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By *OP* NARA Date *12/8/97*

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September 19, 1969

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Reviewed by: Ambassador W. Wisner, I
Date: *3/16/76*

SECRETARY'S DELEGATION
TO THE
TWENTY-FOURTH SESSION OF THE
UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY
New York, September, 1969

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

DATE: September 18, 1969

TIME: 2:00 p.m.

PLACE: Presidential Suite
Waldorf Towers
New York City

SUBJECT: The President's Meeting with
Foreign Minister Schumann in New York

PARTICIPANTS:

U. S.: The President
The Secretary
Dr. Henry Kissinger
Alan R. Thompson,
Department of State

FOREIGN: Foreign Minister
Schumann
Ambassador Lucet

Distribution: White House
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Foreign Minister Schumann opened the meeting by complimenting the President on his momentous and impressive speech before the General Assembly that morning. Schumann also noted that he had made a special effort to get to New York in time to hear the President speak.

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Schumann said that President Pompidou was looking forward with great anticipation to his visit to the United States next February. Pompidou considered this trip his first important foreign travel. Schumann agreed that he and the Secretary would work out details of announcing the Pompidou visit at their meeting on September 23. The announcement of the French President's visit would be made at the White House then. Schumann said that President Pompidou looked forward wholeheartedly to his meeting with President Nixon and regretted that he was out of office at the time of the President's visit to Paris early this year. The President noted his enormous respect for General deGaulle both as a leader and as a man. Schumann responded that Pompidou would be deeply moved by the President's words about General deGaulle. Schumann informed the President that Pompidou would spend the "usual" two days in Washington and asked the President what other cities should be included in Pompidou's itinerary. The President said he hoped President Pompidou would have a comprehensive visit, which ought to include New York, Chicago, and San Francisco. Thanks to General deGaulle, a new period of closer relations between our two countries had opened; President Pompidou could now give impetus to these improved relations. The American people, including Congress and the press, will want to see and hear Pompidou. The President wanted this to be a "full-scale" visit for his French visitor. Dr. Kissinger commented that from his discussions with President Pompidou he knew that the French President was deeply interested in our space program and that Cape Kennedy and Houston might well be added to the Pompidou itinerary. The President agreed with this recommendation.

Foreign Minister Schumann reminded the President that he had earlier been French Minister for Science and personally considered the field of space research to be most important. Schumann was happy that cooperation between United States and France in the field of science had begun again. He mentioned potential cooperation in the fields of atomic research and space developments, in particular. The President referred to his speech before the General Assembly and said our two countries should explore all possibilities for exchange of information in scientific matters. His Administration would reflect his own view that there should be more openness and more freedom of exchange of information to the extent that Congressional inhibitions would permit. The President thought it was important that the two countries be able to point to two or three concrete examples of new fields of French-US cooperation before the

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Pompidou visit took place. Schumann commented favorably on the current visit to Paris of Dr. DuBridge. The President said he had told Dr. DuBridge to explore all possibilities regarding the exchange of scientific information between the United States and France.

Foreign Minister Schumann raised the topic of SALT. He said that President deGaulle had told him that once SALT got underway there would be consultation by all the allies in which France would play a full role. The President assured Schumann that there would be consultation with our allies. This was very much a part of US policy. However, certain bilateral relations initially require bilateral consultations. The President realized that the whole world had a big stake in the outcome of talks which we had proposed to the Soviets. The Secretary noted the press report from Geneva that the Soviets will propose a SALT meeting starting October 14 or 15 in Helsinki. The Secretary thought that we would not be able to evaluate this report until his meetings with Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko next week. We had suggested to the Soviets that the talks take place in Geneva, Helsinki or Vienna. Schumann inserted a comment that the US would have to take part in any European Security conference that might later be held. The Secretary noted that Canada would also take part. The President returned to the subject of the site for a SALT meeting and mentioned his own preference for Vienna. He referred to auspicious historical events there, including the Conference of 1815.

The President asked Schumann how he analyzed the Soviet-Chinese situation. Schumann replied that Soviet threats or suggestions of a pre-emptive strike were simply designed to impress the Chinese with Soviet seriousness -- to let the Chinese know that the Russians meant business. Otherwise, why would the Soviets have consulted the pro-Chinese Australian Communist party about its views on a limited attack against China? The Soviets were also using their improved relations with the US to "scare China stiff". This was all by way of background for forcing the Chinese to talk to the Russians. Foreign Minister Schumann said he discounted the possibility of a Soviet pre-emptive strike, since the risk of even a limited war spreading into major conflict was too great for the Soviet Troika to accept, no matter what the Soviet General Staff might want. Schumann referred to what he called the President's subtle reference to China in his speech that morning, but did not ask for any elaboration.

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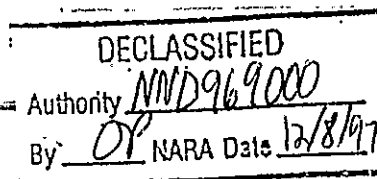
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The President stated that he believed that consultation must include the receiving as well as the giving of information. His Administration welcomes different viewpoints from leaders outside the United States. He thanked Foreign Minister Schumann for his own frank opinions -- which we considered to be very important.

The President said he wished to expand on what he had said in his General Assembly speech about the need for bringing pressure on the North Vietnamese to respond to our offers and our actions, such as the bombing halt and troop withdrawals, and begin serious talks. The President said that Schumann and Pompidou were on the scene in Paris and could call upon the North Vietnamese to respond to our honest offer of free elections in South Vietnam guaranteed by impartial observers. So far we had received no response from the North Vietnamese except the back of the hand. The President emphasized that we had not given up our efforts to achieve peace in Vietnam, but we could not be expected to do any more until we can see some response from the other side. The US will not allow itself to be humiliated in the course of a Vietnam solution. Not only would the American people not permit any such humiliation of their country; the US role in the world was too important to allow this to happen. Schumann said there was nothing France would want less than humiliation of the US. Nothing would be worse for the free world. The President said that, while he did not anticipate any new policy from the successors of Ho Chi Minh, he hoped the North Vietnamese leaders would realize that it is now time to talk. These leaders should have no doubt that our offers to them are firm and our determination to see a free decision by the South Vietnamese people is absolute. The President commented that we can argue about whether the US should have gone into Vietnam in the first place and about whether we should have bombed North Vietnam, but these arguments are not material now. The facts are that we are there, that we have stopped bombing the North and that we have started troop withdrawals. We expect some response from the other side and we would like this fact passed on to them. The President said our minds are not closed about what matters can be the subject of negotiation, but we must be able to have North Vietnam's response to our proposals or proposals of their own.

Foreign Minister Schumann said he wished to make three points about Vietnam: (1) North Vietnam wants to be an independent country -- it wants to find some way to defend itself against the Chinese, for example; (2) North Vietnam is ready to



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accept the fact of an independent South Vietnam, at least for an interim period -- 10 or 15 years ("after that, who knows?"); and (3) an arrangement could be negotiated to sanction a truly neutralist -- not communist -- government in South Vietnam. Schumann felt that there were suitable neutralist candidates available and mentioned Tran Van Huu as an example of such men. Schumann remarked that his government, as host to the Paris talks, kept close relations with both sides. If there was anything they could do, we should let them know.

The President responded that the US also wishes to see an independent North Vietnam. We are ready to help that country economically, as well as South Vietnam, after a peace settlement. We also support the continued independence of South Vietnam. We should not try to impose any particular government upon South Vietnam from the conference table. It is up to the people of South Vietnam to choose their leadership from all candidates and parties, even if a communist leadership should result. Schumann said the idea of free elections in South Vietnam offered an interesting possibility, but the South Vietnamese constitution imposed certain limitations on free elections. The President replied that these limitations could be overcome. He was optimistic that they would be overcome, particularly in view of President Thieu's July 11 proposals, which had gone very far toward guaranteeing free elections. The President hoped that Schumann and the Secretary would have an opportunity to talk further on this matter when they met again.