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MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

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WASHINGTON

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MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

BY dal NARA DATE 11/25/08

PARTICIPANTS: President Ford
Dr. Henry A. Kissinger, Secretary of State and
Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs
Lt. General Brent Scowcroft, Deputy Assistant to
the President for National Security Affairs

DATE & TIME: November 16, 1974

PLACE: Oval Office

Kissinger: [Reads Asad letter] Considering the Israelis have been provocative, the Syrians have been models of patience. Dayan was in to see me. He said we should move on Syria and give Egypt a line which they would find comfortable. Allon sent me a scorchers that they wouldn't go back a kilometer on the Golan.

President: What is Dayan's position?

Kissinger: He is discredited now because of the October war. He is the only one with whom you can speak conceptually. Dayan thinks we should come to an understanding with Syria. If we can't make a promise by June, they will turn on us.

President: This talk about a war -- doesn't it make the American people realize the seriousness of it?

Kissinger: Yes, but this talk is irresponsible. The press was trying yesterday to make headlines -- that it is irresponsible for you to go on a trip, that your Middle East policy is bankrupt and you ought to stay here and put it back together.

[There is discussion of Rockefeller]



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CLASSIFIED BY Henry A. Kissinger
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Kissinger: Dobrynin says the impact on the Soviets of Rockefeller is very bad. He keeps saying there is stability domestically but they don't understand. For a Rockefeller to go through this after 40 years in politics, four times elected governor, they can't believe it.

President: It is a vicious partisan jugular operation.

Kissinger: I told the television executives that we had not had catharsis after Vietnam because of Watergate and the country is awash with negativism. I said they were all responsible, that no idea got followed up, etc. They argued bitterly, but they called last night and apologized and said they would see how they could help. I said they should just support any decent idea we put forth -- not simple negativism, nor did we want partisan support.

Bundy called to say the energy speech could be a rallying point if you would get some Democrats around it.

President: In the case of the Marshall Plan, there was always a leadership group outside the White House which mobilized public opinion and supported the policies. That doesn't exist.

On this trip, let's talk about some people -- labor, news media, academics, access to the board -- that we could get to get going.

Kissinger: I would suggest that you put out a few themes to push, not 100.

President: We did a busy job of selling in October. "Fortune" analyzed my October speech and said it was good but not sold.

Kissinger: Self-help is good here and the government doing it is bad. But your opponents are on the side of the government doing it. There is potential here.

On the trip, UNDOF might not be renewed. There will be no war. Nothing will happen before the Egyptian next step. If we don't get one, we are in trouble. If we get one, we are in pretty good shape.



We must discuss how to discuss with Brezhnev the Middle East. Gromyko is hard-line because of his bureaucratic experience. I told Dobrynin we are fighting for our domestic lives here -- if we wanted a stalemate, we would go to Geneva.

Dobrynin asked about you. I said you were more direct but your instinct was more to the right than Nixon. It is better to have them worry a bit. We lost two years with Kennedy because they thought he was too easy and rattled. If you could show you had an option and an instinct to go to the right...

President: I have a tough and bombastic side...

Kissinger: I wouldn't do that. I would show him still just a bit then throttle it. Be firm but friendly.

President: How many will be in the meetings?

Kissinger: With President Nixon, we had very few.

President: I would prefer no private meetings for two reasons: I want to show we are close and friendly. This is the big league.

Kissinger: You are in the Brezhnev league right now. I wouldn't worry about your meeting him alone, but we should have a record of it.

President: I want them to know we are a team and would prefer not to meet alone.

Kissinger: Let's see how it goes. You shouldn't let it look like you are afraid to deal with him alone. You could speak alone and say stay in touch -- we both have pressures but we must do our best. Take the Middle East: we must not let the Arabs play us against each other. We eventually have to go back to Geneva.

President: Yes, especially if there is a stalemate. They would prove worthwhile only we could make progress.

Kissinger: You don't have to worry about comparison with Nixon. He was a poor negotiator. He was tough in private, but last June he hardly knew what the subject was. Nixon never liked to say no face-to-face. The Soviets respected him not for the negotiations but for his toughness, his daring to mine Haiphong just before his meeting with them.



President: I supported all those hard decisions.

Kissinger: The Soviets didn't respect Kennedy -- they thought he was weak. [Described SALT I crises and Nixon being mad.] I wouldn't get into specifics with him head to head. If you two confront each other, there is no one to fall back on.

Their normal pattern is to start out friendly, then have one tough session, where you just stay calm and strong.

I think he wants a SALT agreement. He wants to be able to report he has established a relationship with you; third, he will want to assess you in a crisis.

President: If you see things heading the wrong way, don't hesitate to set it straight.

Kissinger: We have a tough problem on the Middle East, and they do have a point. The theme in general for you to hit is that we are willing to cooperate in many areas. Be blunt with them in the crunches.

President: Can I say I hope they don't get the impression that the American people are in bad shape?

Kissinger: You shouldn't do it that way. Act confident. You can say that we always have a unified country in foreign policy on major issues -- and that you have great flexibility. You can mention the right-wing problems, and Jackson. You can reaffirm all our commitments and say we have to consider each other's needs. Tell them you expect to be in until 1980 and our election was on internal issues. Ask him what is on his mind right at first.

Japan I am not worried about. Hit them on the energy thing. You won't get a full endorsement, but this is an opportunity to mobilize the West like anti-Communism was.

You could mention to Brezhnev the danger of a Japanese-Chinese alliance. Say that is why we want to keep Japan tied to us and that is why we support Japan in Siberia.

The Chinese aren't with us because they like us. They are cold-bloodedly using us. For 10 years we should support the Chinese, then we may have to join the Soviet Union. The Japanese are a great danger. In all their history they've never had permanent alignments.



The Japanese can do anything. They have such an unusual society that they can adjust to anything. The basic structure of their society can accommodate to any kind of system.

If we decline in world power, we will lose the Japanese. They have no psychological understanding of other societies -- they do every insensitive thing while being very sensitive themselves. Don't give Brezhnev all this but let him know there are things that only you two can do.

Your big problem will be the alliance thing. You should say you share the interest in preserving nuclear peace. Don't be too negative. You agree with the objective but this is a monumental issue. I will write out some questions for you to give him.



