

TELCON  
Mr. Kissinger  
The President  
9/21/71, 11:00 pm

P: Henry.

K: Mr. President.

P: Any later reports?

K: No, I have spent a good part of the evening reading the Intelligence Reports and I have written a memorandum which you will get first thing in the morning of my assessment of the situation. I have also asked CIA to prepare one but I have not seen that yet.

P: Yes.

K: My instinct tells me, Mr. President, whatever it is it isn't the death of Mao.

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[REDACTED] Now we know it was not us and we know it is not anyone we are watching so it may have been the Soviets. So it may have a military significance. There could have been a clash or they may genuinely think that the Soviets are getting ready to jump them.

P: Right.

K: You remember t---

P: About this time of the year would be the time to do it, wouldn't it?

K: That's right. And when I was there, they told me that was one of their concerns that after the announcement of your trip they thought that their neighbors might jump them and we know from ~~xxxx~~ a particular source we have [REDACTED] which is infallible

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P: Right.

K: That they went on full alert the day that they announced your visit. So it may be that. Of course, it may also be a Leadership

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Authority	MR Appeal NLN 05-A-14 *2
By	SO NARA, Date 6/23/10

struggle. They may not want that many people in Peking for a parade while the struggle is going on.

P: Yes.

K: I think there is the ~~slight~~ possibility Mao is dead, but there just isn't any reliable -- there is no news at all ~~for~~ all practical purposes, except for these fragments like the ones ~~that hit~~ I read you this afternoon or the later one, only in terms of it coming to my attention -- [REDACTED] that gives them about four days warning of an air stand-down which does not sound like a death to me.

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P: Yes. Okay. Well, of course, we should have a contingency in the event -- well, any contingency in the event that their announcement affects our ~~other~~ operation.

K: Exactly. I am going to get a group together tomorrow to do exactly that.

P: It could well be that they are just jittery about the Russians.

K: It could well be that Mr. President.

P: It may be they would be well advised to --

K: Well, if they were jittery about the Russians and if that is all this is, then it actually means our game is succeeding.

P: Yes.

K: And that will help the later evolution quite a lot. It does indicate how sensitive we have to be to their requirements on announcements and so forth.

P: Yes. I think rather indicates why they wanted the 14th.

K: Yes.

P: They must have known this at the time they requested the 14th.



K: Oh yes. They stood down starting the 10th.

P: They told you on the 13th.

K: Exactly.

P: I see. You didn't know on the 13th they ordered the stand-down?

K: Well, I knew either on the 13th or shortly afterwards, Mr. President, but at that point it seemed like perhaps a normal precautionary exercise. But this protracted stand-down -- but even that -- the stand-down by itself would not have been so decisive unless it were very much longer protracted but it was the cancellation of the October 1st parade which is totally unprecedented in any Communist country. In the Soviet Union once they cancelled the military part of the parade but they have never cancelled the celebration.

P: And in this instance, they have actually <sup>publicly</sup> ordered the cancellation of the parade, have they?

K: Exactly.

P: That is why people are reading a significance into it.

K: That is why. I did, for example, get a report last week saying that all pictures of Mao were beginning to disappear but that again Mr. President would not be consistent with his death. What interest would anyone have after he is dead to do anything with him except to build him up as a Diety?

P: Yes. And of course reports about his pictures disappearing may have been Taiwan-oriented.

K: Exactly. This is why I didn't feel I should run into you with every agent report. These were agent reports. These were not evaluated reports. At that time, I was watching the stand-down. That seemed interesting to me, but we have gone through those periods before -- not on the Chinese side but on the Russian side in 1969. They stood down for two weeks in Siberia

and it may be just a war of nerves.

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- P: My view is the Russians would never think of jumping, having in mind our trip.
- K: Well, of course, they had a Summit announcement set for 1968 but that was with a Lame Duck President on the day they invaded Czechoslovakia. But that was with a Lame Duck President. Unless they jump them Mr. President, then we would have to go hard right.
- P: On the Russians?
- K: Yes.
- P: Oh hell yes. We are not going to have any damned condominium with the Russians, don't you agree.
- K: Absolutely. <sup>all</sup> If they did that, we should rally our allies and knock off detente and build up the defense budget and rally the American people and the war in Vietnam brutally.
- P: Yes. Well, good.
- K: But I don't think that is going to happen.
- P: No. I am inclined to think it is going to work out in some way.
- K: Well, so far we have no evidence that anything ~~has happened~~ is happening.
- P: You may get a reply from them too. However, I would say now that if you don't get a reply within a week then there is something screwed up. I would say about a week, wouldn't you say?
- K: Yes. If by the middle of next week if we have not had a reply then we are getting into a zone where it is going to be technically tough to arrange.
- P: As far as your trip is concerned?
- K: Yes. But something is clearly screwed up. That you can tell already because they have always been meticulous in their reply. It is very fast or at least if they didn't reply they did something planned.

- P: You could have a group of younger officers that -- you know after all the country is in a sort of miserable condition, let's face it and it just may be that a group of younger officers came to their senses -- hardliners -- and said well the hell with them, we'll throw them out.
- K: Yes and if it has we wouldn't know any of them.
- P: We wouldn't know any of them and they -- if they are hardliners, they are going to hardline <sup>on</sup> the Russians too.
- K: There is no question that a reconciliation with the Russians seems to me the least likely ~~x~~ outcome.
- P: That, in my view, would be the greatest danger.
- K: Yes, but that is the least likely outcome. You remember, everytime we have thought we ~~were~~ <sup>that</sup> drawing closer the opposite has happened. And I don't believe ~~it~~ -- if the cultural revolutionists are making a coup, then they will be very hardline to the Russians. They will also be hardline to us. Of course, one other possibility, Mr. President, on the more hopeful side, is that Chou-En lai is cleaning out the cultural revolutionists preparatory to your visit.
- P: Sure.
- K: I mean that would fit the evidence too -- that Chou En-lai knowing of my visit <sup>for</sup> which he wants to be ready -- and of your visit, is consolidating his position. And if that is the case, all the signs are consistent with that too. And he would want to make sure --
- P: Yes but certainly, too, they must have read -- I think my press conference came at a very important time because he - whatever is happening - ~~I think~~ they read that and I think if anything that would strengthen his hand.
- K: That is right and Chou En-lai is the only leader who has been seen performing his normal functions in the last week.
- P: Has he still been performing them?
- K: Well, he has been seen running around Peking in his normal way and none of the military leaders have been seen anywhere.

- P: He has been seen?
- K: He has been seen and their Acting Foreign Minister has been seen, which would tend to strengthen the position that maybe if a purge is going on it is by Chou En-lai of his opponent.
- P: Yes. You know on the Vietnam side. I have really been cogitating a lot about that. I become more and more intrigued with the idea that rather than thinking in terms of an announcement in January that we might announce in December or November a pull-down to 100,000 for whatever date we want to select -- and just say we will have another announcement later.
- K: That is another possibility.
- P: You know put it -- that would be February I suppose.
- K: That's right.
- P: Anyway, and then having said that we say that I also think in January that if these fellows are still as intransigent as hell, we just might risk the whole ball -- you know the more I think of it we might just risk the whole ball on the idea that if they are still screwing around with the prisoners rather than to go on the deal while prisoners for Thieu's head rests that we just simply say, "now look here, we got enough, we have heard everything, you know give out the whole record. Say now we give them an ultimatum. Get these prisoners or -- that is until ~~we~~ we do we are going to blockade them. By that I mean -- by blockade I mean maybe it is mining and the cutting of that railroad and take out those power plants. Goddamnit, you could have a lot of public sentiment for that.
- K: Well, with respect to the first, Mr. President, as much time as we can buy in November the better off we will be. With respect to what we do -- I think in any event whenever you announce your final thing we ought to break off in Paris and just keep a liaison team there. At that point, there would be no sense in keeping Porter in Paris.
- P: Yes. We would say withdraw our Ambassador. And we will just have a liaison office there. That they have refused --
- K: Which in itself will be a tremendous thing for the prisoners.
- P: And that in the meantime that our patience is running out on that. We are going to retain forces until we get the prisoners and, then I would go -- I really think there is one place for



the American people and it would serve a double purpose to support us and that is it would cause ripples with the Chinese and Russians but maybe not so much as we think. We would simply say now damnit we want those prisoners and then by blockading or quarantining is the word I'd use and we will lift the quarantine when we get the prisoners. Now that really very seriously limits their ability to wage a spring offensive.

K: Right. It will depend, Mr. President, on how our relationship to the Chinese and Soviets has developed at that point.

P: True. True.

K: And if we have to give a lot of way to one or the other. But certainly it is an option that we should keep very much in mind.

P: Yes. Well, I want that prepared.

K: Right Mr. President. It will be done.

P: Another thing. It seems to me that we might try a little war of nerves. You know, we went through that business of the loading those damned mines and moving the carriers and all that sort of thing -- the mine sweepers, etc.

K: Right. I remember -- in 1969.

P: Well. Let's try it again. I would like to see Moorer have that on salvo again.

K: Right Mr. President.

P: We could move planes and a helluva lot of other things around if we are ready for a helluvan offensive.

K: I will talk to Moorer first thing in the morning.

P: And another thing is that I do think that -- the more I think about it -- having gotten away with this strike as apparently we have --

K: Oh yes. Easily.

P: As soon as this weather clears, I would go back and clean out the rest of that stuff.

K: I think that we should do Mr. President.

P: I just think we ought to do it.

K: But not while you are traveling -- or do you think?

P: Oh hell, that wouldn't bother me a bit.

K: It doesn't bother you. Well then we can just give them the authority --

P: As soon as the weather clears for a day, to go in, but goddamnit, tell them I want some results.

K: Well, they had pretty good results today Mr. President because we intercepted North Vietnamese communications in which they report themselves very extensive damage.

P: Are those reliable?

K: Oh yes. I mean that is just to themselves.

P: Damage to what -- just oil tanks?

K: They reported heavy damage to POL and they are using this area for the fuel for the trucks that go down the Ho Chi Minh Trail and so that has to be --

P: But as I understand there are trucks and supply depots and other things and I would just knock the bejesus out of them.

K: But we didn't get the supply dumps other than POL near a port because we were afraid to hit the civilian population when we couldn't bomb visually. And that would be the most lucrative target ~~if they~~ when the weather clears.

P: I am not so goddamned concerned about the civilian population. I am not so concerned about it.

K: Well, it would give them a lot of pictures they could use.

P: Maybe. Maybe. Well I think you ought to lay it on -- just thinking it through I don't think it is going to affect either the

Chinese or the Russians.

K: Well, if we did it-regularly --

P: On the DMZ thing. We just sort of get in the habit of it -- that above the DMZ we are just not going to tolerate this kind of buildup.

K: Well, I think we can get away with one more Mr. President. Then I would put a pause in of a few weeks.

P: Let's make the one more damned good.

K: That's right Mr. President.

P: So would you tell Moorer.

K: I will tell him first thing in the morning. Well, they would have tomorrow if the weather had been better.

P: Alright.

K: But if we can tell them on the first clear day -- one more maximum effort in that area.

P: Provided they think there are significant targets etc. It does not have to be limited to that area. If you want to hit a few passes at the same time.

K: They are not in operation yet.

P: Alright.

K: They won't start going for another few weeks. We should save that until the end of October.

P: Well, let me say that in October we will do it. I am not about to do it. Both the Russians and the Chinese have got to know that we mean ~~big~~ business.

K: Absolutely. That's why this strike yesterday was so important.

P: I have a feeling that was the case and just know that that is -- if there is any psychological benefit left to what the hell we are doing to those people, this is going to do it. Okay.

You are going to meet with Connally when?

K: ~~Thursday~~ Thursday morning.

P: What are you going to call it?

K: We are not going to call it anything.

P: You can just say you are meeting with them to look over some of the -- what excuse will you give to Peterson when he is not invited?

K: I don't have to tell him anything. I said that Connally and I were talking and we just decided to bat it around a bit.

P: He wanted some of your views and you thought you ought to pass his views on to him as you had to him.

K: That's right. I think we can handle that. I must say, Mr. President after having thought about it more, I am becoming more and more of your view that we shouldn't give up the surcharge very easily.

P: Good. Well, I guess domestically it is dynamite to give it up. But beyond that from a foreign policy standpoint, what in the name of God do we get for it?

K: I think what we have to do is change our tactics a little bit. We have ~~xxxx~~ shown our deeds. Now we have to speak in a somewhat more fatherly way. Because this is a tremendous domestic wrench for a lot of these countries.

P: Sure. Well, that is what I told Byrnes -- to prepare some material for me on that score.

K: And that way we can break away -- the British -- I had a long talk with Cromer tonight.

P: Do you think you can break them away?

K: Well, I think we can get them not to --

P: According to Connally they are hopeless.

- K: I don't know. I think we could get the British to put forward as their idea ~~something~~ some things we can live with. If there is a showdown between us and the common market, until they are fully in, they have to back the common market.
- P: That's correct.
- K: That is why we have to avoid a formal showdown and see whether inside the common market they could put forward as theirs something we can live with.
- P: Yes. But we have got to give them something we will live with.
- K: Well, we have to give them some idea of what we want which we have not done yet.
- P: Yes. As you know, Byrnes' view is to go back one way or another -- he is hepped on the idea of raising the price of gold. And that --
- K: But that will just -- that is like SDRs Mr. President. It would get us three or four years and then we will be right back where we were. It will get us whatever the time additional currencies will get us. But it doesn't save the basic imbalance. Basically all it does is increase our reserves.
- P: Which is not what we are really interested in.
- K: Well, it buys us whatever time is involved when you have larger reserves.
- P: But it doesn't help us on our trade balance.
- K: It does not help us on our trade balance. It is, in fact, counter-productive. Because it is a way of perpetuating the present problems.
- P: Yes. Well, I wonder if Byrnes realizes that?
- K: Well, he figures <sup>if</sup> there is more liquidity we can turn it around by domestic policies.
- P: Oh Christ. That is what the Europeans tell us <sup>but</sup> /~~xxthat~~ our domestic policies aren't going to work that soon.

- K: That's right.
- P: Well, as you talk, try to get some position I can take.
- K: Absolutely.
- P: Because I will have to address myself at least briefly to the subject and I am the one that should be out making some generous damned statement and not say something that ~~will~~ we'll have Connally have a major statement at the time of the IMF Meeting. Another way I can finesse Detroit is to say well the Secretary of Treasury (and this is what you might discuss in the morning) will be addressing this subject at (if we want to say that) -- at the IMF Meeting and that we are looking for a solution but both sides have got to participate in it. We just can't be one-sided.
- K: Well, I think if you put it on the basis of the - that we treasure our close relationships to our allies, that it is painful to us that this has developed.
- P: Yes. I had a very interesting talk with Paul Hoffman. He is a nice fellow. He made an interesting point. He was the first, as you know, to go to the Marshall Plan. He made this point. He said now look, you can talk all you want about the Marshall Plan but as a result of the economic features of the Marshall Plan, the economic success of the Marshall Plan very very significantly reduced (and he put it in even more dramatic terms) he said it removed the possibility of conflict between the Western European nations who have been fighting -- fought two wars in a half a century. The other point he made is this. He said, looking at the world there can never be one world politically. However, what we should work for is one world economically. That's not bad.
- K: That's a good way of putting it.
- P: Economically that's good. Another thing I want to be able to say/  
if I can. I would like to give them some hope on East-West trade. in Detroit
- K: Yes. That you can do Mr. President because you can point out -- I will get you the figures -- that this year alone we have

already approved over \$. 5 billion, in addition to the other programs, and there is more in the works.

P: Well, the Kama River thing. They are terribly interested in that you know and anything we can say on that in positive, I would like to say out there if I could.

K: Well, the problem is on that Mr. President. We are not the problem. The problem is that this whole thing is getting renegotiated. But there is one contract in for Swindler-Dresser Corporation for some \$285 million on top of the foundry which we have already approved, which is part of the Kama River project. You will be able to tell them that we have given close to \$400 million -- I mean approved that -- for one project alone.

P: Well, why don't you do a little talking point on that particular matter about East-West trade and what the prospects are for the future. Will you do that?

K: Exactly. Of course. I will do it first thing in the morning.

P: I won't need it until late in the afternoon.

K: Right Mr. President.

P: I'll be working tomorrow in the EOB and if anything develops you can reach me.

K: Of course. I will let you know the second we know anything. This may be a false alarm Mr. President. This may be a purely military exercise. Or it could be a purge of Chou of his opponent.

P: Or it could be a purge of Chou by his opponent. Although his presence doesn't seem to me --

K: That is inconsistent with his presence.

P: That is right.

K: One would have to assume that he is the stronger of the people right now. I mean having ridden through the cultural revolution it would be hard to know what would weaken him now.

- P: Yes. But you remember Mr. K went when nobody expected him to.
- K: That's true.
- P: So you never know what is happening in the goddamned countries, do you?
- K: That is true but he had had a whole series of failures. ~~XXXX~~
- P: Chou, in my view, is looking pretty damned good in the world today. You know he has been seeing Western people. He is getting a helluva of a press in the world and you know, that ought to impress these people.
- K: That's right. And he is damned near indispensable Mr. President. He has run the goddamned country.
- P: And the Chinese -- they are getting, in my view, as most sophisticated observers are saying, a helluva lot out of their meeting with us. I notice where some jackass from the American         ? Service Committee said that Chou would insist that the U.S. withdraw from Asia.
- K: Oh that is total nonsense. He has read the Reston interview.
- P: Yes. Well, we finished that interview off.
- K: That is the truth.
- P: Well, let's get Moorer to work on some contingency plans, will you?
- K: Right Mr. President.  
but
- P: Also, /in any event, as far as contingency plans, let's have a few naval maneuvers up from there.
- K: Right Mr. President.
- P: The Navy can move around and put some mine sweepers up there and a few other little odds and ends.
- K: I will talk it over with Moorer the first thing in the morning.
- P: Okay.
- K: Right Mr. President. Goodbye.