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WASHINGTON

August 14, 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR SECRETARY KISSINGER ✓
SECRETARY SCHLESINGER
COUNSELLOR MARSH
JIM LYNN

FROM:

BOB ROUSEK BR

Attached are proposed remarks for the President's use at the National American Legion Convention in Minneapolis on Tuesday, August 19, 1975.

May we have your comments, along with your initials on the attached clearance sheet, by noon tomorrow, Friday, August 15? If your comments are not received by this time, it will be assumed you have no problems with the text.

Thanks.

TO: THE PRESIDENT
VIA: ROBERT HARTMANN
FROM: PAUL A. THEIS
SUBJECT: National American Legion Convention

TIME, DATE AND PLACE OF PRESIDENTIAL USE: _____

10:30 a.m., Tuesday, August 19, Minneapolis, Minnesota

SPEECHWRITER: Hartmann

EDITED BY: _____

BASIC RESEARCH/SPEECH MATERIAL SUPPLIED BY:

Research Office, Secretary Kissinger

CLEARED BY (Please initial):

- () OPERATIONS (Rumsfeld) _____
- (X) CONGRESSIONAL/PUBLIC LIAISON (Marsh) _____
- () PRESS (Nessen) _____
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- (X) SECRETARY KISSINGER _____
- (X) SECRETARY SCHLESINGER _____

PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS TO NATIONAL AMERICAN LEGION CONVENTION,
MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA, TUESDAY, AUGUST 19, 1975

I am glad to have this opportunity to talk with my fellow Legionnaires and fellow Americans about two things which the American Legion has always held dear: freedom and peace -- for our country and for the world.

Freedom always comes first, let there be no doubt about that.

Patrick Henry answered that question for us 200 years ago, and the Marines, seamen and airmen who rescued the Mayaguez gave the same clear answer.

But in today's increasingly dangerous world of technological terror, with weapons of awesome sophistication and destructiveness, it is difficult to see how freedom as we know it could survive another all-out war. It is even questionable whether a free society such as ours could survive an all-out, unrestricted arms race.

We are therefore faced with the dilemma that has faced the American people and their government since the postwar

administrations of President Truman and President Eisenhower:

how to preserve, protect and defend our own freedom and that of our essential allies, and of advancing the cause of freedom elsewhere; while at the same time diligently seeking to preserve the general peace and create conditions that reduce the chances of major war and the tremendous costs of maintaining the total mobilization required for a major war.

This is an exceedingly difficult course to steer. We have come perilously close to catastrophe, we have suffered serious setbacks, and we have been unable yet to resolve local conflicts in the Middle East and other areas.

But we have prevented World War Three and the destruction of civilization. We have, with some complex and tragic exceptions, held the frontiers of freedom at the lines fixed by the grim realities of military power at the end of World War Two.

The free world, as we define it, is essentially intact after 30 years of uneasy peace between the superpowers, instability in former colonial areas, and sporadic outbreaks of local and

regional violence. And three decades of this imperfect peace have permitted unprecedented gains in productivity and prosperity for much of mankind, including the United States.

Few who remember the immediate postwar period would say that the world is not safer and better off today than it was after the terrible destruction of World War II and in the period when every midnight siren might have been a thermonuclear warning alert.

A few fundamentals have prevailed throughout this period which must not be forgotten.

First, the military might, material strength and moral purpose of the United States, as the principal defender of freedom in the world, has been the absolutely essential element in the preservation of what international order and stability we have achieved.

Second, our enormous defense capability and its economic base have been reinforced and undergirded by the growing resources

of our allies in the North Atlantic, the Mediterranean, and the Pacific, and by the increasing interdependence of the industrial democracies in both military and economic areas.

Third, the policies of five American Presidents before me in support of adequate national defense, reducing East-West tensions and the threat of thermonuclear war, and strengthening our essential alliances with the NATO nations and our Pacific partners, have had the unswerving and nonpartisan support of Congress and the American people.

I would be remiss if I did not say to you frankly that I am as concerned as you are over cracks that seem to be appearing lately in the foundations of essential national unity on defense and foreign policy.

Without such a clear consensus, the role of the United States as the champion of freedom and peace in the world will be crippled seriously if not fatally. The ability of a President, myself or my successors, to carry out his Constitutional duty

will be dangerously diminished. The temptation to potential adversaries to take advantage of our apparent weakness, disunity and indecision could become irresistible.

Let me first discuss our defense posture. George Washington said the best way to preserve peace is to be prepared for war; in one way or another each of his successors has repeated that truth. Unfortunately, our history has been one of repeatedly ignoring it. After every war, we have abruptly demobilized and the next generation has paid for this folly. I see some danger signs of our doing it again -- with the stakes infinitely higher than ever before.

I am determined to resist unilateral disarmament.

I am committed to keep America's defenses second to none. There are many sincere, but shortsighted, Americans who believe that the simple way to balance our swollen Federal budget is by cutting defense spending -- now that Americans are no longer fighting on any front. I know there are others

who believe the billions we spend for defense should be better spent for social programs to help the poor and disadvantaged, regardless of the size of the deficit or its inflationary effect on everybody's living costs.

For my part, I consider adequate spending for national defense as a form of insurance premium we cannot afford to be without. It is most valuable if we never need to use it, but we could be wiped out if we didn't have it.

Certainly the most important social obligation of government is to guarantee all citizens -- including the disadvantaged -- sufficient protection against outside attack for their lives and their freedoms. Today that protection is not only our best, but our only hope of peace. What expense item in our Federal budget is more essential?

As you know, the proportion of Federal spending for national security and the proportion of our gross national product going for defense requirements have declined in recent

years. The dollar figures go up because of inflation, but the weapons they will buy or the personnel they will pay have declined.

What is not so readily recognized is that during the Vietnam War, defense spending concentrated on current combat requirements while long-range research and development as well as replacement was generally shortchanged. This could be fatal to our qualitative superiority in the future if our technological and scientific lead is not rapidly recovered. And our potential adversaries are not slowing, but quickening, their pace.

The defense budget which I submitted for FY 1977 represents in my judgment the bare minimum required for our safety. I will resist any major cuts in every way I can.

Let me tell you now what I think about detente.

First of all, I don't much like the word "detente" because its meaning is not clear to everybody. French is a

beautiful language and the classic language of diplomacy. But

"I suspect that "detente" translates slightly differently in Russian and in English.

I wish there were one simple English word to substitute for it, but unfortunately there isn't. Literally it means "easing" or "relaxing" -- but definitely not the relaxing of vigilance or easing of effort. Rather it means the easing or relaxing of constant crisis and deadly dangerous confrontation. As the younger generation would say, the relaxation of "uptightness." Maybe the best idiomatic English translation would be "to cool it."

The process of detente -- and it is a process -- looks toward a saner and mutually safer set of relationships between us and the Soviet Union -- a road along which we have taken only a few first steps. It represents our best effort to cool down the Cold War which on several occasions became much too hot for comfort.

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It is easy to be a Cold Warrior in peacetime.

The second thing we must understand about this detente or cooling process is that it is only undertaken by people who don't get along very well, who are really squared off and ready to fight.

If you tell me that you and your wife are practicing detente, I would say your marriage is in bad shape.

We do not undertake detente with dear friends, but with deadly foes. We only do so when, and if, both parties are convinced there must be some way out of their hostility besides knocking the chip off the other's shoulder, and having it out to the finish.

Having said what detente means to me, perhaps I can further enlighten the subject by saying what it does not mean to me and should not mean to the United States as the leader of the free world.

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It does not mean peace at any price -- only a strong preference for peace.

It does not mean any sacrifice of fundamental American principles.

It does not mean letting down our guard, or dismantling our defenses, or neglecting our friends.

It does not mean the curtailing of rugged but peaceful competition between political and economic systems. We have every confidence that, without the elements of fear and force, ours are clearly preferable.

It does not mean a license for one side to fish in troubled waters, or to seek stability in one part of the world while promoting disruption in another.

It does not mean "trust" -- a bond which nations rarely extend unreservedly and then only to old and proven allies -- but rather something less than total hostility and belligerency which could trigger a universal calamity.

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In this context, detente is not so much a policy as an attitude that has been consistently adopted by the United States ever since the Soviet Union emerged as a nuclear super-power after World War II, and to which the alternative has become increasingly unacceptable.

We have made some progress, though not as much as I would like: a defusing of the Berlin time-bomb, the ABM treaty, an interim SALT I agreement and progress on SALT II, the start of Mutual and Balanced Force Reduction negotiations in Europe, and other agreements regarding space, the seabeds, bacteriological and chemical warfare. We also have some grave concerns which we are carefully watching as evidence of the Soviet attitude towards detente and cooperation in European security. Quite frankly, the situation in Portugal is one of them.

On balance, however, I believe my meetings with General Secretary Brezhnev in Vladivostok and Helsinki have been helpful. But we will have to wait for further concrete developments.

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I will continue to seek safer and saner relations with the Soviet Union, and with all nations, because I am convinced that peace is the primary objective of the foreign and defense policies of the United States. But I can assure you, as I did Mr. Brezhnev and the leaders of 32 other European nations and Canada at Helsinki, that freedom comes first. Those who proclaimed American Independence almost 200 years ago asserted not merely that all Americans should enjoy life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, but that all men everywhere are endowed by their Creator with such inalienable rights.

I told the leaders of Europe that these principles, though still being perfected, remain the guiding lights of American policy; that the American people are still dedicated to the universal advancement of individual rights and human freedom that is implicit in the Helsinki declarations.

It gave me great pride as the spokesman for the United States to say to both East and West, my country and its

principles of freedom have given hope to millions in Europe and on every continent, and that we still do. That we are tired of having our hopes raised and then shattered by empty words and unkept promises. And that detente must be a two-way street, because tensions cannot be eased by one side alone.

Nevertheless, we will continue our effort to reach gradual but meaningful arms agreements, ¹³ but this will be possible only with sufficient and credible strength of our own and in concert with our allies. Moreover, any agreements we may reach must be self-verifying. That is, each side must possess dependable means of making sure that they are being lived up to.

The time is not yet come when we can entrust our hope for peace to a piece of paper.

Thus another essential element to any real arms limitation, whether of strategic systems or conventional forces, is our own intelligence capability. Recent and seemingly endless exposures of our intelligence activities represent a serious handicap we can ill afford.

I certainly do not condone any illegal or improper activities or violations of the Constitutional rights of Americans unrelated to real security needs. On the basis of the comprehensive studies of our intelligence agencies made by the Rockefeller Commission and the Murphy Commission on the Conduct of Foreign Policy, I am taking or recommending to Congress any further action that may be required to prevent future abuses.

But intelligence in this modern world is absolutely essential to our nation's security -- even our survival. It may well be more important in peace than in war. Any sensationalized public questioning of the true value of our intelligence services, any reckless Congressional action to cripple their effectiveness in legitimate operations would be, in my judgment, catastrophic.

Our potential adversaries operate in all intelligence fields with secrecy, skill and unlimited resources. I know I can count on your firm support for an American intelligence capability second to none.

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Finally, and this relates both to our vital intelligence installations and to the imperative need to strengthen key alliances, such as NATO, I must express my considered view that the worst security setback this country has suffered since I became President is the present crisis in our relations with Turkey.

Of course there are many Americans who deeply sympathize with Greece, and I understand their feelings. But the continued refusal of Congress to allow delivery to Turkey of arms and supplies Turkey has already paid for, which caused Turkey to shut down vital American installations on its territory, has helped neither Greece nor Turkey nor the solution of the Cyprus problem.

Instead it has seriously damaged the United States and, unless promptly reversed, could wreck the NATO Alliance on its important Eastern flank, undoing the solid work of nearly a quarter century. Greece and Turkey, as well as Italy and Israel,

as well as the United States and our other free allies, have a vital stake in the strengthening of NATO and the stability of the Mediterranean.

All that the stubborn stand of the Congress has done in this situation is worsen things for everybody concerned. I am convinced from my personal talks last month with the leaders of Greece and Turkey and Cyprus that their differences can be settled peacefully. But the United States' role as peacemaker has been seriously retarded by Congress trying to conduct its own foreign policy in the middle of the most delicate negotiations.

(Conclusion to come)