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WITHDRAWAL ID 018482

REASON FOR WITHDRAWAL National security restriction
TYPE OF MATERIAL Memorandum of Conversation

TITLE Ford, Kissinger
CREATION DATE 01/04/1977
VOLUME 2 pages
COLLECTION/SERIES/FOLDER ID . 031401014
COLLECTION TITLE National Security Adviser. Memoranda of
Conversations
BOX NUMBER 21
FOLDER TITLE January 4, 1977 - Ford, Kissinger
DATE WITHDRAWN 08/02/2004
WITHDRAWING ARCHIVIST GG

Sanitized 12/6/04
5/18/10

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

SECRET/NODIS/XGDSMEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

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

DATE AND TIME: Tuesday, January 4, 1977
10:18 - 11:04 a.m.

PLACE: The Oval Office

Kissinger: I think to propose it [statehood for Puerto Rico] and have them vote on it is the way to go. Commonwealth status would lead to continual problems.

The President: It puts Carter on the spot too. I've long thought it was the thing to do. I was for Alaska and Hawaii statehood too.

Kissinger: I don't think there has been too much flak.

The President: What else is new?

Kissinger: It is difficult to imagine how incompetent the British are. The Richard mission is a disaster. He only went to the moderate black -- Kaunda -- before he went to the whites, so Kaunda gets stuck with what happens. Then he goes to see Smith before he sees Vorster. Smith turns him down, which magnifies the pressure on Vorster. You recall we wouldn't even talk to Smith before we had an agreement with Vorster.

How about this open administration? Carter has asked CIA how he can communicate with the embassies

The President: Really? That is surprising.

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

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Kissinger: It is in line with the questions he asked Brent. [REDACTED]

The President: What do you think of the Sorensen appointment?

Kissinger: That one really scares me. He is an arrogant super liberal. I think it must have been that they thought more bloodletting was required. Even Phil Geyelin is amazed.

The President: I am concerned about what is happening. What is this NIE fracas about?

[Scowcroft described how it had gotten started. The President and Secretary Kissinger were both critical of the way Team B had been set up.]

Kissinger: Back to Richard. The original plan was not ours, it was British. The way it's going now, the blacks just keep raising the ante. The only way to deal with them is to say: "This is it." But it won't be concluded before January 20. We should get credit either way.

We should also get credit for what happened to the OPEC prices. I have said all along the Saudis were the key. Only they can raise production to make it stick. Our great diplomacy with the Saudis is what did it.

In the Middle East, I think Carter wants to talk to everyone in the Middle East beginning with the Saudis. If he doesn't talk to Sadat first, he will be deeply offended.

[The talk continued on the Middle East and the Helms case.]

Kissinger: In Japan, we are seeing a process which started with Lockheed. It was a shock to the Japanese system, and they will start making their own way. They have already decided to augment their forces opposite Korea in anticipation of our departure. You can say that is good that they are picking up more of the burden of their own defense, but it could be a step toward remilitarizing.



