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Frank

ADMIRAL BURKE'S CONVERSATION WITH SECRETARY FRANKE, 12 AUG 60

ADM BURKE: I have had a rough time in the last couple of days. Nobody knows this except Claude Ricketts who was there. He doesn't know what happened yesterday, except in very general terms. They asked us especially not to debrief anybody. I also told Jim Russell very generally what was happening in case anything happened. But nobody else in the Navy knows it at all. Or knows anything about it although they are curious as hell. I put out the word not to speculate and not be curious--just hoping they will have patience.

But Tom came down with a proposal Wednesday afternoon. I had heard he was going to. And they came down with a proposal to give to SAC the responsibility for making out the target list--individual targets--not complexes--which would be nothing like 2009. And to make out the integrated operational plans--that he would have a deputy from another Service of his choice--he would recommend that that would be from another Service. That there would be staffs furnished--some people for his staff from the other Services. And there would be representatives of the other Unified Commands in SAC's headquarters.

MR. FRANKE: Permanently or just for this job?

ADM BURKE: For this job--permanent job. It would have to be done all the time. They would have to be right there.

MR. FRANKE: Constant changes?

ADM BURKE: Yes. Now he has done this, I am sure--I don't see how he can believe that is good. He is ignoring the fundamental thing--what SAC has done in the past. They have never followed

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through with the Joint Chiefs policies. he says well they ought to. Well, sure they ought to. But the Joint Chiefs and the Secretary of Defense himself have not made SAC amenable to control. Libby was kicked out for telling the truth--just exactly what Libby said was going to happen. He was dumb for mentioning names. But Power who did not tell the truth is still in the Service.

So, what has happened in the past--there are a lot of things like that--but Tom ignores that and says he does. Because he says he cannot build his bases on distrust. And he is right.

He would have this operational plan--he has got some policy statements there which are pretty broad--he has it in his policy planning--operational plan that the plan would include a list of all the targets which would be hit. That it would determine the weight of the attack. In other words, the Titan bomb order would be placed, and the numbers of bombs which in effect determines the atomic weapons requirement. And SAC is about ten times as high as anybody else--very much higher, not ten times. He would determine--he would integrate in detail the details of corridors, timing of the attack, the ECM's, everything, though that would mean that they could, and SAC will, I think, go so far as to position the carriers in the ocean--say you stay right here, Or that you will stay within your corridors. In other words, they can make it very tough. Now worse than that, it does not allow any flexibility for conducting attacks. SAC itself does not follow those things. They have a general rule but they do not follow it

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This would give SAC--I think it completely abrogates the responsibilities of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, in spite of the fact that the Joint Chiefs of Staff would get to review this. But if they can't make out the thing, they can't review it. Another point to this thing is that Tom is going to have all the Joint Chiefs go out and stay for three whole days to review this thing. I could not review the thing in three months by myself. It takes a staff to analyze this stuff. It takes three months to work it out with 600 people. Nobody else can do it because they have the brains up there. And they are going to take the Joint Chiefs of Staff out there to review it. It is a snow job. Tom ought to know that. It is a complete snow job. But I could not go out there and kick. And neither could anybody else because you could not know what the score is. The Joint Chiefs of Staff would abrogate their responsibilities absolutely, and SAC would be running the general war. That is the first thing. Now Tom does not believe that. He says the Joint Chiefs of Staff ought to. I said you set it up so they can't.

The next thing was the effect on Unified Commanders. Because this operational plan has to be followed in detail--the details that are in there--the forces of the commanders that are participating in that--they are rigid. You take the atomic delivery forces--you take the carriers--they ante up the carriers--then their plans have to be rotated around this plan. And all the other plans have to be rotated around this plan and you have just froze it. And you^{are} cut out--not only for those forces but for all other forces. Not all of them, but most of them. If the plans are rigid, then all of your plans are rigid. If your plans are

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flexible, and they are continually modified by CinCSAC every morning say, and their plans are changed, then your plans are in a state of flux, and all the other plans have to be in a state of flux. Each one is dependent upon this plan. ~~ADM~~ And it all has to go back to Omaha for control. And then, of course, it has its effect on NATO allies--may have. I think it would.

Tom presented this thing--and a lot of other things too--I do not have a copy of it. He did not leave it. He presented this and then all the people agreed with it except me. And the Marines--Dave.

MR. FRANKE: Did the Army agree with it?

ADM BURKE: Yes, the Army agreed with it because they think it can be controlled because of the Deputy out there you see. They said they would put some very good Army officers in--and we would put some Naval officers in. But it is just like putting a little bug in a piece of plastic. The bug does not control the plastic. The plastic encases the bug. In other words these people could be absorbed. There might not be. There is a hope in it. There is a hope. Even if this group is honest--I am using words now that I did not use down there--even if they turned out the very best plan they can, it is still so rigid that it has a lot of very bad things in it.

MR. FRANKE: Suppose you get a disagreement?

ADM BURKE: Well if you get a disagreement, the disagreement is settled by SAC--by the Commander of SAC--but it is highlighted in the report to the Joint Chiefs of Staff. So the Joint Chiefs of Staff get their report three or four months later and you have a whole series of little disagreements. They will take them up

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and they will be split and go up to SecDef. How are they going to be settled? They will be settled in favor of SAC. Tom, I think, has sold his soul there and I don't think he wanted it. I fought this pretty hard. Tom got very much distressed with me. Hurt I think. Tom is [?] ~~stripping~~. The night before he had a meeting on the SEQUOIA in which he had the White House people--Goodpaster John Eisenhower, Bryce Harlow, I think. I heard about this from Noel Gayler who went--who expected to go to a social meeting. They talked about this somewhat although there was a lot of politics. Noel came up and told me the next morning that he was distressed. He did not know anything about this. He was distressed because Tom said that he knew that I was going to the President--but I would lose. Of course, he lined the thing up pretty well. I don't know whether he talked with the President or not but anyway he had the Presidential Advisors there. And he gave them a good briefing that night. They did not offer anything one way or another. He talked around this thing ~~x~~ quite a bit. To a lot of people I guess. So I said that I wanted to see the President on this thing. That hurt Tom. He thought I ought not to want to. So I went up yesterday and I was prepared to turn in my suit and I thought during the course of the conversation I might have to. In fact it might be advisable.

Lemnitzer came up afterwards--after the meeting on Wednesday, and told me that the only reason that he went along with this was he thought it could be controlled. I went over some of the incidents of the Army ~~of~~ and the Air Force. And I said do you think you are going to control that? You can't control these things. Like the...that you have now. It is yours. The Air

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will
Force is take it away from you. I cited what they were doing with atomic weapons--what SAC has done. He said, well, I know. He said I will be Chairman. We can keep it under control. I told him what I was going to do with the President. He said for God's sake don't...We need you around here. You will be a big help. I said this is an important thing. He said I agree with you. He said would it help if I went. I said no, I don't think it would. You are neutral. You would accept this. In the discussion down with Tom he went farther than he would have had to to accept it. I mean he supported Tom pretty strongly. So I said you had better not. It would not do any good to have him go.

So yesterday when we went over there--we went over around 10:15 and we stayed for about two hours. Tom laid out his proposal--the policy part of it--not the other part--he had 3 or 4 papers. He discussed from the top of it that there would not be a Strategic Command but that all the rest was an Air Force thing. Basing some of his argument on making one statement that the Joint Staff had neither the manning capability nor the equipment to do these things. They both had to be done together. I read a statement which I had written in longhand last night--the night before last--
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which I ~~xxxx~~ to you if you can read it. I doubt if you can read it because I was writing so late at night and I was pooped.

The President naturally because Tom was there-- Douglas was there and Twining was there--all violently opposed to it. The President said he agreed with Tom in general. He agreed with the thing in general. Twining made some pretty strong statements about the Navy's recalcitrants--the Navy was never opposed to putting its forces under Unified Commanders. I brought out that

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the Navy was the only Service ~~x~~ who had all of its combat forces under the Unified Commanders. He brought out the Navy would wreck this thing. And I said that is not a fair accusation. I said if it will work we would like to see it work but it won't work the way it is set up I am afraid.

Tom went backwards and forwards--me arguing against the 3 of them. The President got a little irked I think because it took a long time--and I wasn't giving. It looked to me like Tom was about to say once either you accept it or else. You have got to have a team and there was a lot of ~~px~~ play about teamwork. I didn't give an inch. I agreed as I always have that a single operational plan is good providing it does not have the details, providing that it gives the Unified Commanders a task and let them do it to the best of their abilities. Guarantee to do the task. That it can be done by the Joint Chiefs of Staff. I agree that there should be a master target list. My idea of what comes out of those papers--~~that~~ and what Tom thinks will come out of these are two--Tom thinks they will come out the same paper. They will be different. If the Joint Staff makes them they will be a different paper. Twining kept saying that I would ensure that this thing did not work if it went into the Joint Staff. We did not want to make this thing work. Pretty strong accusations which surprised me and hurt a little. Tom also got ~~xxxxxxx~~ provoked...but he did not intend ...People sometimes say things they don't mean.

It ended up where I fought my--for God's sake, don't make the final decision on this now. You don't know what is coming out of it. Tom thinks it is going to be small list. I don't think so. It is going to be a big list. Tom thinks it won't affect the Unified Commanders. I think it will and seriously. We don't

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know. Let's see. Let's try one of these things. The President bought it. The President said he would/^{not}make the final decision now. But that we would make this list--He wanted to make the final decision before he left office. Of course all three of these people are all for the list--for doing it this way. Tom will do everything he can of course--he has got to to drown me. He has got to drown me. But I will fight like hell in or out of the Service. I realize it is completely ineffective outside. That thing has got to be good because if SAC gets control of this thing, the number of atomic weapons will be tremendous and they will be the wrong kind of atomic weapons. The numbers of horses will be tremendous. There will be thousands and thousands of Minutemen. They will control the budget. They will control everything, and they will wreck--I am sure they will wreck everything in the rest of it if they can. And the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Secretary of Defense and nobody else can stop it because they are the ones that have the figures. And they are the only ones who have the figures. In a year of this stuff--you can never undig it. Grave harm. And the President won't have the guts any more than the past Presidents have had the guts--because these people will then be entrenched. The systems will be laid. The grooves will be dug. And the power will be there because the money will be there. The electronic industry and all of those things. We will wrick this country. If we are not careful. Tom does not think to be done at all. I think he is abrogating his own power. I think he is obsessed with one thing. He has been praised so much for getting these things off the books that he wants to get it off the books. And the only way he can get it off the books with a recalcitrant

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Service with the Air Force is to give them what they want.

The Air Force is working on the system--you either do it my way or we wreck it. And Tom will give them their way. He does not realize that and I did not say that. But I think that is it.

Tom I think, will do everything he can to get this thing through of course.

MR. FRANKEE: He has to. It is his plan.

ADM BURKE: I am in a very tough spot--the Navy is. But I don't know what we can do.

MR. FRANKE: A very basic fact about this is that if you had complete confidence in SAC it still would not work but you would be this thing of--Tom won't accept this. I don't think he believes it.

ADM BURKE: No, he doesn't believe it. He had this party. They are nearly all Air Force people. He listens to Brown. This plan is not the one he wrote but I can see Brown's writing in the thing. Part of that is SAC's. It came from Power. He said Power did not know anything about it. The hell Power didn't. I am sure that Tom didn't tell him but Brown did.

~~MR. FRANKE~~ Or got the facts from him. Got what they wanted.

I am going to have to go down there and fight like hell I think. For a long time. All I would have to do is just mention this to our people and they would rise in wrath. They would ruin themselves. But they have got to know sooner or later. The thing that is coming up now how are they going to do this? I said that you have got to do it the same way that you would do it regularly. They said how are you going to get people. I said order them. So we are now--people don't know why--but I am preparing a list of all the Navy people who have talent in this direction and there are quite a few

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of them. We will have to put some of them up in SAC and some of them here. to be prepared to check this thing. There are 3 Flag Officers--4 possibilities--Lemnitz also said we could have the Deputy and work with us. ^{There} ~~It~~ would be Riley who has had some experience but I don't think he is the best one. Pirie has had some experience. Butch Parker who has had a lot of experience. Tom Moorer. I may have to pull Tom out of where he is to do this send Butch Parker there who has had some machine experience and who knows a lot about it and put Tom Moorer right under him. And then get about 20 other people there.

The Air Force is going to accuse us--"Burke's Wreckers" or something like that--to wreck this but we do not want to wreck it. And we want to make it work. We want to make this thing work just as well as we possibly can.

If this plan can be made to work--if they don't tie the hands of the Unified Commanders--if they turn the cards and the tapes, and the dope over to the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and if they assemble these things in target complexes, and if they are reasonable about this thing, and they show some consideration for the Commanders, ~~xxxxxx~~ it could work. But there are a lot of ifs.

I will give you this thing here. As a matter of fact the Air Force is liable not to make it work unless they get it exactly their way in what they are doing in two things. So that they get the only voice in this thing, and they can get the carriers out of the business completely, and they can control Polaris by putting them on insignificant targets or putting so many of them on one target or something like that. This is a bad

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thing to give you and I doubt if you can read it. But that is the speech I made before the President essentially. I didn't want to get it typed up.

MR. FRANKE: I will put this in my pocket. I don't see how even under this plan the Joint Chiefs are going to control this thing.

ADM BURKE: Well they can.

MR. FRANKXE: How are they going to control it? Are they going to take a report from SAC and just say it looks pretty good. How are they going to check this thing?

ADM BURKE: They are going to have to--

MR. FRANKE: Remember, Arleigh, times have changed in this--I think Tom Moorer would be tops for this job. ...Five years from now ...he will get in the habit of being accustomed to things, accepting things and pretty soon you could find that the check and balance system attempts to provide through utilization of officers in the Army and ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ Navy, don't work any more. It has become an accepted organization.

ADM BURKE: Yes. We won't have the numbers of officers. We're going to have to pull people--every officer we're going to have to pull out of this thing because we don't have the numbers. The same thing is true in communications--we're stuck on communication ~~errors~~.

MR. FRANKE: Part of Tom's thinking, I know, has been the fact that the Joint Staff doesn't have enough people to do it. Remember, we had talked one time about having the Joint Staff take over part of SAC or all of SAC for that matter. At least this part of it. And run it themselves, even if they had to run it all. ~~Tom doesn't see~~

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any difference, having SAC run it and use officers from the other Services.

ADM BURKE: He doesn't, he still doesn't.

MR. FRANKE: And it's hard to see. People have to go all the way back to the original suspicion of the Air Force.

ADM BURKE: Let me show you some papers here.

MR. FRANKE: I got an eye-opener at that briefing that you...to see. It's a terrible thing to do.

ADM BURKE: You might want to take this with you too. If you've got time to read it. Those are things that SAC has done. (Mr. Franke reads papers). That's agreed intelligence. They paid no attention to that. They used their own. Now, one thing about this if you ever talk to Tom and I don't think you should now, ~~xxx~~ unless he brings it up, because I was told to keep it quiet and I am violating that to this extent, because I think you ought to know, have got to know--because you're liable to have to choose another Chief. He doesn't say that CINCSAC will do this, he says--he appoints CINCSAC as the director of this strategic target plan, but still in the next breath he says that only SAC can do this and so he's going to use a staff, so it's the same thing, and that is just a gimmick. This snow job that he wanted to do to have the Chiefs go out there, he knows that's a snow job. He knows that. Well, I'm sorry I bring so much trouble, but this is the first time--every once in awhile you get something that you know is right and this one I know is right. I know it's for the good of this country that this cannot be, forever and ever.

MR. FRANKE: You've only got one more...and it's not a very good one. That is that the decision wasn't made yesterday, but this doesn't mean anything to Nate...

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ADM BURKE: That's right. If this plan is good--maybe yesterday it jolted the President a little bit, not much but a little bit. I used my quota of mercy up on him too, I'm afraid. But maybe a good plan can come out of it. I don't think so, but if it does, then it has been worth it. Now here is what I think will happen. I think that they won't force it now before the election. That would be very bad, but after the election I can be very good fodder, and I think I probably will be. Now there's another thing here that--

MR. FRANKE: When is this going to start?

ADM BURKE: Well, I don't know. They were talking about it.

MR. FRANKE: What does he mean by "trying out"? Are they going to put it into effect?

ADM BURKE: They're going to make a sample, they're going to make a Basic National Target List and submit that, then the President said that this was to be analyzed every way by every agency who ~~ix~~ wants to have a hand in it, by everybody. He made a point there--I made that point and he accepted that. Then that National Target List, that can be done very good. That can be done very good, and we can tell on that if it can be analyzed. If they permit us to analyze it and if they turn over all their records and their cards, their machine cards and things like that, we can analyze that fairly rapidly, fairly accurately, good. Then on the operational plan, they are going to make out an operational plan just the way--I mean, the operational plan--we'll see what that looks like and see what effect ~~ilt~~ it has on the unified commanders and whether it is feasible or not for other forces, whether or not it can really be made to work with the changes and the things, with reality. If those do turn out to be good, we can accept them. But on the basis that this is the way

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it will be done and in addition to that we can draw up rules.

MR. FRANKE: I think that we have to do is tell our people on this preliminary thing that they've got to strive and work like hell to find out what they think is wrong about it, what kind of a job it is, what questions they can raise, but Arleigh, if SAC is as smart as I think it is, these trial jobs will be done to everyone's satisfaction. There won't be any way to find anything wrong about them at all. That isn't ~~xxxxx~~ the way it will be. That's the way it will be at that point but that's not the way it will be permanently.

ADM BURKE: Well, that's true, that might happen.

MR. FRANKE: Then you've got to set up some kind of ground rules to control it.

ADM BURKE: That's right, that's right.

MR. FRANKE: Nobody can downgrade the intelligence of this organization. These are smart people.

ADM BURKE: They're smart and they're ruthless. They're ruthless with their own organization. There are a lot of Air Force people that don't like this, a lot of them, including Norstad, I think. Now, Tom has tried to railroad this thing through me. He hasn't talked to any of the Unified Commanders. He's doing a good railroading job. He had me set up in an impossible situation yesterday. It was clever, where everybody in the room was against me, and it was very good. It wasn't unethical either, it was just good politics. Perfectly all right, but he knows how to do these things. This thing of keeping quiet, putting me so that if there is any leak he'll point the finger at the Navy, but the leak won't come from the Navy. As a matter of fact, nobody knows it now. It will come from the Air

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Force and he'll still point the finger--but in order to be sure that I can't make any preparations. I am by myself, but the Air Force will get--I am sure this is all ~~the~~^{over} the Air Force.

MR. FRANKE: With glee.

ADM BURKE: Yes. Well, we won a big battle there yesterday within--

MR. FRANKE: Well, I think you did as well as could be expected, ~~much~~ better than I thought you would do.

ADM BURKE: Well, if I hadn't done that well, you would have had a new Chief.

MR. FRANKE: I was pretty sure the President would have said "Well, I agree with Gates".

ADM BURKE: Well, if he had done that, I would have had to say I think that this is serious, Mr. President, and I don't feel I can support this, and because I know that, it wouldn't be right for me to stay in office, because I think this does great harm to the United States.

MR. FRANKE: I certainly hate to see JCS lose control. I can see that Tom doesn't feel that this is happening.

ADM BURKE: No, and Lemnitzer doesn't feel that it's really happening, but he thinks he can get control--Lemnitzer--and he-- with Lemnitzer in the chair there, and if he gets a strong Army man--Decker isn't very strong; but he's a good man--

MR. FRANKE: But he won't be troublesome.

ADM BURKE: No, he won't be troublesome. He's got integrity.

MR. FRANKE: That's a better situation. Actually, facing this particular problem it's going to be better with a new JCS setup than it is with the present one.

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ADM BURKE: Oh yes, because Twining said the Navy will not let this temporary thing work. He said it's got to be done, now Mr. President you've got to make the decision, now. You've got to. The President said I don't see why. Well, the reason is, he makes a final decision now then what comes out of this will be a dog fight. They will have won it and they will know very well that they can do anything they want to do. Now, I'm going to call all the people in here on this thing that are going to these two briefs and I'm going to give them a speech. Maybe you ought to give them a speech if it's out in the open then too, and saying perhaps the same thing and they ought to get briefed so that they--I mean essentially the same thing, what they've got to do, and maybe a lot of people here that know this stuff ought to brief them.

MR. FRANKE: I don't believe for a minute that Tom would deliberately turn over authority, take it away from JCS and give it to anybody else. I don't believe that. That's not Tom.

ADM BURKE: He doesn't think--

MR. FRANKE: He doesn't think so, he doesn't believe this will happen.

ADM BURKE: Yes, he doesn't believe it. He thinks that I am a partisan and that this is pro-Navy and that's the only reason I'm doing this. I would do the same thing if it were the Army.

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ADM BURKE: I would do the same thing if it were the Army. He doesn't understand. He won't admit, he won't look--he's been so used to dealing with people with integrity that he doesn't understand and you can't go up and say that Powers doesn't have integrity, unless you want--it's like suing for libel. What is integrity? And the words he says--he just doesn't support them. Undercutting all the time. It's the same way as the Communists, it's exactly the same techniques. As a matter of fact their textbooks, originally about 10 years ago, were built on the textbooks of the Communists, how to control these things. They put one out by Rand, which is a good book to read. I read it. It was given to me by the Air Force when I went to the Korean thing, how to deal with Communists, the operations of the Politburo, but it was written in such a way that--the methods of control, how you control organizations--could be put into any organization. You can't take that book and say "this is an instruction book for the Air Force" because it shows how the Communists work and how successful they are.

I hope I'm wrong but I'm afraid I'm not. I told Bob last night that I was in trouble and she just went over the Korean thing. She said you were in trouble in Korea too and you were right in that one, it turned out to be right, everybody thinks it's right now, so maybe you're right in this one. She doesn't know what it's all about.

MR. FRANKE: If you feel as strongly about this one, Arleigh, as I know you do, I guess you'll turn out to be right too. We don't have much time on this. Mr. President wants to make a final decision and we don't have much time.

ADM BURKE: They don't have much time and--

MR. FRANKE: The next President, I don't know what he will do.

ADM BURKE: Well, the next President may very well go a lot farther than this. If he does, then this country is really in a bad way.

As far as combat capability is concerned, because we won't have any. We'll go the way of other countries who have done similar things.

MR. FRANKE: If it's Kennedy that's what I am afraid is going to happen. If it's Nixon I wouldn't be.

ADM BURKE: I don't know about either one of them. It depends mainly upon who is Secretary of Defense. They're going to be busy people and they aren't going to be able to run the details, even though they want to do certain things. Kennedy, I think himself, would be all right, but he doesn't know enough so he is going to delegate this. His brain-trusters don't know anything about it and they're going to--

MR. FRANKE: I think we missed the boat on Kennedy and it's as much my fault as anybody else's. It's one man I've never cultivated.

ADM BURKE: Well, I did very little.

MR. FRANKE: It could have been done. I missed the point. I really never thought that Kennedy had a chance to get the nomination. I never had any idea he would get this nomination. I don't think he's going to be elected either.

ADM BURKE: I don't know, he's got a pretty good chance. This is one horse race I wouldn't put any money on at all.

MR. FRANKE: Well, I'll keep all this entirely to myself.

ADM BURKE: Yes, sir, I would appreciate it if you did.

MR. FRANKE: I think that you did all you could do under the circumstances.

ADM BURKE: Yes, I don't think I could have done any less or any more.

MR. FRANKE: We should never have courted this one. That won't do any good. No right to do that.

ADMBURKE: No, it won't do a bit of good. The only reason I will is when they say this you must do. That I think is bad for the country

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and you can't do it.

MR. FRANKE: No, you can't do it.

ADM BURKE: Well, thank you very much.

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