

Conversation No. 720-4  
 Date: May 5, 1972  
 Time: 8:55 am 10:09 am  
 Location: Oval Office

The President talked with Peter J. Brennan.

[Conversation No. 720-4A]

[See Conversation No. 23164]

Rose Mary Woods entered at 8:56 am.

[End of telephone conversation]

Stephen B. Bull entered at an unknown time after 8:58 pm.

Henry A. Kissinger  
 -Location  
 -Meeting with the President  
 -Time

Bull left at an unknown time before 9:14 am.

Tricia Nixon Cox  
 -Interview with Barbara Walters  
 -Thelma C. ("Pat") Nixon's report  
 -Walters's demeanor  
 -Tricia Nixon Cox's appearance  
 -Walters's questions  
 -Antiwar hecklers  
     -George S. McGovern's appeal  
     -Tricia Nixon Cox's handling  
 -Tricia Nixon Cox's appearance  
 -Tricia Nixon Cox's selfassessment  
 -Personal strength  
 -Manner  
 -Comments on the President's job  
 -Manner

Julie Nixon Eisenhower  
 -Meeting with the President

Nixons' travel  
 -Mrs. Nixon  
 -Ronald L. Ziegler

- Funding
- Julie Nixon Eisenhower's public appearances
- Woods's opinion
  - Mrs. Nixon
  - Democrats

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BEGIN WITHDRAWN ITEM NO. 2

[Personal Returnable]

[Duration: 10m 49s]

END WITHDRAWN ITEM NO. 2

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- Forthcoming letter to Francis E. Meloy, Jr.
- Retirement of Donald L. Jackson
  - Dictation

Kissinger entered at 9:14 am.

Kissinger's previous speech in New York

- Response
- Soviet Summit
- Asia Society
  - People's Republic of China [PRC] trip
  - Foreign Affairs Council
  - Audience
  - Columbia University/TimeLife sponsorship
  - Kissinger statement on Vietnam
    - A heckler
    - Hedley W. Donovan
    - Applause

Vietnam

- Press reports
  - President's talk with Brennan
  - Effect of President's televised speeches
    - Lyndon B. Johnson comparison
- Kissinger's Asia Society audience
  - Statement
  - Response
  - Donovan

Woods's schedule

- New York

## Kissinger's schedule

- Speeches

## Woods's schedule

- Camp David
- Visit
- President's trip
- Departure time

Woods left at 9:15 am.

## Soviet Union

- Kissinger's meeting with Anatoliy F. Dobrynin
- The President's instructions
  - Mrs. Nixon
  - Irina N. Dobrynin

## Vietnam

- North Vietnam offensive
- US response
  - Planning
  - Orders to Alexander M. Haig, Jr. and Adm. Thomas H. Moorer
  - Kissinger's schedule
    - President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board [PFIAB] meeting
    - Meeting with Haig and Moorer
  - Leak on blockade
    - Dan Rather's report
    - H. R. ("Bob") Haldeman
    - John A. Scali
    - Haldeman
    - John D. Ehrlichman

Haldeman entered at 9:21 am.

- Rather
- Ehrlichman
- Richard A. Moore
- Charles W. Colson
- Scali
- News reports
  - Rather
  - Wall Street Journal*
  - Rather report
    - Source
    - Melvin R. Laird
    - Moorer

- State Department leak
  - Robert Keatley [?] report
    - Terms for settlement
    - Source
      - William H. Sullivan
      - Cable about cease-fire
        - William P. Rogers
        - Leonid I. Brezhnev
        - Haig
        - Rogers
- Department of Defense [DOD] briefing
  - Soviet arms
- Speculation
  - President's previous remarks
  - Settlement
  - Blockade
  - Bombing
  - Sources
    - Marvin L. Kalb report
      - Sources
    - Rather report
      - Sources
      - Haig
- Press
  - White House staff
    - The President's instructions
  - Moorer
- Plans
  - Kissinger meeting with Moorer
    - Attendees
    - Time
  - President's review
    - Haldeman
    - Notes

Haldeman left at 9:30 am.

- State Department involvement
  - Timing
  - Rogers
  - U. Alexis Johnson
- Blockade
  - Advantages
  - Disadvantages
- Bombing
  - Disadvantages

- Peace demonstrations
- Blockade
  - Commitment
  - Soviet response
  - India's response
  - PRC response
- Bombing
  - Targets
  - Dissent
- Blockade
  - Advantages
  - Alternatives
- Ground action
  - Latest reports
  - Weakness
    - Kontum
  - North Vietnam casualties
  - North Vietnam attacks
- US response
  - US landing in panhandle
    - Effect
- US bombing
  - Effectiveness
- Blockade
  - Effectiveness
- Bombing
  - Impact
    - Haiphong
    - Hainan
  - President's instinct
    - Su Nan [Sp?]
  - William J. Porter walkout
  - Kissinger backgrounder
    - Talk with Henry Hubbard, Jerrold L. Schecter, and Max Frankel
- Blockade
  - Kissinger's view
  - Public support
  - Advantages
    - Decisiveness
    - Effect on forthcoming election
    - End of war
- Bombing
  - Advantages
  - John B. Connally's advice
  - Advantages
    - Soviet response

-Cancellation of Summit

An unknown person entered at an unknown time after 9:30 am.

-Soviet Summit

The unknown person left at an unknown time before 10:09 am.

- Timing with North Vietnam offensive
- Public perception
- Hue
- Kontum

An unknown person entered at an unknown time after 9:30 am.

- Bombing
- Timing

The unknown person left at an unknown time before 10:09 am.

- Lines of communication
  - Gen. Creighton W. Abrams, Jr.
  - Ellsworth F. Bunker
  - Instructions
    - Abrams
    - The President
    - Kissinger
    - Bunker
    - Abrams
    - Laird
    - Moorer
    - Abrams
    - Laird
    - Abrams
    - Moorer
    - [David] Kenneth Rush
    - Bunker
    - Laird
      - Actions
      - Motives
- US position
  - Haig
  - Moorer
  - Connally
- Soviet reply to US message
- Bombing

- Soviet response
  - Effect on bombing
- PRC summit
  - Effect of Hanoi and Haiphong bombing
- Blockade
- Soviet goals
  - Kissinger's assessment
    - Foreign Affairs Council speech
- Hubert H. Humphrey, McGovern, Edward M. Kennedy
  - Dealings with Soviets
- Connally's advice
- Escalation
  - Issues in Vietnam
    - Communist government
    - Control of US policy
  - US response
    - Peace offers
  - North Vietnam motives
- US long-term interests
  - Soviet Summit
    - Cancellation
      - Connally's advice
      - Public response
        - Dwight D. Eisenhower's cancelled trip to the Soviet Union
        - Eisenhower's cancelled trip to Japan
        - The President's trip while Vice President to Venezuela
- Bombing
  - Soviet response
    - Summit
      - Comparison with blockade
- Connally's advice
  - Avoidance of defeat
- Bombing
  - Effectiveness
- Blockade
  - Effectiveness compared with bombing
  - Commitment
  - Soviet Union response
  - PRC response
  - President's foreign policy
    - Risks
    - Legacy
      - PRC
  - Compared to Laos operation
- End of war
  - President's efforts

- Dealing with Soviets, PRC, Europeans, and Japanese
  - Alternatives to President
    - Connally
    - McGovern
    - Humphrey
    - Kennedy
  - Ability to conduct foreign policy
- US stakes
  - President's incumbency
  - US foreign policy
    - Rogers and Laird
  - Disentanglement from war
    - North Vietnam terms
      - Kissinger's view
      - May 31, 1971 proposals
  - Forthcoming election
    - Effect on South Vietnam
    - Blockade compared with bombing
    - North Vietnam actions
      - Break-off of talks
        - Responsibility
          - Porter
      - Peace groups
      - Press coverage

#### Forthcoming election

- Democrats
  - Draft of Connally
  - Possibility

#### Vietnam

- McGovern
- Impact on US foreign policy
  - Humiliation
- Blockade
  - Necessity
- Bombing
  - Moorer
  - Extent
  - Civilian casualties
  - Targets
    - Petroleum, Oils, and Lubricants [POL] dumps
    - Dikes
      - Civilian casualties
      - Forthcoming study
      - President's familiarity

- Evacuation of civilians
- Destruction
  - Impact
- Questions raised by Kissinger
  - The President's view
- Effectiveness
  - Coordination with blockade
  - Relationship to averting defeat
- Return of prisoners of war [POWs]
- South Vietnam performance
  - Collapse
  - Losses
    - Kontum
    - Provincial capitals
      - Slow movement
    - Quang Tri
      - Capture
      - Value
- Blockade
  - Effectiveness
  - Only sure option
- Peace terms
  - Nguyen Van Thieu
  - US dignity

Stephen B. Bull entered at an unknown time after 9:30 am.

Forthcoming PFIAB meeting

- Delay
- Refreshments

Bull left at an unknown time before 10:09 am.

Vietnam

- Blockade and bombing
  - Effect on South Vietnam
  - Effect on North Vietnam
    - Connally's comment
- Haig
  - Trip to South Vietnam
    - Haldeman
- Trip to South Vietnam
  - Abrams
    - Lt. Col. W.E. Depuy
      - Kissinger's view
      - Assignment

- Bunker
  - Responsibility to the President
  - New assignment
- Replacement for Abrams
  - Laird involvement
    - Kissinger's view
    - Kissinger's call to Laird
- President's meeting with Laird and Rogers
  - Johnson
- Cable from Bunker
  - Kissinger's view
  - Contents
    - Abrams
    - Moorer
    - Abrams
    - Bunker
    - Moorer
    - Rush
    - Laird
- President's meeting with Laird about the blockade
  - Kissinger's instructions
    - Secrecy
      - Rogers and Cambodia comparison
    - President's need for Laird's support
      - Strategic Arms Limitation Talks [SALT] comparison
  - President's decision on blockade
- Rogers
  - Meeting with the President
    - Time
    - Day
    - Kissinger's schedule
    - Day
- President's speech
- President's meeting with Rogers
- Laird
  - Meeting with Kissinger
- Briefings
  - Congressmen
    - Rogers
    - John J. McCloy
    - Announcement
      - Time
    - J. William Fulbright
    - Michael J. Mansfield
    - Rogers
    - Laird

- Kissinger's briefings
- Press
  - Timing
  - The President's view
- Kissinger meeting with Dobrynin
  - Manner
  - Speculation
  - Response to questions
  - Chou En-lai

Kissinger left at 10:09 am.