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TELOON

Secretary Kissinger

Scotty Reston

4/16/75 4:30 p.m.

RELEASED IN FULL

K: Hello--Scotty, how are you?

R: Your secretary tells at the State Department you are still alive.

K: Ha ha, only breathing.

R: Where are we getting on ceasefire? Just between you and me.

K: Look we have to do on ceasefire in South Vietnam?

R: Yeh.

K: We are not getting anywhere, right now, but ah--well it is very difficult for me to talk about the diplomacy, but it is merely something we have in mind.

R: Well we are getting some--we are picking up some suggestions which we ~~could have~~ didn't put out on our own, but from two different sources, indicating that Hanoi wants to talk. I'm not surprised that they do--

K: Well, look if Hanoi wants to talk it has been my experience they never have been very bashful about making that clear to us and if they want to talk, we certainly do our damnest to facilitate it. Can you tell me, are these newspaper sources?

R: No, they ar3 East German sources.

K: Well, we are certainly--I mean this is for your own guidance, we are certainly in touch with the Russians, and if anything is happening we will hear it soon enough.

R: What kind of help are you getting from Dobrynin?

K: Well, you know, I think these guys are as surprised as we are by what happened. What basically happened is that they kept their level of aid steady and ours declined for a variety of reasons including inflation, and oil prices, and after all since Schlesinger early in March gave a press conference which reflected our intelligence assessment that this would not be a year of a big offensive.

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R: Yeh, well I heard your testimony on that yesterday. I just have a feeling that--nothing but a feeling that--maybe something can be done to avoid this really disastrous human carnage ~~xxxx~~ in Saigon--

K: Look that is almost the only thing left to do.

R: Well, that is what seems to me ought to be--what troubles me Henry, quite frankly, for reasons which I understand, obviously you have to give the impression that your first priority is the moral obligation to deliver arms, but certainly the higher priority is to --

K: Yeh, but you can't do one without the other.

R: You don't even have time to get the other there--

K: Probably, maybe not.

R: Schlesinger yesterday says six weeks before you can get really effective equipment in there--we haven't got six weeks, have we?

K: I think there is a certain logic of events that will unfold.

R: There is a kind of cynical idea around which is--and this is in our embassies, saying in effect look what Washington really did--what it did was to negotiate a peace which got their POW's out and now they are negotiating an appropriation -- got the rest of the Americans out.

K:NO, I think the agreement could have held without Watergate and you know, in a reasonable atmosphere between the executive and legislative there wouldn't have been this sort of furor over the appropriations that developed this year.

R: You really think the Watergate thing was a factor in that--

K: I think the Watergate thing so weakened the executive authority and in May, as late as May 74 all the signals were that the Communists were digging in for the long pull there and then during the course of the summer they went to high points and in February of this year they decided to go all out--the vultures have had only about a month's' training ~~xxx~~ right now, so I think it is a casualty of Watergate.

R: Well, we will see, I just hope we can do something about--

K: But it is not an issue which we will pursue; I am giving a speech tomorrow to the newspaper editors--I'll send you a copy in the morning--I'm trying to make it a conciliatory speech.



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R: Yeh, well I've been there all day and I'm just going down to the WH now for that bash down there. The President tried to deal with this, but you know he got into all kinds of trouble about well--.... just give us three more years you know, Jesus Christ, nobody's got a stomach for three more years.

K: I haven't seen a transcript yet.

R: No, it wasn't a transcript, it was in response to questions

K: No, no, I mean I didn't--I was at a lunch when he was.....

R: What else is worrying you?

K: The big problem we have now is to change the world-- there is nothing we can do about the world's perception of Vietnam, but there is a lot we can do about changing the world's perception about our reaction to it and that is our big problem right now.

R: Well, sure but it is a perception of ours and what we are and what we stand for

K: Exactly.

R: I agree. Well, off you go, you've got--

K: I think I'll see you tomorrow night--aren't you going to Rockefeller

R: Yeh

K: Good, and I'll see you there.

R: Great, all the best.