Conversation No. 721-1

Date: May 8, 1972
Time: Unknown between 8:36 am and 8:38 am
Location: Oval Office

The President met with Alexander P. Butterfield.

President's schedule
- Duke Law School reunion
  - John W. Dean, III
  - Egil (“Bud”) Krogh, Jr.
  - William H. Brown, III
    - Equal Employment Opportunities Commission [EEOC]
  - Charles W. Colson
  - Number attending

Butterfield left at an unknown time before 8:38 am.

Conversation No. 721-2

Date: May 8, 1972
Time: 8:38 am - 8:43 am
Location: Oval Office

The President talked with John D. Ehrlichman.

[See Conversation No. 24-1]
Date: May 8, 1972
Time: Unknown between 8:43 am and 8:54 am
Location: Oval Office

The President met with an unknown woman.

Henry A. Kissinger
- Meeting with President

The unknown woman left at an unknown time before 8:54 am.

Date: May 8, 1972
Time: 8:54 am - 8:56 am
Location: Oval Office

The President met with Ronald L. Ziegler.

Press briefings
- National Security Council [NSC] meeting
  - Time
  - Henry A. Kissinger
  - Ziegler's presence
- Forthcoming speech
  - Text
  - Timing

Ziegler left at 8:56 am.
Conversation No. 721-5

Date: May 8, 1972
Time: Unknown between 8:56 am and 8:59 am
Location: Oval Office

The President met with an unknown woman.

Henry A. Kissinger
- Location
- Vice President Spiro T. Agnew
- Meeting with President
  - National Security Council [NSC] meeting
    - Time

The unknown woman left at an unknown time before 8:59 am.

Conversation No. 721-6

Date: May 8, 1972
Time: 8:59 am - 9:06 am
Location: Oval Office

The President met with Henry A. Kissinger.

Vietnam
- National Security Council [NSC] meeting
  - Richard M. Helms
    - Briefing
      - Previous Washington Special Actions Group [WSAG] meeting
        - Purpose
          - Impact of blockade
        - Adm. Thomas H. Moorer briefing
          - Duration
            - Helms
              - Previous meeting with Henry A. Kissinger
                - View of blockade
                  - Central Intelligence Agency [CIA] view of shipments
                    - Rail
        - North Vietnam imports
-Sea
-Overland
  -Feasibility
    -Soviet Union and People's Republic of China [PRC] cooperation
  -Rerouting of supplies
  -Call from President
-Blockade
  -Resistance
    -Bureaucracy
    -Cambodia comparison
    -WSAG
      -U. Alexis Johnson
        -Health
        -Kissinger’s view
-[David] Kenneth Rush
  -Support
  -Consequences
  -Implementation
    -Intensity
    -Time
  -Vice President Spiro T. Agnew’s view
    -Political consequences
    -Necessity
  -William P. Rogers
  -Johnson
    -Opposition
  -Opposition
  -Support
    -Moorer
    -Rush
    -John B. Connally
  -Opposition
    -Arguments
      -Effectiveness
      -Impact on South Vietnam

Alexander P. Butterfield entered at an unknown time after 8:59 am.

NSC meeting

Butterfield left at an unknown time before 9:06 am.
Vietnam
- Blockade
  - Opposition
    - Reasoning
  - Melvin R. Laird
    - View of South Vietnam
- Rogers
  - Ambiguity
- South Vietnamese morale
- Kissinger’s previous meeting
  - John Negroponte
  - George C. Carver
  - Support
- North Vietnam logistics
  - Impact
  - Manpower
  - Command and control
- South Vietnamese morale
- Bargaining chip
  - Prisoners of war [POWs]
- President’s peace proposals in forthcoming speech
  - POWs
  - US forces
  - Wording
    - John K. Andrews, Jr.

Kissinger left at 9:06 am.

Conversation No. 721-7

Date: May 8, 1972
Time: 9:07 am - 9:08 am
Location: Oval Office

The President met with Henry A. Kissinger.
National Security Council [NSC] meeting
- Ronald L. Ziegler's presence
- Leaks
- Decisions

Kissinger left at 9:08 am.

Date: May 8, 1972
Time: Unknown between 12:07 pm and 12:13 pm
Location: Oval Office

The President met with an unknown person.

Request for meeting with Henry A. Kissinger

The unknown person left at an unknown time before 12:13 pm.

Date: May 8, 1972
Time: Unknown between 12:07 pm and 12:13 pm
Location: Oval Office

The President talked with H. R. (“Bob”) Haldeman.

John B. Connally
- Meeting with President
- Location
  - Meeting with Henry A. Kissinger
- Location of meeting with President
- Call
Date: May 8, 1972
Time: Unknown between 12:07 and 12:13 pm
Location: Oval Office

The President met with an unknown man.

BEGIN WITHDRAWN ITEM NO. 1
[Personal returnable]
[Duration: 6s]

END WITHDRAWN ITEM NO. 1

The unknown man left at an unknown time before 12:13 pm.

Conversation No. 721-11

Date: May 8, 1972
Time: 12:13 pm - 1:15 pm
Location: Oval Office

The President met with Henry A. Kissinger.

Vietnam
-Previous National Security Council [NSC] meeting
  -Kissinger's evaluation
  -William P. Rogers
    -Position on blockade
  -Kissinger's evaluation
  -Blockade discussion
    -Melvin R. Laird's position
    -Rogers's position
      -Support compared with Laird
-John B. Connally
-vice President Spiro T. Agnew
-United Nations [UN]
-Kurt Waldheim
  -Security Council meeting
    -Significance
    -State Department
    -Soviet Union
    -Significance
    -People’s Republic of China [PRC] and Soviet Union view of resolution
-Delay
  -Waldheim
-Blockade
  -President's decision
    -Timing
      -President's schedule
  -Richard M. Helms's briefing
    -Content
  -President's decision
    -Possible delay
      -Problems
        -Leaks
      -Duration
        -Advantages
  -Public position
    -Timing of NSC meeting
    -24-hour delay
      -Advantages
      -Duration
        -The President’s schedule
  -Soviet pressures
    -UN resolutions
      -Waldheim
-NSC meeting
  -Follow-up meeting with Connally
    -Location
      -H. R. (“Bob”) Haldeman
      -Laird
-Laird's position

Haldeman talked with the President between 12:21 and 12:22 pm.
[Conversation No. 721-11A]

[See Conversation No. 24-2]

[End of telephone conversation]

Vietnam
- Blockade
  - Costs
    - Connally
  - Delay
    - Soviet pressure
- President's decision
  - Discussion

Connally entered at an unknown time after 12:22 pm.

- Laird
- Connally

Connally's schedule

Vietnam
- NSC meeting
- UN
  - Waldheim
    - Security Council meeting
      - Initiative
      - State Department, Soviet Union
    - Security Council resolution
      - Ceasefire
      - Rogers's schedule
      - Delays
- Blockade
  - President's decision
    - Possible delay
      - Kissinger's reasons
      - Advantages
        - Public perceptions
      - Disadvantages
        - Soviet awareness
- UN meeting
  - Waldheim
- Sources
  - State Department, Soviet Union
- Reasons
- President's decision
  - Delay
    - Advantages
    - Disadvantages
      - Opposition
        - Arguments
    - Advantages
    - Cabinet
      - Rogers's position
      - Laird's position
      - Helms's position
        - Briefing
- Support
  - Connally
    - Vice President Spiro T. Agnew
    - Gen. George A. Lincoln
    - Connally
    - Lincoln
    - Agnew
  - Laird's position
  - Rogers's position
- Timing
  - Rogers
  - Laird
- Opposition
  - Connally's view
  - Timing
- Connally's evaluation
  - Status quo
    - Rogers
    - Laird
    - Rogers
      - Soviet Summit position
    - Laird's position
      - Disadvantages
- Imports to North Vietnam
  - Percentage by sea
-Air strikes  
  -Impact on supplies and rail lines  
  -Rail lines  
    -Problems with statistics  
    -Gauges in North Vietnam and PRC  
    -Impact on imports of Petroleum, oil and lubricants [POL]  
    -Overland shipments  
-Rogers and Laird  
  -Conversation with Connally  
    -Rogers  
      -Soviet Summit concerns  
      -Kissinger's trip results  
      -Kissinger’s view  
    -Laird's concerns  
      -Costs of blockade  
    -Rogers's position  
      -Bombing  
        -Laird's opinion  
        -Targets  
    -Connally's position  
      -Bombing of Haiphong and Hanoi  
      -Support for President  
      -US foreign policy  
      -Effect of South Vietnam  
-Rogers and Laird  
  -Support  
-South Vietnamese collapse  
  -US position  
    -Advantages  
    -Rogers's assessment  
    -Connally's assessment  
      -Message of retribution  
      -Bombing of North Vietnam  
      -Targets  
    -Civilians  
      -Fear of deaths  
      -US message to aggressors  
-Kissinger's assessment  
  -Consequences of failure  
    -US troops in South Vietnam  
    -Speed of possible South Vietnam collapse  
    -Agnew's theory
- Laird's theory
- North Vietnamese objectives
  - Kissinger's assessment
    - Kissinger’s return from Soviet Union
    - Camp David
  - Provincial capitals
    - Army of Republic of Vietnam [ARVN] collapse
      - Dangers
        - South Vietnam-US fighting
        - Coalition government in Saigon
  - Prisoners of war [POWs]
    - Bargaining chip
  - Possible ARVN collapse
  - Blockade advantages
    - Bargaining chip
      - POWs
    - Nguyen Van Thieu
    - South Vietnamese morale
- Impact
  - Laird's assessment
    - Kissinger’s view
  - Moorer's assessment
  - POL supplies
    - Overland shipments
      - PRC and Soviet Union coordination
      - Air strikes
    - North Vietnamese reaction
    - Kissinger’s view
- North Vietnamese leadership considerations
  - Division supplies
- Impact
  - North Vietnam logistical system
    - Difficulty in changing
- North Vietnamese campaign
  - Hue
  - South Vietnam response
  - North Vietnam method of operation
    - Inflexibility
- Reaction of Soviet Union and PRC
- US domestic support
- Soviet reaction
  - Pressure on North Vietnam
-Summit
  -Cancellation
  -US statement
  -Ronald L. Ziegler's release
  -Kissinger’s possible briefing
-Announcement of agreements
-Rogers's position
-Connally's view
-North Vietnam offensive
-South Vietnam military situation
-Laird's assessments
-Cambodia, Laos comparisons

BEGIN WITHDRAWN ITEM NO. 3
[National Security]
[Duration: 18s]

CAMBODIA

END WITHDRAWN ITEM NO. 3

-Effect of blockade
  -Diplomatic
  -On South Vietnam collapse
  -On bargaining for POWs
-Military operations
  -North Vietnam
  -South Vietnam morale
  -North Vietnam
  -POL supplies
-Air strikes
  -Impact
  -Utilities
  -Communications
-Latest strikes
  -Damage reports
-President's options
-South Vietnam collapse
  -US efforts to prevent
  -Rogers
-Protests
  -Domestic
  -Senate
  -UN
  -PRC and Soviet Union
-President's East-West policies
  -Impact
    -Press
-American people
-Support for President
-Opposition to war
-American spirit
  -Connally’s view
-Possible US withdrawal
  -Timing
    -Forthcoming election
-Means
  -Diplomatic efforts
    -North Vietnamese response
  -Military efforts
    -POWs, troop withdrawal
    -Intensity
    -Laos, Cambodia
    -Necessity
-Support
  -Duration
-Time
-Possible US withdrawal
-North Vietnamese offensive
  -Duration
    -Impact of blockade
    -Weather
    -Hue
-Future strategy
  -Time
    -Democratic National Convention
-Movement of troops
  -B-3 front
  -Cambodia
-October offensive
-Effect of blockade
-Blockade
-Necessity
-President's speech
  -Haldeman
  -Time
-Forthcoming briefing for Congressional leaders
-Content
  -Notification of Rogers and Laird
-Peace offer
  -POW exchange
  -Ceasefire
  -US withdrawal
    -Time
  -Hugh Scott
-POWs
-Ceasefire
-US withdrawal
-Trade
-Advantages for North Vietnam
-Rogers's and Laird's notification
-Use of term blockade
  -Domestic response
  -Soviet response
  -Press use
-Mining
-Interception of ships
-Contents
  -Mining
  -Instructions for US forces
    -Interdiction

Connally left at 12:59 pm.

-Drafting
  -Kissinger's schedule
  -Haldeman
-Notification of Rogers and Laird
Haldeman and Manolo Sanchez entered at 1:00 pm.

President's schedule
  -Executive Office Building [EOB]

Kissinger's schedule
  -Soviet embassy

Sanchez left at an unknown time before 1:02 pm.

Vietnam
  -Democrats
    -Senate caucus
      -Possible meeting with President
        -Arrangements
          -Clifford P. Case-Frank F. Church amendment
            -Michael J. Mansfield's role
  -Blockade
    -President's speech
      -Television time
    -Notification
      -Cabinet
        -NSC
        -Andrews
        -Time
        -Rogers and Laird

Kissinger left at 1:02 pm.

  -President's possible meeting with Democratic leaders
    -Mansfield
    -Time
    -Press reports
      -NSC meeting
      -Democratic leaders
- J. William Fulbright, John C. Stennis
- Delay in antiwar amendment vote
  - Soviet summit
- Hawks' position
  - Stennis
  - Henry M. (“Scoop”) Jackson's statement
    - Ground troops
    - Bombing
    - Hanoi, Haiphong
- Time
- Need
- President's speech
  - Briefing of Senate Democratic leaders
    - Time
  - Mansfield's call
    - Delay in response
  - Notification
  - Announcement of television time
    - Time to release
    - Ziegler
- Briefing for Congressional leaders
  - Attendees
  - Kissinger's opinion
  - Allen J. Ellender
  - Fulbright
  - Mansfield
    - The President’s view
- Briefing for committee chairmen
  - Rogers
- Blockade
  - Chances of success
    - Rogers's assessment
      - Support for the President
      - US military strength
- Options
- Laird's view
- South Vietnam's strengths
  - Deterioration
    - Rogers's argument compared with Laird’s argument
- Alternatives
- Connally's view
  - Need to try
- US credibility
- POWs
- US credibility
- Rogers's view
  - Compared with Connally’s view
  - PRC
  - Soviet Union
- Soviet Summit
- President's strengths
- Chance of success
- Outcry
- Rogers's view
  - Connally’s view
  - Soviet Summit
  - Kissinger’s role
  - The President’s view
- Laird
  - The President’s view
  - Opposition to blockade
- President's decision
  - Chances of success in Vietnam
  - Effect on Summit
    - Cancellation
      - Probability
      - Timing
    - Public opinion
      - Expectations
      - Separability
    - Effect of military situation
      - Time
      - North Vietnam offensive
- President's forthcoming speech
  - Arrangements
  - Cabinet meeting

The President and Haldeman left at 1:15 pm.
Conv. No. 721-11 (cont.)

Date: May 8, 1972
Time: Unknown between 1:15 pm and 8:40 pm
Location: Oval Office

Unknown persons met.

Oval Office tour
  - The President’s location
    - Executive Office Building [EOB]
  - The President’s Senate campaign
  - President’s office in the EOB
  - Roosevelt Room

Unknown persons left at an unknown time before 8:40 pm.

Conversation No. 721-13

Date: May 8, 1972
Time: Unknown between 1:15 pm and 8:40 pm
Location: Oval Office

Stephen B. Bull met with unknown persons [Secret Service agents].

[Unintelligible]

Bull and the unknown agents left at an unknown time before 8:40 pm.