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MEMO

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THE WHITE HOUSE
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MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

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Reviewed by H. D. Brewster

PARTICIPANTS:

CLASSIFIED BY FRANK WISNER
SUBJECT TO GENERAL DECLASSIFICATION
SCHEDULE OF EXECUTIVE ORDER 11652
AUTOMATICALLY DOWNGRADED AT TWO-
YEAR INTERVALS AND DECLASSIFIED ON
DECEMBER 31, -----

DATE AND TIME:

Date: 3-8-78 1978
Ismail Fahmi, Acting Egyptian
Foreign Minister
Abdallah El-Erian, Egyptian
Ambassador to France
Henry A. Kissinger, Secretary of State
Joseph J. Sisco, Ass't. Secretary of State

Friday - November 2, 1973 - 8:19 p.m.

PLACE:

11/2/73
SECRETARY'S OFFICE
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Fahmi: I have decided to stay in Washington a little longer.

Kissinger: If you agree to the exchange of POWs in the proposal we discussed, I would try to see to it that there would be no Israeli offensive military action against the Third Army.

Fahmi: You would guarantee that there would be no military action, even if they move to the October 22 positions.

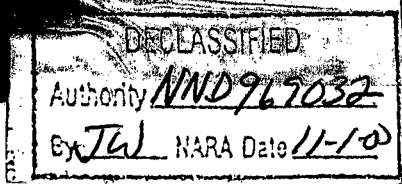
Kissinger: I cannot assure you that Israel will move to the October 22 positions. I can guarantee that after an agreement on the ceasefire, an agreement which includes no military supplies, we will do whatever we can to prevent Israel offensive military action against you.

Fahmi: If I agree to non-military cargos and exchange of wounded, the ceasefire is unstable. I will be at a disadvantage if they resupply in the West. You said you guarantee no offensive military action. I want all of this after they have moved to the October 22 positions. I want to take this guarantee in writing to Cairo and I would give it only to President Sadat.

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President
Kissinger
FOL 27-16 Arab-ISR



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Kissinger: I will see if we can express this in some way, and it would only go to President Sadat. I would like to look at the record of this meeting.

Fahmi: Do you plan on giving this only when you come, or can you get it beforehand?

Kissinger: Let's see what can be done.

Fahmi: I want the guarantee in writing, and only President Sadat would know about it. Mrs. Meir is unfair. She got from us a commitment to peace and she got a commitment for negotiations with the help of the United States.

Kissinger: The policy outlined is a fixed policy of the United States. We are determined to play a major role in a settlement and I intend to say this when I come to Cairo.

Fahmi: I am not leaving now. I am waiting for a final summation of Mrs. Meir's position.

Kissinger: We meet again briefly tomorrow. I have not had a report. She has a number of other meetings today. She cannot make the decision here. It would have to be made at a Sunday Cabinet meeting.

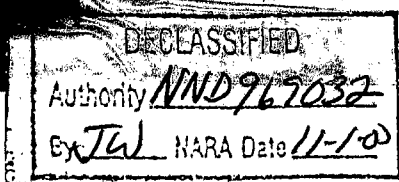
Fahmi: She is not interested in her POWs.

Kissinger: She is interested, but does not seem to want to pay very much for them.

Fahmi: We will not give up the POWs for nothing. We have held them for six to eight years. She may have difficulty inside her own country if she does not get her POWs. I heard what you said regarding Israeli acceptance on October 14 of a ceasefire in place with the United States and the USSR abstaining. The tragedy is now; I don't see why she does not return to the October 22 positions.

Kissinger: There is no rational explanation.

SECRET/NODIS



SECRET/NODIS

- 3 -

Fahmi: The President will receive you on your arrival in Cairo. He will give you -- a first in history -- a dinner in his own house in your honor. With you and two associates, the President will continue his negotiations and receive you upon arrival and take you to the Palace. Then after that there will be chats, dinner with you and two associates. On the second day, instead of talking to me, he has decided that he will talk to you and do the negotiating.

Finally, I want to inform you we have accepted your proposal that you can fly in the Finns directly rather than through some intermediate point.

You should be ready to discuss disengagement proposals seriously. I will discuss disengagement. What you can expect from us is a serious effort and to focus on realistic solutions and in what time frame something can be achieved. We have full confidence in you. It is in the overall interest of the United States.

Kissinger: The Israelis have enormous domestic strength. I appreciate the courtesies, and there will be reciprocity. I will discuss our general approach in Cairo. I will indicate our capabilities. I cannot make any final commitments to a plan, but I can talk about a direction.

Fahmi: The President does not expect you to have a final plan. What he wants from you is the United States' position.

Kissinger: If we do it too fast, it will not work. We need careful public preparation. Tell your President that we are determined to make significant progress. I believe our conversations this week have been very useful. Moreover, the presence of the [Israeli] Prime Minister has been helpful. It has given us a clearer picture of the problem we face in Israel and at home. We want to promise only what we can deliver. The question is how to organize ourselves domestically to get ready for the battle ahead. The President and I have to decide how to organize ourselves -- on what points to apply pressure. Let's decide what points to apply pressure.

As to disengagement, I am ready to discuss it. However, we have to avoid expending all of our efforts on a return to the October 22 position. Israel is not going to stay forever on the West Bank of the Canal. The October 22 position is only important in relationship to supply; it should

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DECLASSIFIED
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Ex JW NARA Date 11-10

SECRET/NODIS

not be used as a red flag and everything else forgotten. We want to be sure that we are going in the right direction. We have to think in terms of bigger steps. We have to come to a decision to make progress and to bear in mind the time scale that is possible and not to overinflate our expectations. I believe our basic approach has merit. We will have a massive brawl with the Israelis on the question of the return to the October 22 positions. We have two choices: To do that, or to say, "To hell with this. Let's tackle the bigger problem." We can move on to the broader question. Only we can deliver. It is important that you repeat this to your President.

Fahmi: I appreciate what you have told me. You are confirming my feeling and my President's feeling. It is exactly what I got from the President two days ago. I agreed with your proposal of taking seriously the role of the United States. That the United States will deliver the goods is what we want. We want a basic starting point. Nobody in the Arab world believes that you cannot tell Israel what it must do. We want to discuss everything on the Middle East and our future bilateral relationships. I am glad that you are prepared to discuss disengagement.

It is important we get something done on the thin layers problem. Suppose the proposal is rejected by the other side. What will be our situation? This is the question. Suppose we both agree on something and that you cannot deliver. This process of getting together on negotiations will never start. Everybody in the Arab world and elsewhere is pressing us. "What about the October 22 position?" they are saying. "You cannot deal with the Americans," our friends are saying. "Why don't you go to the Security Council?" We are hearing from NATO, from the Soviets, from the Arabs. I agree with your approach. The weight of the United States must finish the job.

Kissinger: We have an important tactical question. Everything needs time. Let's take this thin layer problem you just mentioned. On the thin layer, if you want to spill enough blood, we can get something. What do we want to spill blood on? That is the question. Is it worth spilling blood for five kilometers or 50 kilometers? I will know what is possible on the thin layer when I have completed my talks.

Fahmi: Do they want a settlement? They will not be able to stay there. She knows this.

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SECRET/NODIS

- 5 -

Kissinger: She does not. We have got to open peace negotiations. It is important that something happen and that we set up a procedure.

Fahmi: She will not get her POWs and Bab Al-Mandab. How does anyone believe that Sadat can go to negotiations if she does not return to the October 22 position?

Kissinger: If you present them with a pretext to get out of negotiations, then there is no pressure on them. If she can get a brawl started, it is great for them, not for you. We have a strategic problem before us. It is not worth a lot of shouting for tactical points.

Fahmi: Have you asked why we should not exchange wounded POWs?

Kissinger: They are in no hurry.

Fahmi: We are interested in guarantees. We believe this is important. You agree with the Russians on all points regarding starting negotiations. I remind you, however, that nobody speaks in our behalf.

Kissinger: We will speak to you. It was the Russian idea of joint auspices. Dobrynin came in the other day to ask how it might work. We did say Geneva. We have agreed to it.

Fahmi: In New York would be better. We want them in New York where they are closer to you, because we need you. We need your presence.

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