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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Memorandum of Conversation

DATE: Dec. 3, 1973
Time: 4:00 P.M.
Place: The Secretary's office

SUBJECT: The Middle East and
the Year of Europe

PARTICIPANTS: The Ambassador of France, Jacques Kosciusko-Morizet
Francois de La Gorce, Minister, French Embassy

The Secretary of State
Wells Stabler, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State
for European Affairs
Richard D. Vine, Director, Western European Affairs

AMBASSADOR KOSCIUSKO-MORIZET: I got out of a sick bed to come to see you today.

THE SECRETARY: I'm sorry to hear that. Why didn't you let me know, we could have changed it to tomorrow? Well, I notice that your Foreign Minister has let loose again, this time in the Senate. I guess he has run out of parliamentary bodies to address.

AMBASSADOR KOSCIUSKO-MORIZET: The speech was not very surprising.

THE SECRETARY: I agree. I am no longer surprised by what he says. It was essentially the same speech he gave in the National Assembly.

AMBASSADOR KOSCIUSKO-MORIZET: Yes. If I remember correctly there were four main points in it: the crisis in the Middle East; the management of the crisis by you and the Soviets; the necessity to build Europe.....

THE SECRETARY: the necessity to build Europe against the United States. That is what we object to.

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AMBASSADOR KOSCIUSKO-MORIZET: ...and questions of European defense.

THE SECRETARY: Do you honestly believe that we can be relegated to the role of mercenaries, that we should be accorded the great privilege of defending Europe, but have no other role?

AMBASSADOR KOSCIUSKO-MORIZET: No.

THE SECRETARY: But that is what is meant when Jobert says we are not to be trusted, that we are engaged in a condominium with the Soviets, and other horrible things.

AMBASSADOR KOSCIUSKO-MORIZET: You go too fast. Jobert is simply indicating that the Treaty on the Prevention of Nuclear War has created some concerns in Europe.

THE SECRETARY: Fifty per cent of those concerns are generated by Paris. We gave you a full explanation on the Soviet-US agreement. You knew what we intended.

AMBASSADOR KOSCIUSKO-MORIZET: No.

THE SECRETARY: Jobert was fairly explicit.

AMBASSADOR KOSCIUSKO-MORIZET: There can be no doubt of your assurances or of the trust we have in you. But take the Soviet Union -- do you believe their credibility is the same?

THE SECRETARY: More so.

AMBASSADOR KOSCIUSKO-MORIZET: You think so?

THE SECRETARY: Yes, our credibility has been weakened more by the European reaction to our alert than by anything else.

AMBASSADOR KOSCIUSKO-MORIZET: You believe that?

THE SECRETARY: We are rapidly approaching in our bilateral relations the conditions of 1962 and this in an administration more francophile than any could conceivably imagine.

AMBASSADOR KOSCIUSKO-MORIZET: I can see you're upset by Jobert, but he tells the truth about the Middle East.

THE SECRETARY: Jobert sat right here and told me that the Middle East was a matter for the United States and the Soviet Union.

AMBASSADOR KOSCIUSKO-MORIZET: You are right when you say that he told you that only you and the USSR could do the job of ending hostilities, but not afterwards. He did not agree that excluding Great Britain and France from the later peace talks was desirable.

THE SECRETARY: We have no particular intention to exclude the Europeans. You have excluded yourselves. The Israelis do not want your participation because you have so explicitly supported the Arabs. But secondly, we are aware of French approaches in Arab capitals and our reports suggest that your position has been critical of the United States. I see no reason under these conditions for a cooperative relationship.

AMBASSADOR KOSCIUSKO-MORIZET: I have no confirmation of those reports.

THE SECRETARY: But you have no denials either.

AMBASSADOR KOSCIUSKO-MORIZET: Our position is that there can be no lasting peace in the Middle East without the confirmation of the permanent members of the Security Council.

THE SECRETARY: I agree.

AMBASSADOR KOSCIUSKO-MORIZET: The Secretary General....

THE SECRETARY: What about him?

AMBASSADOR KOSCIUSKO-MORIZET: Can he go along and participate in the talks without a mandate from the Security Council or without giving an account to the Security Council? According to the UN Charter, the Secretary General cannot act himself. Security Council action would be a good way to give this mandate.

THE SECRETARY: I agree that the Secretary General should give an account. Our objective is to get this matter settled, We are not interested in posturing. There is certainly no glory involved, it is a messy, dirty business.

AMBASSADOR KOSCIUSKO-MORIZET: It is certainly not our intention to embarrass the United States. Our only objective is to obtain peace in the Middle East.

THE SECRETARY: It is not possible to keep attacking us and yet to insist on close cooperation. You know the affection I have for your Foreign Minister, and that my writings were

favorable to France. But I am too busy in this job to have new ideas.

AMBASSADOR KOSCIUSKO-MORIZET: We are not attacking you on your handling of the Middle East.

THE SECRETARY: It is not just the Middle East, but also on the evolution of Europe. In May you accused us of fostering European unity in order to squeeze France. Now you accuse us of thwarting Europe. In June you told us we could not work with the Nine; now you are working with the Nine against us and you are using this argument to organize Europe. In the long run, that will not work.

AMBASSADOR KOSCIUSKO-MORIZET: We have worked with you in the preparation of the Atlantic Declaration.

THE SECRETARY: But I'm beginning to think that even that has weird connotations. (To his American colleagues) Who was that who was complaining to Irwin?

VINE: Boidevaix.

STABLER: He is Jobert's Chef de Cabinet.

THE SECRETARY: He criticised us because he believed that the Dutch consulted with us before agreeing to the EC Declaration on the Middle East. First let me say that there was nothing to that, the report was wrong and the Dutch did not consult with us or get our approval. But I will say that the Nine should have consulted with the United States on that declaration because it was of obvious interest to us. Now you tell me what you came to tell me.

AMBASSADOR KOSCIUSKO-MORIZET: I wanted to talk about how you see the NATO Ministerial developing.

THE SECRETARY: I want to speak late in the session, at the end of the first day. I want to listen to the Europeans first.

AMBASSADOR KOSCIUSKO-MORIZET: We hope that it will be constructive.

THE SECRETARY: I am prepared to be constructive. Of course this depends upon how one interprets "constructive." I will also be prepared to answer any criticisms.

AMBASSADOR KOSCIUSKO-MORIZET: Will we be ready to agree on the NATO declaration?

THE SECRETARY: I do not believe that the present climate justifies completion of the draft declaration.

AMBASSADOR KOSCIUSKO-MORIZET: There is agreement on the dinner of the Four. Our concept of this dinner is that the official agenda should deal with Germany, but when the foreign ministers meet in that context they discuss many things.

THE SECRETARY: The thought of listening to fifteen foreign ministers, how many are there? Ah, so that I will only have to listen to fourteen, fills me with dread.

AMBASSADOR KOSCIUSKO-MORIZET: Other things are discussed -- off the record -- since otherwise the others are upset...

THE SECRETARY: We are prepared to do that.

AMBASSADOR KOSCIUSKO-MORIZET: If we do not keep it secret and informal, the others will consider it a Directoire of four.

THE SECRETARY: I will be prepared to discuss the NATO Declaration if that is desired. But I will not let the Treaty for the Prevention of Nuclear War be mentioned in the Declaration. We can accept a general formulation, but I will not let it be singled out after your Foreign Minister has referred to it so often publicly.

STABLER: You will recall, Mr. Secretary, that the French are reported to have said that you had indicated you would be willing to discuss the US-EC declaration at the Quadripartite dinner. We have stated that there is no basis for such an assertion.

THE SECRETARY: Yes. I think it was Davignon who told us this. This is not so. I have no agenda for the Quadripartite dinner.

AMBASSADOR KOSCIUSKO-MORIZET: Jobert will only arrive in Brussels Sunday night, just in time for the Quadripartite dinner. So you could meet Monday or thereafter any time at your convenience.

THE SECRETARY: I want to meet him.

AMBASSADOR KOSCIUSKO-MORIZET: I have no instructions, but I am sure he could do it.

THE SECRETARY: We'll see. Why not have de Rose and Rumsfeld work it out. I enjoy working with Jobert.

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AMBASSADOR KOSCIUSKO-MORIZET: Then you are going to London afterwards?

THE SECRETARY: I am going to London, first to give a speech at the Pilgrim's, then for a conference of our Chiefs of Mission. Then I am going to Cairo, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, then Lebanon, probably, almost certainly to Syria and to Israel.

AMBASSADOR KOSCIUSKO-MORIZET: As you know, we received Qhedafi without our having wished it. Ambassador Dobrynin told me we should get a gold medal for neutralizing him during the Algerian conference.

THE SECRETARY: Probably - I agree. Have the Nine asked for a meeting with me?

STABLER: Not formally.

THE SECRETARY: If they do, I would not want the meeting to take place until after the NATO meeting was completed. I have no idea what is going to happen at all these luncheons and dinners.

AMBASSADOR KOSCIUSKO-MORIZET: I don't know how you consider such a meeting. Do you want it?

THE SECRETARY: If he would like it -- oh, what are you referring to, a meeting of the Nine or with Jobert?

AMBASSADOR KOSCIUSKO-MORIZET: Of the Nine.

THE SECRETARY: I am going to see all the ministers separately. I am not asking for a meeting. It was not my idea.

AMBASSADOR KOSCIUSKO-MORIZET: The subject of the meeting would be the US-EC declaration and it is probably too early for a discussion of that.

THE SECRETARY: Our position is that, if the Nine want it, we would be happy to have one, but I have no reason to ask.

AMBASSADOR KOSCIUSKO-MORIZET: Of course, Ireland would not be there.

THE SECRETARY: Ireland would be willing to come if a meeting were held. I have given the strictest instructions to my associates not to organize anything on this, to stay out of it. (Aside to Stabler) I trust those instructions are being followed?

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STABLER: I can assure you that they are.

AMBASSADOR KOSCIUSKO-MORIZET: *So you are making no request?*

THE SECRETARY: There is no request on our part. Our position is that we are not going to say one more thing about the US-EC Declaration. Have we given our comments on the NATO Declaration?

STABLER: I think so. They were to be given to de Rose today.

THE SECRETARY: We have made suggestions for the revision of two paragraphs and given them to de Rose.

STABLER: There are actually four.

THE SECRETARY: We are not going to introduce them until we have comments from the French Government. We will have no debate in the NAC without those comments.

STABLER: We are going to give them to de Rose and then have them circulated in the NAC.

AMBASSADOR KOSCIUSKO-MORIZET: Do you think things are improving in the Middle East?

THE SECRETARY: Not particularly.

AMBASSADOR KOSCIUSKO-MORIZET: I thought there was some concern Friday and Saturday that the position had deteriorated.

THE SECRETARY: We are heading for negotiations and we will do out best to bring them about. I think it will be a question of whether the Israelis withdraw before the negotiations or as a result of the negotiations. We are now trying to get them together again at kilometer 101 and I think we are succeeding. There is still no final word on negotiations.

AMBASSADOR KOSCIUSKO-MORIZET: Will the Egyptians come?

THE SECRETARY: Not unless they are urged not to come until the Israelis withdraw.

AMBASSADOR KOSCIUSKO-MORIZET: Not by the French.

THE SECRETARY: But perhaps by the Russians.

AMBASSADOR KOSCIUSKO-MORIZET: That is not a complaint against France?

THE SECRETARY: No, I am not accusing you of that, I agree.

AMBASSADOR KOSCIUSKO-MORIZET: But you think the Russians are?

THE SECRETARY: The Russians seem to be complaining of the same things you are.

AMBASSADOR KOSCIUSKO-MORIZET: Then maybe we are succeeding. I don't think that the January or February meeting with Brezhnev will be changed. But we have been attacked in the Soviet press, and Marchais, in an article published last week in Humanite attacked Pompidou. This is new. And do you know why? Because Jobert, when he spoke of detente, made clear that it must be proved in reality. Secondly, because the Soviets are reacting to talk of European defense.

THE SECRETARY: You know we have always supported European unity, a strong France and a strong Europe. Although the matter has not been discussed within the Government, the President and I are in favor of European defense. But Europe cannot be built in opposition to the United States.

AMBASSADOR KOSCIUSKO-MORIZET: That is not our intention.

THE SECRETARY: The EC overture to Japan was an unfriendly gesture. It was the way it was put, the method of handling it. I have already told you my views about the two declarations. They have been drained of any significance. The only thing to decide now is whether it would be more damaging to end consideration of the declarations or to complete them. But I pay no attention to them.

AMBASSADOR KOSCIUSKO-MORIZET: Our views on a triangular relationship are an old story by this time.

THE SECRETARY: And I have told you that I care less what the declarations contain than the attitudes they represent.

AMBASSADOR KOSCIUSKO-MORIZET: We are trying to make the Europeans conscious of their own identity. It is hard. Perhaps we are pushing too far. But we are not trying to create a Europe in opposition to the United States. That is ridiculous. Economic and security stability in the world is not possible without the United States. I hope that direct talks between you and Jobert will wipe out these misunderstandings.

THE SECRETARY: But if that is followed by a summit that repeats his speeches, it will not make much difference.

AMBASSADOR KOSCIUSKO-MORIZET: What is it specifically that you object to?

THE SECRETARY: The concept of condominium and the idea that the United States has frustrated and humiliated the Europeans.

AMBASSADOR KOSCIUSKO-MORIZET: He did not say that, he said that Europe was humiliated, not that the United States had done so.

THE SECRETARY: Europe humiliated itself, it was not our fault. If Europe is not strong enough, or is not close enough to one of the superpowers to mediate its interests, it has only itself to blame. I am also unhappy with the guidance your press receives. Nothing friendly ever appears. These are all combined to produce a different perception of interests. This also came out in the way the Year of Europe has been treated as an adversary procedure. You know the sentimental attachment the President has to Europe; yet you make it impossible for him to proceed.

AMBASSADOR KOSCIUSKO-MORIZET: Curious. Pompidou and Jobert are being accused in France of being too Atlantic and traitors to Gaullism. You must recognize these domestic difficulties.

THE SECRETARY: I recognize that you have domestic difficulties. We do as well.

AMBASSADOR KOSCIUSKO-MORIZET: The Communists accuse us of turning toward the United States. They argue that the construction of Europe is but a new version of reintegrating ourselves into NATO. This is not true, but we are taken between two fires.

THE SECRETARY: I will be glad to see your Foreign Minister.

AMBASSADOR KOSCIUSKO-MORIZET: May I have a few minutes alone?

THE SECRETARY: Yes.

(Messrs. de La Gorce, Stabler and Vine withdraw)