

UNCLASSIFIED

X 206 \*

TELCON  
Scotty Reston  
Sec. Kissinger  
November 3, 1975  
8:20 a.m.

RELEASED IN FULL

K: You are the only journalist I will talk to.

R: We are all puzzled about what is back of this and what does it all mean.

K: Well, I cannot go into that. You know strictly for your own information this was not my doing nor my idea nor my recommendation.

R: Who precipitated it.

K: I quite honestly don't know. I found it when I came back from China.

R: It is so out of character of the President. I thought maybe Ford himself had gotten so tough on New York that he had to concede something on the Defense Budget and Schlesinger kicked up his heels. Something like that.

K: You know -- on what basis are we talking about here.

R: Obviously this is a hell of an upheaval and it will be the subject of intelligence speculation. We cannot talk off the record.

K: You are speculating on your own.

R: Sure. I am not trying to attribute anything to you. I will take full responsibility.

K: I have to tell you honestly. Schlesinger has been extremely ruthless and irritating in what the newspaper thinks is his case but he never presented them in the meetings. That is one thing. But what in fact precipitated this whole sequence of events is not clear to me.

R: Not the differences of the / : <sup>cruise</sup> missiles or...

K: Well look. There were a whole lot of things that the President and I kept reading about in the newspapers that were allegedly Schlesinger's views that he never said in meetings. Some of it ruthless. But he never presented what the real alternatives were for America. It is all right for Jackson to have these views but on substance there were some pretty rough stuff. I think the President just decided he had had enough.

R: When you say presented his case... you mean presented his case to the Congress.

K: To the public. Never in his name either. We have never heard the cruise missile arguments that I have seen in the New York Times in any coherent way.

R: That is extraordinary.



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K: The last SALT position was 80 percent worked out by him. Not by me. It was our way to try to keep him quiet while ~~we~~ elicited the Soviet response and I think the average citizen thought I had rammed it down the Pentagon's throat.

R: That impression was the fact.

K: That is not true. So the President may<sup>be</sup> just had enough.

R: What about the NSC thing.

K: Well, what about it.

R: I suppose that is politics too.

K: I think it is inevitable when the other thing is done which is another clear indication that it was not my preference.

R: I don't follow the whole political argument in this thing, Henry, because it seems to me that once you put all of these pieces in position there is only one result to this which is greatly to strengthen your position. I cannot see it any other way and that certainly is not a Reagan or anti-Reagan argument. It is not something he would want or tolerate as a political move.

K: I don't need my positioned strengthened. That is the last thing that is needed at the moment.

R: I understand that but if you move Rummy out of the White House and you put Scowcroft in your present NSC job it just seems to me quite obvious that your position is strengthened. But as you say you don't care about that.

K: We have a year before an election. We<sup>have</sup> just barely quieted the country down. For once there is not a major issue. How can it possibly be in any ones interest to get this debate started for 2-3 months.

R: Of course.

K: What are these power positions if I cannot convince the President of my views it comes back to the same thing either way. Either I can convince him or I cannot. When you have been in here in the 8th year. They are not keeping a scorecard. What good is power in the 8th year of an administration. What we need now is to have something that can be left. That is the only power that makes any bloody difference.

R: I agree.

K: This is off the record.

R: I take it this other speculation is accurate about Rumsfeld to the Pentagon and Bush to Colby's.



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K: That is substantially correct.

R: Well, I must say I was surprised. I am not unhappy about it. Though as you say it does the one thing you don't want to do. Get's you more deeply involved in politics.

K: Right. On substance it is not the wrong decision to stop this harrassment. When you read an Evans- and Novak Column where the President does not know what a PBO is you don't exactly ... there was an allegation that I had held something up rather than the President's ordering it which was totally wrong and they said he does not know what Kissinger ordered stopped.

R: All that stuff coming from the White House was from there.?

K: Absolutely. I don't know, but it certainly did not come out of here. The NEWSWEEK people who called here said they got it from the White House.

R: Well, o.k. Thank you very mucy, Henry.

K: Thank you Scotty.