

MEETING WITH PRESIDENT FORD ON NOVEMBER 29, 1974

I was with President Ford this date for the presentation ceremony to Commander Kerr.

President Ford asked where I was living. I told him we were living in Falls Church until next summer, by which time we must decide on a second career.

He asked me what I was doing. I said that I was giving some university lectures, some public lectures, and trying to write a book.

I asked if the Russians had pulled their usual negotiating trick at Vladivostok of keeping him negotiating until he had to ask for a recess to go to the bathroom. He said that Brezhnev was the one who had to ask for the break each time. It was obvious that he had been forewarned of the technique. He said that Brezhnev was apparently not feeling very well. He had been told by Brezhnev's interpreter that he had been sick before the meeting, and after the second day he seemed fatigued. He said that Brezhnev was very well briefed and knew his stuff.

I made the point that I thought that Brezhnev must have evaluated

him as a pretty tough guy because Brezhnev ^{gave} him, Mr. Ford, a better deal than he was prepared to give Mr. Nixon in July. Mr. Ford said that he had done some pretty hard negotiating with Brezhnev. I went on to say that I thought that this was just a start and that we had a long way to go. Mr. Ford agreed. Secretary Mittendorf and Admiral Holloway were there and commented on the fact that they thought that Congress was beginning to understand a little better how much help the Navy needed in the ship-construction budget. Mr. Ford said I hope so, I'm worried about the new Congress. So many of them ran on an anti-defense program. I said that in my view the monkey really ought to be put on the back of those in Congress who have cut our defense, that this has contributed to our inability to get a better deal in the Strategic Arms Limitation than we have. Mr. Ford said that he agreed with that. Secretary Mittendorf said that he had spent two hours with Senator Stennis the day before Thanksgiving and that Senator Stennis said that he now realizes that the Navy needs help. Secretary Mittendorf said that Senator Stennis was apparently quite distressed about the pressure I had put on him to get the budgets through when I was

Chief of Naval Operations, and that he, Mittendorf, had defended me, doing the only thing that could be done to get a reasonable budget. I told Secretary Mittendorf that I wouldn't believe Senator Stennis was for us until I saw it; that each year he had started out by saying it and each year he kind of worked against us.