MEMORANDUM
THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

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

DATE AND TIME: Monday, April 12, 1976
9:20 - 10:30 a.m.

PLACE: The Oval Office

President: That Safire article [attached] is the damdest thing I ever saw.

Kissinger: I want you to know I have no separate files of which there are no copies.

[Described what kinds of papers he had.]

Nessen should say the White House has and always has had all memcons and other official records in which I participated as Assistant to the President.

President: Why is Safire so vicious?

Kissinger: He thinks I was responsible for tapping him. [Described the NSC tapping process.] I didn't even know he was being tapped, as is the case with several others.

President: I thought it was a lousy article. He was stretching for something to say.

Well, how are things in Lebanon?
Kissinger: Quite well. We may walk through that mine field okay.

President: The leftists are really getting after the Syrians, aren't they?

Kissinger: Yes. The Syrian force is there to keep the pressure on the negotiating process. The Israelis have been very relaxed. Dinitz said yesterday that the Syrian force was reaching the limits of what was acceptable, but nothing more.

Our information is that the Soviets are urging restraint. We sent them a tough note. Egypt is urging restraint on Jumblatt.

The next danger is that the new President [of Lebanon] may ask for Syrian troops.

President: Because he won't have any forces to keep order?

Kissinger: Yes.

President: Aren't there any alternatives to the Syrians?

Kissinger: [Described the problems with all the other forces.]

President: Can't the Saiqa and PLA do it?

Kissinger: Maybe. That depends. But this could be a crisis point.

President: I didn't see Schlesinger on TV yesterday. The headline was about our dealings on military aid with the Chinese.

Kissinger: We are having no discussion of any kind with the Chinese about military assistance.

I told Schlesinger he should put his mind to what we could do if the Soviets jumped the Chinese. There was also some talk of a hot line and early warning system. This happened in '73. We talked about selling them an early warning system or we would do it and give them a readout. I talked to Schlesinger at the Gridiron. He said we hadn't put enough into Angola -- it was our fault.
President: Listen, if we hadn't done what we did in Angola, everyone would now be screaming that we let the Soviets take it because of detente.

Kissinger: I am going to Africa. I plan to take a strong stand for the blacks with respect to South Africa.

President: That is okay with me.

Kissinger: You will get some flak from the South on it. I will support repeat of the Byrd Amendment.

President: That is our position -- but it should be on its merits, not as an amendment on another bill.

Scowcroft: We got it removed from the Defense Program Authorization Bill.

Kissinger: I met with a panel of Wall Street Journal editors. I said Zumwalt never protested SALT. They said Schlesinger told them there were twelve protests from the JCS but he was asked from the White House not to forward them. I said that was a lie. [Described the III-X silo issue.]

Biteios is coming this week. We plan to have an exchange of letters in which they ask about the Aegean and Cyprus and I answer. They are also asking for aid and they want the same amount as Turkey. That is impossible. This will cause us some problems with the Turks but it is manageable. [Discusses some details of the exchange of letters]

President: What about Clerides' resignation?

Kissinger: Those negotiations will be hard to get off the ground, because of the domestic situation of all the parties.

President: I saw a TV broadcast about Greek refugees. It was calculated to stimulate the Greeks.

Kissinger: Congress will like the Greek deal.

President: [Describes the AHEPA dinner -- moderate reception.]
Kissinger: I am meeting with Romulo. We are setting high standards for base negotiations. We offered them $25 million a year, but they now will want much more.

You have the 200-mile sea bill before you.

President: You gave a speech on Law of the Sea last week.

Kissinger: It was well received. If we make it, this will be an historic achievement. The last one lasted 300 years.

President: How about the problems in the delegation?

Kissinger: We have a unified position. Learson is another Moynihan. Simon has been great to work with. [Discussion of the 200-mile bill.]

Scowcroft: McCloskey called me. He wants you to veto with a promise that you will welcome resubmission if adequate progress is not made during this negotiating session.

President: I will look at it carefully.

Scowcroft: [Discussed nature of his commitment to sign.]

Kissinger: I think you have to get Fred Dent under control. He is letting Congressional staff in all his meetings and has sent a letter to Long. [He reads the letter]. I think he has to walk the cat back.

Fred behaves as if his loyalty is to the Finance Committee. If the Finance Committee gets away with it, all the other committees will want the same. This undermines the separation of powers.

President: Have you talked to Dent?

Kissinger: No. I will talk to him and if we can't solve it, we will come to you.

President: You talk to him.

Kissinger: Next is Elliott Richardson. He wants to go to China.

President: I thought I told him no.

Scowcroft: Not really. He wants to talk to you this week.
Kissinger: Richardson wants to negotiate textiles and claims and he wants to take Zarb with him on oil.

President: I will take care of Richardson.

Kissinger: Rogers. If he is a massive problem, we should drop it, but the delay won't make it easier.

[Some discussion.]

President: Will the Democrats and at least some Republicans support him?

Kissinger: All the Democrats will, and I think Case, Scott and Griffin at least.

President: Why don't you find that out? How about Goldwater?

Kissinger: I am going to Arizona with Goldwater on Friday. I will talk to Scott and Griffin first.

On my Arizona speech, I won't break any new ground. I will talk about optimism and pessimism in foreign policy -- saying it isn't optimism to keep the truth from the people.

[Discussion of Woodward and Bernstein book on Nixon.]
Mr. Ford's Cover-Up

By William Safire

Whoever, having the custody of any such record ... willfully and unlawfully ... removes ... the same shall be fined not more than $2,000 or imprisoned not more than three years, or both; and shall forfeit his office ... 18 U.S. Code 2011.

When J. Edgar Hoover ran the F.B.I., he withheld certain highly sensitive files from the bureau's filing system upon his death, those files were destroyed, frustrating law enforcement officials and historians. When Henry Kissinger ran the National Security Council, he, too, withheld certain records from the council's computerized retrieval system. Some months ago, I reported that these "dead key"-type transcripts of all his telephone conversations, taken down secretly by a secretary on a dead or silenced extension -- were no longer in the National Security Council, where they belonged, but had been taken over to the State Department.

Messrs. Woodward and Bernstein have added another wrinkle to that story. It seems that when these sensitive records were removed from the White House, they were first sent to the private vault of Nelson Rockefeller at his Pocantico, N.Y., estate. After a Federal attorney warned that boxes of top-secret documents could not be sent to a private home, a private plane, the Secretary brought them back onto Air Force One.

Here is some more information, which the White House refuses to confirm or deny:

1. Dr. Kissinger's "little file," as Security Council staffers refer to the records withheld from the system, is not limited to telephone transcripts. It contains conversations with the President and foreign officials like Soviet Ambassador Dobrynin are included, and in many cases, no other copies of the memos exist.
2. The judgment to withhold material from proper Security Council classification and filing was once one of David Young's functions; when that Kissinger aide went off to head the "plumbers," aides Jonathan Howe and Peter Rodham took over.
3. A. In general, briefcase loads of this secret material were taken out of the White House to the Rockefeller estate in the early seventies, culminating in a big move of the sensitive files in April 1973. The Kissinger men will claim they were "protecting" the files from the Watergate, but the files began disappearing from the White House long before Watergate, and they have not yet been restored.

Now comes the reason, I think, that there is material in that "inert file" that Secretary Kissinger does not want anybody in the White House, the Department of Defense, the C.I.A., or certainly the Congress to see. There are certain meetings, particularly with Ambassador Dobrynin, that he wants to be able to escape from the recollection. If he can control the "memos," he can rewrite history.

How does Nelson Rockefeller feel about his complicity in all this? "Henry's a friend," the Vice President told me. "Told him he could have the use of the vault." Wasn't he just volunteering his vault, or did Henry say, "I don't remember"? Were six filing cabinets filled with secret records stored there? "There's been a small volume of papers stored there." Did he realize his personal vault was being used improperly to store official secrets? "Henry's a friend," I think he said something about papers from Harvard, "I don't know anything about classified documents."

Could you see the man who has his Pocantico vault to see what was in it? asked in and out, and who was permitted access to the documents? "No, you can't, that's private." And when his taxpayer-paid aide, a young naval officer named -- you guessed it -- Jonathan Howe, the same Kissinger aide who operated the Pocantico underground railroad, "No, he's unavailable."

Here is the second highest ranking official in our Government, who was chosen by President Ford to head the commission to restore respect for law in our intelligence community. His home was used as the safe-house for the illegal concealment of the nation's secrets. His stone-cold answer to legitimate inquiry is that he cannot be held responsible because he did not want to know what was going on in his own home. Behind the stone wall, I suspect, there is an important story of conversations the public or at least key Government officials are entitled to know, and perhaps of records that have mysteriously disappeared.

President Ford, who essentially offers F.B.I. help to Congress for purging its files, has assigned nobody to look into this major breach of security. But it is Gerald Ford's Vice President who works at the risk of law in handling intelligence; it is Gerald Ford's National Security Adviser who refuses all comment at an abuse of power he was surely aware of; it is Gerald Ford's Secretary of State who treats the nation's secrets as his personal secrets, and it is Gerald Ford's cover-up that must be exposed.

City Above
P. That Safir out is a damned hot thing. I am

K. Don't you know I have no separate place

(Please note that my papers are laid)

D. Well, should say it has something to do

all to it, and it was quite normal. But I

mentioned in one of our

letters,

P. Yes, it was very sad. He was stretched for nearly

the sky

Well, how are things in London? I

K. Quite well. We may visit them that mine field

in?

P. The whites are really getting quite a Stryker out here?

K. Yes, the sight is quite a big problem in my view.

The I have been very sick. funny, said yesterday

that, Stryker, and was recreating a climate of what was

acceptance, but nothing more.

Our trip is that, was an美军 retreat, we

sent them a tough note, requesting retention

on Jemalat.

The next thing is that I telephoned among others

Stryker troops.

1. Because he won't have any force to help us?

K. Yes,

1. What other alternatives to Stryker?

K. (Described role of other forces)
P. Can't c Suric F2X @ R.
K. Wayen. That'd be us. But this could be a crisis.

P. I didn't see Stoc today. The funereal was
about ourchemical WC RC
K. We're being very careful of that kind of RC.

P. Allow me to tell you what can
K. allow us to tell WC we can talk of
this WC E2 system. This happened in 73. We
talked about selling them an E2 system a can use

P. I'm afraid of not having enough not to tell any more. I'm afraid that we are
K. going to America, I plan to take a strong chance

P. That is the question. That it should be in site
K. Many are in another site.

S. But we got it removed from a Deep Prod. Chair Bill.
K. I meant to UST shot. We had UST made into

P. It's time to change our letters in which they write about Agnes & Types.
K. I agree. They also asking did we want more
as T. that impossible. This will cause an even.
Dear W/C T. E. Trowbridge:

(More some details of letter of June 12)

P. What about Clarke's deal?

K. They went with in hand to put up ground, sense of
    decision at in two all parties.

L. I have a TV about Greek refugees, it calculated
    to reinforce the Greeks.

K. I am writing the Greek deal

P. (Discuss discussing about some matters together)

K. I really wish to improve the relations with Greece. We
    are in a very good position. We thought 25 cents/ye, but they
    now will cost much more.

K. You have a visit to Greece before you.

P. I have a speech last week.

K. You will be wind. If we send it, this will
    be a historic event. The liaison
    lasted 2 new yrs.

P. Amakua, you will be in a delegation.

K. We have a high position. How can I send
    German Army? Simon has been send to the war of.
    Conclusion of 200 miles life.

S. The Army called me. A war to 2000 miles after
    2000 per year will increase significantly
    of all communications. This might
    very quickly.

P. I will look at it presently.

S. American officials of this content a sign.

K. I think you have to get Dad send booklet
    he is letting out copy in all his notes. +
    insert a letter in Andy (should letters)

I think he has to write a cut back. First where
    as if the agreement into Fair Games. Of Fair Cook
get away with it, all other entities' mort -
isms. This undermines a separation of
powers.

P. Have you talked to Nixon?

K. No, I will talk to him of what we could talk to
him will amount to.

P. You talk to him.

K. First is Elliott Richardson. He wants to go
Chen.

P. I think I will bring us

S. But really. He wants to talk to you this week.

K. (Defund Richardson want to accept White
claims + take Fack on oil.)

P. I will take care of Richardson.

K. Rogers. If he is a massive part, use that day
It, but delay won't make it easier
(Congressmen)

P. Will the Dems say at least some leger? phy that?

K. All Dems will. I think Clone, Scott & Griffin at
least

P. Why don't you find that out? How about
Cassidy?

K. It going to anyone w/ Cassidy or Fen. I would
Talk to Scott & Griffin first.

C'mon. Anyone except I won't think any worse
of him. I will tell an Optimist & pessimism is
fit - many 4. It isn't optimum to keep a
truth from 4 pieces

(Discussion of Woodward & Bernstein & Nixon)