

25 November 1980

SUBJ: Visit of President Nixon to U.S.S. CINCINNATI on 14 and
15 November 1980

1. In a conversation with President Nixon in May, 1980, he expressed an interest in visiting a nuclear powered submarine. In consequence, a trip was arranged by the Navy. The CINCINNATI left New London on November 14th and returned the next day.

2. During the course of the visit, President Nixon talked to the officers for about an hour and a half in the wardroom, answering all questions they asked. He later talked with the crew for about two hours and answered all their questions.

3. He was quite impressed with the officers and men. He was more interested in the people than in the machinery on the ship. He said the morale was high.

4. When President Nixon was in the Navy during World War II, his ship went to and from the South Pacific; he used to get seasick. After experiencing the smoothness of being underway in a submarine, he said he would have preferred going to sea in such a ship.

5. Following are the statements made by him to the officers and men:

a. In relation to the Soviet Block Nations--one must consider the difference between the characteristics of the people and the ideology of its leaders and of their governments. We should maintain relationships with countries even if we differ ideologically.

b. The Soviet Union has made progress in the treatment of ousted leaders.

c. The Chinese look at themselves as more civilized than the Russians.

d. Disclosing of military information, including that related to submarines, should be evaluated on a nation-by-nation basis.

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e. U. S. economic power should be used to strike agreements with unfriendly nations, but should be withdrawn when needed.

f. If Russia competes with the U. S. in an all-out arms race, Russia will lose.

g. Wars are fought not because of the existence of armed forces, but because of political differences.

h. China will make better progress if it is more Chinese and less Communistic.

i. China is practicing Communism in a purer way than Russia.

j. The Shah of Iran was the key to the Mideast, and would have prevented the Soviet takeover of Afghanistan.

k. Economic aid should be given to Poland.

l. Many benefits of the space program were unknown until they were realized.

m. Place a tax on gasoline. Use the tax for military spending.

n. Practical use of solar energy is still many years away.

o. The American public should be convinced it must go on with the use of civilian nuclear power.

p. Almost half the employees of the United States and sixty percent of government personnel work for the Department of Defense.

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q. Service in the armed forces in peacetime can be boring and can involve financial inconvenience. The American people should give more support to those who do serve in our military.

r. For the defense and survival of the United States, it is necessary to win the battle against inflation. This is as important as the strength of our armed forces.

SUMMARY OF PRESIDENT NIXON

DINNER CONVERSATION

OF 14 NOV 1980

In dealing with other nations, we must consider the difference between the characteristics of the people and the ideology of its government. The people of the Communist nations are generally friendly toward us even though our governments differ ideologically. We should maintain relationships with these countries in order to keep the lines of communication between the people open.

We should maintain both diplomatic and trade relations with unfriendly nations. Our real advantage over all other countries is economic - by maintaining trade and economic relations with unfriendly countries, we can obtain leverage by threatening withdrawal of concessions, rather than by threats of war. We should be prepared to use our economic power whenever required to further national interests. In precluding social and trade contact, we severely limit our options.

The Soviet Union has made significant progress in the human rights area; whereas Stalin purged and killed his opponents, Breshnev only made Kruschev a non-person - this is real progress. This progress has been quite rapid in comparison to Great Britain in the 18th Century.

The U.S. should use friendship with the Chinese as a "trump card" in its relationship with Russia. The Russians fear the Chinese, and we can use this fear to our advantage.

Disclosure of secrets, including those related to submarines, should be evaluated on a nation-by-nation basis. Some nations are more reliable than others in maintaining secrets. The French, British, Germans, and Japanese would be more prone to leaks, whereas the Chinese would not. We could use selected disclosure of classified information to gain concessions or leverage in certain situations.

The Russians have considerable internal problems. During one of Mr. Nixon's visits it was evident that the Ukrainians still do not accept Russian rule. He cited the invasion of the Soviet Union by Germans in WWII when the Ukrainians met German troops with open arms as liberators, but were revolted by the brutality of the Germans. We should not be fooled into believing that the Russians do not have significant problems.

Communism does not work, the Soviet economy is a shambles. Our strength is the fact that our system does work; the world sees this and wishes only that we were of firmer resolve. Except for the fact that they are so well armed, we would only have to wait for an internal revolution to overthrow Communism. We should use our economic superiority as a weapon for our advantage.

If Russia competes with the United States in an all out arms race, they will lose due to our overall stronger economy. Their current advantage in this area is their ability to concentrate their effort while we cannot in other than a crisis situation.

Wars are fought, not because of arms races, but because of unresolved political differences. We must not reduce our military capabilities below that level necessary for national security.

China will make more rapid progress if they are more Chinese and less Communistic. The Chinese view themselves as more civilized than the Russians. They view the Russians with disdain. The potential of China is mind boggling; they are naturally intelligent and industrious and they have vast, untapped natural resources. China is the world power of the future - and the Russians fear that.

China is more Communistic than Russia in adherence to the basic Communist philosophy. One example cited was the difference between state dinners in Russia and China. In Russia only the U.S. dignitaries were invited, whereas, in China the entire U.S. delegation (including drivers) was invited.

The Shah of Iran was the key to stability in the Middle East; he would have prevented the Soviet takeover of Afghanistan. We were wrong in not supporting him when he was threatened. Many of our problems in the Middle East are a direct result of our non-support and the subsequent overthrow of the Shah.

Economic aid should be given to Poland to support the union's fight for autonomy. We can not let them starve.

Many of our programs are criticized as unnecessary; for example, the space program. The public still does not realize

the technical breakthroughs brought about by the space program. Such programs, while expensive, provide significant technical advantages to this country and should be undertaken simply because they are there.

A tax should be placed on gasoline and used for military spending.

Practical use of solar energy is still "light years" away. We need to concentrate on immediately available sources of energy. In this vein, the American public should be sold on the use of civilian nuclear power.

Mr. Nixon would support a draft, but would institute it carefully. To outwardly support a draft would be politically unwise. He would instead, institute a blue ribbon manpower study that would logically recommend the draft. He would then approve the results for implementation.

Sixty percent of all government personnel work for the Department of Defense. There is significant waste here which should be reduced. The military should be de-civilianized.

Mr. Nixon does not expect to serve in the Reagan administration in any official capacity. He will be available, however, to serve the new president in any capacity required.

Mr. Nixon talked of his travels throughout the world and provided numerous personal glimpses of U. S. as well as foreign leaders. He also spoke fondly of Camp David.

Political campaigns will, to some extent, always have the person to person interface, i.e., hand shakes, pressing the flesh, etc. President Nixon noted Lyndon Johnson's expertise in this area. Admiral Rickover asked if this were really necessary. Nixon replied probably not, however Lyndon Johnson was very effective. Mr. Nixon stated that Governor Reagan is not too much of a gladhander, but that he uses the media very effectively. Mr. Nixon noted that the present and future of campaigning will be in the area of television.

Mr. Nixon opposes televising congressional committee meetings, saying that personnel in such situations generally make statements and agreements for the record and not always in the best interests of the nation; some meetings and agenda should be "closed door". Mr. Nixon concurred that most of the bargains made at committee meetings were prearranged.