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TELECON
President Nixon/Secretary Kissinger
January 5, 1976
Time: 6:07 p.m.

RELEASE IN FULL

N: Hello.

K: Mr. President.

N: Henry, how are you?

K: O.K. How are you?

N: Fine. I hear you have a good tan -- someone told me.

K: You are getting this place under good control again.

N: Yes. Let me ask you what is the line that you think is important to get out so we can keep the Reagan people and others from making detente the major issue in New Hampshire and Florida. My concern is that if, when we had a little war in Vietnam on our hands, we could go forward with the Chinese and the Russians having in mind the peripheral areas that could not stand in the way and make progress on great issues that involve the survival of our nation in the future. Right now I am thinking of the country. Now it would be a tragedy if Reagan would make detente an issue and do well.

K: Mr. President what is the alternative. You and I were extremely tough. The concept of detente doesn't mean you don't resist the Soviet Union when it makes a move. The Soviet Union is becoming a truly great power with which we have to deal the same as with other great powers. It isn't a case of overwhelming American superiority -- there is no way we can recapture this.

N: That was the case in the first years of 1960 too.

K: The first time we faced that condition was in your Presidency.

N: Right. What we did, while it had risks, well the alternative was riskier. Now we can't allow Angola to make us break off progress on SALT.

K: If there is no SALT agreement the Soviets get 200 missiles right away because they have to dismantle 200 to get under the Vladivostok limit. Then we have to put money into strategic forces which we can't possibly build up in time, if ever again.

N: The strategic forces are not an instrumental part of our policy. There is something else to be said which I tried to make evident earlier. Look, we have to face the facts that if there is no agreement there will be an arms race and one horse will run, theirs, and we can't be sure ours will leave the starting gate.

K: Anything you could do to keep Reagan on a rational course would be helpful. These guys shouldn't come after me also, I am the guy in favor of holding firm every where.



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N: The columnists are coming after you, but we have to realize.....

K: That is on the liberal side. The liberal politicians are also coming after me.

N: The liberals will shift as quick as the wind changes.

K: You always said that and it turns out to be true.

N: I don't know what can be done except in an indirect way. I want to be sure this line will be followed. Obviously you will have a diplomatic offensive to get the Africans not to recognize the Soviet side and second you will try to go along with limited funds and third try to get a withdrawal of all foreign forces. You must not drive the South Africans out unless someone else gets out.

K: That is our strategy. If this were your Administration and we had the flexibility we used to have, we could crack Cuba. If we could put in \$50 million a year -- you know the Cubans aren't fighting very well. This thing would turn into a nightmare for Castro. We wouldn't even have to put in one American.

N: I think I have the line properly. How is NBC going to handle it tonight?

K: I shudder to think.

N: What I would hope is that you don't get the Administration, speaking of the top man, too far to the right because of short-term political concerns.

K: A move too far to the right would be bad.

N: Exactly, in the long run it will lose the election, it may save the primaries.

K: There is nothing the democrats would like more than the failure of the detente policy. Then we will see what you faced in 1969/70, constant attacks on the Defense budget.

N: I don't know what can be done but I will try.

K: I am thinking about coming to the West Coast soon. I will set aside an evening or morning whichever you wish.

N: Good. We need to keep both games going -- the Chinese and Russians.

K: They don't understand that. Bad relations with the Russians means bad relations with the Chinese.

N: Right. You have no other problems with the bureaucracy?

K: Oh, massive ones. I am now in your position.

N: In my position?

K: Everyone is after me, I am the official victim for 1976.



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N: Well, the main thing is what counts -- you are important. Just stick in there and kick them when it is time.

K: That is my intention.

N: The tragedy is the Republican party is not united.

K: That is a pity.

N: Well good luck. I trust that your rest gave you a little.....

K: I feel alot better.

N: Take care. If there is anything I can do for you, let me know.

K: I will be in close touch with you.