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MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

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MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

PARTICIPANTS: President Georges Pompidou
Andronnikov, Interpreter

Dr. Henry A. Kissinger, Assistant to the
President for National Security Affairs

DATE AND TIME: Friday, May 18, 1973 - 11:00 a.m.

PLACE: President Pompidou's Office
Elysee Palace

Dr. Kissinger: I am very pleased to see you again and to thank you once again for the arrangements that you have made for my visit here and which allowed me in particular to see in Paris President Sadat's special envoy. President Nixon is looking forward with pleasure to seeing you in Iceland, and he hopes to be able to reach some fundamental decisions on American policy towards Europe and other questions. In any case, he expects to work in close cooperation with France and with you. What are the questions that you would like to discuss now and in what order?

President Pompidou: We can discuss everything. There are some questions I would like to ask you about your speech. You have already seen Mr. Jobert. I would especially like to mention those questions that I intend to discuss with President Nixon.

When you speak, in your speech, of the regional position of Europe, I am not particularly shocked by what you say. In this sense I am not entirely in agreement with everyone else. I would have been shocked if you had said that we do not have the right to have your own opinion, but you did not say that, and we do have our own opinion. I recognize however that Europe has influence and possibilities for action essentially in Europe, in the Mediterranean basin and in Africa, but that taken together the European countries

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represent a secondary power. This may shock some but it is more or less true, given that what I say not be taken in a restrictive sense. Likewise, when you declare that it is necessary to study things globally, I am less shocked than others. Of course it is necessary to study each problem in its own context, and for example commercial questions should be treated in the GATT. But we need to consider the entire context on all occasions. It would be impossible to agree, for example, on grapefruit while forgetting the general questions of politics, military problems or monetary problems. Your speech, nonetheless, did lead to considerable discussion; if some were shocked by your ideas I personally did not find your ideas so far from reality.

With President Nixon I would like to have very precise discussions. First of all there is the monetary problem. We are certainly not going to solve the problem at Reykjavik. In any case the two of us alone could not solve the problem and nobody is yet ready. Nonetheless we cannot go on like this and not know at all where we stand. I would therefore like to discuss the monetary question and also the question of gold -- not the role of gold because we could debate that in vain and we know that we are not in agreement; but there is the question of the price of gold and we can no longer continue to go on pretending that an ounce of gold will always be worth thirty-eight dollars when it is now worth one hundred and six dollars. We also have to worry about the enormous speculation on gold. I think that the general interest, as those of the United States and France, are not in conflict and that they are even congruent. I would therefore like to discuss the dollar and also its convertibility, not into gold but into other currencies. The present situation is ridiculous. Each week I have to buy florins and marks, which are weak or wavering, and I receive dollars which I cannot use. Conversely, we give dollars to the Germans or the Dutch. The problem is real, and I would like to discuss it. M. Giscard d'Estaing will come with me, but I have my own ideas which he does not necessarily share.

There are next trade questions and questions of agriculture. As I already told President Nixon in the Azores, we are making mistakes: we are in a period not of overproduction, but of underproduction. The Arabs, who are not exactly a model of unity, have nonetheless been able to reach understandings on oil while we have not been able to reach agreements on wheat. We sell to the Soviet Union and to China, and also to Japan, countries which can pay high prices, and we make of them dominant forces in the

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market place because we sell to them at low prices. I think it is possible to reach an understanding among France, the United States, Canada and perhaps Argentina, to constitute a sort of OPEC to direct the market, in which there are now shortages, which will only continue to grow, largely because population is expanding rapidly and production is not keeping up with it; and also because the Communist system is not productive. Will President Nixon be disposed to talk about these issues, without radically changing policy? Does he have some ideas on these issues or some practical propositions to make?

There is also naturally the military question. Our position is that of strict United States-French bilateralism. We will not budge from this and we do not wish to include the United Kingdom in this business. Moreover, Mr. Heath knows this and he is counting on leading you in the end to giving him supplementary gifts.

There is also your project of agreement with the USSR that we saw this morning and which surprises me a little. Isn't President Nixon's policy deviating somewhat from Kissinger's policy? You have always said that there is China, the Soviet Union, the United States, Japan, and Europe, and now you give the impression that you have chosen the USSR against China in this document. Is that true? I would like to know because that would be an important choice. This is especially important since you are going to receive Brezhnev soon, a sympathetic man and bon vivant whom it is difficult to stop when he advances. He does not necessarily advance by war, although your system seems to be based on the idea of a conflict. And if there is not conflict, if a French Government, a "false" French Government, would declare: "Soviet friends come to our help against the capitalist plot which aims to overthrow democracy," what would you do? There was Czechoslovakia and there will be perhaps Yugoslavia and China after the death of Chou En-lai and of Mao. One must ask the question: is there an American tactic for stopping a camouflaged Soviet advance that is without recourse to force but comes as a "progressive tide"?

Finally, there are commercial problems. Some are secondary and will be settled. Others, more important, require a certain cooperation between France and the United States in order to resolve them. There is no reason to always discuss issues with the Soviets and never with the United States, especially since these are not equivalent actions: when we sign with the

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Soviets a piece of paper where we say, for example, that we favor a free exchange of men and ideas we know perfectly well what that means and the limits that exist. But with you, it is a matter of real agreements. If it is written that such and such will happen, it will take place.

I would like to discuss all this with President Nixon and with you. We need to clarify our positions to each other. The position of France is fiercely independent. If it were not, we would be overwhelmed by someone or other, because of our relative weakness. Nonetheless we must believe in solidarity, we know this well, and perhaps we must even more than others. We may as well say this frankly so that we don't run into contradictions at each step.

Dr. Kissinger: You will certainly be able to discuss all these questions with President Nixon. Permit me to deal first with the relations between the United States and the Soviet Union. To speak with you with complete frankness, even though our tactics may seem faulty on certain points, it is very important that you understand perfectly the objectives of our strategy. I would like you to consider my words as strictly confidential and reserved for you alone.

Have we chosen the Soviet Union over China? This is a crucial question that you have asked and my response is absolutely negative. There is no sense in choosing the strongest against the weakest. If the Soviet Union managed to render China impotent, Europe would become a Finland and the United States would be completely isolated. It is therefore consistent with our own interests not to want and to try not to permit that the Soviet Union should destroy China. In fact, it is more a question of playing China against the Soviet Union. We have never used such frankness in discussing this with another Head of State. It is extremely important that you understand our real strategy. How can one support China? Today, such an idea would not be conceivable for American opinion. We need several years to establish with China the links which make plausible the notion that an attack directed against China could be an attack on the fundamental interests of the United States. This is our deliberate policy. We have the intention to turn rapidly toward China in the space of two or three years.

It is nevertheless important that this movement not serve as a pretext for a Soviet attack against China. It is consequently necessary that our policy be such that it does not seem to be directed against the Soviet Union and that detente is carried on in parallel with the Soviet Union; that the Soviet

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Union uses its power in conditions of peace and not of tension; finally that there would be a certain juridical obligation which would be violated if the Soviet Union undertook a military attack against China. It is from this point of view that you should study our document. We have tried to create a means to put the Soviet Union in a situation where it cannot use force against anyone without violating our agreement. The Soviets envisaged a bilateral arrangement, and they proposed it as a formal obligation. They would like to establish a distinction between nuclear war and conventional war. We have obtained, after many efforts and despite violent Soviet objections, an agreement that all obligations applicable to the Soviet Union and to the United States will also be in effect with respect to third countries. We have refused to distinguish between nuclear war and conventional war, in favor of a renunciation of all uses of force against anyone whomsoever. Consequently, the use of nuclear weapons would only be justified in the case where force would be employed against another country. Our own interest, therefore, militates against the interpretation on which you questioned me. We aimed to gain time, to paralyze the Soviet Union; in the opposite case we would have the juridical possibility to act in conformity with our national interests in areas which are not covered by alliances. And this is in our interest. If one carefully considers our project and the original Soviet proposition, I think I can say that we have succeeded. I am prepared to go over our text paragraph by paragraph with M. Jobert to explain the deeper reasoning to him.

Frankly, we are very preoccupied by Soviet intentions toward China, especially since the visit that I paid to Brezhnev. I believe that it was Talleyrand who said that the art of diplomacy consists of playing the fool without being it, and it is true that I listened with interest to Brezhnev's thoughts and his threats toward China, which became increasingly clear. He doubtless would like to involve us in them. But in no circumstance and at no price will we collaborate in such an enterprise. What might succeed against China could also be used against Europe. The entire world situation would then be threatened.

The question then is to know not whether we should resist the Soviets on this, but how to do it. If, for example, China were to destroy Japan, Japan would turn towards the Soviet Union.

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It is therefore absolutely essential that you personally and President Nixon understand each other well on the fundamental objectives of our strategy. It may be complex, but it is not stupid. Our planned agreement, which I am completely prepared to discuss with you or M. Jobert is not a capitulation to the Soviet Union, but rather an attempt to enmesh them.

Concerning Europe, you asked what the attitude of the United States would be toward Communist predominance which might be gained by non-military means. I may be indiscreet but I would like to say that during my discussions with Chou En-lai last February, we were in agreement in hoping that the French elections would have the results that they happily did have. We did not know how we might be able to contribute to that result, but we were in agreement in thinking that such results were consistent with the interests both of China and of the United States. It was rather surprising to hear Chairman Mao criticize us for not having exercised sufficient influence against the French Communists. I tell you this because we believe that it would be very dangerous for Europe to allow itself psychologically to lose its capacity to have a strong and independent policy. As long as this administration remains in office, we will do the maximum to prevent such a psychological deterioration by cooperating closely with those in whom we have confidence, such as President Pompidou. It is in this context that you should study our propositions. I know that we are being accused of treating Europe as a "regional" power and of wanting to exercise against it a sort of blackmail by tying economic and trade questions with other problems. Whether Europe wants to be a global power or not depends only on Europe and not on us. We would not oppose it, and we would in fact welcome it. We have not found our involvement in Southeast Asia so attractive that we would not want to share it with others.

As for economic questions, our intention first is not to say that all problems should be dealt with by the same negotiators (there would certainly be different groups), but to make it understood that if the economic questions are not examined in a broader contest and if they are only discussed by technicians then a confrontation is inevitable. Our discussions in the Azores are a good example of this. During the preparations for this meeting all our technicians pressed for organizing Germany against France and a confrontation based on the idea of a divided Europe. I am not an expert

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in monetary matters but I recommended that we discuss these matters with you in a broader context. It seemed to me that the solution we reached in the Azores was very reasonable at that time.

A difficulty and a danger that we notice today in the West (and to which you alluded) is that in each country there is a tendency to judge that a foreign policy is successful when it deals with relations with adversaries; there is no leader and no opinion who see success in our relations with friends. We believe it is essential to create again in each country commitments among friends. It is only in this way that we can resist the Soviet strategy which hopes to weaken our will to resist. It is with this intention that we drafted our "declaration of principle" to elicit common actions among friends. Dealt with in this context I believe that economic questions, monetary questions or agricultural questions will find a sympathetic hearing by President Nixon. It would be a nightmare for us to have to deal for three more years with technical questions while the Soviet Union continues to gain in the psychological realm. When President Nixon has left and when President Pompidou will have completed his term, which is similar to that of Mr. Heath, we will find ourselves in a situation where it will be extremely difficult to organize a Western policy turned toward the future.

We do not seek to dominate Europe, on the contrary. We want a strong Europe. We have always supported the European nuclear effort. As I recently told your Ambassador, we are not pushing but we are ready to discuss with you, either directly or if you prefer through the British, what we could do to strengthen your military capacity. A strong Europe is an essential as a strong China. We have always believed that in a strong Europe, as General de Gaulle and you yourself were able to determine in your discussions with President Nixon, France would play a pivotal role. We do not believe that Germany is sufficiently strong psychologically, and we believe it is too open to Soviet pressures to be able to contribute to develop a Europe in this sense. It is therefore of great importance that you understand our real policy. Once again, we have never discussed this so openly with another leader.

President Pompidou: What you have told me is very important, of course, and I will think about it a great deal. All of this will remain among ourselves and M. Jobert. I place you in the position of Mr. Rogers in order to

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simplify life. Concerning economic and monetary matters, M. Giscard d'Estaing will naturally have a role to play. For the moment I have not told him anything. I can assure you that we are going to Iceland with the desire to achieve positive things.

Concerning your document on the relations between the United States and Europe we must have a real discussion. We must talk to one another so that Europeans will not have the impression that things are dictated by the United States. This would be the best way to bring them in; the smaller one is, the more susceptible one is.

Dr. Kissinger: We attach a very great importance to our conversations with France, Germany, the United Kingdom and to our mutual understanding. It is not a question of an "American document" that we are demanding Europe accept.

President Pompidou: Concerning other questions, I would like to tell you a word about my discussions with Hafez Ismail. He is a very discouraged man. On the one hand the Arabs have the impression that morally their position has improved in the United Nations. On the other hand, they do not want to get embroiled with the United States and at the same time they do not want the veto of the United States. Therefore, they will do the maximum that is possible in this sense without there being a veto. The representative of President Sadat realizes, however, that things in reality are not advancing. He has discarded the previously-suggested idea of an interim agreement with the partial withdrawal of Israeli troops from Sinai and the opening of the Canal. He has also abandoned the idea of a committee growing out of the Security Council which would have been a separate council. All this is negative and he has not put forward anything positive. Nonetheless, one must be attentive because of a certain despair which could lead to almost anything. I have just seen the King of Saudi Arabia; his position is that of a "moderate extremist." Verbally, he massacres "Zionists" while in practice he shows great wisdom. I am particularly afraid, however, of Libyan influence, not so much because of Libya as of Gaddafi. At a certain point, Ismail asked for a European and French initiative. I asked him what he wanted us to do. In effect, I said to him, we cannot do anything and we do not even know what you want. He responded to me that he would be seeing you. He gave me the impression of a dignified man who is a little bit lost. One must say that Israel is not doing anything to improve matters. All of this is very preoccupying.

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Another concern, perhaps less, is the end of the affair in Vietnam. One cannot make North Vietnam leave the South.

Dr. Kissinger: It is impossible.

President Pompidou: We now have two Embassies. I have refused to link them to official recognition of the PRG. Hanoi yelled, but then came to accept this. There is the problem of Cambodia: Everything there depends on China. China's choice should serve to guide us. I personally believe in Sihanouk. Our Ambassador sees him frequently and it seems that one can deal with him even though he is a bit extravagant.

The problem of the Middle East remains the most unsettling, and one sees no solution for it. Have you any ideas on this issue?

Dr. Kissinger: I have already thanked you for having let me meet Ismail in Paris. I do not expect great results from this discussion. Egypt's dilemma is that if it wishes to win a moral victory it cannot obtain anything practical; if it wishes to make practical progress it must abandon its moral attitude. It does not seem that Egypt can resolve the dilemma. The only hope to move forward would be if one could accept on both sides a formula of the type of UN Security Council Resolution 242, which could be interpreted in different ways but which could allow negotiations to begin. I will be frank with Ismail: Egypt expects us to force Israel to make the maximum amount of progress in the least amount of time. That is impossible. If you wish, I could inform you of our discussions or I could tell M. Jobert.

President Pompidou: "Insulted and injured" of Dostoievsky corresponds to the condition of Egypt. She wants more to be treated with consideration than to resolve the practical questions which inevitably come up. The Arabs feel very deeply affected; for them it is a question of honor. Nevertheless Ismail really does not know what to say.

Dr. Kissinger: This affair truly has an aspect of being a great tragedy, because all the parties involved are right and they all seem intent upon destroying themselves with what is best in them.

President Pompidou: Jarring is worth saving. He does nothing but if he disappears he will never be replaced.

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Dr. Kissinger: Concerning Vietnam when we looked forward to this present meeting we did not think that the events of April and May in the United States would be as they are. One could have picked a better moment to talk to Le Duc Tho. Nonetheless, my general philosophy is that when in doubt one must move forward. It is still too early to judge, but it is not impossible that we will achieve positive results for Vietnam and Laos. As for Cambodia, Le Duc Tho told me yesterday, and I believe that he is right, that the dilemma comes from the weakness of those whom the United States supports. We spoke in Peking about this with Chou En-lai. I don't know, however, if the Chinese have enough critical force to obtain what they want. After all, our interests are analogous: to achieve a Cambodia that is neutral and independent. I will talk about this today with Le Duc Tho, and I will keep you informed if you wish. As for the rest, I believe that we can improve the situation. One must say that the attitude of Congress does not make things easier, but Le Duc Tho has a great esteem for our capacity to be irrational.

President Pompidou: Will you take Brezhnev to the Congress?

Dr. Kissinger: I doubt it.

President Pompidou: That would have been picturesque.

Dr. Kissinger: We don't have many illusions about Brezhnev.

In any case, I believe it is very important that the results of your Summit at Reykjavik, where you will have long discussions with President Nixon, should not be presented by the European governments in such a way as to support the Soviet strategy.

President Pompidou: Of course not, and we should not give the impression either that we are settling between the two of us the future of Europe.

Dr. Kissinger: That would be inconceivable. After the war in Vietnam, we need time in the United States to give ourselves room for maneuver, and we would not want at all that our European policy become the object of the same attacks that were directed at our Vietnam policy, and on the part of the same groups. We would like to act in such a way as to increase Soviet difficulties.

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President Pompidou: I will go to China in September. In your opinion are there people behind Mao and Chou En-lai to follow the same policies?

Dr. Kissinger: I do not know. I have never seen them. In Chou En-lai you will find the best ally of NATO.

President Pompidou: But these leaders are old.

Dr. Kissinger: Unfortunately. Chou En-lai is shocked by the moral weakness of the Europeans. Your visit will be very important in this sense. We are ready, for our part, to establish close political consultations among ourselves, France and China, and each one with respect to the other.

President Pompidou: It is a mysterious country.

Dr. Kissinger: I had prepared a statement before going there on my first secret visit. There was in the last part the phrase "Here I am in this very mysterious country." Chou En-lai interrupted me as I was reading it: "Where is the mystery?" And as I was a bit taken aback, he said to me "We will speak of the nature of this mystery." And we spoke about this before discussing the question of Formosa.

You will find that the mentality of the Chinese is quite close to that of the French: They are skeptical, precise, analytical and without sentimentality. You will note also in this group of old men a real knowledge of the Western situation. I have been rather surprised that their analysis of Europe is more intelligent than that of Bonn.

President Pompidou: Can you tell me a country whose policy is sentimental?

Dr. Kissinger: Germany.

President Pompidou: It is dominated by sentiment. That is not the same thing.

Dr. Kissinger: All countries tend to act in conformity to their national interest. In this sense the United States is particularly sentimental. Nonetheless not every country is capable of analyzing its own interests coldly. I think that the European left in general is not even able to analyze its national interests, with a few exceptions.

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President Pompidou: In any case the text in which President Nixon asked Congress for economic powers was not at all sentimental.

Dr. Kissinger: Not at all. But it is very important that we make understood in this commercial area that one cannot only strive for unilateral advantages. We must address ourselves to Congress on this because of public opinion. It is difficult however not to strive for unilateral advantage unless we can place ourselves in a broader context and a more important context. For example, our economists examined the question of reverse preferences and of compensation from associates of the Common Market such as Spain and Israel. I opposed this for six months, but it is difficult to find a political justification at present that one could oppose to Chinese exports towards the United States: in the case of delivery of \$10 million worth of cotton, I had to refuse authorization. I am sure that if you and President Nixon managed to reach an understanding on general relationships, we could deal with commercial relations in a manner that will allow both sides to draw benefits. This in any case would be our attitude. If we sought to extract unilateral advantages from Europe, this would turn against us later on. From all evidence it will be easier to talk of these questions in a broader political context.

President Pompidou: If you would drop the term "reciprocity" somewhere, this would help a great deal. For our part we have strong ties with certain African countries, but I am not in favor of extending association everywhere. If we give it to everyone one ends up by not giving anything to anyone and by weakening the others. In fact I am not very far from your position even with respect to Japan. The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Ohira, said to me "Let us become allies against the United States." I refused and I said that the United States wants Europe to proceed to make purchases in place of the Japanese; it is up to you to produce less or to buy more. I think that he understood.

Dr. Kissinger: In the long term Japan could present formidable problems for everyone, because it has no concept of global interests. It pursues its own interests so narrowly that this could be dangerous for all countries. It is impossible to have only trade surpluses toward everyone.

[The meeting then ended.]

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