



NIXON PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY AND MUSEUM

Tape Subject Log
(rev. Sept.-2010)

Conversation No. 876-13/877-1

Date: March 12, 1973
Time: 4:40 pm - 6:34 pm
Location: Oval Office

The President met with Jeremiah A. Denton.

[CONTINUED FROM OVAL 876]

[An unknown portion of this conversation was not recorded while the tape was being changed.]

[The recording began at an unknown time after 4:40 pm.]

Vietnam War

- December 1972 bombings
 - Melvin R. Laird [?]
 - Options
 - Fighter bombers compared to B-52s
 - Weather
 - Window of opportunity
 - Possible losses
 - Laos [?]
 - Decision
 - Adm. Thomas H. Moorer
 - Losses of B-52s
 - Timing
 - Flying patterns
 - Targeting
 - Moorer
 - Christmas halt
 - President's telephone call to Henry A. Kissinger
 - Resumption of bombing
 - Moorer
 - Resumption of bombing on December 26, 1972
 - Intensity of attacks
 - Denton's experience
- Bombing decisions
 - Public relations [PR]

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Conversation No. 876-13/877-1 (cont'd)

- Reasons
 - End of war
 - “Maximum force”
- End of war
 - “Uneasy peace”
 - South Vietnam
 - Military strength
 - Morale
 - Viability
- Aid to North Vietnam
 - Leverage
- Bombings
 - Debriefing for President
 - Joseph [last name unknown]
 - Cabinet
 - Prisoner of war [POW] Reactions
 - Denton’s leadership
 - B-52s
 - Integrity
 - Prayer for President
 - Effect on North Vietnam
- Military tactics
 - Shock
 - Explanation to Denton
 - Explanation of escalation tactics
 - Effect on willingness to fight
 - Use
 - Effect on combat
- Conduct of the war by John F. Kennedy, Lyndon B. Johnson
 - Gradual escalation
 - 1968 campaign
 - President’s criticism
 - Use of power
- POWs
 - Perception of December 1972 bombing
 - Effectiveness
 - Senior officers [?]
 - Appreciation

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Conversation No. 876-13/877-1 (cont'd)

- Release of POWs
 - Recordings
 - Denton's prediction
 - May 1972 blockade
 - Pressure in September
 - Offer of release
 - Publicity
 - Basis for Vietnam settlement
 - October negotiations
- George S. McGovern
 - Position on withdrawal, POW
 - Immorality
- North Vietnam
 - Release of POWs
 - Conditions
 - US withdrawal
 - Aid to South Vietnam
 - Nguyen Van Thieu
 - Overthrow
 - Aid to Cambodia
 - Thailand
- 1972 election
 - Compared to Harry S Truman-Thomas E. Dewey Campaign, 1948
 - Vietnam settlement
 - Newspaper predictions
 - Impact on negotiations
 - Communists
- POW release
 - Denton's prediction
 - Impact of December bombings, blockade
- Blockade, mining, bombing
 - Aerial attack
 - Rail lines
 - Estimates of success
 - Congress's role
 - Kissinger
 - Return to Paris
 - North Vietnam's positioning

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Conversation No. 876-13/877-1 (cont'd)

- Message
- New negotiations
 - Conditions
 - Vietnam settlement
- December bombing
 - Timing
 - Congress's role
 - Democratic caucus
 - Partisanship
 - Cut funds to South Vietnam
 - US withdrawal
 - POWs
 - Impact on negotiations
 - Kissinger
 - President's resolve
 - Compared to Congress, public, cabinet
 - Denton's opinion
 - Planning
 - Adm. Thomas H. Moorer's role
 - Melvin R. Laird's role
 - President's role
 - Compared to Dwight D. Eisenhower, Lyndon B. Johnson
 - Intensity
 - 1972 summer
 - Mining, blockade
 - US-Union of Soviet Socialist Republics [USSR] summit
 - Election
 - McGovern
 - Weather
 - Peace
 - Moorer's recommendations
 - Bombings
 - Laird's opposition
 - Failure to press bombing
 - Reports
 - Impact on negotiations
 - Opposition to President's policies
 - Softness

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Conversation No. 876-13/877-1 (cont'd)

- President's concern for presidency
 - Personal feelings
 - President's background
 - Quakers
 - Pacifism
 - Evils of war
 - Slavery
- Stakes of war
 - Denton's letter
 - US character
 - US foreign role
 - Responsibility
 - Leonid S. Brezhnev, Chou En-Lai, Mao Tse-Tung
 - US presidency
 - Strength and respect
 - Nuclear weapons
 - Polaris
 - Poseidon
 - Trident
 - Impact of American "Bug-Out"
 - Respect for People's Republic of China [PRC]

US Foreign policy

- PRC-USSR interests
- President's public statements
 - Desire for good relations
 - Universities, press people's appreciation
 - President's meeting with Communist leaders
 - Relations with world leaders
 - USSR

BEGIN WITHDRAWN ITEM NO. 3

[National security]

[Duration: 14s]

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Conversation No. 876-13/877-1 (cont'd)

NUCLEAR WEAPONS

END WITHDRAWN ITEM NO. 3

US foreign policy

-PRC-USSR rivalry

-President's public statements

-Denial of US manipulation

-Compared to public acknowledgement

-President's meeting with PRC

Reasons

-1972 election

-PRC, USSR support for President

-1960 election

-Nikita S. Khrushchev

-Opposition to mining in Mexico [?]

-John F. Kennedy

-Need for US

-Chou En-lai, Mao Tse-Tung

-PRC's fear of USSR

BEGIN WITHDRAWN ITEM NO. 8

[National security]

[Duration: 10s]

USSR-PRC RELATIONS

END WITHDRAWN ITEM NO. 8

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Conversation No. 876-13/877-1 (cont'd)

US foreign policy

- PRC-USSR rivalry
 - PRC's military preparedness
 - Bomb shelters
- US-PRC relations
 - PRC leadership
 - US credibility
 - Strength
 - USSR counterweight
 - US withdrawal from Vietnam
 - PRC response
 - Dependability of US
 - President's meeting with Chou En-lai
 - Compared with Japan
 - USSR deal
 - Rearmament
 - US compared to USSR's influence
 - Kissinger's return to PRC
 - North Atlantic Treaty Organization [NATO]
 - Europe
 - PRC interests
 - Counterweight to USSR
- US-USSR relations
 - Historical perspective
 - USSR's fear of PRC

BEGIN WITHDRAWN ITEM NO. 9

[National security]

[Duration: 13s]

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Conversation No. 876-13/877-1 (cont'd)

NUCLEAR WEAPONS

END WITHDRAWN ITEM NO. 9

- PRC's population
- US-PRC alliance
- USSR's relations with Europe
- US-PRC relations
- USSR-PRC rift

Vietnam War

- US blockade, mining of North Vietnam
- PRC response
- USSR response
- President's visit to USSR
- Summit
- Reception of US
- Meeting with Brezhnev, Nikolai V. Podgorni, Aleksei N.

Kosygin

- Dacha
- President's quiet diplomacy
- USSR, PRC response
- Public comments
- December 1972 bombing
- USSR, PRC response
- Europe's response
- Edward R. G. Heath
- Willy Brandt
- Germany
- Canada's response
- Australia's response
- Socialist leadership
- US actions
- Private channel communications

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Conversation No. 876-13/877-1 (cont'd)

- Kissinger
- State Department
- Cables
- USSR-PRC response

Cambodia

- US actions
 - PRC reaction
 - US press corps
- Denton's view
 - Conclusion of War in 1965
- Conflict with PRC

BEGIN WITHDRAWN ITEM NO. 10

[National security]

[Duration: 2s]

US-PRC RELATIONS

END WITHDRAWN ITEM NO. 10

- USSR
- PRC, USSR strategic interests

Vietnam War

- US relations with PRC, USSR
 - “Tacit agreement”
 - Desire for peace
 - North Vietnam actions
 - Economic impact

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Conversation No. 876-13/877-1 (cont'd)

- PRC, USSR
 - Compared to revolutionary struggle
- Private diplomacy
 - President's intuition
- Response to bombing
 - Publicity
 - Demonstrations
- US foreign policy
 - Leadership
 - John B. Connally
 - International experience
 - Compared to President
 - World travel
 - Latin America, Africa, Middle East, Asia
 - 1953 visit to Hanoi
 - Partition
 - Adm. Henry D. Felt
 - Military
 - Raymond A. Spruance
 - Ambassador to Philippines
 - Commanders in chief, Pacific [CINEPAC]
 - [unintelligible names]
- POWs
 - Roger Shields
 - Airplane
 - Reception at home
 - Press
 - Charges of indoctrination
 - Grand-standing
 - Status as celebrities
 - Example to other Americans
 - View of US public
 - Compared to baseball, football players
 - Possible substance abuse
 - Children
 - Standard of conduct

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Conversation No. 876-13/877-1 (cont'd)

- Patriotism compared to personal life
- Pride of POWs in US
- Interviews with press
 - Denton
 - Television [TV]
 - Norfolk, Virginia
 - Question about "Bud" Fletcher
 - Shields
 - Col. Robinson Risner
 - US Air Force
 - Statement on TV
 - Peace settlement in 1968
 - Compared to Denton
 - Torture
 - Amnesty request
 - Ho Chi Minh
- Terms of settlement
 - [First name unknown] Harrington [?]
- Dignity
 - Years in captivity
- Ordeal
- Cooperation with North Vietnam
 - Earlier prisoner
 - Number
 - Senior officer
 - Psychological problem
 - US Air Force
 - US Navy
 - Anti-war statement
 - Voluntary
 - Marina flyer
 - Compared to new prisoners
- Treatment of the POWs
 - Publicity
 - Effect on US aid to North Vietnam
 - Changes in treatment
 - Denton compared to Risner
 - October 1969

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Conversation No. 876-13/877-1 (cont'd)

- Impact of President's speech
 - November 3, 1969
 - United Nations [UN]
- Death of Ho Chi Minh
- Denton's experience
 - Camp transfer
 - “Soft camp”
 - News transcripts
- Conversations with Major Bai [?]
 - Head of propaganda, torture program
 - Democratic Republic of Vietnam [DRV] policy
 - Self-criticism for ill treatment of POW's

Manolo Sanchez entered at an unknown time after 4:40 pm.

- Refreshment
 - Coffee

Sanchez left at an unknown time before 6:34 pm.

- POWs
 - Treatment
 - Publicity
 - Impact on North Vietnam
 - Release
 - Maj. Bai
 - Disappearance
 - Protest
 - Fast
 - Voluntary participation
 - Denton's leadership
 - Treatment of POWs
 - Effect on morale
 - Food, games, exercise
 - Removal
 - Release
 - Meeting of Denton and Col. Robinson Risner
 - POWs public statements

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Conversation No. 876-13/877-1 (cont'd)

- Treatment of POWs
- Impact on US aid to North Vietnam
- North Vietnamese statement
- POWs cooperation with North Vietnam
- POWs' response
 - Publications
 - Torture
 - Change of treatment
 - Geneva Convention
 - Military hospital
- Treatment
 - Publicity
 - Public response
 - Aid to North Vietnam
 - Denton's support
 - POWs' attitude
 - Public statement
 - Briefing
 - Timing
 - US withdrawal from Laos
 - White House event for POWs
- Aid to North Vietnam
 - Attitude of POWs
 - Compared to Denton
- Vietnam
 - US policy communism
 - Anti-communism
 - Post-World War III
 - United Nations [UN] mandate
 - Franklin D. Roosevelt
 - Distractions
 - Europe
 - Marshall Plan
 - Withdrawal
 - US and North Atlantic Treaty Organization [NATO]
- Revolution
 - Ho Chi Minh

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Conversation No. 876-13/877-1 (cont'd)

- PRC
- Opportunities for peace
 - US aid as stimulus
- President's visits
 - Meeting with Gao Dai, Ngo Dinh Diem
- Ngo Dinh Diem
 - Leadership
 - Murder
 - John F. Kennedy
 - Catholicism
 - Fulgencio Batista Y Zaldivar
 - Cuba
 - Latin American dictator
 - Alternative
 - Communist dictator
 - Fidel Castro
 - [Manolo Sanchez][?]
- President opinion of people
 - Lies
 - Cruelty
 - Compared to PRC
 - Energy level
 - Laos
 - Energy levels
 - Cambodia
 - Energy levels
 - President's visit
 - Norodom Sihanouk
 - Violin
 - Thailand
 - Energy levels
 - Right-side of conflicts
 - Wins
 - Similar to Switzerland
 - Malaysia
 - Indonesia
- Relationship with the US
 - Kissinger

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Conversation No. 876-13/877-1 (cont'd)

- Phan Van Dong
- US withdrawal
- Renewal of conflict
- US aid to North Vietnam
 - POW release
- Denton's view

POWs

- Treatment by North Vietnam
 - Publicity
 - Leaks
 - Public reaction
 - North Vietnam compared with Nazi Germany
 - Concentration camps
 - US reaction

Aid to North Vietnam

- US credibility
- Christian charity
 - Denton's work

US Society and culture

- Changes in U.S.
 - Published materials, TV, movies
 - Denton's conversations with Joe Kittinger [?]
 - Flyer shoot down in 1972
 - X-rated movies
 - Degeneracy, moral climate
 - Male leaders
 - Women
 - Youth
 - Sexual hang-ups
- Newsweek, Time*
 - Cover stories
 - Marlon Brando's film *Last Tango in Paris*
 - Pornography
 - US Supreme Court definition
 - Redeeming social value

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Conversation No. 876-13/877-1 (cont'd)

- Sales
- First commandment [?]
 - Allegiance to country
 - Spirituality
- Religion and patriotism
 - Clergy
- Berkeley rebellion
 - East coast
- 1972 campaign
 - Hecklers
 - Appearance
 - Long hair
 - Hatred, obscenities
 - Movies
- Antiwar demonstrations
 - White House
 - Numbers
- Press coverage
 - TV, columnists
 - New York and Washington, DC
 - Compared with South, Midwest, and mountain states
 - Church attendance
 - Urban areas
 - Illinois, Ohio, Indiana
 - Texas
- California
 - Corruption
 - Los Angeles, Hollywood, San Francisco, San Diego
- Loss of religious faith
 - Necessity of faith
 - Principles
- Atheists
- Youth
 - Self-hatred, anti-Americanism
 - Loss of faith
 - God
 - Country
 - Self

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Conversation No. 876-13/877-1 (cont'd)

- Press corps
 - Differences of beliefs with President
 - Vietnam
 - Values
 - Honor
 - Bill Henry
 - Los Angeles Times* sports editor
 - Columnist
 - Radio, TV program
 - Window on Washington*
 - Criticism of Washington press corps
- Ministry
 - Protestants and Catholics
 - White House church service
 - Father [first name unknown] Matthews
 - Jesuits
 - Conservatism
- University
 - Self-hatred
 - 1972 election
 - Students
 - Support for President
 - Faculty
 - Support for George S. McGovern
 - Students
 - Friends of President
 - Ivy League
 - Marijuana
- Political establishment
 - Robert A. Taft, Arthur H. Vandenberg, Richard B. Russell, Walter George
 - Moral decline
 - Congress
 - Anti-ballistic missile [ABM]
 - Vice President's tie-breaking vote in Senate
 - Impact on nuclear negotiations with USSR
 - Summit invitation

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Conversation No. 876-13/877-1 (cont'd)

BEING WITHDRAWN ITEM NO. 5

[National security]

[Duration: 9s]

NUCLEAR WEAPONS

END WITHDRAWN ITEM NO. 5

- Opposition in Senate
 - Partisanship
- Supporters in Senate
 - John C. Stennis
 - Harry F. Byrd, Jr.
- Vietnam
 - Stennis
 - Statement
- Russell
- Bombing decision
 - Lack of support
 - President's explanation
 - Radio, TV
 - North Vietnam
 - PRC, USSR
 - Compared to May 8, 1972 decision
 - Public support
 - Settlement
- Leader class
 - Denton
 - Education
 - US Naval Academy, George Washington University
 - Compared with President

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Conversation No. 876-13/877-1 (cont'd)

- Moral decline
- Labor leaders
 - George Meany
 - Frank E. Fitzsimmons
 - [unintelligible name]
 - Strengths
- Farmers, isolationists
- Lower, middle class
 - Ethnic peoples
 - Italians
 - Poles
 - Irish
 - South
 - Patriotism
- Elite class
 - Business community
 - New York
 - Misunderstanding
 - Adolph Hitler
 - Communism
- Effects of US education
 - Weaknesses
 - Leader class
- Decline of nations
 - Military, economy compared to national character
 - Common people compared with leader class
 - Greece
 - Rome
 - Morality
- Compared to Communist nations
 - Leadership
 - Leonid I/ Brezhnev, Chou En-lai
 - Brezhnev's skill as swordsman
- Puritanical, overzealous attitude
- Graft, corruption
 - PRC, USSR
- Leadership class
 - Habits

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Conversation No. 876-13/877-1 (cont'd)

-USSR

-Alcohol consumption

-Adultery

-US leadership

-Decline of "Puritan ethic"

-Courage, strength, principles

-President's talks with business leaders, academics

-Reaction to Cambodian invasion

-Ivy League presidents

-Kissinger

-Harvard University

-Support for President

-Protests on campus

-Professors

POW's

-Example to Americans

-Image

-Frustrations

-Stories

-Potential leadership

Denton

-Book

-US society and culture

-Future plans

-Military service

-Book

-Age

-Military rank

-Leadership steps

-Flag

-Book

-Personal anecdotes

-Format

-Diary

-US moral climate

-Draft on bandages

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Conversation No. 876-13/877-1 (cont'd)

- Anti-communism
- Solitary confinement
- Support for President

An unknown person entered at an unknown time after 4:40 pm.

Copy of President's November 3, 1969 speech

The unknown person left at an unknown time before 6:34 pm.

President's speech

POWs

- Meetings with President

Denton

- Book
- Self-subjugation
- The Lord's Prayer

An unknown person entered at an unknown time after 4:40 pm.

Delivery of November 3, 1969 speech

President's glasses

The unknown person left at an unknown time before 6:34 pm.

Glasses

- Denton's glasses

President's speeches

- Availability to Denton, other POWs
- Influence over POWs
- Denton's view of President
- "Silent Majority" speech of November 3, 1969
- Denton's brother
- Use of term "Silent Majority"

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Conversation No. 876-13/877-1 (cont'd)

- Crank calls to Denton
- President's points in speech
 - Vietnam
 - Alternatives for US
 - “Just peace”
 - Negotiated settlement
 - Vietnamization
 - U.S. withdrawal
 - Consequences
 - Recriminations
 - US role in world
 - Confidence in US
 - Relief compared to remorse
 - History
- President's problems

Past wars

- [Thomas] Woodrow Wilson, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Harry S. Truman
 - World War II
 - Support of US public
 - Cabinet
 - World War I
- Abraham Lincoln
 - Difficulties
 - Mary Todd Lincoln's brothers
 - Civil War experience
 - Support of Cabinet
 - Leader class
- Vietnam
 - Support for President
 - Public, Congress
- Dwight D. Eisenhower
 - Anne Whitman's telephone calls to Vice President
 - Problems
 - Heart attack
 - Political understanding
 - Support
 - President's task to cheer up

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Conversation No. 876-13/877-1 (cont'd)

Vietnam

- Lack of support for President
- Goals
 - Oval Office
 - Fate of presidency
 - Importance

US as world leader

- Pre-World War I
 - Theodore Roosevelt,
 - Albert Thayer Mahan
 - “Great White Fleet”
- US role
- Pre-World War II
 - US leadership
 - Compared to Great Britain
 - Vietnam era
 - Free world leadership
- President’s speech
 - 1968
 - World politics
 - Terror, communism
 - PRC
 - USSR
- Stakes in Vietnam
 - Military sacrifice, POWs
 - Credibility
 - American spirit, character
- Postwar role
 - Disarmament
 - Public sentiment
 - Defense budget cuts
 - Dealings with USSR, PRC, North Vietnam
 - US strength
 - Public support
 - Leadership class
 - Compared to labor, stenographers [?], farmers, poor

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Conversation No. 876-13/877-1 (cont'd)

-Importance
-Opinion makers
-TV, radio, columnists, university presidents, clergy,
businessmen, political leaders

-US withdrawal
-Opposition to war
-Leadership class
-1969 election
-Victory
-Compared to "Silent majority"
-Hardhats, farmers, poor
-Support for President
-Need for leadership
- "Average man"
-Clergy, politicians

US society and culture

-Education
-Respect for teachers
-Religious schools
-High schools
-Press
-Influence
-TV
-Vice President Spiro T. Agnew's statements
-Denton's interactions
-Consensus

Denton's meeting with President

POWs

-Reception
-Example for President

Presidential gift

-Golf balls

POWs

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- Reception
- Weather

President's visit to South in the 1940's

- Road trip
 - Virginia
 - South Carolina
 - North Carolina
 - Charleston, South Carolina gardens
 - Flowers
 - Motels

Denton left at 6:34 pm.

Conversation No. 877-2

Date: March 12 or 13, 1973

Time: Unknown between 6:36 pm, March 12 and 8:14 am, March 13

Location: Oval Office

Manolo Sanchez met with unknown men.

President's location

-Time [?]

Executive Office Building [EOB] [?]

An unknown man talked with an unknown person at an unknown time before 11:59 pm.

President's location

The conversation was cut off at an unknown time before 8:14 am, March 13, 1973.