

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

SECRET/NODIS/XGDS

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E.O. 12958 Sec. 3.6

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

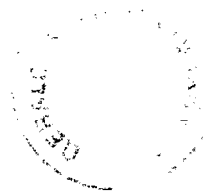
MR 01-100, #40, NSC-22, 10/15/01

By del NARA, Date 10/24/01

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

DATE AND TIME: Monday, March 29, 1976  
9:20 - 10:25 a.m.

PLACE: The Oval Office



Kissinger: If we say the trend is going against us, that is bad enough. The impression that we are slipping is creating a bad impression around the world.

Rumsfeld: But it's true.

Kissinger: Then we have to define our goals. It is inevitable that our margin since '60 has slipped. Are we trying to maintain the same margin as we had in 1960 or to maintain adequate forces?

Rumsfeld: But it is true. We have been slipping since the '60s from superiority to equivalence, and if we don't stop, we'll be behind.

President: I don't think the President should say we are slipping. I can say we need to redouble our efforts. I don't want to say we are getting behind. I'll say we have a challenge, we have rough equivalence and we've got to keep up.

Kissinger: I think the posture to take is that Reagan doesn't know what he's talking about and he's irresponsible.

President: I set the tone in California and that I want to follow -- to hit the Congress on Defense. It is a line which will pay off.

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EXEMPT FROM GENERAL DECLASSIFICATION  
SCHEDULE OF EXECUTIVE ORDER 11652  
EXEMPTION CATEGORY 5 (b) (1, 3)  
AUTOMATICALLY DECLASSIFIED ON Imp. to det.

Kissinger: If the Cubans pull off another military adventure in Africa, no matter how just the cause, it will be perceived as such a power shift -- that will really do it.

President: I notice that Kaunda denied permission for the Cubans to cross to Mozambique.

Rumsfeld: I think we will kill ourselves if we make threats and the Congress passes a resolution forbidding any action.

President: I don't think we should say what we will do, but I think we should be prepared to take affirmative action. I don't want the Communists to get the idea that we would not take drastic action.

Rumsfeld: I tried to follow your line yesterday, but I am Secretary of Defense and all these stories of invasion coming out of State . . .

Kissinger: Nothing is coming out of State.

[Small argument]

Rumsfeld: But we aren't considering the Soviet Union or anything but military action.

Scowcroft: That is not so. All types of things are being looked at and I will ensure that the Soviet angle is looked at.

Kissinger: Here is what is going on in Lebanon.

[Describes the situation]

[Discussion of the options]

Scranton is doing a fine job. There were a couple of points in his speech, but they were our fault, not his.

Rumsfeld: May I talk about France? Some time back we started talking to them about wartime LOCs. We now have an agreement ready to be signed. It is no big problem but it raises a major point. The U.S. military want the closest cooperation in case there is a war. That is understandable. But to the extent they have a free lunch, there is a disincentive for closer French cooperation with NATO. It puts arguments

into the hands of the Gaullists -- they get all the benefits and not the burden. It could be an incentive for others to want the same kind of arrangement. I think the Gaullists are in some trouble in France and I suspect that moving in this direction eases the pressure on them. I think we have to sign this, but I wonder if we shouldn't slow down and not let them have everything.

Kissinger: Giscard is very much a minority President. Mitterand has been organizing very cleverly. If he came to power, he certainly wouldn't return to NATO. Chirac wouldn't either.

Rumsfeld: I would just say maybe we should slow down a bit.

Kissinger: I think we should do it case by case.

Rumsfeld: Orders to Defense in a crisis.

✓ P/R IR

1:20 - 10:25 am

27 Mar 76

- K If we say a trend is going against us, that is bad enough. The impression that we are slipping is creating a bad impression around the world.
- R It's true.
- C ~~There~~ Then we have to define our goals. It is inevitable that our margin since '63 has slipped. Are we trying to match the same margin as '63's or other adequate forces.
- R But it is true, we have been slipping since '63's poor superiority & equilibrium & if we don't stop will be behind.
- P I don't think a Pres. should say that we are slipping. I can say we need a redoubtable effort. I don't want to say we are getting behind. I'll say we have a challenge, we have rough equilibrium & we've got to keep up.
- K I think a posture to take is Reagan doesn't know what he's talking about & he's irresponsible.
- P I set a trail in Calif & that I want to follow is to hit a Longan by. It is a line which will pay off.
- R If Cuba's pull off another mil. adventures in Africa, or rather than just a course, it will be perceived as such a former shift - that will really do it.
- P I notice that Kameda denied permission for Cuba to cross to Mozambique.
- R I think we will bill ourselves if we make threats & Cong. passes a resolution forbidding any action.
- P I don't think we should say what we will do, but I think we should be prepared.

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AUTHORITY Am mb 61-100, #40  
BY lha NLF, DATE 6/19/04

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Suggest Sejmien Pol. both morning & night instructions.

take appropriate action. I don't want Carter to get a idea that we would not take drastic action.

R I tried to follow your line yesterday, but I am Sicily and all these stories of invasion coming out of State. . . .

K Nothing is coming out of State  
(Small argument)

\* R But we aren't concealing a S U or anything but mil. action.

S That not so. All types are being looked at and I will ensure that US S R angle is looked at.

K Here is what is going on in London.  
(Describes)

(Discussion of options)

Scranton is doing a fine job. There were a couple of points in his speech, but they were our fault, not his.

R Very little about France. Some time back we started talking to them about wanting to be a member of the NATO. It is a big job but it raises a major point. The US mil. want a close coop in case there is a war. That is understood. But to the extent they have a full bank, there is a disadvantage for them. For example, NATO. It puts arguments into hands of Gaullists - they get all the benefits & not the burden. It could be an incentive for others to want a some kind of arrangement. I think a Gaullist are in some trouble in E & I suspect that increasing



## McNamara - Eilat's points

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I think we have to sign this, but I wonder  
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has been organizing very closely. If he wants to  
peace, he certainly wouldn't return to NATO. Giscard  
wouldn't either.

R I would just say maybe we should slow down  
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R Orders to Defense in a crisis.