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1975/08/26

MEMORANDUM

Authority NND0090674
By [Signature] NARA Date 8/3/75

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

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MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

PARTICIPANTS: U.S.: Dr. Henry A. Kissinger, Secretary of State
and Assistant to the President for National
Security Affairs
Joseph J. Sisco, Under Secretary of State for
Political Affairs
Hermann F. Eilts, U.S. Ambassador to Egypt
Winston Lord, Director of Policy Planning Staff,
Department of State
Harold H. Saunders, Deputy Assistant Secretary
of State for Near Eastern and Asian Affairs

CLASSIFIED BY FRANK WISNER
SUBJECT TO GENERAL DECLASSIFICATION
SCHEDULE OF EXECUTIVE ORDER 11652
AUTOMATICALLY DOWNGRADED AT TWO-
YEAR INTERVALS AND DECLASSIFIED ON
DECEMBER 31, -----

8/28

Mohammed Anwar al-Sadat, President of the
Arab Republic of Egypt
Major General Mohammed Husni Mubarak, Vice
President
Mamdouh Salem, Prime Minister
Ismail Fahmy, Deputy Prime Minister and
Minister of Foreign Affairs
Lt. General Abdel Ghany el Gamasy, Deputy
Prime Minister and Minister of War

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DATE & TIME: Tuesday - August 26, 1975
7:05 - 7:45 p.m.

PLACE: The President's Beach House
Alexandria, Egypt

[After a picture taking session with the press, during which President Sadat and the Secretary answered some questions from the journalists, Tab A, the group moved to a table in the garden. There was a brief small talk while further pictures were taken.]

Kissinger: My apologies for the questions of the press, which seemed more designed to embarrass you than to elicit information. But you handled them with great skill.

On the item with respect to the line, we got their agreement to go to the second point I showed you, not the first. [He gets a map from Mr. Sisco.] We will get an exact delineation of it. I haven't the exact delineation, but it is about here [pointing to the map.]

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Kissinger: Yes, in the Giddi.

Sadat: You have moved them.

Kissinger: Yes. We'll get the exact delineation, but it won't vary by more than 50 meters. [There was then a brief discussion of the maps, and the Secretary got out the Giddi map.] They will be down here somewhere.

Sadat: Still in the pass.

Kissinger: They claim that the pass ends here.

Gamasy: The forward line or the main line?

Kissinger: The forward line.

Gamasy: In the same place.

Kissinger: I suppose it could be moved back somewhat. It has to be; otherwise it makes no sense. [President Sadat and Foreign Minister Fahmy exchange words in Arabic.]

On your surveillance site, station, after studying the problem they preferred that point 180 which I gave you yesterday and which you did not much like. I am sure they will accept 716, which they claim is extraordinarily well-chosen; in fact, that is why they would reject it today. They claim it can cover all the Sinai but a small area here. It does not increase their confidence in the General. So I think you can assume they will accept it. I told them that it must be built by an Egyptian construction team. They asked me to tell you that they prefer 180 in the north. [There was then a further exchange among General Gamasy, President Sadat and Secretary Kissinger about the Egyptian warning station.]

Gamasy: They want 180. They prefer that for us.

Kissinger: For you.

Gamasy: [Pointing to the map] No. We prefer this, and then this.

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SECRET/NODIS/XGDS

3

Kissinger: They claim that it [716] is better for you than your second priority.

Gamasy: We gave them three priorities and they rejected even the third one.

Kissinger: I have to tell you quite honestly these two they rejected and the third one they wanted to think about overnight. Overnight they came to the conclusion that this post [716] is electronically better for you than even this one [the Egyptians' second choice], and they showed us on the map why. But I have insisted that they have to accept this one [716]. Is it true that it is electronically better [than your second choice]?

Gamasy: Yes. The other two are better than the third.

Kissinger: They said that this one was better than that.

Sadat: It is not between two passes.

Kissinger: They claim it covers practically all the Sinai except a very narrow part.

Sadat: Maybe there are some mountains.

Kissinger: They say that the General is very clever. At first they did not see the significance [of the warning site.] They seemed somewhat relieved. Then they studied it and wanted to pull out of it. We had a rather extended discussion this morning. [The Egyptian side talks in Arabic among themselves.] They showed me on a map what it covers -- everything except a small section here. It covers everything in all directions. It was very naughty of you [General Gamasy].

Gamasy: It was our specialists who did it.

Sadat: It proves their respect for Gamasy.

Kissinger: It is one of their compliments.

Sadat: We could be nice and take one in the north.

SECRET/NODIS/XGDS

SECRET/NODIS/XGDS

4

Kissinger: They prefer 180. They admitted that of all the positions this one was the best, better even than this.

Gamasy: This one [716] is better.

Kissinger: Do not tell me what you have in mind. I cannot face it.

So that is it for the warning station.

They agreed to the general process discussed here on how to bring the agreement to a conclusion. There would be initialing on Friday and signature in Geneva the day after the Knesset approves it, which they plan for Monday, after the initialing on Friday. Then the technical commission meeting would take place on a fixed date following the signature, which could not be before Friday because the next two days are Jewish holidays. At any rate, it seems generally agreed.

Sadat: How would it be initialed in Geneva?

Kissinger: It would be signed in Geneva.

Sadat: Where would it be initialed?

Kissinger: We thought we would carry the documents to each of you and get the initialing done in each place.

Sadat: Like before.

Kissinger: The initialing would freeze the document for signing. There would be no further changes. Then they would put it...

Sadat: Before the Knesset.

Kissinger: ...before the Knesset for approval the day after the signing in Geneva. Then there would be the technical talks for implementation. We skipped the initialing stage last time. Last time there was only a signature followed by the technical talks. There is a different stage, initialing, this time. It would be different, but it is better than to put it before the Knesset without initialing.

Fahmy: Normally documents are put before groups after signature, not initialing.

SECRET/NODIS/XGDS

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Kissinger: I know.

Fahmy: This is a problem.

Kissinger: Is it your proposal to sign it first?

Fahmy: We propose initialing as indicated and then sign it in Geneva on Monday. They can put it before the Knesset on Monday or Tuesday. That is my personal view.

Kissinger: The technical talks would be on Friday.

Fahmy: Technical talks would start Friday after the Knesset.

Sadat: He [Fahmy] knows more than me on procedures.

Kissinger: He is absolutely right. The normal process is first to sign, then submit it to the Parliament. In the Syrian agreement they [the Israelis] had major trouble having signed a disengagement with you without submitting it to the Knesset. Therefore in the Syrian case before signing they submitted it to the Knesset. They cannot keep the agreement from the Knesset. It still has to be put before the Knesset, such as on the day before signing. They cannot prevent the Knesset from considering it.

Fahmy: We are not trying to prevent that.

Kissinger: My concern is that if it is not initialed, the Knesset will be more tempted to pass a resolution asking for modifications.

Fahmy: If the Knesset stops the agreement, Rabin will be a hero and it will blow up despite both sides having initialed it. Or look at the reverse situation -- suppose our Parliament rejects it.

Kissinger: And suppose you sign it on Sunday before it is put before the Parliament. In my opinion it will be put before the Parliament in any event, whether or not it is initialed. It was initialed in the Syrian case. Suppose your Parliament rejects it after your signing, which our Parliament did for the League of Nations, and then it failed. I think the major use of the initialing is that it stops the nitpicking and further discussion.

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Salem: The Knesset can see it whether it is signed or initialed. They are free to see it without its being initialed. Maybe they will change it. We do not want to be embarrassed. What if we initial and then they refuse it?

Kissinger: Let's not confuse two things. In almost all diplomatic negotiations when a document is agreed it gets initialed before signing. The fact that they want to put it before the Knesset before signing is a secondary matter. They cannot put it without its being initialed.

Sadat: If they intend to reject the agreement, whether it is initialed or signed is the same thing.

Kissinger: Right.

Sadat: Initialing means either that one signs or refuses the document without change.

[The Egyptian side talked among themselves in Arabic.]

Kissinger: Actually, we thought... [To Sisco:] It was their [Egyptian] idea.

Sisco: Right.

Kissinger: This is not essentially their idea. My own personal view is that you lose nothing through the initialing. The consequences of rejection are the same whether it is initialed or signed. In fact it is worse to reject a signed agreement than an initialed agreement. Initialing prevents any possible tampering with the text. My strong view is that we should move very quickly after finalizing negotiations to freeze the text.

Sadat: They should submit it very quickly to the Knesset.

Kissinger: His [Rabin] intention is to not have the Knesset defeat it. If this agreement is defeated he is finished. He will have to resign. His political career would be over. For better or worse, Rabin and Allon are committed to the agreement. The others are dancing around. The Embassy believes that there is a narrow majority in the Knesset for the agreement.

Fahmy: My count shows 70 votes.

SECRET/NODIS/XGDS

SECRET/NODIS/XGDS

Sadat: That is still narrow for Rabin.

Kissinger: For Rabin 70 is an unusually large number. If he does get 70, that would be a very significant turn in the political spectrum. They have just released a public opinion poll showing 48% for the agreement and 36% against. That surprised them.

Those are the major items except for the detailed agreement. I do not know how you want to proceed, Mr. President.

Fahmy: Let me see the map. This area is clear.

Sadat: In the south.

Kissinger: The situation is clear that the only function of the United Nations is to check on the non-military forces provision of the agreement. I thought we would work out the exact plans of how to describe the zone. In any event I told them that you do not accept this as a UN zone. They have agreed to that. Now they are proposing a phrase which was on your map which we gave them, "Egyptian Civilian Administration with UN Presence."

Fahmy: That was their map.

Kissinger: No, it is your map. I think there will be no difficulty. I explained to them that you cannot have territory returned to you, to Egyptian administration, and not have it called Egyptian. Also the only restriction is that there are no military forces. There are no other restrictions.

Sadat: That is right.

Kissinger: That principle, in my impression, is accepted. I believe we can solve this. They are prepared to find a way because the principle is accepted that the territory returned to Egyptian administration is Egyptian territory and not UN territory, and the function of the UN is to determine the absence of military forces in the area, and the UN has no other functions in the area. How we express this we have not yet done, because I wanted to talk to you and Fahmy. This will be in the annex, and it is not written yet. My impression is that if other things are solved this will be solved.

SECRET/NODIS/XGDS

SECRET/NODIS/XGDS

8

I have also made clear that there must be no destruction in the zone, and I have assurance on that subject. I have also discussed the concept of how the transfer [of the oil fields] is to be accomplished, and I think any reasonable proposal can be worked out. My major argument is that if they are ever going to convince Egypt that peace is possible, this is the place to do it. This is the area where you recover territory for the first time that is important economically, and I have told them that it must be handled in an impeccable manner. I think the problem is manageable. We will certainly give you full support. We have no scheme. They will study the problem overnight.

Fahmy: The transfer of the oil fields is no problem. I have checked with the Oil Minister.

Kissinger: They [Israel] are worried how to get their military out.

Fahmy: We will have the Italian technicians take inventory as the UNEF takes over and then Egypt will come in together with Mobil technicians. The technicians will take inventory with UNEF and then on the second day Egypt will come in.

Kissinger: My impression is that it is no problem.

Sadat: Along the lines of the first agreement.

Fahmy: Mobil has a 50% interest and we have a 50% interest. The American and Italian technicians will take inventory from Israel and the second day Egypt will come in. Those companies are as interested as us. They are 50/50 partners with us.

Kissinger: It is an eminently soluble problem--though there are no easy problems in Jerusalem. But no obstacle in principle has been raised. Last time the schedule and general time frame was in the protocol at the Kilometer 101 talks.

Gamasy: Yes, but the principles were agreed beforehand.

Kissinger: The principles were agreed beforehand, but the precise schedule was worked out by the technical people. But I think the principles outlined are principles that will be acceptable to Israel.

Sadat: If there is time for the technical committee to finish the details before they enter [the oil fields].

SECRET/NODIS/XGDS

SECRET/NODIS/XGDS

9

Kissinger: I only think that you and we should coordinate our timing and put it in a time frame with our Congress with respect to our obligations. I think it will take you two weeks [to work out the technical details].

Gamasy: Two weeks? It will not take more than 7 days. We have a plan and they will have one in 24 hours. Last time it took 7 days.

Sadat: Let's say 10 days.

Kissinger: I recommend we give it two weeks by which time our Congress should have acted.

Sadat: The difference between 14 and 10 days is little.

Kissinger: If it is done earlier, so much the better.

[He then had an exchange with Fahmy in which he said that the U. S. problem was that we did not want implementation until the Congress had acted. Fahmy noted that Mansfield had just come out against the American civilian presence. The Secretary replied that he was more concerned about Senator Jackson's opposition].

Sadat: Very well, Henry.

Kissinger: All the rest of the time with them we spent going over the papers that Ismail and I discussed yesterday, and we have many tiring detailed comments. I do not know if you want to go through them. Ismail tells me that you have comments on the paper too and maybe you want to go over those.

Sadat: Shall we now have a closed session together?

Kissinger: Yes. [To Gamasy:] You are a bad influence with the Israelis. You picked a great warning station.

Gamasy: It was the specialists, not me.

[President Sadat, Secretary Kissinger and Foreign Minister Fahmy went off into another area in the garden and conferred until 9:15 p. m. After that meeting the American group departed on the helicopter for the Ras el-Tin Palace.]

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