

By Geo NARA, Date 5/27

TELECON

The President

Mr. Kissinger

4:40 p.m., September 27

Mr. Kissinger said he was just going to call the President when this call came in. He said he had an interesting conversation with Dobrynin. He came in with two stupid questions: (1) whether we want to have the Berlin talks to be quadripartite or bilateral, and (2) he wanted us to use our influence to see that Gromyko and the ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ ^{President} before Gromyko leaves on Wednesday (K interjected here he thinks the State people have practically given away our position). K told D his call was providential -- as far as the White House is concerned, we have no great incentives; D owes us an answer to the question given him in May and another in the conversation K had with him in April. As far as we are concerned, the train has left the station. The Soviets have a choice of believing the President or the New York Times and K, if he could advise him, would recommend that they believe the President.

D said one other thing -- he knew of K's meeting in Paris. K asked him what he knew. D said Hanoi told them this was the best conversation they had had and they thought something might come of it. K said if it does, they will have to make the move. We are not going to make the move, to which D didn't really respond. D said there are a lot of arguments in the Soviet Union, and they feel we are not willing to move very fast on Soviet-American relations in general. D did not mention SALT, but mentioned trade, for example. K told him that the President had told D, and K had told D, that we are going very far on trade, but we aren't going to let Communist countries supported by the Soviet Union chop us out. K said he had been very tough with D -- he didn't give an inch.

K told the President he didn't think we should move very fast on the Middle East. P said the point is we can't deliver. K said that is not what they are asking. They want us to agree to a piece of paper for Yarring (?) to deliver. K said they aren't anxious to get something in the Middle East -- their problems with the Egyptians must be very serious. He wanted us to be very forthcoming.

P wanted to know D's attitude. K said they want major improvements in relations with us. He said they always run into trouble. He was asked in Moscow what advance has been made, and he couldn't answer. K told him he could have said "the SALT talks." D said there will be a positive answer pretty soon, but he didn't say any more about it. K said he doesn't believe the U.S. should be in a pleading position on it. He thinks we could play it the other way. If we go the hard route, and can keep them quiet, that is what we want. P said he is

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eenly aware that we don't want to take the hard route and make them mad. He asked K, "You have no doubt but that he is reminded of the fact we are going the hard route?" K said yes; he had been very tough on him. D had asked what K thought of the Sino-Soviet problem. K had said the Soviets have a big geopolitical problem that no death is going to solve. D had asked K whether he thought they (the Soviets) were going to attack the Chinese. K had replied that, as a historian, he thought the Soviets were considering it.

D had ~~XXXXXX~~ said something about Romania -- he asked who thought of it. K had replied that every fundamental decision here is made by the President, and he wasn't going to give D a checklist of who made the various proposals.

D had asked whether we had any response from the Chinese on the change in travel restrictions. K had replied that D knew as well as he that the Chinese move in very complicated ways (which didn't really give an answer to his question). K said he had been personally much more aloof with D than before.

P asked what had been said about Vietnam. K told him D had said we may not believe it, but the Soviets have a real interest in ending this war, but for different reasons than ours. K told him we have no evidence of this. K said D had said they had been helpful on the shape of the table, to which K replied that they were helpful to Hanoi on that. K gave no encouragement here, and wasn't really very pleasant. He had reminded D that we have a problem -- there can be no movement until they show us.

The President said, "The summit and trade they can have, but I'll be damned if they can get the Middle East, etc." K said he doesn't see what we gain by going to a fall-back position on the Middle East. His instinct for handling this, would be for Rogers to tell Gromyko we will give our answer to Dobrynin in about two weeks.

K said he thinks D came to see him to let him know they knew about K's Paris meeting, and to fix an invitation for Gromyko to see the President. D had said in all previous administrations Gromyko had been received by the President. K told D that Gromyko hadn't asked for a meeting. K told the President if Gromyko asks for a meeting, formally, the President will have to see him, but if he doesn't, K doesn't think we should invite him. K said D came back to this two or three times -- (Gromyko would love to have an invitation). K further doesn't think we should encourage him to ask for an ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ appointment.

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to the President
said, on the Middle East, it would help us if we didn't do anything
right now -- it could be done in about 10 days to 2 weeks between
Disco and Dobrynin. K said he didn't know whether Rogers will make
a formal proposition -- he hadn't been in touch with K. P said waiting
makes sense.

P said the papers had made a big thing about Gromyko getting a warmer
reception than he. The reason is obvious -- all the Middle East had
to be silent to him; we have nothing to offer the Africans; and we didn't
mention Latin America. He said he felt it was foolish to go up there.
K said he didn't think the President got a cool reception; he couldn't
count on the newspapers giving such a distorted picture. The President
said we said things not calculated to get a warm reception.

Getting back to D and Vietnam, P asked K whether he saw much movement.
K's response was that the fact that ~~XXXXXX~~ D told him about his Paris
conversation, and that Hanoi considers that the most useful conversation
they have had, he (K) considers positive. D had said in watching the
President's news conference, it was clear ~~XXXX~~ the President isn't
going to make any major concessions, and that it was useful to get this
on the table. K thinks we will get a move within the next month.

P mentioned the demonstrations coming up on October 15. He said
the Democratic National Chairman had been meeting with the doves,
at the same time of his press conference, to make Vietnam a political
issue. P said he didn't hit this hard with Haldeman, but he feels
the real attack should be on them. K agreed, saying they got us into
the war. P said our people have to start fighting harder. K said the
press conference was essential and extremely helpful. He thinks
events of the last two or three weeks show the long route cannot
possibly work. The President agreed, especially with our 60,000-man
withdrawal, reduction of the draft by 50,000, and Ho Chi Minh's death.
The doves and the public are making it impossible to happen. He
asked K, if in his planning, he could pick this up so that we make the
tough move before the 15th of October. K said yes. P said he had
been wondering if we shouldn't -- he doesn't want to appear to be
making the tough move after the 15th just because of the rioting at
home. K said there is a problem, however -- if Hanoi takes us
seriously, and they wouldn't have told Moscow if they weren't taking
it seriously, we shouldn't confuse them. If we want them to make
the move, we should give them time -- two weeks. His only worry
is that if we went ahead with the tough move before the 15th -- and
there is a 10% chance Hanoi might want to move, if we hit them
before they have a chance to make the move, it will look as if we
tricked them. He said the President might want to consider another
press conference before the 15th ~~XXX~~ or a television report, saying

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these people (demonstrators, etc.) are dividing the country and making it impossible to settle the problem on a reasonable basis. P said he would just as soon have them demonstrate against the plan. If we went ahead and moved, the country is going to take a dimmer view after the move than before. P would like to nip it before the first demonstration, because there will be another one on November 15. P reminded that Laird had said for three months after we do this, it will have ~~XXXX~~ relatively high public support. K said as an assistant, he had to give P the dark side. He suggested again the possibility ~~KK~~ of P going on television before the demonstration -- possibly around Oct 10.

P said okay; they had had an interesting day; and he would see K on Monday. If Rogers calls, P will try to cool off that thing. K said Rogers can be generally positive but defer an answer for two weeks.

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