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**1972/09/10**

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ME By FDNARA Date 5/25

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

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MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

PARTICIPANTS:

Minister of State Franz Heubl  
Franz Joseph Strauss  
Henry A. Kissinger  
Helmut Sonnenfeldt

DATE AND TIME:

September 10, 1972, 4:15-4:45 p.m.

PLACE:

Arabaella Haus, Munich, Germany

Strauss: I want to ask you first of all about the CSCE.

Kissinger: It is probably inevitable some time next year.

Strauss: Are you sure it is inevitable?

Kissinger: We did not favor it but all our allies do; the French do, the British do and your government does.

Strauss: Well, we do not and we will go slow once we are elected. You have to realize that with these socialists there is nothing but concessions.

Kissinger: Why do you say that?

Strauss: My dear Henry, because socialism is synonymous with concessions. They can't help themselves. And we are really faced with a socialist belt now. First there are the Scandinavians and we all know about them. Then there is Austria, although Kreisky is trying to follow his own policy. In Italy by sheer luck there isn't a socialist government yet but who can tell in that country how long the present setup will last. And in France you have Mitterand who is already in bed with the Communists. Pompidou, who is a good man, will probably win in the elections next year but don't discount Mitterand and the socialists. And then our socialists. Well, the chances are you will have this socialist belt from the North Cape to the Mediterranean.

Heubl: There has been a story, just in the last few days, that the Chinese will somehow want to participate in the CSCE.

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Kissinger: I cannot believe that Mao will die unfulfilled if there is never a conference. For obvious reasons, this is not a favorite idea of the Chinese. They are the best members of NATO these days. You mentioned the election. What do you think the outcome will be?

Strauss: It looks as though we will win it. The Olympics have probably hurt Brandt. There also was the Schiller affair and the Quick affair -- the practice of persecuting journalists for minutia. You are laughing. But I am not sensitive when I say this because I think there is a difference between printing a letter of resignation of a minister and the nuclear target list of NATO. So I am not sensitive. You should know there is an underground attack against our system. Communists and anarchists pervade the youth organizations of the SPD and even the Free Democrats. And of course the Russians support the Government and have a mammoth propaganda machinery against us. This could result in a close election.

Kissinger: What is the best time for you?

Heubl: December 3 is optimal, after that it is unpredictable.

Strauss: There is a story that Brandt in the next two weeks will send a letter to the President of the Bundestag and ask him to pose the confidence question. Brandt does not want to pose it himself. But under our constitutional system that would be a very questionable procedure.

Heubl: I had not heard of this.

Strauss: I heard about it just in the last few days. I don't know what von Hassel will do. But I think it is impossible.

Kissinger: What will be the effect of the completion of the treaty with East Germany?

Strauss: Well they could have that; and Scheel will go to China; and there could be an agreement on CSCE; and the Poles could agree to repatriate Germans from their Western territories. But I think people are not so much concerned about foreign policy as they are about security. ("Sicherheit").

Heubl: Anyway, it could be close. But if Brandt ends up with just a one-vote majority, the legislative period will not last four years.

Sonnenfeldt: What if you end up with one vote?

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Heubl: Then we have to govern; there would be no alternative.

Strauss: Of course we will have to keep Barzel tied down.

Kissinger: But you supported him.

Strauss: What was the alternative? But he would have to go if he does not perform after the election.

Heubl: But with Franz-Joseph running economics and finances and Schroeder foreign policy it should be possible to keep Barzel in line.

Strauss: Barzel lost a lot because of his wavering on the Eastern treaties. But if he does not perform, he will have to go.

Kissinger: We are talking completely privately? No press leaks?

Strauss: None whatsoever.

Kissinger: Not even hints or statements attributed to me by implication?

Strauss: Nothing traceable to you. That is how it should be between old friends.

Kissinger: Who would be the alternatives to Barzel?

Strauss: Well -- Schroeder or Stoltenberg.

Kissinger: Do you think the evolution would have been the same if the small coalition had continued in 1966?

Heubl: I don't think so.

Strauss: It is very hard to say; it is speculative.

Heubl: I know your time is short. I want to ask you three questions. One, what do you think will be the reaction in Moscow if there is a CSU/CDU Government? Two, what are the prospects for US troop cuts in Europe? (Strauss: Application of the Nixon doctrine to Europe.) Three, how do you see the developments in the Middle East and will this come up in your talks in Moscow?

Strauss: Yes, and then there have recently been many stories, especially from the French that say you and the Russians will get together on a combined

attack on the EEC. Of course, the French have a reason for saying this. Pompidou is an intelligent man but the French use this to argue against any derogation of sovereignty in Europe.

Kissinger: (Asks for repetition of first question.) Let me tell you about our experience. We were warned that when President Nixon became President, the Russians would see him as a cold warrior and things would be rough. Everyone was making proposals to us: that we should go to the summit immediately; that we should start SALT; that we should make concessions; that we should move quickly on trade. The New York Times and other papers were full of this. Well, we did nothing like that. We took our time. The Russians tried to build a submarine base in Cuba and we reacted tough; they tried to inject themselves in the Middle East and we reacted. Then things began to change. Now we are prepared to move on trade and we will do many things because we have gotten some political things. We moved very coldly and concretely and deliberately. That is what the Russians respect because they also calculate coldly.

Strauss: That is exactly my approach.

Kissinger: You may have a similar experience. Lots of threats beforehand. And maybe some kind of crisis after you are elected. But then they may be ready to do business. In any case, we won't permit a crisis to happen.

Strauss: I find this very interesting. There actually are some signs already of their trying to communicate with us. But this is very interesting.

Kissinger: The Russians have no use for sentimental people.

Heubl: Well, Franz-Joseph is not sentimental.

Kissinger: Now on the second question. We will use MBFR to reduce troops as slowly as possible -- not more than 10-15% over five years and then only reciprocally. But of course the Europeans have to do their share.

Strauss: Burden-sharing. A Nixon doctrine modified for Europe. I have advocated it for eight years.

Kissinger: Yes, burden-sharing. The Europeans have to stop using our troops for their detente policies.

Strauss: I hope you have said this to Helmut Schmidt.

Kissinger: If you are defense oriented, we won't reduce. Of course, I can't guarantee some small number like 20,000. But ...

Strauss: I have always said that if the Americans reduce in Europe, mutatis mutandis have to make up the difference.

Kissinger: I agree. You simply cannot expect the US to defend an economic competitor. I mean there will be competition; but it has to be within bounds. You simply cannot expect this to go on indefinitely.

Strauss: Well, I agree with that.

Kissinger: Now on the Middle East. Well -- this is really too complicated and I don't really want to say anything about it now. It is very dangerous and there has recently been a substantial US success because of the removal of the Russian troops. But we do need a united Western policy on energy sources. We can't let them -- cites example of Libya -- play us off one against the other. So we really should do what we can to get a united policy on that.

Strauss: Well, I agree with you on that, too.

Kissinger: Now about the EEC. It is absolutely essential -- and I have said this to the members of the Government with whom I have spoken -- that after we have had our elections that we have a fundamental review of our relations, the relationship between the US -- America -- and Western Europe. I think this is absolutely essential or we will find ourselves fighting about individual issues year after year. And after a while the economic problems will make it impossible to maintain the security relationship. You should be aware that if it were not for Richard Nixon -- this extraordinary political phenomenon who does not come from the American political establishment -- if it were not for him we would already be in the midst of a major fight with Europe. You could very well get this. I wouldn't say that there will be a joint US-Soviet attack. But there will be real pressures against Europe. So we need to get our relations fundamentally looked at. I don't mean that you would agree with us in every detail.

Strauss: Obviously, that would not be the case. But I completely agree with you. We are exactly in agreement on this. But I doubt that the other party, the present majority party, is.

Kissinger: Well, as soon as the elections are over, we must get in touch. I may send somebody over. All this is of course on the premise that the

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President will be elected. I remember the advice you gave me once that after defense one should turn to economics. Maybe this is what I should do.

Strauss: I hope you will do nothing that can be used by the Government as being your blessing of its eastern policy. I mean the sort of thing the Secretary of State said, though he hasn't recently.

Kissinger: There is no reason to say anything. But we will do nothing like that.

Strauss: Well, we really hope so because it gets used in the debates with us constantly.

Kissinger: Well, I am afraid the time is running out. I have to get to Moscow to see Brezhnev. I hope we can stay in touch. We are old friends.

Strauss: I tried to get in touch in April -- about those statements that the Secretary of State was making. But you were away.

Kissinger: Yes, I think I was out of town. But let me know when you come so we can talk.

Strauss: Well, I don't like to trade on old personal friendship. But we will stay in touch.

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