could have done anything else.

(Some discussion of mtg, R-1307 & TC)

Let Government say these guys are found serious & they need a crisis every few months to keep money coming in.

I disagree w/ Dan. These guys will not be w/ you. If you get any, it will be w/ someone like

K butzwick.

P I think that is right. And I think I would win in a competition.

K I met w/ George Montgomery write. I was tough but I did say we could agree to open talks w/ NUN. We could send a note thru Paris & offer



- ^{get} ~~can~~ P a copy of Braden speech

talks on outstanding issues - at low level

P Will it leak?

S Yes. We will have to tell the Court - they will publish

K We can say we discussing NIA's.

S Will the Court drop a challenge to amendment Sec. 40A bill?

P That should be a precondition. Lots of cables, first w/ talks

K I think we should train our people but on a S.V. We should keep clothing them on Bangalore - plenty to keep - but on a Bangalore - but

