

**The original documents are located in Box 26, folder “State Department - Kissinger Interviews (1)” of the Ron Nessen Papers at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.**

### **Copyright Notice**

The copyright law of the United States (Title 17, United States Code) governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted material. Ron Nessen donated to the United States of America his copyrights in all of his unpublished writings in National Archives collections. Works prepared by U.S. Government employees as part of their official duties are in the public domain. The copyrights to materials written by other individuals or organizations are presumed to remain with them. If you think any of the information displayed in the PDF is subject to a valid copyright claim, please contact the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

[ca. 5/75]

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

To  
Nessen  
for  
President's briefing  
book for review of  
prior press conference.  
Please ensure that  
this transcript is  
closely held.

\_\_\_\_ M. Vanderhuyse

INTERVIEW  
OF  
HENRY A. KISSINGER, SECRETARY OF STATE  
WITH  
BARBARA WALTERS

MISS WALTERS:

Mr. Secretary, we are about to celebrate our bicentennial. Is Vietnam our first defeat in 200 years?

SECRETARY KISSINGER. When a nation is engaged in a major effort for 10 years and then doesn't achieve its basic objectives you have to say it is a significant setback, yes.

MISS WALTERS. Is this our first defeat in 200 years?

SECRETARY KISSINGER. Well, it depends how you assess the war of 1812 and other events. It is a significant setback.

MISS WALTERS. You are responsible for the airlift of more than 100,000 Vietnam refugees. How do you answer the American people who are worried about further economic deprivation and are resisting the arrival of these refugees?

SECRETARY KISSINGER. It has been the American tradition to take refugees throughout our history even from countries to which we had no special obligation. We took 675,000 Cuban refugees. We took over 150,000 Hungarian refugees. Here is a country in which for 15 years we were engaged in a major effort in which hundreds of thousands of people cooperated with us in the belief that the United States would see this effort through. The least we owe these people, those who were most seriously endangered, is that we make an effort to evacuate them.

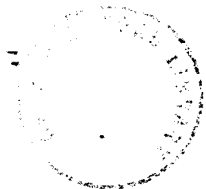
I think when the American people reflect about our obligation they will recognize that we could not decently do anything else. The number is about 120,000. It is one of the things that we can be proud of having achieved. I think it is a national duty to help them.



Moreover, I believe that the impact in any one locality is going to be absolutely minimal.

MISS WALTERS. Mr. Secretary, right now at this point of our history how do you see the fundamentals of our foreign policy and are they being redefined since the fall of Vietnam?

SECRETARY KISSINGER. The fundamental goal of our foreign policy has to remain to preserve peace and to achieve progress, economically, humanly and politically in the world.



Now there is a curious situation in which many people say there is no domino effect, but we have to redo all our foreign policy. Both propositions cannot be true.

I believe that the major objectives which the United States has set itself are dictated by our history, by our values, by our geography. They are unaffected by what has happened in Vietnam. They are more difficult as a result of our setback, but we can master them and we will master them.

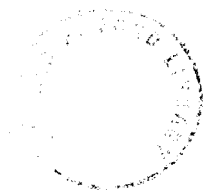
While Americans have some reason to be unhappy for various reasons about the outcome of Vietnam, if we look at the whole post-war record, we have preserved the global peace. Almost every great initiative in the post-war period has either been initiated by America or has been carried out with our strong support. If we want to avoid a world of chaos, if we want to achieve a world of progress, the American role is absolutely imperative. I repeat it is our goal to maintain it and based on our recent experience, to strengthen it in a more mature way.



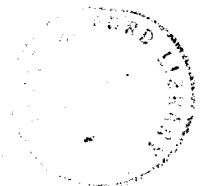
131

With respect to Indochina it is important to remember that we found 550,000 Americans in Indochina when we came into office. We didn't put them there. In fact, we withdrew them.

Our attempt has been to gear American commitments to American capabilities and necessities.



MISS WALTERS. I would like to divide our foreign policy questions now into different parts of the world. Starting with Vietnam and going to the Far East. On Vietnam at the time of the Paris peace treaty many people felt, perhaps cynically, that it was only a matter of time before North Vietnam took over all of Vietnam and that the withdrawal of our troops was only a way of saving face.





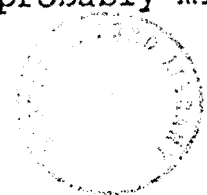
These people wonder why you didn't know this and have some alternate plan should Vietnam push south.

SECRETARY KISSINGER. - If so many people knew it they managed to keep it rather quiet. I don't remember any very vocal statements at the time that pointed out what you have just said.

Secondly, when you say why didn't we have an alternative plan, I would have to know what sort of a plan do people have in mind, what could we have done?

MISS WALTERS. Let me make a suggestion then; not to run your foreign policy, but when Congress passed the War Powers Act limiting our aid to South Vietnam, we might have gone to President Thieu and told him, "Look, it is a new world and you had better negotiate unless you want defeat."

SECRETARY KISSINGER. Let me first go back to where we were in January, 1973 and where we wound up in April of '75. In January '73, we did not foresee that Watergate would sap the Executive authority of the United States to such a degree that flexibility of Executive action inherently would be circumscribed. We did not foresee that the Congress would pass a law which prohibited us from enforcing the Paris agreement and while we probably might



have done nothing anyway, it makes a lot of difference for Hanoi whether it thinks the United States probably will not or whether it thinks that we certainly cannot.

I do not believe that Hanoi would have sent 19 of its 20 divisions south if these two things hadn't happened; nor did we foresee that aid to Vietnam would be cut in successive years by 50 percent each year at a time when inflation quadrupled, the oil prices and inflation increased the cost of everything.

So that after May, 1974, no new equipment of any kind was sent to Vietnam and not even spare parts in any substantial quantities reached Vietnam. So that ammunition had to be rationed for the Vietnamese forces. Maybe the South Vietnamese army was not one of the better armies in the world, but even a good army would have been demoralized by these successive cuts.

None of this was predictable. After it became clearer that a gradual erosion of morale was occurring we tried very hard to get negotiations started and President Thieu, whatever you may think of him, on a number of occasions made proposals to get these talks started unconditionally.



9

But once the North Vietnamese realized what the trends were, they blocked all negotiations and went for a military solution.

MISS WALTERS. So that you feel there was no other possibility?

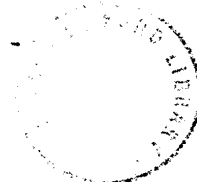
SECRETARY KISSINGER. There was no other possibility.

MISS WALTERS. It is now known that President Nixon wrote a letter to Thieu in January of 1973 promising that the United States would move full force to punish any violations of the Paris peace agreement. You obviously knew of the contents of this letter.

SECRETARY KISSINGER. Of course.

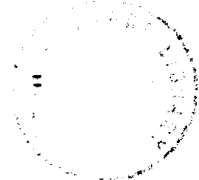
MISS WALTERS. Why didn't you reveal to Congress in the past months the contents of this letter, especially when Senator Jackson raised this question?

SECRETARY KISSINGER. It is a very important question of the conduct of foreign policy. Presidents have been writing letters to foreign heads of state since the founding of the Republic. During the difficult months when we were trying to convince President Thieu to accept the Paris accords, many letters were written, just as every President, including President Ford, is writing, has been writing letters to foreign heads of government.



If we begin revealing the contents of letters, simply because a Senator, on top of it a Presidential candidate, but quite apart from this, a Senator alleges that there is something in these letters, then Presidential correspondence will lose its private character.

Moreover in this particular case, President Ford announced that the substance of these letters had been made public not ascribed to correspondents, but in fact, had been made public.



The reason President Ford decided to not release these letters was to maintain the principle of confidentiality of Presidential correspondence. We do have an obligation to tell the Congress about obligations which the country has undertaken. That was done in many public statements in 1973 and they were made moot by Congressional actions and after that, it was not an issue.

MISS WALTERS. Mr. Secretary, this brings up one of the criticisms about you today. That is, people say Henry Kissinger deals in excessive secrecy. There are other letters and other deals perhaps being made at other conferences and other summits that perhaps the Congress doesn't know about.

How does one resolve that and how do you answer that criticism?

SECRETARY KISSINGER. Once certain stereotypes develop it is very difficult to deal with them. I am certain that if I read top secret documents in front of the Washington Monument to a public assembly I would still be accused of conducting foreign policy too secretly. One has to separate it into two parts.

The first is: Secrecy in negotiations is absolutely essential because it enables each side to state views and explanations which could be extremely embarrassing if



they became public. It is absolutely required for the foreign leaders who deal with us to know that they can talk to us frankly.

Therefore, the secrecy of the negotiating process must be preserved.

Charles Evans Hughes said in 1923 that open diplomacy can only refer to results, not to the processes.

The second point is: Are there secret agreements that people don't know about and that have been kept from the public? Well, so far with all the allegations that have been made nobody has yet produced any secret agreement that has not been made public. At one time there was an allegation that we had made some secret agreement about 70 missiles. That turned out to be an absurdity, but it is so complicated to explain that I don't want to go into it now.

At any rate, that was an absurdity.



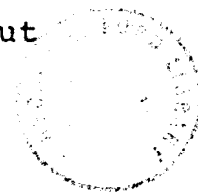
Then there is --

2

The second argument that has been made is that we did not reveal a Gromyko letter about Jewish emigration. It is true that we did not reveal the letter, but the substance of that letter was fully disclosed to the Senate in the testimony before the Senate Finance Committee on December 3, 1974.

The third charge has to do with the war in Vietnam, with the end of the war in Vietnam. There, too, the substance was fully explained.

All these three allegations have one thing in common: We have consistently refused to reveal confidential exchanges, but we have always put before the public the substance of these exchanges without



SECRETARY KISSINGER. Well, first of all, to say it has not worked is probably --

MISS WALTERS. That is what your critics say.

SECRETARY KISSINGER. That is probably an overstatement. If you look at what has been done over the last 6-1/2 years with China, with the Soviet Union, in energy, in food, in getting our troops out of Vietnam and our prisoners back and in starting the process toward peace in the Middle East, I don't think it is correct to say that our foreign policy hasn't worked. I don't want to identify our foreign policy with me personally.

MISS WALTERS. Everyone does.

SECRETARY KISSINGER. But I do not think Americans should accept the proposition that their foreign policy hasn't worked because it has worked. We have had some setbacks, but nobody is batting 1,000. Most of our setbacks, many of our setbacks have been caused by domestic problems. But on personal diplomacy, all diplomacy is to some extent personal.

Finally, the thing that probably will last longest, one of the aspects that will last longest is to get into the key positions of the Department of State, the ablest younger people in the Department so that I think now the Department of State has the most tough minded, and most

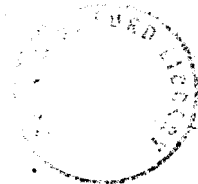




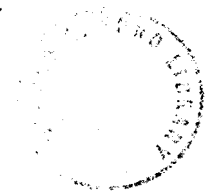
revealing necessarily what they were derived from. That is the only issue that has arisen. There are no secret agreements. No one has as yet produced any secret agreements. All they have produced are limited statements that were fully revealed to the public.

MISS WALTERS. Mr. Secretary, do you see our Government recognizing the North Vietnamese Government?

SECRETARY KISSINGER. Well, we now have to see what the conduct of this government is internationally and partially domestically. For example, we know that in Cambodia very tragic and inhuman and ~~impo~~<sup>barbarous</sup> things are going on. We don't regret not having recognized Cambodia immediately. We want to observe the conduct of the Vietnamese ~~conduct~~<sup>government</sup> for a while before we make this decision.



MISS WALTERS. Can you tell us what part the Soviet Union played diplomatically, militarily, during the waning days of South Vietnam's collapse?



SECRETARY KISSINGER. The Soviet Union played, in the last two weeks, a moderately constructive role in enabling us to understand the possibilities there were for evacuation, both of Americans and South Vietnamese, and for the possibilities that might exist for a political evolution.

On the other hand, I do not want to give the Soviet Union excessive credit for moderating the consequences that its arms brought about.

Therefore, we have to see it in perspective.

MISS WALTERS. Did the Soviet Union tell you that there would be no possibility of a negotiated settlement, that it was going to end in a takeover of the city?

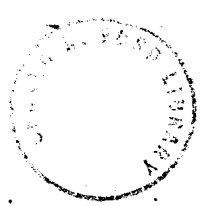
*FWD  
1/14/71*

SECRETARY KISSINGER. That was not clear to me from the exchanges.

MISS WALTERS. We talked of detente with the Soviet Union, but how do we reconcile detente with the country that aids the collapse of an ally we are committed to defend?

*Begin  
Part 2*

SECRETARY KISSINGER. We have to understand what detente represents. The Soviet Union is a country that we recognize is ideologically hostile. The Soviet Union is a great power that is in many parts of the world operating competitively with us. The Soviet Union is also



a country that possesses an enormous nuclear arsenal and with which we have certain interests in common such as the prevention of general nuclear war, such as limiting conflict in areas where both of us could get directly involved.

In those areas detente has worked reasonably well. What we cannot ask the Soviet Union to do is to keep itself from taking advantage of situations in which, for whatever reasons, we do not do what is required to maintain the balance.

It is true that Soviet arms made the conquest of South Vietnam possible. It is also true that the refusal of American arms made the conquest of South Vietnam inevitable.

Therefore, while the Soviet Union does have a heavy responsibility, we cannot expect the Soviet Union to police the world for us and we have to be mature enough to recognize that we have to co-exist, even in a competitive world, and perhaps hopefully be able to moderate over a period of years the competition in peripheral areas.

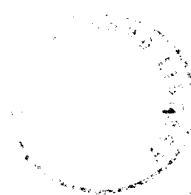
Now eventually the Soviet Union must realize that it is responsible for the consequences of its actions even in peripheral areas.



But as a basic relationship detente has never meant the absence of competition.

MISS WALTERS. Where does China stand now as a result of the fall of Saigon?

SECRETARY KISSINGER. Well, China now has 40 million Vietnamese on its frontiers who do not exactly suffer from a lack of confidence in themselves. I think China will look at the international situation from a point of view of an overall balance of power, from a point of view of its own national interests. I think it will conclude that the policy that led it to undertake normalization of relations with the United States remains the best course for it, just as we believe that the normalization of relations with the People's Republic of China is an important objective of American policy which will be maintained.



MISS WALTERS. Mr. Secretary, Thailand's Foreign Minister has said all American soldiers will be totally gone from that country within one year. What does that mean to us?

SECRETARY KISSINGER. Basically, as we assess our policy around the world, it is important to understand that the United States does not do favors to other countries by being in an alliance with them, nor do other countries do us favors by being our allies. If other countries want us to withdraw our troops, we will, of course, withdraw them.

Our security can be protected in many ways. What it means, however, is that for the Thai leaders the last few months have been a traumatic experience. Thailand supported our efforts in Vietnam and in Indochina because it believed its own security was intimately connected with it. And it is well known that we used Thai bases for many of the operations of the Indochina war. So naturally the Thai leaders are concerned about what this means, what our withdrawal from Cambodia and Vietnam means, about our general attitude in foreign policy. But I think they will find that we are going to stick by our commitments.

If they want us to reduce our forces and they have indicated that they do, and if they want us to withdraw them,



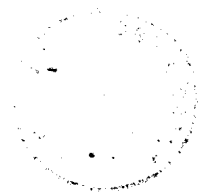
we are prepared to discuss this with them and of course we will accede by their wishes.

MISS WALTERS. Senator majority leader Mike Mansfield has said that we should withdraw our troops from South Korea, probably the next target of Communist pressure. Do you think we should? Has South Korea asked us to?

SECRETARY KISSINGER. South Korea has not asked us to. In South Korea there can be no ambiguity about our commitment because we have a defense treaty ratified by the Congress. If we abandon this treaty it would have drastic consequences in Japan and all over Asia because that would be interpreted as our final withdrawal from Asia and our final withdrawal from our whole post-war foreign policy.

MISS WALTERS. Is there a redefinition of the domino theory in light of the internal rebellions going on in such countries as Thailand, Philippines, Thailand and Malasia and have we as a result of Vietnam stopped trying to persuade governments to resist Communism?

SECRETARY KISSINGER. There are two aspects to the domino theory. The first is: Is there a domino effect to foreign policy action. The second is: Can we, as a



country, do something about every domino effect that may occur in the world.

MISS WALTERS. I like your questions much better than mine. They are clearer.

SECRETARY KISSINGER. With respect to my first question, there is in almost every major event a domino effect that is produced either by the change in the balance of forces or by the perception of other countries of the actions of the various participants or by the general psychological climate that is created in the world as to who is advancing and who is withdrawing. That is inevitable.

What the United States can do about it is another matter. For example, with respect to Indochina we now receive cables from places as far away as Latin America and Africa that have no geographic interest in Southeast Asia simply questioning what this means about the American purpose.

Now, does it mean that the United States is no longer urging countries to resist international subversion?

The first decision whether to resist internal subversion must come from the countries concerned. We probably made a mistake in Vietnam to turn Vietnam into a test case for our policy and not for the Vietnamese



THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

NOTE FOR:

Raw

FROM:

TOM DECAIR

Something like this  
should follow the  
"Did they die in vain"  
answer -- to deal  
with the "where do we  
draw the line" question

policy back in 1962 and 1963 when we first got ourselves involved there.

So, our general attitude would be that the basic decision of how to react to internal subversion depends on the countries concerned.

MISS WALTERS. Let me go back to that. Does that mean we should have realized that the trend was towards Communism and said we will stay out?

SECRETARY KISSINGER. No, but we perhaps might have perceived it more in Vietnamese terms rather than as the outward thrust of a global conspiracy.

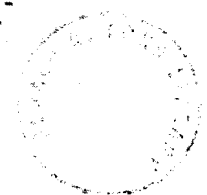
MISS WALTERS. Okay.

SECRETARY KISSINGER. Then if there is a decision to resist internal subversion I would think that the introduction of American military forces is the worst way of dealing with it because that introduces a foreign element. If we want to be helpful we would be much better off strengthening the government's ability to resist and giving it assistance rather than introducing American military forces.

But as a general rule, one would really have to look at that country by country. We don't have a blanket policy in this respect that applies to every country in the world.

MISS WALTERS. Mr. Secretary, can we talk of the Middle East? President Ford and you are due to meet President Sadat in Austria next month and later with Prime Minister Rabin in Washington. What possible avenues for new negotiations do you see? One rather doubts that you and President Ford would put yourselves in the position vis a vis Egypt and Israel without some new plan or some prior assurances from these governments that there are welcoming possibilities?

SECRETARY KISSINGER. We do not have a plan that we want to present to these two governments now. But we do have the conviction that a prolonged stalemate in the Middle East involves a high risk of another Middle East war with major consequences for the possibilities of a conflict with the Soviet Union and with a major impact

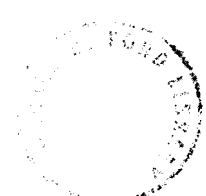


on the economies of all of the industrialized nations, including us. That is a danger that we are determined to avoid. We believe that it is also in the interest of all of the participants, all of the parties in the Middle East, including especially Israel.

So, we will talk to President Sadat and when we meet Prime Minister Rabin and other leaders about their ideas of how the Middle East can be moved to a solution. And after that we will formulate a precise American policy.

MISS WALTERS. It has been widely noted that you and the President criticized Israel for not being more flexible. What was the purpose of this private criticism?

SECRETARY KISSINGER. You know, Barbara, there are so many myths that go around. The President made a public criticism, not a private criticism, when he referred to inflexibility



In terms of the long-term consequences, I have expressed the view that a strategy which on the whole had been agreed to with the Israeli Government did not succeed.

The purpose has been not of criticism, but the purpose of making clear the general American perception of the problem was to make clear that new decisions had to be taken by all of the parties and that the progress towards peace in the Middle East cannot be stopped.

MISS WALTERS. But when you publicly or privately criticized Israel, didn't this release President Sadat from reexamining his policy?

SECRETARY KISSINGER. We have asked all parties to look at their policies and the allegation of private criticism of Israel comes mostly from people who think they are helping Israel but who in my view are not helping Israel by making these allegations.

Our view is that all parties on both sides have an obligation to explain what they can do to produce peace.

On the Israeli side this is a question of what territory they are prepared to give up. We prepared to give up

On the Arab side it is a question of what concrete commitments to peace they are prepared to make.

What has to be balanced is territory against commitment to peace. Both sides have an obligation, in our view, to explain their position with that respect. We are not taking sides.

MISS WALTERS. Almost six weeks ago, President Ford asked for a reassessment of our policy in the Middle East.

Possible

I know you have not finished the reassessment. They say it will be done by the end of the week or next week perhaps. But I know you must have some idea. Can you tell us anything of what has emerged?

SECRETARY KISSINGER. First of all, when President Ford announced this and set a tentative deadline it was before events in Indochina took a great deal of our attention.

Secondly, it is a mistake to believe that there will be some clear terminal date at which one can say from now on the assessment is completed. But I believe that on the whole, the decisions, the final decision, will not be made until President Ford has had an opportunity to meet with the leaders of the countries principally concerned.

But the conclusion to which we have come is certainly to continue a major American effort to produce progress toward peace in the Middle East and not to permit a long period of stagnation.



MISS WALTERS.

What assurances does Israel and our other allies have that we will keep our commitments to them since Israelis hear "reassessment" and other allies too, it seems to strike great fear that it could mean abandonment or great change. What assurances do they have? they have?

SECRETARY KISSINGER. The President has, on several occasions, made clear, and so have I, that we will stand by our existing commitments.

MISS WALTERS. Could Congress change this?

SECRETARY KISSINGER. Certainly Congress can change our commitments, as it did in Vietnam, not our commitments, our implied obligations.



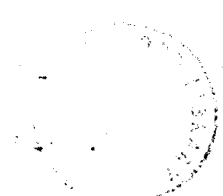
But the situation in Vietnam was quite different from the situation in other parts of the world. In Vietnam the situation was extremely controversial. It has not been that with respect to Israel or with respect to Western Europe and most of our other alliances. But Congress can certainly change any commitment we have.

MISS WALTERS. But do you feel that Israel and these other allies have good reason to be assured that the basic policy will not change?

SECRETARY KISSINGER. Assurances are not achieved with words alone. It depends on our conduct as a people. In terms of the foreign policy of this Administration, our allies and friends have no reason to fear that we will abandon them.

In terms of our overall performance as a country, it is crucial that we restore a sense of unity between the Executive and Legislative Branches and that we perform in such a manner that other countries know that we are dealing with them as a united people.

11/10/74





MISS WALTERS. If we turn now to Europe, our base in the Portugese Azores was essential to the military airlift of aid to Israel in the October War. Portugal has said she may not allow this to happen again.

SECRETARY KISSINGER. She said we will not.

MISS WALTERS. Do we have alternate plans?

SECRETARY KISSINGER. We have alternate possibilities, but they are much more complicated and involve a much longer route.

MISS WALTERS. Are you very concerned about this?

SECRETARY KISSINGER. It is an additional problem in case there is a Middle East war.

MISS WALTERS. What are our relations now with Portugal? What do you see happening with this?

SECRETARY KISSINGER. The situation in Portugal is in a state of evolution. There recently were elections which indicated gratifyingly that a majority of the Portugese people favored the democratic parties. It is also a fact that the government has a very heavy Communist influence, out of proportion to the numerical strength of the party the party represents. So we have to investigate what the foreign policy of Portugal will be before we can make any final decisions.

MISS WALTERS. But you have expressed yourself as being very gloomy about what you see as the decline and erosion of the free world.

SECRETARY KISSINGER. No, it has been alleged.

MISS WALTERS. It has been alleged. All right. Are you?

SECRETARY KISSINGER. It is not always true.

MISS WALTERS. It has been alleged that you are gloomy about what you see as the decline and erosion of the free world. Is this true that you feel this way?

SECRETARY KISSINGER. As a matter of fact, it is; it is partly true. It is not so much erosion of the free world. I think if we look around the world today that in many



MISS WALTERS. But you have expressed yourself as being very gloomy about what you see as the decline and erosion of the free world.

SECRETARY KISSINGER. No, it has been alleged.

MISS WALTERS. It has been alleged. All right. Are you?

SECRETARY KISSINGER. It is not always true.

MISS WALTERS. It has been alleged that you are gloomy about what you see as the decline and erosion of the free world. Is this true that you feel this way?

SECRETARY KISSINGER. As a matter of fact, it is; it is partly true. It is not so much erosion of the free world. I think if we look around the world today that in many



countries Marxist ideologies and perceptions of the world which are contrary to our values are gaining in strength and that therefore we have in the world both a political problem and a philosophical problem, that is, a problem of the degree to which we appear relevant to other countries.

In Europe, in some European countries, the left is gaining in strength. Now I am stating this clinically, as a fact. I am not stating that necessarily the United States can do a great deal about it. It is something to be noted.

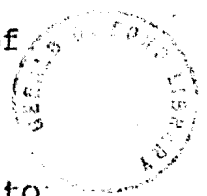
MISS WALTERS. If it happens, if it kept growing little by little, will it reach us? Has it reached us?

SECRETARY KISSINGER. Will it? The United States cannot be an island in this world any longer. We are tied to the rest of the world through the necessities of security, increasingly by the imperatives of economics and inevitably by the modern means of communications.

So, I would suppose that the intellectual and philosophical currents in the world will sooner or later affect the United States and then it is a question of what other currents exist here to deal with them.

MISS WALTERS. You will be visiting and trying to reassess our relations with NATO, our participation in NATO. Do you expect Turkey and Greece to remain in NATO?

*Moved  
for  
the legal*



Realistically as things are now?

SECRETARY KISSINGER. I hope very much that Greece and Turkey will stay in NATO. I think it is in their self-interest to stay in NATO, but the national passions are very great. They are now negotiating in Vienna, the Greek and Turkish community in Cyprus are negotiating in Vienna. We hope that during the NATO summit the President and others will have an opportunity to exchange views with the Greek and Turkish leaders and we hope that we can play a role in moving things towards a negotiated outcome.

MISS WALTERS. Mr. Secretary, my mind is still -- as you are talking -- back on the other question as to the currents in our country.

As you look at it as a historian, do you see us going more to the left or becoming more socialistic or do you see a right wing element taking us over or how do you see it going?

SECRETARY KISSINGER. I don't think we are becoming socialistic in this country. This is not at all a trend. But we have had a very sharp division in this country which formerly centered around Vietnam, but for which Vietnam was really a symbol between a more radical trend and a more conservative trend. And for one of the rare occasions in our history the contest was fought out in almost,

it sometimes took extralegal forms on both sides.

Now I think it is too early to tell in which direction it goes in this country because in this country the traditional element is very strong. It is a country that has very great faith in its existing values. So it could really go in either direction. But the major point that I would like to make is that we have the great advantage over many other countries that our divisions are not yet unbridgeable and that people on both sides of political dividing lines can still talk to each other.

I think we must preserve this and try to develop common positions rather than become, as so many other countries, divided into ideological blocs.

MISS WALTERS. Mr. Secretary, is there any difference between the foreign policy of President Nixon and President Ford and if so, how do they differ?

SECRETARY KISSINGER. The foreign policy of a great country cannot be changed at the whim of individuals and if it is perceived that every President starts an entirely new foreign policy, that in itself will create an element of instability in the world.

So if you look at the entire American post-war foreign policy you will find that the changes in the major directions of the foreign policy haven't been all that

significant.

What is different between various Presidents is the style, the method of doing business and when new problems come up they must make their own decisions.

MISS WALTERS. Is there anything significantly different between these two men that you can see in the way that they handle foreign policy that influences you, that changes the direction?

SECRETARY KISSINGER? Well, I would think that in the conduct of shaping, that is, shaping a domestic consensus, that President Ford would, on the whole, be more conciliatory.

MISS WALTERS. Well, it is considered in general that he is weaker in foreign policy than President Nixon. In his last speech there was a good deal of feeling that President Ford was going to put his own implant on foreign policy, but what he did was to put Henry Kissinger's impact. You read the papers so you know what I am saying.

SECRETARY KISSINGER. This is the sort of gossip that comes out of every White House.



President Ford worked on this speech for many weeks. He spent days and nights on that speech, with many advisors.

Now if advisors choose to put out that there were different points of view which were never apparent in the room and that one advisor prevailed, this makes a dramatic story, but it is not true. This speech reflected the convictions of President Ford.

MISS WALTERS. You did not go in the last few days and --

SECRETARY KISSINGER. That is nonsense.

MISS WALTERS. -- and keep yourself in the White House and make the final impact and implant?

SECRETARY KISSINGER. That is nonsense. There was only one draft of the speech. I never heard any philosophical disagreements stated while I was in the room, nor did I change anything that already existed. It was predominantly a speech by President Ford which various of his advisors helped to draft.

MISS WALTERS. Is he as knowledgeable about foreign policy as President Nixon?





SECRETARY KISSINGER. I think he would be the first to admit that when he came into office that he was not as knowledgeable about foreign policy. On the other hand, he spends an enormous amount of his time on foreign policy. He moves with great deliberation, great care and great thoroughness and he masters the subjects of foreign policy with extraordinary attention and skill.

MISS WALTERS. If we might turn, just because we are limited in time, even though you have been very generous, to Latin America. I am going to be visiting Cuba as this interview is aired. I will be going with Senator McGovern and some other reporters.

This weekend the Organization of American States meets here in Washington and high on their list is a reassessment of the economic blockade of Cuba. It is suspected if Latin America does this we will go along. What would you want Cuba to do to reestablish normalcy and if I do see Premier Castro, is there anything that I can ask him for you, for us?

SECRETARY KISSINGER. Castro is without any question a remarkable man. I think it is important for Americans to understand that individuals who go into the mountains to lead a revolution are not motivated by economic considerations. If they were, they would be



bank presidents and not revolutionaries.

We have made clear to Cuba that we are prepared to improve our relations. We have made certain gestures to Cuba, so far not reciprocated. We are prepared to discuss with the other countries of the Organization of American States the question of blockade, the economic blockade, and to enable them to express their majority view on this subject.

subject.

But I think, Barbara, that Castro knows how to get in touch with us. I don't want to make it too tempting for him by using you as an intermediary.

FIND  
3/14



Begin  
Part II

MISS WALTERS. Mr. Secretary, let's talk about you and the criticism that is all around you at this point.

SECRETARY KISSINGER. All unjustified. That is my position and I will maintain it.

MISS WALTERS. Well, let's start. It has been said that by your holding two positions, Secretary of State and National Security advisor that the President doesn't have the benefit of hearing diverse views on foreign policy. That is a legitimate point of view.

SECRETARY KISSINGER. Leaving aside now the question of whether a man should hold two positions and addressing the question of does the President get diverse views on foreign policy, the whole purpose of the national security system as it exists is to make sure that the President gets every significant point of view that exists in the bureaucracy. Typically when a major decision has to be made there will be first a paper in which every agency expresses its view. After which there will be a meeting of the National Security Council at which every agency is represented. So that the possibility of keeping anything from the President does not exist and, moreover, any person who has been in a senior position for any



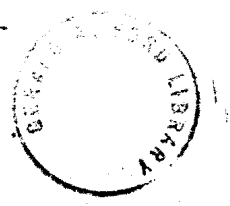
length of time knows that it is essential for the President to make sure that the President has heard conflicting points of view, because if he doesn't and anything goes wrong for a reason which you didn't tell the President, his whole confidence in the policy will be undermined.

MISS WALTERS. All right. Now you have often said when we have talked in the past about how you present things, how you presented things to President Nixon, that you outlined all the possibilities, but you also make recommendations. You are wearing two hats. Should you be? If you were standing out there somewhere looking at this one man holding two jobs, do you really think it is best that he hold both of them?

SECRETARY KISSINGER. First of all, I want to make clear that the Secretary of Defense, the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency and any other official who believes he has something relative to say has very easy access to this President. It is not being blocked.

Secondly, the decisions are made at meetings at which everybody is present. If the President wants to ask for my recommendation he doesn't ask in what capacity he is asking it. Therefore, the question cannot be answered in the abstract.

I agree with what the President said. If there is



an individual who can handle both jobs and has the confidence of the President, the President should have the option of combining it. He should not be forced to either combine it or separate it. He should have that option.

MISS WALTERS. Would you resign if either of these jobs were taken away from you?

SECRETARY KISSINGER. I think this is not a time to talk about my resigning.

MISS WALTERS. I am going to have to because other people are, Mr. Secretary. Senator Frank Church, the leading Democrat in the Foreign Relations Committee has called for your resignation as has the former Secretary of Defense Clark Clifford. How do you react to men of this stature saying the country would be better off without you. I would like to know how you react as the Secretary of State and how you react as Henry Kissinger when you walk out of the room.

SECRETARY KISSINGER. Senator Church, as I understand it, didn't ask for my resignation. He said we should change our policies or I should resign. I think that whether I resign or not depends on two factors: One, on the views as to my utility and secondly on my assessment of whether I am serving the country.



After one has been in Washington for 6-1/2 years as I have, under extremely difficult and sometimes passionate circumstances, holding a job does not in itself hold any particular attraction. What I have to consider is the impact internationally if ever, successively -- if the President, Vice President, and the Secretary of State resign and for what reason, and what reasons are used to bring this about.

So I have to judge this point of view.



MISS WALTERS. This interview is going to run over a several day period. I don't want to miss anything. Can I be assured that you will not resign between now and the end of the airing of this interview? Would you like to say something about it?

SECRETARY KISSINGER. I save my resignations for visits to Salzburg.

MISS WALTERS. You only resign in Austria, is that it?

SECRETARY KISSINGER. That is right.

MISS WALTERS. Mr. Secretary, let's talk a little bit about you in a personal level now. You have been married now, it is over a year, isn't it?

SECRETARY KISSINGER. Over a year, yes.

MISS WALTERS. What has marriage brought you besides a lovely wife?

SECRETARY KISSINGER. I am very close to my wife. I think it has enormously contributed to my peace of mind and to my ability to deal with temporary adversity.



MISS WALTERS. Is there any particular criticism that you feel is particularly unfair and that is prevalent and that you would like to answer?

SECRETARY KISSINGER. I don't -- I haven't really thought about this.

MISS WALTERS. Perhaps the major one is that it has been personal diplomacy, that it is Henry Kissinger's personal one-to-one diplomacy and that hasn't worked.





forward-looking group it has had in 20 years. I am not working alone. I am working very closely with my associates.

MISS WALTERS. How is your staff going to feel when they hear you complimenting them. Aren't they going to get the bends just from the change?

SECRETARY KISSINGER. I will make it up in private meetings.

MISS WALTERS. In days past --

SECRETARY KISSINGER. One of my associates has said the highest praise they can get from me is the absence of abuse.

MISS WALTERS. Are you really that tough?

SECRETARY KISSINGER. I am a perfectionist. I like to try to make people do things that they didn't think they could do, but most of my close associates also become close personal friends.

MISS WALTERS. Mr. Secretary, in days past you used to say -- when we had conversations sometimes as well -- that you wanted to leave office in a sense while you were ahead, to avoid the kind of controversy and pain, for example, that a man like Dean Rusk went through. Having said that in the past, do you feel sometimes, do you wish you could have left sooner?



SECRETARY KISSINGER. For me selfishly it would have been better if I had left sooner. But I think if I may say so, that was at a perhaps more immature period of my life because I should look at this not from the point of view of what may be better for me, but for what is better for the country. Right now in these circumstances to leave in a period of turmoil when people are looking for a sense of direction and when foreign nations are watching us, I think it would not be a service to the country if I left as long as the President has confidence in me and asks for me to stay.

If I ever questioned that I would leave very quickly and without any difficulty.

MISS WALTERS. Mr. Secretary, you are a historian as well as a statesman. If you were writing the text, what was Henry Kissinger's greatest contribution and what was his greatest failure?




SECRETARY KISSINGER.

I am sure

there are several things that I wish I had done differently, but when you are in the middle of it I think it is dangerous to claim successes and premature to insist on failures.

But, well, there are, I suppose, several things I might have done differently, but the main lines of the policy, this I want to repeat, the main lines of the policy,



if I had to do it over again, I would do again,  
substantially the same way, which may make me unreconstructed  
and maybe one reason why I am at peace with myself.

MISS WALTERS. Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

END

~~5:08 P.M.~~

