MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

PARTICIPANTS:

President Gerald Ford
Ismail Fahmi, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Arab Republic of Egypt
Dr. Henry A. Kissinger, Secretary of State and Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs
Lt. General Brent Scowcroft, Deputy Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs

DATE AND TIME:
Saturday - October 5, 1974
7:30 - 8:51 a.m. (Breakfast meeting)

PLACE:
First Floor Private Dining Room
The White House

The conversation opened with small talk about Indian Summer in the U.S. and about the ceremonial opening of the Jefferson Room at State which Minister Fahmi had attended the evening before.

Kissinger: Ismail and I had good talks in New York, and I thought it would be good for him to give us an idea of how the situation looks to President Sadat.

Fahmi: I appreciate this opportunity. President Sadat sends his best wishes for Mrs. Ford’s recovery.

I can’t complain about developments since October on a personal basis. On a personal basis it couldn’t be better. But speaking as Foreign Minister, I can’t plan for the future of my country on that basis and especially in view of the problems in which your country has been involved. It has a very bad effect on your country abroad. The world looks to you for stability and guidance.
I have no problem with Henry, but all these things make us wonder. We want to know what the policy of the United States is. My feeling is the responsible people in the United States don't act on an urgent basis with respect to the Middle East. If the Soviet Union continues to have the strong role in Egypt it has had for 15 years, they will continue it everywhere in the Middle East. They tried to pressure Egypt and we stood fast. Now they see they made a mistake and they are trying to recover. Now I am going to Moscow October 14 to prepare for a Summit.

Do we have to go back to the Soviet Union and say, "You were right; you told us so?"

President: There should be no doubt about me and Secretary Kissinger personally and our desire to expand relationships with you. Dr. Kissinger and I had a very tough week with the Congress, but we laid it on the line that we had to have continuity in foreign policy and we had to be able to act without a lot of restrictions. They may cut the amount, but we made our point on the restrictions. I think we won.

Kissinger: It was a net gain.

President: And Congressman Passman has assured me there will be money for Egypt in the aid bill. There is a realization that the situation in the Middle East is tenuous -- that there could be a war, or an embargo. I think Congress is more open to equitable treatment for the Arabs than ever before. We have enemies, but the leadership is with us.

Fahmi: It is not a question of money. We can manage on whatever. There are many factors we must consider.

I expect Israel to take some military measures against Syria -- big or small. They think the Soviet Union gave too much to Syria and they have to do something. I know it is not serious, but Israel maybe needs it psychologically to show they are still supreme. Also, if you don't prevent them from doing something it will destroy your relations with the Arabs, and that they want. Israel wants you to have bad relations with Egypt. In the '50s they planted bombs in U.S. installations in Egypt to blame Egypt.

When we have a peace settlement we have no objection to a guarantee to Israel, but we want one too. President Sadat confirms this.
I say all this because if there is no progress soon, it will be very
dangerous and the Soviet Union will be back in. President Sadat hates
the Soviet Union. When President Nixon came, it was not just being
polite. It was the people showing their discontent with the old policies
with the Soviet Union. Now our relations with the Soviet Union are zero.
But they know they made a mistake and they are now trying hard.

Kissinger: Yes, I think you will be offered anything you want in the military
field.

Fahmi: Right now you are doing nothing in the area; there is no American
presence. Even the USIA operation is poor. It isn't the money.

Kissinger: They are judged in the Middle East as the first country to
move to the United States. So to the extent we don't have a presence and
we can't get the bill through Congress, it looks like an Egyptian mistake.

Fahmi: We need your cooperation to move again.

President: Dr. Kissinger and I have an excellent relationship. He has my
total policy support.

We are on the right track in the Middle East. Our policy is fully
supported in America. It has been a hallmark of constructive policy here.
It has succeeded, and the people support it and expect us to move forward.
They know that if we don't move, all is in jeopardy. There are Israeli
supporters who don't see it in a balanced way, but want arms. So we must
move forward to avoid more war.

Fahmi: That is why we need your assurances on.

Kissinger: President Sadat last October gambled on my assurance last
fall -- to go for the longer-term objectives rather than the short-term.
The error of the past has been to lump everything together, and then
everyone can be mobilized against it. We are breaking it up one step at
time, so that all the opposition doesn't coalesce. But we have to prepare
the ground, and that takes time.

Fahmi: But they (the American Jews) will bring pressure on you -- even
personally. How do we know you will stick to your guns?
I feel I can get everything from the Soviet Union if I want. But the end result will be escalation and a new situation. There will be a war in one, two, five years. I am a nationalist. If there is no action by you, I leave my country and the Middle East high and dry. And I have no assurances.

President: I see your point. You can get what you want from the Soviet Union, but an arms race and war are the only result.

Kissinger: Then we would have to support Israel militarily.

President: But the Soviet Union cannot bring peace. I can assure you we will cooperate in the negotiations, help you economically and militarily.

Kissinger: If you go back to the Soviet Union, we will have to demonstrate you can't get anything from the Soviet Union.

Fahmi: We don't think you should give them all they ask for.

Kissinger: Despite what you read in the Israeli newspapers, we gave them almost no heavy equipment. What we gave made no strategic difference, and it exhausts their credit so they have to come back to us next year.

You do have a military problem, with your equipment running down, and if no Soviet Union equipment coming in and the other Arabs are getting it. It is not easy for us, and the Saudis are not too efficient. I am seeing the Shah next month, and he is more efficient and reliable. But at some point we have to do it openly.

Fahmi: You will have to guarantee that Israel takes no action against Syria.

Kissinger: I told Rabin that I would oppose an Israeli-initiated military operation against Syria.

Fahmi: If Syria is forced to fight, we will be blamed. The only winners would be Israel and the Soviet Union. To restore the present situation would be almost impossible.

President: We think it would take 25 years.

Fahmi: We need some concrete progress on the Sinai front. This is a must. If Kissinger can do it in not more than two months, that is good. It is necessary. We are working with the extremists, to change the image of the United States. It can be done, but it is tricky and could go either way now.
Kissinger: Can you make a Sinai move alone?

Fahmi: Sure. Not to a peace. We must proceed slowly. We must get some equipment from the Soviet Union, but I can make it sweeping or just enough to get by.

Kissinger: You must do what you want, but a sweeping deal would cause an outcry that you are a Soviet stooge. The next move will be tough, because in the Sinai the next move will interrupt a decade of infrastructure. I told the President when he came in that there would be an attack on me and an attempt to split me and the President.

But we can't move before November 5. You didn't notice, but the President got additional aid to Israel taken out of the Continuing Resolution -- for the first time ever.

The next step in the Sinai is much more important than the first, because now there is no logical stopping place.

Fahmi: No one can accuse us of being a Soviet satellite. We get nothing from the Soviet Union now and we need something. But if we get nothing from the Soviet Union and nothing from you, and are asked to make more concessions, my army will think I am foolish. We have to get some equipment, but the issue is whether it will be a lot or a little. If we can get something from you early next year, we can get by with only a little [from the Soviet Union].

The oil people are the biggest political amateurs -- nice to us internally but with loudspeakers outside.

Kissinger: The reason I arranged this appointment is because I agree with Fahmi's appraisal. I think Sadat is very exposed. Last November he made a big gamble. There is no doubt he is anti-Soviet. But the radicals are using his moves against him, and if he gets no progress for his efforts and no help from us, he is in trouble.

Fahmi: What he needs is movement in the Middle East more than arms. We are diversifying our arms supply now -- your allies are selling to us.

President: We must push Israel into the arena to participate.
Kissinger: What Israel is asking for is an end of belligerency. We have to find a formulation -- you can't give that -- something which looks like progress toward peace without giving up your principles.

Fahmi: Sadat can give nothing more than military disengagement. It has to be described that way. Non-belligerency is out of the question. We could not sign anything like that. Politically he couldn't survive. He can sign a military agreement and some other things. But for him to make another big move in Sinai without a move on the Syrian and Jordanian fronts would be a big political move: It would get us out of the conflict, and what more could they want?

Kissinger: I had a brutal meeting with Allon yesterday because he said he would discuss only non-belligerency.

Fahmi: Khaddam came to Cairo only to block any separate move by Cairo. We agreed there would be no separate political move. So it must look like a military one.

Kissinger: So Israel will try to force the next move to be a political one. Israel likes to make offers which look reasonable and which the Arabs can't make.

The radicals want to make Egypt look like it is betraying the Arabs; Israel wants Egypt to look like it is resisting progress to peace.

The Soviet Union is pushing for a total solution in order to freeze the situation and make progress impossible. If there is no progress in the next six months we are in bad trouble.

Fahmi: The Jewish lobby thinks it can manipulate any American President.

President: I won't bow to that kind of pressure. And there is less support for Israel than ten years ago. Vietnam made the American people much more cautious and less likely to back Israel.

Fahmi: I am glad to hear this. I will convey it to Sadat. We will work out how to present all this in connection with my trip to the Soviet Union.

I am glad to hear what we can do in the next three to four months.

But I can't avoid getting some Soviet arms.
Kissinger: We realize this. But the impact here -- like the Soviet deliveries recently -- is played in our press as a failure of American policy and Egypt's going back to the Soviet Union.

Fahmi: We lost 125 MIG's. We have to get them back, unless you can give me 120 -- or 60 early in the year, nothing now, and I keep it quiet. But otherwise I have to get something.

Kissinger: If you have big shipments coming in early, we will face massive pressure to ship big to Israel. Rabin has already said the President committed to a long-term arrangement. That is not so. We said we couldn't even consider it before the first of the year.

Fahmi: Then give us 50 F-4's. We are the only ones who haven't restored our forces since the war.

Kissinger: The Soviet Union won't do it for nothing.

Fahmi: Yes, they will, this time -- just to kick the U.S. out of Egypt. They have suffered greatly and they will give everything I ask to get you out of Egypt. I am not threatening you; I am just talking frankly.

President: Suppose they gave you 120 planes. That won't help achieve peace. We are committed to work out an arrangement for peace in the Middle East. Providing equipment beyond your needs doesn't help achieve peace.

Fahmi: Yes, but I have no choice but to strengthen the military. We are not going to war -- that is out of the question -- but we have to do something. And a political settlement alone with Israel would be suicide. A move on Syria too would help.

Kissinger: That is impossible now. We will never move under what looks like Soviet pressure. If they give arms and then we move, the Soviet Union will claim the credit. That we won't tolerate. We have our limits too.

Fahmi: But if no move on Syria, who has to defend you? Us. We are the defenders of the United States in the Arab world.
JF: I don't know if I can bring up the MC and I don't think it's going to be good for him to make an issue of it or to do it publicly. F: Appreciate this opportunity. I don't want to make this more public. I can't explain what it's all about. It's on a personal basis. I don't even think the President will know. I think it's been kept so secret it's been kept out of the press. I've been involved in some of the things which you know. The President has been very much involved. World view of the world looks to your administration. If there's any problem at all, they're certainly won't want to hear or that there's something. I'm going to try to do my best to keep things the same. F: I have some question. I don't know if I should ask the President. I want to hear what you think of this. My feeling is a strong feeling in C. I may have an idea. What is my feeling? F: I think we want to know what they're thinking about MC. If they had been -- if you were to bring up the -- they would still be in favor of M. F: It's a very close call. They still have to come up with a decision. We have discussions. But leadership is still there.
I left a question of security, which we must manage, but that can only be done in a way that is not easy. I think I may have to take some action to secure the situation. There are some things I have to do, and I believe it will work. I believe it will work, and I may see it. If you don't prevent them from doing something, it will not bring down whatever it wants. I wonder how it works in E. The key problem seems to be the parent attitude. I think it important to understand that I don't want and too. I don't think this is going to happen, because if we pursue it, it will be very difficult. So we will be back in. So after whatever it wants, we will be back in. So after whatever it wants, we will be back in. So after whatever it wants, we will be back in. So after whatever it wants, we will be back in.
That's not what we're concerned about. Our concern is that everyone should have the right to live in a safe and secure environment. Our government has the responsibility to protect our citizens. If we can't do that, then we're not doing our job. I think it's time for a change.
THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

K, if you go back to Syria, we will
want to demonstrate you can't get
anything from us.

F, we don't think you should go.

K, despite F's warning, we go there
almost every weekend.

What is your plan for Syria?
K, it's not as simple as the
Syrians say.

F, G, and I would like you to
think about what we might do.

K, we think we need some
thinking outside the box.

F, if we think of how to get
Syria in the middle of the
conflict, we will have an
opportunity to change the
course of events.

K, there's no easy way to
cure the conflict.

F, if you want to guarantee I take
you off the table against Syria,
P, I will bring the
Syrians to the

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

F, if Syria is placed in a
proposition, we will
do whatever needs to be
done. We don't want it
to become a

P, if we think 25 years.

F, we need some
thinking outside the
Syrians. This is a

K, and if it's not more than
two months, it will
work.

F, making it happen is

K, can you make a

P, sure, but to a

K, I think we must

P, if you want to

K, you must do what you want, but

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON
I'm not sure what Mr. Kirtman [redacted] means by the phrase "I can't seem to talk a good infrastructure." I think he means that we can't seem to talk about infrastructure or that we can't seem to talk with the president.

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I, that I seeking for is end of belly. 

We have to find a formulation that something which looks like progress to pride and to my own principle.

So I want to know what does Thoreau think of that thing. He is decided that way. With belly is not good. We could not sign anything that radically be called desirable. He can turn with agreement or some other thing. But for him that unable the man in Japan who born on empire and Japan feel to be big political man - it would get nothing of agreement what more would they want.

If I had printed truly well to exactly because he said he would hear me the man. belly.

If Thoreau came to believe only to block any separate man by Cuba.
to both E.

F asked to have this signed away to G about. We will work out from it presently this in connection with the SU.

I asked to have what we can do in west 3-4 now.

But I want to avoid getting some SU

If we rush this, but it is quite

some - how are decisions made

to play it over and over again

I will phone & I going back to SU

F will catch 12:15 16:30. We have
to get them on the Airlines you
can win me 12 or 1:00 each
in a week.

nothing now, so I have no control. But

otherwise I have to get something

10 If you have big of servants

away in early, we will

face monopoly pressure to stay

with E. Rhen this already and

Parma will it long time anymore.

That is a good wind that consider

it before 12:30 now.

Then

F. 1300 or 13 30 15, will one only

seriously and haven't scheduled our
day will now.

14 5U would do it for nothing.

F. Yes they will this time - just to

think 12 & 13 of E. They have enough

gone they will give anything

a week to get you out of E.

I will seat claiming you - just

talking friendly.

P. Supposing they give you 120 planes

That won't help a clear peace. We

will try to work out arrangement for

plane in ME. Boringly yours...
BY WIRELESS THE WHITE HOUSE WASHINGTON

F: YES, but I have no evidence that
in Washington any war is not
likely to come. We have
enough men here to do something, and
a formal statement such as [I]
announced here a while ago might help.
R: We will make some sort of
statement later in the afternoon. If they
give us 30 days, we will come out
with such a statement. But if we don't
agree, they have our word that,

F: But if we don't agree, who
has to send you an order? for example,
the President after C. S. L. in a council
will,