

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

PARTICIPANTS: President Ford
Representatives of the National League of
Families of Missing-in-Action
Cong. G. V. (Sonny) Montgomery (D.-Miss.)
Senator Robert Packwood (R.-Ore.)
Lt. General Brent Scowcroft, Deputy Assistant
to the President for National Security Affairs
Roger Shields, Dept. of Defense
Frank Sieverts, Special Assistant for POW/MIA
Matters, Dept. of State

DATE & TIME: Tuesday - July 22, 1975
5:30 p.m.

PLACE: The Oval Office

President: It is a pleasure to have you here to see how we can work out something. Most of you know my feelings on this, both now and in the past. We want to do anything possible to resolve this terrible problem. We must be realistic, but I want you to know we will do everything within our power. I am pleased to have Senator Packwood and Congressman Montgomery here.

Bus Mills: We are honored at the opportunity to meet with you to discuss some of the concerns we have. We were pleased that you could meet with some of our families last week. I want to point out that we are discussing the problems from our point of view.

[He reads a statement.]

President: Thank you very much, Bus. Would some of you like to make comments? I am sure you recognize that what Congress does is an initiative on their part. I think there are several alternatives, Sonny. There is one proposal for standing committee jurisdiction; there is a proposal for a select committee. I can't interject myself into the Congressional process, but if they want our help we will cooperate in every way. I would rather not give you answers now to the questions in your statement. I would rather give it thoughtful consideration later.

DECLASSIFIED
E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.5
NSC Memo, 11/24/98, State Dept. Guidelines
By lt, NARA, Date 1/26/00



CLASSIFIED BY 40152

Hartness: We get many queries as to why you don't speak out on this issue more -- like recognizing this meeting.

President: I did refer to the problem in my Memorial Day address. And the press will cover this meeting.

Franks: We are concerned not only with this war but all wars. We worried that in future wars men won't want to serve because under the situation as it is, we won't or can't do everything possible to get them back.

President: If there are laws which should be changed, I would appreciate knowing it. I would be upset if I thought our Government wasn't able to do everything possible for its prisoners and missing.

Lewis: We appreciate this meeting but hope you will meet with us periodically during the year.

President: I will do my best, but there are only so many hours in the day.

Martin: I represent the 400 men on whom there have been presumptive findings of death. This problem will go on forever as far as some of these people are concerned.

President: I can appreciate that.

Cong. Montgomery: My bill has more sponsors than any bill before. Our problem is with committees and reluctance to have another Select Committee.

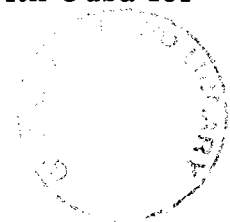
The basic step is to get to the sites and get there fast -- the jungle is closing in and people forget. I don't know how we do it, but that is the most important first move.

President: One of the staff people can say what our efforts have been.

Shields: [He detailed the activities of the MIA searches and their termination with the evacuation of South Vietnam.]

Sieverts: [Described the diplomatic efforts at getting an accounting.]

Hartness: We have a new ballgame now. All these countries want to trade with us. We hold some trump cards -- we have an embargo with Cuba for less reason than this.



Harper: We feel there is a basis for talks. We are not for ransom but we think we should take some initiatives.

Scowcroft: [Described that we are in contact and continued on the cynical nature of their treatment of this issue.]

President: I can assure you we will not recognize those countries nor will we give them any assistance.

Mills: We are pleased to hear that you won't recognize or aid them. We would push the UN. There is the thought that if Israel were kicked out of the UN we would reduce our support. We should contemplate the same on this issue.

President: Would someone like to summarize? I would just say we will fight to keep Israel in the UN. The UN has not always done as much as we would like but we will keep trying.



Kim Longy.
Call Tom Fuchs

What are proposed solutions.

P/ Nath League of Families

22 July 75

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Bus Mills. We looked at report to meet w/ you to discuss some of concerns we have. Pleased you could meet w/ some of our families last week. I want to point out that ~~we~~ we are discussing a proba from our point of view. ~~All of them are willing to talk. We should be willing to talk but are should not~~
(Reads statement)

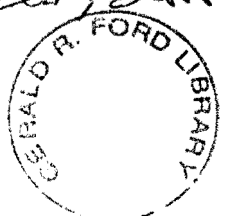
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Con. Montgomery. My bill has more ^{any} jurisdiction ~~has~~ ^{sub}
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Basic story is to get a ~~site~~ + get these ~~fact~~ -
a jungle is closing in + people forget. Don't
know how we do it, but that is most important
1st word.

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been.

Shields (Detailed a timeline of of NIA searches + their termination
w/ ~~some~~ of SVN)

Servants (Described day. efforts at getting accounts)

Hartness We have now ~~will~~ ^{will} ~~game~~ ^{game} now. All these countries
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them. We would push a ~~CR.~~ ^{CR.} ~~to~~ ^{to} there is that



that if I ever kicked out of UK we would advise
our support, we should ~~contingents~~ & some on
this issue

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