

- MEETING OF SECRETARY KISSINGER
WITH ADVISORY COMMITTEE
ON FOREIGN RELATIONS -

- held in Secretary's Conference
Rm., Fri., Nov. 12, 1976 -

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In Attendance

Secretary of State Kissinger

Professor Oliver - Chairman

Mr. Trask

Professor Divine

Mr. Aandahl

Ambassador Jessup

Ambassador Reinhardt

Professor Cohen

Professor Jacobson

Professor Gardner

(The meeting was convened at 3:45 p.m.)

SECRETARY KISSINGER: Well, gentlemen, I first of all want to express my appreciation to you for coming down here and for participating in what I, as somebody who is extremely interested in history, strongly support-- I don't have the time to give day-to-day attention to the important problem on which our historians are working, but I'm extremely sympathetic to it; and this is a good opportunity to find out what your recommendations are and what you think we can do.

PROFESSOR OLIVER: Well, thank you very much. We shall do that.

If I may for just a moment, I am in the position of being the Transition Chairman -- since this is my last year of service on a Committee that, as you know, represents the interests of consumers of foreign affairs history in the United States. And, in the groups we represent as claimant groups, we have found in the four years that I have been here steady progress.

SECRETARY KISSINGER: You have?

PROFESSOR OLIVER: We have, indeed.

SECRETARY KISSINGER: I'm glad of that.

PROFESSOR OLIVER: Of course, we are very pleased

that you, Mr. Secretary -- you and your associates in the Department -- have seen fit to accept our strong recommendation that David Trask become the Historian of the Department, and we have seen progressively over the years the steady improvement in the scientific process of aggregating and selecting the material that should go both into the research work of the Department in foreign affairs history and into the publication of a U. S. foreign relations series.

At the present stage, my impression -- though we as a Committee have not had time to caucus yet; we'll do that later -- my impression is that this is a good year, indeed. We find the relationship between the Bureau and the Office to be excellent because we have --

SECRETARY KISSINGER: The Bureau being John?

PROFESSOR OLIVER: The Bureau being, of course, our good friend the Ambassador, and David and his associates in the Office.

SECRETARY KISSINGER: Don't be associated with Reinhardt. He's the biggest con artist in the building. I pity those poor Africans whom he gets to deal with on those occasional trips! (Laughter.)

PROFESSOR OLIVER: We do find, as I say in my report -- we came to that conclusion as we caucused. At the present time there are some production and engineering problems mainly, and they're largely problems of funding and money -- of how to move the materials in that have been selected and Xeroxed into print. This involves many issues, including the problems of the Government Printing Office that perhaps haven't come to your attention, but they do exist. The GPO is an overworked institution and it sets its own priorities, and the historical priorities are not of the highest.

That's one set of priorities. It's funding for production -- an engineering and production sort of job. There are a few scientific problems. Mainly there are problems, as we have seen them, of delays asked for clearance, of very key documents -- developments that should, if possible, go into the regularized compilations.

SECRETARY KISSINGER: Clearance from this building or clearance from other agencies?

AMBASSADOR REINHARDT: Both.

PROFESSOR OLIVER: Both.

AMBASSADOR REINHARDT: Mostly from other agencies though.

PROFESSOR OLIVER: They're not many,
but they happen to be salient.

SECRETARY KISSINGER: Of course, clearance from
this building we ought to be able to expedite.

AMBASSADOR REINHARDT: On most occasions we have
been able to.

SECRETARY KISSINGER: Who does the clearing here?

AMBASSADOR REINHARDT: The Bureau. Where the
document originates is the prime mover.

PROFESSOR OLIVER: I think I've said enough
in my very transitory role as Chairman. I would much prefer
that my colleagues on the Committee express themselves to
you in the brief time that I'm sure you can be with us.
And I want, on behalf of all of us, to thank you for giving
us this time.

SECRETARY KISSINGER: I'm delighted to do it.
In fact, I expect to be a consumer. (Laughter.)

PROFESSOR COHEN: On the Committee? (Laughter.)

PROFESSOR OLIVER: Yes. We look forward to
that. My fellow Texan, Professor Divine, has been
serving in the Committee for some time. Perhaps he would
like to say something.

PROFESSOR DIVINE: I would just like to point

out on the clearance problems it's not only the question of foreign relations but also the manuscript records. It has to be cleared through the Department before it goes to the National Archives. For many scholars it's crucial -- not just to compile material for the volume. It depends on the actual clearance. The clearance holds up the whole scholarly process. Right now the scholars cannot get beyond 1949 in terms of scholarship records, which means even the Korean war.

SECRETARY KISSINGER: What is the difference between manuscript records and documents?

PROFESSOR DIVINE: Foreign Relations prints only a small percentage of the high-level, more sensitive records.

SECRETARY KISSINGER: Oh, I see, I see -- documents for Foreign Relations in addition.

PROFESSOR DIVINE: Once they're cleared for, the lesser documents are automatically cleared as well; but everything proceeds on that basis --

SECRETARY KISSINGER: I see.

PROFESSOR DIVINE: -- and right now the compilations are only coming up to '49.

SECRETARY KISSINGER: What I have trouble understandin

-- and I should have asked my associates -- is how can any scholar work on the mass of material that is flowing through the Department? Leaving aside now whether it's cleared or not, we get -- what? -- two-three thousand cables a day. Now, I have people sorting them out for me -- sometimes well, and sometimes to keep me from forming an opinion. (Laughter.)

PROFESSOR DIVINE: Well, my colleagues working on the 19th Century find the new documents are revealing, and those of us who work on the 20th Century find just exactly the opposite.

SECRETARY KISSINGER: Exactly. I worked on 19th Century. It wasn't easy, but the fact was with communications, whether worse or poor, they had to give detailed instructions explaining their reasoning and they couldn't give tactical instructions.

Today we don't explain our reasoning. We tell the Ambassador: "When you go in, say the following." If we have something that involves conceptualization, we're more likely to send somebody out.

What happens to talking points, for example?
Do they disappear?

AMBASSADOR REINHARDT: No, they don't; but they

haven't come up by '49, to any great extent--

MR. TRASK: Yes.

AMBASSADOR REINHARDT: --but they don't disappear.

PROFESSOR COHEN: In the new record-keeping, are they in the records?

MR. TRASK: They'll be in our computerized retrieval system, yes.

SECRETARY KISSINGER: You know, when Jack goes on a trip to Africa -- even those talking points aren't all that helpful. They contain what you said. They don't contain why we said it, what the reasoning is.

AMBASSADOR REINHARDT: No.

PROFESSOR COHEN: I'd like to raise two points; and I should repeat that since we have not caucused, these are personal; they are not Committee. And they both grow out of the acceptance of the documentary record. I'm sure earlier Dean Acheson pressed for the creation of a page with a footnote, and the documentary records of this are not very good and are not a basis for anchoring historical reconstruction.

SECRETARY KISSINGER: I don't know. My fear is that they're too good.

PROFESSOR COHEN: Too~~d~~ good. Well, I wonder if that isn't a problem of your current need for fast decision as against the academic who's got a lot of time to go through the record.

SECRETARY KISSINGER: No. Even if you had -- for me I have no problem. I get what I need to have. But then I know what I'm trying to do. so it's not that there's too much for the Secretary of State. There probably is also. But I'm putting myself in the position of a scholar who doesn't know what one was trying to do. Therefore, he'll want to work through the document.

PROFESSOR COHEN: Yes.

SECRETARY KISSINGER: What documents do we really consider relevant and which don't we consider relevant? What is your criterion of relevancy? That's the problem that's going to exist on any negotiation. There are thousands.

PROFESSOR COHEN: But I would go further and say no matter what your criteria are, you probably would find that the documents aren't sufficient -- I mean, you were saying yourself that certain things were not in the record. So what I had in mind was this -- two points: One is that since the Historical Office has been reorganized

so that the foreign relations function and the other ordinary historical research functions of the Office are combined. We find ourselves in the odd position that the charter of this Committee is only concerned with the documentary -- the foreign relations function. And it seems to me that there would be some point in enlarging the charge of the Advisory Committee to include all the historical functions of the Historical Office and, in part, in order to get to this Committee.

SECRETARY KISSINGER: Well, I like that idea. Do we have a different group for the other one?

AMBASSADOR REINHARDT: No. It's the same group of people. They have now been merged. They used to work separately.

SECRETARY KISSINGER: No, no -- but I mean in terms of the Advisory Group, do we have a different Advisory group?

AMBASSADOR REINHARDT: No. This is the only Advisory Group.

SECRETARY KISSINGER: Well, why don't we expand their function?

AMBASSADOR REINHARDT: We can. Well, this suggestion was just coming up.

PROFESSOR COHEN: Yes. And it seems to me that it would then permit the Committee to go into all kinds of questions -- like what sources of data would be good for the record, apart from those that exist in the documents.

PROFESSOR OLIVER: The present limitation shouldn't restrict us, but some of the expectant -- I won't say "claimant" -- groups represented are more interested in foreign relations than in the wide-ranging historical research. For example, Judge Jessup and I represent the American Society of International Law and our focus is a fairly sharp one if it's international relations, but the historians represented by the American Historical Association have a different view; and I think it's very sound that we try to expand the charter of the Advisory Group.

AMBASSADOR JESSUP: But it seems to me, Mr. Secretary, that you have the inevitable problem in the clearance of documents. The officers who are in charge of a particular negotiation or a particular relation with a certain country in a given time, when asked to clear a document -- they have to see the difficulties. and if it comes to you, you are right apt to say, "Well, if you see

this difficulty, I think we better hold it up. History will take care of itself in a few more years."

So HO is bound to lose out on that kind of thing. Now, it always has, and I'm afraid it probably always will. Now, I hope when you cease to be Secretary that you might have a different idea about the declassification of documents than you might have had last week.

SECRETARY KISSINGER: Well, I don't think that I was -- no; I was quite sympathetic to the declassification of documents, whenever decisions came to me. Is that fair -- is that correct or not?

MR. TRASK: I think that is right, Mr. Secretary.

SECRETARY KISSINGER: I think I was, but the normal tendency of a Secretary of State is to back up his Bureaus.

PROFESSOR OLIVER: Sure, sure.

SECRETARY KISSINGER: And the normal tendency of the Bureaus is to hold --

AMBASSADOR REINHARDT: To hold tight.

SECRETARY KISSINGER: -- to hold tight. And the normal function of the agencies is to avoid anything controversial, so the clearance is tough. (Laughter.)

PROFESSOR OLIVER: Might we without a caucus discuss how much time the Secretary has? As far as foreign relations is concerned, the target is official publication 20 years after the event. So for that you have until 1996, I believe, or so; don't you think? (Laughter.) But, as to the research side, what would be a desirable minimum -- or maximum, rather?

PROFESSOR COHEN: Time?

PROFESSOR OLIVER: Classification period. How do you view as a research --

SECRETARY KISSINGER: Why should it be different?

PROFESSOR COHEN: Different from what?

PROFESSOR OLIVER: From 20 years. Well, 20 years is the old-type, preselected official range. People may want to delve earlier, I would suppose. I don't know.

AMBASSADOR REINHARDT: They can't unless the records have been declassified.

PROFESSOR OLIVER: I know, I know.

PROFESSOR COHEN: But he's asking the question whether we should focus in on a different time frame.

PROFESSOR OLIVER: Now we're talking in the context of explaining the claim of the Committee, so I thought it fair to raise this question.

PROFESSOR COHEN: I would say -- five years?

(Laughter.)

AMBASSADOR JESSUP: It used to be ten, didn't it, for a while?

PROFESSOR OLIVER: Yes.

SECRETARY KISSINGER: Ten--before you could go into the records, really.

AMBASSADOR JESSUP: They tried to get foreign relations within ten years. That used to be.

PROFESSOR COHEN: When was that?

PROFESSOR DIVINE: When it originally began was the next year. It was published the next year in 1862-1863.

MR. TRASK: From the official correspondence, and it did not attempt really to describe the overall process of formation and exclusion, so that we are comparing oranges and pears; and I think we have to realize that the expanded scope of the series makes it much more difficult, as it raises problems that did not arise for our forebears, and we can't talk about five years, but I think --

PROFESSOR COHEN: No; of course, not.

PROFESSOR GARDNER: Didn't I understand this afternoon that the 1949 China volume was actually ready

in 1952 or '53?

PROFESSOR DIVINE: '56.

PROFESSOR GARDNER: It was ready in '56, and it was held up for 20 years almost on account of a few documents that people can't get clearance on.

MR. AANDAHL: I think it was wider than that. It was held up by order of Secretary Dulles in 1957 because the first volumes that came out had a bad political effect. So the series as a whole were held up and Secretary Rusk later agreed that the others were to come out with the other volumes for the same year. It's been held in galley proof for many years -- yes.

PROFESSOR OLIVER: Well, we come to a celebrated case, Mr. Secretary, that has been before our group for many years; and it does concern the foreign relations, actually, as has just been stated; and it involves some very interesting, and really quite revealing possibly, initiatives by Chou En-lai, as reported through --

SECRETARY KISSINGER: In what year?

PROFESSOR DIVINE: November '49.

PROFESSOR OLIVER: '49. And EA -- we may as well speak frankly here. EA has been reluctant up to now to give its clearance; and we're not trying, you know,

to bring you down on top of EA.

SECRETARY KISSINGER: Even the present EA.

PROFESSOR OLIVER: What?

SECRETARY KISSINGER: Even the present EA.

AMBASSADOR REINHARDT: Yes.

SECRETARY KISSINGER: Well, what's their initiative?

AMBASSADOR REINHARDT: I told Joe Dyess that they wouldn't even consider releasing this document. Now it has been reintroduced to EA and they still are unwilling to release it.

SECRETARY KISSINGER: On what grounds now?

AMBASSADOR REINHARDT: On grounds that things are not settled in China and that this could be --

SECRETARY KISSINGER: Well, what's in that damn document? I'd be interested. (Laughter.)

MR. TRASK: There was a lot of *factuality*, as you realize; and there was, in effect, a group that wanted to initiate relations with the United States in this mid-1949 period. Nothing came of this ultimately, but there was a feeling in EA that in some sense you might be pointing the finger -- you might be signing the death warrant of some people who were on the side of that initiative -- and so on. But they were of the feeling in some way this material might seriously compromise some people still

living in China and might embarrass us politically.

PROFESSOR OLIVER: We mention it only as illustrative of the few problems of this sort that arise; and for my part, not to bring you down on top of your Bureau, as an old Assistant Secretary I wouldn't want that to happen (laughter), but it's just one of those situations.

SECRETARY KISSINGER: It's a good thing. Ambassador Reinhardt would confirm that I'm going to be down on some Bureau for some reason. (Laughter.)

AMBASSADOR REINHARDT: We'll turn to EA. (Laughter.)

SECRETARY KISSINGER: That's my administrative principle -- never to let the Bureaus think that I'm not watching. (Laughter.)

AMBASSADOR REINHARDT: No. This has been a very bothersome problem for the reason these gentlemen have pointed out. Nevertheless, we've had a certain sympathy with the arguments that we've heard from EA. We're going to have less sympathy -- what has it been, six months after Chou's death? A year from now I wouldn't know what their reasoning would be.

SECRETARY KISSINGER: And you wouldn't release

a volume with some documents missing?

MR. TRASK: We feel that these documents are so important that not to include them would go beyond the bounds of proper practice.

PROFESSOR OLIVER: But you might add that EA wouldn't even let you put a note there.

AMBASSADOR REINHARDT: They wouldn't even let us put a footnote there.

MR. TRASK: But we have now come back to make another request, and their views might now be different. We can't tell.

AMBASSADOR REINHARDT: I'm not sure that Hummel has yet focused on this as some people under him have. Do you know?

MR. TRASK: We do not know, except we have some indications.

SECRETARY KISSINGER: Probably the institutions are less efficient than academic institutions (laughter), so the only ones that can generate more work than faculty meetings are the Bureaus. (Laughter.)

PROFESSOR COHEN: It's a little bigger.

MR. TRASK: But this case, while a special and unusual one, is a particularly important one from the point

of view of the principles involved; and that's why it interests us.

SECRETARY KISSINGER: ^WWhat were you an Assistant Secretary of? (Addresses Professor Oliver.)

PROFESSOR OLIVER: ARA. My heart was really in E. I grew up with E from '42 on, but in the 60s I was tapped to run Inter-American Affairs. EB it's called now. In my time it was just E. But I used to come up through the arched doors past Secretary Olney's portrait to attend meetings of your predecessor in this room.

I don't know whether we should mention the other cause célèbre to the Secretary or let it ride.

Professor Jacobson, do you wish to address some memorials to the Secretary now while we have the opportunity?

PROFESSOR JACOBSON: It's a slightly different topic.

PROFESSOR OLIVER: Let's move to a different topic.

PROFESSOR JACOBSON: As the range of foreign policy expands, the problems of getting the record straight will increase-- when Labor takes a role, for example -- getting documents from the Department of Labor -- and

Agriculture and Treasury and so on.

SECRETARY KISSINGER: But theirs are unclassified.

MR. TRASK: It's possible the ones that interest us will be classified.

SECRETARY KISSINGER: I don't exactly know this. It's rather disgraceful for me to admit, but I don't know how these documents are selected. What do you do? You try to get together -- what's your definition of what a relevant document is? I suppose the Bureaus give you copies of everything.

MR. TRASK: We begin, of course, with the Department's records; but many other agencies are involved. We have various procedures for attempting to gain access, and later to publish their records too.

SECRETARY KISSINGER: Does that include Restricted classification cables that go only to, say, me, and --

AMBASSADOR REINHARDT: NODIS.

PROFESSOR OLIVER: NODIS, Limited.

MR. TRASK: We haven't come to that point in the historical period when we get that sort of classification, but we will.

SECRETARY KISSINGER: Because without it it means

nothing.

PROFESSOR OLIVER: That's right.

AMBASSADOR REINHARDT: Well, there are far fewer of them. That's where they are now.

SECRETARY KISSINGER: Because Top Secret I don't even see -- use any more --

AMBASSADOR REINHARDT: Very seldom.

SECRETARY KISSINGER: -- and it has no significance anyway. (Laughter.) You know, it's the modifiers.

I think the distribution of Top Secret -- I don't know how much less it is than Secret. But what really cuts down distribution is the LIMDIS, EXDIS, NODIS and some other special ones. And I would say that for my period and for the period preceding, if you don't have access to those you can't write a history that's worth a damn.

MR. TRASK: This question arises for us in connection with our policy-related research in various very recent materials but not as yet for the compilation of the Foreign Relations Series.

AMBASSADOR REINHARDT: When they come to that point, presumably the historians within the Department will have access; but they will have a monumental task of getting clearance.

SECRETARY KISSINGER: I would have thought that some of this would have been next to impossible.

Well, gentlemen, are there any other problems that we --

PROFESSOR OLIVER: Professor Gardner?

SECRETARY GARDNER: No.

SECRETARY KISSINGER: I appreciate it very much. We'll expand your charter, unless Jack has some objections which he --

AMBASSADOR REINHARDT: I can see no objections.

SECRETARY KISSINGER: -- which he's not eager to mention at this meeting (laughger). But I think we ought to do both -- the research and the foreign policy series.

Thank you very much.

PROFESSOR OLIVER: Thank you very much, Mr. Secretary.

SECRETARY KISSINGER: Nice to see you.

AMBASSADOR REINHARDT: Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

(Whereupon, at 4:12 p.m., the meeting was concluded.)
