

SJ 221

*

TELECON
General Scowcroft/Secretary Kissinger
August 20, 1976
Time: 8:04 p.m.

RELEASE IN FULL

K: How are you?

S: Pretty good.

K: We are shipping home those two guys in a coffin made out of that tree. We also are doing a systems analysis study of how many Americans they have to kill before we have deforested them and changed their climate.

S: It is a great success.

K: They can't stop us from pruning trees for christ's sake.

S: I am sorry they didn't make a challenge out of it.

K: I am sorry we didn't decide to hit the barracks. I am not sure we still shouldn't do that.

S: I am not sure we need to stop and say it is all over now. It is a little more puzzling what really they had in mind.

K: The North Koreans?

S: Yes. They were apparently quite docile when we cut the tree down.

K: Which means they were scared out of their minds.

S: Yes.

K: I am worried about how the other countries assess us. When you look at the Soviet and Chinese reaction it is very mild -- you have to assume that they thought we would do something drastic. Now they see us just chopping down a tree -- which looks ridiculous. Habib tells me it was illegal to fire across the zone.

S: God Henry. So it is not illegal to murder people.

K: No, that was wrong but not illegal. They were doing it in the JSA where they had every right to be. They were illegally killed but two wrongs don't make a right. If you are not a mormon you won't understand that. You can't build justice on two wrongs.

S: We are trying to keep them in their cage.

K: Scowcroft you are getting to literal -- I am being sarcastic.

S: I know, I know.



- 2 -

K: How was your trip? Was Dole with him?

S: They went to Dole's home town and had a rally.

K: Did he go to Abilene while he was at it.

S: No, he didn't.

K: This management is unbelievable. As I understand it, it was 20 miles from Abilene. Why couldn't he go to Eisenhower's birthplace and make a peace speech?

S: Oh brother. I have not the slightest idea where we went.

K: I understand it is 20 miles from Abilene.

S: That would have been a nice gesture.

K: The other one would have tied him...

S: Nationally much better.

K: That's right.

S: Listen, you were really good with him this morning.

K: On what?

S: Just everything. You were really good.

K: Well, when you don't give a damn it isn't hard.

S: I was very proud of you.

K: Let me get to another phone -- I want to ask you a questions and I don't want Habib to have another heart attack.

S: O.K.

(Kissinger goes to another phone)

K: Hello?

S: Yes.

K: What do you think about shelling them after all?

S: I don't think it is a bad idea.

K: The negative is that Thurmond, Percy, Javits and some others have called for going to the UN on it rather than doing anything.



- 3 -

S: Did they!

K: Yes, but in retrospect as I reflect on it what we should have done is to hit them -- is to do the tree, pull out and shell the barracks and say now it is over.

S: Yes, probably. If the thing had operated right as soon as that fracas started..

K: The instructions should have been if there is a fracas you have a pretext, but if there isn't you pull out and hit them anyway.

S: Probably.

K: You see what I mean?

S: Yes. I do. I feel very unfulfilled about it all. I still don't think we have done enough.

K: That should have been our instruction. Go in, cut down the tree, if there is a fracas take out the barracks -- if there is none, pull out and have the barracks taken down anyway.

S: What did the Pentagon think about taking out the barracks separately from the tree?

K: They will say no. They will want to clinch their great victory.

S: By doing nothing.

K: Yes. Are you seeing the President tonight?

S: No, I told him over the telephone....

K: Why don't you tell him we feel unfulfilled about this and what does he think. I will call Clements. Do you think I made it clear to the President I was unenchanted with him?

S: You made it clear that you were unhappy about the way things went on substance.

K: Yes, that is what I meant.

S: That was unmistakable.

K: Good, then I didn't need to make a long speech.

S: You were very good all around.

K: Did you see the editorial in the Star tonight saying that when we repudiate our own foreign policy it could become habit forming -- the American people could start doing it.

S: The only line we can take is the one you took this morning, but it can't help but be damaging.



- 4 -

K: I don't know what they will do about the campaign.

S: The President has just left to play golf.

K: Play golf!! What time is it there?

S: It is 6:20.

K: Is it still daylight out there?

S: Oh yes. I called him just after I got the report -- I can't remember when that was.

K: About an hour ago.

S: Yes. I called him then and he was just leaving.

K: Try to get to him as soon as you can and call me back.

S: O.K.

K: Good. Thank you.