

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Memorandum of Conversation

Klein
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Approved in S
4/23/65

DATE: March 24, 1965
Time: 12:30 p.m.
Place: Secretary's Office

SUBJECT: Spanish Foreign Minister's Talk with the Secretary.

PARTICIPANTS: United States

Spain

The Secretary
Mr. William R. Tyler, EUR
Mr. David H. McKillop, WE

Foreign Minister Fernando Maria Castiella Y Maiz
Mr. Ramon Sedó, Director General of Foreign Policy
Ambassador Merry Del Val

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1. Remarks of the Spanish Foreign Minister Concerning his Trip to the Far East - After the customary exchange of greetings, the Foreign Minister replied to the Secretary's inquiry about the Minister's trip to the Far East. The Minister outlined his itinerary (The Philippines, Thailand, Cambodia, Hong Kong, Nationalist China and Japan) and commented on the cordial reception he had received everywhere. He said this had included Cambodia, where he visited Angkor Wat. The highlight of his visit was in the Philippines, which is observing the 400th anniversary of the first Spanish presence there and where he had been the personal guest of President Macapagal. The President, despite the fact that he is very much preoccupied with the current election campaign, had been most generous with his time and extremely friendly and considerate. The Minister felt that on the basis of the President's record and energetic efforts, he would probably be reelected.

The Minister said that everywhere he had gone in the Far East, he had experienced concern about developments in Southeast Asia, not only regarding Viet-Nam but also Indonesia, whose aggressive tactics are creating great uneasiness. He found his travels most helpful in giving him a better insight into the problems of this unsettled part of the world.

Referring to the Minister's cordial reception in the Philippines, the Secretary expressed his great admiration for the way the Minister had succeeded in strengthening Spanish relations with countries with which Spain had been associated in the past, such as the Philippines and Latin America. "I salute you on this success", the Secretary said. Obviously

pleased

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By *jc*, NARA, Date 5-16-01

pleased by this praise, the Minister said he felt Spain's efforts in this field redounded to the benefit of the United States since they highlighted the importance and value Spain attaches to its friendship with the United States.

2. The Situation in Indonesia - The Minister expressed concern about Communist penetration of Indonesia and its aggressive policy toward Malaysia. He felt that the Filipinos were also worried about Indonesian ambitions. The Secretary stated that we had informed Sukarno very firmly that any Indonesian move against the Philippines would be regarded as also directed against the United States. The Philippines have a complete commitment from us for its defense against Indonesia or any other country, and we would respond with whatever measures necessary to honor that commitment. As for Malaysia, the British are standing by their obligation to defend that country, as demonstrated by the fact that one quarter of its forces has been assigned to this task. In the light of that fact, we have not pressed the British for greater assistance in Viet-Nam. It was the Secretary's feeling that if Sukarno made a serious attack against Malaysia, he would receive a "bloody nose".

3. Viet-Nam - In a _____ review of our policy in Viet-Nam, the Secretary stressed the following points:

(a) Viet-Nam is presently where the issue of war and peace is posed in its most critical form. Peiping and Hanoi have confronted us with the decision of withdrawing or holding fast in fulfilling our commitments to South Viet-Nam and in Southeast Asia generally. We have chosen to stand firm and are fully prepared to take whatever measures are necessary to do so.

(b) We hope, however, for a peaceful solution, which could be achieved immediately if Hanoi would cease its aggression against South Viet-Nam. We will not accept the forceful take over of South Viet-Nam - that is the heart of the matter.

(c) Although there is a variety of channels available to ascertain Hanoi's views, so far there has been nothing to indicate that the North Vietnamese want peace and are willing to agree to let South Viet-Nam alone. There are quite clear indications that the Communists wish to avoid a general war but they also obviously want to take over Southeast Asia. It is too early to tell which of these desires will prevail.

(d) The Soviet Union has also shown caution in its approach to the Viet-Nam conflict and would not welcome a confrontation with the United States in SEA. Nevertheless, the Soviet Union is in a difficult position because of its competition with Peiping for the leadership of the Communist world, and it is therefore difficult to predict exactly what the Russians may be prepared to do in SEA.

(e) Regardless

(e) Regardless of what the Communists do, however, we have no other choice than to stand by our commitments in Viet-Nam and SEA. Were we to fail to do so, the credibility of our commitments everywhere in the world, including the NATO area and Berlin, would be undermined. If, for instance, we should act on the view even de Gaulle has voiced that peace in Southeast Asia is desirable at any price, the French would probably be the first to cite this surrender as an example of why the United States cannot be relied upon to fulfill its commitments in the defense of its European allies.

(f) We have been able to deter Soviet aggression in Europe only by dint of great effort and expense in creating an effective NATO shield. The United States practically single-handed is now trying to do the same thing vis-a-vis Peiping. We cannot disregard peace and security in the Pacific any more than we can in the Atlantic.

(g) Whereas in general we have had comprehension for our position in SEA from our NATO and Western European friends, there has been no real partnership in meeting the threat to South Viet-Nam. We wish we could count on more active support from Western Europe.

(h) In contrast to the Korean situation, it has been difficult in Viet-Nam to clarify the issues, not only for our Allies and other friendly governments but for these governments vis-a-vis their people. This problem has resulted from the way the crisis has developed in Viet-Nam where Hanoi has resorted to massive infiltration instead of direct attack. The political confusion in Saigon has also encouraged Hanoi to believe that its take over of South Viet-Nam is just a matter of time, thus contributing to defeatist thinking in the West.

The Foreign Minister said he concurred in the views that the Secretary had so convincingly set forth and welcomed the strong affirmation that the United States would stand firmly by its commitments in SEA. The Secretary's assurances would be most useful in his conversations with persons expressing doubt about American determination in Viet-Nam and the Far East as a whole. Thanking the Foreign Minister for his remarks, the Secretary said that the United States already had expressed this determination in a great deal of blood and treasure, and would continue to do so to the extent necessary.

4. Spanish-U.S. Bilateral Relations - The cordial talk terminated with the Secretary's remark that he was glad there are no significant bilateral problems troubling Spanish-American relations. The Foreign Minister warmly thanked the Secretary for making possible such a profitable exchange of views and the meeting adjourned for luncheon.