

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

~~SECRET/NODIS/XGDS~~

WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

PARTICIPANTS:

President Nixon
 William P. Rogers, Secretary of State
 Elliot Richardson, Secretary of Defense
 Dr. James R. Schlesinger, Director of
 Central Intelligence
 Dr. Henry A. Kissinger, Assistant to the
 President for National Security Affairs
 James Farley, Deputy Director, ACDA
 Amb. Donald Rumsfeld, US Ambassador
 to NATO
 Admiral Thomas H. Moorer, Chairman,
 Joint Chiefs of Staff
 Kenneth Rush, Assistant to the President
 Brent Scowcroft, Deputy Assistant to the
 President for National Security Affairs

DATE AND TIME:

Thursday, April 12, 1973
 10:00 a. m.

PLACE:

The Cabinet Room

SUBJECT:

NSC Meeting on MBFR

The President: We are faced with a situation where any reduction is probably to our detriment. If we don't show some movement, the structure of NATO will come apart because of the lack of U. S. support.

We will have a hell of a time maintaining the military budget against Mansfield and the others.

We are keeping one step ahead of the sheriff. We can't say any agreement is better than none, though.

We have got to show movement; we have got to have something come of it.

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CLASSIFIED BY Henry A. Kissinger
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 BY MM, NARA, DATE 3/20/04

SALT is somewhat like that. It may be good on its own -- although there are lots of problems, like cheating, military cutback, etc. But the mood of the country is such that if we don't move in this context, we will cut unilaterally.

We still have some hawks; the polls are good. I talk hawkish, but let's face it.

Let's analyze the realities coldly, then see what it is we can live with.

Jim?

Schlesinger: (Briefs)

The President: Elliott?

Richardson: With Congress, we have devoted a lot of effort to show that NATO forces are capable.

The President: On the trip wire thing, say that if there is a confrontation, it will be nuclear. That is the best argument for a conventional capability.

Henry?

Kissinger: This is a superficial analysis. The Germans were inferior in two wars and nearly won. We should not kid ourselves that we have a balance.

Richardson: The Soviets have the same sort of interest in stability in Europe that we do. But we have to show that we don't have to depend on the trip wire.

Rogers: Henry's analysis, if you believe it, would indicate that our leadership is worse than the Warsaw Pact.

Kissinger: Elliott is correct about the Congressional presentation of the situation. But as things stand, we do not have a cohesive alliance. We have the dilemma of MBFR versus force improvements.

Rush: Europe is afraid we are leaving NATO. NATO is making force improvements and we should push for more, but not tied to MBFR.

Rogers: NATO is afraid we have already made a deal with the Soviet Union.



The President: I don't think the Soviet Union is too keen on MBFR.

Rogers: There is agreement in the government on how we should proceed.

The President: Henry?

Kissinger: (Begins his briefing at 10:33 a. m.)

The President: Let's have no illusion -- the whole thing fails if we don't keep our contribution level. We must show that if we keep strong, we can reduce later; and Europe must do its share.

Richardson: Arends has a study that is favorable to NATO and against unilateral reductions.

Kissinger: (Resumes his briefing, which is completed at 10:58 a. m.)

Rogers: I think we are generally agreed. We want to get going, show seriousness, and show that we haven't made a deal.

I like the two proposals, plus implicit linkage and the force improvements.

Richardson: I think we should present both, but express a preference for reduction of stationed forces at as high a percentage as is negotiable.

We can also introduce the nuclear component, as an illustrative approach.

The President: Tom?

Moorer: We should have in our minds how we want to come out.

On the Soviet side, all the stationed forces are Soviet; on ours they are British, Canadian, and U. S.

The first step should be a U. S. cut of ten percent and a Soviet cut of eighteen percent. We shouldn't get into the structure of the forces to be withdrawn.

Richardson: Collateral constraints could be important, like stationing of observers.

Farley: There will be lots of discussion.

Rumsfeld: We should say we may have a preference, but our final preference will depend on the final alliance consensus.

The President: Good point.

Kissinger: Agreed.

The President: We must recognize we must take the lead, without appearing to sell our position.

Rumsfeld: It should include the nuclear option, and collateral constraints.

Kissinger: With Hungary in, you can't have a common ceiling cut, only a percentage. A percentage cut is detrimental to NATO.

The President: We have no illusion but that improvement of forces must go along with MBFR. It is essential for support here at home. We have a tough selling job here. I have yet to talk to a NATO leader who talks in terms of selling to his people a strong NATO. There is no guts in the European elite.

Heath has problems. He wants to be strong, but has economic problems.

Brandt has problems. Look at their attitude toward our troops. Brandt is a muddle head anyway.

In Europe we have a bunch of ward heelers, not international leadership. They would want to be but their public won't allow it.

The old bipartisan leadership has gone. It's lost its guts. Unless we step up to the problem, no one will.

Rumsfeld: The argument that cuts leave us only with a nuclear option should be persuasive. Even peaceniks shouldn't want to be on that side of the argument.

The President: Kennedy had an overwhelming superiority. He didn't need other options. Now we have parity -- so now we need an option other than all or nothing.



Stenzel - Has not been let into regular number - On address
Keogh - Tell Dave Parker - where treasury is working
James - Getting seven home -

✓ MBFR - 12 Apr

10:00 AM
NSC MTF
MBFR
Mar 11, 12 00W
1973

1000

P. Fraud w/ Sat where only reduction is publicly
to our detriment
If we don't show some movement, structure
of NATO will come apart because of lack
of US support.
Will have lobby trial starting with budget
against Mansfield et al.
We keeping one step ahead of sheriff. Can't
say any agreement is better than none.
Get to show movement, get to have something
concrete.

SAT is somewhat like that. It may be
good on its own - although lots of problems - meaning,
military cutbacks, etc. But most of
country is such that if we don't move
in this context, we will not militarily.
We still have some banks, police force good,
I take heart, but let's face it
let's analyze & react coldly, then see
what it is we can do w/

1007-1015

Shlesinger brief.
Ritch w/congress, we have devoted a lot of effort to
show that NATO forces are capable.
P. Trip will bring say that if there is a cooperation,
it will be nuclear. That is a least
agreement for conventional capabilities.
K. This is a superficial analysis. Germans were
superior in 2 ways & nearly won.
Should not del ourselves that we have a balance.



Rice - Soviets have the same sort of interest in stability in Europe that we do.

But we have to ~~show~~ show that we don't have to depend on top wire

Roq - Henry's analysis, if you believe it, would indicate that our leadership is worse than Warsaw Pact

HK - E list is correct about long presentation of situation. But as things stand, we do not have a cohesive alliance. We have debate of MBER vs free immigrants.

Rush - Europe is afraid we are leaving NATO. NATO is making free immigrants + we should push for more, but not tied to MBER

Roq - NATO is afraid we have already made deal with U.S.

P - I don't think U.S. is too keen on MBER.

Roq - There is a question ^{impact} on how we should proceed.

HAK starts 1033

P - We'll have no illusion - whole thing falls if we don't keep our contribution level. We must show that if we keep strong, we can reduce taxes, and Europe must do its share.

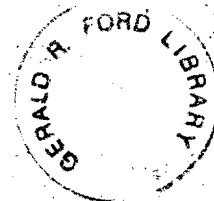
Rick - Arends has a study favorable to NATO & against unilateral reductions

HAK resumes.

1058 HAK finishes

Roq - I think we are generally agreed. We want to get going, show seriousness, & that we haven't made deal.

I like 2 proposals, plus implicit linkage & free immigration



Red - I think we should present both, but express a preference for structural reduction as high percentage as negotiable.
Also notes does mention commitment, as an illustrative approach

Notes - We should have in our minds how we want to come out.

On our side, all structural funds are SMC, on ours they are Brit, Com, US.

First step should be a cut of 10%, 50% of 10%.

We should get into a structure of funds to be w/drawn.

Red - Collateral constraints would be important - like stationing of observers.

Fordy - ~~It~~ There will be lots of discussion.

Rums - We should say we may have a preference, but our final preference will depend on a final alliance consensus.

P - Good point.

K - Agreed

P - We must recognize we must take a lead, w/o ^{appearing} ~~appearing~~ to sell our position.

Rums - Should include nuclear option, collateral constraints.

K - w/ Hungary in, you can't have a common ceiling cut, only a 10% is determined to NATO.

P - No illusion that improvement of peace forces must go along w/ NIBFR. It is essential for support here at home. We have a tough selling job here. I want you to talk to a NATO leader who talks



in terms of selling to his people a strong NATO. There is no guts in the European elite.

Heath has problems - wants to be strong, but has
even problems

Brenth has problems - looks at their attitude toward
arm troops. Brent is a
muddle head anyway

In Eur we have a bunch of weak leaders, not
with leadership. They would want to be but
their public won't allow it.

The old bipartisan leadership has gone - lost
its guts. Unless we ~~step~~ step up to a
problem, we are well

Rums - Argument that cuts ~~back~~ decrease us only
if nuclear option should be persuasive. ~~Even~~ Even
peacekeepers shouldn't want to be on that side of a
argument deficit reduction option

P. Kennedy had overwhelming superiority. Now
we have parity - so now we need an option
other than ~~was~~ allow nothing.

