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KISSINGER BRIEFING: Dec 24 1970

When this Administration came into office, it found itself confronted with the necessity of changing the emphasis of American foreign policy both in its general philosophical thrust as well as in a number of specific areas.

I don't say this as a criticism of previous Administrations, but rather because the coming into office of this Administration coincided with a general shift in the nature of international relationships, as well as with the fact that a number of crises had brought about a new questioning of some of the old assumptions.

I have spoken at various briefings and there is no point in repeating now what the factors were that had brought about this change of the international climate. The attitude that had projected us into post-war international affairs, in which we were initially the only country in the non-Communist world capable of conducting a global foreign policy, reflected conditions which, by the late 1960's, had significantly changed.

By the late 1960's, it had to be an imperative of American foreign policy to take into account that many new nations had come into being, that many traditional nations had regained their vitality, that the Communist world had become more differentiated, and that the strategic equation had importantly changed.

All of this was a fact of international life. And it was overlaid by the anguish of the war in Vietnam, which had divided our society, and which had gone on inconclusively for five years when this Administration came into office.

Now, I can add nothing, or very little here, to various background briefings which some of you have heard me give on these trends, and I, therefore, will not take time now to repeat them.

Let me make a few observations on what we have attempted to do to meet these conditions. The philosophical statement of what the Administration attempted to do was expressed in the Nixon Doctrine. No one has ever claimed that the Nixon Doctrine is a cookbook which gives you a recipe for every situation with which you may be confronted. It defines an attitude and a general philosophy, not a set of specific detailed policies.

What it says is that you cannot build a new international structure entirely on conceptions, the resources and the unilateral policies of the United States; that in the next phase of American foreign policy our ingenuity has to be concentrated on eliciting the cooperation of other countries; and that defense and progress in other areas of the world cannot be entirely or even largely an American policy.

This is not intended as a retreat into isolationism. The President has repeatedly pointed out that this is our way of remaining committed to the rest of the world under the conditions appropriate to the new period for the next phase of American foreign policy.

It isn't possible in the abstract to say how this has applied from circumstance to circumstance. In many countries, such as in Asia, it has led to a reduction of the American physical presence and will lead to a further reduction of the American physical presence as the local resources become available. In other areas, it was believed that the only way a greater contribution of those areas could be elicited was to maintain the presence of the United States, more or less, in its current extent. This was the decision we made with respect to NATO.

Therefore, one cannot apply it literally in every specific area, but the major thrust is clear; that intellectually, politically and in terms of resources, a greater contribution by other countries is required, and that we are looking for a new cooperative relationship with those countries with which we have been allied and with those countries with which we share common objectives, even if they are not allied with us.

Now, let me make a few observations about different parts of the world.

One of the top priorities of the Administration, which was symbolized by the first foreign travel of the President, was to restore our relationship to Western Europe.

The United States deserves a great deal of credit for the economic and political recovery of Europe and for maintaining its security through much of the post-war period. But, also, in that period a pattern of paternalism developed in which the United States, perhaps, became too obtrusive in the development of common policies.

This Administration is convinced that a greater European contribution in the common interest is desired.

We are prepared to conduct our relations with Europe on the basis of a real partnership and we have attempted to be meticulous in consulting our European Allies on those policies which we are conducting bilaterally with the Soviet Union or in other contexts.

We have conducted the SALT negotiations without any of the flare-ups that have characterized previous disarmament negotiations; that is, flare-ups with our Allies.

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We believe that we have restored a greater degree of understanding between ourselves and the Europeans. There are a number of issues in American-European relationships: First, the issue of defense. We have concluded, after very careful study, that the new strategic equation, the new strategic situation that exists, requires that NATO adapt to some of its actions and some of its policies.

For a long time, NATO, in effect, could rely almost exclusively on the threat of massive retaliation. In the new nuclear situation that exists, it is only realistic to face the fact that other forms of defense are also essential. Many Europeans expressed profound concern earlier last year about the possible withdrawal of American forces from Europe. We have committed ourselves to maintaining our forces in Europe, provided the Europeans cooperate with us in making these forces militarily meaningful and cooperate with us in an equitable sharing of the burdens that result from it.

The second concern that I read about in the newspapers has to do with the various policies of detente, that different European countries may be pursuing more or less bilaterally as we pursue some of our policies bilaterally.

Let me make the attitude of this Administration clear. We favor a relaxation of tensions and we are committed to inaugurating a period of negotiation, rather than one of confrontation.

It is in the common interest that the policies of negotiation, whoever pursues them, we or the other countries, are carried out in the closest consultation so that they do not lead to an opportunity by possible opponents to drive a wedge in between traditional friends or to use a differentiated detente; that is to say, to have a detente with one part of the Alliance and a hardening of relationships with the other.

These are strictures we put on ourselves and therefore, we have meticulously consulted our Allies on SALT negotiations. This is our view with respect to bilateral negotiations that our Allies may conduct with the Soviet Union.

We have no complaints about the degree to which we have been consulted in the past. And within this framework of consultation, we believe that the general process of relaxation can continue, provided there is a realistic basis for negotiation, and that is in the common interest.

The third problem we will face is the negotiations that are now going on between Britain and the Common Market, looking to Britain's entry into the European economic community.

This Administration favors Britain's entry into the European economic community, but we also believe that the details of how it is to come about are primarily for the Europeans to negotiate and cannot be the result of American policies or American pressures.

We recognize that there may be some price that we have to pay for the greater degree of cohesion that will be one of the benefits of greater European economic integration, and to a certain point, we are prepared to go along with it.

Again, we believe it is in the common interest that these relationships develop in such a way as to encourage the maximum degree of trade, rather than restrictive practice. but I believe that the principle is recognized on both sides of the Atlantic and in the years ahead, we will attempt to work it out to the common interest.

A word now about East-West relations: When the President came into office, in his Inaugural Address he pointed out that he wanted to initiate an era of negotiation, rather than confrontation. Our basic principle has been to deal with the Communist world, and particularly with the Soviet Union, on the assumption that the tensions of the past two decades have not been caused by personal misunderstanding, but have an objective basis. And we have, therefore, been prepared to deal with these issues concretely, realistically, and on the basis of reciprocity. We recognize that the Soviet Union is a great country, is a major power, and we recognize that a major power will not make agreements to its own disadvantage. And this is not our interest.

Similarly, we expect that the same principles are applied to us. We have, therefore, insisted in our own preparations for negotiations,such as SALT, to be meticulously prepared and not to substitute a general attitude for detailed negotiation.

This process has had its ups and downs. It would be idle to deny that there have been incidents that have given us pause. Events in the Middle East last summer, some of the activities in the Caribbean, some of the harassments on the Berlin access routes have, in our view, not been conducive to creating the climate which we are seeking.

On the other hand, the SALT negotiations have been conducted,on the whole, in a realistic and constructive spirit.

But my purpose here is not to discuss the past. My purpose is to reaffirm that this Administration remains committed to the policy of negotiation. This Administration continues to believe that it is in the mutual interests of both countries to seek realistic negotiations.

We recognize that major settlements of major areas, such as the Middle East, are not possible, unless the Soviet Union is also interested in achieving a realistic settlement and considers its own interests adequately safeguarded.

And, therefore, we still strive, in the next two years, to continue to explore means,within the framework that I have indicated,of reducing the causes of the tensions and of seeking realistic agreements with the other side.

In this connection, the SALT negotiations have always had the special attention of this Administration.

It is not only that strategic arms represent the most cataclysmic threat that mankind has ever confronted. It is also that if the two sides can come to an understanding of the limits of permissible actions in this field, that they might develop a common interest affecting their relationships in other areas as well.

The subject is extremely difficult. Even within our own preparations for it, we confronted many objectively difficult issues. And we are, therefore, not surprised, and even less are we disheartened by the fact that progress in these negotiations has not been, as yet, spectacularly rapid.

On the other hand, we are in a position of being able to move very rapidly into various types of agreements, because the kind of preparation we have made enables us to put together the building blocks of various positions fairly fast, and secondly, we believe that we have now reached a point in the negotiations in which the two positions are fairly well understood, and in which the intellectual basis of a possible agreement is becoming increasingly clear.

What is required now is a political decision to move forward towards an agreement, a political decision we believe primarily in Moscow.

If that decision is made, we believe that an agreement can be reached fairly rapidly.

With respect to Communist China, and other of the major Communist countries, our position has been quite similar to the one that I have just described towards the Soviet Union.

Early in the Administration, the President ordered an examination of the possibilities of easing some of the irritations in the relationship, especially in the field of trade and travel. And we, therefore, took a number of steps which removed some of these restrictions and which beyond that made clear to the Communist Chinese that the United States was prepared to talk seriously and to enable them to re-enter the international community.

We are in the process now of again reviewing the still existing restrictions. We remain prepared, at Warsaw, or elsewhere, to talk to the Communist Chinese about differences that divide us. There were some talks in Warsaw last year that were interrupted, but we stand prepared to resume them, applying the same principles that I have indicated govern our relationship to the Communist world, which is to seek, on the basis of equality, to remove the causes that have produced the tensions.

A few words about Vietnam, the subject most difficult to discuss in a non-liturgical manner.

I think I have spent more time with this group on Vietnam than on any other single subject. But it might be important to recall that when we came into office, the number of troops in Vietnam was still actually increasing, that no substantive negotiations had, as yet, taken place, no formal American position in the negotiations existed. And no policy for how the war might be ended was at hand.

I would simply point out to you that the number of troops in Vietnam will have been cut in half by the spring of this year; that we believe that the Vietnamization program is making progress so that the end of the war can now be said to be in sight one way or the other, either through negotiation or through Vietnamization or, at least, through Vietnamization, the end of our active participation.

We have been disappointed that negotiations have not been more rapid. And we had greater hopes for the peace initiative in October than have so far been realized.

On the whole, we believe that the main thrust of our policy will lead us towards the objective to end the war under conditions that keep our country united and that give our people the sense that the suffering of the last seven years has not been entirely pointless.

We have never said this is an easy process, and there will be no doubt in the next two years, ups and downs, but the thing to observe is the trend and not any particular event, and the trend is clearly going to be in the direction which I have indicated.

A few words about other areas. The Secretary of State covered the Middle East fully yesterday at his press conference. There is nothing that I can add, except the observation that I have already made.

Of course, a settlement in the Middle East will be extremely difficult to negotiate. The fears and the passions of the protagonists are very profound. The interests of major outside countries are involved.

No one has ever pretended that the progress will be smooth, but whatever the difficulties of an existing policy, they have to be measured against the alternatives, and it is the view of this Administration that the alternative of permitting the military confrontation to continue involves unacceptable risks for everybody.

We went through a difficult period last summer with the Jordanian crisis, with the cease-fire violations, in which for a week the question of peace and war in the Middle East seemed to hang in the balance.

We believed that the experience of that week should teach everybody how precarious the international equilibrium in that area is and should enable all the interested parties to take a new look at their positions when the negotiations begin again. As the Secretary of State pointed out yesterday, he hopes they will at the appropriate time.

Among the disappointments, one would have to list the evolution in Latin America. We developed early in the Administration a new policy informed by the same spirit as the one I have indicated to you previously, but as with all transitional programs, there is an inevitable time lag as one shifts from one phase to another. And in some revolutionary areas, that time lag then produces events that may occur more rapidly than one would like to see.

Nevertheless, we remain convinced that the Western Hemisphere is an area as much as any other, in which the possibility of cooperative relationships must be tested and fully explored.

I will stop here with just one general observation. The basic thrust of the instructions that the President has given his senior adviers has been that he doesn't want to be remembered as the President who managed crises well, that he would like to bring about policies which reduced crises to a minimum and gave the maximum opportunity for the development of constructive and peaceful policies.

We have attempted to look ahead three to five years in major areas. In many little-observed respects, we have tried to take farsighted approaches, such as in the regulation of the seabeds where we have proposed a new international regime.

In evolving a new structure for peace, it is inevitably true that the task of construction takes longer than to regulate the destructive forces, and, therefore, the public's attention is inevitably focused on the crises and on the dangers.

And it also seems to us to be the case that while in the first two years we had to deal with many vestiges of previous periods and previous policies, while we had to get the machinery of government into place, while we had to lay the foundation of the constructive phase, that many of the trends that I have described should develop further in the next two years and that is certainly what we will dedicate our efforts to.

I apologize for the generality of some of these remarks, but I will try to be more specific in answering your questions.

Q Dr. Kissinger, a liturgical question about Vietnam.

DR. KISSINGER: You don't scare off easily, do you? (Laughter).

Q Does the Administration consider now that the preservation of a non-Communist government or friendly government, friendly to us, that is independent of Hanoi, is essential to the security of the United States?

DR. KISSINGER: The Administration considers, as the President has pointed out in several speeches, and as other senior officials have said, that we should give the people of South Vietnam an opportunity to express their preferences and not to have a government imposed on them from the outside.

This Administration will abide by the political decisions of the South Vietnamese people. It will not impose a government on the South Vietnamese against their wishes.

It is also, of course, clear that how you determine the political will of the South Vietnamese people is a very complicated process. The traditions are different than ours. We have proposed various methods of determining it, which we obviously believe to be the best, or we would not have proposed them. But we have always said that we are prepared to listen to counter-proposals that are consistent with this objective.

Q Dr. Kissinger, has the evolution of Soviet policy in the last two years surprised this government, and if it has, is that the reason why the Nixon Doctrine has had to be adapted in several ways? And the Asian aspects of it are quite different from the European aspects of it.

Would it have been similar but for this evolution of Soviet policy in the last two years?

DR. KISSINGER: I think it is safe to say that the change in international relations that we are trying to bring about, especially in our relationships to major adversaries, such as the Soviet Union, present major problems for the decision-making also of the other countries. The old Cold War world is more familiar to everybody, and therefore, any major change is bound to run into internal oppositions everywhere.

Therefore, the process of negotiation inevitably is going to have its ups and downs. And I think it is safe to say that relationships have not improved as rapidly as some of us had hoped.

Is the change in NATO policy the direct result of specific Soviet policy? I will have to answer this in two parts: The change in NATO policy is to the largest degree due to the changed nature of the strategic situation, which is independent of individual Soviet policies, other than their rapid buildup of long-range missiles.

That has produced a new strategic situation, which in turn led to its own consequences. And in these circumstances, it simply was not possible to continue the previous pattern.

We have, however, made clear, and we continue to be prepared, that we are willing to discuss a mutual, what is called a mutual balancedforce reduction, and, therefore, to the extent that the Soviet Union is prepared to engage in serious negotiations with us on that issue, we can reverse these NATO policies which I have described on the basis of reciprocity.

As far as we are concerned, we are now in the process of making as detailed and as serious studies on the issue of mutual balanced force reductions as was previously made on SALT, even though no negotiations seem to be eminent.

I mention this only to indicate our general readiness. Therefore, I would have to reply to you that, of course, in Western Europe, the countries concerned are in direct confrontation with a military power possessing an enormous nuclear arsenal, and is directly adjoining.

In Southeast Asia, this is not the precise strategic situation, and this is one of the main reasons for the difference in which the Nixon Doctrine has been applied in the two areas of the world. I would not describe the NATO policy in major part as a reaction to specific Soviet moves over the last six months.

Q May I follow up? The reason I asked my question was because it was assumed, and many people said that we are not going to maintain present force levels in NATO beyond the end of fiscal 1971, and we have adopted a policy which seems open ended now.

And that would seem to suggest that it was because of something that happened of a specific policy nature.

DR. KISSINGER: No, the decision was made in its largest degree as a result of our analysis of the strategic situation as well as of the concerns expressed by the Europeans, as to the requirements of Atlantic cohesion. But we made studies, starting last May really, as part of the preparation for the Defense budget, in the course of which we came to the conclusion, really primarily on the merits of the strategic analysis, that a shift away from the attitude of the 50's to the realities of the present was essential.

And it is fair to say that not everybody started with that conviction when the studies were first undertaken. That is not said as a criticism. That is what studies are for.

Murrey?

Q May I follow that up?

DR. KISSINGER: As long as you don't ask me about what a certain word means.

Q I will not. (Laughter).

A number of responsible critics, Dr. Kissinger, have said that on analysis to them the emphasis of the Nixon Doctrine on the reduction of forces and bases overseas in many areas inevitably will lead to a raising of the threshold for use of tactical nuclear weapons.

Could you respond to that?

DR. KISSINGER: OFF THE RECORD, of course, I have to say that we have some difficulty accepting the proposition that the adjective and the noun can be connected. I am not sure they are responsible critics. (Laughter).

But leaving that for later discussion, what you must mean is lowering the threshold, not raising the threshold. What you are saying is that tactical nuclear weapons may have to be used earlier than they would be if the Nixon Doctrine did not exist?

Q I believe it has two elements; that there is greater reliance on tactical nuclear weapons, it is contended, and/or, that they will have to be used earlier.

DR. KISSINGER: It is not true that there is an explicit policy to rely on tactical nuclear weapons earlier than was the case previously. In its formal sense, what the Nixon Doctrine attempts to do is to substitute, to the extent possible, local resources for American resources, and, therefore, if that substitution works out, that should not make the recourse to tactical nuclear more necessary.

The primary thrust of the Nixon Doctrine is not to develop a military strategy as such. The primary thrust of the Nixon Doctrine is to take account of the fact that it is psychologically and physically, but above all, psychologically, beyond any one country's capability to make itself responsible for every part of the world, at every moment of time, in every conceivable crisis.

We are, above all, interested in eliciting the participation of other countries in their own development and in their own defense. That is the primary orientation of the Nixon Doctrine, because anything else and any paternalistic attitude on our part really, over a historical period, breaks the self-reliance of the countries concerned.

Then you come to the practical question: As American forces are reduced, does that in practice lead to a greater reliance on tactical nuclear weapons, even if that was not your original intention?

Let me explain, for example, with respect to the decision to withdraw 20,000 troops from Korea. We made very extensive studies. First, you have to remember that the level of forces that existed in Korea dated from the middle 50's and that once these deployments exist, they develop a life of their own.

The original purpose and the original rationale may be forgotten and the forces take on a symbolic character of their own.

We attempted to ask the question of what threat is it that any forces, Korean or American, might have to meet in Korea. We came to the conclusion that with a modernization program for South Korean forces they ought to be able to meet, in the new arrangement that we have proposed to them, any foreseeable threat from North Korea. And even a threat from North Korea, combined with some measure of threat from Communist China.

Of course, if Communist China launches an all-out attack against South Korea, together with an all-out attack from North Korea, then you face a new situation. But that new situation, in our judgment, would exist even if 20,000 more American troops were there.

In other words, that is not affected by our withdrawal and, therefore, in the case of Korea, I can say with some confidence that according to our best judgment, the probability of using nuclear weapons earlier is not involved.

In other areas where there have been drawdowns, such as Vietnam, this is also not the case, and one would then have to analyze it area by area.

In Western Europe, the whole issue of tactical nuclear weapons is involved in the examination of the strategy in which we are now engaged and clearly the likelihood is not going to be increased by the decision to rely more on conventional weapons.

So, I would say this is an unjustified criticism both in terms of philosophy, in terms of our intentions and in terms of the likely results as we have studied them.

Q Could you describe for us the direction and thrust of our policy toward Chile and specifically what alternatives ---

DR. KISSINGER: I knew you were going to get me. I have ducked you for three weeks. (Laughter).

Mr. Ziegler says the time is up. (Laughter).

Q I haven't finished my question.

Q What is the question?

DR. KISSINGER: I am afraid I know the question.

Q Would you please describe for us the direction and thrust of American policy toward Chile and specifically what alternatives are being offered this country to prevent them from going in the direction of Cuba?

DR. KISSINGER: First, I think we have to understand that some countries have their own policies and don't pursue them primarily in reaction to ours. If you look at the career of the Chilean President, you have to say that he has pursued certain principles with a fair amount of consistency over a considerable period of time. I don't want to go into many specifics on an issue as delicate as our relations with Chile. Our policy is to be prepared to have the relationship with Chile that Chile is prepared to have with us.

We are not seeking a confrontation with Chile. We have maintained all people to people programs of the Peace Corps, P.L. 480, and there will be other measures of this kind. We have kept open many of the pipelines.

So, I think it is safe to say that the government of Chile knows that the lines of communication to us are open and if it moves in the direction of Cuba, I do not believe it can be said that we are driving it there.

Q But if some aid is held up, Dr. Kissinger, as it has been reported it has been, wouldn't they have to go elsewhere for alternatives?

DR. KISSINGER: First of all, it is a question of what aid we are talking about, because anything having to do with people to people programs has been completely unaffected. Other matters, other programs, are under the process of review, but no existing program has been permanently held up or has been held up beyond what is made necessary by a review brought about by such a self-proclaimed fundamental change.

Bob?

Q Henry, on this success of the Vietnamization program, if this program is, as I understand it, an attempt to provide the South Vietnamese with the wherewithal to fight their own battles, defend their own country, equipment, training, they have now got their own helicopter units, their own air force, and you say this is all succeeding, why is it then necessary to step up the bombing or even to threaten to step up the bombing if we, in fact, believe that all of this is working out for us?

DR. KISSINGER: First of all, we haven't stepped up bombing. What the President has said, and what the Secretary of State has repeated, yesterday, was that if the other side steps up its activities, we retain the freedom to react to it.

I do not want to create the misleading impression that the policy of Vietnamization is proceeding in a straight line in every area of the country at an equal pace.

In military Region 3 and military Region 4, as a result of the Cambodian incursion, the ability of the North Vietnamese to launch major operations has been, for the time being, practically eliminated.

In military Region 4, there are at present no American forces, and nevertheless, the Pacification Program is gaining. There are, however, two problems. One is when you replace 550,000 Americans, when you are in the process of drawing down several hundred thousand Americans in a relatively short period of time, and replacing them with Vietnamese, it is obvious that this is a problem that goes beyond just training these Vietnamese. It has also this replacement aspect.

Secondly, the North Vietnamese have significantly stepped up their rate of infiltration in this dry season, which may create the impression or which gives us the impression that they may be planning offensive operations. We are not saying that the North Vietnamese cannot launch an offensive. And as our troops are withdrawn, of course, the remaining troops are, to that extent, somewhat more exposed to an unimpeded North Vietnamese attack.

Nevertheless, we believe that over a reasonable period of time we can get the South Vietnamese into a position where we will be able to deal with some ups and downs, with any unforeseeable level of North Vietnamese attack.

In 1971, this will not be quite the case yet, but it is much more the case in 1971 than it was in 1970. If we can make similar progress in 1971, as we did in the last year, I think that the concern you have expressed would be sharply reduced in future years.

Q Dr. Kissinger, do the tactics taken by West Germany in its negotiated treaty with the Soviet Union and Poland meet your standards of the right way to go about detente, or do they perhaps also create some anxieties?

DR. KISSINGER: I have pointed out that there are two problems in any bilateral negotiation with the Soviet Union. And I would apply this to us, as well as to any other country. This is not a peculiarly German problem.

There is, first of all, the substance of the negotiation. There is secondly the process in which the negotiations may start. As to the substance of the negotiations, all of the issues that the Germans have negotiated have concerned essentially German matters in which we believe that they have to be the best judge of their own interests, and in which we believe it would be inappropriate for the United States to express an opinion as to the substance. They have not affected essential American interests. And we have been fully informed about the negotiations.

The second is that any bilateral negotiations, by anybody, including us, have the problem of perhaps creating temptations of driving a wedge between the various Allies. Therefore, they have to be compensated by, first of all, very careful consultation, both as to the details and the general theory that is being pursued, and secondly, by some agreement on general objectives.

Again, we have full consultations with the German Government, and we see no point in taking actions now on the basis of things that might happen in the future and that it is in our power to avoid and that it is in the common interest to avoid, and, therefore, almost all of these stories about tensions between Bonn and Washington, that I have read in the newspapers, astonish senior officials both here and, I believe, in Bonn.

Q Dr. Kissinger, you mentioned, sir, that a political decision would have to be made by Moscow in the SALT talks. When will this have to be made in order that the SALT talks will not become an 18-nation disarmament conference?

DR. KISSINGER: I think that the Soviet Union has to judge its own interest. We are not giving the Soviet Union any particular deadline.

If you look at the way the negotiations have gone, it would be highly unfair to compare them to simply a debating forum. First of all, they have elicited from both sides, and I can say certainly from us, the most searching examination of the nature of the strategic arms race that has ever been undertaken, either in or out of the government.

This was understood in the merits of our position, simply in the preparation of it. I think it has been reflected in responsible positions on our part and in serious replies on their part.

The progress has not been overwhelmingly fast, but it also has not been irresponsible. It has gone at the pace that you would expect serious people to go. What a political decision could do is to give it a particular urgency, and a particular focus.

And if that were made, we believe that an agreement could be reached fairly rapidly. We think we now understand each other's position. And we know the general framework of the negotiations. But I did not mean to suggest that there was a particular deadline attached to the negotiations, other than what is inherent in the momentum of the arms race.

Chuck?

Q May I follow on that particular question? If the positions are well understood, is there anything more to be done in the SALT talks in the absence of a political decision to give it that urgency?

DR. KISSINGER: Yes. The basic positions are well understood. However, the Soviet position has not been put forth in anything like the detail that ours has been put forth.

With respect to both ours and to theirs, there are many issues that remain to be explored in considerable detail. So that even in the absence of a political decision, we believe that further progress is possible at Vienna.

What the political decision would do is to speed up the process. But even in the absence of that decision, if the negotiations continue at their present rate, we have not exhausted the possibilities of exploring the various points of view.

Q Dr. Kissinger, there are all sorts of reports and rumors about Soviet activity in Cuba, particularly in regard to nuclear submarines.

What is the truth about that, and do we have a new understanding with them or a new definition of the 1962 understanding in regard to that?

DR. KISSINGER: The Secretary of State explained this yesterday.

And Mr. Ziegler has also explained it. He is mumbling to me now and the Caribbean seems to be his area. (Laughter).

Q He mumbled to us when he explained it. (Laughter).

DR. KISSINGER: Let me repeat what Mr. Ziegler said the other day, and what the Secretary of State said yesterday.

We believe we have an understanding with the Soviet Union in which both sides know the limits of action in the Caribbean beyond which the situation would become very grave. We believe that exists and there can be no misapprehension about that. Whether any particular activity goes to the edge of that understanding or not has to be judged from case to case.

We are watching it very carefully. Up to now the understanding has not been violated. It would, of course, be preferable if activities could be kept well short of the limits of the understanding in order to remove any possible doubts. But all I can say is we are watching the situation very carefully and, if we believe that the limits of the understanding are exceeded, then we will, of course, have to consider what action has to be taken.

Q Is this a verbal understanding or is it a written understanding?

DR. KISSINGER: I don't want to go any further into it.

Q Dr. Kissinger, could you tell us if you are really concerned with the possible resurgence of militarism in Japan, and if you are, do you see it as sort of a logical inevitable outcome of the Nixon Doctrine?

DR. KISSINGER: I must tell you honestly, my colleagues from Harvard battered me so much about the resurgence of American militarism that I haven't been able to give full attention to the problem of the Japanese, the possible problems of Japanese militarism. (Laughter).

We believe that Japan is a valued and important friend. We do not construe the Nixon Doctrine as separating ourselves from Japan. We attempted to conduct the Okinawa negotiations in a manner, for example, that would guarantee a confident, long-term relationship between Japan and the United States. And we will not knowingly encourage nationalistic separate policies in Japan.

So, if there is a resurgence of Japanese militarism, or a danger of one, which I am not affirming, it will develop from autonomous Japanese causes, it will not be knowingly encouraged by the United States.

MR. ZIEGLER: We have gone about an hour now, gentlemen. I think we have time for about ten more minutes. Is that all right?

DR. KISSINGER: I thought you said ten more questions.

MR. ZIEGLER: At the rate of your answers, you would be here an hour.

DR. KISSINGER: Do you want to recognize the people? Why should I make enemies? (Laughter).

Q In that same connection, would you follow on with the economic relations with Japan that seem to be getting much worse?

DR. KISSINGER: OFF THE RECORD, there was a happy period in my life when I never knew a thing about textiles. (Laughter). I am not becoming one of the great bores at cocktail parties because I can talk about a subject that no one else understands.

Economic relations between us and Japan, with the resurgence and build up of the Japanese economy, are undergoing a somewhat complex period. We are involved in textile negotiations with the Japanese Government, which I don't want to discuss now, because they are in a delicate phase.

In general, there is a feeling, on the part of some of our industrial people, that perhaps Japanese economic policies have been unduly restrictive. I know there is a fear on the part of the Japanese that we may be heading into a period of a trade war.

I want to make it clear that the policy of this Administration considers Japan as one of our most important friends and a cornerstone of any relationship that can be built in the Pacific.

We would guide our economic relations by our political imperatives, not the other way around. We are most anxious to have a liberalization of trade on both sides and if a trade war were to result, we would consider that a great misfortune and it will not be encouraged by this Administration.

The textile problem, as many people know, is in a special category for the time being. But in terms of our general relationship, we believe that the conversations we had here with Prime Minister Sato, as well as our own realization of the necessities of the period, lead us in the direction of encouraging greater liberalization on both sides of the Pacific, rather than encouraging restrictive practices.

So, this is our policy.

Q Dr. Kissinger, there is a feeling among some of the newer of the black nations in Africa that the United States is unsympathetic to their problems. Could you address yourself to that?

DR. KISSINGER: The United States is sympathetic to the aspirations for development, political independence and self-determination of the black African states. In black Africa, as in many other parts of the world, we are attempting to encourage as much self-reliance as we possibly can. And we are attempting to encourage policies which can have constructive consequences rather than policies that are simply made for the record.

But you will remember that the Secretary of State of this Administration was the first American Secretary of State in office to visit black Africa. He made an extensive tour. This is a symbolic gesture. The President gave a dinner for African Ambassadors here, most of whom are black.

Given the availability of resources and the shrinkage imposed on us by the Congress of aid funds, we have to establish priorities within black Africa. So, we cannot support every country and we have to concentrate on a few of those countries.

But it is not correct to say that this Administration is unsympathetic. We consider it an important area, going through a very difficult period in which perhaps our capacity for direct influence is not as great as our sympathy. But if you are talking about our attitude ---

Q I am speaking about tangible things that have happened.

DR. KISSINGER: Like what?

Q I thought I was clear in my question to you without spelling it out.

DR. KISSINGER: Like on the issue of South Africa, for example, or on the issue of black Africa itself?

Q I am speaking about black Africa itself. I am speaking about Tanzania. I am speaking about the head of government that came here from Africa to try to see the President to speak about the council of government. I am speaking about an attitude.

DR. KISSINGER: Yes, but let's take the case of the President of Zambia. I don't think a great deal is gained by going into detail.

Q I am speaking about an attitude, not specifics.

DR. KISSINGER: If you are citing that as an example ---

Q That is why I did not want to, you see.

DR. KISSINGER: But we set an appointment. It was changed by the President. We set another appointment. Twelve hours before it was due it was cancelled from New York and we are still not absolutely clear where the communications problem occurred. The President was going on a campaign trip, offered to see him as soon as he came back after the campaign trip, had delayed his campaign trip to make the appointment that was cancelled.

The President had originally offered to see him on a Sunday afternoon. When that was cancelled, he offered to see him on a Monday morning just before he left.

So I really think that the facts in this case do not support the charge. All I can say is there is no hostile attitude towards black African states, and if anything, our tendency would try to be to lean over backward to avoid any slight like the one you have described.

That was one of those unfortunate events where there was a mix up in the communications somewhere and not on our side.

MR. ZIEGLER: We have time for one more question.

George Sherman?

Q Dr. Kissinger, you mentioned the step up of infiltration during the dry season. Can you give us some idea of the magnitude or some framework where it is centered -- and then give us your initial assessment on the changes in Poland, whichever border you like? (Laughter).

DR. KISSINGER: Let me take the last part first, because I don't want to end on a negative note.

I don't think it would be appropriate for me at this moment to make any comment on the situation in Poland.

As to the rate of infiltration, there are two things to be said: First, it is always higher at this time of the year. This is always the relatively highest period. I don't have the figures here, you should check it at the Defense Department to make sure. My impression is it is about 30 percent higher than at a comparable period last year and roughly at the level that it was in 1968 in the period just before they launched the second Tet offensive; that is, the offensive that started shortly after this Administration came into office.

This is about the magnitude of it. It is not at the level that it was prior to the big Tet offensive of '67, I would think about 30 percent below that, or roughly about 30 percent above what it was last year at this time.

There are a number of things that have to be weighed, however, in assessing this. One is that since the losses they suffered in Cambodia occurred just before the beginning of the rainy season, they have not yet -- some of these are replacements for those losses.

To make a full assessment of the significance of this infiltration, one will have to wait a few more weeks to see whether it continues at the present rate.

But in any event, it is the highest it has been in two years and if you couple it with the amount of supplies, the increased amount of supplies that is coming down the trails also, which is substantially above what it was, the signs tend to point towards an attempt to launch an offensive.

Q Could we just get how many is the total estimate now of the North Vietnamese prepared to fight in South Vietnam or in Vietnam?

DR. KISSINGER: I really think you ought to get the figure at the Defense Department. I just don't have it here. I just don't want to give it. It is not for security reasons. I think we have given it out before. I just don't want to give you a wrong figure.

Q Are those supplies going into South Vietnam or towards South Vietnam or towards Cambodia?

DR. KISSINGER: At this stage, it is extremely difficult to say, because their traditional infiltration pattern is that they go down towards Cambodia, even if they go into South Vietnam. They are going through Laos into Cambodia and whether they then branch off into South Vietnam or whether they stay in Cambodia to launch an offensive in Cambodia, on this, there are frankly divided theories. Most people seem to think that an offensive in Cambodia is more likely.

But on this, there is a question of speculation.

THE PRESS: Thank you, Doctor.

END (AT 11:42 A.M. EST)