

Scowcroft file
(Scowcroft)

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

SECRET/NODIS/XGDS

DECLASSIFIED
E.O. 12958 SEC. 3.8
050 JUL 10 1998
MAR 08 91 #34: 010104 100 211104

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

BY del NARA DATE 3/10/09

PARTICIPANTS: Dr. Henry A. Kissinger, Secretary of State and Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs
Under Secretary of Defense William P. Clements, Jr.
General George S. Brown, USAF, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff
Lt. General Brent Scowcroft, Deputy Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs

DATE AND TIME: Saturday - September 27, 1975
11:50 a.m. - 1:25 p.m.

PLACE: Secretary Kissinger's Office
The White House

Kissinger: I want to tell you where the negotiations are, where I think we are, and where I think the country is going.

I think we are in a real mess.

George, I am extremely pained by the military. I have depended on your weapons systems, your budget, in a crisis, etc. But to ^{**}immediate issue...

I had breakfast with Schlesinger. I told him I was seeing Gromyko on Sunday and had to say something. Here is what we worked out:

[He described the American proposal.]

Gromyko asked me some questions about it -- like the theory of including Backfire. He said it wasn't capable of reaching the U.S. except on one-way missions. He said only four people on the Politburo understand SALT but that all of them understand Backfire. They don't understand the bitterness in the U.S. on SALT. They think they gave us 1200 units at Vladivostok

SECRET/NODIS/XGDS

CLASSIFIED BY Henry A. Kissinger
EXEMPT FROM GENERAL DECLASSIFICATION
SCHEDULE OF EXECUTIVE ORDER 11652
EXEMPTION CATEGORY 5(b)(3)
AUTOMATICALLY DECLASSIFIED ON Imp To Det.

which fit the Backfire definition -- capable of reaching the other side. By the Backfire criteria, all should be counted. Then we came back with cruise missiles which add thousands on our side, and Backfire which takes hundreds from them. He pointed to their big concessions on verification, forward based systems, and silo dimension. He said on cruise missiles, above 600 was ridiculous because you couldn't verify it. On ALCM he said this would give us 3,000 more reentry vehicles they hadn't counted on.

They are leery about a summit in December. I think they don't want a SALT agreement before February. Gromyko says they are bitter about Backfire and the history of the past 15 months where they have made all the concessions -- equal aggregates, high MIRV limits, heavy missile defense, verification, forward based systems, etc. He also said they had played Vladivostok as a major achievement, whereas the President got clobbered here for the agreement.

I think they think that if they make more concessions, they are not sure we will agree even then, and even if we do that, they're not sure all hell won't break loose.

So, I don't think there will be an agreement.

But I do have a grievance against DOD. We haven't had a working relationship for two years.

Clements: That is right.

Kissinger: You must realize that we have a strong group of liberals, press, etc. which is basically against the military, against defense budgets, etc. Right now they are quiescent, because they hate the Republicans so much.

The strategic gap isn't caused by SALT. It is caused because for ten years we didn't start any major strategic programs for ten years while the Soviets were working like hell.

It is detente which keeps these guys under control, because we have pre-empted the peace movement. We will reenter the Cold War with great élan, but within two years we will be struggling again to defend against the assaults to cut back. So I think we are killing ourselves with our SALT position.

DOD has ceased being part of the government and has become a political party -- positioning itself both to the right and left of the Administration.



SALT got off the track because never did we sit down and analyze where we were and what we wanted. I met all the time with Tom Moorer on SALT I and never put something forward without checking it.

Clements: That is not the way George and I want it.

Kissinger: I know that. But what will happen without SALT? Do you think Muskie, Mondale, etc are going to fight for five years of big defense budgets? This is where I think we stand. If we get this country divided again on the peace issue -- when DOD is accused of increasing tensions....

Clements: I had a helluva time finding out what happened at that breakfast. We finally did, and then we had a two and one-half hour JCS meeting. Wickham says the result of the breakfast was "assured acquiescence." I said this was wrong.

I left the NSC meeting with the impression you two would meet and there would be VP and NSC meetings. But I guess you assumed that because Jim agreed, we didn't need a meeting because we were on board. That is not so.

Kissinger: Schlesinger knew I was going to do it.

Clements: We know now, but we didn't then. He never told us anything about it. In fact he told me he was really opposed to the position but if it was the best you could do, we would have to live with it. But I know, he will lie behind the log with you out in front and snipe at you saying he opposed and you are selling it out.

[There was a discussion of what went wrong after Vladivostok -- with cruise missiles and Backfire becoming burning issues.]

[Kissinger leaves and returns.]

Clements: You can't fire Schlesinger. If you think Zumwalt is bad [out of office], you have no idea what Jim would do. What you should do is fire Laitin. Laitin is his mouthpiece. Fire him and put in the President's man. That would discipline Schlesinger and partially stop the leaking.

Kissinger: But where are we? What is wrong with the position?



Clements: It is too complex; people won't understand; it blows equal aggregates, etc.

Kissinger: That is true. I don't like it either. What do you recommend?

[Much discussion]

Kissinger: If SALT ever gets going again, could the four of us sit down and discuss what is on your mind on SALT?

NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION
Presidential Libraries Withdrawal Sheet

WITHDRAWAL ID 018291

REASON FOR WITHDRAWAL National security restriction

TYPE OF MATERIAL Note

DESCRIPTION Brent Scowcroft's handwritten notes
from Kissinger, Clements, Brown meeting

CREATION DATE 09/27/1975

VOLUME 4 pages

COLLECTION/SERIES/FOLDER ID . 031400682

COLLECTION TITLE National Security Adviser. Memoranda of
Conversations

BOX NUMBER 15

FOLDER TITLE September 27, 1975 - Kissinger, William
Clements, General George S. Brown

DATE WITHDRAWN 06/15/2004

WITHDRAWING ARCHIVIST GG