



DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Washington, D.C. 20520

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file  
Secretary -  
Papers

MEMORANDUM

April 13, 1976

TO: L - Mr. Monroe Leigh

FROM: L - Michael Sandler *MS*

SUBJECT: Press Briefing Concerning Pocantico Hills

Attached are (1) the transcript of yesterday's press briefing, and post-press briefing questions, concerning the April 12 Safire column and (2) Tratner's press guidance prior to the briefing.

I call your attention to page 4 of the briefing transcript. Two things are striking. First, we have for the first time an official acknowledgement that tapes were used to make transcripts of telephone conversations, albeit the tapes were apparently destroyed after a transcript was made. Second, it is not clear what private papers were transferred to Pocantico Hills. For example, did they include the telephone conversation memoranda or other papers that relate to the performance of government activities. I am not sure the answer at the top of page 4 will end speculation by Safire or other members of the press.

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April 12, 1976

Q: Do you have any statement on the movement by the Secretary from the White House of files, private files --

A: Yes, Henry. I'd like to make two or three points on that. You're asking a question in reference to the article by Mr. Safire this morning?

Q: Right.

A: First, all memoranda of conversation or other diplomatic exchanges in which Sec. Kissinger was involved as Asst. to the President are now and have always been in the White House files. There are no other memoranda of conversation or diplomatic exchanges.

Secondly, this applies as well, of course, to memoranda of conversation with the Soviets. Specifically, copies of all memoranda of conversation with Amb. Dobrynin or other senior Soviet officials were sent to the President before being put into the White House files. There are no other notes or documents on exchanges with the Soviets or indeed any other diplomatic exchanges with other governments.

Q: John, that doesn't entirely address the issue of the distribution of these things. The memcons are kept, according to the statement, in the White House files and were shown to the President. Was there any limited distribution of relevant discussions with Soviet officials, for example, to the Intelligence community, or to statutory members of the NSC, which would include the Secretary of Defense?

A: I'm not able to go beyond what I've stated on this subject.

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Q: Could you take the question?

A: I can take the question.

Q: Is that statement cleared by the Secretary?

A: Yes, sir.

Q: Could I add to that: including also the Secretary of State before September, 1973? (Added to taken question)

A: Noted.

Q: Does your reference to memcons and documents also cover tape recordings?

A: I'm really not able to go beyond what I've said.

After the briefing the spokesman responded to the following question:

Q: Does the statement cover tape recordings?

A: Yes it does. There are no tapes of telephone conversations in existence. Any conversation of substance with Amb. Dobrynin or any other senior diplomatic official was the subject of a memorandum to the President and would therefore be in the White House files.

After the briefing the spokesman was also asked the following question:

Q: Did the Secretary move any of his files or records to Governor Rockefeller's estate at Pocantico Hills?

A: Yes. When the Secretary was considering resigning from the Government, he moved his Harvard files and personal papers covering the years before 1969 -- which he had brought down to Washington from Boston during the student riots in 1969 -- plus some other personal papers, to a vault at Governor Rockefeller's estate. No documents, memoranda or other records were removed from the White House.

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files. When the Secretary later in the year decided he would stay in the Government, he moved all of those papers back to the White House. Everything taken up to Governor Rockefeller's estate was returned in the spring of 1973 when the documents were brought back to the White House.

The Spokesman was subsequently asked the following question:

- Q. What do you mean in saying "When the Secretary was considering resigning from the government"? When did he consider doing so? Can you elaborate?
- A. The Secretary had always thought that he would probably resign after the Vietnam war had ended. Therefore, he had decided to leave as soon as U.S. troops had left Vietnam and peace seemed well on the way to being established. However, as Watergate developed, he decided he could not leave.

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In addition to the foregoing, Ozzie Johnston of the Los Angeles Times asked the following questions and was given the following replies:

- Q. Your statement on removal of the Secretary's papers from the White House indicates that they were his records and documents and personal papers--i.e. they were not Government documents, official, etc. This seems in conflict with what Woodward and Bernstein state in their book (The Finals Deal) that Kissinger, after being told that removal of his papers from the White House contravened regulations,

and storage of classified documents outside government facilities, had the files returned to the White House. This seems to suggest either that his personal papers were classified, or that the removal was not, in fact, limited to Harvard and personal papers. Can you clarify?

X A. The Woodward and Bernstein book is factually inaccurate on this point. The Secretary had brought the papers back on his own when it became clear he could not resign under Watergate conditions. Later he did talk to a lawyer about the general problem. But his papers, including the Harvard papers, had already been brought back to the White House some time before his conversation with the lawyer.

Q. In the Washington Post of March 27, 1976 Mr. Eagleburger is quoted as confirming that the Secretary had stored some papers at the Rockefeller estate. Why didn't he say then that these were private papers?

A. He did use the word "private" to the Post but the Post did not include that word in what it printed.

Q. You have said that no tapes of telephone conversations exist, and you have said previously that transcripts of the Secretary's telephone conversations while Assistant to the President are kept in the Department of State. Can you go one step further and say what happened to the tapes from which the transcripts were made?

X A. As soon as a tape had been used to make a transcript of a telephone conversation, it was destroyed. And, as we have said, any conversation of substance with any senior diplomatic official was the subject of a memorandum to the President and would be in the White House files.

Q. (From first page of excerpt from daily briefing of April 12, concerning distribution to intelligence community, NSC

members, Secretaries of Defense and State (up to September 1973) of memoranda of conversation or of other diplomatic exchanges in which Secretary was involved as Assistant to the President.

A. I am not going into a discussion of . . . distribution.

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SAFIRE ON KISSINGER FILES

If Spokesman is asked about Safire article, he will make following two points:

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3. Q: Did the Secretary move any of his files or records to Governor Rockefeller's estate at Pocantico Hills?

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4. Q: What about telephone transcripts?

A: As we have already publicly indicated, transcripts of the Secretary's telephone conversations while he was Assistant to the President are held here in the Department of State.

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