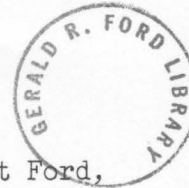


**The original documents are located in Box 1, folder “Scowcroft, Brent (National Security Council) - Interview, 12/1/77” of the A. James Reichley Interview Transcripts at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.**

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Interview with General Brent Scowcroft, Dec. 1. 1977.



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Scowcroft, Director of the National Security Council under President Ford, said that he thought there had been a continuity in foreign policy from Nixon to Ford. He said there was ~~x~~ an underlying philosophy and strategy to the Ford administration's foreign and defense policies which he would summarize as being to reduce needless ~~and~~ tension and competition in the world, to strengthen ties with our industrial ~~colleagues~~ <sup>allies</sup>, and to aid the transition of the Third World. Scowcroft says that he would not describe American ~~foreign~~ <sup>foreign</sup> policy in this period as being one of contraction of ~~the~~ American power, but it did ~~x~~ involve a more realistic appraisal of what the United States ~~could~~ could do by itself. The point of the Nixon doctrine, Scowcroft said, was ~~not~~ not to pull back from involvement in world affairs, but to take a role only where the local ~~will~~ <sup>will</sup> would support and favor such a role ~~x~~ <sup>that</sup> this was the only <sup>way in which</sup> the United States participation could have a good effect. ~~That~~ <sup>take</sup> this was the only way in which our efforts could pay off. ~~It~~ <sup>take</sup> was a realization that we couldn't <sup>take</sup> on the burden of world management. Scowcroft says he thinks it is true that in the 1960s we had overestimated our ability to manage world affairs <sup>had grown up</sup> through our own efforts alone. The belief <sup>that</sup> a suitable infusion of American money and American effort would change the complexion of almost any situation in a way that was desired. In those <sup>days</sup>, it was thought that the United States through its leadership could bring the relatively helpless countries ~~x~~ of the Third World to maturity in a way that would be supportive of American interests. This change in American strategy <sup>was</sup> based on a recognition of changes of the objective situation in the world. Western Europe, for instance, has been declining in capability ever since the end of the second world war. Japan, on the other ~~x~~ hand, has been growing in capability, but its willingness to take on responsibilities has not kept pace <sup>with</sup> its growth in capability except economically. Scowcroft said that it was controversial within the Ford administration as <sup>to</sup> whether Japan should be encouraged to play a regional defense role. It was felt that Japan should play a role in its own defense, but

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there was ~~a~~ not unanimity in the administration whether Japan should be encouraged to play a specific leadership role. There was, Scowcroft says, in the late 60s and <sup>(the early)</sup> 70s, deterioration in the relationship between the United States and ~~Europe and Japan~~ our allies. This was to a great extent because of Vietnam <sup>our</sup> allies did not ~~a~~ understand what we were trying ~~a~~ to do in Vietnam or if they did understand it they ~~did~~ <sup>were</sup> not sympathetic with it. They felt we were ~~concentrating~~ concentrating on the ~~xxx~~ wrong area which was leading to erosion of our strength throughout the world. Scowcroft feels that this deterioration in relation with the allies has been largely repaired by the time Ford left office. In fact, entirely repaired, <sup>the</sup> closeness of relations between the United States and its allies at the end of the Ford ~~xxx~~ administration has never been matched. This was both official and personal relations. Scowcroft ~~this~~ <sup>said</sup> that the deterioration in the relations were also to ~~a~~ some extent due to the way in which negotiations were carried out by Nixon and Kissinger ~~xxx~~ with China and Russia. He would not speak for Nixon and Kissinger but he thinks that they would say that it was necessary to carry out ~~these~~ <sup>these</sup> negotiations in secret because it would be too risky to take the allies into our confidence during the negotiations with Russia and China, because of the danger of premature leaks. This is particularly true of ~~a~~ Japan <sup>the</sup> nature of their system, their political culture, is such that it is ~~very~~ <sup>(for them)</sup> difficult to hold information close.

Scowcroft says that another one of the sources of our problems with the allies was the attitude of the French, ~~that~~ <sup>the</sup> French were seeking to unite Europe around a standard of anti-Americanism. They were trying to pull Europe together as an antagonist toward the United States, <sup>this</sup> also, ~~a~~ naturally, created tension with the United States. This strategy of the French was largely given up after Guiscard became President after the death of President Pompidou. The tensions between the United States and France in the Pompidou period were further complicated by a clash of personalities between Kissinger and the French Foreign Minister Joubert.



The problems were very largely solved in the meeting between President Ford and Guiscard at Martinique. Martinique was the turning point. The two Presidents hit it off very well and much more was achieved at Martinique than anyone had dared to hope for. President Ford, Scowcroft <sup>(said)</sup> had a great ability to develop close personal ties with world leaders. ~~He~~ developed close ties not only with Guiscard, but also with the leaders of Britain and the leaders of Germany, which substantially improved our relations with these countries. However, it is true, Scowcroft said, that relations were already improving under President Nixon. The worst year was 1973, and after that things began to get better. In 1974, Nixon had made good headway <sup>(alliance)</sup> and at the NATO summit in 74, the relations within the ~~alliance~~ had taken a substantial turn for the better. Nevertheless, it is true that Ford's personality had a real effect of the further improvement of relations within the allies. As far as relations with the Soviet Union went, the change there was to a great extent Watergate related. The Soviets held on to Nixon as long as they could, they felt comfortable ~~with~~ dealing with Nixon, and they were not ~~so~~ anxious for change in the slightest. However, they finally realized that Nixon was going, and began to accommodate to the transition. They ~~so~~ recognized that they would be able to do another kind of business with Ford and were finally somewhat relieved that they could carry on business with ~~the~~ <sup>an</sup> American President without the impediment of Watergate. ~~That it was through this~~ <sup>Vladivostok</sup> recognition ~~that~~ <sup>that</sup> led to the agreement which was reached at ~~(P)~~ <sup>(P)</sup>.

It is true <sup>that</sup> toward the end of the Ford administration ~~that~~ <sup>the</sup> détente with the Soviets began to deteriorate, Scowcroft says. He thinks that this ~~is~~ was largely a reflection of American domestic politics, ~~that~~ <sup>to</sup> some extent Senator Jackson's anti-Soviet activities, but even more so the effect of Ronald ~~E~~ Reagan's <sup>1980</sup> candidacy. The 1976 campaign, Scowcroft said, drove Ford further and further to the right, ~~that~~ <sup>he</sup> began making more and more cracks about the Soviet Union and the Soviets were disturbed by these remarks by the President. Scowcroft said that he and





Kissinger had done their best to <sup>(restrain)</sup> ~~hold~~ the President from departures of this kind, ~~that~~ <sup>(They were)</sup> ~~it was~~ having a harmful effect on American foreign policy, <sup>(In)</sup> ~~and~~ Scowcroft's own view, <sup>(they were)</sup> ~~that it was~~ harmful politically in the ~~dom~~ domestic situation as well. But Scowcroft acknowledges that he is not an expert on that subject.

Scowcroft <sup>(said that he felt)</sup> ~~felt~~ that ~~the~~ Ford could not help <sup>(hope to)</sup> ~~be~~ more conservative than Reagan, to appeal to the conservatives ~~x~~ more than Reagan ~~did~~, and that his best chance was to rally the moderates in both parties behind his leadership. The moderate Republicans, in the first instance, to assure the nomination, <sup>B</sup> but this was not the course that ~~the~~ President Ford took. Scowcroft feels that Ford was going against his own natural instincts and inclinations in the ~~political~~ course that he followed in 1976. He said that if Ford had followed his own inclinations, ~~that~~ he feels sure that he could <sup>(have)</sup> achieved a SALT agreement in 1976. But his political advisers were pushing him strongly <sup>+</sup> the other way.

16 Don Rumsfeld, in particular, was pushing the President to the right. The substantive position that Rumsfeld was taking on SALT had the effect of undermining negotiations with the Soviet Union. Rumsfeld's briefings to Congress pictured the Soviets as a dark menace and this inevitably had a harmful effect <sup>(on relations)</sup> with the Soviet Union, Scowcroft feels. He said that the Russians discounted some of this as campaign oratory, but nevertheless they were disturbed <sup>(by)</sup> it. After the convention, there was some change in direction back toward detente, Scowcroft says, but really not very much. In ~~the~~ some ways, the campaign was still directed against Ronald Reagan <sup>?</sup> after the convention. Scowcroft says that the President should have put much more emphasis on foreign policy, that he had important achievements in the foreign policy area <sup>(that)</sup> ~~that~~ he feared to take credit for, ~~that~~ <sup>H</sup> he was fearful that if <sup>he</sup> pointed to his foreign policy accomplishments, ~~that~~ he would antagonize the conservative Reagan <sup>?</sup> supporters <sup>X</sup> on whom he felt his election depended. The reaction to the ~~Reagan~~ Reagan <sup>?</sup> threat began really quite early, Scowcroft says, <sup>5</sup> it began early in the fall of 197<sup>5</sup> when the first signs began to appear that Reagan <sup>?</sup> would be a candidate. Scowcroft points out that Reagan <sup>?</sup> himself did not get into foreign policy criticism until pretty far into the primary season, and it was almost by accident, <sup>H</sup> he mentioned the



Panama Canal in a speech, Scowcroft said that he thought ~~that~~ Reagen <sup>probably</sup> had never heard of the Panama Canal before. But it got him a good response from his supporters, and then he continued to bear in on that issue. And the President was convinced that he was making headway on it, and Ford accommodated to meet this threat.

On the President's remark about Eastern Europe about not being under ~~the~~ Soviet domination, Scowcroft said there is no question that Ford, what <sup>(Ford)</sup> he meant to say was that the <sup>(indomitable)</sup> ~~indomitable~~ spirit of the Polish people would never be subjugated by the Soviet Union. He said that Ford was primed to deal with ~~that~~ a question on Eastern Europe, <sup>(a)</sup> question on the <sup>(Sonnenfeld)</sup> ~~Sonnenfeld~~ doctrine, but he just could not bring himself to believe that he had not said what he had meant to say, ~~and~~ it was for this reason that it was very hard to persuade him to issue a retraction. Scowcroft says he thinks it is true there has been a declining support in the United States for a positive <sup>(role)</sup> ~~for the~~ United States in foreign policy. He says there has been a waning of the <sup>(idealistic)</sup> ~~idealistic~~ spirit that was expressed in President Kennedy's inaugural speech. He thinks that this ~~is~~ was to a large extent induced by frustration and reaction to Vietnam, ~~and~~ but that <sup>(required)</sup> ~~it~~ it goes beyond that, there is a feeling that the United States should not longer be <sup>(pursued)</sup> ~~carried~~ to carry the burdens of world leadership.

Scowcroft does not think that Nixon and Ford would have <sup>(pursued)</sup> ~~issued~~ basically different foreign ~~politics~~ policies if they had felt that the support had existed for a more aggressive foreign policy in the United States. Scowcroft points out that Ford did pursue detente aggressively up until 1976, ~~and~~ <sup>(and then)</sup> in 1976/everything was put <sup>(onto)</sup> ~~under~~ the back burner, there was a feeling that no further achievements could be made until after the election. Scowcroft does not think that either President felt much impeded by a lack of support in public opinion for their foreign policy.

1975. Congress, of course, ~~provoked (?) great problems, it~~ had a ~~a~~ <sup>(the)</sup> restraining effect on the conduct of foreign policy. This was true in Vietnam, in ~~Cyprus~~ <sup>(the)</sup> Cyprus problem, in Angola, and even in the Middle East. There was a lack of understanding in Congress, Scowcroft says,

for the efforts ~~W~~ the United States was making to establish better relations <sup>in the Middle East</sup> and <sup>through</sup> ~~some~~ these better relations ~~to~~ exert a restraining influence on the Arabs, to encourage the Arabs to become independent of the Soviet Union. This growing feeling of resistance ~~spread resistance~~ in Congress sprang from Vietnam and Watergate, Scowcroft feels.

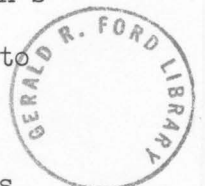
Scowcroft recognizes that the Ford administration as well as the Nixon administration were ~~criticized~~ <sup>(criticized)</sup> for a lack of attention to moral concerns in foreign policy. He said that

it depends on what you want to achieve in foreign policy, how you evaluate these criticisms. Whether you are concerned with results, <sup>(or)</sup> concerned with domestic propaganda

or raising some rallying cry. It's true that neither administration put much public emphasis on human rights, but they did make ~~some~~ substantial progress, through Nixon's efforts, Jewish immigration from the Soviet Union was increased from 409 in '68 to 35,000 in 1972. Now because of the effects of actions like the Jackson-Vannick amendment, it has <sup>(been)</sup> reduced back to about 2,000. Scowcroft said that it is sometimes forgotten that the Soviet dissident that Carter met with would not have been in the United States in the first place if Ford had not got him out of the Soviet Union.

President Ford made successful, though quiet, diplomatic efforts to improve human rights in South Korea, <sup>in</sup> and the Soviet Union, <sup>and</sup> in Syria. He was not flamboyant, but he achieved good results.

Scowcroft agrees, however, that it is necessary to infuse foreign policy with a sense of moral purpose, and he thinks that President Carter ~~xxx~~ is much more effective at doing this than Ford or Nixon were. He thinks that Carter's emphasis on human rights removed ~~some~~ of the jaded sense that ~~it~~ was a hangover from Vietnam. The Carter human rights policy is being very well received in Europe, Scowcroft says, not by the governments, but by the public in the European countries. Perhaps Ford should have done more in this direction, Scowcroft says, but this was what Helsinki was <sup>(supposed)</sup> to be all about, an expression of the United States concern for human rights. But was not played up enough. From the beginning, the political people around Ford tried to sabotage Helsinki because they were concerned about the President losing the support of ethnic groups in the United States. It was only by the most extreme efforts that







Ford was prevented from making departure remarks on his leaving for Helsinki that would have completely undercut the human rights side of Helsinki. Bob Hartman, ~~was~~ Scowcroft said, was particularly outspoken in his opposition to the President's participation in Helsinki, and was responsible for the departure remarks undercutting ~~(If delivered, they)~~ Helsinki that almost got delivered, ~~and it~~ would have ruined the entire mission. The attitude was that Helsinki was something we had to ~~xx~~ swallow and there was no effort ~~xx~~ made to turn it to the political advantage of the administration, which Scowcroft thinks was most ~~misguided, not clear~~.

Scowcroft said that he had made only minor changes in the structure of the National Security Council when he took over from Henry Kissinger. ~~He had~~ reduced the size to the staff somewhat, and made some minor changes in operation, but nothing of any significance. Scowcroft ~~said~~ that he would gather memoranda from the members of the National Security Council on a given issue and would then send these memoranda in to the President. ~~He~~ ~~was~~ would put on top a memorandum from himself which would in part summarize the technical aspects of the issue involved and describe the views of the ~~xx~~ members of the National Security Council and often would give his own recommendation. He said that the participants in the National Security Council would not see his own ~~memorandum~~ ~~that went into the President~~. Normally, Dick Cheney would see it but on occasion he would ~~talk~~ ~~(?)(?)~~ ~~(that was something highly sensitive and~~ ~~Scowcroft)~~ ~~he~~ would communicate ~~it~~ to the President orally. Scowcroft said that he would make an effort to point out the issues involved from the perspective of the President, ~~the~~ ~~He~~ would try to take a national view without the necessarily special perspectives of the State Department and the ~~xxxx~~ Defense Department and he would also point out the implications of an issue from the political perspectives of the President as he would sense them. He would sometimes also attach a decision-memorandum to the material that went into the President, which would contain his own recommendation of what ~~the~~ decision the President might want to make. This decision-memorandum and Scowcroft's own memorandum would not be seen by the other ~~xx~~ players in the NSC. If there were





to be a meeting of the NSC, he would usually not attach a decision-memorandum, but he would wait until the meeting had been held ~~and~~ <sup>if</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>a</sup> decision were made, he would set forth this decision in a decision-memorandum that he would ~~then~~ send into the President. He did not show this decision-memorandum to the participants in the NSC, ~~he~~ felt that this was a presidential paper and it should not be necessary to clear a paper that was the President's own work with other people, ~~he~~ said there was no ~~effort~~ thought really of keeping these things a secret or keeping them from other members of the NSC, but it was ~~simply~~ a presidential paper, and it would not be appropriate to show it to the members of the NSC.