

## Document 6

### **Conversation between President Nixon and National Security Adviser Kissinger, followed by Conversation Among Nixon, Kissinger, and U.N. Ambassador George Bush, 30 September 1971**

[Source: National Archives, Nixon White House Tapes, Conversations 581-1 and 582-2]  
Transcript prepared by Sharon Chamberlain, Ph.D. student, History, George Washington University.

*[Kissinger enters the Oval Office during a meeting between Chief of Staff H.R. Haldeman and President Nixon to advise the President of Ambassador Bush's arrival.]*

- Kissinger: Mr. President, I just wanted to mention George Bush is in my office [inaudible].
- Nixon: [Inaudible].
- Kissinger: He does say that it will hurt—I mean I have to be honest with you [inaudible].
- Nixon: The fact that you're going?
- Kissinger: Yeah. Because the debate is about that time. Trouble is, they moved it up three weeks from last year—last year it was at the end of November, and this year they moved it up after the session started, which was after we had fixed the date with the Chinese.<sup>1</sup>
- Nixon: [Inaudible].
- Kissinger: I am afraid now, Mr. President, after your visit with Gromyko<sup>2</sup> and the announcement of the summit meeting, if you change the Chinese date, that ah [inaudible] Peking. They won't [inaudible]. They only wanted to announce it on the 14<sup>th</sup>, we pressed them into the earliest possible day; now they agreed to it and then two days after you see Gromyko, you change the date and announce a summit. We can try but the problem is [inaudible].
- Nixon: [Inaudible].
- Kissinger: You want to see Bush?
- Nixon: If it's useful?
- Kissinger: Two minutes, just to tell him [inaudible].

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*The following is the conversation among Nixon, Kissinger, and Bush on the potential impact of Kissinger's proposed second trip to China on the upcoming U.N. vote on Chinese representation*

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<sup>1</sup> Kissinger is referring to the timing of the debate in the United Nations on Chinese representation; it was “moved up” after the date of his second trip to China had been fixed with the Chinese government.

<sup>2</sup> Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko; the Americans and the Soviets had recently agreed to a summit meeting to be held after Nixon's trip to China.

*[Initial greeting, partly inaudible and not transcribed]*

Nixon: Of course the China—the substance it doesn't really change—

Bush: No, it [inaudible].

Nixon: Everybody knows the trip is going to take place—all this does is to simply remind them again. We're going to make arrangements but [inaudible] it's too damn bad that the timing [inaudible] want to try to have it earlier [inaudible]. Give me a rundown on things.

Bush: It's very close, we're fighting [inaudible] still, but extremely close, we think we've got to win this important question, this procedural vote. We gotta get that done first. If there was a way we could mention that to Sir Alec,<sup>3</sup> that he's going to be one step from us—not that they can support us but they can abstain on priority the very important question—they can abstain on the important question, that would be important. I don't know whether you want to mix that in, but if you could it would be helpful. We're going to have to do some things like that in order to be—to guarantee this first vote—this important question vote. We think we can get the votes to do that. And then it's a procedural thing—is a little confused. [Inaudible] the Albanian Resolution is not going to get two-thirds of the vote and then we think we've got a—there is a fifty-fifty chance to win our dual representation. The problem with this thing, and Henry is very well aware of it, is that we're fighting a kind of a psychological battle. The arguments are well if the U.N. [inaudible] can't be serious if the President's gone to Peking. You're fighting the battle of people who obviously do want to see us lose. We're separated from our guys on this. The Scandinavians who normally are helpful to us in certain things up there. Just solid, they're hard-headed, they're—so I think, I think it's winnable. I think this thing [Kissinger's trip to China]—to be candid as I've told Henry—will not be helpful at all.

Nixon: [Inaudible] can do is turn it around [inaudible].

Bush: Yeah, but—

Nixon: It is a real question, it is a real question how we can [inaudible] what we can do. You don't think there is any way we can—

Kissinger: This thing—

Nixon: —kicked it around [inaudible].

Kissinger: [Inaudible].

Bush: Yes it is, last year the [inaudible].

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<sup>3</sup> British Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs Sir Alec Douglas-Home; President Nixon was scheduled to meet with Douglas-Home later that day.

Kissinger: The date was really set—proposed by us in August, when we thought the vote would be at the end of November.

Nixon: [Inaudible] get the damn thing out of the way before the vote actually.

Kissinger: And then they accepted it in September.

Bush: And the reason they did it is they think—you know, last year the vote was in the middle of November and the reason they do it is they think they're in better shape. They give us a couple of [inaudible] voting in the other day. So they're no [inaudible]. But they're still trusting in the procedures there such that—normally what we've always tried to do, without discussing it with anybody [inaudible] if we could another event in between or if we could get another—

Nixon: [Inaudible] anything you can do?

Bush: No, unless there was some major Security Council thing but we can't engineer those things too well.

Nixon: No, I see.

Bush: So, I think really we're just going to have to make the best of it. We'll have to be—I'm worried a bit about the political aspects of losing for you. If we don't go through—you know, they don't—people don't understand we're doing everything we can on it and we're getting some helpful conversations that are useful to us.

Nixon: The way this will be handled it'll have to be [inaudible]. Of course it's awfully hard to say that anything is low key but it will be handled as a routine advance [inaudible].

Bush: Well, that would be helpful.

Nixon: We're not going to make any—we're not going to do anything in the way of a miniature [inaudible]. Kissinger is going to [inaudible] arrangements for the trip, period. There's not going to be any press or [inaudible] of that sort. But it'll be big—nobody [inaudible] anything having to do with China is big news. But that's the way we planned [inaudible].

Kissinger: But it will be big.

Nixon: Yeah.

Kissinger: I'm afraid [it will be big], don't you [think]?

Bush: [Inaudible]. It will be bigger there that it is [inaudible]. Everybody's so damn smart. There everybody knows everything—you know, he can tell what this means and—that's the thing we're up against, what actually happens, but they—and then you hear all kinds of interpretations by these smart diplomats who know exactly what Henry talked about in Peking—they know exactly what you're going to do. And so it's that kind of a thing rather than the fact itself—it's the psychology; it's the, it's the—

Nixon: When's the vote?

Bush: Well, it'll probably be around—I say probably because there is some flexibility, but just kind of in that last, last—very end of the month, around the 28<sup>th</sup> or 29<sup>th</sup> or somewhere in there. We're assuming now that the debate would start on the 19<sup>th</sup>, which would be the latest we think we can get it started. They warned me the Albanians are pushing to start it on the 14<sup>th</sup> or the 15<sup>th</sup>, but I think that that's the end of the week, we think we can delay it over for a day or two but it falls—the other problem in regard to me is that I'm speaking and—we're some kind of quarterbacking the thing but it is going to be awfully difficult to say—for me to say nothing because our allies, our allies are going to be, ah—

Nixon: [Inaudible].

Kissinger: No, I was wondering—we were exploring all possibilities—

Bush: —actually if we could—

Kissinger —but if the American speech could be put after I've left there, since the debate will go on for three or four days after I've left there.

Bush: And that's still possible, Mr. President. But procedurally they are going to be doing things—procedurally I have to be there prepared to say, now wait a minute they're going to try to separate our [inaudible].

Kissinger: [Inaudible].

Bush: If there was a way I could fight openly [inaudible]. You know, giving it all we've got so win or lose people aren't going to say look they held back on this thing; without obstructing anything Henry's doing I just think it's terribly important to [inaudible] the other way. I mean, there's a big [inaudible].

Nixon: [Inaudible.] We have a two-[inaudible] problem here. We have the desire which of course [inaudible] to see that the Chinese visit goes off. It's very important for other reasons [inaudible]. On the other side, [inaudible] in this country there's a hell of a lot of people that don't want to see us just drag our feet and let Taiwan go down the drain.

Bush: Exactly, and that the—I think, ah—

Nixon: I think that on that point, since we are going ahead we better let George fight hard.

Bush: [Inaudible].

Kissinger: There's no question about that.

Nixon: I meant, in terms of his public fighting, I don't think it makes a hell of a lot of difference. And Rogers [inaudible].

Kissinger: Procedural fighting is no problem at all. If the speech itself could be delayed that would be slightly better, but we can live [inaudible].

Bush: I think that I can make the case if—[inaudible] win or lose hopefully it will be a decent speech just before the vote and the Congress rather than [inaudible].

Nixon: [Inaudible].

Bush: So I think we can do it that way—

Kissinger: [Inaudible] no problem about, you know, fighting on procedurally.

Nixon: Fight like hell and [inaudible].

Kissinger: No one understands those anyway.

Nixon: [Inaudible] on procedure.

Bush: [Inaudible] try to buoy up our allies on this thing who are first at hand [inaudible] have a lot at stake on this. [inaudible] but I was just thinking is there any way that they could, you know, be plugged in a day before this is—[inaudible].

Nixon: Oh yeah.

Bush: [inaudible] leak like a sieve, but—

Kissinger: They'll be told twenty-four hours ahead. This time we'll do the consultations better.<sup>4</sup>

Nixon: Yeah. This time we can.

Bush: [Inaudible].

Kissinger: Well, we still wouldn't like a leak, but ah—I think if we sent the message to Sato<sup>5</sup>—not through the embassy but through our own channels, we can get it delivered. We have sometimes kept messages for forty-eight hours before leaking.

Nixon: Yeah.

Bush: [Inaudible] for me to think about is this line: look, sure, Bush is up there [inaudible] politician going through the routine in New York, and yeah, you can only [inaudible], but we all know there's no way that Peking [inaudible] this way, and we all know there's got to be some side deal between Peking and the President on this thing, and there's going to be this kind of a skeptical, cynical thing—this just proves it, here it is right in the middle of the U.N. debate [inaudible]. That's the thing that's got to be overcome. I don't think—I think we can do it in such a way that from a domestic political standpoint that won't be too bad. It does hurt us from a vote standpoint in the U.N. and I [inaudible]. We can—I think we can twist it around to, you know—just in consultation say, wait a minute, what does this mean—Peking, they've got the same problem, I mean if they [inaudible].

*[The remainder of the conversation was not transcribed owing to difficulties with audibility, but at one point they discussed the idea of asking Peking to help in deferring the U.N. debate, although there was some doubt that this was either a good or useful idea. After Bush leaves, Kissinger reminds Nixon that*

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<sup>4</sup> The Administration had been criticized for failing to give sufficient advance warning to U.S. allies, particularly Japan, when Kissinger's first secret trip was revealed and it was announced that Nixon would be going to China.

<sup>5</sup> Japanese Prime Minister Eisaku Sato.

*the trip date came up in mid-August, when they still thought the U.N. vote would be at the end of November.]*