

MEMORANDUM

[TS-K-H76]

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

~~TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE~~

March 18, 1974

DOS, NAVY, USAF,
OSD, USAID
Reviews Completed

MEMORANDUM FOR: HENRY A. KISSINGER

FROM: BRENT SCOWCROFT *B*

The attached list of subjects for breakfast with Schlesinger are all worthy of raising.

With respect to the Thailand force levels, Schlesinger is very insistent that this not go through the formal interagency system. He was very concerned when he thought I had scheduled a WSAG to deal with the paper (as it turns out, there is nothing in the issue which would warrant the convening of a meeting).

- The whole issue is one of timing. Schlesinger wants a major withdrawal between the end of the dry season and fiscal year (about 60 days). He says he is concerned to show some early movement so as to relieve pressure on the Hill to force worldwide withdrawals. I suspect there is also a budgetary aspect to it, although Defense stoutly denies this.
- I am inclined to believe that a somewhat more deliberate withdrawal would be better, although Kissinger is likely to say that Defense's contacts with the Thai military indicate that his is the way to go.
- I suggest that, after some discussion of the subject, you say that you will get a decision from the President right away.

With respect to the Suez Canal clearance, the only point I would make is that you should not take seriously any legal arguments Schlesinger may make about Defense not being able to do the mine clearing except as an agent of AID. Buzhardt says we can interpret the law to suit the policy in this matter.

You had also indicated that you wanted to talk with Schlesinger about aircraft carrier levels (Defense apparently intends to drop from 15 to 12)

~~TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE~~

TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE

2

and also about NATO naval deployments. I think we badly need to get into this area, but it is one which Schlesinger is likely to think is his own private preserve unless it is done on a broad national strategy basis.

You may also wish to mention the provision of military equipment to Egypt through Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, etc. You have already broached the subject to him, but you may want to get a little more specific now that we have an Egyptian shopping list (which I will have with me).

It may also be useful to talk a bit about SALT, especially in the context of the NSC meeting. If you take the approach that your Moscow trip will be to try to elicit from the Soviets whether there is any chance of pursuing a MIRV agreement, you may help in avoiding a hassle over SALT positions at the NSC meeting. That approach may also serve to deflect Schlesinger from trying to get Nitze on your trip.

Schlesinger may raise the following issues:

- Diego Garcia. He will urge that you talk to Mansfield and Symington. [FYI, your new stalwart, Holton, apparently argued at the last LIG meeting that we should fall off on our efforts on Diego Garcia.]
- Israeli Aid. He may ask where we stand on the exotic equipment (standoff weapons, etc.) which Eban has raised.
- European Developments. He will probably express his concern that the President's statements jeopardize our troops in Europe. I have pointed out that the opposite could be true, but he is obviously concerned.
- Graham Martin. He is upset at the press briefing which Graham Martin gave last week intimating that our Vietnam problems ~~would~~ focus more on economic than military aid.

Attachment

TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE


MEMORANDUM

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

SECRET GDS

March 18, 1974

MEMORANDUM FOR: SECRETARY KISSINGER

FROM: Jeanne W. Day 

SUBJECT: Talker for Breakfast Meeting with
Schlesinger, Tuesday, March 19

The staff suggests the following items for your breakfast meeting with Secretary Schlesinger on Tuesday, March 19:

Withdrawal of U. S. Forces from Thailand

Secretary Schlesinger raised this subject with you two weeks ago, saying he wanted to get a decision on our troop levels in Thailand, and will probably raise it again. He has also asked for your approval of a new DOD plan to withdraw about 8,000 men (9,300 spaces) along with a number of aircraft (6 tactical air squadrons and 33 B-52's) in sixty days, by June of 1974. This would bring our actual military personnel level down to about 28,000.

-- Kintner's Views. Kintner has expressed his desire for withdrawals in a "steady and orderly manner": he has said that he opposes sudden unilateral withdrawals taken without previous consultation. He thinks the Thai want us to withdraw but believes that a level of 32,000 by the end of June could cope with expected pressures from the Thai election campaign which will be in full swing by early summer. During the next fiscal year, Kintner thinks we should be down to about 25,000 by next December and down to below 20,000 by June 30, 1975.

-- The Thai Prime Minister told Mr. Rush two weeks ago that his caretaker government could not make final decisions or engage in definitive consultations on our troop disposition. That would have to be done by the next government.

-- Our view is that we can and should reduce our forces (starting in late May) by something like the magnitude that Schlesinger proposes, but that we should stretch out the withdrawals over a six month period because:

SECRET GDS

-- We must discuss with the new Thai government to be elected late this summer or early fall the question of re-entry rights for some of our B-52's and tactical air squadrons in the event of need in Indochina.

-- We should give the new government some of the credit for the withdrawals.

-- We should avoid a sudden, massive reduction that could raise questions as to our basic intentions and could cause serious economic dislocations.

As regards withdrawals over the longer-term, we believe Defense and State should address our long term military presence in Thailand.

We are preparing a NSDM on this entire question for your and the President's consideration.

Jordan

General Bin Shaker is here this week. You may want to reinforce with Secretary Schlesinger that the President promised King Hussein that every effort would be made to give Jordan the best possible value for its military assistance dollar. The President wants not only a package totalling \$100 million (\$70 million in grant and \$30 million in credit) but also an opportunity to review a package totalling \$130 million.

Israel

If you have not had a chance to do so previously, you may wish to explain to Secretary Schlesinger your thinking on holding up a final decision on the mix of grant and credit in the \$1.5 billion package.

Suez Canal Clearance

An issue has arisen of how to pay for the US contributions to the reopening of the Suez Canal. There are two projects: (1) clearing mines and removing unexploded ordnance and (2) raising sunken ships. The mine clearing will be performed by the US Navy, which has estimated costs at about \$10 million although not all would be spent this fiscal year. We have offered to help train Egyptians to remove unexploded ordnance along the Canal. The removal of ships will be done by a civilian contractor and should cost approximately \$7 million, which Fahmi has asked us to pay for at \$7 - \$10 million. AID should pay for the ship-raising; the issue is whether Defense or Security Assistance should pay for the mine-clearing. There are arguments both ways.

SECRET GDS

SECRET GDS

-3-

You will receive a separate memo on this. For purposes of this talk with Schlesinger, it is suggested that you say the following:

-- Would Secretary Schlesinger please take a hard look at Defense paying for the mine-clearing and unexploded ordnance operations?

-- If Schlesinger finds serious legal reasons for not doing so, could he pare the Navy's costs to an absolute minimum? (The estimate is \$10 million, but most people feel that could be cut at least in half if the normal overhead and administrative costs were not charged.)

SECRET GDS