

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

SECRET/NODIS/XGDS

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

PARTICIPANTS: President Ford
Ambassador Kenneth Rush, U.S. Ambassador
to France
Brent Scowcroft, Assistant to the President
for National Security Affairs

DATE AND TIME: Friday, January 14, 1977

PLACE: The Oval Office

[General small talk about domestic, international and personal matters.]

Rush: Giscard never fails to mention you. You know, he is not a warm man. He just can't unbend. But at Martinique you laid the basis for the best U.S.-French relations ever. That is what Giscard says -- our relations have never been better. That is in fact true. Through most of our history we have been at odds with France. Giscard is in desperate trouble.

The President: Is it Mitterand?

Rush: Chirac. [He described the French political structure.] Their economy is not doing well either. Now Chirac has resigned. He has set up a new party -- almost a Hitler-like affairs.

Now there are elections coming up in 1978. If the conservatives win, Chirac can claim victory and become Prime Minister again. If the Socialists and Communists win, Mitterand will become Prime Minister. And Giscard will be in a corner. He will either be a figurehead or have to resign and run for reelection.

The President: What is Mitterand like?



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Rush: He is a very sharp man. He tells me he is all moderation and that in his government the Socialist -- not the Communists -- view would prevail.

I think the chief cause of our improved relations with France is we paid attention to them bilaterally. What a change there has been from the DeGaulle/Pompidou period.

The President: How is the French economy doing?

Rush: It is a basically strong economy, but it's in trouble. In Italy there is a weak economy and a weak government. There is real danger of a Socialist/Communist victory at the polls in 1977. And whatever variety of Communists they are, the result has to be detrimental to our interests.

The President: They are just bound to act like Communists and to have a relationship to the USSR.

Rush: That is right.



P/ Arthur Rusk

14 Jan 77

(General small talk about
the domestic, intl, + personal
matters)

R General never fails to mention you. You
know, he is not a warm man. He just
can't understand. But at meetings you
laid a basis for a best US-Fr relations
ever. That is what General says - our
relations have never been better. That
is in fact true. Then next of our history
we have been at odds w/ Fr.

General is in deep trouble

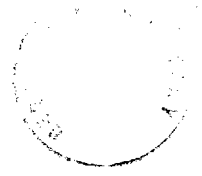
P Is it Witterand?

R Chirac (Described - Fr. pol. structures)
The ~~party~~ economy is not doing well either.
And Chirac has resigned. He has set
up a new party - almost a Hitler like
affair.

Even there are elections coming up in '78.
If a conservative win, Chirac can claim
victory + become PM again. If Soc/Pres
win, Witterand will become PM. +
General will be in a corner. He will
either see ~~protest~~ or have to resign
+ run for reelection.

P What is Witterand like

P He is a very shrewd man. He tells me
he is all moderation + in his job a



Socialist - not a Communist - view would prevail.
I think a ~~big~~ ~~big~~ cause of our
improved relations w/ Fr is we paid attention
to ~~them~~ them bilaterally. What a change
there has been from De Gaulle/Pompidou.

P How is Fr. economy doing.

R It is a basically strong economy, but
is in trouble. In Italy there is a weak
economy & a weak govt. There is real
danger of a Soc/Comm entry at polls in
1977. And whatever ^{weak} ~~hand~~ of Comm they
are a result has to be detrimental to our
interests.

P They are just bound to do it like Comms
etc have a relation to USSR

