

The Secretary of State



Interview

October 12, 1975
Washington, D.C.

Bureau of Public Affairs
Office of Media Services

Secretary Henry A. Kissinger interviewed on NBC-TV's "Meet the Press." Moderator: Lawrence E. Spivak. Panel: Clifton Daniel, The New York Times; Peter Lisagor, Chicago Daily News; Robert Keatley, Wall Street Journal; Richard Valeriani, NBC News.

Mr. Spivak: Our guest today on "Meet the Press" is the Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger, who recently completed his second year in office. He serves concurrently as Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, a position he has held since 1969. Secretary Kissinger was born in Germany in 1923 and came to the United States in 1938. He received his undergraduate and graduate degrees from Harvard and was a member of the faculty from 1954 until 1971. Among his many awards is the Nobel Peace Prize, which he won in 1973.

We will have the first questions now from Richard Valeriani of NBC News.

Mr. Valeriani: Mr. Secretary, Egyptian President Sadat has said that he will ask for American military aid when he comes to Washington later this month. What will be the Administration's response?

Secretary Kissinger: President Sadat has indicated to many visitors that he would ask for military aid, having interrupted his relationship with the Soviet Union. We don't know whether in fact he will have a specific shopping list or will ask for it in general. I don't think we will be prepared at this moment to make any specific commitments of

military aid, but we will be prepared to discuss the problem with him in general terms.

Mr. Valeriani: Have you given him any assurances that you will give such a request sympathetic consideration or serious consideration?

Secretary Kissinger: We are prepared to discuss it with him but at this time not in terms of specific shopping lists.

Mr. Valeriani: On the other side of the equation, Mr. Secretary, by making so many promises to Israel, in order to get Israel in the right mood to make certain concessions in the Sinai Agreement, haven't you really given up most of your leverage for getting Israel to make tougher concessions down the road in negotiations on the Golan Heights, or the Palestinians?

Secretary Kissinger: Well first of all, the so-called concessions to Israel, or assurances to Israel, have to be seen in the historical context; and the assurances that were given in connection with this most recent agreement were not substantially different from assurances that have been given in connection with other agreements. When you are dealing with a country which has only one steady ally, assurances are of very great consequence.



Secondly, the relationship with Israel should not be conceived in terms of a pressure operation in which we must be able to pressure Israel before every negotiation. And finally, our basic relationship with Israel depends on a continuing need for close consultation and close cooperation between us and Israel. And that fact is going to weigh heavily in Israeli considerations, whatever decisions may have been made on this or that item.

So I believe the nature of our relationship with Israel gives us sufficient opportunity to have our views heard sympathetically.

Mr. Valeriani: Why was it necessary to put all this in writing in specific terms now? So that Israel can avoid pressure in the future?

Secretary Kissinger: It is—the sort of understandings that have been published have been characteristic of America's Israeli relations through the whole history of American-Israeli relations.

The only difference is that in the past, at least in recent years, these documents have been submitted to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on a classified basis. This time they were published; and their being published gave them a formality and subjected them to a kind of textual analysis that was never intended and which, if one had brought them into the context of the overall and long-term relationships, would have made it clear that it was not an unusual event in our relationship.

Mr. Keatley: Mr. Secretary, the second Soviet-American strategic arms control agreement is about a year or so behind the schedule once expected. What are the prospects for concluding it any time during '75?

Secretary Kissinger: I wouldn't say it is a year behind schedule. It may be a few months behind the most optimistic schedule which was June-July of this year.

I think the prospect of having a second strategic arms limitation agreement within the next months is good. Whether it will be in 1975 or in the early part of 1976, we will know more clearly after I receive a response to the propositions that we made to Foreign Minister Gromyko when he was here in October.

Mr. Keatley: Some people think delay is due to a Soviet effort to limit American weapons while not restraining seriously its own programs. What convinces you that the Soviets do want an agreement that restrains both sides in roughly comparable ways?

Secretary Kissinger: I think in fairness one has to point out that most of the significant concessions over the last 18 months in the negotiations have been made by the Soviet Union: with respect to equal aggregates; with respect to taking forward-base systems out of the negotiations, which means that several hundred or close to a thousand American airplanes are not counted; and with respect to the verification procedures. I do not think it is fair to say that the issue is to limit our systems while not limiting the Soviet systems. The issue is that the two forces have been designed in a way which makes it difficult to compare the weapons on both sides and to know how to bring them into relation with each other.

Finally, we are down to only two or three issues and they can be settled at any time, after which it will take about 4-6 weeks of technical discussions to work out the final details.

About 90 percent of the negotiation is substantially completed.

Mr. Daniel: Mr. Secretary, you have remarked that our pledges to Israel have been published, but they were not published by the State Department. This latest agreement in the Middle East is going to cost us Americans billions of dollars and may involve us in highly dangerous commitments. Why can't we know formally, officially, and fully what has been promised in our names?

Secretary Kissinger: First of all, everything that has been published was submitted by the State Department within 3 days of the completion of the negotiations to the Congress, so there was absolutely no attempt to keep anything from the Congress.

Secondly, we were prepared to work out with the Congress an agreed summary that would have put before the public the essence of the American commitment, so that the American public would have known precisely what it was we were really committed to. What we attempted to avoid was

formulations that in themselves were not legally binding, but indicated a general guidepost of policy, and to avoid forcing other governments to take a formal position with respect to understandings that in the past had always been handled on this basis.

Finally, I do not agree that this recent agreement cost the American public billions of dollars. Last year the Congress voted, in a combination of emergency and regular aid, \$3 billion for Israel without the agreement. Before the agreement Israel requested \$2.6 billion as its regular need for economic and security assistance, and we had set aside in our planning a certain amount to be asked for Egypt. In fact, we will ask for less than the Israeli request when we submit our aid package to the Congress; and the additional sums that this agreement costs are, if anything, relatively small. Beyond that, we have taken no commitments that involve actions by the United States that involve the threat of war, or the risk of war. I think these are facts that have to be understood.

I repeat: We have put everything before the Congress that was later published; and the only disagreement concerned the form of publication and whether we could work out with the Congress a form of publication that would [not] risk the foreign policy dangers.

Mr. Lisagor: Mr. Secretary, quite apart from the amounts involved, given the mood of the Congress, have you made commitments or promises or assurances in the Sinai negotiations that this Administration, or possibly the next Administration, will not be able to fulfill?

Secretary Kissinger: The basic commitments of the United States have been put before the Congress. There are two categories of actions: those that can be done on Presidential authority and those that require congressional authorization and appropriation.

Those that can be carried out on the basis of Presidential authority, we are certain we are able to fulfill either in this Administration or in succeeding Administrations.

Those that require congressional action have been carefully limited in all the documents we have agreed to, as being subject to congressional action.

No specific amounts were mentioned, and there the mood that you describe may in fact be a factor. But we think it is terribly important that the American people understand that it is not the agreement that provides the need—that creates the need for assistance to the parties—but the long-term national interests of the United States and that the assistance to the parties antedates the agreement.

Mr. Lisagor: Mr. Secretary, you have been met with a great deal of skepticism and suspicion in the Congress in the debate over the Sinai negotiations in your own testimony. Has this been a recoil against the secrecy that has gone on in the recent past and the lack of consultation that went on in other foreign policy matters recently?

Secretary Kissinger: I think in fairness to the Congress one has to point out if one reads the whole transcript of all the sessions, executive and public, there was overwhelming support for the agreement. Its basic attitude—maybe not in front of television cameras—but the basic attitude in the relationship between the congressional committees and the executive was one of dealing with a common problem in a joint way.

However there is profound concern in the Congress, much of which I can understand, that the pendulum had swung too far in the fifties and sixties in the direction of executive discretion; and the Congress wants to make very sure that it is not giving a blank check to the executive for consequences that the Congress never intended, as it believes it did in the case of the Tonkin Gulf Resolution. That intention, I think, is justified, and we are prepared to cooperate with it.

There is concern with excessive secrecy which, too, we are attempting to meet.

On the other hand, one has to understand that a certain amount of confidentiality is essential or the diplomatic process will stop. So somewhere between those two extremes one has to find a joint position between the Congress and the executive. But we are not complaining about what happens in the Congress.

Mr. Spivak: Mr. Secretary, in his New York Times column of August 15, James Reston writes

that you believe "the capitalist and Communist worlds are two bankrupt systems in conflict now, neither adequate to the requirements and possibilities of a safe and decent world." Does that accurately describe your analysis of the world situation today?

Secretary Kissinger: No. I think it is too abbreviated a formulation. I was struck, on the trip to Europe with the President, on the occasion of the European Security Conference, at the problems that it seemed to me the East European countries had in establishing widespread support.

One is also struck by the debates that are going on in Western Europe about the stability of the government, and so I feel that the modern industrialized states have a basic problem of how to relate the complexity of their problems, the difficulty of the issues that the people face, to an overall national purpose that gains long-term support. Basically I believe that the Western capitalist systems are more dynamic, with all their debates, than the ones on the other side; and therefore I am basically optimistic about the potentiality of the democratic systems to prevail and to defend themselves.

Mr. Valeriani: Another question on the agreement, Mr. Secretary. In the confidential assurances to Egypt, the United States promises to consult with Egypt in the event of an Israeli violation of the agreement on the significance of the violation, and possible remedial action. Now, what does "remedial action" mean? Would that involve holding up supplies to Israel in the case of an attack?

Secretary Kissinger: First of all, exactly the same assurance was given to Israel; and both sides knew that the same assurance was given to the other side. What it meant was that the United States as the party that was the principal mediator in the negotiations, that knew the record of the negotiations, would make an effort, in case of a violation, to point out what its judgment was of the significance and of the possible cause of the violations.

What remedial action we would take—that has not been discussed with either side.

In the other two disengagement agreements,

those between Syria and Israel and those between Egypt and Israel, what happens is that a violation will be brought to our attention and we then bring it to the attention of the side that is accused. In every case that I can remember a remedy has been found. This is one of those clauses that codifies existing practice and is not a novel departure.

Mr. Keatley: Next week you will be in Peking and next month President Ford will go there. Will these visits result in diplomatic recognition of the Peking government by the United States?

Secretary Kissinger: The basic purpose, the basic relationship between us and the People's Republic of China is the result of the congruence of some perceptions of the international environment; and therefore, on many of these visits, a significant part of the discussion concerns a review of the international situation and to see to what degree we agree or disagree.

The process of normalization of relations between the People's Republic and the United States has been established in the Shanghai communique. We intend to live up to this and we intend to continue the process of normalization to its ultimate conclusion. I do not anticipate that it will be completed on the next visit, but I do not exclude that some progress would be made.

Mr. Daniel: Mr. Secretary, Warren Nutter, former Assistant Secretary of Defense, has published a study in which he says your diplomacy in Russia has created too much detente and over-relaxation of tension, that the United States is giving away too much for too little. As you know, many conservatives are consequently very suspicious of detente. Does this mean that the Ford Administration is going to retain its full faith in detente or will there be some change under the pressure of 1976 politics?

Secretary Kissinger: The impression is created that detente, which is a bad word anyway, is something that we grant to the Russians as a favor and that we withhold as a punishment.

The fact of the matter is that there are certain basic conditions that bring about this policy: the fact that the Soviet Union and the United States possess nuclear weapons capable of destroying

humanity, the fact that we impinge upon each other in many parts of the world, so that we are, at one and the same time, rivals and yet we must regulate our conduct in such a way that we do not destroy humanity in conducting our disputes. We are ideological opponents, yet in a way we are doomed to coexist.

Those are the realities. They cannot be removed by rhetoric, and those are realities to which every President has been brought back throughout the history of the postwar period.

The foreign policy of this country will be conducted with concern for the national interest and for world peace, and it will not be affected by the Presidential campaign.

Mr. Lisagor: Mr. Secretary, you are known for playing diplomacy close to the vest. And some former intelligence officials in the government have said that what you and the President, President Nixon as well as Ford, have talked about to foreign leaders, never got communicated through the system so that they could make expert appraisals of that. Are those charges true?

Secretary Kissinger: I sometimes suspect that if I started reading the most top secret documents from the top of the Washington Monument, we would still be accused of playing diplomacy close to the vest. To some extent a certain amount of confidentiality is essential. This depends entirely on the relationship of confidence that exists between the head of the State Department Intelligence, for example, and the Secretary of State.

The current Director of Intelligence in the Department of State attends every top level meeting with Soviet and other key leaders; and he has no problem of receiving access.

There are some—in every administration there have been some—extremely confidential documents that were not necessarily distributed to every intelligence analyst in town. They are always distributed to some key advisers. Who the key advisers are depends on whom the Secretary of State and the President have confidence in; but it is in the interest of the President and the Secretary of State to get the widest possible relevant advice, so I would reject this particular charge.

Mr. Spivak: Mr. Secretary, the President has just lifted the embargo on grain sales to Poland. Can you tell us what is holding up the decision on grain sales to the Soviet Union?

Secretary Kissinger: We are still discussing a long-term grain deal with the Soviet Union and until that is completed we are not in a good position to judge the total availabilities in relation to the demands, but as the President indicated yesterday, we are making progress in that long-term grain deal.

Mr. Spivak: Are you certain that a deal will go through?

Secretary Kissinger: I am not certain, but I am optimistic.

Mr. Spivak: Will the United States be likely to attach any significant reciprocal conditions to a deal?

Secretary Kissinger: The context in which a deal is made is always clear. The conditions of the agreement themselves as they now stand and as they will be negotiated are, in our view, very favorable to the United States.

Mr. Valeriani: How close are you to making a deal, Mr. Secretary, and in that connection, do you think you can make a deal for buying Russian oil?

Secretary Kissinger: We are discussing both of these issues, not directly linked, but in a parallel framework. We are quite close to making a deal on grain. We still have some additional considerations to discuss in the case of oil but we have made progress on that too.

Mr. Keatley: If President Ford is elected next year and if he asks, will you stay on as Secretary of State?

Secretary Kissinger: I haven't—first of all, I haven't been asked yet, and that is a decision I will make then.

Mr. Daniel: Mr. Secretary, you seem to agree that we are now coming to the end of the step-by-step process of maintaining peace in the Middle East. Where do we go from here?

Secretary Kissinger: Well, I think we then have to find some larger frameworks which com-

bine several of the issues and several of the parties and maybe all of the issues and all of the parties. We are in a process of consultation about that now.

Mr. Spivak: I am sorry, but our time is up. Thank you, Secretary Kissinger, for being with us today on "Meet the Press."



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