

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

PARTICIPANTS: Mr. Max Fisher
President Ford
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

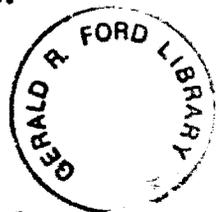
DATE AND TIME: Thursday, March 27, 1975
3:10 p.m.

PLACE: The Oval Office
The White House

President: I don't think I have ever been so disappointed as when I heard Henry was coming back without a settlement. It was as low as I have been in this office. The impression I had, after my meetings with Allon twice, with Rabin, with Golda, etc., was that we had been working so closely that when the chips were down they would see how deeply this would affect the prestige of the United States. When the final decision was made, their inflexibility has created all sorts of problems. When Henry reported to the leadership, they without exception strongly supported our efforts and were quite critical of Israeli actions.

The result is that we have undertaken a reassessment. That doesn't mean we will drop Israel but we have to go on a broader basis. You know me well enough personally and officially -- we just can't get led down the primrose path and be rejected.

Kissinger: Max doesn't know that the timing resulted from Israeli insistence.



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

DECLASSIFIED
E.O. 13526, SEC. 2.6
NSC MEMO, 11/14/00, STATE DEPT. GUIDELINES, State Rev: ew 3/11/04
BY lala, NARA DATE 5/13/04

Fisher: I don't feel any better than you. I had lunch with Dinitz today. I have the transcript of what he said in New York. My first responsibility to you is to keep things cool. That is what I tried to do. I called the president of every community in the U.S. I didn't want sermons coming out on Passover week and the 30th anniversary of the Holocaust.

To make a decision which in their own mind they had to know created a gulf with the U.S. -- something must have happened. I just don't know. I think we all have a desire for peace. I agree with your strategy, and I see what could happen at Geneva.

This coming on top of everything else -- with a Congress wanting to act like a State Department. But the only one who can settle this is the United States. The Soviet Union can't do it.

Kissinger: That was our policy. But Eban and Peres and a third of the Jews go around saying let's go back to Geneva. You can't undermine us and keep telling us to do it.

Fisher: The Jewish Community is saddened and disturbed by this, but they haven't lost the reservoir of good will. I read Safire today. You have done a tremendous job for the U.S. -- don't let a small group get to you. Look at the rank and file of the people. If anything can be salvaged, you can do it.

Kissinger: But the Israelis have to help us if anything can be salvaged. When Eban and Peres say we should go to Geneva, it cuts any other way.

Fisher: I told Dinitz that, tough as it looks, we can't let it go down the drain -- and it will. I think there must be some sober realizations in both Israel and Egypt. Geneva will just be a shouting match. I think both sides want peace. How it got off the rail, I don't know. But before we get too far off, I want to suggest.... The reassessment raises too many fears. This weakens the hand of what you are doing in diplomacy. I feel that people are having second thoughts, but I can't prove it. I think they may be facing up to it. The blame is never totally on one side. I want to keep things calm and with maximum good will. I owe that to you.



President: Henry and I have spent more time on this than on any other foreign policy issue. We put my credibility on the line and it was a hell of a disappointment. I detect an undercurrent that some in the community are spreading the word I am turning my back on Israel and they made unkind remarks about Henry. We haven't taken one step about Israel. But when people start to attack, the impulse is to lay out the record. We haven't done it because we want a solution, but when we have been led down the primrose path.....

Fisher: Let me tell you about the things I hear. In my room Sunday I will have ten stalwart people there to tell them what I believe. I will put it on the table. I think Henry is right. You have a tremendous amount of good will. I want to find out what went wrong. I want to get an excuse for going over there to find out. Meanwhile, I will do what I can to hold things calm. Israel has no chance without the U.S. Somehow we have to find a solution. I don't want to go over there on a delegation, as Javits wanted. I don't want to do that.

Kissinger: I didn't encourage him. I don't know what could be done.

President: We see no alternative now to Geneva. We don't like it but I see no choice. We have warned about Geneva for eight months -- now the Jews are starting to worry about it.

Fisher: We have to be positive and do what we can.

President: You are a good friend, and I had to tell you on a personal basis that nothing has hit me so hard since I've been in this office. I see no choice but Geneva. Maybe something will turn up, but unless people will sign on the dotted line, I see no alternative.

Fisher: But if you go to Geneva, Israel has to fight on the basis of the '67 frontier.

Kissinger: That's what we have been saying.

Fisher: We have got to try to find a solution. It can't be settled by the Soviet Union; the Europeans. I want to be of service on this.

President: Keep in touch with Henry and Brent. We will keep cool and calm but we must set a steady course. Unless we get a firm commitment, we can make no promises.



Fisher: How do you account for it?

Kissinger: Frankly, they looked at what happened with Iran and Iraq, and they didn't want to be dependent on Iranian oil; they looked at Southeast Asia; they looked at our domestic weakness. Peres wanted to stick it to Rabin and pick up the pieces. No one had tried to prepare the people. They were paralyzed from the second day. Rabin couldn't carry his Cabinet, I think. He doesn't have the strength of Golda.

President: And whoever is giving them advice on American domestic policy gave them bad advice. If this ends up in a confrontation with the Soviet Union and an oil embargo, there will be a turnaround in this country. I supported Israel because I think it is right. Some of my best friends are Jews because I admire strength and brains. I feel awful to be put in this kind of position.



P/Fisher/R

27 Mar 75

P I don't think I have ever been so disappointed
as when I heard R was coming back w/o
a settlement. It was as bad as I have been
in this office. The impression I had
after meeting w/ Allan Tria, Robin, Gold, etc
was that we had been working so closely
that when chips were down they would
see how deeply this would affect the
prestige of US. When a final decision
was made, their reflex has created all
sorts of probs. When R reported to leadership
they w/ exception strongly supported our
efforts & were quite critical of T's views.
Result is that we have undertaken a
reassessment. That doesn't mean we will
drop I but we have to go on broader basis.
You know me well enough personally
& officially - we just can't get lead down
a narrow path & be rejected.

K Max doesn't know that the timing resulted
from T's insistence.

F I don't feel any better than you. I had lunch
w/ Drinky today. I have transcript of what he said
in NY. My first reply to you is to keep things
cool. That is what I tried to do. I called Pres of
every entity in US. I didn't want serious
coming out on passover week & so coming of
Holocaust.

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E.O. 13526, SEC. 1.5

NBC MEMO, 11/18/03, STATE DEPT. GUIDELINES, State Rev. ew 3/11/04

BY WJA NARA DATE 5/13/04

To make a decision which in their own mind they had to know created a ^{only} gap w/c US - something must have happened. I just don't know. I think we all have ideas for peace. I agree w/ your strategy & I see what could happen at Geneva.

This coming on top of everything else - w/a country wanting to act like a State Dept. But only one who can settle this is c US. S J can't do it.

K That was our policy. But E ban + Pares + 1/3 of Jews go around saying lets go back to Geneva. You can't do because we're help telling us to do it.

F The Jewish Community is saddened & disturbed by this but they haven't lost reservation of good will. I read Sapir today - you have done a tragedy tremendous job for c US - don't let a small group get to you. Look at the rank a file people. If anything can be salvaged you can do it.

K But I have to help us if anything can be salvaged. When E ban + Pares say we should go to Geneva, it cuts out any other way.

F I told Dinitz that tough as it looks we can't let it go down a drain - & it will. I think there must be some other negotiations in both E + E. Geneva will just be a shouting match. I think both sides want peace. How it got off the rail I don't know. But before we get too far off, I want to suggest...

Reassessment raises too many fears. This weakens a hand of what you are doing in diplomacy - I feel that people are being & will

this, but I can't prove it. I think they may be
facing up to it. Blame is never totally on 1 side. I
want to help things calm & restore max goodwill. I want
that to you

P K & I have spent more time on this than any other F & P
issue. We put my credibility on the line & it was an
hellward's opportunity. I blurted an endorsement
that some in a country are speaking words & are
turning my back on I & made several remarks
about K. We haven't taken 1 step about I. But when
people start to attack & injure is to lay out a record.
We haven't done it & cause we want a solution,
but when we have had some previous path.

F Let me tell you about things I hear. In my own thinking
I will have 10 stalwart people to tell them what
I believe. I will put it on a table - I think K is
right. You have tremendous amount of goodwill. I want
to find what went wrong. I want to get someone to
go over there to find out. Meanwhile, I will do
what I can & hold things calm. I have no choice
w/ or US. Somehow we have to find a solution. I
don't want to go over there on a delegation ^{as Jim's words} I don't want
to do that.

K I didn't encourage him. I don't know what could be done.

P We see no alt. now to Wilson. We don't like it
but see no choice. We have worried about Carter
for 8 mos - now Jim is starting & worry about
it.

F We have to be positive & do what we can.



P You a good friend too and I don't tell you on a personal basis nothing has hit me so hard in this office. I see no choice but to leave - maybe something will turn up, but unless people will sign or ditch him, I see no alt.

F But if you go to Geneva, I have to figure on a basis of 67 position

K That's what we have been saying.

F We got to try to find a solution. It can't be settled by a S.U.; a Europe. I don't see you service on this

P Ruffin took off R & S. We will try call a deal but we must set a steady course. Unless we get a firm contract, we promise

F How do you account for it?

K Frankly, they looked at Iran - Iraq & didn't want to be split on Iranian oil; they looked at SEA, they looked at our domestic weaknesses. Peds wanted to stick it to Robin & pick up a piece. No one had tried to prepare people. They were paralyzed for a 2nd day. Robin couldn't carry his cabinet, I think. He didn't have a strong ch of Gorbachev

P And whenever giving them US domestic pol. advice ^{June} ~~January~~ they had advice. If this ends up in cooperation w/ S.U. & oil embargo, then will be increased in this country. I supported it because I think it right. Some of my best friends are from former & advise strength & brains. I feel comfort to be part in this kind of position.