

**Conversation No. 22-62**

**Date: March 30, 1972**

**Time: 8:02 pm - 8:07 pm**

**Location: White House Telephone**

**Participants: Henry A. Kissinger & President Richard Nixon**

**Nixon:** Hello, Henry. I was looking at the *Star* tonight, that report with regard to the gunship in Laos.

**Kissinger:** Yes.

**Nixon:** And, what is the situation on that?

**Kissinger:** Well, as you know, they have those SAMs so located now that they can reach [unclear].

**Nixon:** Yes.

**Kissinger:** We think—they're not yet absolutely sure—that it was hit by a SAM located on North Vietnamese territory.

**Nixon:** Yeah.

**Kissinger:** And, uh—And that brought it down.

**Nixon:** Right.

**Kissinger:** And that was the first time [unclear].

**Nixon:** Right, What—what—what—what should our reaction with [unclear] be?

**Kissinger:** I think, Mr. President, we should watch for another day to see how this—whether this was a one time offensive, whether it was just a high point or a real offensive.

**Nixon:** Right.

**Kissinger:** If it is, then we can go after these SAM sites that we just bombed.

**Nixon:** Right.

**Kissinger:** And take all of them out.

**Nixon:** Right.

**Kissinger:** And, in fact, go for it the first pretext that we can do it.

**Nixon:** Yeah.

**Kissinger:** Now, what we normally did—and this is what I'm investigating—now, normally when we sent out these gunships we had escort planes with them so they could get the radar locked on when they started moving—

**Nixon:** Yes, we didn't this time.

**Kissinger:** So there must have been slipups this time.

**Nixon:** Yeah.

**Kissinger:** Because 90% of [unclear] comes from [unclear], and we have—

**Nixon:** But there are—Are there fourteen people on those things?

**Kissinger:** Yeah.

**Nixon:** Um-hmm. Well,...

**Kissinger:** But, I'm sure they can [unclear].

**Nixon:** Yeah. Oh, of course, it's missing in action, but nevertheless, I was going to say that we really can't let them get away with this because—

**Kissinger:** I think—I think either they continue this offensive, or [unclear].

**Nixon:** Um-hmm.

**Kissinger:** We've got to take out, now, the SAMs.

**Nixon:** It's just protective reaction. That's right. Well, does—What does Moorer say? The weather's still too bad?

**Kissinger:** [Unclear].

**Nixon:** I guess so, huh?

**Kissinger:** [unclear] but in two weeks it ought to get better.

**Nixon:** [laughs] Well, that's nice.

**Kissinger:** [Unclear].

**Nixon:** Well, just so we're—If we have a good provocation I'd just whack 'em in there, and, you know, if you do it on—with—on the basis of protective-reaction there isn't going to be a hell of a flap.

**Kissinger:** Right. Oh, no. Well, in order to do it well, though, they have to take out a lot of these SAMs.

**Nixon:** Right.

**Kissinger:** [Unclear].

**Nixon:** Sure. Of course. Of course. I understand that.

**Kissinger:** [Unclear]. I think they have their own massive problem. They have been trying to get their offensive all year.

**Nixon:** Yes.

**Kissinger:** And—

**Nixon:** And it's, now, the first of April.

**Kissinger:** It's now the first of April and while, of course, they may be saving some of their supplies for a Fall offensive, they'll have to be [unclear] all summer long, so—

**Nixon:** Yeah.

**Kissinger:** So, they're not really in all that good shape.

**Nixon:** No, they're not—

**Kissinger:** [unclear].

**Nixon:** Correct. Yeah. Well, be sure you just ride those military hard. Moorer knows — Moorer knows we're watching it does he now, does he?

**Kissinger:** I called Moorer three times today, and Haig called him, too.

**Nixon:** Good.

**Kissinger:** [Unclear].

**Nixon:** I see.

**Kissinger:** If the Soviets think [unclear]. It would be interesting to see how that goes.

**Nixon:** Right.

**Kissinger:** And then, while I'm there [unclear]. They, too, have a massive problem.

**Nixon:** That's right. They may want to go [unclear] with it. I understand that—

**Kissinger:** [Unclear] they won't be better off next year [unclear]—

**Nixon:** Sure. Oh, oh. I'll say. I'll say.

**Kissinger:** You know, they are [unclear] —

**Nixon:** Yeah.

**Kissinger:** [Unclear] —

**Nixon:** Yeah.

**Kissinger:** [Unclear] —

**Nixon:** Ok. Well, just keep your eye on 'em. Ok?

**Kissinger:** I'll try to, Mr. President—

**Nixon:** Bye.