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1973/05/22

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

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MEMORANDUM FOR CONVERSATION

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

DATE AND TIME: Tuesday, May 22, 1973
6:05 - 7:45 p.m.

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

Jobert: Are you reaching the end?

Kissinger: Yes, we finish tomorrow. We are sending Sullivan to Saigon. And we plan to come back the 5th of June, and in another day or two we come to an agreement. But we have a substantial agreement now. This is just between you and me. On most things we can get a modus vivendi, except Cambodia.

Jobert: The other day we talked about Cambodia. Your friend Chou had two things -- I forgot to tell you. It was Chou who wanted you to know.

Kissinger: When I saw Chou, I frankly had the impression he was distancing himself from Sihanouk. But since then he has gone back -- partly because of the weakness of the Phnom Penh side and because he has no other card.

Jobert: He told me to tell the United States that Sihanouk was an interesting personality. He insisted on this to our Ambassador.

Kissinger: He spoke to the head of our Liaison Office in a similar sense. The dilemma is what I told you the other day. Will the return of Sihanouk make a Communist victory more rather than less likely?

TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE
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Jobert: I think your analysis of the other day was good.

Kissinger: If the Chinese take Sihanouk and if Sihanouk can control the Hanoi forces, and if Sihanouk is not simply used as a means for the non-Communists to be destroyed, that is a circumstance in which he might be useful. But if he is used to destroy the non-Communists, then Sihanouk has no interest for us.

Jobert: Even if Sihanouk returns with good will, it could end up with the solution you described.

Kissinger: That is right. That is a distinct possibility.

So I very frankly... There is no objective reason to have a two-week delay, but I want to see if in talking to the Soviet Union and the Chinese we can bring about a better modus vivendi, before we sign the memorandum of understanding.

All the other issues are substantially settled. That doesn't mean they will be observed. But we have gone through the Agreement.

Jobert: You expect to finish the work on June 5?

Kissinger: Yes, in three days. I would appreciate it if this information was kept very confidential. Because we don't want the North Vietnamese to put out a version; then Saigon will put out a version. The Presidents will talk about this when they meet.

I thought we might perhaps briefly review the meeting in Reykjavik. Also about my discussion with Ismail -- which I can do very quickly -- and any other matters you think we should discuss.

In my conversations with the Egyptians I told them to give your Ambassador a brief report.

Jobert: He asked me for a meeting.

Kissinger: It will be for other things, but at the end of it he will ask for a meeting alone.

There is really very little to tell you. He substantially covered what you already told me -- the substantive possibilities. Either they can aim for

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P1

TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE
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-3-

a moral victory or they can try for concrete progress, but not both. Even moral victories will not be possible, in terms of resolutions we can abstain on. Concrete progress would have to be in terms of a Suez Canal agreement.

Precision of thought is not his outstanding attribute. There was an extremely lengthy conversation but no concrete results. He said he had to talk to his President. We discussed a formula for linking the interim with the overall settlement, He said he would not push it in the Security Council before our Summit. He said they would be prepared, after they made some of their speeches, to go along if someone moved for an adjournment of the Security Council. What exactly they want from the Security Council isn't clear to me. Is it clear to you?

Jobert: No.

Kissinger: I don't think it is clear to them. My impression is that they want to have a debate, then use the Presidential-Brezhnev visit as an excuse for delay. Then the Security Council reassembles in July and August.

Jobert: He said to me June or later.

Kissinger: He said very clearly to me that if after a week or so some nation proposes an adjournment, they would accept.

So much for the Middle East. We discussed in a general way whether there was a possibility to think of resolutions or a set of principles sufficiently vague so both sides could interpret them their own way and get the talks started.

He asked intelligent questions, but nothing happened.

Jobert: He talked about the union between Libya and Egypt?

Kissinger: No, just Arab-Israeli problems. He wondered how we would work with the Israelis on oil policy against Egypt. It was a meaningless exchange. How could we work with the Israelis on this? And Egypt is not an important oil producer.

Jobert: You are accustomed to meaningless exchanges.

Kissinger: Fruitless exchanges, not meaningless ones. With the North Vietnamese I have the feeling always that they know what they want.

TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE
EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY

TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE
EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY

-4-

I asked Ismail what they would like us to do. He said, break the neck of the Israelis. That is a very ambitious request.

If we get some positive answers to the questions, maybe there will be some progress in July.

He is a very nice man, as you know.

Jobert: Yes.

Kissinger: If you tell your Ambassador not to discuss with Ismail what went on....

Jobert: I will talk only to the President of the Republic.

Kissinger: As to Reykjavik. Your President mentioned many topics that he would like to discuss. Our President would be willing to discuss many of them. The question is, in what order, and to what end. I know your President wants to discuss the monetary system, some agricultural problems, OPEC, and some commercial matters. My advice is not to begin with these economic topics.

Jobert: That is my advice to.

Kissinger: Our President, in all honesty, is not an economist. If he knows what framework he is operating in, it will be more fruitful if we first discuss various aspects of the Atlantic relationship.

We don't insist, but that is my strong recommendation.

The way we should handle this is to have the two Finance Ministers work out the agreements and disagreements, then take these to the Presidents on the second day.

Jobert: It would be better to do it the first day, in the afternoon.

Kissinger: All right, in the afternoon. As in the Azores, they had a good political discussion in the morning. If you agree.

Jobert: Yes, I agree it is a good idea.

TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE
EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY

TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE
EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY

-5-

Kissinger: Give me some word ahead of time.

Jobert: It is wise if we don't speak too late of monetary and economic issues. It should begin the second part of the afternoon.

Kissinger: It would help me if you could let me know what you hope to get out of the monetary and commercial talks. What you would consider a success. That does not mean we will agree with it; but we can shape the discussion.

Jobert: The second day is a half day.

Kissinger: Should they discuss military problems the first day? Or not at all? We have no urgency about it.

Jobert: It is better if they first discuss about Europe and Atlantic policy. They could speak about military problems if they want. The first morning is the best time to do it.

Kissinger: That would be the normal place to do it.

Jobert: That is logical.

Kissinger: Yes.

Jobert: I am not sure logic is always the best thing.

Kissinger: No, that is the best. What is your view of what they will discuss about Europe?

Jobert: About your views. I think if you have an idea of putting in train a number of countries this summer, he must speak of this. I must advise Mr. Pompidou you will raise these subjects and in this way. President Nixon will have to outline the concrete lines, the framework, of his conception. I don't think Mr. Pompidou will be opposed to the idea.

Kissinger: I spoke to him at some length. I had the impression that he is not opposed to the idea. But we didn't discuss concrete detail.

Jobert: Yes. We are not "demandeur."

Kissinger: There are two aspects: how we proceed, and to what extent France will in fact cooperate with us. You can take a relatively aloof position; that has certain consequences. Or you can take a relatively cooperative position without being "demandeur". That too would have certain consequences.

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TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE
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-6-

We are really doing this in the common interest. As I told you, the danger is that if the present trend continues, the dangers of condominium you fear will be accelerated, because every country will be driven to go to its adversaries for foreign policy successes.

Jobert: What I meant by "demandeur" is that it is you who put forward these ideas, and who should explain.

Kissinger: But it is not impossible to give an answer and give some concrete suggestions even if we put forward the idea.

There are two possible ways, or a combination, in order to proceed: (1) The United States, Britain, France, and Germany can have a preliminary understanding, to drive the larger forum; (2) We can immediately create a larger forum. That would be enormously time-consuming. Our instinct is to have a smaller circle, even if it is side by side with the other. If we don't make the preliminary discussions early in June, we will lose most of the summer.

Jobert: I think the Presidents must speak of this. They have to. If it goes, I think it is the first formula that is good.

Kissinger: A smaller group.

Jobert: Yes.

[At this point Dr. Kissinger was called out for a phone call.]

Kissinger: What we should do is perhaps have some preliminary ideas of what could usefully come out. If you agree that a smaller group is better, our President will propose it. And the level we think -- if you were in your old position, I would say at the Presidential Advisor's level -- and we would create some bureaucratic instruments. We will certainly approach this with the attitude of coming up with a constructive solution to the problems your President raised -- certainly not in the attitude of a confrontation with Europe, much less with France. And we will get control of the economic agencies.

Jobert: So they will begin with grand perspectives, and the military questions if they want. And then the monetary questions. We should exchange papers first.

TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE
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Kissinger: Yes, and with a possible outcome. I will send it to you by Monday morning. Our Ambassador has means of getting to the White House by special means.

Jobert: And we also have Green Phone in the Elysée.

Any other problems?

Kissinger: We have this issue of computers, on which we don't have a formal request from you. We will have opposition from the bureaucracy, but our attitude is to be helpful. I can not guarantee approval, but our attitude is to be helpful.

On the nuclear program, our attitude is sympathetic.

On the engines, GE/SNECMA, a new agreement has been worked out.

On this FRELOC program...

Irwin: That is the compensation for moving NATO logistics. It would help with Congress.

Kissinger: It would be helpful if we could get a mutually acceptable solution. I am sure our President will not raise it. It is not an ultimate matter, but it would help the climate.

Irwin: Everything is agreed except the figure.

Kissinger: [laughs] What else is there?

Irwin: It used to be an issue of principle.

Kissinger: I once read an analysis of French negotiation tactics. Until the line shifts, they stick absolutely to the old position; then all shifts occur at once. Did you read that?

Jobert: No.

Kissinger: I must have read it in a British newspaper.

Are there any other subjects?

TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE
EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY

TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE
EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY

-8-

Jobert: We spoke about the Concorde.

Kissinger: We did what we could do.

Jobert: We already spoke about that. Another general matter is the role of Europe in advanced technology. Where are the frontiers of economic warfare?

Kissinger: That is an important problem. It is the same question we put in the diplomatic field -- where are the frontiers of autonomous action?

But again, I know this sounds wrong -- but it will be easier to solve once we have the political framework. If one knows in the name of what one is doing it, it is easier to solve. It got into this on the problem of space launchers. On the merits, it is not easy to deal with, because the economic agencies are right. But we would be prepared to discuss it.

Jobert: Another bilateral matter is aerospace efforts. Either France or Europe.

Kissinger: I don't know how we are doing. We're having trouble putting our [Skylab] men up.

Sonnenfeldt: And energy.

Kissinger: Yes. We are not yet in a position to put concrete proposals.

Jobert: Yes. Only two sentences are spoken, about a union of consuming nations. As to Europe, if there is an accord among the Europeans, there might be an allocation of the European market among companies. What will your President say?

Kissinger: I think the most useful thing that could come out in that subject is a general discussion of your intention and views. I don't think we have a fixed view on that subject.

Jobert: I don't think there will be a shortage of fuel.

Kissinger: We have economists who share this view.

Sonnenfeldt: It is more a question of price.

Kissinger: There are two problems -- should the consumers organize themselves in some way to deal with it? We have not made up our minds. It is

TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE
EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY

TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE
EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY

-9-

not sensible if we replace you in Algeria and you replace us in Iraq -- and if Japan is there to inherit us all. On Algeria, we held up on El Paso for a couple of months -- but had no clear idea.

We would be glad to discuss it with you.

Jobert: You think it is useful to talk about it?

Kissinger: Yes, it would be useful if only to indicate the general directions in which we are going, and to stay in contact.

Jobert: There is a new arrangement: the Iranian organization may build refineries in New York.

Kissinger: Really? Why?

Jobert: To be closer to the market.

Kissinger: It is an interesting idea. It gives the client a hold over the producer.

Sonnenfeldt: It gives us something to nationalize!

Jobert: I think they will do it for one refinery.

Kissinger: One thing we have been doing is: we will undoubtedly in the next six months considerably increase our research in alternative sources.

Jobert: It is a question of price. If price rises, research will increase.

Kissinger: Also, a country that can put men on the moon should be able to do the research and bring the price down.

It could be argued that the Arabs' best incentive is to leave oil in the ground.

Jobert: That is one reason for research.

Kissinger: Frankly, that is one reason for the research -- to put pressure on the producers -- even if the research doesn't produce anything in ten years. That is to the benefit of everyone.

TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE
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TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE
EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY

-10-

Jobert: Yes. Is Alaskan oil competitive?

Kissinger: I think so. Shale, no.

Jobert: Why did the State Department do a report on energy?

Irwin: Some of our people did it, and took it to OECD.

Kissinger: We had a committee on energy, with Ehrlichman, Shultz and myself. Now it has lost one of its members, so we have to reconstitute it. It has an office in the White House. The President published a message in early April, but we separated out the domestic from the foreign aspects: The latter will be in a separate study, which will be completed in early July.

I had the intention before your election and your promotion -- you wanted to set up some exchanges between the Elysée and the White House when our policies are in the formative stage. For example, to send some people over without publicity when our energy policy is still in the internal stages. And on force reductions.

Jobert: Yes, gladly. One can do it.

Kissinger: It would not commit you to anything. Get in touch with me.

Another thing our two Presidents should discuss is the project I mentioned to you.

Jobert: On what?

Kissinger: The project between the United States and the Soviet Union. If you want to discuss it.

Jobert: Yes, I think it is a good thing, if you want.

That easily makes one and one -half days.

Kissinger: When I was talking to your President after meeting the Vietnamese in December, and I was desperate, your President said, "Don't worry, you are doomed to succeed." He was right.

Jobert: Remember the ideas of Giscard on monetary matters are not the same as those of President Pompidou.

TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE
EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY

TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE
EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY

-11-

Kissinger: How do we handle that?

Jobert: Who will come from your side?

Kissinger: If Giscard comes, it will be Shultz. If you want. I had the impression your President wanted Giscard.

Jobert: Yes, he does.

Kissinger: Then we will bring Shultz.

Jobert: Shultz and Giscard can discuss their ideas.

Kissinger: Do we have your President's ideas? It would be helpful if we could have a summary of your President's views, particularly where they differ from Giscard. This would help us enormously in preparing our President.

Jobert: It is not a bad idea to have a discussion between the two Ministers of Finance.

Kissinger: No, they should meet anyway. But we need to prepare the President for what he will confront. Otherwise Shultz will prepare the President on the basis of what Giscard told him.

Jobert: I will try to do it. Before Monday.

Kissinger: That will be helpful. We can talk when I am back here with the Vietnamese.

Jobert: You have not much rest.

Kissinger: We are running out of islands.

Jobert: That is a problem for the next meeting!

Kissinger: We will make an official visit so you will make a return visit.

Jobert: Yes. There is always French Guiana.

Kissinger: Devil's Island.

Jobert: The islands in the Pacific we don't propose, for your benefit.

TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE
EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY

TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE
EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY

-12-

Kissinger: Because of the nuclear testing. We won't announce your tests.

Jobert: Keep it like that.

Kissinger: Oh yes.

Jobert: I had a story from Mr. Murphy of Australia.

Kissinger: There are standard reactions from our critics. When we bombed, they criticize us. Then we proposed aid for North Vietnam, and they wouldn't support us. Testing is another issue. I am told there is more radioactivity going to the Alps from Paris than from testing.

Jobert: And there is also Australia's desire to play leader in the South Pacific.

Kissinger: Without a military effort. Who will they lead? Not Indonesia or Singapore.

Jobert: The Fijis. I told Murphy not to claim the whole Pacific.

Kissinger: I told Wilenski, if I knew historical evolution, by the end of the century Australia will be on her knees asking us for help against the South Pacific. They have no one to lead. No Asians will follow them.

Jobert: Yes, but they caress the idea.

Kissinger: Yes, they can strike great poses.

Jobert: I saw Whitlam when he was in opposition. He told me about his friends the Chinese and North Vietnamese.

Kissinger: What can Australia offer the North Vietnamese? They are very cold blooded. The Chinese are very realistic -- they don't want friendship; they want support. Europe has something to offer them; the United States does too.

Jobert: You know the Chinese Foreign Minister, Chi Peng-fei.

Kissinger: Yes.

Jobert: What sort of man is he?

TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE
EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY

TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE
EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY

-13-

Kissinger: Boring. One of the few boring Chinese.

Jobert: He is coming here in June.

Kissinger: He is a nice man. His Vice-Minister Ch'iao is closer to Chou. The Foreign Minister knows his subjects, but I think he is used for representation. When Chou doesn't negotiate, Ch'iao does. I never negotiate with him.

I think he is going to San Marino. It is a strange relationship, they had a big reception in Peking for the Prime Minister of San Marino! If he had come to Europe in February he would have gone there. It was on his schedule.

Jobert: A policy of power!

Kissinger: I don't see why it would annoy the Russians. He was planning to go to Albania, Romania, Yugoslavia -- and San Marino.

Have you dealt with the Chinese before?

Jobert: No. I went to one reception at their Embassy. No one spoke French!

Kissinger: Their Ambassador in Paris I would see often during the negotiations. I would say, "If your allies don't negotiate, we will do something violent." He would put more liquor in my glass and say "bottoms up!"

But they are very restricted in their authority, their Ambassadors.

Jobert: Are you happy with the Brezhnev visit in Bonn?

Kissinger: We have to separate the immediate from the long-term problem. I think the point will be reached where no German Chancellor can afford the hostility of the Soviet Union. When that happens it will be a very dangerous situation.

Jobert: At what distance do you foresee this?

Kissinger: I think five years.

TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE
EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY

TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE
EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY

-14-

Jobert: Five years.

Kissinger: If something else does not happen. That is another reason one really has to provide an emotional alternative. Your President asked me what countries practiced sentimental foreign policies. I said two, Germany and the United States.

Jobert: Yes.

Kissinger: In Germany, the CDU which was opposed to it, could do what it did in 1959 and adopt it as the national policy. On nationalist grounds there is no reason not to do it.

Jobert: Do you think they will sign a declaration of principles?

Sonnenfeldt: They have announced an agreement.

Jobert: They tell us everything.

Kissinger: Afterward. I have the impression they will sign a statement of principles. They haven't told us. Yet they will complain if we do it without consulting them.

Jobert: Brezhnev now comes to the States on the 18th?

Kissinger: The talks begin on the 18th. Either the 16th or 17th he will arrive. There is a big discussion on whether they will have one day or two days in Camp David.

You know what will emerge. Plus bilateral agreements. Plus a statement of principles on SALT. There will be no agreement in substance on SALT. As soon as we have a draft, we will send it to you for your comments.

Jobert: He said something about stopping in Paris on the way back from the States. I am not sure. Anyway it is too much trouble.

Kissinger: For whom?

Jobert: For everybody. In Germany it was Gromyko who played the major part in the talks. Brezhnev was the charm.

TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE

TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE
EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY

-15-

Kissinger: Brezhnev's detailed knowledge of the subject matter is not overwhelming. Gromyko is very precise. Has Brezhnev left?

Sonnenfeldt: Yes.

Kissinger: So there may not be a statement of principles.

Sonnenfeldt: The big issue was Berlin, and they issued a document.

Kissinger: I really don't understand the Vietnamese. I would sometimes tell Saigon what I thought was an outrageous North Vietnamese proposal and Saigon accepted it. Sometimes I would tell Saigon what I think is a great accomplishment, and they reject it.

Jobert: You have long silences in your negotiations with the Vietnamese?

Kissinger: When we reach a deadlock, sometimes there are long silences. Normally he speaks. Le Duc Tho is intelligence, disciplined. He always knew what he wanted and never got rattled.

Ismail has no idea what he wants; he wants a solution by a miracle. Le Duc Tho didn't get all he wanted, but he had a plan. He obviously knew in July he wanted a settlement in October, and he waited until the last minute. He made a lot of tantalizing proposals. If we had handled it normally bureaucratically they would have had us. In fact, we were tempted. He made all his concessions at once. It took enormous strength, inward strength.

Jobert: You too, to wait until the last minute.

Kissinger: But I had made a judgment that if McGovern was more than ten points behind by September 15, they would settle.

Jobert: What happened to McGovern?

Kissinger: Nothing. He would have disappeared. Watergate gives him or the radicals a new lease on life.

Jobert: Shriver sent me a letter in French a few days ago.

Kissinger: We will meet then in Reykjavik.

TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE
EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY

TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE
EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY

-16-

Jobert: In this nice northern resort. Where are you staying there?

Sonnenfeldt: In the Ambassador's residence.

Jobert: And we in the house of the footballer, a man who was once famous in France. It was bought by the Marseilles club. Well-known by readers of L'Equipe.

Kissinger: Where do we meet?

Jobert: In a museum.

Sonnenfeldt: In a park.

Kissinger: Do you have the institution of advance men?

Jobert: We have a small group.

Kissinger: When we came to Orly for DeGaulle's funeral, Podgorny's plane was coming first. Our advance men decided that we had to be first, so he practically seized control of the control tower to hold all the air traffic up. But you recovered your sovereignty.

Jobert: We did well with that.

Kissinger: It was really quite moving. The Mass, the Marseillaise in Notre Dame. And to go through the streets of Paris with tens of thousands of people just standing there.

Jobert: Yes.

Kissinger: It was quite moving. He was a great man. He was disconcerting, but he was usually right.

Jobert: Disconcerting for himself, too. Very quick to change.

Kissinger: On tactics. Because he had very clear goals.

Jobert: He was an immobile man. He did not lead things; sometimes he just took an attitude. He didn't govern. My impression is that. But from time to time he would strike an attitude.

TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE

TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE
EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY

-17-

Kissinger: But he had goals.

Jobert: He was more a contemplative man than a man of action.

Kissinger: I understand. Were you with him in the Elysée?

Jobert: No, I was in the Matignon with Pompidou.

Kissinger: DeGaulle made a long presentation to our President on Europe. President Nixon asked me my impression -- which did not go over too well. I said "how will you insure that this Europe will not be dominated by the Germans?" He said, "Par la guerre." A very disconcerting reply!

Jobert: DeGaulle was once talking to Guy Mollet and said to him, "All difficult decisions have to be made alone. You were clearly alone when you made the decision about the Suez invasion." [laughter]

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