

WASHINGTON SPECIAL ACTIONS GROUP MEETING

October 19, 1973

Time and Place: 10:04 - 10:57 A. M. , White House Situation Room

Subject: Middle East

Participants:

Chairman: Henry A. Kissinger

CIA: William Colby

State: Kenneth Rush
Joseph Sisco

Assistant to President for
Energy Policy:

Defense: William P. Clements, Jr.
Robert C. Hill

Gov. John Love
Charles DiBona

JCS: Adm. Thomas H. Moorer

Vice Adm. John P. Weinell NSC Staff: Gen. Brent Scowcroft
William Quandt
Jeanne W. Davis

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

It was agreed that:

- 1) Governor Love, with State, Defense and the NSC Staff, will turn the draft Presidential speech on the oil program into a message to the Congress;
- 2) a US nuclear submarine will be moved into the Mediterranean
- 3) CIA will prepare a paper on the impact of an oil cut-off -- where it will start showing up and when;
- 4) State will prepare a paper today on possible oil talks with the OECD;
- 5) we will agree to Prime Minister Heath's request for US-UK talks on Middle East oil next week;
- 6) Defense will supply General Scowcroft with status reports on all ships loading US military supplies for Israel;

TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE/CODEWORD

Approved for Release by CIA
Date 9/10/12

- 7) Defense would send a civilian team of technical representatives and a photo interpreter to Israel;
- 8) the JCS will furnish Secretary Kissinger with a paper on the Israeli nuclear capability.

TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE/CODEWORD

Secretary Kissinger: (to Gov. Love) Do we have any oil business today?

Gov. Love: I was asked to come to the meeting. I would like to say that I consider the Arab oil moves relatively moderate. We need to do these things we're proposing anyway. It's just a matter of timing, but I don't believe it is the right time yet.

Secretary Kissinger: We'll go with the program as soon as a ceasefire is concluded. What do you all think?

Mr. Clements: I agree.

Secretary Kissinger: Let's aim for the end of next week.

Mr. Sisco: If you think we will get a ceasefire within the week, then the end of next week would be fine. If we conclude that the fighting will be much more protracted, we might consider going with the oil program before next Friday. If we get a ceasefire by next week, that will help ease the Saudi position.

Gov. Love: Even after a ceasefire, if the negotiations are protracted, the Arab use of oil as a pressure point may continue or increase.

Mr. Sisco: That argues for the timing Henry (Kissinger) suggests. It would help deflate the pressure.

Secretary Kissinger: There will either be a ceasefire, in which case we want to be ready for the post-ceasefire period, or there won't be a ceasefire and we will need it for our diplomacy.

Gov. Love: I'm going to Canada on Tuesday to talk to them.

Secretary Kissinger: Once we have a program ready for Presidential announcement, how do we trigger it? Can we do it as a message to Congress if the President doesn't want to make a speech?

Mr. Sisco: A message would be better than a speech. It obviously involves Congressional action.

Secretary Kissinger: Have we at State gone over the speech?

Mr. Sisco: In draft.

Mr. Colby: The immediate impact of the cut-back will not be very large. But the longer term impact will be greater and will place a greater degree of

power in Arab hands down over the years. It will only affect 1% of US consumption.

Mr. DiBona: It depends on whether the Europeans cut back their exports to us. If they do, it will mean 3-4% of the US consumption, but only 1-2% if you're just talking about Arab shipments.

Secretary Kissinger: At what point will it affect the Europeans?

Gov. Love: It already has. They're 1-2 million barrels per day down to the Europeans already.

Mr. Clements: They're off 12-14%.

Mr. Colby: European consumption is 15 million barrels a day, 11 million of which comes from the Arabs. That's 72%. They have already chewed into that by the 2 million barrel a day cut.

Gov. Love: If there are further European export controls, we will have less import and our shortfall will be even greater than already anticipated.

Mr. DiBona: The Italians and Spaniards have already cut back exports. But I have talked to some European Community people and, as long as the EC doesn't act, they think they can move around it.

Mr. Sisco: I think the Secretary needs a paper which will analyze in depth the impact and implications of our moving with the oil program quickly. Both the practical impact and the effect on our diplomacy. Also, the impact of waiting to move with the program, both as to the time lag and the effect on the diplomacy.

Gov. Love: It's just a matter of good policy to use the crisis to do what we have to do domestically anyhow.

Secretary Kissinger: We have to do it. The only question is timing.

Mr. Sisco: It should be a message to the Congress so as to get the thing as far down the line as possible.

Mr. Clements: Regardless of timing, it can only help the negotiating track. These are must steps -- it's just a question of how soon. The problem will only get worse.

Secretary Kissinger: John (Love), could you, working with Bill Clements and State, turn your draft Presidential speech into a message to the Congress over the weekend? We may want to go with it early next week.

TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE/CODEWORD

Approved for Release by CIA
Date 9/10/12

Gov. Love: Yes.

Secretary Kissinger: Get State and the NSC Staff involved. You've done a great job.

(Governor Love and Mr. DiBona left the meeting.)

Secretary Kissinger: Bill (Colby), let's have your briefing.

Mr. Colby briefed from the attached text.

Secretary Kissinger: (referring to the Israeli force on the west bank of the Canal) How did they get there? Did they punch through the Egyptian defense line?

Adm. Moorer: They put a bridge across the Canal. The Egyptians didn't have a solid defense line. The Israelis just went between two Egyptian strong points, then used the terrain to the best advantage.

Secretary Kissinger: They're using that lake to cover their flank?

Adm. Moorer: Yes. The Egyptians can't get coordinated. They're letting the Israelis nibble them off piecemeal.

Secretary Kissinger: I thought the Israelis were waiting until all the Egyptian armor was on the East Bank. Why can't those Egyptian tanks come back over the Canal?

Adm. Moorer: The Israelis are bombing hell out of the bridges. The Egyptian's main problem is indecision.

Mr. Rush: Why can't the Egyptians outflank the Israelis from the East?

Mr. Colby: They're trying to do that now -- that's what all that fighting was about.

Secretary Kissinger: The Israelis must be in the SAM belt now.

Adm. Moorer: They are and have knocked out some of them.

Secretary Kissinger: So they can use their air force?

Adm. Moorer: Better and better.

Secretary Kissinger: We may have a massacre.

TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE/CODEWORD

Mr. Colby: It's possible. It began as a raid, but when it went well the Israelis began to reinforce it.

Adm. Moorer: The commander of the original force wanted to withdraw, but they wouldn't let him. They said "we're coming to join you." It was a raid originally, but when it began to go well they ran the tanks up from the original 20-25 to 200.

Adm. Moorer: (commenting on the briefing item concerning King Hussein's annoyance at the Arab disorganization) The Saudis got lost in the desert and the Jordanians had to send camels out to find them.

Mr. Colby: (following the briefing) The Soviets sent four new amphibious ships, with marine infantry aboard, to the Mediterranean on October 17. That gives them 73 units in the Med which is an all-time high.

Adm. Moorer: They have 36 ships with combat capability and 37 support ships.

Mr. Colby: There are also 18 Soviet subs there -- two echelons, where they usually have only one with nine ships.

Mr. Clements: That's that double submarine thing I talked about right at the beginning when we thought they were replacing one group with another. They kept them both there.

Adm. Moorer: We've got one nuclear sub in the mid-Atlantic -- the Sea Dragon. We could send that into the Med if you think this thing will last.

Secretary Kissinger: Will they see it?

Adm. Moorer: No, no one will know it's there.

Secretary Kissinger: Would it be useful?

Adm. Moorer:

Secretary Kissinger: We have no objection; it's up to you.

Adm. Moorer: I think we should do it.

Secretary Kissinger: Then go ahead. Let's go back to oil. Could CIA give me a paper on the impact of a cut-off -- when it will start showing up and where.

Mr. Rush: How much storage do they have?

Mr. Colby: The Europeans have about 60 days.

TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE/CODEWORD

Approved for Release by CIA
Date 9/10/12

Mr. Rush: I mean the Arab states. They'll still be shipping out of their storage.

Mr. Colby: We're talking about actual tanker movements.

Mr. Clements: This is an extremely complicated picture. You can't reach quick judgments. The Europeans are already affected. That two million barrels a day curtailed out of the Eastern Mediterranean is a European supply factor. They have already started conserving their oil. The effect will be almost immediate. When one end cuts off production or shipments, the other end starts conserving its supply.

Secretary Kissinger: I want to know what the situation is. I want a judgment as to when the pressure will start building up on us. When are the Europeans going to come screaming to us?

Mr. Colby: They have already cut their exports.

Secretary Kissinger: I have no preconceived idea about this. But we need a forecast -- a range of how and when it will happen. Bill (Clements), would you help CIA on this?

Mr. Clements: I'll talk with Bill Colby. It's already started.

Mr. Sisco: My visceral reaction is that we may want to go with Governor Love's oil program on Monday or Tuesday.

Secretary Kissinger: I haven't read the draft statement yet. Someone in State and Bill Quandt look at it and give me a one-page analysis. (to Scowcroft) Get our Program Analysis people on it, too.

Mr. Clements: When you read in the papers that the major oil companies are advising their clients that there will be a shortage, they are talking about refined products from Europe.

Mr. Rush: The Europeans will start conserving anyway.

Adm. Moorer: The pipelines into the Eastern Mediterranean at Sidon and Latakia are practically stopped.

Mr. Clements: That's where the loss is, but it's a damned tough message to get across.

Secretary Kissinger: I want some estimate of what this does to the Europeans. (to Rush) Also, I understand (Under Secretary of State) Casey is going to the OECD. He can't fly blind. Any talk about sharing will come out with something.

TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE/CODEWORD

of maximum benefit to the Europeans. We want something of maximum benefit to the US.

Mr. Rush: Casey may not go to the meeting; we're thinking of sending someone else.

Secretary Kissinger: Whoever it is, we have to know what he will say. Let's get a paper today on what he thinks he will be doing.

Mr. Clements: Sharing only goes from us to them.

Secretary Kissinger: As long as they are screwing us in the Middle East, we shouldn't go around financing them. Also, (British Prime Minister) Heath wants some US-UK talks on Middle East oil. He wants to send someone over this week. We'd better let him do it. Who would talk to them?

Mr. Rush: Bill Casey and I.

Secretary Kissinger: Good; but we have to know what we're saying.

On the diplomacy, with Kosygin coming back, we expect we will hear something by tomorrow. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Their minds are beginning to work. I think within 48 or 72 hours we will have some movement in the diplomacy. We'll talk about it at our meeting tomorrow.

Mr. Clements: When do you want to meet tomorrow?

Secretary Kissinger: How about 9:30 a.m.? We should have a clearer picture of where the diplomacy is going.

How are we doing on supplies?

Adm. Moorer: The 28 F-4s are there in Israel. I talked to the lead pilot of the first group. He said the Israelis met them 150 miles out and escorted them in. The escort pilot had just shot down a MIG and had been diverted to escort our planes in. Once our planes were on the ground he did his victory roll over the field. We have 8 more F-4s standing by at Lajes if we want to use them. Also, we have 10 A-4s in the air. We will be sending 40 A-4s altogether. That will complete our aircraft delivery. We have 12 C-130s already there. We're stepping up the airlift to 5 C-5As and 18 C-141s a day. And we're getting ready to load the ships. Incidentally, our tonnage figures are affected by the fact that the Soviets are flying aircraft down inside the transports.

TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE/CODEWORD

Secretary Kissinger: How are we getting the A-4s there? By hopping across the carriers?

Adm. Moorer: Yes. But we have to include the weight of the planes we're flying down there if we're going to compare tonnage with the Soviets. We've got an extra 750 tons in those planes we're flying over. The Israeli Air Force has almost everything they asked for as their first priority. We've also sent them some Maverick missiles and we hope they use them today. We want to see how they work. That's an optical guided missile fired from fighter aircraft against tanks. It's new and we are anxious to see it in action. Also they have been using the TOWs; they have been very effective and the Israelis are pleased with them.

Mr. Clements: [redacted]

Secretary Kissinger: He's really bleeding about those M-60 tanks, isn't he?

Mr. Sisco: Also [redacted] the Israelis have solved the SA-6 problem. Have they?

Adm. Moorer: They've degraded it. They don't have the same hit probability, but they haven't solved it. I've talked to some of the pilots. They say an SA-6 can hit an aircraft at 50 feet. They must have a different guidance system. But the pilots say they can maneuver away from it. It has both a booster and a ram-jet. They say when they see the booster, they can go down on the deck. They're concerned about the SA-7s, though. They are really an arrogant bunch.

Secretary Kissinger: They are as obnoxious as they are courageous. I wish we could fight with someone who is not just unbearable. I remember the South Vietnamese.

Adm. Moorer: Up north, the Israelis are holding the best ground and I think will stay essentially where they are.

Secretary Kissinger: How far beyond the ceasefire line are they?

Mr. Colby: About 20 miles.

Adm. Moorer: The bulge is about 14 miles deep. I don't think they'll expend any more effort except in a holding action.

Mr. Clements: Israel is leaving about 35,000 men and 2-300 tanks there. The JCS people are satisfied that they can hold with what they have there.

TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE/CODEWORD

Secretary Kissinger: Everything else is in the Sinai?

Adm. Moorer: Or moving down. They have about 9000 men in reserve in case the Syrians break through. Of course there are Soviet ships coming into Latakia loaded with tanks and there will be a flow of material to the Syrians.

Secretary Kissinger: Enough to make a difference?

Adm. Moorer: Not right away. Their problem is trained personnel. They might be able to run the tanks down the road but they can't fight them. The Russians now have embarked about 16,000 tons on the ships.

Mr. Colby: We think it's more -- about 23,000 tons.

Mr. Clements: The Soviet materiel enhancement represented by those ships is significant. There are tanks and armored cars. The question is whether the Syrians have sufficient organized units to use the equipment effectively.

Adm. Moorer: Of course that material will be attrited by Israeli action along the road.

Secretary Kissinger: How long would it take the Syrians to train new units?

Adm. Moorer: It will take them months to get back where they were when they attacked. Particularly pilots. I told the Senators yesterday there are no such things as instant aviators.

Mr. Sisco: But the Syrian forces aren't broken?

Adm. Moorer: No, but they can't push. They can harass the Israeli with artillery fire but they can't break them. They have about 60,000 men up there against the Israelis.

Mr. Clements: [REDACTED]

Mr. Rush: [REDACTED]

Secretary Kissinger: [REDACTED]

Adm. Moorer: He says the Iraqis had 80 tanks there and only 8 are operating now.

Secretary Kissinger: [REDACTED]

TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE/CODEWORD

Approved for Release by CIA¹⁰
Date 9/10/82

Mr. Clements: Apparently the Jordanians got in a real mess. The Iraqi and Syrians started shooting at each other and the Jordanians were chewed up by the Israelis.

Secretary Kissinger: What about the sealift? We want that for two reasons: (1) to discourage the Soviets from a war of attrition, and (2) when we get into the diplomacy, so we won't be accused of wrecking it by moving supplies.

Mr. Clements: We have located and identified 20 ships. One in Boston is loaded and will be underway soon. The next one will be ready on October 25. The first ships will arrive in Israel on November 12. That will be the start of the sealift. From then on, the ships will arrive at regular intervals. These are all Israeli flag ships or charters. They will move up to 50,000 tons.

Secretary Kissinger: Over what period?

Mr. Clements: Forty-five days from November 12.

Secretary Kissinger: What about loading?

Mr. Clements: Move it back two or three weeks.

Secretary Kissinger: I'm talking about departures. You mean 45 days back to October 25?

Adm. Moorer: Yes.

Secretary Kissinger: Will you give Brent (Scowcroft) a list of the ships?

Mr. Clements: I will. Now remember, these are partial cargoes as far as our supplies are concerned. Part of the cargoes are military supplies, comingled with food, hospital supplies, etc.

Adm. Moorer: Supplies the Israelis have purchased on their own.

Mr. Clements: So don't be too optimistic about your ability to turn these ships around in mid-ocean.

Secretary Kissinger: I'm not optimistic about turning them around. But I'm optimistic about keeping them from being loaded, as long as we know when they are due to leave. Turning them around at sea only gets us two weeks. We can start slowing up their departures if we want to. We will use Bil Clements in his role as procrastinator instead of his role as expediter. As long as we know when and where to turn them off. Stopping them in mid-ocean

TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE/CODEWORD

Approved for Release by CIA
Date 9/10/12

is a drastic step. If we can slow up the loading, that's okay. Give Brent (Scowcroft) an up-to-date list of what's in the pipeline and where. Let's not talk too much about a peace offensive. The Israelis have already started putting the pressure on us. Let's do one thing at a time. I don't believe in shooting before we're ready to hit the guy.

Mr. Clements: Defense would like to have some technical people in Israel, particularly on these electronic techniques. The Israelis want them too. They could be civilians -- technical representatives.

Adm. Moorer: I have a five or six-man team of civilians. They could give the Israelis the benefit of our technical know-how, and we would learn something from it, too. They could be attached to the Embassy.

Secretary Kissinger: Could it be with the lowest possible visibility? Civilian clothes?

Mr. Clements: Yes.

Secretary Kissinger: Okay.

Mr. Sisco: But tell them not to be tempted when the Israelis ask them if they wouldn't like to go up to the front and look things over. They are to stay in Tel Aviv only.

Secretary Kissinger: Yes, Israeli interests are not the same as ours here. They would like to get us involved.

Mr. Clements: They would be attached to the Embassy and under the tight control of the Ambassador and our military man there.

Adm. Moorer: After the ceasefire I might want to augment them.

Secretary Kissinger: It will be^a different problem after the ceasefire.

Mr. Clements: [REDACTED]

Secretary Kissinger: [REDACTED]

Mr. Colby: [REDACTED]

Mr. Sisco: I suggest Defense prepare a joint message [redacted] to Ambassador Keating and the senior military man making it clear what the restraints are. I'd like to take a look at it. (to Kissinger) Incidentally, (Ambassador) Keating's sister died. He may want to leave.

Mr. Clements: What about the legislative thing?

Secretary Kissinger: The message is going to the Hill today.

Mr. Colby: [redacted]

Secretary Kissinger: [redacted]

Mr. Colby: [redacted]

Mr. Sisco: [redacted]

Secretary Kissinger: [redacted]

Mr. Colby: [redacted] Would that mess up your diplomacy?

Secretary Kissinger: Don't get too eager. Suppose that Israel bridgehead explodes. We don't want to be blamed. We shouldn't excite the atmosphere.

Mr. Rush: I agree.

Adm. Moorer: They're on 24 hours notice.

Secretary Kissinger: (to Colby) Bring it up again tomorrow.

Mr. Clements: Tom (Moorer) and I went up to the Senate yesterday. Both (Senators) Stennis and Symington asked why in hell we didn't have more than one base in the Azores. I passed the buck to State.

Secretary Kissinger: You used to pass it to the White House. One more year and we may get you to assume some responsibility!

Adm. Moorer: (Senator) Symington went into a tirade against Spain. I tried to explain to him that Spain works with the Egyptians for our interest.

Secretary Kissinger: Do they want us to get more bases in the Azores or elsewhere?

Mr. Clements: In Europe; they mentioned Greece, Italy and Turkey specifically.

Secretary Kissinger: Those SOB's cut our aid budget, attack every ally of the US and make it as difficult as possible for anyone to be friendly with us, and now they're surprised we don't have more bases! For years the State Department conducted a political science course for the Greeks, telling them how to run their country. Why should they do anything for us?

Mr. Clements: I'm just telling you what happened. It went very well in the end. (Senator) Scott of Virginia was the only one opposed.

Adm. Moorer: I was closely question by (Senator) Symington about Israeli nuclear capability. What did they have? What would they do in extremis?

Secretary Kissinger: He hit me on that at a dinner party.

Mr. Clements: I just told him I was dodging that question.

Mr. Colby: I've been asked the same thing on the Hill and I say that they have the capability and may well have a weapon.

Adm. Moorer: I have a paper telling everything we know about that.

Secretary Kissinger: I'd like to see it. Give it to Brent (Scowcroft), will you?

Adm. Moorer: Sure.

Mr. Clements: The House has asked us to come up on Tuesday.

Secretary Kissinger: Let's mute any talk of a peace offensive until we have a ceasefire.

Adm. Moorer: You would have been proud of us on the Hill yesterday.

Secretary Kissinger: I think this crisis is the best run one we've had since we came here. The next 96 hours will tell the tale.