## THE WHITE HÖUSE

WASHINGTON

## SECRET/NODIS/XGDS

## MEMORAND JM OF CONVERSATION

PARTICIPANTS:

President Nixon

Golda Meir, Prime Minister of Israel Yitzhak Rabin, Ambassador of Israel Simcha Dinitz, Director General, Prime

Minister's Office

Dr. Henry A. Kissinger, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs
M.Gen. Brent Scowcroft, Deputy Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs

DATE AND TIME:

Thursday, March 1, 1973

11:03 - 11:25 a.m.

PLACE:

The White House The Oval Office

[The press was admitted.]

President: You can imagine the problems we had on the dinner. We made 100 friends and 1000 enemies. Everyone wanted to come.

Ambassador Rabin, I want to congratulate you--I know you're 51 today. We first met after the '67 war. He's been a great Ambassador. I will miss him.

I want to welcome Mr. Dinitz. We first met in the Mayflower here in '68. My '67 trip was non-political.

Mrs. Holton said how kind you were to her son who visited Israel.

Meir: We are very happy to have visitors.

President: It takes time. That is the problem. There's only so much time in a day, so correspondence must be done at night.

[The President met the Israeli press. The press departed at 11:10 a.m.]

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DECLABORFIED E.O. 12068, SEC. 9.6 Meir: I want to give you congratulations from the depth of my heart on your revolutionizing the world and creating for the first time hope in the nearts of people that we are approaching the end of wars. That people with different ideas and beliefs can live in peace. This is a great contribution.

President: As you are aware, there are what we call hopeless idealists. They see us trusting Mao, trusting Brezhnev, and they think as a result the world has changed—that the Communists have changed, that we have, and that the world is safe. This may be partly true. As Ambassador Rabin said, we have changed the world because of this dialogue and these agreements. There are improved chances that confrontation will not explode into war.

We are realistic about the dangers which still exist. Many here say that since the world is at peace, we can reduce arms to spend on ghettos. But there will be more until our adversaries really change. So publicly we say that it is good to say that these moves have happened -- we wouldn't have had a Vietnam settlement without our moves toward China and the Soviet Union, we wouldn't have these moves with the Soviet Union without the Chinese initiative -- but we will not change our ground.

Meir: I told Willy Brandt -- at the Socialist International -- don't become dewy eyed or drop your guard.

President: One thing you can do with your fellow Socialists. They are naive and think we can all drop our defenses. It doesn't mean we're still in the Cold War, but we must be realistic.

They talk about the golden rule. My rule in international affairs is: do unto others as they would do unto you.

Kissinger: Plus 10 percent.

Meir: We must be realistic. There may be a possibility of coexistence.

President: We mean live separately.

Meir In the meeting of the Socialist leaders....

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Kissinger: [Explained the meeting.]

Meir: I said I knew all about cease fires and peacekeeping. Palme said he knew the next most. Kreisky is good.

President: It's too bad Austria is so small.

Meir: Brandt didn't come. The Belgian is good, and the British shadow cabinet.

<u>President: Woodrow Wilson</u> was the biggest idealist in this office. When he wnet to Versailles, the pragmatists gobbled him up.

Except for Versailles, there never would have been a Hitler. What do you think, Henry?

Kissinger: Versailles was either too soft or too tough.

President: It was too tough.

Kissinger: It humiliated Germany without weakening it. It put all the weight on France, and Russia feel out. A disaster.

President: I'm glad you had a talk with Henry.

Get this out of the way because they will ask. On the plane accident. It was unfortunate. When you have this situation, things like this can happen.

Mrs. Meir wouldn't have wanted this to happen and if they did they would have been too smart to do it this way.

On ICAO, it never came to me. We would have pushed for an investigation first. It was a misunderstanding.

Meir: It was a misunderstanding. I want you to know that at the UN in January we got warnings from friends that the Black September Organization was planning a plane full of explosives to crash into an Israeli city. At Lod we had Japanese kamikazes. So we had to consider it a serious matter.

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I want you to know that if we had any doubt that there were passengers we never would have done it. No body is no more sorrowful than me.

<u>President:</u> We understand. The main thirg is that we don't want the Israeli position in the world to suffer. Your statement was good -- to help the innocent victims.

In Vietnam, when we hit the hospital -- our bombing was accurate because we could have wiped out Hanoi in three days. We want your position to be one which can be supported throughout the world.

Meir: In the Lebanon strike, the easiest way would have been air strikes. But they were next to a refugee camp, so we walked in for hours. We injured no refugees. I worried until they got back, but we did it to save lives.

<u>President:</u> Two major issues we always seem to discuss: arms and economic issues. On the negotiations. Do you have any others?

Let me begin. While you have been concerned at times over the past four years about us standing by you, I have kept our commitment to you and not squeezed you. That will continue.

Now we think it is important to move together to get off dead center in the negotiations. You can't link giving arms to negotiations. We give aid because it is in our interest that Israel be able to defend itself. But we also are interested, and you, in negotiating.

Meir: First, every commitment of yours has been meticulously kept. We never had it so good. There is mutual confidence. If you had doubts about our use of arms, we wouldn't get them. The arms we get are for self-defense and have also prevented war. Otherwise, there would have been shooting over the Canal.

Your policy has been correct. It has not only given us defense but prevented violence. We have been asked -- now that Vietnam is over -- don't you fear the US will be more active in the Middle East? The answer is we don't oppose it. On the contrary. The question is how to go about it.

Our stand is we will negotiate any time, anywhere.

We got a note last May that the Romanian Deputy Foreign Minister wanted to come in. Romania is the only Communist Government with diplomatic relations with us. He came in and told me that President Sadat wanted to see you. Can you come to Bucharest? I went and I was told Sadat wanted peace and Sadat thinks a meeting with Mrs. Meir is essential. I said tell him we sincerely want peace and would be glad to meet. He said good, you will hear within two weeks. Since then nothing. I am sure Ceausescu delivered the message, but nothing.

So we are prepared for direct negotiations, proximity talks which you suggested. All Israel is ready -- with any Middle East country.

<u>Kissinger:</u> Hussein sent a special message the day before yesterday before he left.

President: [Reads the note.]

Let me suggest a possible way to proceed. There are two tracks. The public track -- the difficulty is once you launch it, it has to work or one or obht sides must react. However, public discussions must go forth.

But just between us, we have found that because of my relations with Kissinger and the way we work together, by the time we go to the summit in Moscow and Peking we know what will and won't happen. So they were a success. We haven't done this in your area. You haven't wanted it.

Here is the proposal. You must have confidence in me. We know your elections are coming, and so on. The energy crisis is putting public pressure on doing something in the Middle East.

You are in a strong position -- you can take care of yourself, except for the Soviet Union.

You are so strong that Egypt is coming to us. We think the Soviet Union wants to get Egypt off their back -- we don't reallyknow.

I would like Henry to explore privately with Egypt what might be possible -- not negotiate for Israel, but he should know what your positions are. The same with the Soviet Union. Brezhnev will

come, probably in June, and this will be an opportunity to do the same with them. Henry has told you of our dialogue with them. I can give assurance that Henry will conduct this absolutely off-the-record. If it is okay, let us see if there is a settlement possibility. You know Egypt wants to see an overall solution. You want security; they want sovereignty.

Now this is most sensitive. It must be fuzzy. Henry is a master of fuzzy language. The reason Sadat doesn't want to talk with you, Mrs. Meir, is he is afraid you would gobble him up.

Tell the Chou story, Henry.

<u>Kissinger:</u> Chou said "We don't have a chance. Kissinger is the only man who can talk for 1-1/2 hours without saying anything."

<u>President:</u> Maybe it won't work, but I think we should try, both tracks. We won't broker for you but we should know the outline of what you want.

Meir: We are strong, thanks to you, but we want a situation of peace in the Middle East.

We know you are talking to Egypt and the Soviet Union. Egypt wants you to deliver Israel to them. First they asked the Soviet Union, now you. We know better.

What we want is that you not come to a separate position that we would not know about. We want security; we are not concerned with sovereignty. What does Egypt really want? They tell their friends that Israel must go back to the '67 borders and deal with the Palestinians.

We agree with a Suez interim step. The line of withdrawal would be clearly temporary and subject to final negotiations. This means a lot to us. We would be leaving our natural defenses and the strongest point we have against Egypt; it shows we are prepared to take a risk for peace. We want the Suez Canal cleared and operating, in the hope that the sides, if separated from each other, won't shoot. We want people moving to their cities along the Canal, because that enhances the chance of no fighting.



We will even let some police on East Bank. We wouldn't implement a right to use the Suez Canal. We would insist on the right but not use it. That would save face for Sadat.

So here is something that can be done if they really want.

Kissinger: These proposals have never been formally put.

President: You mean publicly?-

<u>Kissinger:</u> I have a number of points. It can be done in one of two ways. Let State start an interim settlement procedure, and get proximity talks going.

President: Don't tell State the Israeli position. Just that Israel will be reasonable.

State has to be doing something. Have State move, but don't give them the whole position. Let Henry sell this.

Meir: We won't say publicly, but we are willing towithdraw to the passes. But I won't tell State.

President: Yes, we can't have it leak.

<u>Kissinger:</u> There will be a couple of months of just getting things going in the public channel.

Meir: The trouble with Egypt is they want to end before they begin. Our stand is that the practical possibility is this interim agreement.

President: I have talked to Hafez Ismail. They are hard, but I think there is a window, don't you think?

<u>Kissinger:</u> There is no flexibility in their position, but there is in their attitude. Now we know something of your position.

President: I told Ismail that the two are far apart and we must have something in between, and what is their view? That is where we are.

What is the Soviet position?

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<u>Kissinger:</u> Now that Egyptian talks are going, the Soviet Union will want a position paper on it. We can say that now that we are talking with Egypt, Egypt says they don't want a specific scheme from the Soviet Union. Dobrynin will probably bring back a specific scheme from Moscow.

<u>President:</u> If we, as the middle man, are talking to both sides, you are in a good position, because we tilt to you.

Meir: The Soviet Union told Ismail don't give in to the U.S. They didn't say go to war -- they were cautious there -- but said they would get the MIG-23 and send pilots to the Soviet Union.

Kissinger: We always get the transcript of these exchanges.

Meir: We share them with you.

They want Egypt to be inflexible. They want a repeat of the '57 performance. So they say "Don't compromise."

<u>Kissinger:</u> They don't like Sadat. They keep him inflexible so as to undermine him.

President: The Soviet Union is playing to the radicals in the area. We can't let them play the middle man.

Moir: Yes, they are playing with Syria. Qaddafi is the first madman in the area, Syria is the second.

President: Shall we do this then? Kissinger and Dinitz.

Kissinger: And on your side, keep it in the Prime Minister's office?

Meir: Yes. And now to hardware.

Production. The Pentagon said they would help with the prototype. It was successful. Now we want production. We want the Pentagon to say the prototype is successful, now go ahead.

As I said, we never had it so good. The planes are coming in and we are okay through '73. But we need to know for 74-75. No publicity -- only if the deliveries are not made. If you decide 36-30,

for 74-75, there will be absolutely no publicity.

<u>President:</u> Nothing should be said. As I understand on the numbers, it is better to indicate agreement in principle, with the details to be worked out. Is that okay, Henry?

<u>Kissinger:</u> Yes, we look sympathetically in both places, but let the numbers be agreed on by the experts.

The difficulty we have is the bureaucracy recommended a very small number. The President can't just overrule.

<u>President:</u> The recommendation is for a small number. We know you feel strongly. We will look sympathetically on the number you suggested. We will not take the recommendation of State and DOD, but with your number, we will look on the basis of no linkage.

I don't want to be in a position of overruling the bureaucracy. We will treat you right.

Rabin: Distinguish between public and private. In public, Mrs. Meir will say we don't discuss our military relationship in public and the U.S. will say that it will do whatever is needed for the balance of power. Privately, let's agree here we will get planes, both kinds, and you look sympathetically on the numbers.

President: How does that sound?

Meir: I always give in. [Laughter] Now on production.

President: You want 200, we will give you 100.

Rabin: At least 100.

President: Yes. Okay, Henry?

Kissinger: Yes.

Rabin: The problem is knowhow. We need decisions to give us knowhow. We can't go into production for only 100. Let's agree for not, at least 100, okay?

<u>Kissinger:</u> I'll check with DOD. As I see it, it makes no difference to us. We are not committed; we just left it open.

Meir and Rabin: What we want is that there is not now a decision of only 100, and nothing more.

President: Okay?

<u>Kissinger:</u> Make it clear to DOD. We are not committed to more than 100.

Meir: I don't want to go into details. My Finance Minister has talked....

President: We have budget problems we understand.

[The President left at 12:21 and returned at 12:22]

Meir: Henry said we must break at 12:30.

One other point. We have people coming in, but the Soviet Union is bad. They have people in prison just because they want to go to Israel. This ransom is terrible. If they would only let them leave. Anyone who applies for emigration loses his job, and usually goes to prison.

President: I know about anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union.

Meir: Now it is official.

<u>President:</u> Yes. Now what do we do? We have talked to them, Henry and I, and we will continue -- but privately. We could do it publicly -- like the Congress -- but what good would that do? They would slow down. It is unfortunate that Senators are tying MFN to exit fees. But that would be too popular for me.

I am willing to play a hard line -- my Vietnam bombing decision indicates my toughness -- if it will work. But if we do this publicly -- tie them together -- they can't back down. My view is we can accomplish more -- our conversations with the Russians are tough, frankly; that is why we get along -- by doing it privately. Publicly, they would slam the door.

Kissinger: I agree.

President: We will put it to the Soviet Union, you can be sure. We have experience with these people, and taking a public position would hurt. Privately, yes, but publicly we will deny we are linking.

I am afraid if this continues to escalate, it will not help the Jewish Community. They are even worse than you say.

Meir: There is one with terminal TB.

I don't ask you to do it publicly. I don't expect the Soviet Union to publicly say "no more fees."

President: But Congressmen say the linking has the support of Israel.

Kissinger: The important thing is for you not to influence the Congressmen.

Meir: I can't talk to American Jews about Russian Jews. Not all Jews will go to Israel. The Soviets are fools. They could get all the good will in the world.

Kissinger: The problem is not that you should say anything, but if you could restrain friendly Senators not to push the Jackson Amendment.

President: For us to make progress here is in your hands. We can't face down the Soviet Union any more -- it would mean mutual suicide. We have a dialogue. You can lick anybody except the Soviet Union. We have to keep them out. Let us develop a Soviet policy so we can influence them. Brezhnev is a tough cookie.

[Everyone got up.]

You will be asked about planes by the press. Just stick to what we agreed.



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