

WASHINGTON SPECIAL ACTIONS GROUP

October 25, 1973

Time and Place: 10:16 a.m. - 10:50 a.m., White House Situation Room

Subject: Middle East

Participants:

<u>Chairman:</u>	Henry A. Kissinger	<u>NSC</u>
		<u>Staff:</u> Major Gen. Brent Scowcroft
<u>State:</u>	Kenneth Rush	Harold Saunders
	Joseph Sisco	Jeanne W. Davis
	Robert McCloskey	
<u>DOD:</u>	James Schlesinger	
	William Clements	
	Robert C. Hill	
<u>JCS:</u>	Adm. Thomas H. Moorer	
	Vice Adm. John P. Weinel	
<u>CIA:</u>	William Colby	
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SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

It was agreed that:

- 1) Defense and JCS would prepare a contingency plan for the movement of U.S. forces into Israel and possibly some Arab countries;
- 2) State would prepare a diplomatic scenario for such a contingency, with a Working Group to consider trigger actions and timing.
- 3) all agencies should consider steps we might take vis a vis the USSR in various fields.

NLNP
Mandatory Review
Case NEW 03-11-02
Doc. 14

Secretary Kissinger: May we have your briefing, Bill (Colby).

Mr. Colby: briefed from the attached text.

Secretary Kissinger: [redacted]

Mr. Colby: [redacted]

Adm. Moorer: [redacted]

Secretary Kissinger: [redacted]

(General Scowcroft left the meeting)

Mr. Schlesinger: [redacted]

Adm. Moorer: [redacted]

Secretary Kissinger: Have you all seen the messages from the Egyptians today? (None had, and Mr. Saunders left the room to get copies of the messages.)

Mr. Schlesinger: There are indications that the Israelis may have been diddling us yesterday as to who was doing what. [redacted]

[redacted] They alleged that there were flights of Egyptian aircraft designed to coincide with an attempted Egyptian breakout to the east. [redacted]

[redacted] It looks now as though the Israelis might have been the ones who were moving, with their aircraft providing cover, and the Egyptians came up to meet them. This would support what the Russians were saying to us yesterday about Israel's activities.

Secretary Kissinger: (reading from message from Egyptian Foreign Minister Ismail) He rejects all the Israeli allegations concerning compliance with the ceasefire. He says the presence of US military attaches to observe the ceasefire is not sufficient and that they wanted a joint US-Soviet military

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presence. Now he says they are asking the Security Council for an international force. There is a similar message from Sadat to the President. This could or could not be helpful. If it means that they will accept our amendment that the international force be composed of non-permanent members of the Security Council, we would support it. (General Scowcroft returned) It can be settled this morning if they accept our amendment. But if they insist that the force include the permanent members, we have to face the possibility that the Soviets will show up in the name of the Security Council as an international force. Then we have an entirely new situation in the Middle East. We have instructed (Ambassador) Scali, despite violent Israeli objections, to accept an international force of non-permanent members. I don't believe China will support a force that includes the Soviet Union. (to General Scowcroft) Call the Chinese Ambassador. Tell him we will not have Soviet forces in an international force and that we want his support. (General Scowcroft left the meeting)

I have had a long talk with the President. Our evaluation is that if the Soviets put organized combat forces into an area which is not contiguous to them, involving foreign policy issues, that would be an event of the greatest magnitude and entirely novel in the post-war period. The Soviets would then be in a position to strangle the Middle East and we cannot accept that. You know how that would be perceived in the Arab world and in Africa. Even if Soviet strategy is to claim that they have only 5000 men and a few dozen aircraft, they could easily go to 50,000 men. The President is quite determined to try to work this out, but if the Soviets show up in force he wants the option of putting US forces in somewhere as a counterbalance. Then we can offer to pull out if they pull out. The question is where to put US forces. Assuming the Russians go into Cairo, if the Egyptian 3rd Army were being strangled, the Russians couldn't just sit there. Their position would be intolerable and we would have to expect them to do something other than just sit in Cairo. I think today will tell the story. The Russians have the ability to get off the hook by agreeing to a force composed of non-permanent members or by some informal understanding to that effect. We would have to veto a Security Council resolution that did not exclude permanent members, wouldn't we, Joe (Sisco)?

Mr. Sisco: Yes.

Secretary Kissinger: The great lesson to be learned from this is that when you have a victory, don't turn the screw one time too many.

Mr. Sisco: I think we would try to put forces into Israel and should talk to Jordan and possibly Lebanon about a presence there. There is some danger in broadening it, but there would be an advantage to a certain symbolic U.S. presence in parts of the Arab world. Possibly even Saudi Arabia, although that's irrelevant.

TOP SECRET/NODIS/CODEWORD

Secretary Kissinger: We would have no problem with Jordan and Lebanon; Saudi Arabia wouldn't accept American forces as a counterweight under these circumstances.

Mr. Rush: I agree. The Saudis would be opposed to Russian forces coming in.....

Secretary Kissinger: I'm strongly in favor of trying to put forces in some Arab countries.

Mr. Sisco: The Saudis are more afraid of the Russians than they are of the Israelis.

Mr. Clements: They have more severe pain about the Russians and communists than they do over Israel. I know that.

Secretary Kissinger: (to Mr. Schlesinger) Can we get a contingency plan from Defense for a move of US forces into Israel, and a move of forces into Israel plus some Arab countries; the number of forces and how they would be moved. (to Mr. Rush) Could State prepare a diplomatic scenario. Then let's get a Working Group to tell us what we should trigger and when. Jim (Schlesinger) and Tom (Moorer), you get us a plan for the movement of American military forces--where and when they can go. I don't exclude Saudi Arabia.

Mr. Clements: It doesn't have to be Saudi Arabia. We can put them in the Gulf.

Mr. Sisco: The offer itself would be important.

Mr. Clements: (to Secretary Kissinger) Were you in touch with the Shah last night?

Secretary Kissinger: No.

Mr. Rush: They would see a US-Soviet conspiracy if we put troops into Saudi Arabia.

Secretary Kissinger: If the Soviets go in, they have to have a reason to get out. They will have no such reason if we don't do something. The President is prepared to ask for a supplemental defense budget. All agencies should consider how we could screw down on the Soviets--Eximbank loans, no more wheat shipments, if there are any left to go. (to Mr. Rush) Have EUR prepare a list of everything that could be done--pulling out of the European Security Conference, for example.

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5

Mr. Schlesinger: (to Secretary Kissinger) What was the Congressional reaction at the Leadership meeting this morning?

Secretary Kissinger: Amazing. They were ~~horrified~~ and supportive. (Senator) McClelland led the charge--it was absolutely amazing.

Mr. Sisco: Were there any dissident voices?

Secretary Kissinger: We told them that if the Soviets put combat forces into Egypt it would be an event of the greatest significance. Only one of them--Congressman Derwinski--appeared pained. But he has cried all along about getting into the Middle East.

Mr. Sisco: (referring to a message handed into the meeting) Henry, you have got to call (UK Prime Minister) Heath. We can't take that kind of stuff from the British. The UK is threatening to veto a Security Council resolution which doesn't include the permanent members in an international force.

Secretary Kissinger: (to General Scowcroft) Get me (British Ambassador) Cromer on the phone.

(General Scowcroft left the meeting)

Mr. Sisco: You need to talk to Heath.. Cromer won't pass it along.

Secretary Kissinger: Cromer will convey a message from me to Heath.

Adm. Moorer: What advice do you have for those of us who are going to the Hill this morning?

Secretary Kissinger: We told the Congressional leaders these are precautionary measures. Nothing has happened, and we are trying to avoid anything's happening. We noticed certain disturbing signs. The state of readiness of the Soviet forces, plus their tactics in the Security Council, plus the fact that they are not pursuing implementation of the current ceasefire resolution, plus these new charges of violations----all these things lead us to believe that they are trying to exploit this situation for their own purposes. If they were willing to continue along the line to which we had agreed, the right tactic yesterday should have been to get us to clamp down on the Israelis to open that road (for humanitarian supplies to the Egyptian 3rd Army). This could have led to negotiations to open the road, possibly with certain restrictive

(Mr. Kissinger left the room to speak with Lord Cromer on the telephone)

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Mr. Sisco: It would be best, if we had to introduce US troops, to put them into Israel and Jordan. Jordan would feel a little lonely, of course, and we might include Lebanon--I'm not sure. But we need some political Arab umbrella.

Mr. Schlesinger: Have you been working on the Saudis this morning?

Mr. Sisco: No.

Mr. Clements: Nor the Shah?

Mr. Sisco: We're not at that point yet. We should be in touch with them soon.

Mr. Schlesinger: The Saudis have been pushing Sadat to get the Russians out of Egypt. The whole thing will go up in smoke if the Russians come back in.

Mr. Sisco: That's probably the reason they left open that loophole of the non-permanent members. Sadat doesn't want the Russians back. And a Faisal would intervene with Sadat to prevent that.

(Secretary Kissinger returned)

Secretary Kissinger: We have another message from Sadat to the President that looks like a trouble-maker. He says the Israelis have refused to permit the passage of a UN helicopter with Red Cross personnel and blood plasma aboard. If they are insisting that every little thing like this has to be settled with the President.....

Gen. Scowcroft: We've talked to (Israeli Ambassador) Dinitz and he says they have allowed the Red Cross personnel through on the ground. The problem with the helicopters was that they were Egyptian helicopters and they weren't sure they could prevent their being fired on.

Secretary Kissinger: Do a message to Sadat saying these things should be handled by UN observers on the ground who can establish the facts. They cannot make every such thing a matter of government pressure. I think this is a deliberate strategy of escalation to confrontation. We shouldn't kid ourselves. When Sadat starts writing the President about every helicopter, there's nothing we can do from here about it.

Mr. Schlesinger: I'd like to argue the other side, not that I necessarily believe it, but I don't think it's been presented. The Soviets may have believed that we were cahoots with the Israelis when yesterday we were denying what it appears the Israelis were doing. Under these circumstances, our subsequent assurances were suspect.

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Secretary Kissinger: Then why didn't they let the UN observers in? They were stopped in Cairo yesterday.

Gen. Scowcroft: They started to move in this morning.

Secretary Kissinger: If I were sitting in the Kremlin, I could make this thing look dirty, too. We have to reassure them but not tempt them, if reassurance is what they need. An easy test would have been an effort yesterday to get that road open. But their strategy yesterday was one of obfuscation and of a kind that did not permit any resolution. We received a letter from them in the morning--a low key reporting of more violations. We replied with a long list of the things we were doing. At 4:00 p.m., (Soviet Ambassador) Dobrynin came to see me to talk about how we might get the negotiations started. We picked the participants, the time and the site. It was all very friendly. Then the information came in that the Security Council would be meeting, and I suggested we let (Soviet UN Representative) Malik and (Ambassador) Scali cooperate. At 7:30 p.m., they told us that if others introduced a resolution calling for joint US-Soviet forces, they would support it. They wouldn't introduce such a resolution but they wouldn't attack it. Then at 10:30 p.m. they hit us with the bomb.

Mr. Colby: Sadat was getting hysterical about the Egyptian forces in the south.

Secretary Kissinger: (to Mr. Schlesinger) For your 11:00 a.m. meeting (on the Hill), play it low-key, non-confrontation. In my press conference, I will start with October 6 and trace developments forward. I will stress the hopeful elements, but say there were disturbing events and we had to take precautions. I won't challenge the Soviets.

Mr. Schlesinger: At 5:00 p.m. yesterday we said we had no evidence the Israelis were causing the violations. I think we should correct that.

Secretary Kissinger: No, we said we had no evidence of large scale violations

Mr. Sisco: I checked that language very carefully.

Secretary Kissinger: I think we should have no further communication with the Soviets until we hear from them. There are 1000 easy ways to settle this if they want to settle it. We won't push them against the wall.

(Secretary Kissinger left the meeting)

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Date: 9/10/12

8

Mr. Sisco: I don't think we'll hear from the Israelis on our proposal on the international force. They won't agree or disagree. If it doesn't work, the burden is on our shoulders. If it does, they can say they reluctantly agreed.

Mr. Colby: (to Mr. Sisco) Don't you think we'd better start the messages to (Saudi King) Faisal and some other Arabs?

Mr. Sisco: We can get some prepared, but I think we had better wait for the Russians before we do anything more.

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