The President met with Jeremiah A. Denton.

[CONTINUED FROM OVAL 876]

[An unknown portion of this conversation was not recorded while the tape was being changed.]

[The recording began at an unknown time after 4:40 pm.]

Vietnam War
  -December 1972 bombings
  -Melvin R. Laird [?]
  -Options
    -Fighter bombers compared to B-52s
  -Weather
    -Window of opportunity
  -Possible losses
    -Laos [?]
  -Decision
  -Adm. Thomas H. Moorer
  -Losses of B-52s
    -Timing
    -Flying patterns
  -Targeting
    -Moorer
  -Christmas halt
    -President’s telephone call to Henry A. Kissinger
      -Resumption of bombing
        -Moorer
    -Resumption of bombing on December 26, 1972
      -Intensity of attacks
        -Denton’s experience
  -Bombing decisions
  -Public relations [PR]
-Reasons
  -End of war
    -“Maximum force”
  -End of war
    -“Uneasy peace”
  -South Vietnam
    -Military strength
    -Morale
    -Viability
  -Aid to North Vietnam
    -Leverage
  -Bombings
    -Debriefing for President
      -Joseph [last name unknown]
    -Cabinet
    -Prisoner of war [POW] Reactions
      -Denton’s leadership
        -B-52s
        -Integrity
        -Prayer for President
    -Effect on North Vietnam
  -Military tactics
    -Shock
      -Explanation to Denton
      -Explanation of escalation tactics
        -Effect on willingness to fight
    -Use
      -Effect on combat
  -Conduct of the war by John F. Kennedy, Lyndon B. Johnson
    -Gradual escalation
    -1968 campaign
    -President’s criticism
      -Use of power
  -POWs
    -Perception of December 1972 bombing
      -Effectiveness
      -Senior officers [?]
      -Appreciation
Tape Subject Log
(rev. Sept.-2010)
Conversation No. 876-13/877-1 (cont’d)

-Release of POWs
  -Recordings
  -Denton’s prediction
    -May 1972 blockade
    -Pressure in September
      -Offer of release
      -Publicity
      -Basis for Vietnam settlement
  -October negotiations
-George S. McGovern
  -Position on withdrawal, POW
  -Immorality
-North Vietnam
  -Release of POWs
  -Conditions
    -US withdrawal
    -Aid to South Vietnam
    -Nguyen Van Thieu
      -Overthrow
      -Aid to Cambodia
    -Thailand

-1972 election
  -Compared to Harry S Truman-Thomas E. Dewey Campaign, 1948
  -Vietnam settlement
  -Newspaper predictions
  -Impact on negotiations
    -Communists
-POW release
  -Denton's prediction
  -Impact of December bombings, blockade
-Blockade, mining, bombing
  -Aerial attack
  -Rail lines
  -Estimates of success
  -Congress’s role
    -Kissinger
    -Return to Paris
    -North Vietnam’s positioning
-Message
-New negotiations
  -Conditions
  -Vietnam settlement

-December bombing
  -Timing
    -Congress’s role
      -Democratic caucus
      -Partisanship
      -Cut funds to South Vietnam
      -US withdrawal
        -POWs
      -Impact on negotiations
        -Kissinger
  -President's resolve
    -Compared to Congress, public, cabinet
    -Denton’s opinion

-Planning
  -Adm. Thomas H. Moorer’s role
  -Melvin R. Laird’s role
  -President's role
    -Compared to Dwight D. Eisenhower, Lyndon B. Johnson
    -Intensity
  -1972 summer
    -Mining, blockade
    -US-Union of Soviet Socialist Republics [USSR] summit
    -Election
      -McGovern
    -Weather
    -Peace
  -Moorer’s recommendations
    -Bombings
    -Laird’s opposition
  -Failure to press bombing
    -Reports
    -Impact on negotiations

-Opposition to President's policies
  -Softness
President's concern for presidency
- Personal feelings
  - President's background
    - Quakers
    - Pacifism
      - Evils of war
      - Slavery
  - Stakes of war
    - Denton's letter
    - US character
    - US foreign role
      - Responsibility
        - Leonid S. Brezhnev, Chou En-Lai, Mao Tse-Tung
    - US presidency
  - Strength and respect
    - Nuclear weapons
      - Polaris
      - Poseidon
      - Trident
    - Impact of American "Bug-Out"
    - Respect for People's Republic of China [PRC]

US Foreign policy
- PRC-USSR interests
- President's public statements
  - Desire for good relations
    - Universities, press people's appreciation
    - President's meeting with Communist leaders
    - Relations with world leaders
      - USSR

BEGIN WITHDRAWN ITEM NO. 3
[National security]
[Duration: 14s]
NUCLEAR WEAPONS

END WITHDRAWN ITEM NO. 3

**************************************************************************

US foreign policy
-PRC-USSR rivalry
  -President’s public statements
    -Denial of US manipulation
    -Compared to public acknowledgement
  -President’s meeting with PRC
Reasons
  -1972 election
    -PRC, USSR support for President
  -1960 election
    -Nikita S. Khrushchev
      -Opposition to mining in Mexico [?]
    -John F. Kennedy
  -Need for US
    -Chou En-lai, Mao Tse-Tung
  -PRC’s fear of USSR

**************************************************************************

BEGIN WITHDRAWN ITEM NO. 8
[National security]
[Duration: 10s]

USSR-PRC RELATIONS

END WITHDRAWN ITEM NO. 8
US foreign policy
  - PRC-USSR rivalry
  - PRC’s military preparedness
    - Bomb shelters
  - US-PRC relations
    - PRC leadership
    - US credibility
      - Strength
    - USSR counterweight
  - US withdrawal from Vietnam
    - PRC response
      - Dependability of US
    - President’s meeting with Chou En-lai
      - Compared with Japan
        - USSR deal
        - Rearmament
        - US compared to USSR’s influence
        - Kissinger’s return to PRC
  - North Atlantic Treaty Organization [NATO]
    - Europe
    - PRC interests
      - Counterweight to USSR
  - US-USSR relations
    - Historical perspective
    - USSR’s fear of PRC
NUCLEAR WEAPONS

END WITHDRAWN ITEM NO. 9

******************************************************************************

-PRC’s population
-US-PRC alliance
-USSR’s relations with Europe
-US-PRC relations
-USSR-PRC rift

Vietnam War
-US blockade, mining of North Vietnam
-PRC response
-USSR response
-President’s visit to USSR
-Summit
-Reception of US
-Meeting with Brezhnev, Nikolai V. Podgorni, Aleksei N. Kosygin
-Dacha
-PRC’s quiet diplomacy
-USSR, PRC response
-Public comments
-December 1972 bombing
-USSR, PRC response
-Europe’s response
-Edward R. G. Heath
-Willy Brandt
-Germany
-Canada’s response
-Australia’s response
-Socialist leadership
-US actions
-Private channel communications
Cambodia
-US actions
-PRC reaction
-US press corps
-Denton’s view
-Conclusion of War in 1965
-Conflict with PRC

BEGIN WITHDRAWN ITEM NO. 10
[National security]
[Duration: 2s]

US-PRC RELATIONS

END WITHDRAWN ITEM NO. 10

-USSR
-PRC, USSR strategic interests

Vietnam War
-US relations with PRC, USSR
-“Tacit agreement”
-Desire for peace
-North Vietnam actions
-Economic impact
Conversation No. 876-13/877-1 (cont’d)

- PRC, USSR
  - Compared to revolutionary struggle
- Private diplomacy
  - President’s intuition
- Response to bombing
  - Publicity
  - Demonstrations

US foreign policy
- Leadership
  - John B. Connally
    - International experience
      - Compared to President
- World travel
  - Latin America, Africa, Middle East, Asia
  - 1953 visit to Hanoi
    - Partition
    - Adm. Henry D. Felt

Military
- Raymond A. Spruance
  - Ambassador to Philippines
- Commanders in chief, Pacific [CINEPAC]
  - [unintelligible names]

POWs
- Roger Shields
  - Airplane
- Reception at home
- Press
  - Charges of indoctrination
  - Grand-standing
- Status as celebrities
  - Example to other Americans
    - View of US public
      - Compared to baseball, football players
      - Possible substance abuse
      - Children
  - Standard of conduct
-Patriotism compared to personal life
-Interviews with press
  -Denton
    -Television [TV]
    -Norfolk, Virginia
-Question about "Bud" Fletcher
  -Shields
  -Col. Robinson Risner
    -US Air Force
-Statement on TV
  -Peace settlement in 1968
    -Compared to Denton
      -Torture
      -Amnesty request
        - Ho Chi Minh
-Terms of settlement
  -[First name unknown] Harrington [?]
-Dignity
  -Years in captivity
-Ordeal
-Cooperation with North Vietnam
  -Earlier prisoner
    -Number
    -Senior officer
    -Psychological problem
      -US Air Force
      -US Navy
  -Anti-war statement
    -Voluntary
    -Marina flyer
  -Compared to new prisoners
-Treatment of the POWs
  -Publicity
    -Effect on US aid to North Vietnam
-Changes in treatment
  -Denton compared to Risner
  -October 1969
Impact of President's speech
- November 3, 1969
- United Nations [UN]
- Death of Ho Chi Minh
- Denton's experience
- Camp transfer
  - "Soft camp"
  - News transcripts
- Conversations with Major Bai [?]
  - Head of propaganda, torture program
  - Democratic Republic of Vietnam [DRV] policy
  - Self-criticism for ill treatment of POW's

Manolo Sanchez entered at an unknown time after 4:40 pm.

Refreshment
- Coffee

Sanchez left at an unknown time before 6:34 pm.

POWs
- Treatment
  - Publicity
    - Impact on North Vietnam
  - Release
    - Maj. Bai
      - Disappearance
      - Protest
        - Fast
        - Voluntary participation
      - Denton’s leadership
    - Treatment of POWs
      - Effect on morale
      - Food, games, exercise
    - Removal
    - Release
  - Meeting of Denton and Col. Robinson Risner
    - POWs public statements
Tape Subject Log (rev. Sept.-2010)
Conversation No. 876-13/877-1 (cont’d)

- Treatment of POWs
- Impact on US aid to North Vietnam
- North Vietnamese statement
- POWs cooperation with North Vietnam
- POWs’ response
  - Publications
  - Torture
  - Change of treatment
  - Geneva Convention
  - Military hospital

- Treatment
  - Publicity
    - Public response
  - Aid to North Vietnam
    - Denton’s support
    - POWs’ attitude
  - Public statement
    - Briefing
    - Timing
      - US withdrawal from Laos
  - White House event for POWs

- Aid to North Vietnam
  - Attitude of POWs
    - Compared to Denton

Vietnam
- US policy communism
- Anti-communism
- Post-World War III
- United Nations [UN] mandate
  - Franklin D. Roosevelt
- Distractions
  - Europe
  - Marshall Plan
- Withdrawal
  - US and North Atlantic Treaty Organization [NATO]
- Revolution
  - Ho Chi Minh
PRC
- Opportunities for peace
- US aid as stimulus
- President's visits
  - Meeting with Gao Dai, Ngo Dinh Diem
- Ngo Dinh Diem
  - Leadership
  - Murder
  - John F. Kennedy
  - Catholicism
- Fulgencio Batista Y Zaldivar
  - Cuba
  - Latin American dictator
- Alternative
  - Communist dictator
- Fidel Castro
  - [Manolo Sanchez][?]
- President opinion of people
  - Lies
  - Cruelty
  - Compared to PRC
- Energy level
- Laos
  - Energy levels
- Cambodia
  - Energy levels
  - President’s visit
  - Norodom Sihanouk
    - Violin
- Thailand
  - Energy levels
  - Right-side of conflicts
    - Wins
    - Similar to Switzerland
- Malaysia
- Indonesia
- Relationship with the US
- Kissinger
-Phan Van Dong
-US withdrawal
-Renewal of conflict
-US aid to North Vietnam
-POW release
-Denton’s view

POWs
-Treatment by North Vietnam
-Publicity
-Leaks
-Public reaction
-North Vietnam compared with Nazi Germany
-Concentration camps
-US reaction

Aid to North Vietnam
-US credibility
-Christian charity
-Denton’s work

US Society and culture
-Changes in U.S.
-Published materials, TV, movies
-Denton’s conversations with Joe Kittinger [?]
-Flyer shoot down in 1972
-X-rated movies
-Degeneracy, moral climate
-Male leaders
-Women
-Youth
-Sexual hang-ups
-Newsweek, Time
-Cover stories
-Marlon Brando's film Last Tango in Paris
-Pornography
-US Supreme Court definition
-Redeeming social value
-Sales
-First commandment [?]
  -Allegiance to country
  -Spirituality
-Religion and patriotism
  -Clergy
-Berkeley rebellion
  -East coast
-1972 campaign
  -Hecklers
    -Appearance
    -Long hair
    -Hatred, obscenities
    -Movies
-Antiwar demonstrations
  -White House
    -Numbers
-Press coverage
  -TV, columnists
  -New York and Washington, DC
    -Compared with South, Midwest, and mountain states
      -Church attendance
      -Urban areas
      -Illinois, Ohio, Indiana
      -Texas
-California
  -Corruption
    -Los Angeles, Hollywood, San Francisco, San Diego
-Loss of religious faith
-Necessity of faith
  -Principles
-Atheists
-Youth
  -Self-hatred, anti-Americanism
-Loss of faith
  -God
  -Country
  -Self
-Press corps
  - Differences of beliefs with President
    - Vietnam
  - Values
    - Honor
  - Bill Henry
    - Los Angeles Times sports editor
    - Columnist
    - Radio, TV program
      - Window on Washington
    - Criticism of Washington press corps

-Ministry
  - Protestants and Catholics
    - White House church service
      - Father [first name unknown] Matthews
      - Jesuits
      - Conservatism

-University
  - Self-hatred
  - 1972 election
    - Students
    - Support for President
    - Faculty
      - Support for George S. McGovern
    - Students
      - Friends of President
      - Ivy League
      - Marijuana

-Political establishment
  - Moral decline
  - Congress
    - Anti-ballistic missile [ABM]
      - Vice President's tie-breaking vote in Senate
      - Impact on nuclear negotiations with USSR
      - Summit invitation
BEING WITHDRAWN ITEM NO. 5
[National security]
[Duration: 9s]

NUCLEAR WEAPONS

END WITHDRAWN ITEM NO. 5

-Opposition in Senate
  -Partisanship
  -Supporters in Senate
    -John C. Stennis
    -Harry F. Byrd, Jr.
  -Vietnam
    -Stennis
    -Statement
  -Russell
  -Bombing decision
    -Lack of support
    -President’s explanation
      -Radio, TV
      -North Vietnam
      -PRC, USSR
      -Compared to May 8, 1972 decision
        -Public support
        -Settlement
  -Leader class
  -Denton
    -Education
      -US Naval Academy, George Washington University
      -Compared with President
-Moral decline
-Labor leaders
  -George Meany
  -Frank E. Fitzsimmons
  -[unintelligible name]
-Strengths
-Farmers, isolationists
-Lower, middle class
  -Ethnic peoples
    -Italians
    -Poles
    -Irish
  -South
    -Patriotism
-Elite class
  -Business community
    -New York
    -Misunderstanding
      -Adolph Hitler
      -Communism
  -Effects of US education
    -Weaknesses
      -Leader class
  -Decline of nations
    -Military, economy compared to national character
      -Common people compared with leader class
        -Greece
        -Rome
    -Morality
  -Compared to Communist nations
    -Leadership
      -Leonid I/ Brezhnev, Chou En-lai
        -Brezhnev’s skill as swordsman
    -Puritanical, overzealous attitude
    -Graft, corruption
      -PRC, USSR
    -Leadership class
      -Habits
USSR
- Alcohol consumption
- Adultery

US leadership
- Decline of “Puritan ethic”
  - Courage, strength, principles
- President’s talks with business leaders, academics
  - Reaction to Cambodian invasion
    - Ivy League presidents
    - Kissinger
      - Harvard University
- Support for President
- Protests on campus
- Professors

POW's
- Example to Americans
  - Image
- Frustrations
- Stories
- Potential leadership

Denton
- Book
  - US society and culture
- Future plans
  - Military service
  - Book
- Age
- Military rank
  - Leadership steps
  - Flag
- Book
  - Personal anecdotes
  - Format
    - Diary
  - US moral climate
- Draft on bandages
An unknown person entered at an unknown time after 4:40 pm.

Copy of President’s November 3, 1969 speech

The unknown person left at an unknown time before 6:34 pm.

President's speech

POWs
  -Meetings with President

Denton
  -Book
    -Self-subjugation
      -The Lord’s Prayer

An unknown person entered at an unknown time after 4:40 pm.

Delivery of November 3, 1969 speech

President's glasses

The unknown person left at an unknown time before 6:34 pm.

Glasses
  -Denton's glasses

President's speeches
  -Availability to Denton, other POWs
    -Influence over POWs
    -Denton’s view of President
  "Silent Majority" speech of November 3, 1969
    -Denton's brother
      -Use of term “Silent Majority”
Crank calls to Denton

President's points in speech

Vietnam

- Alternatives for US
  - "Just peace"
  - Negotiated settlement
  - Vietnamization

-U.S. withdrawal
- Consequences
  - Recriminations
  - US role in world
  - Confidence in US
  - Relief compared to remorse
  - History

-Presidents’s problems

Past wars

-[Thomas] Woodrow Wilson, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Harry S. Truman
  - World War II
  - Support of US public
  - Cabinet
    - World War I
  - Abraham Lincoln
    - Difficulties
      - Mary Todd Lincoln's brothers
        - Civil War experience
      - Support of Cabinet
        - Leader class
  - Vietnam
    - Support for President
      - Public, Congress
  - Dwight D. Eisenhower
    - Anne Whitman's telephone calls to Vice President
    - Problems
      - Heart attack
      - Political understanding
    - Support
      - President’s task to cheer up
Vietnam
- Lack of support for President
- Goals
  - Oval Office
  - Fate of presidency
  - Importance

US as world leader
- Pre-World War I
  - Theodore Roosevelt,
  - Albert Thayer Mahan
  - “Great White Fleet”
- US role
- Pre-World War II
  - US leadership
  - Compared to Great Britain
- Vietnam era
  - Free world leadership
- President’s speech
  - 1968
- World politics
  - Terror, communism
  - PRC
  - USSR
- Stakes in Vietnam
  - Military sacrifice, POWs
  - Credibility
  - American spirit, character

Postwar role
- Disarmament
  - Public sentiment
  - Defense budget cuts
- Dealings with USSR, PRC, North Vietnam
  - US strength
- Public support
  - Leadership class
  - Compared to labor, stenographers [?], farmers, poor
Importance
Opinion makers
TV, radio, columnists, university presidents, clergy, businessmen, political leaders
US withdrawal
Opposition to war
Leadership class
1969 election
Victory
Compared to “Silent majority”
Hardhats, farmers, poor
Support for President
Need for leadership
“Average man”
Clergy, politicians

US society and culture
Education
Respect for teachers
Religious schools
High schools
Press
Influence
TV
Vice President Spiro T. Agnew's statements
Denton’s interactions
Consensus

Denton's meeting with President

POWs
Reception
Example for President

Presidential gift
Golf balls

POWs
Denton left at 6:34 pm.

Date: March 12 or 13, 1973
Time: Unknown between 6:36 pm, March 12 and 8:14 am, March 13
Location: Oval Office

Manolo Sanchez met with unknown men.

President’s location
- Time [?]
- Executive Office Building [EOB] [?]

An unknown man talked with an unknown person at an unknown time before 11:59 pm.

President’s location

The conversation was cut off at an unknown time before 8:14 am, March 13, 1973.