

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

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MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

PARTICIPANTS: Simcha Dinitz, Ambassador of Israel
Mordechai Shalev, Minister

Henry A. Kissinger, Assistant to the President
Peter W. Rodman, NSC Staff *PHR*

DATE AND TIME: Monday, September 10, 1973
6:03 - 6:45 p.m.

PLACE: Military Aide's Office
The White House

Dinitz: I just finished an hour-long talk with Secretary Rush. It was just a general review of the situation.

Kissinger: Who was there? Sisco?

Dinitz: Yes. Also his aide, Samuels.

Kissinger: He's good.

Shalev: Also Stackhouse, of the Israel-Arab desk.

Dinitz: I reviewed the question of terror, particularly our concern with these missiles in Rome [rockets discovered by Italian police in the hands of Arab terrorists]. We know they're serialized, so the Russians must have an accounting of where they are located. It would ^{not} be difficult for them to trace if they wanted to.

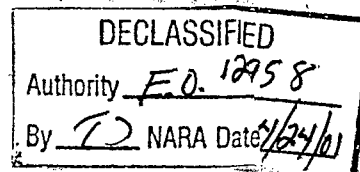
I asked Secretary Rush that you find a way to convey this concern to the Russians, and secondly, that in the ICAO in Rome now you will put ^{the} gravity of the situation on record and help draft legislation to deal with this situation.

Kissinger: What did he say?

Dinitz: He said you [the USG] had been in communication with the Russians on

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CLASSIFIED BY: NE [redacted] KISSINGER



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this and that he would take our/in the ICAO into consideration, and you were with us on this.

Kissinger: Can you give me the serial numbers?

Dinitz: Yes, I didn't give them to him but I can give them to you.

Kissinger: I am seeing Dobrynin on Thursday.

Dinitz: Then we talked about oil and diplomacy.

Kissinger: You noticed what the President said Saturday. It is going in the direction I have pointed out.

Dinitz: I noted to Rush that much of it--on energy--is helpful to our relations, but much of the press interpretation frankly is not. He agreed. Then I called attention to the Sisco interview in the Jordanian paper.

Kissinger: What did Sisco say?

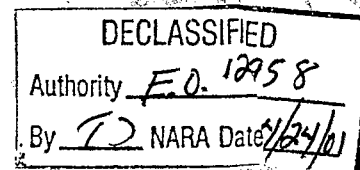
Dinitz: Nothing at all during this conversation. Sisco had said--spoken in terms of--Palestinian "rights", not "interests". He called for some movement in advance of negotiations, and third, that an initiative was coming. I asked for Rush's cooperation on muting this sort of thing, because it just means a debate through the press, and nothing but harm to our relations could come of this.

He said he was very much in accord with me. He said the U.S.' and Israel's strategic interests are the same. He said the U.S. is not pro-Israel, or pro-Arab but pro-peace. (I heard this before.) But then he said the status quo was no good; and we had to get the negotiations off dead center.

I said that we agreed completely; Israel wanted to convert the status quo into peace and security. I then went into a long discourse about how whenever we came forward with a new proposal, it just postponed negotiations. I pointed out that the Arabs were now linking everything with Palestine. He said he wasn't asking us to take a unilateral step or to negotiate from a point of weakness. He said he knew from his negotiations on Berlin that the only way to deal was through a position of strength. He ended by asking us what our government could do, in concert with ^{you} ~~us~~, to get talks moving.

Kissinger: First--let me make clear I am not talking now in my official capacity. We should still meet in this restricted channel.

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Dinitz: Separate it.

Kissinger: Yes. It is important for the Prime Minister to understand my judgment on this. All of these are just phrases--the ones that assure you and also those that disquiet you. You shouldn't attach too much importance to it.

Dinitz: I know, I was just reporting.

Kissinger: As I told your Prime Minister, and as I have told you before, the trend here to do something is getting overwhelming. It can be delayed but it cannot be arrested. If you look at the balance of individuals, and the influence of the companies... Two years ago I suggested to Ambassador Rabin and the Prime Minister that we should do something in the area of an interim settlement. You didn't do too badly in following that advice.

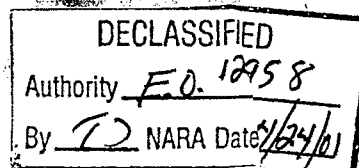
The trouble is, the U. S. public doesn't understand what it really is that the Arabs are proposing -- that as a precondition for a negotiation you give up all the territory in exchange for an "end to the state of belligerency," which is indistinguishable from the ceasefire that exists. They think the issue is Israeli intransigence. Most people don't understand. So an Israeli initiative would at least have the advantage that one could dramatize what the Arabs are asking. I have no concrete proposal. But I exhausted Le Duc Tho last year by giving him in rapid succession five different proposals which were all plausible but none of which gave up our key position--that we would not overthrow Thieu. In case the negotiations broke down, we could show he had rejected, not our maximum position, but all these successive proposals.

I must say our troubles with the South Vietnamese started when we did this because they thought we were giving up something. But we weren't. Every concession was at the periphery, not on the main issue. And this would keep the initiative with you.

My second strategic concern is that we have to find a way of splitting the Arabs and also of splitting the pressures in this country. We can't have all the pressures here together-- the oil companies, the Arabists --against the Jews. We could try to split off the Saudis. Three years ago, the oil company leaders came in here. The issue then was to do something about Jerusalem. They wanted it to be a neutral city, and I know this is unacceptable to you. But I wonder why there can't be some formula for some extraterritoriality, plus some access route...

This won't be made as an American proposal; you can count on that. But it would help with the Saudis; this is the only thing they express themselves on. It would help domestically. What the President said--even with what I told you--you

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should not believe it might not return.

Now I can use the discussions with Ismail; nothing will happen until after your election. So there is no immediate pressure. I have not even discussed this Jerusalem proposal with the President. There won't be a big initiative when I come in.

Maybe a settlement first with Jordan would do it. Maybe you have some other cleverer idea.

Dinitz: I noted before that your mind was moving on Jerusalem, first when you asked Eban about it, and second when you said before that what concerned you was to remove Faisal from the picture and to isolate Sadat. Incidentally, I thought your sending Phantoms to Faisal would do the opposite; and only attract Sadat to him.

Jerusalem is of course the most sensitive issue with us. This is just off the cuff. I will of course report all of this to the Prime Minister.

Kissinger: Maybe she has a better idea.

Dinitz: But usually when you try to defuse an issue you try a less sensitive, less emotionally-laden issue. Jerusalem will be the hardest with Jordan. We have tried some phrases before, like "some extra-territorial status" for the Holy Places.

Kissinger: Please don't interpret this in legalistic terms, but in strategic terms.

Dinitz: I see the strategy.

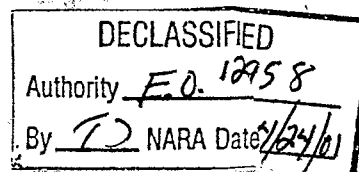
Kissinger: I think the borders will be the most sensitive.

Dinitz: No, I think it will be easier to decide with Sadat where the final borders will be than to agree to a split in Jerusalem's sovereignty. Anyone in Israel who suggested it would be shot out of office, not run out. We could agree to a passage for the Jordanians to go to the Mosque of Omar without going through Israeli checkpoints.

Let me ask two questions, Dr. Kissinger. Do you mean something that Israel should think of independently of a course of negotiations commencing?

Kissinger: There are many ways of doing it. We could tell the Saudis that we

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heard this from you and you are willing to discuss it. Or you could make it as a public offer. Or as a private offer, and then publicize it if it doesn't work.

Dinitz: My second question is, do you mean to say that you believe something like this could move the Saudis?

Kissinger: I have no feel for the Saudis, quite honestly. I met only Yamani, when he was here. And fifteen months ago I met with their prince.

We have informally asked Prince Fahd to come over. We did this in order to avoid having too many of our delegations going over there. It has nothing to do with Israel. He's available to come in late November or early December. That would be a good occasion.

My strategy is to keep the Saudis out of the Arab-Israeli dispute, because any settlement achievable wouldn't be satisfactory to Arabs, and it would only weaken the regime to have to take responsibility for it. It might help to take some action on the one area of their religious concern.

Dinitz: I'll pass on your thinking to the Prime Minister.

Kissinger: I have no idea what Rush has in mind when he says off dead center.

Dinitz: Nor has he.

Kissinger: It is absolutely necessary that you don't let yourself be put into the position of looking like the obstacle to peace. You must keep the Arabs on the defensive. The British have told us they want to talk to us about it, and the French too.

I'm not interested in the Nobel Peace Prize.

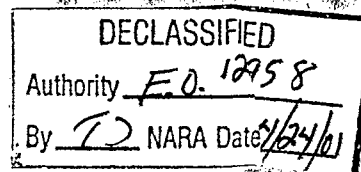
Dinitz: I wouldn't mind seeing you win it, Dr. Kissinger. Nothing would give me greater pleasure.

Kissinger: But there is no way for us to do it without brutalizing everybody. It would be moved into special channels.

Dinitz: What do you mean?

Kissinger: Some special envoy will be appointed by the President.

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Dinitz: To solve the Middle East crisis?

Kissinger: Yes. I really have no specific ideas.

[to Rodman:] Have we heard from Zahedi [on his talks with Ismail in Geneva]?

Rodman: Not yet.

Kissinger: Check on it.

Dinitz: Do you think you can get the Arabs off their position of demanding a commitment to total withdrawal as a precondition to negotiations?

Kissinger: My strategy is to exhaust the Arabs. We have been doing it, but every time, some one of our people pops off. But can I do it? It's extraordinary that the Egyptians haven't leaked my negotiations with Ismail. It shows they haven't given up yet on my approach.

Dinitz: Our sources say they now think that oil will do it for them.

Kissinger: If we can figure out some way to split the Saudis off... Jordan is already split off. The Syrians won't be. But Egypt is already willing to make a separate peace.

Dinitz: I think the pivot of it is their oil strategy. You have today the first visit by Hussein to Egypt. You could tell the King it is not a good idea.

Kissinger: I will do that. [to Rodman:] Is Rifai coming to the UNGA?

Rodman: I'll check.

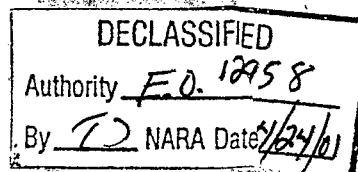
Dinitz: When the Shah was here, did you talk to him about his contributing to Jordan?

Kissinger: Yes, at great length. But he said that, while from his selfish point of view and strategically he's with you, from the tactical point of view he'd like some movement.

Dinitz: But he has no idea what it should be.

Kissinger: Right.

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Dinitz: I don't have as pessimistic reading of consensus in this country as you do. What you describe is a feeling in this Administration, but not the country. It is not just the Jews, but Congress.

Kissinger: The Congress is against whatever the Administration is for!

Dinitz: But the labor movement, and the media, and editorial pressures.

Kissinger: That I wouldn't attach too much importance to. That we can easily handle if we have a platform on which to stand. We are not asking you to give up essential positions.

Dinitz: Yes.

Kissinger: One amazing thing about my hearings is to see the liberals attacking me for being too soft on the Russians! For 5 years they attacked us for being hard. But in a crisis they will run.

Dinitz: Yes. They think goodwill is the solution.

Kissinger: You remember the Jordanian crisis. I've never seenⁿ so effective an example of crisis management. We worked well together.[^]

Dinitz: Yes, I was on the other end.

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