



**NIXON PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY AND MUSEUM**

**Tape Subject Log**  
(rev. Sept.-2010)

Conversation No. 876-13/877-1

Date: March 12, 1973  
Time: 4:40 pm - 6:34 pm  
Location: Oval Office

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]

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Conversation No. 876-13/877-1 (cont'd)

- 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

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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

**NIXON PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY AND MUSEUM**

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Conversation No. 876-13/877-1 (cont'd)

- 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

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Conversation No. 876-13/877-1 (cont'd)

- 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

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BEGIN WITHDRAWN ITEM NO. 3

[National security]

[Duration: 14s]

NIXON PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY AND MUSEUM

**Tape Subject Log**

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Conversation No. 876-13/877-1 (cont'd)

NUCLEAR WEAPONS

END WITHDRAWN ITEM NO. 3

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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

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BEGIN WITHDRAWN ITEM NO. 8

[National security]

[Duration: 10s]

USSR-PRC RELATIONS

END WITHDRAWN ITEM NO. 8

NIXON PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY AND MUSEUM

**Tape Subject Log**

*(rev. Sept.-2010)*

Conversation No. 876-13/877-1 (cont'd)

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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

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BEGIN WITHDRAWN ITEM NO. 9

[National security]

[Duration: 13s]

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Conversation No. 876-13/877-1 (cont'd)

NUCLEAR WEAPONS

END WITHDRAWN ITEM NO. 9

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- 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
- President'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

**NIXON PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY AND MUSEUM**

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Conversation No. 876-13/877-1 (cont'd)

- Kissinger
- State Department
- Cables
- USSR-PRC response

Cambodia

- US actions
  - PRC reaction
  - US press corps
- Denton's view
  - Conclusion of War in 1965
- Conflict with PRC

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BEGIN WITHDRAWN ITEM NO. 10

[National security]

[Duration: 2s]

US-PRC RELATIONS

END WITHDRAWN ITEM NO. 10

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- USSR
- PRC, USSR strategic interests

Vietnam War

- US relations with PRC, USSR
  - “Tacit agreement”
  - Desire for peace
    - North Vietnam actions
    - Economic impact

**NIXON PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY AND MUSEUM**

**Tape Subject Log**

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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

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Conversation No. 876-13/877-1 (cont'd)

- Patriotism compared to personal life
- Pride of POWs in US
- 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

NIXON PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY AND MUSEUM

**Tape Subject Log**

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Conversation No. 876-13/877-1 (cont'd)

- 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

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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

NIXON PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY AND MUSEUM

**Tape Subject Log**

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Conversation No. 876-13/877-1 (cont'd)

- 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

NIXON PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY AND MUSEUM

**Tape Subject Log**

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Conversation No. 876-13/877-1 (cont'd)

- 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

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**Tape Subject Log**

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Conversation No. 876-13/877-1 (cont'd)

- 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

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**Tape Subject Log**

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Conversation No. 876-13/877-1 (cont'd)

- 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
  - Robert A. Taft, Arthur H. Vandenberg, Richard B. Russell, Walter George
  - Moral decline
  - Congress
    - Anti-ballistic missile [ABM]
      - Vice President's tie-breaking vote in Senate
      - Impact on nuclear negotiations with USSR
      - Summit invitation

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Conversation No. 876-13/877-1 (cont'd)

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BEING WITHDRAWN ITEM NO. 5

[National security]

[Duration: 9s]

NUCLEAR WEAPONS

END WITHDRAWN ITEM NO. 5

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- 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

NIXON PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY AND MUSEUM

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Conversation No. 876-13/877-1 (cont'd)

- 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

**NIXON PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY AND MUSEUM**

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Conversation No. 876-13/877-1 (cont'd)

-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

NIXON PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY AND MUSEUM

**Tape Subject Log**

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Conversation No. 876-13/877-1 (cont'd)

- Anti-communism
- Solitary confinement
- Support for President

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"

**NIXON PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY AND MUSEUM**

**Tape Subject Log**

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Conversation No. 876-13/877-1 (cont'd)

- 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
- President'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

**NIXON PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY AND MUSEUM**

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Conversation No. 876-13/877-1 (cont'd)

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

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Conversation No. 876-13/877-1 (cont'd)

-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

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- Reception
- Weather

President's visit to South in the 1940's

- Road trip
  - Virginia
  - South Carolina
  - North Carolina
  - Charleston, South Carolina gardens
    - Flowers
    - Motels

Denton left at 6:34 pm.

Conversation No. 877-2

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.