

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

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MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

PARTICIPANTS: Dr. Henry A. Kissinger, Secretary of State
and Assistant to the President for
National Security Affairs
Dr. James R. Schlesinger, Secretary of Defense
Ambassador Kenneth Rush, Deputy Secretary
of State
Admiral Thomas Moorer, Chairman, JCS
William Colby, Director, Central Intelligence

DATE AND TIME: Tuesday, October 9, 1973
9:40 - 10:25 a. m.
11:55 a. m. - 12:20 p. m.

PLACE: Situation Room

SUBJECT: Special WSAG - Principals Only

Kissinger: This will be a preliminary discussion. Later we will meet with the President. The Israelis have called all night asking for deliveries. This morning they said they bombed Damascus hoping for a quick victory.

At 0800 they told me their losses in aircraft and tanks. Some of the tanks have broken down. The total of Arab resupply from other countries is 1,800.

They are desperate and they want help. They are willing to mobilize the aircraft and point out the El Al signs. They especially need anti-tank ammunition.

Schlesinger: That is strange. Yesterday they said the 30th was okay.

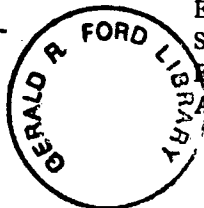
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Kissinger: I am just reporting what they said. Also Golda wants to come over here for one hour and return. That is unusual for just 100 tanks.

Let me give the problems. You all can think about this and we then will meet with the President.

Battles in the desert are like naval battles; you either win or lose. Their lines could crack, or there could be a stalemate. That too would give the Arabs a tremendous boost. If the Israelis can represent us as having screwed them in their hour of need, we lose any leverage we have.

Schlesinger: It also increases their need for us.

Kissinger: The best way would be for them to win without our help.

Schlesinger: That still may be okay.

Kissinger: We have to decide how to handle these requests -- we can meet them, deny them, meet them partially, or obfuscate. To meet them would immediately drive the Arabs wild.

Moorer: It would trigger the Soviets also.

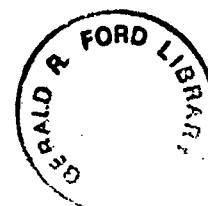
Rush: Also the Saudis.

Kissinger: They said they would do well with the Syrians today and hold against Egypt. They are scared that if their losses get out, all the Arabs would jump in.

Schlesinger: They still have a decisive edge in aircraft, and know that many can be repaired.

They are asking for two types of things. The ancillary equipment we can do, except some ECM with technicians. The major issue is tanks and aircraft. If we seem to turn around a battle that the Arabs are winning, we are in trouble. We should be willing to defend the Israeli borders ourselves, but not get involved now.

Their story has shifted in the last 24 hours. They either fibbed yesterday about the bridges down or today about the forces who got across.



Colby: They are doing okay in Syria. They have pushed them back.

Kissinger: But Syria didn't crack.

Moorer: The Israelis are out numbered four to one.

Colby: The Sinai is farther away and less accessible. Syria is an immediate threat.

According to the last reports they are doing well along the Canal. If the Egyptians have only gone 10-12 kilometers, that is not much.

Rush: The Israeli objective is to get us locked in. We can break with the Soviet Union.

Kissinger: As of last night we were in great shape.

Rush: This may be the Israeli scenario to lock us in.

Schlesinger: The situation has not changed that much. We want to see Syria and Egypt get their knuckles rapped. We have a chance that we may wind up with an Egyptian presence in the East Bank. We don't like it -- but is that enough to risk our new stature with the Arabs?

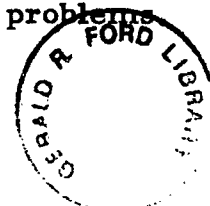
Kissinger: There are two interpretations of Soviet behavior: First, that they have washed their hands of the Arabs and hope they get kicked. That gets it for us. The second possibility is they knew about it all along and strung us along.

By tonight we will face a ceasefire resolution which we can veto, abstain or vote for. The present instruction is we should abstain. I don't see how we can veto it unless the Arabs object.

Schlesinger: Maybe we should vote for it. Who can object to a vote for peace?

Kissinger: If we vote for it, how can we avoid sanctions? Because Israel won't accept it, they will feel betrayed.

Rush: I think we should abstain. If we vote for it, or if we abstain, Israel will do what it wants anyway. If we veto, we face massive problems.



Kissinger: It is possible the Arabs will couple a ceasefire with a return to the 1967 borders. We can probably start talking.

Colby: A couple of days would help.

Kissinger: That is a tactical problem. How about Golda coming? My judgment is that would be a mistake.

Rush: A mistake.

Kissinger: The President's first instruction is to give everything. I am leaning to give them as much of the consumables as possible that are of use in battle, and put the heavy equipment on a time schedule which would put it beyond the war. There are two F-4's this month, is that correct?

Schlesinger: They will be ready in a couple of days. We need to know about the bridges.

Kissinger: We should fly the SR-71.

Colby: The bridges can be put up and taken down.

Kissinger: They say they underestimated the Egyptians' capacity. They were cocky last night, pushing for aircraft, but I said yes, but after the battle.

Moorer: They underestimated the Syrians and had to divert their air.

Kissinger: Maybe they will turn it today. But for Golda to absent herself, that is not an easy decision.

Colby: The long-term Israeli strategy is to lock us in. Their time clock is ticking. If they wrap it up in a few days, they will lose their chances to lock us in.

Rush: I think they are trying to lock us in. She wouldn't leave if the situation was desperate. This would be the worst thing for them to do.

Kissinger: That may be, but we don't know their objectives.



Colby: To lock us in is their objective; they need many appropriations.

Schlesinger: We can't replace the tanks without using the C-5.

Kissinger: If we can figure a schedule which we could fulfill after the war, that is the way I am thinking. We can't ship the tanks and a large number of aircraft during the battle.

Kissinger: But are there two or three F-4's lying around which are not in units which we could offer and say that is all we can do?

Schlesinger: I will check. The problem is to keep things quiet.

Kissinger: Can we keep ammunition quiet?

Colby: Sending anti-tank ammunition is defensive and can be justified.

Rush: How accurate is the estimate the Arabs only have two days of ammunition?

Schlesinger: If Henry's second thesis is right, the Soviets may have jumped in.

Kissinger: Let's meet at 11:30. Pick out of this list what can be reasonably related to defense and on-going operations.

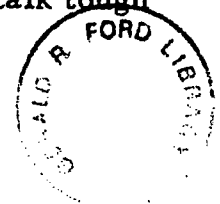
[The meeting adjourned at 10:25 and was convened again at 11:55].

Moorer: This is the intelligence assessment from our Defense attache. 48 hours ago there was gloom. 24 hours ago, they were euphoric. Now they have lost their air of exultation because of a change of attitude on inventories rather than tactically. They are pushing the Egyptians back. The DAO expects new requests for more consumables soon. The losses are stated as 150 tanks and 50 aircraft. He now feels the tank assessment is low and maybe the aircraft assessment is high. He says they will present their losses in a way as to put it in the best light.

Kissinger: There are two issues: supply and the indication the Soviet Union is stirring up the Arabs.

[He read out the Jordan and Algerian cables, and the Bhutto letter.]

We can't let the Soviet Union get away with this. We have to talk tough to them.



The President will meet with us at 4:00. I told the Israelis they would hear from us about 6-6:30.

Schlesinger: Option one [see attached paper] handles the request for consumables. It leaves out laser bombs -- they can't use them. [Tab A]

Kissinger: How quickly can we move?

Schlesinger: This evening.

Kissinger: Can you set up a procedure for keeping it secret?

Schlesinger: We will do our best.

Kissinger: Are we using one airfield or many airfields?

Moorer: Maybe two - _____ and Robbins.

Kissinger: I would promise them replacement without a firm promise on equipment with a schedule which would put deliveries after the battle.

Schlesinger: That is okay. If we don't, they may run out of ammo.

Colby: The Israelis have 14 days' supply for a whole army.

Kissinger: That's like the NATO assessments. If you run out of one item, you are out.

Moorer: Not really.

Kissinger: Option two is really option 1 plus lasers. You work out a schedule for the equipment.

Schlesinger: On the F-4, we can't give them any separately, but we can add to the delivery from McDonnell-Douglas. To give them 300 tanks, we would have to take them from the Army.

Kissinger: How can we do it over time?

Moorer: We can't do it without taking them out of inventory -- the modern ones.

Kissinger: We have two things -- get them over the crisis and set up a resupply schedule. We can't fly in tanks with a C-5. It would be a total



disaster. If they think they will get replacements, they may be more free in expending them.

Schlesinger: Tactically they are not doing badly. They are worried about supply.

Kissinger: I am outraged by the Soviet behavior.

Colby: That is cheap. It is not costing them anything.

Kissinger: But it is not what they promised the President.

Schlesinger: What we are seeing is not a tactical change, but ammunition shortages....

Kissinger: Something started during the night, because he was cracking at 1900. Then he called at 2:00 upset. Again at 3:00 and again at 6:35. The only information I have that you don't is these phone calls.

Moorer: I think they reassessed based on reports the Arabs are sending equipment and they are afraid of a war of attrition. The Arabs never before have been coordinated.

Schlesinger: They are crying wolf maybe because they want to lock us in.

Kissinger: I would agree, if they hadn't been euphoric yesterday. Why did they switch?

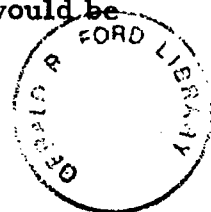
I think we should not surface anything in the UN and wait for someone else to do something.

Colby: Is there any kind of solution which would leave Egypt on the East Bank?

Kissinger: The best scenario is for Israel to push them across the Canal, but there would be severe strategic losses. We don't want an Arab debacle. Israel has suffered a strategic defeat no matter what happens. They can't take two-to-one losses.

Colby: But isn't that a reason they might agree to Egypt on the East?

Kissinger: The government couldn't survive that. The best would be a status quo. There are heavy Israeli losses.



Schlesinger: The Israelis don't have that faith. We have been giving them little, saying that if there is trouble we will pour equipment in.

Kissinger: My assessment is a costly victory without a disaster is the best.

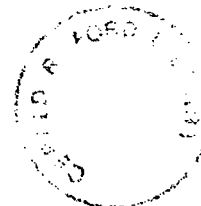
Colby: Being thrown back across the Canal would be an Egyptian disaster.

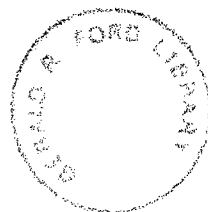
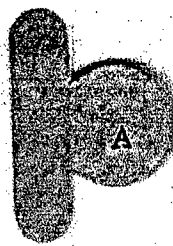
Kissinger: Can you identify equipment now for movement after 4:00?

Schlesinger: We want to put the Roosevelt to sea.

Kissinger: Wait until 4:00.

Moorer: On the SR-71, can we get the paperwork done?





Option 0 is what we have been doing up to this point. It consists of regularly scheduled contractor deliveries plus minimum aid primarily to provide an indication of US support, but minimizing visibility of movements so as to preserve the image of even-handedness. Delivery on 8 October of one planeload of Sidewinders plus bomb racks is the additional aid provided so far.

Option 1 is provide consumables of the traditional types we have previously provided. This would be provided immediately, although responsibility for transportation would be theirs. Associated with Option 1 is the promise of future delivery of replacement equipment, but we are not going to provide that equipment -- tanks or aircraft, etc. -- during the crisis or current battle time-frame.

Option 2 would be Option 1 plus new types of expendables, such as laser bombs, etc. Delivery of replacement equipment would be provided after the crisis period.

Option 3 is essentially Option 2 plus delivery of replacement equipment "in the near future," depending on how well the current tide of battle goes. If it turns for the worse 48 hours from now, we begin to finalize plans for replacement equipment.

Option 4 -- immediate delivery of consumables plus replacement equipment on the basis of they can haul away themselves. This would include such replacement items as F-4s.



Option 5 is Option 4 plus use of US delivery means, including C-5As for M-60 tank delivery.

