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folder continue from the
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HAK/Rabin
Memcon

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

~~SECRET/XGDS~~

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

PARTICIPANTS: Yitzhak Rabin, Prime Minister of Israel
Yigal Allon, Deputy Prime Minister and
Minister of Foreign Affairs
Shimon Peres, Minister of Defense
Simcha Dinitz, Ambassador to the United States
Lt. Gen. Mordechai Gur, Chief of Staff
Mordechai Gazit, Director General,
Prime Minister's Office
Avraham Kidron, Director General, Ministry
of Foreign Affairs

Dr. Henry A. Kissinger, Secretary of State
and Assistant to the President for
National Security Affairs
Amb. Kenneth Keating, U. S. Ambassador to
Israel
Joseph J. Sisco, Under Secretary of State
for Political Affairs
Alfred L. Atherton, Jr., Assistant Secretary
of State for Near Eastern and South Asian
Affairs
Harold H. Saunders, Deputy Assistant Secretary
of State for Near Eastern and South Asian
Affairs
Robert B. Oakley, NSC Staff
Peter W. Rodman, NSC Staff *PMR*

DATE AND TIME: Saturday, March 22, 1975
6:35 - 8:15 p.m.

PLACE: Prime Minister's Office
Jerusalem

Rabin: Shimon and I met with the opposition leaders in Tel Aviv this morning.

Do you have anything new from Egypt?



DECLASSIFIED *State Dept Review*
E.O. 12958, SEC 2.5 *SR 9/17/03*
EXEMPTED FROM GENERAL DECLASSIFICATION
SCHEDULE OF EXECUTIVE ORDER 11652
HR *10/02/03*

CLASSIFIED BY Henry A. Kissinger
EXEMPT FROM GENERAL DECLASSIFICATION
SCHEDULE OF EXECUTIVE ORDER 11652
EXEMPTION CATEGORY 5 (B) (1, 3)
AUTOMATICALLY DECLASSIFIED ON Imp. to Det.

Kissinger: Yes. I sent two messages last night, one about military matters and one about the status of the negotiation. I asked if there were any aspects of the Egyptian position that had not yet been revealed. I referred specifically to retaining an early warning station in the buffer zone and giving Egypt one, in order to get the Israeli line back. Before it was inside the Israeli line; now it would be in the buffer zone. We have received the following reply from Fahmy. [He reads from Aswan 273:]

"There is no change in our position as you knew it before your departure.

"We cannot accept a monitoring station so far as Israel alone is concerned, or even on a reciprocal basis.

"There is no necessity to leave Joe Sisco because if you do not succeed this time, there will be no chance for a future success, and therefore we cannot agree to a suspension.

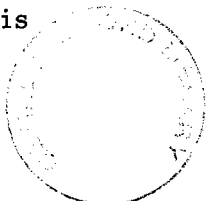
"The concrete result of a failure will have a tremendous and diversified impact in the Arab world and other circles. And it could not be a mere suspension but will in fact be, as the President and I told you before, an irrevocable and fatal blow to the step-by-step process.

"The new course will then have to be, as you know, the convening of Geneva. The President will have no problem to declare the failure of the step-by-step process and that we will try the second alternative, which is Geneva.

"I am sure you will understand that once there is a failure this time, we will not be bound by any undertakings we have already given thus far during these talks and that our position remains as defined by us and by the Arab world and in particular its latest summit meeting in Rabat.

"You are certainly welcome to come back to Aswan if you feel that you are able to gain progress. If not, in case of your decision to go back to Washington, the President still prefers that in that case you should proceed directly from Tel Aviv to Washington."

Ambassador Eilts talked to Fahmy and expressed concern at the seemingly negative cast of the above. Fahmy said he was writing this at the personal instructions of the President.



"Fahmy expects that the Foreign Ministers' meeting in Cairo will focus on the talks. He also notes that unless there is a marked change in the next 24 hours, the President will probably have to make his long-deferred talk to the People's Assembly in two or three days' time to explain that Egypt has followed the step-by-step course as far as it seemed viable but that now Geneva is the only alternative."

"There is considerable gloom, frustration, and bitterness among the Egyptians. They profess inability to understand how your mission could have been undertaken without a clearer idea about the correlation between the Israeli demands and offers."

This is self-explanatory, but I will add only one additional point.

There is no question that for whatever reason, on the American side there is a conviction similar to what the Egyptians said. We would not have conducted ourselves for the last seven months in the way we did if we knew this would be the final Israeli position. Particularly after Rabat. This accounts for the reaction. But aside from this are the realities that will follow.

None of this was a matter of pressure on Israel. Some of this can be worked out in a matter of the next weeks. But there is a concern about the reality that will now descend upon us. There was a conviction that this process, while it was in the United States' interest, was also in Israel's interest -- splitting all the Arabs, keeping the Soviets out, keeping the Europeans and Japanese quiescent -- and that this in itself was a quid pro quo for Israel, and for this reason we thought an agreement would be reached.

So whatever goodwill will be lost, we will make an effort to overcome. The real danger is that with the best will in the world, we will now be forced into a series of decisions that will face the U. S. with increasingly difficult dilemmas. This is the reality. This is where the pressure came from. Mr. Prime Minister, if you assigned a team of intelligent and serious people to examine from our point of view the decisions that will now have to be made, you would see the dilemmas we face. It is not possible for a superpower to separate itself totally from the Arab world, to separate ourselves totally from the West, to separate ourselves totally from the Soviet Union.



So let us part on good terms. We will keep in close contact with you. I wanted to say this ahead of time. There will be no pressure from us. We are not forcing Israel to do anything. The pressure we see is inherent in the situation -- that we attempted to protect you from, that we attempted to manage. And you will, if you review the record, admit that nothing was done that was not coordinated with you. There will now be enormous pressures to separate us, instead of enabling us to stay together and enabling the U.S. to protect Israel's position.

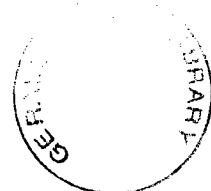
The decisions to be taken now will be the real tests. This is the only pressure you will feel. All the rest will be worked out one way or another.

Rabin: We all wanted the process to proceed in such a way as to save our interests and your interests. We agreed to give up the oil and we explained the importance of the passes. We see as part of the process for the future the need for practical arrangements by Egypt. We thought the wording -- and that there will not be cooperation in supervising and patrols of the demilitarized zone, and that there will be no easing of boycott, and what about other issues that were not discussed -- To give the passes and the oil field for this, when they are our best card in the process, is unexpected. This is what caused the misunderstanding.

Our position can be changed but only slightly. The road in the Israeli zone into a UN checkpoint; a move with the line in the North. But there is an enclave for the oil, and our line in the passes. Where do the Egyptians move to, with a new line?

The refusal of the monitoring station is a sign.

Allon: We do need a talk about how the communications broke down. I have checked the minutes of the previous talks, and from what I could read, there was no reason for misunderstanding about our position. And I was disturbed by the language from my counterpart; there seems to be an ultimatum from Fahmy. It sounds like we misunderstood the intentions of the Egyptians. The Egyptian insistence on removing the monitoring installation, even from the buffer zone, serves as a warning that even if we have an agreement, we will have another war or will be subjected to such strong pressures very soon. They may think they can pressure the U.S. to get Israel out of the Sinai for nothing. We agree that the process



is worth retaining, but for almost no element of nonbelligerency? We assumed that whatever area we evacuated would be controlled by the UN; we were even willing to give Egypt the buffer zone. They don't want the oil even though their people are starving. We have all this information about their military build-up. And we get this ultimatum to the Secretary of State from Fahmy.

And we wanted an agreement. We thought it would be good for Egypt. We thought it would be good for the U.S. I am sorry to see one of my best friends fail.

Kissinger: That is irrelevant.

Allon: Would it be advisable to go to Aswan to make the announcement?

Kissinger: I cannot go.

Allon: Do they know we are willing to give them free access on the road to the enclave?

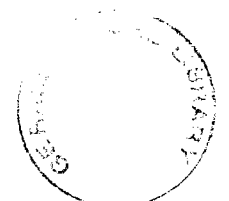
Kissinger: I don't want to give little concessions until we get an agreement on the basic points -- the passes.

Allon: Let us use only the encouraging sentence in the communique of the suspension -- that you are going to keep in touch with the parties. After the Passover you can take a new initiative -- in a different way.

Kissinger: It is totally out of the question. The U.S. will not again engage -- nor will it be able to engage -- in bilateral diplomacy again.

Peres: I don't see much reason to go into the past. The dilemma Israel faces is about the future, and we cannot separate from our own shadow.

There were four issues on which the talks concentrated: duration, the passes, the oil, and nonbelligerency. Israel moved on all four, and Egypt did not move at all. We agree that the pressure is inherent in the situation -- and it will come again with Syria. So what sort of Israel will face this uncompromising Arab mood? We were more hopeful about the Egyptian mood at the beginning. No nation can take this pressure. We have to choose between confrontation and movement to peace, but we are not met by conciliation on the part of Egypt.



I hope that the friendship of the U. S. and Israel will overcome this test. We and the team tried to bridge the unbridgeable.

Kissinger: In fairness I believe I cannot let pass the proposition that Egypt made no concessions. It is simply not correct. The correct statement may be that both sides made the maximum concessions they were capable of making, and that it wasn't enough. But it is not a trivial matter for an Arab state for the first time to say that there will be no recourse to the use or threat of force; that all conflicts henceforth between you will be settled by peaceful means; that the agreement is open-ended and will last until it is superseded by another agreement; together with an assurance to the United States that if Syria attacks Israel, Egypt will not join; and on duration we could have worked it out with the UNEF to give an assurance that it will be automatically extended indefinitely. So that is the wrong view. I believe the issue has been wrongly defined from the beginning. And I of course would say in Egypt that it would be incorrect to say that you did not make concessions. You made significant concessions.

Incidentally, another concession that is not insignificant is the assurance that would be given to the U. S. that no matter what happened at Geneva, it would not affect the agreement. If nothing that is done at Geneva will affect the agreement, what could break the agreement?

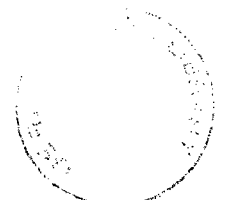
And it would enormously strengthen your position in public opinion in America.

Allon: Their answer on the early warning system is a new element.

Kissinger: They believe it is their territory. This is the problem, not necessarily that they are planning a surprise attack. You could put up another early warning station. It is expensive to replace; it is reasonable to ask -- but their refusal is not necessarily evidence of an intention to attack.

Gur: What about the idea of reducing forces on both sides?

Kissinger: I made the point to them -- about deployment which gave both sides assurance against a surprise attack. They agree to discuss that -- they liked the idea -- they agreed to this. I told Sadat that a



reduction of the standing army would be reciprocated by a thinning out of Israeli forces or a reduction of the term of service. He said this could be considered. He did not accept it but he did not reject it. The early warning site has been rejected consistently. I put it to him in the context of preventing a surprise attack, that a reduction in the numbers in the standing army in Egypt and a reduction in military service in Israel would mean movement toward peace.

Sisco: I took it up independently with Gamasy, who said he was open-minded about this.

Rabin: So how do you see it?

Kissinger: There has been no change in the Israeli position in the past 24 hours?

Rabin: In the passes and the line, no change. North from the passes and in the road to Abu Rudeis, we are willing to make some change. The opposition leaders believe we are selling out the country. They said that if an agreement like this with Egypt is reached, they will attack us.

Allon: May I ask a question? Is it conceivable that if we agreed that our men in the zone would remain for 5-6 years only?

Rabin: Let's be realistic. They don't think of keeping the present position for 5 years -- one or two years maybe.

Kissinger: If we had achieved success, in an atmosphere of cooperation there would have been a real turning toward peace, and we could have achieved a de facto situation which, with skill, would last for four years. I thought certainly it would last more than two -- but he can't publicly admit it will last 5 years.

Peres: You once said you could predict only two years.

Kissinger: I did not say two years with no pressure. He will of course make his demands at Geneva. But the American public would have treated an attack on Israel under a non-recourse to force provision as aggression, and would have been behind Israel all the way.

Peres: All our wars in the area -- four of them -- have been due to the Sinai.

Kissinger: In May you said all the wars were the result of Syria!
At this very table I heard it.

Peres: If we could have arranged that Sinai be potential for a period of calm and not for force, could it be theoretically possible one day to put Sinai under Egyptian sovereignty and public administration and only police -- and no armies? Can we do this?

Kissinger: It is essential that we have no illusions about the significance of this sequence of events. The Arab leader who banked on the United States is discredited; the Arab leader who attempted to separate himself from the others has failed. We will now see a united Arab front. We will see a greater emphasis on the Palestinians. There will be no propositions about the Sinai separated from propositions about the Golan. The step-by-step process has been throttled, first for Jordan and now for Egypt. The Soviets will step into the area at least as the equals of the United States. So it is senseless to talk about ideas that the United States could arrange. We are losing control over events in the Middle East for the first time since 1969. That is a fact, and we had better adjust ourselves to the reality.

The European Community will now accelerate its relationship with the Arabs.

If the 1971 interim agreement had succeeded, there would have been no war in October 1973. It is the same process here. We are losing control over events in the Middle East. Ideas we might have been able to work out are dead. We have no strategy for the situation ahead. Our past strategy was worked out and agreed to between the U.S. and Israel. Now I don't know what we are going to do.

Events will impose on us a necessity -- against our will -- which will inevitably lead to a certain dissociation. We will be forced to maneuver with the Soviet Union, with the Arabs, with the Europeans, so as not to be totally isolated. All our strategy which we devoted ourselves to for a year and a half is smashed. Let's not kid ourselves; we've failed. Sadat will say that his desire to have good relations with the US will continue, but events will drive him.

The Prime Minister and I used to talk, when he was in Washington, about such ideas as sovereignty for the Sinai, in 1970. But a long, long period of turmoil will be ahead.



Sisco: It is another lost opportunity. And there is a good possibility there will be another war in the next year.

Allon: Why not start it up again in a few weeks?

Kissinger: Because Sadat has to explain why he did it to protect himself. Because I am no longer the figure who mesmerizes them in the Arab world, because in every area the United States is no longer a country that one has to take so seriously. If the U.S. acts with brutal decisiveness somewhere, in a test of strength, maybe we can again, but I would not count on it, given our domestic situation. And don't misunderstand: I am analyzing a situation with friends. One reason my colleagues and I are so exasperated is that we see a friend damaging himself, for reasons which will seem trivial five years from now, like Soviet soldiers across the Canal in 1971.

We should discuss the suspension scenario. We want two hours to notify Washington, and to get messages off to foreign governments, and to notify Aswan. When should we announce it -- at 10:00 tonight?

Rabin: Make it 11:00. We want to notify the Cabinet.

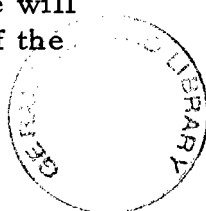
Peres: What do we announce?

Rabin: That Dr. Kissinger announces the suspension of the talks.

Peres: We do not want to fight.

Kissinger: We leave Jerusalem at 10:00 tomorrow, and we leave Ben-Gurion at 11:00. We will read the following statement [he reads text of draft statement]:

"We have been seeking, in response to the desires of the parties, to help them achieve an interim agreement as a further step toward a peace settlement. We believe both sides have made a serious effort to reach a successful outcome. Unfortunately, the differences on a number of key issues have proved irreconcilable. We, therefore, believe a period of reassessment is needed so that all concerned can consider how best to proceed toward a just and lasting peace. Secretary Kissinger has accordingly informed the parties that he is returning to Washington to report to the President and the Congress on the present stage of the negotiations. He will remain in close touch with the parties and the co-chairman of the Geneva Conference during the period ahead."



Rabin: If you announce this way, I will have to follow and explain why to the Israeli people.

Kissinger: While I am in this area, I will have to disassociate myself.

Peres: President Ford's letter is an occasion . . .

Rabin: The brutality of the formulation of President Ford's letter upset the Cabinet.

Kissinger: If an argument starts about the letter, it will not be in the interest of Israel or of the Jews in America.

Rabin: It is not a compliment to the Israelis that one can talk like that to Israelis.

Kissinger: I have made it clear to you how the U. S. must react to the objective undermining of our position.

I cannot believe it is in Israel's interest to tackle the President.

Allon: Forget about the letter. The other branches of the Administration will put the blame on Israel and Egypt will get full credit.

Rabin: I ask now, what can we say? We have kept silent for two weeks. We must explain the problem. The Egyptians have explained their position all the way through.

Peres: Make it public after another meeting; then we will state our case. There will be no polemics tonight with Egypt or Israel.

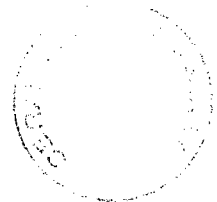
Kissinger: Good. Let's suspend for two hours and meet again at 10:00 -- to discuss how we conduct ourselves in the weeks ahead. We should discuss where we go next. We will not criticize Israel; we will not engage in attacks on Egypt. We will be evenhanded. So to that extent there will be a dissociation. We will say both sides made a serious effort. We will not support either position. We will say both sides made a serious effort and failed. We will inform our Congress.

Rabin: We will meet again at 10:30. I will phone the Cabinet at 10:00.

[The meeting ended, and the group rose from the table.]

It is a Greek tragedy.

Kissinger: It is. That's what makes it worse -- that each side, following the laws of its own nature, reaches an outcome that was perfectly foreseeable.



HAK/Rabin
Memcon



MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

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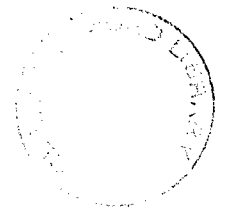
Dr. Henry A. Kissinger, Secretary of State
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Peter W. Rodman, NSC Staff *PWR*

DATE AND TIME: Saturday, March 22, 1975
10:35 p.m. - 12:05 a.m.

PLACE: Prime Minister's Office
Jerusalem

Rabin: Well, we have not yet prepared our announcement.

Allon: The team is still doing it.



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E.O. 13526, CFR 1.5 SF 9/18/03

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H2 10/02/03

Rabin: Because anyway we will do it an hour after you.

Peres: What we intend is to state the Israeli position and to refrain from any polemics.

Kissinger: We would appreciate it if you would say nothing while we are in the country which will be taken by the Egyptians as an endorsement of what you have said.

Rabin: When will you announce? 11:00 o'clock?

Kissinger: 11:00 or shortly after. We would also like to ask that nothing be done in the United States that will force us to answer.

Rabin: We will do our best. There will be nothing officially.

Kissinger: If there is a dispute, we will have to answer.

Rabin: We won't start a dispute, officially or unofficially.

Dinitz: There is no dispute with the United States.

Rabin: It is not even that: We have nothing but friendly relations with the United States. Not that there is no argument.

In the United States, there are so many groups -- we don't control them -- who use Israel for their own political purposes and ambitions. There are so many people here attacking us.

Kissinger: It can't be in Israel's interest to start a debate on Israel in the United States.

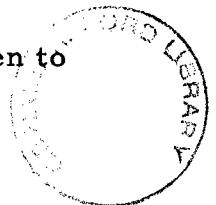
Rabin: I couldn't agree more.

Has there been any reaction from the Egyptians?

Kissinger: Not yet. They couldn't have.

Rabin: We will hear on the radio.

Peres: We hear from the UN that they won't permit newspapermen to cross to the other side of the Canal.



And they are sending another convoy through the Canal.

We will go ahead with allowing the Red Crescent; it may be an empty gesture.

Rabin: We are in a delicate situation [on the missing bodies]. We have kept quiet for over ten days. It will be leaked. We have to tell the families.

Kissinger: You should work it out with your channels with the Egyptians. We have no standing with the Egyptians.

You can say we were told there were 39 bodies.

Rabin: We have to inform the parents.

Kissinger: You have to decide how much you want to attack Egypt. We recommend against inflaming the situation and we should give an opportunity for things to calm down. We on our side will do nothing precipitately.

Allon: Since we are all dealing with politics and each one of us is occupying a responsible duty for his own people as well as for the international body, I think tonight -- maybe not tonight is the proper time -- to give some positive meaning to the words in the communique -- which is well written -- about the Secretary continuing his contacts with the parties. Because we are not playing soccer; we can't just go home. We are responsible for the people in the area. We are all sorry about what happened. But we can't let it just be a statement but there must be something about new initiatives. On this basis I would still like to work out an understanding with the United States, because we would still like to negotiate an interim agreement, or even an overall agreement, if it can be done. But not on the basis of an ultimatum from the other side.

Kissinger: There were no ultimatums from the other side. In all fairness, in the absence of new Israeli ideas, we received no new Egyptian ideas. There were no ultimatums from either side.

We will now conduct our relations as two sovereign nations. The President has asked for an NSC meeting later this week. Until those decisions, I can't commit myself to anything.



You have to understand there is no scope for separate American efforts. They would not be accepted by the Arabs, they would not be tolerated by the Soviets, and they would not be risked by us. We will have to see what multilateral approaches are possible. As the Prime Minister knows from his time in Washington, I am not a great advocate of multilateral efforts. So the steps I have tried for five years to avoid may be our only option. But there will not be another American initiative in the area in the near future, and I think your planning should assume this. We are not going to be in the central position in the diplomacy, as I have been telling you for two weeks.

Sisco: I think you will see the same thing we have seen in the last few days -- like Stanley Hoffmann in Foreign Affairs, drawing up a final settlement that goes far beyond the Rogers Plan.

Kissinger: And Brzezinski.

Sisco: Steve Rosenfeld, a good friend of yours

Rabin: He is no friend of ours!

Sisco: . . . just today endorsed the Hoffmann approach.

Kissinger: You have effectively destroyed, by this decision, a year and a half of American policy, from which certain consequences will flow. We will not oppose resumption of the Geneva Conference.

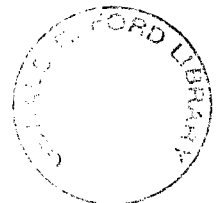
Rabin: I understand.

Kissinger: And we will not be hung up on procedural issues. How we conduct Geneva, I haven't thought out. I had assumed that at Geneva we would meet under conditions where we can tell the Arabs "Either do it our way or you get nothing." Now the Soviets are in that position, and we can say nothing. We will have to show our good will at least.

Allon: I don't know how you can say we have destroyed a year and a half of American policy.

Rabin: Yigal . . .

Allon: Because it looks like the Egyptians did everything.



Kissinger: That is not the issue.

I have been telling you for seven months that you would not get an equivalent quid pro quo. It was understood that the negotiation would be conducted in the interests of an overall strategy that would be overwhelmingly in Israel's interest. An agreement would have many things in it that would be hard to defend; and that has bothered me. But the quid pro quo would be in enabling us to control the diplomacy, and exhaust all the participants. Compared to that, the location of the line by eight kilometers one way or the other didn't frankly concern me that much.

And you got all the military elements of non-belligerency, and the elements of non-belligerency you didn't get are unrelated to your line.

When you see over the next two weeks the damage that is done to American foreign policy all over the world -- and this on top of Indochina, Turkey, Portugal -- we are doomed to irrelevance. You won't be able to write us little notes: "Please go to Asad and ask about UNDOF."

I agree it was done with good intentions; I am not assessing blame. As long as you define the problem in terms of the negotiation, you didn't ask for anything unreasonable. But in terms of the risks you would have to run, and the dangers you could have avoided by these risks -- it is a real tragedy.

Allon: When you received that cable from Aswan, from that great President, that he had no new ideas . . .

Kissinger: I want to make clear what I told the Egyptians; I said there is no change in the Israeli position -- exactly what the Prime Minister recommended. I said, if there is anything he can add to what he gave us before, now was the time to do it. Six months of experience told me this is not the way to deal with Sadat. I told you all these things could have been worked out -- the road, etc. -- on condition of the line. But why should he make this concession now when he knows it has failed?

Allon: So that means that in any negotiation with an Arab country, he can demand whatever he wants, or else we destroy the American position all over the world, and the Europeans will turn their backs on us, and . . .



Kissinger: No, he didn't deal in an ultimative way. He asked for El Arish from the beginning.

Rabin: When I was in Washington, you used to say -- I am not quoting you, and it was in different conditions -- that American policy in the Middle East should be to show the Arabs that what they want, they can get through you and not through Moscow, and that what they want, they can get through the political option and not through the military option.

Kissinger: That is essentially correct.

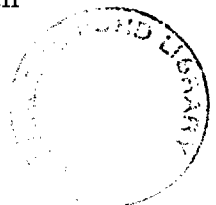
Rabin: That was your strategy.

Kissinger: And still is.

Rabin: The Yom Kippur War, in a way, changed this strategy. As a result of the war, the Egyptians came to the conclusion they could use you to achieve, to extricate, much more concessions from Israel. I still doubt what would have happened after the first phase. So we have to bear in mind, no matter what we are saying in Israel, that to sacrifice the oil, everything, to assist your strategy -- I have prejudices -- it's more than that; it's the realities that we have seen in the Middle East -- that they could have switched. So what we have tried to do -- our strategy -- is to go with you to the limit of what we can do without risking our security. To me, the passes always have been more important than the oil. We had to do something so that if it failed, we would not be jeopardized by it.

Kissinger: I can't see why the eastern end of the passes and the western end of the passes . . .

Rabin: It is not that -- it is the location of the Egyptian forces. We are a reserve army; they have a standing army. As you explained it, the Syrians would conduct a war in a way so as to prolong it and to cause us as many casualties as possible. So at any given moment, something would have happened. The Syrian problem was not solved. Any talks about the Syrian problem would not have led to anything concrete. We would not have negotiated an interim agreement with Syria, only an overall. And the Syrians would not negotiate for anything other than total withdrawal.



Kissinger: That isn't true. I reported to you what was possible.

Allon: For an overall?

Kissinger: I have reported to you. But we will never know.

Peres: I want to say that we don't want to assess blame. Secondly, we know Israel is now sailing in very bad weather. There are no illusions that the rupture of the negotiations improves our situation; on the contrary. We know there is an improvement in Egypt's policy but it was not sufficient to warrant giving up the passes.

Kissinger: If the Egyptians followed you into the passes -- which wasn't the issue -- you could have gotten back there much faster if there was a violation. And under those conditions, even non-belligerency was too dangerous.

Peres: We looked to non-belligerency as evidence of a real change of heart on the part of Egypt.

We know that from tonight our nation will be lonelier than ever before. We have no illusion. But from the time we have started the negotiations, up to tonight, we have made very important concessions. The oil was very difficult.

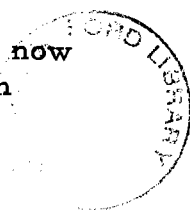
Kissinger: You have known for seven months it would be raised. It is not a concession when you know from the beginning.

Peres: That it would be raised in the context of non-belligerency.

Rabin: Non-use of force.

Peres: On the passes, it is a question not just of the passes but of military installations that have no offensive purpose and are needed. The situation is Egyptian forces that can move in six hours to our line. What we have to have for our security is twelve hours, six hours, to warn our people -- and this is especially after the Yom Kippur war.

The previous government, of which I was a member, couldn't overcome the psychological blow that was suffered, that the Egyptians and the Syrians could launch a surprise attack. So this is a serious problem now for our people. This is the importance of an early warning system in the passes.



Kissinger: But you wouldn't leave the passes anyway.

Peres: But we arranged the line so we could keep Umm Kasheib, which is one of the two eyes of our nation.

Kissinger: If you told us seven months ago that you couldn't give up the station -- when many people were telling us "Don't delay the negotiations; don't give the arms, but tie them together."

Rabin: We talked about it. Colby visited there and he understands it.

Kissinger: And we told you it couldn't work.

Peres: If you knew the reasons behind our position . . .

Kissinger: Your position is not unreasonable. It is disastrous but not unreasonable.

Colby doesn't make our policy.

Rabin: But the question of including or not including, was not left clear.

Peres: If the Egyptians would permit a real change in the situation . . .

Kissinger: Look, it is senseless. The Egyptians have been informed. If you offered the passes now, it wouldn't work. We are facing a new situation. Our influence in Egypt will diminish; our influence in Syria will disappear; our influence in Saudi Arabia will be replaced by Western Europe. You will now face the joint position of all the Arabs.

Dinitz: How can all the Arabs get anything without you?

Kissinger: Our influence will diminish. We have other interests besides to defend Israel. We have tried to reconcile these with the defense of Israel. We have geared our policy almost totally to the requirements of Israel, as we understood them, and as you understood them.

It is not like 1971 when things just ended and there is a hiatus. Things will go on.



In retrospect I think the interim agreement in 1971 was correct. I didn't support it. There was no pressure behind it. All I am saying is that when the interim agreement failed, our interest was to frustrate the Arabs and the Soviet Union. I cooperated with it. It is now against your interest to frustrate the Arabs and to invite the Soviet Union in. And you say they can't do it without the United States. It can be held for six months, a year, but not for an historic period. Irrespective of my intentions, or the President's intentions; if our intentions were the issue, we would do it. Now our newspapers will ask how a crisis can go on month after month without any American initiative. You see what is happening already, even in the conditions of success -- Stanley Hoffmann, George Ball, Brzezinski. Anyone who tells you different is wrong.

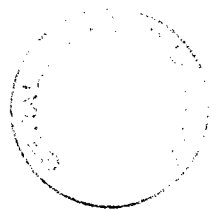
I got a cable today from Rockefeller who says: How can Israel want a crisis now when our domestic situation can't be managed?

In November, we could have sold Geneva to the Russians at Vladivostok -- we could have gotten stages, etc. In three months, no one will know where the Mitla Pass is, where the Gidi Pass is. This is what you face.

We will stagger through the next few weeks. If that is your problem.

Events will determine our dynamic. Events are now out of American control. That is the reality. There are a lot of Congressmen who talk big. Just put a bright man in charge of analyzing what the American Secretary of State should do -- of pro-Israel orientation. You would see our dilemma.

We have attempted to reconcile an almost total support for you -- for your essential requirements If this was salami tactics, if we wanted the 1967 borders, we could do it with all of world opinion and considerable domestic opinion behind us. If we were going to do that, we wouldn't have gone through this horrible agony. The strategy was designed to protect you from this. As my colleagues can tell you, I have prevented for a year any drawing of overall plans. But ask yourself what the position of the United States can be at Geneva without a plan. Even for the most benevolent American President. That is my nightmare -- what I see now marching towards you. And compared to that, ten kilometers in the Sinai is trivial. I am not angry at you; I am not asking you to change your position. It is tragic to see people dooming themselves to a course of unbelievable peril for reasons that are heroic, stubborn -- and disastrous.



Rabin: It's the day you visited Masada!

Kissinger: That's right. The reason I don't want a confrontation with the U.S. is about anti-Semitism -- I don't want the midwestern mentality in America to see first that the Jews wreck the trade bill, then that they cause a situation which means constant crisis. This is my nightmare.

I agree with you, Mr. Prime Minister. There is a great risk that the Egyptians will some day attack you. There is a great risk that there is an *arrière pensée*. And for that reason I don't take seriously all these proposals for sweeping proposals and guarantees. But what was a possible danger in those conditions is certain now. And you could have let history help you. There could have been a revolution in Syria; there could be a change of leadership in the Soviet Union.

On top of the general appearance of American impotence -- for which you are not in the slightest responsible, although many of your supporters in the U.S. are responsible.

Rabin: I was much criticized on Vietnam.

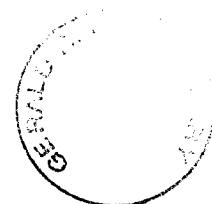
Kissinger: No, no. You know. And on top of the CIA thing, which has partly lost Portugal.

You're better off with a tough unfriendly President than with a friendly weak President . . . Presidency. I wasn't applying it to the present President, but in general.

Rabin: Yes.

Kissinger: In general. And this is all affected by what happened today. You shouldn't say it all depends on what the United States will do; the U.S. is no longer so free in its choices now. That is the reality. That is the great tragedy. If it were the will of the people involved, it could be done. It is when events run away with people that they become inexorable.

Roy, you should go now. [Mr. Atherton leaves to take the text of the announcement -- attached at Tab A -- to Ambassador Anderson at the King David Hotel.]



Allon: Anyway, Henry, since this is not the end of history, we will not give up the policy of peace, with America, and once this crisis is developed, we must make a fresh effort. Simcha is going back to the United States tomorrow, and I am sure our policy of friendship and cooperation with the United States will continue.

We have no illusion about what we face. But anything that would not be given up to American good offices will not be given up in Geneva. And the way to Geneva must be clarified, and Geneva is not an automatic procedure.

Kissinger: I tell you we will recommend Geneva. One thing I can assure you is, when a request for Geneva is made, we will accept it. We have stalled for eighteen months. What will happen, we haven't planned. We will accept. You don't have to come.

Allon: If by threatening Geneva, Sadat is playing chicken with us, it is lost.

Kissinger: I read it [the cable] to you: He didn't send it to you.

Allon: He missed a great opportunity.

Kissinger: [Laughs] I should have let you speak first? You would have changed your line?

Dinitz: We changed the line, but not the passes.

Kissinger: Mr. Prime Minister, you asked for 24 hours not to give a new line but to prepare the breakup better. Would there have been any change in your position?

Peres: If he had given any change on the two points -- duration and warning systems What you said was very impressive and very touching. But we would have faced the Syrian negotiation.

Kissinger: But you would have had no trouble with that. You would have had an ironclad assurance we wouldn't press beyond a certain point.

Rabin: [To Peres] It was for the UNDOF removal.



Kissinger: We wanted it to get UNDOF renewed; we would go to Geneva for that. That is an entirely different thing. We would have supported you. If there was a chance of Syria talking peace, we could have discussed it -- but for the purpose of securing your frontiers there.

Rabin: The President assured us.

Kissinger: On two occasions, and you know why.

Rabin: That we would not be forced to go down from the Golan.

Kissinger: Yes.

Dinitz: Mr. Secretary, sometimes it is very difficult for a small country like us to bear all this responsibility to keep all this strategy going, if we are not given assistance. I was privy to all the decisions that were made. We did all this to keep the process going. There is a point when the other party must give something too, or else we break our spirit.

Kissinger: No one talks more to you about your spirit than I. Even though I was the victim of your negotiating tactics, I believed they were the right tactics, because it is not in our interest that you look easy.

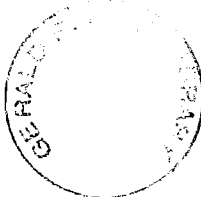
I believe that two years from now it will be clear that a grave mistake has been made. Let me give you an example. On UNEF, we could have worked out arrangements so that if the worst happened and Egypt launched an attack, we would support your seizing the passes.

I am not saying this to change your position; God, the announcement is being made in five minutes.

This was the lesser of the two evils. The whole purpose of it was this. I know Rosenne can show that nonuse of forces isn't the same as nonbelligerency; but for our political purpose there is no difference. The American people would know what it meant if Sadat broke a pledge made to us not to use force.

Dinitz: Sadat owes a lot to the Americans; he has to give something.

Kissinger: I believe he did the maximum he was capable of doing, given his situation.



Dinitz: We wanted to keep the process going but we feel he has a responsibility.

[Messages are brought in to the Prime Minister.]

Rabin: According to Cairo Radio, "Egypt says no. In view of Israeli dragging, Egypt has rejected all the Israeli proposals because they are in direct contradiction to Egypt's position that Egypt is not ready to give up one inch of Egyptian soil or any Palestinian rights to give any concession contradicting this commitment." Fahmy is now giving a press conference.

Kissinger: I think you will have to put out your position.

Dinitz: Explaining the whole background.

Kissinger: No.

Rabin: Since you said you didn't want us to speak while you were here

Kissinger: You can say I asked you not to put out your position but that since Fahmy Not in your statement but in a press conference.

He has to turn sharp to Asad. He has to prove he rejected it to protect Arab objectives. I predicted it all. It proves nothing about his original intentions.

Peres: This alertness [alert]

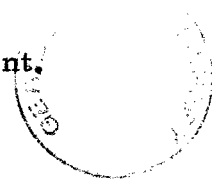
Kissinger: At least it is taking people's minds off inflation. And depression. We got the floor price last week!

Dinitz: I want to reiterate the Prime Minister's statement, that nothing we will say here or in Washington will have anything other than praise for your efforts. I want to say this to you because these are my instructions.

Kissinger: We have to discuss our bilateral relations.

Peres: [Reads another message] "There will be a threat in March or April from Syria." It doesn't say what.

Kissinger: In the context of an agreement, it would have been different.



Rabin: We want to play too. [He marks up the text of the Israeli statement.]

Kissinger: It may be the right thing to do.

Rabin: "The talks that were intended to open the process of achieving a peaceful agreement, that were conducted through the good offices of Secretary of State Kissinger, Dr. Kissinger, have been suspended today."

Kissinger: My father will be disappointed.

Rabin: "In the initial stages of the negotiations, Israel expressed its readiness to vacate the passes and the oil fields in return for Egypt's ending the state of belligerency. Egypt refused. In spite of this, Israel proposed a withdrawal of its forces . . ."

[To Gazit] What? "From its present line to a line that runs through the western passes and oil fields. To Israel's disappointment, Egypt's offer did not include a readiness to end the state of war, and did not indicate a readiness ^{to} move towards peace. Israel will maintain contact with the U.S. Government and particularly the Secretary of State . . ."

[To Gazit] I think it is a mistake not to put what the Egyptians demanded from us!

Kissinger: It's your statement. It's a dignified statement. You will put out, I am sure, what the Egyptians demanded. But put it in.

Rabin: This will be the mood of the statement.

Kissinger: All right.

[The Israeli side works over the statement. The text as released is at Tab B.]

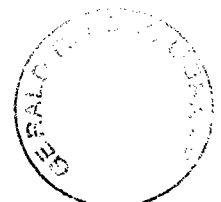
Kissinger: Is there any particular reason for us to stay?

Rabin: No.

Allon: Except for your good company!

Kissinger: So, I will see you at the airport.

Allon: No, I . . .



Kissinger: It is not seven days yet [since Allon's brother's death].

Allon: And Simcha will go back earlier.

Peres: I will see you off.

Allon: An important Minister will see you off.

Kissinger: Who will come?

Rabin: I don't know.

Kissinger: The only reason I checked is, will there be a statement?

Rabin: Do you want to say something?

Kissinger: I have always made a statement when I leave the area, and I think we should play it as cool What will you say?

Allon: Whoever it is, we will coordinate fully with you.

Kissinger: Whatever I say, it will be conciliatory.

Dinitz: It will not be a belligerent statement!

Allon: I hope you include the statement in the communique: that you will maintain contact with the parties.

Kissinger: Yigal,

Allon: It may be my craziness

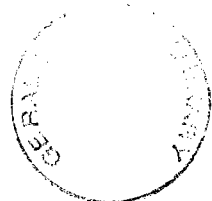
Kissinger: [To Rabin] Could we have breakfast?

Rabin: There is a Cabinet meeting at 8:00.

Kissinger: Oh.

Rabin: So I will come [to the airport].

Kissinger: That will be a nice gesture. I am going to see Golda. Then I don't see you until the airport.



Rabin: When do you leave?

Kissinger: About 10:00. The helicopter is arranged.

Then I will plan to be at the airport at 11:00. Maybe you and I should sit together for 15 minutes. It would be symbolically important.

Rabin: It would be symbolically important.

Kissinger: I will see Golda at 9:30 and meet you at 10:30 at the airport. Because I would like to leave at 11:00. You tell me when I have to leave the hotel . . . 8:30?

Peres: No, 8:45. It's a 20-minute flight.

Kissinger: At the airport we can agree on what we will say.

Rabin: Yes.

Kissinger: Than I take off at 11:00.

My colleagues and I appreciate the seriousness with which these talks have been conducted and the courtesy with which we have been received. And I want you to know that the exasperation felt by some of us is the result of friends' concern about what will happen to you -- and what will happen to our own country, whatever the reasons. I say this with no bitterness, with no blame. I have great respect for the Israeli negotiating team as human beings.

I only hope your assessment turns out to be correct. No one would be more delighted if this happens than I.

Rabin: Mr. Secretary, I want to say how much we admire your efforts and how you conducted the talks.

All of us are, I would say, sad about how things have developed. I would say sad. [The others nod agreement.] We have no intention on our part but to praise the way you conducted these talks in very difficult circumstances. There is no doubt about your intentions, about what you sought to achieve, and we are very grateful to you.

Kissinger: I will see you at 11:00.



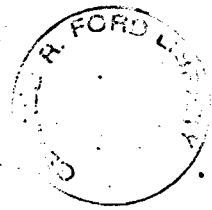
[The meeting ended. Secretary Kissinger and Minister Peres went downstairs and spoke briefly to the press outside the front entrance. The text of their remarks is attached at Tab C.]



B



We have been seeking, in response to the desires of the parties, to help them achieve an interim agreement as a further step toward a peace settlement. We believe both sides have made a serious effort to reach a successful outcome. Unfortunately, the differences on a number of key issues have proved irreconcilable so far. We, therefore, believe a period of reassessment is needed so that all concerned can consider how best to proceed ^{toward a just and lasting peace.} Secretary Kissinger has accordingly informed the parties that he is returning to Washington to report to the President and the Congress on the present stage of the negotiations. He will remain in close touch with the parties and the co-chairman of the Geneva Conference during the period ahead.



Israeli Government Statement

Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 2300 GMT 22 Mar 75 TA

[Text] Some two minutes ago, Mr Dan Patir, the prime minister's adviser, appeared here with the prime minister's announcement on the postponement of the talks with Dr Kissinger. We shall hear now the recording of Dan Patir's statement: [Patir--recorded] The talks that were intended to open the process of achieving a peaceful agreement on controversial subjects between Egypt and Israel were interrupted this evening. In the initial stages of the negotiations Israel expressed its readiness to vacate the Jiddi and Mitla passes and the Abu Rudays oilfields in return for Egypt's ending the state of belligerency. Egypt refused to cancel the state of belligerency, insisting that it continue. In spite of this, Israel proposed a withdrawal of its forces from the existing separation lines in return for a less binding political formula.

[Announcer] A short break in the announcement occurs here, caused by an amending by one of the secretaries of something in the statement of the prime minister's adviser. We shall hear the sequel immediately: [Patir] I continue. In spite of this, Israel proposed, in return for a less binding political formula, a withdrawal of its forces from the existing separation lines, including the western part of the strategically important Mitla and Jiddi passes, and their transfer to UN control. Israel also proposed to transfer the oilfields to Egyptian administration. This proposal also has been rejected by Egypt. This rejection by Egypt precipitated the break in the talks. Israel is ready--today as always--to continue seeking a settlement with Egypt, and with this objective in mind it will continue to maintain very close contact with the Government of the United States.

The Government of Israel expresses profound appreciation to the U.S. Government, and especially to the secretary of state, Dr Henry Kissinger, for his untiring efforts to achieve peace. This ends the official statement.

[Announcer] The prime minister's adviser went on to say that at 0800 tomorrow a plenary session of the Cabinet will be convened to hear a report; and afterwards the Knesset also may be convened to hear an announcement by the prime minister.



C

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE



March 22, 1975

No. 165

REMARKS OF
THE HONORABLE HENRY A. KISSINGER
SECRETARY OF STATE
AND ISRAELI DEFENSE MINISTER SHIMON PERES
FOLLOWING AN EARLY MORNING MEETING OF
THE AMERICAN AND ISRAELI NEGOTIATING TEAMS
JERUSALEM
MARCH 22, 1975

DEFENSE MINISTER PERES: Well, as you know, we had an important and long Cabinet meeting this afternoon. Afterwards we have reported to Dr. Kissinger about the deliberations in our Cabinet session, and we went into great details about the many and complicated problems ahead of us, and since today is Friday night we have decided to continue tomorrow. I hope the Secretary will remain so we shall be able to deal with the very serious matter in a relaxed and thoughtful way tomorrow night.

QUESTION: Mr. Peres, are the talks deadlocked? Have you hit a really serious snag?

DEFENSE MINISTER PERES: I would not like to conclude the negotiations as long as they go on. Let us be a little bit patient and not run ahead of time, neither with guesses nor with conclusions.

QUESTION: Why the special session tonight, on Friday night?

DEFENSE MINISTER PERES: Basically, I believe because we are a democratic country and decisions are being taken by the Cabinet.

QUESTION: Could we get Dr. Kissinger's assessment?

SECRETARY KISSINGER: I agree with what the Defense Minister has said. We reviewed in great detail all the points that are involved in a potential agreement. We thought that both sides would benefit from a day of thinking over where we stand, and we are going to meet again tomorrow evening and continue our discussions.

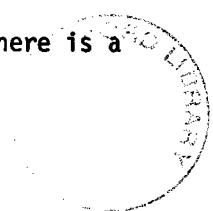
QUESTION: Secretary Kissinger, how do you react to these tales of deadlock? How would you characterize where it stands?

SECRETARY KISSINGER: I would say that over the recent week the positions of the two sides have come closer to each other. Both sides have made a serious effort to take into account the considerations of the other, but a gap remains and, of course, as long as a gap remains there remains a lot of work to be done.

QUESTION: Are you going to continue with the work? Do you plan to keep going, keep going to Aswan, keep up the shuttle?

SECRETARY KISSINGER: I plan to continue the shuttle as long as I think there is a possibility of bridging the gap.

QUESTION: And do you think so now, Sir?



SECRETARY KISSINGER: I think so now, and we will continue our discussions tomorrow.

DEFENSE MINISTER PERES: Goodnight, gentlemen. Go and have a rest.

