

MEMORANDUM

(C)

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

SECRET/NODIS/XGDS

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

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

DATE AND TIME: Friday, October 31, 1975

PLACE: The Oval Office

Kissinger: The Chinese turned down our statement but accepted the cut-down version of the trip. They stressed that you would be received with courtesy. They need us more than we need them. They may be doing this to prove their manhood; having done so they may give you a good trip. There are two options: cancel, or else go but get the word out that we don't expect anything of substance but that it is important to exchange views.

The President: I think we should do the latter.

Kissinger: Then I would tell the Chinese we find their communique unacceptable and since we submitted the last draft it is up to them to offer modifications. Ask them: Why does it serve their purpose to have the visit end on a statement advertising our differences? But say we are prepared to do without a statement. Then I think we should get to Indonesia and the Philippines and announce it all next Tuesday. [Discussed the sequence of Jakarta-Manila.]

The President: Is there any diplomatic difference?

Kissinger: I don't know which way it would be easier to get out the crowds.

The President: Let's go to Jakarta first if there isn't any difference.

Kissinger: Okay. Let's notify all of them and say we want to announce it at noon here on Tuesday. We will do a note to the Chinese: Since we have submitted something to them, could they submit their version of a press

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statement? Also could they tell us how to make our version acceptable. It is in the interest of both of us not to end on the point of our differences.

Actually the Chinese note was fairly conciliatory. Bush thinks it is best not to have a communique.

The President: I think to cancel it would be a disaster both internationally and with the left and right.

Kissinger: I am going before the Pike Committee this morning. It will be a rough affair. The Republicans are as bad as the Democrats. I am planning a conciliatory statement. [He hands the President the statement. Attached]

The President: It is a damned good statement.

Kissinger: Pike will blast me at the outset. Then I will make my statement. Then Pike will ask what is my legal authority, hoping to trip me. I will say the lawyers say it is legal, and anyway differences between the legislative and executive branches shouldn't be pushed to the point of law but decided on the basis of joint understanding and reconciliation. Then McClory will ask if I am concerned about rights, how come I tapped people? I will say there is no connection -- one is how the policy process can continue and the other how to deal with leaks of sensitive information. Then they will ask about the Plumbers. They have all these questions divided up. I understand Johnson will move to make all the Kurdish documents public.

Let me refresh you on the Kurdish affairs: Aid for the Kurds had been turned over two or three times by the 40 Committee. Then in 1972 the Shah pleaded with the President. We agreed, in order to absorb Iraqi energies. The President wanted to do it. We did it with special procedures [redacted] [Goes into greater detail.]

The President: They would make all this public?

Kissinger: They will make a motion -- it can't be done under your procedures but just the motion about the Kurds will infuriate the Shah. Their purpose is to show I am the evil genius.

The President: Who is the Republican?

Kissinger: Johnson.

The President: He is a disaster.

Kissinger: Many times, when issues were not controversial, the 40 Committee acted by telephonic vote. There was never any hanky-panky in covert operations. Every one of them can be defended and was in the national interest.

The President: Keep your cool -- especially if they are abrasive.

Kissinger: If I explode it will be calculated.

I think maybe I should not go to Moscow now. It would look like you had fired Schlesinger in order to make a new SALT proposal. That would look bad.

[There is discussion of Colby and giving everything away.]

On Sahara, Algeria has said that if there is a Green March, we are to blame.

The President: Why?

Kissinger: They think we could stop it.

I think we are on a bad wicket on the ILO. We can't get off it but we will try to work it out.



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The Secretary of State



Statement

October 31, 1975
Washington, D. C.

Bureau of Public Affairs
Office of Media Services

CONFIDENTIALITY IN FOREIGN POLICY DECISIONMAKING PROCESS

The following is a statement by Secretary Kissinger before the House Select Committee on Intelligence on October 31, 1975.

I am grateful for this opportunity to appear before the committee this morning. In my letter of October 14 to the chairman, I stated that the State Department is prepared to work with the House Select Committee on Intelligence in a cooperative spirit to find a way to accommodate our mutual interests. We understand the difficulties which confront your committee in investigating matters as sensitive and complex as these and are prepared to do all we can to assist you in your important work.

I would respectfully suggest, Mr. Chairman [Representative Otis G. Pike], that as this committee and the Department of State pursue their common objectives in support of our national interests several important factors be kept in mind.

First, our nation today faces serious and unprecedented international challenges. We stand poised between a return to a nuclear arms race and a move forward to a new era of nuclear arms control; our allies and friends around the world continue to look to us for material and moral support to maintain their freedom and independence; our role is crucial in the relationship between developed and developing countries; and the growing problems of interdependence—food, energy, commodities policy, the reformation of international financial and economic institutions—all demand new, sometimes revolutionary approaches.

These goals can be achieved only if we preserve the confidence of other governments in us and in our reliability. Foreign policy involves not only matters of great sensitivity to this country but issues of equal sensitivity to others. Its raw material is actions and statements of American officials, as well as policies and attitudes of foreign leaders, at times conveyed to us in strictest confidence. All this gives a unique dimension to the substance of foreign affairs.

If the last quarter of the 20th century is to be a time of prosperity and security for our nation, it will require the confidence of the nations of the world in the wisdom of our foreign policy and the effectiveness of our national security institutions. And confidence, once lost, cannot soon be regained.

Mr. Chairman, I think we can all agree that the vitality and continuity of the institutions that formulate and implement foreign policy will be essential if we are to meet the challenges that face our nation. We now have a Foreign Service and a Department of State dedicated to the national interest and prepared to serve with dedication under any Administration. We must make sure that this continues. The Foreign Service must not be politicized or intimidated.

It is of course natural and proper for the Secretary of State and his senior advisers to be called to account for their decisions before the Congress and the American people. The conduct of an effective foreign policy requires the support of the American people, who have the right to be

informed about their government's actions through their elected representatives.

These are the considerations I have sought to bear in mind in deciding how the Department of State can most effectively cooperate with this committee. They are reflected in the proposals of my October 14 letter to the chairman. The letter was reviewed by the President before it was sent; the proposals were fully approved by him. Let me review them briefly with you now:

- First, I am prepared to authorize any officer of the Department or the Foreign Service, regardless of rank, to testify before the select committee on all facts known by that officer about the collection and use of intelligence information in foreign relations crises;

- Second, I will authorize any policy-level officer of the Department or the Foreign Service to testify before the select committee on recommendations received by him from his subordinates, but without identification of authorship, and any recommendations he forwarded to his superiors; and

- Finally, I am prepared to supply the committee with a summary from all sources, but without identification of authorship, of views and recommendations on the Cyprus crisis or any other issue within the committee's jurisdiction and criticisms of our handling of it.

In my view, Mr. Chairman, these proposals—offered in a spirit of cooperation and compromise—will make it possible for the committee to secure all the necessary information as it goes forward with its investigation. There is nothing we seek less than confrontation.

I ask the committee to consider the special nature of foreign policy. Because of it the national interest requires—and has long been recognized to require—a high degree of confidentiality in the communications between the senior levels of the Department and their subordinates.

As the committee is aware, it is our view that junior and middle-level officers should not be required to testify as to their recommendations to their superiors. We are convinced that any other course would greatly damage the foreign policy de-

cisionmaking process and, as a consequence, greatly damage the foreign policy of the United States.

Mr. Chairman, in addition to the more general question of what testimony should be required from junior and middle-level officers, there is the immediate issue of the dissent memorandum which this committee has requested from the Department. If we were to accede to that request, we would risk grave and perhaps even irreparable harm to the very mechanism—the dissent channel—which has been established to encourage officers within the Department to give me and my successors the hard, blunt, and critical comments we seek.

I recognize, Mr. Chairman, that these considerations complicate a congressional inquiry, particularly when that inquiry is focused on information of a particularly sensitive nature. But I am confident that the procedures I outlined in my letter of October 14—cooperatively implemented—will allow all the relevant evidence to come forward.

Mr. Chairman, I am here today so that I may personally assure the members of this committee of my deep desire to accommodate the interests of the legislative and executive branches of government. I ask only that you recognize that as Secretary of State I have a number of additional obligations. On the one hand, I must do all I can to assure that committees of the Congress receive the information they need to fulfill their responsibilities. But I must also assure that I and my successors are able to develop and give to the President the most comprehensive advice available as he carries out his constitutional duty to conduct the foreign relations of the United States. And I must, as well, do my duty to my colleagues in the Department of State and the Foreign Service so that they in turn may give our country their best.

Mr. Chairman, I have not come before this committee to win an argument, but to bring about a cooperative solution. The separation of powers was not intended by the Founding Fathers to produce a restful relationship free of controversy. But our country has become great because our executive and legislative branches have generally managed to settle their disputes in a spirit of cooperation; we thrive as a country not on victories, but on reconciliations.

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