

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

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MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

PARTICIPANTS: President Gerald R. Ford
Graham Martin, U.S. Ambassador to
Republic of Vietnam
Lt. General Brent Scowcroft, Deputy Assistant
to the President for National Security Affairs

DATE AND TIME: Saturday, February 15, 1975
10:30 a.m.

PLACE: The Oval Office
The White House

The President: I wanted to chat a few minutes before you go back to that hot spot. How about your evaluation?

Ambassador Martin: It depends on what happens now. If we can pursue your Chicago Tribune proposal of a three-year appropriation, I think we can do it. Grants will be difficult in the recession. Until the ammo cut back in May, the initiative was clearly with the GVN. Thieu sensed the Washington mood better than I did. The initiative thereafter started to slip to the North. I think Hanoi didn't decide on the offensive until after the vote on the \$700 million. There has been some unravelling and they have cranked up a massive propaganda offensive including the January 27th demonstrations here. Our information indicates the focus here is on the 27th activities and on the Congress. If we could show the foreign connection to these demonstrations it would be very useful.

If we could get this Congressional trip out there I think it would be good. I haven't lost a visitor yet except Abzug. But we need some of the leadership, and I gather they are opposed.

The President: Jack Marsh told me that Mansfield is opposed and I gather the Speaker also.

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~~TOP SECRET~~
DECLASSIFIED BY: XGDS (3)
HENRY A. KISSINGER
E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.5
NSC Memo, 11/24/98, State Dept. Guidelines
By lit, NARA, Date 1/20/00

Ambassador Martin: Flynt is good. I'm sorry that Case and Fascell backed out.

[The President discussed Case and Turkey aid with General Scowcroft.]

Ambassador Martin: It would be good if you could talk to Symington.

The President: I think it would be bad if I do. If they turn it down and go public, it looks bad. I don't know Stuart on a very personal basis.

This is not a bad list.

Ambassador Martin: I think it would be a mistake to cancel the trip.

The President: I agree with that. Cambodia looks bad.

Ambassador Martin: Yes, but don't count them out. Even if they do collapse, it won't make that much difference in Vietnam.

It won't even be the end if we don't get the \$300 million. But they will be using bodies instead of ammunition.

The President: What would be the effect of a Saigon bombing of Hanoi?

Ambassador Martin: There would be a short-term psychological benefit -- like Doolittle said -- but no lasting benefit.

The President: What about the Toan appointment? I've been reading about that.

Ambassador Martin: His predecessor hadn't had that much experience and he was getting cold feet. I thought he should be replaced, and Thieu said Toan was the only one he had. He is aggressive.

The President: What about the charges of corruption?

Ambassador Martin: Yes, in the context of that area. He is a bit excessive, but what we need is victories. He can do that.

The President: I talked to Sam Nunn. I plan to read his report.



Ambassador Martin: He has a variant of your plan. I think your idea is better so we don't get accused of gimmickry. I think the synergistic effect of a big program like this is great. I haven't even taken account of oil, and the finds look good.

There is some debate among your advisors about anything which might cause trouble. But Thieu is an attractive personality and I think he would refute the opinions about him if he came back here.

The President: I entertained him here on his last trip. Is there any danger of a coup?

Ambassador Martin: No. It is well in hand. But he would get 80 percent of the vote.

The President: I will talk to Henry. What about Ky and Minh?

Ambassador Martin: Ky is a farmer north of Nha Trang. He is not in politics any more. Minh is a rallying point, but he is very indecisive. A coup would come out of the army.

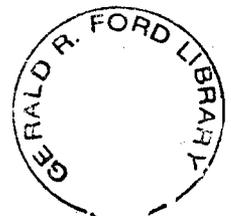
The President: What about the problem of demonstrations?

Ambassador Martin: This is a moderate non-Communist group which has its own arms and Thieu feared they might be co-opted into a neutralist movement. It is not a serious problem.

If the GVN could get assurance of supply, the North Vietnamese would have a serious problem. They are not getting all the aid they want. Kissinger's diplomacy has been successful there. The Chinese don't want Hanoi to dominate the whole area and greatly fear Soviet influence on the North Vietnamese. But the Soviet Union doesn't want to contribute to a PRC-dominated Hanoi.

In the 1973 ceasefire, they had 20 times the arms and supplies the GVN had, because we had ruined the supply lines. So even if they didn't get resupplies they are far better off.

On the economic side, we could see the kind of advance Taiwan and Korea had. Inflation now is only nine percent. They have cut imports



drastically and have to import now only oil and fertilizer. They could export a million tons of rice in three years -- for \$900 million. Modernizing the fishing fleet would bring in \$150 million more. Timber more. There is also a big pool of skilled educated labor. Other countries, once the economy starts moving, will start to fill the gap. That is why we can stop after three years.

So if we could take \$6.5 billion and divide it, \$4 billion for the military and \$2.2 billion for the economy, we could walk away in three years.

The President: We keep being pressed -- is there anything new on MIAs?

Ambassador Martin: No. Only when the North decides it can't use them for bargaining.

The President: It is a tragedy.

Ambassador Martin: I think we should encourage them to keep pressure on Hanoi.

The President: Maybe we could use them to help get our program through. Maybe Thieu's trip could be generated by the Congressional group. Jack Kemp could ask Thieu to come back here to tell his own story.



✓ P/amb. Martin
15 Feb 75

P wanted to chat a few minutes before you go to the club but got home about your evolution

M Depends on what happens here. If we can persuade your Chm. with proposal I think we can do it. Orbits will be big in the session. Until someone contradicts in way, initiative study of GRA. Their revised Work would better than I. I initiate therefore started to slip to North. I think House didn't decide on opinion till after vote on 700 issue. There has been some manoeuvring & they have worked up a massive propaganda opinion including the 27th Chairman here. Our trip indicates focus here on 27th & on CL. If we could show a positive connection to these demonstrations it would be very useful.

If we could get this trip out there I think it would be good. I haven't lost a visitor yet except Abingdon. But we need some local leadership & I gather they are opposed.

— P March told me Mansfield opposed & I gather speaker also.

M Flight is good and if we could get Jabour? Barry Case and Fosell in front

(P discussed case & Tunk and w/one)

M Be good if you could talk to Sydney too
I think best if I do. If they turn it down & go positive it looks bad. I don't

know Steve on a very personal basis.

Q This is not a bad list

A I think it would be a mistake to email
the trip.

P I agree w/ that. Cambodia looks bad.

A Yes, but don't count them out. Even
if they do collapse, it won't make that much
diff in VN.

Won't even be a end if we don't get a zero.
But they will be using ^{booby} traps instead of
ammo.

P What would be effect of a Saigon bombing
of Hanoi

A Short term pay benefit - like Solitt said - but
no lasting benefit.

P What about Trow capt. ~~TOAN~~ TOAN

A He ~~x~~ hadn't had that much experience &
he was getting old yet. I think he should be
replaced & I think I think Trow was a only
one he had. He is a repression

P How about repression.

A Yes, in a context of that area. He is a bit
excessive, but what are we his entire. He
can do that.

P I talked to Sam Trow. I plan to read his
report

A He was a variant of your plan. I think your
idea better ~~be~~ so we don't get accused
of german. I think the synergistic
effect of a big pop like this is great.
I haven't even taken account of oil &
a kinda look good.



M Then some debate among your advisors about anything which might cause trouble. But Thunell is an attractive personality & I think he would reject a opinion about him if he came back here.

P I don't think he's a threat. Is there a camp danger?

M No. It is well in hand. But he would get 10% of the vote.

P I would talk to K. What about Ky + Mish.

M Ky is a former member of whatrang. But in politics, Mish is a rallying point, but he is very indecisive. A camp would come out of a army.

P What about parts of [Quaker]?

M This is a ^{majority} ~~majority~~ non- Comm group which has own arms & Thunell feared they might be coopted into a centrist movement. It was a serious prob.

If G & H could get assurance of supply, N & O would have serious prob. Tony not getting all coal they want. R dysfunction has been successful there. P & C split went from to disrupt a whole area & greatly fear SU influence on Chinese. But SU don't want to contribute to a P & C dominated Korea.

In 73, they had to think a ^{cessation} cessation & supplies G & H had, because we had revived supply lines. So down if they didn't get resupplied they fall rather off.

O in Econ field, we could see a kind of advance Taiwan & Korea had.



Regulation cost only 9%. They have cut
M drastically & have to M now only oil
& fertilizer. They could X 1 mil to price
in 3 yrs - 900 mil. Increasing fishing
fit would mean in 150 mil more. Trucks
more. There is also a big pool of
skilled & educated labor. Other countries,
once the economy starts moving, will start
to fill - guys - that's why we can stop getting
3 yrs.

So if we could take 6.5 bid & divide it
4. - for miles 2.2 for each, we could
walk away in 3 yrs.

P Who's being pressed - is there anything
new on MIA?

M No. Only when North ~~is~~ decides it can't
use them for bargaining.

P Is it a tragedy?

M I think we should encourage them to keep
presence on Hawaii.

P Maybe we could use them to help get our
them. Maybe their trip could be generated
by a Cong group. Jack Kemp could ask them
to come back to tell his own story.

