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MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

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MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

PARTICIPANTS:

Sir John Hunt, Secretary to the Cabinet
Sir Peter Ramsbotham, British Ambassador to the United States
Richard Sykes, Minister, Embassy of Great Britain
Charles Powell, First Secretary, Embassy of Great Britain

Dr. Henry A. Kissinger, Secretary of State and Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs
Major General Brent Scowcroft, USAF, Deputy Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs
Helmut Sonnenfeldt, Counselor, Department of State
Peter W. Rodman, NSC Staff *PWR*

TIME AND DATE:

Friday, April 26, 1974
1:25 - 2:45 p.m. (luncheon)

PLACE:

Eighth Floor Dining Room
Department of State

CLASSIFIED BY FRANK WISNER

SUBJECTS: ~~GENERAL DECLASSIFICATION~~ Nuclear Release Agreement; Labour Government's Defense Review; UK Polaris Program; Diego Garcia; US-Soviet Threshold Test Ban; French Presidential Elections; Middle East; Washington Energy Conference
SCHEDULE OF EXECUTIVE ORDER 11652
AUTOMATICALLY DOWNGRADED AT TWO YEAR INTERVALS AND DECLASSIFIED ON DECEMBER 31, -----

Secretary Kissinger: I talked to a group of Jewish leaders yesterday, knowing they would go right to the Israeli Embassy. In case there are difficulties with Israel. I told them what I think is necessary. So there is no doubt in Jerusalem that I have locked myself into a position semi-publicly.

Ambassador Ramsbotham: That resolution in the UN yesterday. I was astonished at the Israeli National Day yesterday, when their Ambassador congratulated me on supporting their amendment. He made no further comment.

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Secretary Kissinger: They save their wrath for me. [laughter]

Ambassador Ramsbotham: We both put out a statement, the same as yours.

Sir John Hunt: It is extremely good of you to see me when you have to go off.

Secretary Kissinger: This will be the last quiet talk I will have for the next two weeks. [laughter]

Sir John Hunt: Really, there are four things I want to cover; (1) the conditions on the nuclear release agreement; (2) to tell you of our defense review, (3) Polaris, and (4) Diego Garcia.

Secretary Kissinger: Fine.

THE NUCLEAR RELEASE AGREEMENT

Sir John Hunt: The first can be done quickly. On the nuclear release agreements, the Embassy has now got instructions from the Prime Minister to confirm what we have with you.

Secretary Kissinger: Have we received it?

Sir John Hunt: No, not yet.

Secretary Kissinger: As soon as we receive it, we will confirm it quickly and unchanged.

Ambassador Ramsbotham: We are repeating a little of the language; otherwise it repeats it by reference.

Secretary Kissinger: Does it refer to Bermuda?

Sir John Hunt: That is what I wanted to say. The Prime Minister tells me he wants to reconfirm that one too. It is not a new decision; it flows naturally from the other.

Secretary Kissinger: No problem. The only reason we did not raise it was that traditionally you took the initiative.

Sir John Hunt: Yes.

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Minister Sykes: Should we take it up with Hal or Brent?

Secretary Kissinger: Brent. The best way is to use as close to the old texts as possible. Is there any reason to change the text at all?

Sir John Hunt: No.

Ambassador Ramsbotham: We will get on with that then.

THE LABOUR GOVERNMENT'S DEFENSE REVIEW

Sir John Hunt: Good. I would really like, rather privately, to tell you how we are handling the defense review. There will be lots of press stories; we have an active group of defense correspondents. We want you to know the truth.

The present government are committed to this review of defense expenditures. We are looking at all the priorities and commitments. I am chairing this review.

Secretary Kissinger: Isn't that unusual? Not the Defense Minister?

Sir John Hunt: Sir Burke always played a big role in it. The time scale we envisage is: That we will report to Ministers about mid-July. Then Ministers will have to consider all this and expect to take their decision in the autumn.

Secretary Kissinger: Will the budget be in October?

Sir John Hunt: Normally it will be in April.

The Prime Minister wanted me specifically to tell you that no decision will be taken on the defense review without consultation with you, and our other main allies.

We have not been given any specific target for expenditure.

Secretary Kissinger: When you say consultation, with whom? The Defense Department?

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Sir John Hunt: There may be some contacts on a technical level, but with more important things, at the Ministerial level.

Secretary Kissinger: On nuclear matters, we can probably steer you in directions where you will not go wrong. Defense people have their own ideas. Check with us first.

Ambassador Ramsbotham: That will help me too.

Sir John Hunt: There is no target presented for savings.

Secretary Kissinger: But there has to be savings.

Mr. Sonnenfeldt: No percentage of GNP?

Ambassador Ramsbotham: That report was totally untrue. I told Schlesinger this.

Sir John Hunt: But we are very deliberately looking at everything, and putting together the building blocks, if I may use that expression. Instead of going for a percentage cut and how to achieve that, we are looking at the whole range of things. And unfortunately there will be a horde of rumors coming out of London. Because we have this corps of defense correspondents.

Secretary Kissinger: We will take our decision on the basis of what you and Peter tell us.

Sir John Hunt: There was a story that we were leaving Malta and Cyprus. That is not true.

Mr. Sonnenfeldt: But it produced a plea by Mintoff that you stay. [laughter]

Sir John Hunt: Our ministers will not look at anything until mid-July, and there will be no decisions until autumn.

Secretary Kissinger: We will do nothing on the basis of reports.

Brent, can you tell Defense what our understanding with the British is and tell them to lay off?

General Scowcroft: Yes.

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Sir John Hunt: We simply do not know at the moment, and there is the risk of scaring people or of making the wrong reassuring noises.

There is a possibility that a Minister may go out to the Far East to talk to the governments there. It will be to listen.

Secretary Kissinger: The Defense Secretary?

Sir John Hunt: Possibly, or another Minister.

Secretary Kissinger: You will have no problems with us.

Sir John Hunt: We are very grateful.

Secretary Kissinger: You may have problems when you present us your options, but not in the process of review.

Ambassador Ramsbotham: Roy Mason, the Secretary of State for Defense, is coming out the 29th or 30th of next month, at Schlesinger's request. So they can get to know each other before the DPC meeting.

Sir John Hunt: I am quite sure he will be giving no indications of what will be coming out of the defense review.

Secretary Kissinger: If you want me to see him, I will be glad to.

Ambassador Ramsbotham: Thank you.

U. K. POLARIS PROGRAM

Sir John Hunt: Leading on from that, the Ministers have been looking at Polaris -- the Prime Minister, Chancellor, Defense Minister and Foreign Minister. They were grateful for the support the President gave to Prime Minister Heath. They have now got to the state where they were in no desire to reverse the decision.

Secretary Kissinger: Good. Of course, we think you should have made the Poseidon decision.

Sir John Hunt: There will be no formal decision for a while, but I think they will agree. They have already given the authority for spending for the next six months. They would not have done so if they were not so inclined. I am here to ask if you can ask Lockheed to go ahead full blast.

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Secretary Kissinger: Absolutely. No problem.

It would really be a tragedy if Britain got out of the nuclear business. In spite of my hegemonic aspirations over Europe [laughter], I really think it will be better for Europe to have an independent nuclear deterrent.

Sir John Hunt: We will say nothing. If there are leaks or gossip that Ministers have to answer, we will say something banal about taking all steps necessary to maintain the credibility of our deterrent.

Secretary Kissinger: To the extent that we can control it, we will be helpful.

Sir John Hunt: There will be a problem with the firm.

Mr. Sonnenfeldt: There are thousands of people involved, once the decision is made to start up.

Secretary Kissinger: We can talk to the companies, but it is not in their nature.

We can guarantee what our formal response will be.

Brent, in my absence, can you coordinate in the Government?

General Scowcroft: Yes.

Secretary Kissinger: [to Ambassador Ramsbotham] You work with Brent, Peter.

When will Lockheed learn that you have asked them?

Ambassador Ramsbotham: Your Navy asks them.

Secretary Kissinger: First, we will work out some form of words with Peter. Before we tell the Defense Department anything. Then we will call Defense as soon as possible. On Monday.

Ambassador Ramsbotham: The sooner the better.

Secretary Kissinger: Tomorrow.

Ambassador Ramsbotham: Monday is fine.

We have this fellow, Chapman Pincher, who is the best -- or worst -- at finding out things.

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Sir John Hunt: But I think we all have to live with our defense correspondents -- I am sure you have them.

Ambassador Ramsbotham: I was impressed with the quality of the questions from them on your plane. They were well-informed questions.

Secretary Kissinger: They were the diplomatic correspondents.

Sir John Hunt: There is one particular problem on no announcement. That is, on May 22, there is a test in Nevada involving our thing. What we were hoping is no announcement at all, or if it is necessary to say anything, that there be no mention of a British test.

Secretary Kissinger: What is the regular procedure?

Minister Sykes: Defense prefers, if it is a big test and especially if there is a possibility of venting, to announce it in advance.

Secretary Kissinger: What size will it be?

Minister Sykes: Thirty-five kilotons.

Secretary Kissinger: That is no problem.

Sir John Hunt: We hope there is no announcement.

Secretary Kissinger: We should stick as close as possible to the normal procedure because otherwise it attracts attention. Do we announce whose it is?

Mr. Sonnenfeldt: Usually we do, I think.

Ambassador Ramsbotham: That is the problem.

Secretary Kissinger: We will talk to Dixy Lee Ray. Why do we have to announce it?

Mr. Sonnenfeldt: It has to do with the Joint Committee [on Atomic Energy].

Ambassador Ramsbotham: You can hold it up for a few months.

Sir John Hunt: Until 1975, or at least until late autumn.

Secretary Kissinger: Check it, Brent.

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Minister Sykes: The people in the area will observe the arrival of the British scientists. But you can say there is a close continuing relationship with Britain and this is part of the normal liaison.

Secretary Kissinger: Yes. Is this the first Super Antelope test?

Sir John Hunt: Yes.

Secretary Kissinger: But no one could possibly know that.

DIEGO GARCIA

Sir John Hunt: That covers the nuclear field. The other thing is Diego Garcia. The new government have not yet discussed this among themselves. Before I left I told the Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary that you would probably ask about that, so I asked what could I say. This is a difficult one. I think the Prime Minister wants to be helpful and reconfirm it. But there will be a fuss over it. Already a number of Indian Ocean states are complaining.

Secretary Kissinger: I know only one.

Sir John Hunt: We have had more than one.

Secretary Kissinger: Really?

Sir John Hunt: It is a minority government, and there will be an election soon. We would like to know, could it be delayed? What is the urgency from your point of view?

Secretary Kissinger: It is silly to put a \$35 million item into the supplemental aid bill. But I must tell you, the Navy and Defense Department are so eager for this that something that looks like footdragging will cause ill will.

The first problem is to get the money. That is our domestic problem.

Mr. Sonnenfeldt: To get the money will be a problem if your decision isn't made. The opponents will use that argument.

Secretary Kissinger: Is it knocked out of the supplemental?

General Scowcroft: No.

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Secretary Kissinger: If the budget category exists, it will eliminate some of the urgency in Defense.

Sir John Hunt: I cannot tell you that the ultimate decision will be positive because Ministers genuinely have not looked at it. I know the Prime Minister wants to be helpful. It would be better if the decision came in a few months.

Secretary Kissinger: In all honesty, if it were a negative decision you would pay a price out of all proportion. Defense is really concerned.

General Scowcroft: Yes.

Sir John Hunt: You saw the row we had over Chile, whether we should break the contracts over warships. They [the government] have stuck firm. But they are worried about another row while they are a minority government.

Secretary Kissinger: We will protect you. If there are two conditions: (1) That there are not too many statements that it is in doubt.

Sir John Hunt, Ambassador Ramsbotham: Yes, we will do that.

Secretary Kissinger: And second, if you can tell me the key Ministers will work for a positive decision. Schlesinger can talk to your man....

Sir John Hunt: It would be a great pity if the idea got out that there is disagreement over this.

Secretary Kissinger: I agree, but I do not think we can prevent Schlesinger from talking to your Defense Secretary -- or our Chief of Naval Operations will kill him. [laughter]

Sir John Hunt: He should give the arguments why it is important. But there should not be the appearance of confrontation.

Secretary Kissinger: Yes.

Sir John Hunt: If it matters to you, take the opportunity to make it clear to Roy Mason and anyone else. But if you can give us a few months to play this along....

Secretary Kissinger: We will do our damndest. The only problem would be if Congressional action was stimulated by doubts about your decision.

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Sir John Hunt: That is the chicken-and-egg problem.

Ambassador Ramsbotham: We have to play this one very close together.

Minister Sykes: We were worried about this a few weeks ago -- that that argument would be made in the Congress. There were hints of it, but it was less than was expected.

Ambassador Ramsbotham: What about Senator Kennedy's proposal that first there should be an overture to the Russians? A self-denying agreement.

Secretary Kissinger: The Russians were mumbling something.

Ambassador Ramsbotham: Because that would have an appeal in the Labour Party.

Mr. Sonnenfeldt: Is there supposed to be another round of talks on this?

Ambassador Ramsbotham: John Thompson and Sy Weiss are going to get together on another issue.

Sir John Hunt: There is one question that I would like to ask about Diego: The Foreign Secretary wondered if it was a good idea to try to engineer some sort of Indian Ocean Conference, to convince Mrs. Bandaranaike and others that it is a good idea.

Secretary Kissinger: That is not a good idea.

Sir John Hunt: It wouldn't work.

Secretary Kissinger: My experience is the Indians will calm down very quickly, that we are paying no lasting price with them, and the time will come when they will be grateful.

General Scowcroft: But they can't say something publicly.

Ambassador Ramsbotham: The Australians too.

Mr. Sonnenfeldt: On those talks with Thompson and Weiss, we will see to it that our people don't badger yours on Diego.

Minister Sykes: I think Diego is a separate issue from what they're discussing.

Mr. Sonnenfeldt: Then we don't have to say anything to them.

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US-SOVIET THRESHOLD TEST BAN

Secretary Kissinger: One more point on the nuclear business. We are talking with the Russians about a threshold test ban. The threshold would be five on the Richter Scale, or 150 kilotons in Nevada, which protects your program, which is the only reason you would object.

Sir John Hunt: What would the form of such an agreement be?

Secretary Kissinger: We are still talking about whether it should be bilateral or in the CCD. If we put it in Geneva, it really creates pressure on others.

Ambassador Ramsbotham: China.

Secretary Kissinger: And France. It would give the impression of condominium.

Ambassador Ramsbotham: Not to do it would put Geneva in an even further condition of desuetude.

Secretary Kissinger: Which wouldn't be a great tragedy.

Ambassador Ramsbotham: But some in the Labour Government are concerned about this.

Secretary Kissinger: This test ban wouldn't go into effect until 1976. We would agree only that this would be negotiated. A lot of issues, like peaceful nuclear explosions, would have to be worked out.

Ambassador Ramsbotham: Does the 150-kiloton limit bite on anything significant?

Secretary Kissinger: On large warheads.

Minister Sykes: Like Amchitka.

Secretary Kissinger: Oh yes. One of the problems we have is that it would affect the design for larger Minuteman warheads.

Ambassador Ramsbotham: Is it with a quota?

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Secretary Kissinger: No.

Ambassador Ramsbotham: When we were talking about this before, a quota was involved.

Secretary Kissinger: But if you do a number of tests together, it is practically unverifiable.

Ambassador Ramsbotham: The Russians will accept this?

Secretary Kissinger: Yes. Last time we told them 4.7; now it is five. We'll tell them we made a new discovery. [laughter]

THE FRENCH PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

Sir John Hunt: Who do you think will get the Presidency?

Ambassador Ramsbotham: Chaban seems to be slipping fast.

Mr. Sonnenfeldt: Jobert came out for Chaban. Juillet and Balladur came out for Giscard.

Secretary Kissinger: Fascinating. Why would Juillet do that? There was one period when Juillet wanted to establish contact with me. He came over here -- I told you about it, or your predecessors -- and I could never understand what he wanted.

Mr. Sonnenfeldt: You even threw me out so you could see if he really had a secret to tell you. [laughter]

Secretary Kissinger: I think Mitterand could really win.

Ambassador Ramsbotham: Our people, Tompkins, sent in a good assessment a week ago.

Secretary Kissinger: What is our Embassy reporting on, the FRELOC Agreement? [laughter]

Ambassador Ramsbotham: DeGaulle always relied on IFO polls.

Secretary Kissinger: My encounters with DeGaulle were always unfortunate. When we first went there, DeGaulle gave his usual speech on his vision of Europe -- that Europe didn't exist, that it was a collection of states. Then

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they were having drinks, and the President asked me over and said: "Tell President DeGaulle what you think about his presentation." I said, "It was an interesting presentation, Mr. President, but how do you prevent the Germans from dominating the Europe you have described?" He said, "Par la guerre." [laughter] Then later he said: "Why don't you get out of Vietnam?" I said, "Because it would create a credibility problem." He said, "Like where?" I said, "In the Middle East." He said, "In the Middle East I thought your enemies had the credibility problem." [laughter] My encounters were not a great success. I don't think I overwhelmed him.

THE MIDDLE EAST

Ambassador Ramsbotham: Tell Sir John the story about the picture in Riyadh.

Secretary Kissinger: When I first met Faisal, he gave me his story on Zionism and Communism. His idea is that the Jews dominate Russia. He told me that Jews were getting into high places everywhere. At that point I thought I had better change the subject. [laughter] So we were in a big banquet room. On the far wall I could dimly make out a picture of some outdoor scene. So I said, "Is that the Arabian desert?" He said, "It is the holy oasis," and fell into a morose silence. [laughter]

The last time I was there, Saqqaf -- do you know him? -- told me afterwards it was a good meeting, one of the best he'd seen. I said, "How do you know?" He said, "Usually the King just stares at his lap; this time he was looking straight ahead." [laughter] He said, "Usually the King sits there picking lint off his robe; this time he didn't." [laughter] Then Saqqaf told me it was clear the embargo would be lifted. I said, "How? Because the King said it wouldn't." Saqqaf said, "The King was afraid you would leak it, so he told you the opposite." [laughter]

Ambassador Ramsbotham: A clear signal! Will you have a problem in Damascus?

Secretary Kissinger: The problem will first be in Israel. They have never given an indication they would give more than the October 6 line.

Ambassador Ramsbotham: I thought you said they would.

Secretary Kissinger: I wrote them a letter telling them what was needed. I can't believe they would be so reckless as to let me come without getting it.

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The second problem is that there has to be some entry for Syrian tanks to go. They will probably want it all to go the UN.

At some point I will just tell them I am leaving the area.

I will probably go to Kuwait. Then maybe to see the Shah.

At one point I gave them two hours to make a decision. I just said I was leaving the area. At that point there were 950 Egyptian guns across the canal, and they were haggling over whether 36 or 72 could remain. Actually they wanted there to be no tanks.

Ambassador Ramsbotham: The agreement is being carried out well. We helped to set it up.

Secretary Kissinger: Perfectly. There was one technical problem about the number of guns in a battery. That was cleared up. And you know they are also thinning out on the West Bank too.

Ambassador Ramsbotham: To supervise it this way is unprecedented.

Secretary Kissinger: We give both sides the same pictures.

Ambassador Ramsbotham: On Syria, where will you supervise from? Cyprus?

Minister Sykes: It is nearer.

Secretary Kissinger: There is a difference in the atmosphere: Sadat wanted it to work; Asad wants it to work, but has to keep the appearance of straining against it.

Ambassador Ramsbotham: The Russians are making a fuss about the use of Cyprus.

Secretary Kissinger: It is amazing how the Syrians are keeping them at arm's length. Dobrynin made an approach to me about a meeting in Damascus; the Syrians are against it.

Ambassador Ramsbotham: I wonder why this strong hostility toward the Russians. In Egypt I understand it. They were offended by the behavior of their technicians.

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Secretary Kissinger: They were offended by behavior of personnel. Vinogradov too, they dislike.

Ambassador Ramsbotham: I asked the Indian Ambassador about this. Kaul. He knows them, from his own point of view. He said the Russians have a chip on their shoulder about being part of the West, and in the less developed countries they make this apparent in a patronizing way.

Mr. Sonnenfeldt: That is true.

Secretary Kissinger: When I first went to Syria, I thought they were penetrated and so I said nice things about the Soviets in case it got back to them. The Syrians contradicted me!

Ambassador Ramsbotham: When you see the Shah, do tell him about this. Because he is slightly claustrophobic about a pincer movement.

Secretary Kissinger: [makes note to himself] In New York I sat next to an Iraqi, who told me they have a pragmatic policy and aren't tied to the Russians.

Ambassador Ramsbotham: Very interesting.

Secretary Kissinger: We will wait. We will let them feel surrounded first. After we get a Syrian disengagement, the Syrians will come half as far as the Egyptians did towards us. Then we will work on Iraq.

Ambassador Ramsbotham: I am worried about Iraq, the Kurdish thing.

Secretary Kissinger: Maybe we will stoke it a little less actively.

WASHINGTON ENERGY CONFERENCE

Sir John Hunt: On the Washington Energy Conference, are you thinking of reconvening it in the present form?

Secretary Kissinger: We would be willing to reconvene it if other governments support us. I don't have the impression the producers want a consumer-producer meeting.

Ambassador Ramsbotham: This was Ennals' view.

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