

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

~~SECRET/SENSITIVE/NODIS~~

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MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

BY HR **NARA DATE** 5/11/07

PARTICIPANTS: Yitzhak Rabin, Prime Minister of Israel
Simcha Dinitz, Ambassador of Israel
Mordechai Gazit, Director of Prime Minister's Office

President Gerald Ford
Dr. Henry A. Kissinger, Secretary of State and
Assistant to the President for National Security
Affairs
Kenneth Keating, Ambassador to Israel
Lt. General Brent Scowcroft, Deputy Assistant to
the President for National Security Affairs

DATE AND TIME: Thursday, September 12, 1974
11:12 a. m. - 12:24 p. m.

PLACE: The Oval Office
The White House

President: I hope we can more fully discuss each of the things you and Secretary Kissinger discussed yesterday. I unfortunately haven't been able to go over what has been discussed and I would like Secretary Kissinger to go over it.

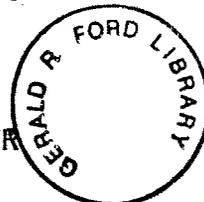
Secretary Kissinger: We discussed the concurrent problems of strengthening Israel and the negotiating track. Only on a basis of the most open relationship can we get through this difficult period.

President: That's my style and that's the way I want to do it. I want to find common ground, but a frank and open approach is infinitely better for both of us. We do nothing behind your back.

Secretary Kissinger: There are no secret deals. Israel knows everything we have discussed with the Arabs. We have no interest in dealing with the Palestinian problem through Arafat -- we want to do it through Jordan.

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~~TOP SECRET~~ - XGDS (3)
CLASSIFIED BY: HENRY A. KISSINGER



On the diplomatic track, you know our strategy: Syria is the one that has the highest potential for war. Therefore, it is best to have a series of settlements so that each one has some prospect of gains. This will avoid a gang-up at Geneva. My impression is that the Prime Minister agreed we would move with Egypt, and didn't reject movement on Jordan although it is more difficult and would require elections. We had no discussion of timing, sequence and methods.

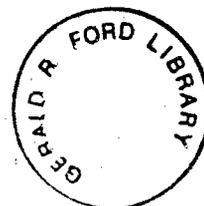
The Prime Minister emphasized Israel's need for security and our arms to go into this process. The items on the urgent list were needed, and the discussion on Israel's long-term program MATMON-B must go forward. I told him that as a result of the NSC meeting, the list was broken into increments for your decisions, and the MATMON-B list would be considered, together with the sensitive items. I explained some of our problems: one is getting the money; second is that it draws down our own stocks and supplies are limited; third is to do it in a way that enables us to manage the Arab reactions.

It was left this way. There was no decision pending your discussion.

President: And what is your position, Mr. Prime Minister?

PM Rabin: I thank you for what you said about the way you want to conduct our relations. We must be frank -- we can argue, but we must be frank. We discussed the strengthening of Israel and the efforts for a political settlement. On the first issue, we have the experience of working together with the United States on the basis of strength. We got generous assistance and we are more than thankful. We believe this will be continued. However, we reached agreement with the U. S. on the closing of a long-term agreement. In the past, we have been told when we made requests that in such short-term you had to take it from inventories. Therefore, we wanted to put it on a long-term basis so we could order from factories and not draw down U. S. forces.

We have made two long-term requests -- "MATMON-A" and "MATMON-B". In the meantime there has been an acceleration of arms deliveries by the Soviet Union to our neighbors, especially to Syria -- and of new arms, like the MIG-23. Therefore, we submitted an urgent list, of items from the A and B lists. In addition there are items on which there is argument -- mostly armament to make us more efficient. The lead time for many of the items is two to three years, so we must get orders in so as to avoid draw-down.



We have had four wars in 26 years and not a day of peace. We can defend ourselves but we need the means. Our military capability is a national obsession. There is national consensus in Israel on the need for a strong defense capability. This is the key to our survival.

The second is the political issue. As a result of the last war, the Arabs now know how to combine oil, diplomatic pressure and force to move or force political movement. Therefore we believe the present disengagement and ceasefire would not be transferred to another situation.

I don't think the Arabs are prepared for a final settlement, especially Syria.

Kissinger: Not on terms you can accept.

Rabin: In Egypt, Sadat has said that all he can do, even for a total Israeli withdrawal, is non-belligerency. Therefore, they are not ready for peace. Since we need peace and security (which means secure boundaries), the gap between the two sides I think cannot be bridged today. Therefore, I doubt success of negotiations on an overall settlement -- but we are ready to try.

Kissinger: The Arabs would be willing, but on the basis of the '67 frontiers, a solution to the Palestinians, etc., which guarantees no settlement.

Rabin: So there is another option -- to move gradually toward peace. We can accept a smaller move not solely in a military context but only in the context of political moves to peace. We fear salami tactics, by which we give up territory and get only words, which can be changed. The more we move the worse our military situation becomes. There is a school which says -- and we will keep the existing agreements on a mutual basis -- that if we have to fight, we should do it on these lines. If we are only gaining time, let's stay where we are.

But we want to move -- if it is a real move to peace and if we gain time. We want an economic infrastructure to be built, especially in Egypt -- which will create new conditions in Egypt. In principle we see the possibility to do this with Egypt. There is also a possibility with Jordan. It will be more difficult, but possible, preferably after Egypt. With Syria I can't see anything now.

My Government can be criticized for taking risks. We have to, but bear in mind the salami tactics. The Soviet Union will try to have Kissinger get more concessions from Israel, then move to salami tactics.



President: We both know the Soviet Union would like to be disruptive.

Kissinger: Whenever the process slips, that is what the Soviet Union will try. It can't be avoided; the question is when is the best time.

Rabin: If that is true, we would rather face it now.

Kissinger: No, it depends on the Arab constellation.

Rabin: We would like non-belligerency from Egypt as the move from war to peace.

President: What does that mean specifically?

Rabin: We have given Dr. Kissinger a partial list.

Without the basic change from war to peace, the process will be salami tactics.

President: I have a couple of comments I want to make:

First, the United States wants Israel strong enough for its security. That is my firm position. When we look over the numbers and dollars, I think we can come to agreement on what is needed for Israel's national security. One of our problems is some people don't see a need for a strong United States military posture. We are very grateful to Ambassador Dinitz for helping in this regard.

Let me make a comment on the long-range, with respect to Congress: To get Congress to move on a ten-year program today is not attainable. I can't make a ten-year commitment for everything you need because Congress won't make that kind of commitment. They might make a lesser commitment in time. There are responsible leaders who have every view to work with us.

It is of the utmost importance to proceed along the lines you suggest. Going right to Geneva would solidify Arab unity.

I like the sequence of Egypt and Jordan -- that seems to be the best procedure. As we move there, we should move on a unilateral basis, and we know you can't do things on a 6-12 month basis. We want to help and think we can work things out.



But I think we do need from you a commitment on the time and substance as we work out military arrangement. How, for example, can we resolve the Egyptian problem? We must find some specifics.

Kissinger: I think it is impossible for Egypt to move alone. Whichever comes first, the other must follow quickly. The Palestinian problem will become impossible for us if there isn't something for Jordan.

President: I gather from Prime Minister Rabin's comments, something that ties in. This morning the Democratic Leadership indicated there would be a post-election session. This could be beneficial in getting Congress to move on the longer-range program. We would like to start movement in October on the negotiation.

Kissinger: I have told the Israelis that we would delay as long as possible. We are at the point where something is needed. My trip could delay until November, but then things must move or they will go to Geneva as a gang. If by the time I go to Israel we could have an understanding of the limits within which we will operate, . . . We need a method -- not shuttle diplomacy -- for the negotiations. Our goal shall be to work out such a strategy through Dinitz, then talking with Allon, and my trip, so by then we have a procedure. This is my idea for proceeding.

Rabin: We may have to argue here and there, but I see no objection.

Kissinger: We have no specific plan, no lines.

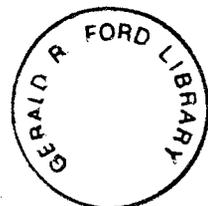
Rabin: We have nothing specific worked out with the Cabinet.

Kissinger: We need only a rough idea of whether we are talking ten kilometers or something else.

Rabin: On military equipment, we are thinking of a 4.5 billion authorization with appropriation as needed.

President: The Congress, rightly or wrongly, doesn't make these long-term commitments. Maybe a two-or-three year authorization with appropriations to fill the pipeline.

Dinitz: That is just what we have in mind.



President: The Congressional leaders said, "Don't do anything before elections because it is most difficult program." Afterwards, we maybe can find a way to get a good program through, and maybe then we could think of a 2, 3, 4-year program for Israel. But to sell the Congress, we must have evidence of progress toward a peaceful solution.

Rabin: The problem is that Golda brought this commitment to the Knesset as part of the disengagement. People ask, "What have you got in terms of what was promised?"

President: On the urgent list we can promise significant assistance -- without getting into numbers. On the long-range, I don't know exactly what he indicated -- I will reiterate President Nixon's general commitment. I will reiterate what he said, but with the caveat that I must deal with the Congress on a year-to-year basis and legislation to implement this commitment has the best chance after there is progress in the Middle East. We need a strategy to get your security and on how to get a settlement.

Dinitz: We face two financial problems. We know that a long-term authorization is difficult. That is why we decided a 4.5 billion authorization is preferable. As for timing, if you feel January is a better time, you are the expert. On the urgent list, we must be able to assure the Pentagon that the urgent list can be financed. I understand there are ways through Treasury and State that it can be done. If we can be sure there are no financing problems on the urgent list, we can wait on the MATMON-B list.

Kissinger: I have the impression we can work out funding on anything the President can give you on the urgent list.

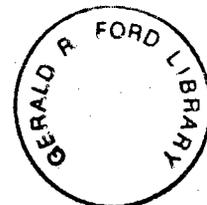
President: Another problem is the drawdown, but for financing, I think we don't really have a problem.

Rabin: When will we know?

President: If we can meet tomorrow morning, we can work it out.

Kissinger: Maybe I can give you some preliminary ideas after dinner. What do we say to the press?

Rabin: The problem that we face -- judging from the last five years -- is that after such a meeting, we should make clear that on-going negotiations on military supply continue. Since there was no decision, we will have a problem.

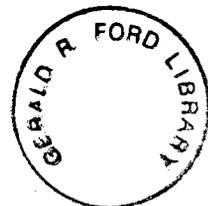


President: How about saying there is agreement in principle?

Kissinger: The problem is what is helpful in Israel creates an explosion with the Arabs.

Dinitz: Can't we say that the military relationship was discussed and the principle of on-going relationship was reaffirmed and that we will continue tomorrow?

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Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin

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