

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

December 15, 1972

MEMORANDUM FOR:

DR. HENRY KISSINGER

FROM:

THE PRESIDENT

RE:

Your Briefing of the Press on Friday

On further reflection with regard to our talk last night, I think it is very important that you handle this briefing in a rather detached matter of fact way and not in a manner that could be interpreted either as anger or sorrow.

What is particularly vital is that you leave no impression that you are attempting through the briefing to defend your statements made in previous briefings where the Press have gone overboard in being more optimistic than they really should have been as to when the negotiations would succeed, and have failed to recognize adequately the caveats that you worked in and of course the ones that I constantly worked into my speeches before the election, particularly in the television speech on the Thursday night before the election, to the effect that, while we were very close to agreement and were confident we would get an agreement, there were still some very sticky matters that had to be worked out. That is why it is particularly important that you hit hard on the point that, while we want peace just as soon as we can get it, that we want a peace that is honorable and a peace that will last, and those two considerations--an honorable peace and a lasting peace--are the overriding considerations as distinguished from any deadline for rushing into a peace agreement which is not adequately nailed down in its details and which could lead to another war in the future.

I think what you should do is to start out with a statement to the effect that you want to give the Press an up-to-date report on the status of the negotiations. You could then go on to say that considerable progress has been made on a number of details that you are not going to go into but which are indispensable before any final agreement is reached. Since October 8th we have narrowed differences in some areas but, on the other hand, with reluctance and objectivity you must report that there are other areas where there are still some significant differences where we have not reached agreement.

