

**Conversation No. 19-65**

**Date: January 25, 1972**

**Time: Unknown between 8:55 pm and 10:03 pm**

**Location: White House Telephone**

**Participants: Henry A. Kissinger, Anatoliy F. Dobrynin**

**Kissinger:** Hello?

**Dobrynin:** Hello, Henry.

**Kissinger:** Anatol, how are you?

**Dobrynin:** Fine. Thank you. How are you?

**Kissinger:** Ok.

**Dobrynin:** Yeah.

**Kissinger:** I called you—

**Dobrynin:** Yeah?

**Kissinger:** —to, uh—I told you tell you to tell you that, uh—If there is any way you can get to your allies and make clear to them...

**Dobrynin:** Yes.

**Kissinger:** ...that, now, they can, of course, start raving about us, or they can try to make a—

**Dobrynin:** Stop. Stop. What'd you say?

**Kissinger:** They can start raging and—

**Dobrynin:** Oh.

**Kissinger:** —and use their usual adjectives.

**Dobrynin:** Yeah.

**Kissinger:** And that would be a very unhelpful approach. I'm here with the President—so—in, in the residence.

**Dobrynin:** Yeah.

**Kissinger:** On the other hand, we are willing, if there's any chance at all of a constructive outcome, to meet with them again and to bring this war to a reasonable conclusion, but they cannot tempt us into a military—they cannot force us into a military outcome or there'll be very serious consequences.

**Dobrynin:** But you cannot [unclear].

**Kissinger:** I—I beg your pardon?

**Dobrynin:** —I can not—I can [unclear] properly your last phrase, what you said about military [unclear] it was not quite clear—

**Kissinger:** Well—

**Dobrynin:** —on the telephone.

**Kissinger:** —I said if they try to force a military outcome, there can only be very serious consequences, but I want you to know that if they behave in a reasonable manner, we are prepared to meet, to meet them in the spirit which I described to you, and the President has again asked me to say that if your government thought a meeting in Moscow would speed things up I remain ready to do that, but—So, uh...

**Dobrynin:** Henry, [unclear].

**Kissinger:** Yeah

**Dobrynin:** [Unclear].

**Kissinger:** Very well...

**Dobrynin:** I send there, of course, a telegram about this spirit of which you are speaking.

**Kissinger:** Yeah.

**Dobrynin:** I'm sure that they will send it. If they are not already sent, they are sending them. Not because now our top men are out of country but I am one hundred percent sure they will prepare for that.

**Kissinger:** Good—

**Dobrynin:** but now, I don't know really. It sounds that even without waiting they are informed [unclear] but now it sounds rather for us [unclear] sending this proposal when everything is made public and everything is complicated. It might threaten it all—

**Kissinger:** Well, it makes it complicated, but on the other hand, making the proposal public also has the advantages that it commits us and the Saigon government to a certain outcome.

**Dobrynin:** No, no. I understand. I was speaking about if it could be made [unclear] in the sense [unclear] rely on what offer. The only thing [unclear]—

**Kissinger:** Yes, but our, our experience in this has just not been good enough. And what they have to understand is that we are very serious, we are prepared to be very generous, and that we would like to proceed in the spirit in which we talked.

**Dobrynin:** Why do you not fix the timing [unclear] right now?

**Kissinger:** Because, we don't want to be in a position where they launch an offensive and we then react to their offensive—

**Dobrynin:** Oh.

**Kissinger:** —without having made it clear.

**Dobrynin:** But you have.

**Kissinger:** And—and, because, we will certainly in case of an offensive have to take drastic measures.

**Dobrynin:** Well, I'll also tell you [unclear] message. I will tell [unclear]—

**Kissinger:** But if you—But—But we certainly want to proceed in the most conciliatory spirit possible. And, I—If you and I can have lunch on Friday...

**Dobrynin:** [Unclear: Sure I can].

**Kissinger:** On this, I know you asked Haig. Friday would be good for me.

**Dobrynin:** Yeah. Yeah. He proposed to have it Thursday or Friday, so I [unclear]—

**Kissinger:** Yeah. Well, let's—let's do it Friday over here.

**Dobrynin:** Ok. On Friday. Early.

**Kissinger:** 1 o'clock.

**Dobrynin:** Yes. And I would [unclear]—

**Kissinger:** But if you could transmit this, and if you found some means getting it to them before they do something irreparable, it would be helpful.

**Dobrynin:** [Well, I—I don't know if I will today; unclear] —

**Kissinger:** Well it is up to you.

**Dobrynin:** [Unclear; I will relay it on Wednesday].

**Kissinger:** Yeah.

**Dobrynin:** [Unclear] before Thursday [unclear].

**Kissinger:** Well, it isn't that, you know. [Unclear] —

**Dobrynin:** [Unclear].

**Kissinger:** Oh, no. Well, that—

**Dobrynin:** [Unclear].

**Kissinger:** But it would be important that they don't freeze themselves into a position that would have consequences we'll all regret.

**Dobrynin:** Of course I am [unclear].

**Kissinger:** Yeah.

**Dobrynin:** I was almost sure—

**Kissinger:** But they have given us no choice—

**Dobrynin:** Huh?

**Kissinger:** They have given us no choice. It's simply not proper—simply not to respond to a serious proposal transmitted through another government and then separately at their own request.

**Dobrynin:** [Unclear].

**Kissinger:** Well, that's—You know, Anatol, that's their problem. And we are perfectly willing to have another confidential channel, or to do to it in other channels, but that's entirely up to them.

**Dobrynin:** [Unclear].

**Kissinger:** We have kept every secret when there was any prospect of a constructive outcome.

**Dobrynin:** Yeah. Henry, I understand [unclear] now.

**Kissinger:** Exactly.

**Dobrynin:** [Unclear].

**Kissinger:** Well, it—

**Dobrynin:** — [unclear].

**Kissinger:** Well, listen—

**Dobrynin:** — [unclear].

**Kissinger:** That is the reason. That is the exact reason.

**Dobrynin:** — [unclear] All right, Henry.

**Kissinger:** Good.

**Dobrynin:** — [Unclear]. Thanks for taking my call. I'll see you on Friday—

**Kissinger:** I'll see you Friday at 1, Anatol. I look forward—

**Dobrynin:** —[unclear].

**Kissinger:** Good. Good. And the President found our talks on Friday very constructive.

**Dobrynin:** [Unclear].

**Kissinger:** Good.

**Dobrynin:** [Unclear].

**Kissinger:** Well, it's—that is the problem that occurs when one side tries to impose a military solution.

**Dobrynin:** Yeah.

**Kissinger:** If they hadn't done that we would have had more time.

**Dobrynin:** [Unclear].

**Kissinger:** Within the next two or three weeks, yeah.

**Dobrynin:** [Unclear].

**Kissinger:** We don't want—

**Dobrynin:** —[Unclear].

**Kissinger:** It isn't so much a question of how dangerous it is; it is a question of a—if there's a major offensive in two or three weeks, we cannot stand to respond with a peace proposal.

**Dobrynin:** [Unclear] it will be very complicated [unclear].

**Kissinger:** Exactly

**Dobrynin:** No, I understand. Ok. [Unclear].

**Kissinger:** Good, Anatol.

**Dobrynin:** Ok. Bye, bye. I'll talk to you later.

**Kissinger:** Right.

**Dobrynin:** Goodbye.

**Kissinger:** Bye.