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**1973/05/31**

THE WHITE HOUSE

MEMO FOR THE PRESIDENT'S FILE

Meeting with President Pompidou  
Thursday, May 31, 1973  
10:15 am

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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

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MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

PARTICIPANTS:           President Pompidou  
                               Mr. Andronikoff (Notetaker)

                              President Nixon  
                               Dr. Henry A. Kissinger, Assistant to the  
                                   President for National Security Affairs  
                               Mr. Alec Toumayan (Notetaker)

DATE AND TIME:           Thursday, May 31, 1973  
                               10:15 a.m. - 12:45 p.m.

PLACE:                    Kjarvalsstadir  
                               Reykjavik, Iceland

SUBJECT:                  The Year of Europe

President Pompidou: I am always pleased to see you personally. I wish to congratulate you again on your overwhelming election and I am at your disposal to conduct this meeting in any way you wish.

President Nixon: I wish to congratulate you myself on your election, which you have won, even though your system is different. I am glad, for it shows what an effective campaign you conducted. We sit here at an important time in our history and -- without wanting to be melodramatic -- in the world. You and I, in the areas where we agree, can make a historic contribution to the world which is overcoming such changes. But we can make this contribution only if we are completely frank with one another. I tell my friends that when I and the President meet, he always goes straight to the point, and we get by the pleasantries very fast.

First, concerning the economic issue, Dr. Kissinger and Minister Jobert have worked out an agenda with your approval and we will take up economic and monetary matters this afternoon. In that area I urge you to take the lead. We just had a long meeting with Secretary Shultz and Mr. Volcker;

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Dr. Kissinger was there also. We believe it is important that the differences between the U. S. and France be reconciled. The trouble with economists is that they are doctrinaire. You and I, Mr. President, can work out a practical solution as policy.

Let me begin by being quite blunt about what I read in the French press. This is not a complaint -- you have no more control over your press than I do over mine. But there has been a difference of interpretation vis-a-vis Europe. I wish to set to rest these misconceptions and speak directly to you about our purposes.

First of all, the timing of our initiative for Europe has nothing to do with the Russian summit or with U. S. political institutions. If we proclaim this year of 1973 the Year of Europe, it is because I feel that during this year of so-called detente with Russia, in this year when Europe is flexing its muscles, we would face a very great danger if Europe were to begin to disintegrate politically. It is wrong to go on saying the U. S. can just sit down with the Russians and Chinese because this downgrades the importance and concern we have for our real friends. When I meet with the Russians I have no more illusions than you do about what they want. But I do not complain.

What I see if we do not seize this moment is a race to Moscow -- each country in the West and in Europe going to Moscow to negotiate and make deals. Of course there must be individual meetings, but there must be some underlying philosophy that animates all of us. Otherwise, those shrewd and determined men in the Kremlin will eat us one by one. They cannot digest us all together but they can pick at us one by one. That is why it is so important that we maintain the Atlantic Community -- I think at the highest level, first of all, the Big Four, Heath, Brandt, Pompidou and the U. S., for some very frank talks about where we are going from here.

I read in the French press that the purpose in the initiative, and we think of it as an initiative of all of us, is to relegate Europe to a secondary position. The U. S. takes the lead, submits the plan, and all meekly follow as in the days of the Marshall Plan. There is also the insinuation that the U. S. wants to change France's role, force France back into NATO and other institutions which France feels it is not in their interest to return to on the old basis.

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Let me go straight to the point and say that my talks with DeGaulle in 1967 and 1969 have made of me and our leaders Gaullists. We represent a minority view in the U. S. Government.

President Pompidou: You probably know that according to the French press I have betrayed Gaullism.

President Nixon: I don't believe it. When I speak of Gaullism I speak in broad terms, meaning that France and the other nations must play a role to the extent that they are capable of. You, Mr. President, have not exhibited some of the extreme views of DeGaulle -- but which were not so extreme when we knew him. Let me say, at the outset, of the Nixon Doctrine, that the Doctrine is certainly not based on the idea that the U. S. will play a maternalistic or dominating role in Europe, Asia, or South America. The Nixon Doctrine is based on the principle that each country seeks its own interest and develops its own defense. This precept applies to the French and to the world.

Let us now come to the critical period in the relationship between the West and the Soviet Union. At the present time I see a grave danger in the development in the U. S. -- and my European friends tell me this is the case in Europe too -- of a neo-isolationism in the political field. There is talk, which is healthy, in the economic and monetary areas, but isolationism in the political field. For example, I just had a meeting with Congressmen from both parties. They tell me that after the Russian initiative, after the Vietnam initiative, isn't it time to cut our defense budget by 10 billion and bring back half of our troops from Europe? These are not peaceniks. These are pragmatic politicians.

Concerning the Russians: Their tactics may have changed but their goals remain the same. Their goal is to seize Europe country by country. They would like to see the U. S. decrease its defense in Europe and see a condominium between the Russians and the U. S. They want this not so much vis-a-vis Europe but vis-a-vis China also. Also remember, they seek their own interest just as we seek ours. It is not in our interest to withdraw our troops from Europe or a condominium with Russia.

We must try to find a new life for the Atlantic Community of which we are both a part. First of all, the world has changed since NATO was founded 20 years ago. The needs of Europe have changed. For instance, when I first went to Europe in 1947 the U. S. was economically and militarily a giant.

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Europe was economically and militarily a pigmy. Fortunately, this has changed and all for the better. I believe in a strong and independent European Community which is not in confrontation with the U.S. on economic matters. Our security interests are such that we must have a more outward approach. To speak quite candidly, when I met with DeGaulle in 1967 and 1969 . . . . The trouble is that the U.S. and European statesmen continue to talk and babble as if the world was the same as it was 20 years ago. But the world is different.

I do not have a blueprint for the future; the future must come from all of us. In spite of what I read in the French press, I am very far from wanting to force France back into NATO or other institutions which France does not consider in its interest to return to. But to be quite frank, there is more U.S. opinion -- because of our success in foreign policy in China, Russia, the end of the war in Vietnam -- a trend such that a rapid disengagement of the U.S. from its commitments would be overwhelmingly approved by Congress. They mistake progress with peace, with the securing of peace itself, and tell us that we must abandon the game plan based on the strength of a good offensive and defense.

For the balance of my term I will fight this, regardless of the consequences. I will fight against the idea of a Soviet-U.S. condominium. To be safe, the world requires the five fingers on the hand, which are a strong Europe, a strong U.S., Russia, China, and for the future, Japan. The rest does not matter. Africa may matter in 200 years. But since our terms of office are more or less the same, we must see what we do during the forthcoming periods. Russia wants the U.S. to withdraw from Europe because it would release them from the two-front situation which they see emerging. Also, they can then infiltrate Europe, not necessarily with communism, but with a new neutralism which for them would be just as good. And, it would then be a U.S. -Soviet condominium at the expense of Europe and also of China.

So the question is, what to we do in the light of these new factors? And this is where the concept of the Year of Europe came in. We at the highest level must talk to see if first the four and then all Europe can work together on security and then economic matters without reference to the old organizations. I must convince our Congress and then public opinion that our interests are served by a strong Europe, both economically and militarily. Failing this, isolationism in the U.S. will force the U.S. to withdraw from Europe, playing into the hands of the Russians and leaving Europe naked.

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I will give you an example. In my conversations, first the Russians wanted to have a bilateral treaty with us. I told Brezhnev that we would not have it. This is not in the interest of our European allies or of our new friends -- and how long will they remain our friends -- in China. Dr. Kissinger and I have worked long and hard on the wording, which is now changed so that now it imposes a restraint on the Russians to start war against an ally or any third country as well as against us. And thanks to Dr. Kissinger's genius, there is enough escape clauses that the U. S. deterrent will remain real.

So we can try to patch up the old alliance; the U. S. can pull out of Europe which will lead to a Soviet-U. S. condominium and play into Russian hands. Or we can seek to define a new purpose on the basis of the new situation for all of Europe and the U. S.

In sum, I do not present a plan for the U. S. and its European allies. I have no such plan. I do not suggest that the U. S. should pull out of Europe in terms of its commitment. I will fight Congress on this and fight against the Russian condominium concept. I do not suggest that France should return to NATO or revise its position. I say that we should take a cold look at NATO, at its purposes and the interest of each country. I am here to suggest to you that if each man plays his role as a parochial politician without regard to the world as a whole, the European Community will disintegrate, to be picked up one by one. And the reality of a U. S. -Soviet condominium will become much clearer. Finally, I am not suggesting that economic matters are not as overwhelming as they are. On the other hand, if public opinion sees economic matters as constituting an end in themselves without considering defense matters, we will have a hard time getting Congress to realize. We want a new cooperation between France and the U. S., between the other major allies among themselves and vis-a-vis the U. S., and in the same context, a new sense of talks in the economic relations.

I welcome your views. I have talked to Brandt and Heath but France is the key. What happens between Europe and the U. S. in the critical period of the next two or three years is of considerable importance.

President Pompidou: I will speak very frankly, and besides, you know that France and frank have the same root. I don't believe that 1973 will be marked by the advent of Europe. It is true that what is called Europe has

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become a major commercial power and can pose a number of economic problems for a number of significant political problems. What strikes me is that the U. S. has accepted political parity, meaning military parity, with the Soviet Union. How could you do otherwise unless you spent fabulous sums? The second event, and we discussed it with Dr. Kissinger, is your relations with China. It is being understood that events support that such relations be maintained, though they may hit a snag should Mao and Chou, who are both old men, vanish within a short time. We all think in terms of detente, Brezhnev certainly does, but the Russians push their pawns wherever they can. And we are worried about the weaker links in the plan, such as Yugoslavia, because Marshal Tito is an old man. In that context the U. S. has chosen to freeze by use of text, agreements, treaties, for example, SALT, MBFR, the situation that existed. Not to tie up the Russians completely, but to block them.

The second event is the probable advent of Japan as the primary economic power, with a difficult strategic position caught between Russia, the Chinese and the U. S., and which has temporarily said it will be tied to the U. S., a development with which we are highly gratified.

President Nixon: As do the Chinese.

Dr. Kissinger: When I was in China Mao criticized me for spending only one day in Japan and four in China. He thought it would have been a good idea to spend more time in Japan.

President Pompidou: Europe, in looking for an identity, is having a hard time because many countries feel they must do their best, not so much to repel an aggression but to play a role in the defense area and exist militarily and politically. Others say it is no use: "Let us not spend any money on it; let us leave it to the allies," meaning the U. S. Still others choose a half-way of using their American friends to develop a force helping them retain independence and remain independent and play a role in a general conflict. I am not speaking of the FRG, which long made a major political and conventional military effort and is now beginning to talk of its two options and proclaims its attachment to the West as it is being pulled into the specific German problem which turns it to the East.

If I were the U. S. President, I would be exasperated by Europe. But Europe is what it is; there is nothing we can do about it and the problem is to know if Europe really interests the U. S., not as a member of a community or a

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military or economic union which will create problems. Can the U. S. accept that sooner or later Western Europe will fall under the sway of Russia leaving the U. S. to become a regional power? We take a high overview, and there is no question of settling anything between the two of us.

I do not think the U. S. can afford to leave Europe. You can pull out 10,000 or 20,000 GIs; this will not matter. It will be a token. It will impress some and worry some. Either the Soviet Union pushes its pawns and it can do so militarily or half militarily, half politically. Will the U. S. accept this or seek a loophole or consider that its interests are at stake? If the U. S. chooses a loophole, the figures are there to show that Europe cannot defend itself. If the U. S. decides that it is vital to ask, then it will not shirk its responsibility regardless of their weight. In 1940, a French politician wrote that the French didn't want to die for Danzig. No doubt many Americans are ready to say now that Americans must not die for either Paris or London. The result of not wanting to die for Danzig is that we died together at the time.

Dr. Kissinger: This attitude provoked the death of many countries even though it is illogical. The President has said he does not want to withdraw more than 10,000 to 20,000, but unless we make an enormous effort, Congress will want to legislate the withdrawal of 75,000 to 100,000 men by September or October. This may be illogical but it is a fact. That is why the President seeks a political basis on which he can stand against what would not be in our interests.

President Pompidou: First of all, there is what we have to call the Directorate of Four, for which I do not criticize you. It was DeGaulle's idea. He wrote to Eisenhower about it. It was a Directorate of three at the time, without Germany. We can, we do talk about it. You have talked to Brandt and Heath. I am here, I saw Heath. I am seeing you. I will see Brandt.

President Nixon: On the Directorate of Four, I refer to a very high-level working group to report back to the four, not to make a decision now concerning the future. The idea is not to go to a summit unless we know what would come of it. I also focus the attention on the political direction as differentiated from the economic. DeGaulle was a pragmatist, as you are. He knew the three were all that mattered for security at the time.

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President Pompidou: But this led to a distrust with the Italians and the Benelux, not to mention Denmark. The smaller European nations felt towards France, the UK, and the FRG the same susceptibility that we may feel towards the Soviet Union and the U.S. We already see this, and it spreads. The Italians are nervous. Jobert saw Medici and found him worried, ready to give you all facilities but not to submit to prior agreements between others and the U.S. Even in Holland which perhaps matters more, because where will Medici be in eight or 15 days?

In the second place, you speak of some declaration. Dr. Kissinger said very aptly that when you make progress with an enemy all applaud but between friends it is felt that there is no need to display friendship. When we have a Franco-Soviet declaration, for what it is worth . . . . it is Franco-Soviet or Franco-Polish! If you have a U.S. -Soviet or U.S. -Chinese declaration. But here we are talking of something very vague. Who says what? If the Alliance, then it must come out of the Atlantic Council. Is it the U.S. plus one European country? Is it the U.S. and the European Community? This is difficult since the Community has no political reality, only an economic reality.

Let me say that I see no great difficult concerning the economic relations between the U.S. and the European Community. Even if your Congress and ours get excited.

If we say that we want greater freedom of exchange of people and ideas with Russians, we know what his means, but we don't need to say this as between the U.S. and Europe because for once reality exceeds fiction. The Soviets are very clever. Look at Iceland. They didn't ask for any outstanding posts. The President enjoys respect. The Prime Minister is a bit abrupt. The Foreign Minister is very nice. They took fisheries and they can cause us quite a few problems right there.

President Nixon: You must have listened to the same lecture from the Prime Minister as I did.

President Pompidou: Yes, indeed. But what forum, what place is appropriate for this declaration? The Atlantic Council has made a number of declarations; some important. For myself I don't want any less defense of the free world as a whole, where we are on the defensive standing as a dam, with relations between the European Community and the U.S. which are basically economic and commercial and are easy to solve.

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Let me say quite plainly -- and perhaps not being very clever -- that I will not be hostile to the U. S. attitude. We will try as Frenchmen to understand the U. S. problem and your own specific problem with a somewhat difficult Congress. I will not conceal that the Community is going, not through a crisis, but through a difficult period. Germany tries to look both ways simultaneously. In the UK, Heath is the only European; I have not met another one in England. The European summit in Paris is now hampered by the UK and the Italian situation. We fight over the price of carrots and wheat. Things come out but they come out poorly. It is a poor system but right now there is no will to pull out of it.

A recent example: under German pressure we had to accept an adjustment of claims which we feel is absurd but Germany was adamant. Under these conditions how do we act? We try to make progress towards economic and military union; some make efforts, some puny gains are attained, setting up an institute in Florence or more practically in the field of energy. We also try to develop our own economy and power, where we are limited by our potentialities and general inflation, and French inflation specifically.

Therefore progress is slow. I do not think 1973 will be the year of extraordinary events in Europe. In 1974 our military budget will be quite higher than in 1973. I effected this from Messmer and Giscard d'Estaing and I will stand up to public opinion on this if I need too. Also, we pursue our nuclear tests in the Pacific, although a number of small countries tell us that the UK and U.S. push them to protest. I tell them it is a convenient pretext to invoke.

Dr. Kissinger: On this issue the President has instructed me not to bring any such appeals to him, to instruct our bureaucracy not to discuss your tests with any government, and forbid the AEC from announcing your tests, to avoid giving anyone any pretext to embarrass you. If you know of any U. S. official involved in this protest we would like to know.

President Nixon: I am for a stronger French and UK nuclear force and I am for your tests. As you know, I talked with Heath about Poseidon and I will be glad to talk with you about anything you may care to raise.

President Pompidou: Thank you for this clarification. I knew this already but we can't keep Latin American countries from saying the U. S. puts them up to this, or Australia, New Zealand or Fiji from saying it is the UK.

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Dr. Kissinger: The Australians are changing. Whitlam wants to come talk to the President.

President Nixon: Any politician can make points with his press or his people by saying "U. S. go home, militarily, but we will trade with you." I could make points with my press and my Congress if I said, "Thank you very much. We accept your suggestion. We shall trade and speak only of the environment, energy and the exchange of professors." But we must separate what I believe in, what you believe in, as responsible world leaders, from public opinion as we confront it in our countries. It would be madness and against U.S. interests to work out a happy trade and monetary agreement with Europe and withdraw 100,000 men. Such madness infects a large part of the U.S. population, as well as the majority in the Senate and perhaps in the House as well.

I recognize the difficulties of our Dutch friends whom I respect, and the Danes with their two battalions, but you are a realist. The UN has shown that you cannot collectively work out policies for 13 or 15 President and Prime Ministers in a room just as we do. So we need preliminary talks to see where we want to go. Then work out the procedures for information and consultation.

Dr. Kissinger: As I understand you, Mr. President, we would not announce a directorate, who would agree in secret and informal talks and go on from there.

President Nixon: Let the experts talk, submit to us, and we decide where we want to go, yes.

Dr. Kissinger: It would be at the level of the President's office so as not to be in a fishbowl.

President Nixon: Dr. Kissinger will represent me. Let me give you an example, on MBFR where you feel as I do. I keep dangling this in front of Congress to keep them from cutting funds. Yet I have seen no plan that is satisfactory. It will be very difficult for any country to sit down and negotiate when the Soviet Union speaks for the entire Warsaw Pact. So it is important that you, Heath, Brandt and I talk of these things. With the Italians also, if we only knew who he is.

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President Pompidou: Leone told me he will come even if there is a crisis, and there will be a crisis. On MBFR we are outside but we have an opinion. We found many good things in the latest information given to us by U. S. representatives. We think one must not touch national forces, for this is the beginning of a neutralization of Europe.

President Nixon: We are happy that this is the French view because this places a new restraint on some of our allies.

President Pompidou: We thought we had persuaded Brandt but recently he spoke of national forces again, and he is an independent man who does not speak lightly.

Dr. Kissinger: Not only that, but it means swapping good German divisions for bad Polish and Czech divisions.

President Pompidou: I speak of Brandt. He came from the U. S. with a good impression that he had convinced you.

President Nixon: Of what?

President Pompidou: This remains the great European problem but it affects the free world. Is our time up? I have told Dr. Kissinger we may differ on this or that but our interests and not just our feelings are tied; even if we disagree on methods we work towards the same end. We are more threatened than you in the military field only. You would kill all the Russians, we would kill part of them, and we would all be dead, but we can also be attacked politically as in the recent personal ambitions of our Socialist Party which could topple France. We know that once the Communists are in power it is not easy to remove them.

You can trust us fully and entirely. We are committed to block the way to communism for France and if possible for Western Europe. Mind you, I find Brezhnev very nice. He likes good food as I do. You will have a hard time keeping him from kissing you. I did. But we would be greatly worried if the U. S. and the Soviet Union were sheltered and Europe became like Vietnam and the Middle East, a stage for more or less nuclear strikes without direct involvement of the two great powers except supplying weapons. Outside of the UK and France, all countries would recline in front of the Soviets.

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President Nixon: We have the same interests. I cannot speak for the left at any time, a group over which I won such overwhelming reelection, not any more than you can speak for your leftist Socialists. We confront a fact, not a theory, concerning the danger of precipitate U. S. withdrawal from Europe. The danger is not in 1974 but in 1973, beginning June 15 when Congress starts slicing the budget. I will fight that, but I must be able to convince Congress and the people that the Atlantic Community is alive, has a purpose, and talks to our time, not to 28 years ago.

Dr. Kissinger: President Nixon has a deep emotional commitment to close ties to France. That is why we want to have the closest consultations with those Europeans who are convinced that Europe must be defended against communism from within or from without.

President Nixon: I rejected the Soviet offer of a bilateral nuclear treaty. It would have left Europe completely uncovered. I think by now the Soviet Union and the Chinese are aware that I stick by an ally, and when the chips are down I shoot no blanks, after the agony through which we went in the U. S. and in France to put an end to the war in Vietnam.

Dr. Kissinger: In proclaiming the Year of Europe the President wants to build an emotional commitment from our bureaucracy, our leaders and the press, so that it will be a political necessity to consult our allies before a final decision is reached with the Soviets. It is the best guarantee against the Soviets condominium that this President will not establish but that one of his successors might. That is why we made the Year of Europe more formal than local needs dictated.

President Nixon: I do not suggest a grand tour of Europe with a U. S. initiative mainly initialed by the European allies. But we cannot go on as things are. We have to get away from the notion that it is all right for the U. S. and the Soviets, the U. S. and China, to get together. I am glad we were able to speak frankly. I was able to remove a misconception on the working group of four. My thought being to give an emotional content, not only to materialistic issues which are important but political, so that we can show the Russians a stronger mystique of unity and purpose than is presently the case. Then the four will report to us individually. We will examine their ideas and engage in wider consultations with our other friends in Europe leading to an enlarged meeting.

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President Pompidou: I am quite willing to have them talk. Concerning the Soviets, we tell them we are secure. Hence our text for detente would be fair. I guess we have to adjourn. Shall we tell the press we had an overview of world events? And we may add, if it helps you, that I stressed the need for the presence of U. S. troops in Europe.

Dr. Kissinger: Could we add we had a useful or constructive talk on the evolution of Atlantic relations, a review of the world situation and a constructive view of Atlantic relations and President Pompidou stressed the importance of the presence of U. S. troops in Europe and the danger of a unilateral reduction of U. S. troops from Europe?

President Pompidou: You can not only say it, but I think so.

President Nixon: I want to strengthen my hand when I meet Brezhnev, and not having Europeans in thinking and talking in strong terms and not having the Alliance unravelling. This will strengthen my hand with him. I don't want him to kiss me unless there is anything to be kissed for.

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