MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

PARTICIPANTS: President Ford
Max Fisher
Brent Scowcroft, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs

DATE AND TIME: Tuesday, March 9, 1976
4:25 - 5:20 p.m.

PLACE: The Oval Office

Fisher: I want to put the current situation in perspective. I told Brent we shouldn't answer Rabbi Schindler right away. Things are getting out of hand and there is a perception problem. There will be serious damage if this is extended past the C-130's. We will really get kicked around and I don't think it's worth it right now.

President: Let me put it in perspective. Through a great deal of effort, we made the Sinai agreement -- which was a good one. At the same time the Soviets cut off Sadat from any new military equipment and spare parts. He can't get anything at all. Meanwhile we are asking for $3.5 billion for Israel alone. Match that against six C-130's for Egypt. That is the substance of the situation.

Some of the State people testified that the aircraft were just a first step. That was a mistake -- in timing. Maybe not a year from now, but now. This step is just symbolic; so is the heavy aid to Israel. If Congress turns us down, we could have Egypt turning back to the Soviet Union or the Soviet Union moving in on its own, perhaps through Khaddafi. Sadat will be so weakened through working with us that he can't hold out.

Fisher: I don't disagree. Some of the State testimony got people inflamed.
The question is how do we get over this and get through the planes without the feeling that arms will be poured into Egypt? How can we get out of it and get some credit, not blame?

The only real opposition is Jackson. He will demagogue it if he can.

President: What should we do?

Fisher: Clarify what it is you are doing. Say you are just giving six airplanes. You could make a statement, meet with a group, or answer the Schindler wire.

President: I am speaking in Chicago Friday for 15 minutes and then will answer questions. That might be good.

Fisher: What would you say?

President: Just off the cuff -- this is a request for six aircraft, nothing more. What situation may develop we would have to review, but this is just a request for six aircraft. Then talk of the danger to Sadat if we reject any help for him.

Fisher: How about saying the request is for six and there is nothing more on the table at this time? But I think a meeting has some merit.

[Discussion of handling it by letter, press conference, or a meeting. Discussion of transitional quarter funding.]

There is a world-wide feeling among the diaspora that Israel needs to show more flexibility. I would like to talk to you about that before I go back to Israel.

President: When are you going?

Fisher: April 1st. I want to talk to the Israeli Government about it.

One other point. Connally feels neglected. He is not in Reagan's camp at all.
E. Don't waste our time trying to understand Schumacher's point. It is not the same as Schumacher's point. We need a different approach. We need to focus on the core of the issue. The problem is not with Schumacher; it is with our understanding of his work. It is not about Schumacher; it is about our approach.

F. Don't waste our time trying to understand Schumacher's point. It is not the same as Schumacher's point. We need a different approach. We need to focus on the core of the issue. The problem is not with Schumacher; it is with our understanding of his work. It is not about Schumacher; it is about our approach.
You can I make a statement, what as a group we assigned a Schmidt mix.

P I am speaking in Chicago finding the 15 minutes + three minutes questions. That might be good.

F What will your say.

P Just the stuff - this is a request for 1/2 supervisors, without that many days we would have only.

F There is just a request for a. I am talking of a longer & shorter is not reject any healthy for him.

F How about again the suppose. In 6+ there is writing write & talk at this time. But I think a weekly has some record.

(Description of looking at it by with, jokes off, no unity)

(Description of F & person)

F There is a second with mixing away a chapter that I need on theme with feasibility. I would

F. I want to you start that before 8 a.m. in 1 a.m. & I set it down 2.

F. One other point. Comment feels suggested. I will look in figure's every at all.