

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

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MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

PARTICIPANTS:

Marilyn Berger, Washington Post
Bernard Gwertzman, New York Times
Richard Valeriani, NBC-TV
Bernard Kalb, CBS
Ted Koppel, ABC-TV
Jerrold Schecter, TIME
John Wallach, Hearst Publications
Bruce Van Voorst, Newsweek
John Sprague, USIA
Oswald Johnston, LA Times
John McLean, Chicago Tribune
Lars-Erik Nelson, Reuters
Dana Adams Schmidt, Christian Science Monitor
James Anderson, Westinghouse
Richard Growald, UPI
James McCartney, St. Louis Post-Dispatch
Barry Schweid, AP

Dr. Henry A. Kissinger, Secretary of State and
Assistant to the President for National Security
Affairs

Joseph J. Sisco, Under Secretary for Political Affairs
Ambassador Robert Anderson, Special Assistant
to Secretary for Press Relations

Peter W. Rodman, NSC Staff *PNR*

DATE AND TIME:

Monday - September 1, 1975
5:00 - 5:40 p.m.

PLACE:

Ambassador Anderson's Suite
King David Hotel
Jerusalem

[Ambassador Anderson explained the meeting was on BACKGROUND and embargoed until the signing in the evening.]

Valeriani: Would you like to start with the uncovered section, Mr. Secretary, the Egyptian assurances to the U.S. and so on?

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Kissinger: The basic commitments are in the document. The rest are technical elaborations.

Wallach: The Israelis are saying that the US in the last three days has weakened its commitments on the bilateral parts -- on the Syrians, on Geneva, and on overall peace talks.

Kissinger: You can't weaken something you've not agreed to. The position is the same -- we're in favor of progress towards peace.

J. Anderson: The commitment on UNEF is not in the document.

Kissinger: It is not in the document. We never said three years. All the commitments are here. The rest is technical elaboration of how renewal will be handled.

Valeriani: What's new in here that was not there in March?

Kissinger: Blockade. And we never had a document in March.

Wallach: What is the most important thing?

Kissinger: It's the first document between the Arabs and Israelis that was not the result of war. It is a balanced document, with military provisions and political provisions, brought in relation to each other. Third, there is a commitment to a peaceful process through non-resort to force. And it is an attempt to encourage a peaceful process that would encourage stability in the area. And a number of provisions, like the Joint Commission, which will encourage a peaceful process.

Schweid: Where are the stations?

Kissinger: [indicates on the map] Umm Khishaba is here, north of the Giddi Road. The Egyptian station is south of Giddi Road. They are within 10 kilometers of each other, because the best location is on hills.

We have not decided on the precise location of the American stations.

Johnston: All in the Giddi?

Kissinger: There will be at least one manned station in the Mitla. It will be decided soon.

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Anderson: What were the hangups?

Kissinger: The major problems were how to define the political commitments. There were some hangups on the southern zone. There were several hangups earlier in the week on the military dispositions.

Wallach: What about the level of the signing?

Kissinger: There is no hangup there.

There will be one more document in 2-3 weeks, when the working groups finish the work -- the Protocol. The Annex will be the guidelines to the working out of the Protocol.

Kalb: What is included in the material not being made public?

Kissinger: Elaborations of what is in the document.

Gwertzman: What about U.S. commitments to Israel?

Kissinger: It will be handled as it has always been handled. They will be submitted to the Senate Foreign Relations and House International Relations Committees.

Berger: You know they will become known here, and possibly in a distorted fashion. Isn't it possible to do it in a more balanced way?

Kissinger: No.

Gwertzman: Who will initial it?

Kissinger: Gur and Kidron. Then their Chief of Staff and Ambassador Osman.

Kalb: What is the precise definition of political commitments? You said Israel gives territory and Egypt gives commitments. What are the Egyptian concessions?

Kissinger: If you look at Article 1, Article 2, and Articles 6 and 7, they represent -- in addition to annual extensions of UNEF -- they represent the largest advance between Israel and any Arab state since the existence of the State of Israel.

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Johnston: Boycott and propoganda don't exist in this document. Do they appear anywhere else?

Kissinger: We will make clear what our understanding is of what Egyptian practices will be. They are not bound by what's in the Israeli documents. We will convey it to the Israelis.

Berger: You believe it is so because the Egyptians told you?

Kissinger: The last thing I expected is when you have three documents and you talk about what you don't have.

Gwertzman: Is there any uneasiness about the American presence?

Kissinger: There is no commitment about the American role that won't be submitted to the Congress.

Gwertzman: Confidentially to Congress.

Kissinger: The American proposal.

Valeriani: In both places?

Kissinger: Yes.

Schweid: Will there be 250 Israelis and 250 Egyptians?

Kissinger: There will be 250 Israelis and 250 Egyptians at the two major warning stations. There will also be some Americans. Then there will be three manned American stations. The total of Americans at the two major stations and the three manned stations will not be more than 200. And they will be in shifts.

Berger: How many U.S. civilians will be at the Israeli and Egyptian stations?

Kissinger: Around ten.

Wallach: Is there an understanding on two years?

Kissinger: There is an understanding.

Growald: What were the gaps yesterday?

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Kissinger: Yesterday the major issue was something we dropped from the agreement. So we can't tell! On the military annex, there was something about the rights of parties in the Gulf of Suez and a few technical issues.

McLean: This agreement gives them a possibility for peace in the Middle East.

Kissinger: Without an agreement, there would be tension and possible war. A stalemate. What is the worst that can happen with this agreement was certain to have happened without it.

The problem is always balancing political moves against the territorial settlement. That process has to start somewhere. A process of cooperation will be inevitable in the implementation. So a possibility of peace has been created.

Schweid: What if the remaining difficulties are insoluble ?

Kissinger: But for two sides to say they will solve their difficulties by peaceful means is not an insignificant event.

Schweid: Yesterday, you said you'd come up against it.

Kissinger: I said if it failed when we were that close, it would be because of that. Having taken this step, perhaps the parties will gain some confidence, if it works, and take further steps.

Schweid: Can we put that on the record?

Kissinger: You can put that on the record.

I think these are significant steps.

Gwertzman: How important was the American commitment to Israel to get Israel to sign?

Kissinger: It is not significantly different from what accompanied the two previous disengagement agreements, on the economic role and the other. Some of it is inherent in the relationship anyway, so it's just stating it.

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Koppel: There are two very major differences between these and those of past agreements. The economic and military aid is so different in scope and the other is the American presence between the two parties.

Kissinger: That's correct. But with respect to the first, if America is going to remain committed to the survival and security of Israel, the bill for that was going to go up anyway, because of the cost of modern weapons and the complexity of the situation. So this ratifies what was going to happen anyway. After the October War, it was \$2.2 billion. It was rising anyway.

The American presence is new. It is of a technical nature. It's not as in the Vietnamese war, when we were in support of one side and trying to achieve our objectives there. It is of a technical nature, and not for objectives of our own.

Anderson: Is there any duration to the financial commitment?

Kissinger: The financial commitment is determined annually. There is no long-term commitment.

Schechter: How much will it be?

Kissinger: The figures I've seen [in the press] are high. It's not yet determined.

Schechter: The President will say something?

Kissinger: Yes.

Kalb: I see that UNEF "shall be extended annually."

Kissinger: It is conceivable that there is an understanding.

Berger: The military limitations will come out.

Kissinger: It's in the annex.

Rodman: It won't be printed, because it's public!

Kissinger: It's open-ended. The understanding was in case of a veto. There have to be alternative arrangements.

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Gwertzman: What is it? Another force?

Kissinger: Not necessarily another force.

Valeriani: There is nothing in any other document that limits Article 5?

Kissinger: The commitment to extend annually is open-ended. In addition, there is some understanding about requests that might be made.

Koppel: The same force under another aegis?

Kissinger: The UN has ways to express itself.

Anderson: In Article 2 it says no threat of force. Suppose Radio Cairo.....

Kissinger: Radio Cairo is not a governmental organ.

Anderson:and it makes bellicose statements, does that break the agreement?

Kissinger: The fact it's violated doesn't necessarily break the agreement.

VanVoorst: How do you see the Israeli military situation now?

Kissinger: The Israeli military problem is slightly more complex. It doesn't make it significantly worse.

Wallach: Does this vindicate the step-by-step? Will it continue?

Kissinger: I told the State Department doctor to confine me if I try to come out here again.

The issues have become sufficiently complex that they are no longer suited to shuttle diplomacy. If I can be helpful....The step-by-step is the right approach, but it is not necessarily the case that I will be doing it.

VanVoorst: What about Geneva and Syria?

Kissinger: The U.S. favors a negotiation with Syria but we'll reserve our position until it develops.

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Valeriani: It is correct to interpret that as a March shuttle? [Laughter]

Koppel: You still feel a "moral obligation" to help the Israelis and Syrians?

Kissinger: We will be helpful if the parties request us.

The first thing, as we did with Israel and Egypt, is exchanges through diplomatic channels. Then we can see if a more active role is possible.

Wallach: Will there be a visit by President Ford to the area?

Kissinger: No.

Berger: What about President Sadat's visit? Is there a date?

Kissinger: There is discussion of a visit by President Sadat to the U.S. in the Fall, but there has been no date set.

I just received word that the Israeli Cabinet approved the agreement unanimously.

[The meeting ended.]