

February 23, 1970

Memorandum from Henry A. Kissinger to President Nixon, 'Summary of My Conversation with President Pompidou'

Citation:

"Memorandum from Henry A. Kissinger to President Nixon, 'Summary of My Conversation with President Pompidou'", February 23, 1970, Wilson Center Digital Archive, Nixon Presidential Library, Henry A. Kissinger Office Files (HAKO), box 852, Camp David Vol. II. Obtained and contributed by William Burr and included in NPIHP Research Update #2. <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/113678>

Summary:

Kissinger briefs President Nixon on his initial meeting with President Pompidou during his visit to the U.S. Pompidou told Kissinger that he wanted to discuss issues relating to the Soviets, Germany, and other defense matters. Financial issues and the establishment of a private channel of communication were other topics of interest.

Original Language:

English

Contents:

Original Scan

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Authority E.O. 12958
By [Signature] NARA Date 11/19/01INFORMATIONTOP SECRET SENSITIVE/EYES ONLY*Date Typed
2/23/70*

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: Henry A. Kissinger

SUBJECT: Summary of My Conversation with President Pompidou

After an exchange of amenities, I assured President Pompidou that the U. S. government was most anxious that his trip be a success and was doing everything in its power to ensure this. President Pompidou expressed appreciation. He said he had never met President Nixon but felt that they had a great deal in common. He recalled that on one occasion shortly after Mr. Nixon had been defeated in his bid for the governorship of California, he had come to Paris and had been received by General De Gaulle who had told Pompidou afterwards, "Mark my words, that man will yet be President of the United States."

I then inquired what subject President Pompidou would like to bring up in his talks with the President, assuring him that we would not bring up anything about a return to the alliance, and so forth. President Pompidou said he would undoubtedly want to talk about Europe and France's relation with it, Germany-Franco-Soviet relations. President Pompidou recalled that Moscow was closer to Paris than New York was to San Francisco and that the Soviet Union was a superpower. President Pompidou noted that the Soviets were buying large quantities of foodstuffs in Europe for delivery to the Far East. He speculated that this might be stockpiling for conflict with China, or simply the Soviet military authorities on the Far East wanting to have large stocks on hand. Pompidou speculated that the Soviets might destroy Chicom nuclear installations without attempting to invade China. This would be a terrible humiliation but the Chinese could not risk an attack on the well-armed Soviet Army in the Far East.

When I asked whether he could discuss defense matters on his visit, President Pompidou said, "I can and I want to." He expressed a preference for a small meeting with President Nixon, with just the two Presidents and interpreters present.

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President Pompidou asked whether the questions at the National Press Club would be tough. I told him they would be and said that attempts were always made to trap a speaker into revealing something he wished to keep secret. Pompidou smiled and said he hoped to disappoint them in this respect.

President Pompidou expressed the belief that Chancellor Brandt dominated the new German government and was sure he would never betray the West. He was unenthusiastic about talks on Berlin which permitted Russia to meddle in West Berlin without a corresponding advantage to the West in East Berlin. He also expressed concern about monetary matters -- the stability of the dollar, which was vital to the anti-inflationary fight.

In summary, President Pompidou is interested in discussing the following items during his visit:

1. The establishment of a private channel of communication similar to the arrangement with President De Gaulle which would include the designation of a member of his staff to deal directly through him to me and then to you.
2. Military questions.
3. The organization of Europe, with specific emphasis on France's role.
4. International financial problems, especially the stability of the dollar.

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