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**1973/05/17**

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

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MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

PARTICIPANTS: Michel Jobert, Minister of Foreign Affairs  
Dr. Henry A. Kissinger, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs  
Ambassador John Irwin II  
Mr. Helmut Sonnenfeldt, NSC Senior Staff  
Mr. Peter W. Rodman, NSC Staff

DATE AND TIME: Thursday, May 17, 1973  
5:24 - 7:10 p. m.

PLACE: The Foreign Minister's Office  
Quai d'Orsay  
Paris, France

[For about 10 minutes, Dr. Kissinger and the Foreign Minister conferred alone. Dr. Kissinger gave the Minister an annotated text of the US-Soviet nuclear agreement, Tab A. The rest of the party then joined the meeting.]

Kissinger: I think this office is better than the other one.

Jobert: It is better for the light.

Kissinger: I put this (eyeglass case) on the table during my meeting with Alec Home last week--it's just my glasses--he thought it was a tape recorder!

I wanted to talk with you about how we conceive this Year of Europe and how we'd like to proceed with France in this regard. Then I would like to discuss some other matters of bilateral relations. And SALT, and Brezhnev.

Jobert: I want to listen, because when you see President Pompidou he will tell you our views. I will report to him, so you can ask him questions.

Kissinger: Let me tell you our general approach to the Year of Europe, and you can ask about any specific aspects.

We, of course, noted many of the European concerns that were expressed

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after my speech and the President's Foreign Policy Report. Of course all these concerns are unjust.

Jobert: Mr. Irwin said that too. In his speech in Strasbourg.

Kissinger: All these complaints that we want to make Europe a regional power while we are a global power; that we are trying to link economic and military and political issues to blackmail Europe; and that we are seeking hegemony like the Grand Design of the '60's.

You know the criticisms.

Let me make a brief comment about the criticisms and then I will speak about what we are trying to do.

This idea that we are trying to reduce Europe to a regional role--nothing would please us more than for Europe to play a global role. It was our experience that Europe didn't want to. If it did, we would more than welcome it. You know from your experience and the British too, whenever we were asked whether you should remain engaged anywhere--you in the Middle East, the British in Singapore and other areas--we always encouraged you. So we were being descriptive, not prescriptive.

Secondly, about linkage, there are two aspects. One is, should the negotiations all be conducted by the same people. That is a technical question, and our answer is, probably they should not be. The second aspect is: should they be organically linked in our conception? They must be. They are linked by reality. What happens in the economic area will inevitably affect the security commitment. This will be produced by our Congress.

Also, when one receives proposals for the economic negotiations prepared by the economic departments, it is impossible to apply political positions; the positions are always justified in terms of special interests. The only way to have a forward-looking generous economic position is for both sides to maintain a political influence over economic negotiations. If we want to blackmail Europe, all we have to do is turn loose our economic departments. If we want a confrontation with Europe we can leave it to the economic experts, and I guarantee a confrontation.

Our deeper positive conception is this: It has often been pointed out that our policies are not very different from things I have written publicly--like Vietnam. My views on Europe are well-known, and the President knew when he hired me. We are not against French autonomy--it is contrary to our convictions; it is contrary to everything we have ever said--and to everything we have done.

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What is it we are trying to do? In our view the Atlantic relationship has for the last ten years been living off the capital of the 40's and 50's, and as a result there has been no new moral or political impetus. We have spent our time dealing ad hoc with technical issues. I am talking about the Atlantic relationship. We have not developed a new conception of what we want precisely in the conditions of European autonomy.

If we don't face this problem, there will be an enormous problem in Western countries. In every country, foreign policy successes are identified with relations with adversaries, while relations with friends seem to turn on technical issues and occasional recitation of formulas. There will be a new generation of leaders that won't have the same commitment to the Atlantic relationship.

I read on Sunday one of your Ministers [Peyrefitte] said we are preparing a "super Yalta." If we wanted to do that, we would not be making these proposals to you, but to the Russians.

Jobert: That touched your Ambassador too.

Irwin: I mentioned it in the speech.

Jobert: It is a "Yalta of peace."

Irwin: It is not a Yalta.

Kissinger: That is the first thing. If every Western country identifies its successes only with relations with adversaries, then we will end up with a Yalta. What we want is to restore an emotional basis for the alliance--a commitment to objectives which are shared, instead of all these suspicions. No one can be deflected from what it wants to do by procedures, but by a sense of shared purposes.

What we want is to use the 3-1/2 years remaining of President Nixon to do this. Whether we call it a Charter or a set of principles makes no difference. It would be insane to first humiliate our friends and then face the Soviet Union alone. That can't be an American objective.

But we are subjected to Talmudic criticisms about secret deals. Every time we make an overture to Europe we are accused of dominating Europe. When we don't make an overture we are accused of neglecting Europe. When we negotiate with Europe we are accused of trying to break up Europe.

With regard to the Common Market, we are not trying to break it or attack

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it. In the economic field, we are somewhat competitive. In the military field, we are mutually dependent--and you more than we--that is a fact of life.

In the political field, when President Nixon comes here, we don't want to address the EC as a unit. You don't either. You don't because it would put a strain on your unity; we don't because we would prefer a more informal framework. It could be NATO or an ad hoc arrangement. That is a technicality, quite frankly.

What is not a technicality is what we are trying to do. We can live without a new initiative. We can conduct the economic negotiations without a political framework. But, if we miss the opportunity--in the security field, Congress will undo it; in the political field, foreign policy will shift to measuring success only by adversaries. And it can't be a mistake to try to give content to relations among friends.

Before we started on this course, I lunched with your Ambassador and I had the impression that what I said was well received.

Secondly, we have no intention to proceed against France or without France. On the contrary, this President has no greater emphasis than to proceed with France. We would like an agreement in principle before we proceed. We recognize there are some matters on which we will not agree; on some things you will oppose us. But if we are wise enough, we will have a wider framework.

I told your Ambassador one token of our commitment, this Administration contrary to that of the early 1960's--has always favored the French nuclear program. And I believe there have been recent exchanges with Foster. In principle, we are not opposed. If we can find a framework we are prepared to help, either via the British or directly.

What the two Presidents should do in Iceland is cut through suspicions, declare an armistice on innuendos, and prepare a more positive direction. If it is not achieved in the lifetime of this Administration, we will have missed an extraordinary opportunity--with President Nixon in office, with President Pompidou in office, and the leadership in many countries basically oriented in that direction.

We can argue about how to do it, but this is our philosophy. We are frankly disappointed at some of the European reaction. There is no popular demand in the United States to do this. We are trying to create the demand. This is our approach.

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Jobert: Yes, I well followed your presentation. If you permit me a personal reproach, this flame? did not come through in your New York speech. You are more convincing here than in your speech. Your speech fell like that, with, in effect, some expressions which--whether willingly or not--were misinterpreted. On Europe preferring regionalism, etc.

Kissinger: But, we didn't say that.

Jobert: On the economic side on what Mr. Peyrefitte said, I can't say anything. He speaks from a limited jurisdiction. On your side, there are persons who say similar things.

Kissinger: But not on foreign policy.

Jobert: It is this that gave us the impression. Finally, we haven't really reacted.

You have now given me today an opportunity to hear your intellectual approach.

Kissinger: One difficulty is, it is difficult to say in a public speech exactly what I have said to you.

Jobert: Yes. It seemed as if when you gave the speech you had a paper in your pocket which you would pull out and give us in September--this Charter. That was the impression of your speech. We had no advance word. It was in effect a shock.

Kissinger: I agree. The truth is, I did not finish writing it until Saturday.

Irwin: One of the things that disturbed me was the readiness for suspicion in Europe.

Jobert: We are a suspicious people.

Irwin: All the reaction was initially in a negative sense. It was disturbing to me.

Jobert: Yes.

Kissinger: There were certain tactical mistakes. I could probably have prepared it better. We had our own preoccupations in America. This somewhat inhibited the amount of time that was available.

I accept this.

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On the other hand, we also suffered from the misapprehension that Europeans had felt neglected and that the mere fact that we made a major statement on European affairs would elicit a positive response, but at least they would agree that we needed a redefinition and would say, let's get to work.

Jobert: When I was asked by the TV people--you are a TV man, I am not--

Kissinger: I have become one. You will too.

Jobert: I was asked for a few words on European-US relations. One of the problems is that we should not fight conflicts that don't exist. I had a few words--there were some problems. I said so frankly.

Kissinger: I agree with you on this. Whether we handled it tactically in the most skillful way is difficult to say. But now we are where we are.

I still believe we now have a good opportunity--maybe a unique opportunity--to make some specific progress. It is hard to believe that when every European country has signed a Declaration of Principles with the Soviet Union--you have, we have, the Germans have; God knows what the Germans will sign when Brezhnev goes there--we can't do this for ourselves.

What we want goes a little further. It would be somewhat more precise. But none of these things mean anything unless there is a commitment to give it content. This is what we now need. It is hard to see how the emotional basis of the Atlantic relationship will not evaporate; it is hard to see how the opposition groups will not coalesce against the minimum security policy, if we can't do this.

You know, I believe essentially that General de Gaulle was right about autonomy. Whether you are in the integrated command is a technical question.

We have consumed a lot of capital in European relations in the last ten years. We have had the illusion that a semiannual communique was the same as a sense of community. And all that pedantry. What we need is a sense of direction.

This is what we would like to overcome--but in the closest cooperation with France, not as an American crusade. You will find us ready to do it in the collaboration with France, as President Nixon has always said to your President. Maybe we can do it preliminarily during my visit and during the meeting between the two Presidents.

Jobert: Yes. It is a problem of time, in part, and of presentation, to

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explain the reaction to your speech. Now it is a problem of patience and conversation and work.

You will prepare President Nixon. You will be able to talk with President Pompidou tomorrow. Whether President Nixon is in agreement or not with what President Pompidou says, your President will not be surprised.

Kissinger: I think it would be very helpful.

One concrete thing is how we can proceed from where we are now to the President's visit in the fall, so something meaningful emerges from it. It is partly a procedural problem--where the discussions will be conducted, and by whom.

Jobert: For the meeting of the two Presidents?

Kissinger: I think we should have at least a brief conversation after I see your President.

Jobert: You leave when?

Kissinger: At the latest, Tuesday. No earlier than Monday. We could either meet Monday or Tuesday. I meet tomorrow with the North Vietnamese again.

Jobert: How is it going?

Kissinger: I don't know how you endured them for 100 years. They have a great capacity to break your heart. The atmosphere was good but it depends on whether they are willing to keep a new agreement any more than the old one. I think they have received good advice, because they complained to me that we have used others to put pressure on them.

Jobert: It is important.

Kissinger: At this moment, there is a chance of having a reasonable outcome of this meeting. The most difficult problem is Cambodia; the others are easier. Today was mostly general; tomorrow will be more concrete. I will tell you before I go.

Jobert: Will you see Hafez Ismail?

Kissinger: Yes. On Europe we don't have to come to an agreement before the two Presidents meet. But we should understand what the general con-

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ception is, so there are no great surprises. Our idea is that after the two Presidents meet, and based on their decision, we would start a serious process of consultations between Europe and ourselves, leading up to the visit of the President to Europe. There is a technical matter we don't have to settle now: your predecessor said your Government placed importance on the visit to France being a State visit rather than an official visit. We are certainly willing to do it, and can have France as the last stop. We don't have to decide it now.

Jobert: That can always be arranged.

Kissinger: After the President comes to the principal countries--France, Britain, the Federal Republic of Germany, and maybe Italy--there can be a general meeting and some general document, which we can call a "Declaration of Principles". If the word "charter" is not liked, that is a minor question. The document can then be worked out in detail. The problem is how to do it with 15 nations involved.

Sonnenfeldt: 16, including Ireland.

Kissinger: Some people think all 16 have to meet, or else there will be no consensus. This may be true. We are willing to try this. It should be at a high level, perhaps the Deputy Foreign Ministers. But it is important that we four agree on where we are going before it is thrown into the general discussion.

Jobert: Yes, I think.

Kissinger: Therefore, we want to establish a fairly high-level way of informally preparing this before the formal procedure runs away. It could be bilateral or joint. It should be at your level, or my level.

This also gives you a maximum guarantee that no great schemes will be sprung on you, which you did not have a chance to discuss--and in fact shape.

Jobert: Yes.

Kissinger: If we can have some reaction before the Presidents meet, we would appreciate it.

Jobert: I can tell him tonight.

Irwin: If the Minister can give us a reply before Henry goes, that would be good.

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Jobert: You can raise it with the President.

Kissinger: I will.

Jobert: Shall we discuss other subjects? Southeast Asia? You have changed your position on Sihanouk? Or is he still the devil?

Kissinger: (laughs) If you can keep him quiet for a few weeks... The North Vietnamese told me--this is strictly between us--that when he went to Cambodia, he asked them to transport one truck for him with his bath and one truck with his toilet. They won't do it again! They are not used to that luxury on the Ho Chi Minh Trail. The problem with Sihanouk is... Sihanouk is close to the Chinese and we feel the interests of China in Indochina are not too dissimilar to ours.

Jobert: I agree.

Kissinger: So I don't have to explain. On the other hand, if he returns he won't have real power. His Hanoi-dominated subordinates would have the real power. So here is the problem: If we could get rid of Sihanouk--in which I think, by the way, Hanoi would cooperate--we might get a solution like Laos, with the proviso that the Lon Nol group would not be as strong as Souvanna. This has the advantage that there would be no dominant personality on either side, so no group could dominate.

On the other hand, if Sihanouk comes back, he might have such charisma that he will finish off his opponents. Then he would become indispensable. So, it could turn out that the surest way to bring Hanoi in is to bring Sihanouk back. We are looking for a way to keep Cambodia either divided or neutral. If we can have an assurance that it would be neutral--for example, not reopen Sihanoukville--

Jobert: The Chinese could give this insurance. If they don't, then Sihanouk is not a good card.

Kissinger: Chou said to me that throughout Chinese history, their knowledge of the world stopped short of Cambodia.

But, Mr. Foreign Minister, you have defined exactly the problem.

Jobert: Sometimes he is nothing in his country; sometimes we think he could manage a few months or a few years.

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Kissinger: A few months is not interesting to us. A few years, yes. Sihanouk is the only card. In Peking, I had the sense that the Chinese thought Sihanouk was dispensable; they may have moved closer since then. I don't think the Chinese want Indochina united under Hanoi.

Jobert: No, no.

Yesterday, I saw Mr. Vien, the Vice Minister of South Vietnam. He is conciliatory, and relatively open to dialogue as I have not seen before. He seemed able to address questions beyond his instructions.

Kissinger: Yes, the trouble in these Vietnamese negotiations is, both sides have subtle points which impede negotiations. But I agree with you--if you take out the demand that the North Vietnamese troops leave, the South Vietnamese position is very conciliatory.

Jobert: Do you think they won't leave?

Kissinger: No.

Jobert: Do you agree to that?

Kissinger: No, but we have no means to get them out without continuing the war another two years. Then they might have done that. The tragedy was that we had nearly won the war, if domestic opinion and international opinion had let us fight another 18 months. But time is one of the factors. Have you a different opinion?

Jobert: No.

Kissinger: I am certain China doesn't want another war.

Jobert: Or a single Vietnam.

Kissinger: Yes.

Jobert: Or two?

Kissinger: I once said to Le Duc Tho as a joke...

Jobert: You joke with Le Duc Tho?

Kissinger: Oh yes. It is a weird negotiation. I asked him whether once North Vietnam was reconstructed, will you head south to claim South

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Vietnam, or will you head north to claim your ancestral home? He thought it was a reasonable question! The Chinese are not eager to have 50 million Vietnamese after them.

The South Vietnamese can survive the current situation, if the North Vietnamese can be prevented from another offensive. That is what we have to bring about, by pressure and other means--by Russia and China.

Jobert: The UN Security Council will start June 4. Are you worried?

Kissinger: How long do you think it will last?

Jobert: Ismail said to me, about a week.

Kissinger: This will get us through the Summit.

Jobert: The Arabs have a certain sympathy in the UN now, and they think they must profit by it. Without going to the point of forcing you to veto, I think. When I asked him how far they would go, he was less precise.

Now they seek an ad hoc committee, and want an interpretation of 242--to complete it, or to put it to the Security Council. I am not sure they perceive it, but if it goes to the Security Council, it will disappear.

Our Ambassador in Cairo sees a danger. They are suffering from a delusion.

Kissinger: He is a student of mine.

Jobert: Yes.

Kissinger: Our concern in the Middle East is this--what is possible to be accomplished; that is a question we have to decide.

Jobert: Moreover, he is very pro-Jarring. Hafez thinks he is not almost worn out.

Kissinger: I have not had as much experience with Egyptians as with the Vietnamese, but I sometimes wonder if they have Israeli agents conducting their foreign policy. I find it difficult to understand how they think they will get from here to there. If they get a new resolution different from 242, it almost certainly will be vague. We will almost certainly veto it if it is too detailed. If we don't, the Israelis won't accept it. So they win a moral victory, but the Israelis are still on the Canal.

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Jobert: That is what our Ambassador said.

Kissinger: I told you he was a good student. They have this theoretical fixation; they win this satisfaction but nothing in reality.

Jobert: They have this pride of face.

Kissinger: The only possibility I see is to come up with a set of propositions that each side can interpret differently but which gives each side an excuse to negotiate with the other.

Do you have the impression from Ismail that they are ready to do that?

Jobert: There are many possible formulas--US-Soviet talks, Jarring.

Kissinger: It is impossible to find a formula that both sides will accept?

Jobert: It is not necessary that it be acceptable, but that it be discussable. Even if they see it as a bad solution, they can take it on themselves as their own responsibility.

Kissinger: We would accept that. But I don't think Egypt would accept that.

Jobert: They are somewhat disoriented. They have economic problems; they are at the end of their declarations.

Kissinger: You will see Ismail tomorrow?

Jobert: No, he goes to see General Franco now.

Kissinger: I don't think he will get an answer to that problem in that conversation.

Jobert: Around Franco there are three ladies who really govern--his wife, his daughter, and his grand-daughter.

Kissinger: When President Nixon met with Franco, Franco was tired from the motorcade and kept falling asleep. It was contagious and I fell asleep too. So the President kept on conversing with Lopez Bravo!

Jobert: A valiant man, Lopez Bravo.

Kissinger: Could the three ladies have a solution to the Middle East?

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Jobert: They could imagine one!

Irwin: The danger of a UN meeting on the Middle East is that whatever success they have will only postpone their willingness to face reality.

Kissinger: I have told your Ambassador in substance about our talks with Brezhnev, but if you have any questions.

Jobert: You saw a lot of him.

Kissinger: Yes, 25 hours of talks, and 4 days in isolation at this hunting lodge.

Jobert: He is a jolly good fellow.

Kissinger: Not of great precision of mind. He is a nice man.

Jobert: Relatively open.

Kissinger: Yes, and probably committed to the improvement of relations, for whatever reason. We had a theoretical discussion about inviolability of borders and renunciation of force. We support the German position but saw no point in arguing with the Russians. It is basically between them and the Germans. They want a heads-of-government meeting at the end of the Security Conference. What is your view?

Jobert: We will wait and see.

Kissinger: That is our position.

Jobert: Brezhnev told us the last stage could be at Paris!

Kissinger: The Soviets gave us a draft declaration of the final outcome of the Conference.

Jobert: I have not seen it.

Kissinger: You have one. With the permission of the Soviets, we gave it to the British. We would like to take it out of our channel and put it into regular channels.

Jobert: Are you impassioned with this Conference?

Kissinger: No! Our only difference with the Europeans is we want to get it

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over with quickly. Our feeling is that the more time we invest in it, the more significance it will seem to have. Our aim is to limit the damage, not to see some positive good from it.

Jobert: You want to see it happen in June?

Kissinger: Only because of our general strategy to get it behind us. They want some permanent machinery. We are not very happy with this.

Jobert: We neither.

Kissinger: The maximum we could foresee is some secretariat that would pass papers around.

On MBFR--I know you won't consider your career unfulfilled here if it never happens. The Soviets said it can be a month after CSCE. I said that was OK as long as it was no later than October 31. Gromyko said that was academic, because the CSCE will be over by September. I don't believe him. So it is unresolved.

They are pressing us for a concrete MBFR proposal, but we have held off until consultation with our allies.

They are very eager on economic relations.

Jobert: It is important to them.

Kissinger: Yes, psychologically important to them.

On the admission of East Germany to the UN, we said it would happen when the Treaty was ratified in Bonn. They wanted a special UN session; we prefer a regular session.

Jobert: Yes.

Kissinger: But we did not give an answer.

On SALT, we don't expect an agreement on SALT at the Summit. We don't expect they will press on FBS.

On the Iceland meeting, I gather we are completely agreed on the last day-- a meeting before dinner but not afterwards. So two meetings on the first day, but one on the second day.

Jobert: So we agree on that.

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Kissinger: You are presenting us with enormous difficulties with your dual capacity. Will you be with your President?

Jobert: I don't know. I will separate myself.

Kissinger: We will do it as at the Azores. All right.

Are you bringing a Defense Minister?

Jobert: I will ask you: Are you bringing a Finance Minister?

Kissinger: If you would like, we will do it. We see no excessive need.

Jobert: I think he will want Giscard, but I am not sure.

Kissinger: One other problem. Should we call on the Icelanders or should they call on us? We are prepared to call on the Prime Minister of Iceland but we do not want to make problems for you if you don't want to.

Jobert: We will call on him. He has invited us to dinner the first night.

Kissinger: Has anybody looked at the facilities there?

Sonnenfeldt: They are marvelous.

Kissinger: At the Azores they put us at an Army base. You will get the best facilities again, I am sure.

Now on bilateral matters, we will be prepared to discuss with you the nuclear question in Iceland--or if President Pompidou wants to mention it. We have told the British last week we do not object if they discuss the problem with you.

Jobert: You will mention it to the President tomorrow?

Kissinger: Yes.

Jobert: Heath is eager to speak about defense with us, but President Pompidou is not so eager.

Kissinger: As far as we are concerned, it is entirely up to you. We have no interest in pressing it.

Jobert: I am sure Heath will raise it. He is entitled to.

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Kissinger: I am sure he will. I don't know what he will propose. It is not our proposal. But we would look at it seriously.

We will look at the computer issue. I understand we have never received a formal request from you.

Sonnenfeldt: We need a formal request to deal with it bureaucratically.

Kissinger: Debre mentioned it once, but it was not a formal request.

Can we announce my meeting with President Pompidou? At 9:00 p. m. this evening here?

Jobert: Yes.

Kissinger: After I see President Pompidou tomorrow, I will arrange another meeting with you.

Jobert: Yes, Monday or Tuesday.

Kissinger: When will I have the pleasure of seeing you in America?

Jobert: I was going to go, but you keep coming here!

Kissinger: But you and I, the community of special advisers should meet in America.

Jobert: Camp David.

Kissinger: Brezhnev took me boar hunting. It is a safe sport--you are up in a tree house. I kept him company. He missed two out of three, to his unbelievable chagrin. The next day they produced one, and said that he had wounded it.

Jobert: Of course.

Kissinger: I keep coming back to Paris.

Jobert: The Japanese Foreign Minister told me they had agreed with the North Vietnamese to have talks in Paris on economic cooperation. So we can fill Kleber again!

( The meeting then adjourned. )

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