

HAK PRESS CONFERENCE - OCTOBER 12 - SECTION ON MIDDLE EAST:

Secretary Kissinger: If there are no more questions on personnel, yes. Maybe it would help if I made a few observations first on the Middle East, and then I'll take your questions.

Q. Right.

Summary of Situation in the Middle East

Secretary Kissinger: I thought it might focus our discussion if I began by giving you a brief summary of the situation in the Middle East as we see it.

You ladies and gentlemen will understand that we are, at this moment, in a delicate phase in which our principal objective has to be to bring about a cessation of hostilities and to lay the basis for a more permanent peace in the Middle East and that therefore I will have to be somewhat guarded in some of the observations I make and in some of the answers I give to your questions. But I expect that after the conclusion of this phase to have another press conference in which I will give a fuller account than may be possible today.

Now let me talk about the situation in the Middle East in the following parts: First, the situation prior to the outbreak of hostilities. Secondly, the American efforts after hostilities started to bring about a cessation of hostilities. Third, a very brief observation on the military situation as we see it today. And, finally, where we hope to go from here.

First, with respect to what we knew prior to the outbreak of hostilities: In the week prior to the outbreak of hostilities, the United States was aware that there were additional concentrations of Syrian forces and also that the Egyptian forces were engaged on what was interpreted both by our intelligence as well as by Israeli intelligence as their regular fall maneuvers.

We asked our own intelligence, as well as Israeli intelligence, on three separate occasions during the week prior to the outbreak of hostilities to give us their assessment of what might happen. There was the unani-

mous view that hostilities were unlikely to the point of there being no chance of it happening. Nor was the possibility of hostilities raised in any of the discussions with either of the parties that took place at the United Nations during the last week.

In these circumstances, the United States had no occasion to warn any country against engaging in preemptive action. The United States, therefore, in the week prior to the outbreak of hostilities, gave no advice with respect to a contingency that we had been unanimously assured was not likely to happen—in fact was certain not to happen.

The first time the U.S. Government was informed that hostilities might be imminent was at 6 o'clock Saturday morning, when I was awakened and immediately contacted the President. From then until the time that we were informed that hostilities had in fact begun—which was around 9 o'clock on Saturday morning—we did make intensive efforts with the parties, as well as with the Soviet Union and the Secretary General of the United Nations, to attempt to prevent the outbreak of hostilities.

Obviously, given the scale of preparation that must have been made prior to the outbreak of hostilities, these efforts were unavailing.

After hostilities broke out, the United States set itself two principal objectives. One, to end the hostilities as quickly as possible. Secondly, to end the hostilities in such a manner that they would contribute to the maximum extent possible to the promotion of a more permanent, more lasting solution in the Middle East.

Therefore, the United States has sought during this period—first in the United Nations and, secondly, through a series of bilateral contacts—to create a framework in which both of these objectives could be realized. We have explored the possibilities of crystallizing a consensus within the United Nations. We have also been in touch with the parties, as well as with the permanent members of the Security Council, in order to see what bilateral efforts might bring.

We have not gratuitously sought opportunities for confrontations in public forums which might harden dividing lines and which might make it more difficult to move toward a settlement.

When this phase is over, we will give an accounting of the efforts we have undertaken, and then a judgment can be made with respect to them. For now, our objective is to bring about an end of hostilities in such a manner that we will be in contact with all of the parties, as well as with the permanent members of the Security Council, after hostilities are ended, because we believe that in this manner we can make a maximum contribution to a just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

Our assessment of the military situation as we see it this morning is that Israeli forces seem to have advanced some distance into Syria. Egyptian forces are holding the east side of the Suez Canal to a distance of about 6 to 10 miles. The Egyptian front—the Suez front—is reasonably stable, and the Syrian front is somewhat fluid.

As for the future, the United States will continue to make, and is now engaged in making, efforts to bring about an end to hostilities in a manner that contributes to long-term peace in the area—and I may say to long-term peace in the entire world. This is the framework of our discussions.

And now, Stewart [Stewart Hensley, United Press International], if you would like to ask the first question.

Middle East Crisis and U.S.-Soviet Relations

Q. What I would like to ask is in connection with bringing about a framework of stability and so forth. You said Monday that the détente between the Soviet Union and the United States could not withstand, or could not survive, irresponsibility in any area, including the Middle East.¹ And I am wondering whether in that connection you feel that the Russian statement urging other Arab

¹ See p. 525.

states to join Egypt and Syria in the fight against Israel constitutes the sort of irresponsibility which jeopardizes the détente and, if it does so, whether you intend to match from the American side the war supplies which are said to be coming in to the others from the Soviet side.

Secretary Kissinger: That's at least two questions.

With respect to the first question: the behavior of the Soviet Union in the Middle East crisis and the effect of the Middle East crisis on U.S.-Soviet relations. Any assessment has to recognize that both the United States and the Soviet Union confront, each from their own perspective, a very complex situation in the current crisis.

Indeed, the reason why we believe that a long-term settlement in the Middle East is so important is the danger that the Middle East may become in time what the Balkans were in Europe before 1914, that is to say, an area where local rivalries that have their own momentum that will draw in the great nuclear powers into a confrontation that they did not necessarily seek or even necessarily start.

It is obvious that the United States has a traditional friendship with Israel, which it will maintain in this crisis. It is also clear that the Soviet Union has a relationship going back some years with some of the Arab states, which it also will not rupture during this crisis. The difficulty both of us face is whether, while remaining true to our principles, we can nevertheless conduct the relationships in such a manner that the larger interests of peace are served.

We did not consider the Soviet statement to the President of Algeria helpful. We did not consider the airlift of military equipment helpful. We also do not consider that Soviet actions as of now constitute the irresponsibility that on Monday evening I pointed out would threaten détente. When that point is reached, we will in this crisis, as we have in other crises, not hesitate to take a firm stand. But at this moment we are still attempting

to moderate the conflict. As of this moment we have to weigh against the actions of which we disapprove—and quite strongly—the relative restraint that has been shown in public media in the Soviet Union and in the conduct of their representatives at the Security Council.

And as of this moment, our objective is, as I stated, to end hostilities on terms that are just to all without exacerbating relations to an unbearable point.

I want to repeat: When we make the judgment that actions have reached the point of irresponsibility, we will be very firm in making this clear.

Ongoing Discussions With Europe

Q. Mr. Secretary, if I may change the subject for a minute, was the dialogue with Europe slowed down by the cancellation of your trip? And could you help us to guess when the Declarations of Principles will be ready for signature?

Secretary Kissinger: The dialogue with Europe was not significantly slowed down, although my vanity will not permit me to admit that my inability to conduct conversations will have no effect on ongoing diplomacy. [Laughter.]

Basically, the discussions that are now going on between us and the Europeans concern two declarations and the general structure of our relationship. The two declarations are between the United States and the Common Market about economic relationships and those political relationships impinging on economic relationships, and between the United States and all its other 14 partners in NATO in a multilateral forum about the future direction of NATO policy. And the third effort is to go beyond these declarations, to use them as a starting point to take a look at the future and to consider how the Western nations envisage the world in which they may want to live, or may have to live, over the next 25 years.

Now, with respect to the dialogue with the Common Market, that, too, has two aspects:

first, the internal cohesion of Europe, which has been, I believe, fostered, and strongly fostered, by our initiative; and secondly, the relationship of this united Europe with the United States.

On October 18, the Political Directors of the Nine European nations and Assistant Secretary of State [for European Affairs Walter J.] Stoessel will meet in Copenhagen to continue the discussions conducted by me with the Foreign Ministers and conducted subsequently by them in New York. Therefore that process will continue.

As you all know, I met with French Foreign Minister Jobert yesterday, and we had an opportunity to discuss both of these efforts.

Last week France submitted a proposal for a NATO declaration. I want to take this opportunity to emphasize that the declaration submitted by the French representative in the NATO Council is considered extremely constructive by the United States. And even though we have some additions that we may wish to discuss, we believe it represents a very major advance in the NATO discussions.

I think it is important to point out that it is not without significance that it is France which would have made this major contribution to the NATO dialogue.

So we believe that our discussions with Europe are now on course and that they will lead to a successful conclusion within a reasonable time span. And I want to emphasize again: We are not interested in time but in substance. And we're not concerned with just a headline, but we're concerned with getting our relationships defined in a manner that can stand the test of time.

Marvin [Marvin Kalb, CBS News].

Situation Prior to Middle East Hostilities

Q. Mr. Secretary, back on the Middle East, do you believe, in light of the Soviet evacuation of dependents from Syria and Egypt last Thursday and Friday, that (1) they knew in advance of the plans for the attack? Do you feel that they should have informed the

United States of those plans? And (2) do you feel that the Soviet Union, to any degree, encouraged the attacks?

Secretary Kissinger: It is too early to make a final judgment on all of these matters.

If the Soviet Union encouraged these attacks—which we have, as of now, have no evidence of—that would have to be treated by us as a very serious matter.

Now, if the Soviet Union learned of these attacks through its own intelligence or in some other manner and did not inform us, then this is a different problem.

In an ideal world, one would expect closer consultation, but given the particular volatility of the Middle East, it would have been a heavy responsibility to make known certain advance information. Nevertheless, we would like to stress that if either side in this relationship has certain knowledge of imminent military operations in any explosive part of the world, we would consider it consistent and indeed required—by the principles that have been signed between the United States and the Soviet Union—that an opportunity be given to both sides to calm the situation.

Q. In view of the reputation of Israeli intelligence, to what do you attribute the failure of both their and our intelligence to spot what was about to take place?

Secretary Kissinger: Nobody made any mistakes about the facts. There are always two aspects to intelligence. One is a determination of the facts; the other is the interpretation of these facts. And there is the tendency of most intelligence services—and indeed of most senior officials and indeed of some newspapermen—to fit the facts into existing preconceptions and to make them consistent with what is anticipated. And if you start from the assumption that a war is probably unlikely—if you know that there have been Egyptian maneuvers every September over the last 10 years—then there is probably a tendency to make observed facts fit your preconceived theories. This is one of the gravest dangers of all intelligence assess-

ments. And facts are much easier to come by than intentions.

Over the years that I have been in this position, the possibility of a massive Arab attack was not considered among the most likely by any of the evaluators that I've talked to.

Q. May I follow that? Mrs. Meir said that she had advised other governments—I think she used the expression “a reasonable time in advance”—so that they could attempt to prevent it.

Secretary Kissinger: Well, it depends on your definition of a reasonable time. We were informed at 6 o'clock on Saturday morning that a war might be imminent. We were informed somewhat earlier that Israel did not intend to attack herself, but that did not indicate to us necessarily that an Arab attack was imminent.

Soviet Airlift

Q. Mr. Secretary, what kind of help are the Soviets giving Egypt and Syria? What kind of help are we now, or will we later, give to Israel?

Secretary Kissinger: Herb [Herbert Kapor, ABC News], at this time I would like to stress again that our principal problem in responding to questions like this is to keep in mind that we are in a very delicate situation which can be easily inflamed by rash statements or by responding to very immediate pressures.

The Soviet airlift, at this moment, is moderate. It's more than light. It's a fairly substantial airlift. And it has to be addressed in relation to the possibility of influencing immediate military operations.

As far as we are concerned, you all know that we do have an ongoing military relationship with Israel, which we are continuing. And we are having discussions with Israel about the special situation created by recent events, but I don't think any useful purpose would be served by going into detail.

Q. In that connection, Mr. Secretary, some

Arab countries are threatening to cut off Western oil supplies if the United States continues this ongoing relationship and re-supplies Israel. How heavily do those threats weigh in the determination of the policy?

Secretary Kissinger: We have made a very serious effort, in this crisis, to take seriously into account Arab concerns and Arab views. On the other hand, we have to pursue what we consider to be the right course; we will take the consequences in pursuing what we consider to be the right course.

Attempts To Crystallize a Consensus in the U.N.

Q. Can you give us any idea, Dr. Kissinger, of the kinds of obstacles that you're running into now in this quest for ending hostilities?

Secretary Kissinger: Well, I have seen a fair amount of discussion about the desirability of some United Nations action. Now, the difficulty has been that our almost daily canvass of the consensus in New York is that the opinions are so divided and the willingness to take a position on the part of the major—or on the part of all—the members of the Security Council is so low that our judgment that to force a formal vote on any proposition that we might put forward would only harden the dividing lines and would only serve to underline the inability to achieve a consensus.

We have therefore placed more stress on attempting to crystallize a consensus than we have in going through a battle of resolutions and counterresolutions.

Beyond this I cannot go, except to make clear that we are in touch with the parties and with the major—with the permanent members of the Security Council—as well as, on a daily basis, with the Secretary General of the United Nations.

Murrey [Murrey Marder, Washington Post]. Let Murrey; Murrey has been over-ridden twice!

Q. Two questions, if I may.

Secretary Kissinger: I probably will regret recognizing him in a minute. [Laughter.]

Importance of Restraint by Great Powers

Q. Would you give us, sir, your overall assessment of the state of attitude by the superpowers—by the three major powers, the United States, the Soviet Union, and China—in respect to the danger of any spread of these hostilities? Secondly, if I may, as Presidential National Security Adviser how do you evaluate the handling of this crisis by the State Department? [Laughter.]

Secretary Kissinger: Well, first with respect to the second question, we are very impressed, in the White House, by the leadership that the State Department has received. [Laughter.] But, on a serious level, I think that—for crisis situations, certainly—the combination of these two positions enables a more coherent policy. And with the operation of my associates in the State Department, the conduct has been outstanding and has contributed to keeping the crisis, so far, contained within its present framework.

Now, with respect to the first question, the danger of escalation as it is evaluated by, may I say, the permanent members of the Security Council, so that I am not making distinctions here:

I think everybody is aware that a war of this nature has a possibility of escalating. I think that up to now both sides, the two countries that are most capable of producing a confrontation, that is, the United States and the Soviet Union, have attempted to behave within limits that would prevent an escalation into such a war. If you compare their conduct in this crisis to their conduct in 1967, one has to say that Soviet behavior has been less provocative, less incendiary, and less geared to military threats than in the previous crisis.

It is of course an extremely volatile situation which has potentialities for getting out of hand. And I can only emphasize once again the great importance of restraint by all of those countries who have it in their capacity to bring about an escalation and an expansion of hostilities and the expectation of the

United States that all countries that have a capacity to influence events influence them on the side of restraint and moderation, as we are attempting to do.

Q. Mr. Secretary, in this connection, have you tried to reach an agreement with the Soviets on suspending the deliveries of arms to the parties?

Secretary Kissinger: I don't think I should go into any of—into the details of any exchanges with the Soviet Union at this time.

Q. Mr. Secretary, when you talk about firmness if the thing should get that far, are you thinking of the kind of firmness that the United States demonstrated in 1970 at the time of the Syrian crisis?

Secretary Kissinger: The question is whether, if the situation reached the point, the United States would act with the same firmness as in 1970. Situations are never comparable, but the basic principles that governed our policies throughout this administration remain constant, and I don't think I should speculate on the particular methods we would use. But we would be guided by the same principles.

But let me repeat: We do not want this to happen, we don't expect it to happen, and we think that with restraint by all sides there is no need whatever for it to happen.

Q. Dr. Kissinger, could you assess the superpower or the large powers—could you assess what you consider the Arab strategy in launching these attacks? I mean, you have talks with the Arab Foreign Ministers at the United Nations. There has been some talk that they had a limited psychological-political objective—in view of the talk about the so-called peace initiative that you were about to launch.

Secretary Kissinger: The Arab objective, of course, has not been fully shared with us. And so we are here in the realm of speculation. And the Arab objective will also become clearer as the days go on.

If the Arab objective was, as is sometimes stated, to emphasize the fact that the Middle East is—that permanent stability cannot be

assumed in the Middle East and that there is an urgency in achieving a negotiated settlement or that it is important to achieve a negotiated settlement, then it would be our judgment that that point has been made. The United States stands ready now, as it stood ready before the beginning of hostilities, to help the parties if they want to pursue a negotiated solution. We believe that it would be useful, and we would be prepared, as I pointed out to both sides in New York, to be helpful in that.

If that is the Arab strategy, then we are at a point where perhaps we can turn, after the end of hostilities, to that search for peace, which the United States would support.

Q. Mr. Secretary, sir, obviously you can't ask the Russians to not send any more arms to these people if you are sending arms to Israel. Why don't you tell the Soviets that we will stop sending arms to Israel if they will stop sending them to the Arabs?

Secretary Kissinger: As I said, this is not the time to discuss what exchanges are going on between the Soviet Union and the United States, except to emphasize again that our primary objective is to bring about restraint and to bring about as rapid a solution as is possible.

Q. Dr. Kissinger, you stressed in your speech on Monday night at the Pacem in Terris Conference the need to move from preventive diplomacy to more creative diplomacy. Does this crisis present an opportunity, do you believe, for the United States, particularly in cooperation with the Soviet Union, to stress a new urgency to move to direct or indirect Arab-Israeli negotiations?

Secretary Kissinger: We would hope that after the completion—after the conclusion of hostilities that all—that, first, the parties directly involved and, secondly, the countries indirectly involved would recognize the fragility of the situation that erupts so periodically into conflict. And if that conclusion should be reached, as we believe it should be reached, the United States stands ready to help the parties in reaching a just settlement.

And we have also urged, and I want to use

this occasion to urge, all the parties in the conduct of their diplomacy now to keep in mind that whatever momentary advantages might be achieved in this or that forum, our principal objective should be to maintain relationships that can move both the area and the world toward a more lasting peace. We will conduct our foreign policy and our diplomacy in that manner, and we hope all other countries will also conduct themselves in that manner.

Q. Mr. Secretary, there is an Arab view that it would be easier to reach a permanent settlement if the Egyptians maintain a certain foothold on the Sinai Peninsula. What kind of map at the end of hostilities do you think would contribute most to a settlement—a permanent settlement?

Secretary Kissinger: This is not an American determination to make. We stated some general propositions at the Security Council on Monday, and we will be prepared to participate in any other exchange and discussion. But I don't think any useful purpose would be served now—

Q. Mr. Secretary, you are planning a trip to China at the end of this month. Has that trip been jeopardized in any way by these developments? And would you expect Chinese cooperation in the restraints that you are advocating?

Secretary Kissinger: Our call for restraint is addressed to all nations with a capacity to influence events. Of course the Chinese capacity to influence events, given the geographic distance, is not as great as that of other countries, and that must be weighed. But our appeal for restraint is addressed to all countries.

I do not foresee that my trip to China will be jeopardized by the situation as it now exists. But of course this depends on how long it will go on.

Q. In pursuit of an end to hostilities, would we be willing to support a cease-fire-in-place now in the Mideast, or do we want withdrawal to the '67 line?

Secretary Kissinger: At this moment, this

is not the occasion to discuss any specific formula that may be advanced, because the attitude to a specific formula will depend on conditions which exist when it is advanced. And there are so many approaches that have been canvassed that it would serve no purpose to review now.

Q. Mr. Secretary, in the light of what was apparently a failure to gauge intentions on the facts prior to the outbreak of hostilities, what steps do you think this country can take to improve its capability to gauge intentions in a situation like this?

Secretary Kissinger: The judgment of the intentions of other countries is always an extremely difficult matter. And it isn't something that can be solved by improving any particular capabilities.

Surprise would never be possible if there were not misjudgments of intentions. And obviously the people most concerned, with the reputation of the best intelligence service in that area, were also surprised, and they have the principal problem of answering the question which you put to me.

To the degree that one can improve one's understanding of the mentality of other countries, to the degree that one understands their decisionmaking process, to that degree one can reduce the dangers of being taken by surprise. But the element of surprise can never be totally eliminated.

Q. Dr. Kissinger, before in assessing possible Arab objectives, you gave us one possibility, which broadly translated means making a political point. What other possible Arab objectives are there beyond that, and if there are, what could be the expected U.S. response?

Secretary Kissinger: I can't speculate on what conceivable objectives there might be—which could range from the one I gave to a total military victory, which could be from a short campaign to a war of attrition. The United States would believe that a prolonged war of attrition in the Middle East would have such a high possibility of great-power involvement—at least great-power involvement in the sense of increasing the

tensions to a point which would affect the entire international atmosphere and raise issues of supplies to both sides in such a manner—that we believe it is in the interest of all countries, including also, and above all, the participants, to bring the war to a reasonable and honorable conclusion as soon as that can be accomplished.

Q. Mr. Secretary, thank you very much for spending this hour with us. We hope to see you again soon.

The Journey Toward a World Community

Toast by Secretary Kissinger¹

Mr. President [Leopoldo Benites, President of the 28th U.N. General Assembly], Mr. Secretary General [Kurt Waldheim, Secretary General of the United Nations], distinguished representatives of the world's nations, ladies and gentlemen: As I welcome you to this hall, let me also issue a word of warning. To those of you who are diplomats, be mindful of what you say, for you are surrounded by members of the press. And to those of you who are members of the press, be careful not to take too seriously everything you hear, for you are surrounded by diplomats.

But let me hasten to add that I mean no offense to the honored profession of diplomacy. I am now, by nomination of the President and confirmation of the Senate, a diplomat myself.

And as a former historian I know that 16th-century scholars believed that the world's first ambassadors were angels—messengers from heaven to earth.

There may have been one or two foreign ministers who have spoken before this Assembly during its 28-year history who appeared to claim a special relationship with

¹ Given at a dinner hosted by Secretary Kissinger at the Metropolitan Museum of Art at New York on Oct. 4 honoring delegations to the U.N. General Assembly.

the Almighty. But that is a view not many of us here tonight would fully support—given the humility so characteristic of our profession.

The ancient Greeks—men with a perhaps less poetic eye than their medieval successors—also linked deity and diplomacy by naming Hermes the god of diplomats. Hermes, as you may recall, was the symbol of charm, but also of cunning. It is said that on the day of his birth he robbed a neighbor of 50 cows and then sneaked back to his cradle. Having managed to get through a whole week without a major diplomatic incident, I will draw no morals from this story.

Mr. President, before I run the risk of dealing U.S. foreign policy a fatal blow, let me turn to more serious thoughts.

Present on this occasion is a glorious mix of tongues, creeds, and races.

Here also are the leaders of an institution designed to serve all peoples of the world, not a particular people or culture or national policy.

And here are leaders of the U.S. Congress, men who remind us that, from the days of Warren Austin and Arthur Vandenberg, Americans—no matter what their party—have always supported the United Nations.

Finally, we are honored by the artists, academics, and journalists who are with us tonight, for they are all guarantors of our diversity and trustees of our common humanity.

Thus, this assemblage symbolizes the world as it is. But more, it symbolizes the world as it can be. For here in the United Nations, and at these tables tonight, we have come together across the boundaries of our differences, because of our common goal: our hope for peace and a better world for all mankind.

Ralph Waldo Emerson once cited a fable from an unknown antiquity:

The Gods, in the beginning, divided Man into men, that he might be more helpful to himself; just as the hand was divided into fingers, the better to answer its end.

This is a wisdom that neither men nor nations have yet understood or practiced. Over