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TELECON

Mr. Max Fisher / Secretary Kissinger

March 24, 1975

7:10

RELEASED IN FULL

F: Are you surviving?

K: Barely.

F: I think it is important that we get together on the situation here. I am trying to dam up whatever leaks there are.

K: Let's get two things squared: first the letter, second the American/Israeli relationship and third is the behavior of the American Jewish Community. The worst mistake the Jewish Community can make is to harass him. He feels let down.

F: In the first place, nobody is harrassing him.

K: Not yet.

F: But I think we've got to talk about it. I know about this situation. I have done everything I can. I know you are worn out, you've just gotten back, but I have to know what the hell it is all about.-- if I can be helpful. I have gone to great lengths in trying to do what I thought necessary. .but when you say a mad President, you must remember that when people don't know what is going on they can create unrest.

K: He is not mad about the letter but about what has been done to us.

F: What?

K: Our Middle East policy has been smashed.

F: When you say what has been done, I don't know what has or has not been done, but if you want help and I think you could use it, I have to know what is going on and have an awareness of the facts so I can do what is in the best interest of all concerned.

K: Let's get together later this week.

F: It won't wait that long.

K: We are not going to do anything.

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F: I have done things on this which I think constitute a strong position on what needs to be done. I have notified the Presidents of the communities throughout the country, but there are too many leaks coming out.

K: Of what?

F: Whether they are true or not, the press is coming out that the Middle East situation is going to be reappraised on the part of Israel.

K: It didn't mean ^{just} Israel -- it said the Middle East -- but that is self-evident.

F: The worst thing is not to have sides. The way things are at this stage of the game it is important that we talk over this situation.

K: It is tough to talk it over since we haven't started the reappraisal.

F: Before you start that you should have input from people. But, if you don't want it.

K: I would be glad for it, but it is a foreign policy matter, not a domestic matter.

F: I don't understand your answer or what you are trying to say.

K: I don't know what it means we have to have some input.

F: The American Jewish Community -- you don't think they have an interest in this?

K: Of course.

F: How are they going to express it? I don't want to see a blowup on this.

K: It would be a disaster for the Jewish Community, if they took on the President.

F: They are not taking on taking on any President -- but you have to remember there are many people who were critical of your step-by-step approach. If I don't have an understanding about what took place -- what I say can't have any weight. I should be kept informed.

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K: You have been kept informed.

F: I know from nothing since the last few days.

K: I have been out of the country. I am not back yet for 24 hours.

F: I know. But let me give it to you this way -- before you left you said I was a good friend -- I say this to you as a good friend. Dinitz got back and made an impassioned plea to a Jewish group, I wasn't there myself, and said you and the President were forthcoming but there are some leaks coming out from the press which create the impression that you are blaming the Israelis, but the last thing we need to do is to have a lot of problems. Right now we have to stay calm.

K: I don't think anyone has heard me blame the Israelis I have tried to express the problem in an even-handed manner and I told Rabin that is what we were going to do. Where have we blamed the Israelis?

F: I don't want to get into a debate with you on the phone. I think it is important we have a conversation, if not I am going to have a problem and you will too. It won't do anyone any good. We should have an exchange of views on this as soon as you get a good night's sleep.

K: I can't do it tomorrow.

F: Tomorrow you can't. But it should be done soon.

K: Wednesday -- can you do it Wednesday?

F: I have to be back for Passover. How about Thursday.

K: Let's do it Thursday at , say, 3:00.

F: This isn't for any group.

K: No, only you.

F: This was a boo boo about the letter.

K: If you show it to 20 people, Israelis, it is bound to leak. It was done internally.

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F: Let me give you a sample: Dinitz called a meeting of the Jewish leaders. I told them this was a real problem. All he did was to present the side of Israel. There have been meetings all over. I had even called the presidents of the Jewish Community in this country and told them they should not give any idea that there was a problem on it -- but we have a long range difficult situation. When you say it is a sad day for America, I agree. But I am trying to be a help to you and to the government but sometimes when you don't know the facts, you can run into problems.

K: Why don't we get together on Thursday and I will bring you up to date as much as possible on what has gone on and where we stand.

F: I agree. The whole issue is coming to an end and we have to face up to the reality of terms -- but an exchange of view is important.

K: I agree and whatever you can do in the meantime.

F: I have....

K: I want to talk to you very straight because the Leadership reaction in the Congress was not favorable to Israel even though we briefed them in a favorable way.

F: Some of these people have already reported back and they are not friendly to the administration.

K: What is their reaction? We are trying to give the facts as they were. We said this is what happened. This is the position of one side and this is the position of the other. We didn't attempt any value judgment.

F: All I can say is be cooperative. That no blame be attached to Israel during this period.

K: We have not attached blame to Israel. We have not attached blame to Egypt, but now we have to go to Geneva under difficult circumstances. And Israel has to go to Geneva under circumstances we have tried to we have tried to keep it from a discussion of the final frontiers. And a few kilometers is not as important as that.

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F: We have a modus operandi -- that is how we keep things in balance. The political situation in this country is horrendous.

K: But the people who were criticizing the step-by-step approach-- now that it is over, we will see how they appear or operate. And Israel -- in six months they will look back with nostalgia about the question of a few kilometers.

F: You and I have no argument about that.

K: I have to tell you as a friend -- the failure of this negotiation is the worst disaster since the Yom Kippur War, not because of what we will do but because of what will develop. We have lost control. We won't cut aid. Aid isn't the issue.

F: I think I understand all these issues.

K: American Jews ought to worry about what is going to happen in the situation that has been created. It isn't easy to say this or that position was right or wrong.

F: We need to get together and secondly I want to tell you I am doing my best and I hope we keep the matter of the blame out of it.

K: No one is blaming Israel. Every newspaper I read says the responsibility went down the middle.

F: Let's keep it that way. Down the middle and I'll see you on Thursday. On this thing -- we'll work it out.

K: You have been a friend. I'll see you Thursday.

END

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