

TELCON
The President/HAK
August 9, 1973/3:12 p.m.

P: Hello

K: Mr. President.

P: Hi Henry how are you?

K: OK. I know you called me earlier but

P: No, I just called but I didn't--it was just something that I'd worked out with Al. It was nothing. It was on nothing of importance.

K: Right. Well, I've had lunch with Dobrynin and at least that part of our foreign policy is....

P: Still alive, huh? (Laughter)

K: Because we've got--we are working on next year's summit.

P: Right. I noted in the summary of course, the fact that they did test their first successful MERVE. It shows why they are against the MERVE ban.

K: Well we are making some progress from the result that they have tested the MERVE. They shall have to take a different _____. I think its already foreseeable.

P: Well with Dobrynin at least it was still cordial.

K: we're already plotting out the elements of an agreement. Of the series of agreements we've now begun to make a breakthrough on SALT. At least a breakthrough to indicate how it might go and we're talking about MBFR. Of course, I am convinced Mr. President we will have that European declaration no later than early next year and in many ways it will be better for us next year than this year.

P: Yes. You haven't heard from the British yet?

K: NO, but we can't until Heath comes back from Ottawa

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P: Yes.

K: We had another bit of a discussion yesterday with their charge. Because they briefed all the other Europeans when Bert Trent was in here and didn't tell us ahead of time and wouldn't even tell us afterwards what they had said so I demanded the briefing and then they said they would do it on a one time basis but they didn't feel obliged to tell us what they discussed with the Europeans. So now I'm cutting them off from intelligence special information they are getting here. I mean if they are going to share everything with the Europeans we can't trust them for special relationship. I am putting it on the basis that we are reassessing all liaison relations. I am not doing it from the White House, I'm having the Agency heads do it.

P: Yes. Well, who do you think is up to this? Who is playing this game?

K: Well, you know he has these tacky tendencies Mr. President and he -- I think he is trying to take a free ride on us in getting into Europe.

P: Yes.

K: I think they'll come around but they are going to be tough because they will want to steal deGaulles' line from the French. It was a horrible mistake that we pushed them into Europe. We didn't do it.

P: Yes. It was never my idea. But never the less.

K: And they are doing that now with the same single-mindedness that they pursued the special relationship with us before.

P: I think they're determined if they are going to be in Europe, they want to wheel Europe and that is it and they don't want us to wheel in.

K: Yes, but if that is what they are going to do there is no sense in arguing them the information which they then can market in Europe. We are better off doing it directly.

P: Sure. No special relations. Correct. They'll have the relation with the French.

K: That's right.

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- P: With them and a few others.
- K: (laughter)
- P: Thats alright. It is just part of the international game.
- K: Oh no. This is...
- P: It is a passing thing.
- K: That is a phase where we just have to show our teeth. Absolutely confident.
- P: Right.
- K: You already see articles in the European press saying now they think the Declaration of Principles is a good idea. Where three weeks ago they were picking on it all the time.
- P: Yes. Look. The main thing is as far as we're concerned though lets not be too eager. We are not eager with them, we are not eager with our Chinese friends. Understand?
- K: Thats right. Well the Chinese... Dobrynin gave me another interesting piece of information. They have a speech--they have now a meeting of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party which we did not know. But they obviously have sources in the Chinese Communist Party and at that meeting Chou En-lai made a very long speech on the international situation.
- P: Yes.
- K: And that mostly the domestic situation but in the international section he violently attacked the Soviet Union.
- P: Yes, and the Soviet Union has violently attacked him.
- K: Yesterday, in reply.
- P: Oh, thats why it came.
- K: Thats right, and so as long as that is the case the Chinese just can't afford to take us on.

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- K: Well, we've got another cable from Graham Martin today whom we were called that son of a bitch and he is very optimistic about South Vietnam. He thinks even Cambodia might be held off.
- P: Hmm, wonder why? You never know. You never know. These things are not going to go that quickly unless there is a hell of a psychological crack but basically lets fact it, the Khmers don't have any Air Force.
- K: No thats right. Its a question of... Well we could still continue bombing. We'd probably even win because right now...
- P: I know. I know that because I could tell from even reading the thing this morning they were doing rather well, the little guys. You know they, in their molasses-like way they took this back or they rolled this back. You know what I mean.
- K: That's right.
- P: And we all know it because frankly I was glad to see you got those _____ up to 48.
- K: That's right.
- P: That's alright. Let them hit a few things. As long as we're there lets don't go out with a whimper. So, on Cambodia he feels that maybe even that they will hang on awhile does he?
- K: That's what he thinks. Yes.
- P: He didn't give any basis for it did he?
- KK: Well, he went over there.
- P: I know he went over but he didn't get his reasoning.
- K: That's right.
- P: He didn't get any reasons for...
- K: No, no he didn't give any basis for his reasoning, that's what I meant.

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- P: He didn't tell anybody probably. We don't know. And incidentally, what frankly he guesses is as good as our guess, I don't know. Let's just pray for the best.
- K: It's entirely a question of psychology. They have the resources to hang on.
- P: Why sure. They have the resources without the bombing Henry. You know that.
- K: Well, if we had had a decent Ambassador there--that's one of my mistakes there. I should have insisted on getting that son of a bitch...
- P: I know, I know.
- K: I don't mean this year. This year wouldn't have made any difference.
- P: Let me see. But right now--
- K: But two years ago.
- P: But right now though they have, in terms of military resources, ground forces and so forth, they are not inferior to the Khmers are they?
- K: Oh no, they are superior to the Khmers.
- P: That's my point.
- K: But they don't have the discipline and the dedication.
- P: That's the point. I understand. So therefore, the chances of the Khmers going in and cutting them up and so forth and then their collapsing are considerable. But let me say this. That isn't going to mean the fall of South Vietnam and it'll frighten alot of people. It'll frighten the Thais and it'll frighten alot of others but I don't intend to get--we can't get discouraged about any of those things.
- K: Well, in this one you were right. The longer we could have held on in Cambodia the surer the situation in South Vietnam would have been. But even with that he thinks South Vietnam can hold six years which he says there is realistically but would get into the next Presidential period. His major concern is that the new President in 1976 have your conviction. After that he thinks it doesn't make any difference what happens.

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- P: Yes.
- K: I mean he put it as coldly as that.
- P: You mean he thinks it could hang for six years.
- K: That is what he thought.
- P: I think he's right. We've started a legacy there. Let's not...
- K: Mr. President, if you had had the support that Ike had after the Korean war, that thing would be in -- 76 would be seen as a triumph and I must tell you honestly I didn't think it could hold beyond 1974, much beyond 74.
- P: Yes. Well we'll see. You want to remember too that the North has its problems. They are trained and it maybe the Russians aren't helping them quite that much and the Chinese haven't got that much to put in there. You know what I mean. Let's fact it.
- K: I don't think either of them are putting in a hell of alot.
- P: Yes. That's my point. I mean the situation has changed a great deal, Henry. I mean we've got our problems, psychological and others on our side, but they've got -- we'll see what they come up... Qell, anyway on the Chinese side they owe you an answer and you all don't expect to get one do you for awhile?
- KK: They may not give us an answer not until their Central Committee is over or they may not give us an answer until after August 15th.
- P: Yes.
- K: It doesn't make any difference because we didn't propose a date until September.
- P: Well, my point is... Is their Ambassador back yet?
- K: No, he is a member of the Central Committee so he would be staying over for the...
- P: Yes. Well, that's all right. I just feel that sometimes we tend to... It's hard to you know, to sort of pull ourselves up by the bootstraps all the time with some things we are going through here but dog gone it we--with the Europeans... My attitude is so what--if they want to play this kind of a game. Fine. You know. Henry, you could find--I mean I wouldn't like it to happen to Europe but there are worse things than the American/Russian condominium now. Let's face i

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- K: Mr. President, the Europeans will be on their knees by the end of this year. They cannot do without us. All they have to understand is that they can lose us.
- P: That's right because you see... You talk about these forces for Europe and that sort of thing but Good God, I mean what the hell are the Europeans going to do when you say -- each of them on their ways to Moscow. Now what in the hell do you think Brezhnev wants with Pompidou?
- K: They've been taking us too much for granted.
- P: That's right. We're going to have... That we have to stay, that we need them and that we're going to maintain the rein and so forth. Alright, we don't have to stay Henry. We just don't have to necessarily. You understand that?
- K: I couldn't agree more.
- P: Let me say, we do have to stay in Japan and Korea but that's a different thing.
- K: Well, I think we have to stay to some extent in Europe but...
- P: No, nobody even in Europe---I would play a different line and say alright and that means... It's up to you, you can't have a free rein they are not going to confront us and have us stay now. That's all there is to it.
- K: They cannot exclude us from their deliberations and expect us to give them an undiluted nuclear guarantee. That just cannot be.
- P: That is right.
- K: But it is certainly not going to come to that point.
- P: Right. Right. Well, I'm up here at Camp David. Its not as hot as in Washington but having to work on this dog gone speech and statement, boy oh boy. I'll be glad when this week is over.
- K: It is a difficult period Mr. President but you have come through so many agonies.
- P: Yes sure.
- K: I know it isn't...

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P: Its more difficult for reasons that we're -- I can't talk about you know but nevertheless we'll come through it Henry.

K: I have every certainty of that.

P: The thing that your liberal friends have always underestimated. They've always felt that I was like--strangely enough--would react the way they would. I mean there isn't a one of your liberal friends not a none, that wouldn't have crumbled 2 months ago. They'd have thrown in the towel. Right Henry?

K: Oh, no question. They would have had nervous breakdowns.

P: Really, I mean they would have.

K: I know it.

P: And the thing that astonished them,they wonder why the hell I didn't.

K: You've astonished them with many periods in your Presidency.

P: And don't you run ~~XXX~~ into that in your private chats with some of them. Whats the matter with--they constantly try to say well, how does he look or...

K: They keep asking me whether you saw any sign of strain and I always tell them in crisis you never do.

P: (laughter) That's the best way to talk. Well anyway, take care old boy. I'll get back to work.

K: Right. Bye.

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