

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

~~SECRET~~/NODIS/XGDS

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

PARTICIPANTS: President Nixon  
Roger Shields, POW/MIA Coordinator  
Brent Scowcroft, Deputy Assistant to  
the President for National Security  
Affairs

DATE AND TIME: Wednesday, April 11, 1973  
12:02 - 12:27 p.m.

PLACE: The Oval Office

The President: To a man the POWs are high in praise of Operation Homecoming and you personally.

Tell all the people on the team it has been a tremendous job.

Shields: This release is so much better than the Cora Weiss group. Everyone worked hard and everyone did his job well.

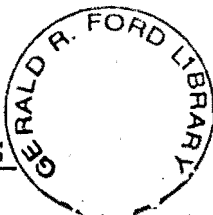
The President: What is you feeling about the difficult readjustment period? They will always be respected I hope they stay in the Service; they should be treated well. They should be recruiters, speaking on college campuses, and writing. They have thought deeply about themselves and their country and we should benefit by it. They must be used in an effective way.

Shields: I think the Services know. Four of them made General.

The President: Yes, but I mean duties, not rank. I don't mean they should talk to every Rotary Club. They must feel fulfilled, that they're doing things that are worthwhile.

There will be a letdown after the euphoria. We must do what we can. These are strong men.

DECLASSIFIED  
E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.5  
NSC Memo, 11/24/98, State Dept. Guidelines  
By LA, NARA, Date 1/18/00



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Shields: They are strong. They know they are men with a mission. They see changes in the United States that they don't like and want to change these. Some will go to War Colleges.

The President: Great.

Shields: I will pass your words on.

The President: These men can inspire and we shouldn't lose this opportunity.

Shields: I agree. These man have been tempered in the fire. They have experiences none of us have had. They have already done wonders for the country.

The President: They really have. The pitiful attempt of the left to say their statements were brainwashed -- you couldn't do it in seven years; not in two hours.

Shields: Denton said he never thought his motives would be understood when he said God Bless America. Denton said on the plane what he wanted to say, and they said great. The first group in Hanoi was great.

The President: Tell me about it.

Shields: We sat around a room to discuss procedures. We initialled a paper with a list of the men to be released. The men came around a corner in a bus. They smiled at me and put their thumbs up. A Navy Commander was the first one off. He was on crutches. He said "Form Up." They men stood tall and proud. They marched through the gate and the Commander threw his crutches down and hugged me and said "I am home." On the plane, Denton said "We wanted to return with honor. Did we?" They sure did.

The President: Flynn said to me, "That was our slogan."

Shields: They were so proud of you. Some had God bless the United States and the President on flags, on tee shirts.

The President: On the MIAs, you say the President personally will follow through on scrupulous adherence by North Vietnam on this. We will leave no stone unturned. All those families, waiting, hoping. They must know the certainty of their men's fate.

Tell your colleagues I raised hell with you on the accounting.



I sent a letter to all of them.

You write a letter to them -- say you are with me and we must carry our our obligation to the POWs but we have an equal obligation to the MIAs. We will leave no stone unturned, Don't raise hopes, but say the President doesn't consider the peace won until there is an adequate accounting for the MIAs.

Shields: I will do it. The families have confidence. The POWs have returned.

The President: And they know we didn't cave. The December bombing was for that. The North Vietnam had attached conditions; we said no and we bombed.

Shields: The men know that. They know of your concern. Two are missing for each POW.

The President: How long have you been in the Defense Department?

Shields: Two and a-half years.

The President: Where are you from?

Shields: Florida.

The President: I don't know that part. Near Gainesville?

Shields: Yes.

The President: How old are you?

Shields: Thirty-three.

The President: You have had a great experience.

Shields: It has been great.

The President: You can't equal this. But these guys have been great for this country. They could have a great impact on the destiny of this country.

Shields: I want to give the men what they deserve.

The President: What do you teach? History?



Shields: Economics.

The President: How did you get into DOD?

Shields: Secretary Laird wanted a study of the economics of Vietnamization. Then I moved over.

[A few words on football]

I was a tackle on the team of '61.

The President: Did you beat Miami?

Shields: Yes. And Florida. Florida State is big now.

The President: Yes, they have a lot of blacks now.

[The meeting concluded.]



✓ Roger Shields Apr 11, 1973

The President  
Roger Shields  
12:00 noon  
Wed 11 Apr 73

P: Tra - woman POW's are high in  
praise of Opur Honors & you  
personally.

Tell all - people on a team it has  
been a tremendous job.

S: This release so much better than  
Cave Weiss guy. Everyone worked hard  
& every one did his job well

P: What is your feeling about difficult readjustment  
period. They will always be respected.  
Hope they stay in a service - should be  
treated well. They should be recruited,  
speaking college courses, visiting.  
They have thought deeply about themselves  
& their country & we should benefit by it.

They must be used in an effective way.

S: I think serious honor, 4 make good

P: Yes, but I wear clothes not rank. Don't  
mean they should talk to every Rotary  
Club. They must feel fulfilled, doing  
things worthwhile.

There will be a letdown after  
the euphoria. We must do what we can

There are strong men

S: They are strong. They know they are  
men w/a mission. They feel changes  
in US they don't like & want to change them.  
Some will go to war colleges

P: Great

S: I will pass your words on

P: These men can inspire & not should not  
lose this offer.



S I agree, These men have been tortured  
in a jail. They have experienced some of us  
have had. They have already done weeks  
for a month.

P They really home. The pitiful attempt of  
left to say their statement was brainwashed  
doubt in 7 yrs. not in 2 hrs.

S ~~Denton~~ said when thought any, mottoes would  
be understood when I said God Bless  
America

Denton said on plane what he wanted to  
say & they said great.

First group in Ramo great

P - Tell me

S We sat around a room to do our problems.  
We introduced a paper w/ men & his ~~status~~ released  
The men came around room in a bus,  
They smiled at Royal, ~~to~~ put thumbs up.  
Henry ed was first off - catches. He said from my  
men stood tall & proud. ~~So~~ They marched  
thru the gate, & ed threw catches down  
hugged me & said they I am home.  
On plane, Denton said we wanted to  
return w/ home. Did we? Sure ch'il.

P Flyers said to me that was our slogan.

S They were so proud of you. ~~That~~ <sup>Some</sup> to hold  
God bless US & Pils on flags, it's about

P On MIA's - you say Pils personally with  
follow them in scriptures adherence by NOAC  
on this. We will have no stone unturned,  
all these families, worthy, hoping.  
~~But~~ They must know the certainty of



P- Tell colleagues I would tell w/you  
on a accounting.

Don't a letter to all of them.

You write a letter to them - say in  
response + we must carry out obligation  
to POW's but have equal obligation  
to MIA's. We will have no strong  
intention. Don't raise hopes, but  
Poo doesn't consider the period was  
until adequate accounting for MIA's

S- I will do it. Families have confidence  
The POW's have returned.

P- And they know we didn't want. The  
? DC thinking was for that. N J M would  
attached conditions, we said no + wanted

S- Now know that. They know of course  
2 missing for each POW

P- How long in DOD

S- 2 1/2 years

P- where from

S- Texas, Florida

P- I know not Texas, Gainesville?

S- ~~Florida~~ Yes

P- How old

33

You have had great experience

S- Has been great

P- You can't spread this. But these groups  
have been great for this country. Could  
have great impact on history of this  
country.

S- wanted to give a man what they deserved



P what about 2 & 1/2

S Ecm.

P How in DOD

S hand annotated ~~some~~ economics of Vietnam

Then ~~discussed~~

a few words on particular Shelley

a trade on team of 61

~~Revised~~

P asked did that business

Yes. And Fla - Fla starts long run.

P - Yes. they have lot of jobs now.

1027

