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ME

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

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MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

PARTICIPANTS:

Leonid I. Brezhnev, General Secretary
of the Central Committee, CPSU
Andrei A. Gromyko, Member of the
Politburo of the Central Committee,
CPSU, and Minister of Foreign Affairs
of the USSR

Anatoly F. Dobrynin, Ambassador to the U.S.

Andrei M. Aleksandrov, Assistant to the
General Secretary

Georgi M. Korniyenko, Member of the
Collegium of the MFA; Chief of USA Dept.

Mikhail D. Sytenko, Member of the Collegium
of the MFA; Chief of the Near East Dept.

Viktor M. Sukhodrev, USA Dept. (Interpreter)

Andrei Vavilov, USA Dept.

Oleg Sokolov, USA Dept.

Dr. Henry A. Kissinger, Secretary of
State; Assistant to the President for
National Security Affairs

Walter J. Stoessel, Jr., Ambassador to USSR

Helmut Sonnenfeldt, Counselor of the Dept.

Carllyle E. Maw, Legal Adviser

Alfred L. Atherton, Assistant Secretary-
designate for Near Eastern & S. Asian Affairs

Peter W. Rodman, NSC Staff *PR*

DATE & TIME:

Tuesday, March 26, 1974

10:35 a.m. - 1:53 p.m.

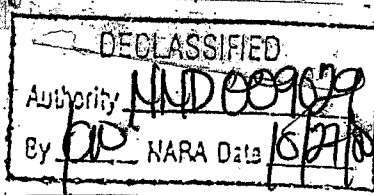
PLACE:

Brezhnev's Office, Council of Ministers Bldg.
The Kremlin

SUBJECTS:

CSCE; Middle East

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Conference on Security & Cooperation in Europe

Brezhnev: Dr. Kissinger, I got home late last night. I certainly can't say I was satisfied in the way things went [on SALT]. We spent all day talking yesterday but we decided on nothing.

Dr. Kissinger: I don't think that is correct. I think we decided on the European Security Conference very successfully.

Brezhnev: That may be true, but nonetheless I still have many reservations on that, and I like precision. When I say I was displeased, that's of course a unilateral statement. There are two sides.

Dr. Kissinger: My assessment is, on the European Security Conference, we'll be able to bring it to an early conclusion along the lines and at the level we discussed yesterday.

Brezhnev: If we really wanted to bring the Conference to a successful conclusion, we could have done it long ago. As it is, we've had communique after communique. It was always said, "There is a possibility of doing it in 1972, and in 1973." Now it's 1974 and we're saying, "There is a possibility." What kind of a way is this to do business? Holland and Belgium are playing around. But who are we? [angrily] We are nations too and we have our views on this. Also there is the GDR, Hungary, Romania, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria -- they're playing in the Conference and not being capricious -- but others are saying they want to establish theaters in the USSR and another wants to know everything that's going on in the USSR as far as the Urals. If they don't want any positive results to come out of the European Conference, why don't they say so? Then there will be, instead of security, insecurity.

Here we are, the second year passing, and no results. The United States in this time managed to fit out all its missiles with MIRV's and we still haven't managed to sign even a piece of paper. We've offered a straightforward proposal, and someone asks for a kind of freedom in someone else's country! What kind of freedom is this? We're not interested in other people's affairs, in Belgium and Holland.

That is just in addition, Dr. Kissinger, to what we agreed upon yesterday. We and you can sign it.

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Dr. Kissinger: As you know, we haven't had success in achieving unanimity from our allies. And Senator Jackson yesterday made a speech accusing me of treating the Soviet Union better than our European allies. I know how pleased the General Secretary is to receive reports from Senator Jackson.

Brezhnev: Very happy indeed.

Dr. Kissinger: So as a practical matter, Mr. General Secretary, we are faced with the reality of a Conference of 35 nations. You yourself said we've put no obstacles to progress.

Brezhnev: That's true.

Dr. Kissinger: I think what we agreed on yesterday will bring results in the next few months.

Brezhnev: I didn't mean you to take my irritability to mean that all I said applied to the United States. I was simply saying I don't understand why they're taking all that time. They gathered in Helsinki, and the Ministers were charged with drawing up documents, and now they are sitting there drawing their per diems and doing sweet nothing.

Dr. Kissinger: I think we now have a procedure which should speed up the process.

Brezhnev: Then I'll proceed from the assumption our two sides will act more vigorously. After all, we're not the last fiddles in the Conference. But if delegations from Holland, Belgium, Luxembourg put forward proposals, we'll never get anywhere. I admire those people, but if they put forward proposals in a businesslike way, not if they make absurd proposals.

I'm not trying artificially to hasten the work of the Conference. But they've been dragging their feet three years now. I would like the Conference to end before President Nixon's visit, because it would be a solid foundation for the visit. We would then truly demonstrate to the whole world that our two major powers have shown the world an example of cooperation in bringing the Conference to an end. That is my main design.

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Dr. Kissinger: I propose Ambassador Stoessel and Mr. Korniyenko work together as we discussed yesterday, both as to tactics and as to substance, as we agreed. And I think we can operate jointly as we did during the Berlin negotiations.

Brezhnev: Yes indeed, but trouble is some delegations there are putting forward things that have no bearing on the substance whatever. France says: "We hold no military maneuvers whatever. What are we supposed to do? Stop all our soldiers? Put them in their barracks?" We always carry out maneuvers -- now as 20 years before. It's a war game of sorts, playing it out. Now they start addressing humiliating demands -- giving notice three months in advance, and so on.

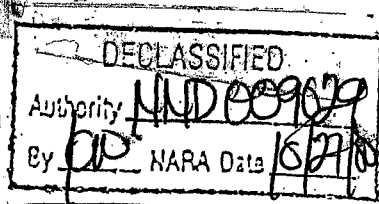
Dr. Kissinger: I said yesterday that the unit to be controlled should be of substantial size; second, that the territory should not include the whole of European Russia, and third, that notice should be reduced from that British proposal. And we'd be prepared to work with you in that sense.

Gromyko: One of the problems is the term "substantial size," because a country like Holland says a division is already a unit of substantial size and we have to inform them. For Belgium or Luxembourg, the movement of one division is a momentous development, but for us it's nothing.

Brezhnev: Look at it this way: in the final document of the Conference that we will sign, we are reaffirming such all-important principles as inviolability of frontiers, respect for sovereignty, non-use of force. Now someone comes up with a demand that we inform them of every military movement. Does it mean people don't believe us? We're signing it in seriousness. And can't individual movements be detected with earth satellites?

I discussed this subject with President Pompidou and I said we would be prepared to invite foreign observers to observe them. Say, around Kiev, we have one, two, or three divisions playing out maneuvers, and we can give a few months' notice. It was something I proposed. But now they're putting forward impossible demands. It's not that we're not willing. Let them come watch them. I'm sure soldiers in Belgium go on maneuvers; I'm sure they don't just sit around in their barracks.

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As to free movement, just by way of a joke, in addition to Solzhenitsyn, we can give you a few more Solzhenitsyns. That's free movement! [Gromyko and Brezhnev laugh]

Dr. Kissinger: If Solzhenitsyn gives a few more interviews, the New York Times will withdraw its recognition of him.

Brezhnev: Well, Dr. Kissinger, I accept what you say regarding this matter. I hope we'll be able to bring our useful influence to bear on the outcome of the Conference. If so, it will do credit to us, and everyone will be grateful. The true importance and significance of a major effort and major achievement can usually be discerned the further you are removed from the time. If Jackson accuses you of something, it doesn't mean the American people do.

Dr. Kissinger: I think improvement of relations between the United States and the Soviet Union has the support of the American people, and it is the fixed and determined course of this Administration. And it is our intention to fix it so firmly that it is an irreversible course.

Brezhnev: As I've said, our people and our party and its leadership value that very highly if that is the case.

Shall we now turn to the Middle East?

Middle East

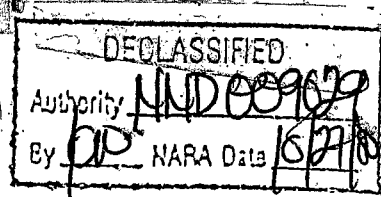
Dr. Kissinger: [smiles at Gromyko] It will deprive me of my sanity eventually -- not this discussion, but the Middle East.

Gromyko: That will be very bad. Sanity must be present -- especially in the Middle East!

Brezhnev: Of course, the question is indeed a very complicated one, and we discerned its complexity long ago.

I don't want to make any reproaches but simply to state the facts as they developed. You will recall the night we spent at San Clemente -- the best part of the night discussing this complex problem. I understand it wasn't easy for President Nixon and you to discuss it, but we did, and I did my best to warn you of the dangers inherent in this explosive region. As I recall, President Nixon and you promised to think it over. But you probably thought it over all the way until October when war broke out.

I have not counted who lost more, but human blood was spilled. But



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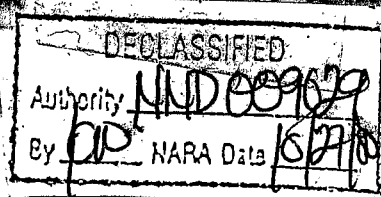
you and I undertook to make an effort to bring peace to the region and guarantee security there. This was a noble task, but we set out to fulfill it. We did succeed in reaching an understanding, and even prompting the Security Council to pass an appropriate resolution about holding an international conference under the auspices of the United States and the Soviet Union. You recall the UK and France wanted to take part, but in the end they didn't veto that resolution. It took place, and we remained in the Conference along with the participants. It seemed that a favorable moment had arrived: there was a ceasefire, and negotiations were about to begin -- negotiations that the participants had been balking at for some time because they didn't want to talk. But they came and talked about the problems, and it seemed an opportunity to finally resolve the problem.

So the International Conference on the Middle East began its work at Geneva; it set up working groups -- but then things began to develop differently.

I will leave whatever reproaches I have regarding the methods employed in bringing about mutual withdrawal and separation of forces. But I want to say at this point that it would be a very bad mistake and delusion if we felt at this moment that the Middle East problem has lost its acute nature or its urgency. To believe that would mean making as severe a mistake as in the past, a mistake which was proved when war broke out in October. It is a fact that the chief source of tensions in the Middle East remains. The prime source of tension was not from troops facing each other but that the entire problem remains as it was. So I cannot fail to utter a warning that the situation remains explosive because the issue remains as it was.

Of course, withdrawal of Israeli forces from part of Egyptian territory in the framework of troop separation is of a certain significance in terms of lessening the possibility of swift and sudden military collision. But, in fact, this is nothing more than a palliative -- it cannot replace the prime need, that is, the need for a complete and reliable settlement of the Middle East conflict, a settlement on the basis we agreed upon in voting for UN Security Resolution 242 and for its implementation in all its parts. But we have by no means approached implementation of that resolution in all its parts. Perhaps President Nixon promised to give the whole Sinai to the Israelis -- but the Arabs wouldn't agree to that. If there is anything covert,

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we would appreciate knowing it. Sadat knows nothing about that, and he certainly believes that troop separation will be followed by the normal process of settlement. As for Syria, you know what demands that country wants met.

Here I would like to say we cannot but express our surprise at the methods resorted to by the United States, in fact by separate maneuvers engaged in by the United States in circumvention of our understanding that there would be joint action and joint Soviet-American auspices in efforts to bring about a settlement.

When Comrade Gromyko was in Washington, I asked him to state our view frankly to the American side. I certainly reacted with a feeling of trust and confidence to the American assurances that the United States would not copy the methods used in the Egyptian-Israeli separation of forces. Then we were faced with new facts, of the same methods in the suggestions of Dr. Kissinger for separation of forces on the Syrian side and not in joint auspices. This couldn't fail to cause surprise.

I would like one thing to be clear: The Middle East settlement as we discussed and agreed upon means not only protection of the Arabs but also for Israel, and guarantees for the Arabs and for Israel. Of course, complex questions like Palestine will require a good deal of brainwracking, but on questions that are clear, we should work together.

Gromyko: The question of Palestine means the question of the Palestinians.

Kissinger: That means that on the question of the Palestinians we can bypass each other?

Sukhodrev: His thought was that that question would require a good deal of brainwracking.

Brezhnev: The question then arises of what is required to pass over to the solution of key aspects of the Middle East problem. We have weighed this complex situation and we believe it is necessary without delay to activate the mechanism of the Geneva Conference. It is necessary that the military working group with the participation of the Soviet Union and the United States urgently address itself to solving

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the question of bringing the separation of Israeli and Syrian forces. And this in itself at the same time will solve the question of the prompt involvement of Syria in the Geneva Conference. It is also necessary to solve the question of the participation in that Conference of representatives of the Arab people of Palestine.

What we have in mind is that the Conference should pass to efforts to resolve the questions in the settlement on the basis of the agreed principled positions of the Soviet Union and the United States. I am not introducing anything new; I am merely repeating what we agreed upon when we acted together to bring about Security Council adoption of the resolution creating the Conference. We can bring appropriate influence to bear on the parties to achieve a speedy, acceptable solution. The only other alternative is a new explosion in the Middle East like those that occurred in the past.

We are certainly very much in favor of Foreign Minister Gromyko and Secretary of State Kissinger meeting regularly to consult with each other, whether in Geneva or elsewhere, to reach a solution to the entire complex of Middle East problems.

If the United States continues to act separately -- and you can convey this to President Nixon -- I am sure nothing good will be produced and there will be no final settlement. And such an approach would not improve relations between our two countries either. Suppose the Soviet Union began to act separately in circumvention of the United States? We certainly have the capacity to do that, but what good would it accomplish? We could have blocked any U.S. plan in the Middle East, but this would violate our understanding. I am saying nothing new, but just what we agreed upon in substance. I am sure in the future we will act together, act jointly.

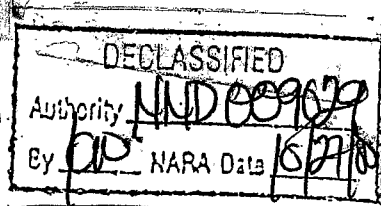
I would end on that, for the time being.

Dr. Kissinger: Can I take a one-minute break before I reply?
Objective necessity.

Brezhnev: Please.

[There was a break from 11:45 - 11:55 a.m. When Dr. Kissinger returned, Brezhnev showed him a photo of Jobert and Aleksandrov at Pitsunda.]

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Dr. Kissinger: Should we both sign it? Should we write "condominium" on it and send it to him? [Laughter]

Brezhnev: Pompidou told me at Pitsunda we shouldn't use the word "superpowers."

Dr. Kissinger: Was Jobert with him?

Gromyko: Jobert told me how much he loves you.

Dr. Kissinger: Maybe that is the problem.

Gromyko: Admires you.

Dr. Kissinger: Jobert found out that every time he attacks me he goes up three points in the popularity poll in France. So he becomes famous. Then he tells me privately he agrees with me.

We appreciated, Mr. General Secretary, your note on your conversation with President Pompidou. It was in the spirit of frankness and cooperation that was characteristic of our relationship.

Brezhnev: I was quite honest in sending you that information -- all the more so since I expected President Pompidou would be informing you, and then the Nine. It would be good to tell the truth.

Dr. Kissinger: You are correct. We also received some information.

Brezhnev: That's no secret.

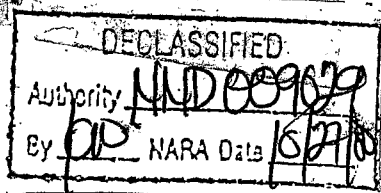
Dr. Kissinger: To turn to the Middle East. First, Mr. General Secretary, we owe it to you to say that your analysis of the situation in San Clemente unfortunately turned out to be correct.

Brezhnev: Nothing else was to have been expected. The situation was like a boil; it just had to come to the bursting point.

Dr. Kissinger: I confess we underestimated it.

Brezhnev: One didn't have to be a genius to foresee it.

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[Sonnenfeldt whispers something to Kissinger.]

Kissinger: Sonnenfeldt says, since we didn't foresee it, what does that make us? [Laughter]

Brezhnev: Nonaligned!

Dr. Kissinger: I must tell you, on the morning of October 6, one of my associates said to me, "There is a minor difficulty between the Egyptians and Israelis and if you act very quickly you can settle it in two hours."

You had somewhat more information. But we recognize the conflict started for spontaneous reasons.

In dealing with the situation as it then developed: When we met here in October we thought the primary goal should be to bring the Arabs and Israelis together into direct negotiations, and we thought it was not attainable unless our two countries provided the auspices. We didn't think we should forbid them to talk if they wanted to talk without our auspices.

Gromyko: You say, "We felt our primary aim should be to bring the Arabs and Israelis together in direct talks" -- this was the U.S. side? Because that was not our position.

Dr. Kissinger: The United States side.

But I will not insist on this but rather talk about some rather more general things.

First, there are no secret deals between us and any of the Arab countries. And, of course, the idea of a secret deal with an Arab country is a contradiction in terms. [Brezhnev doesn't smile.]

We have not discussed any final solution with any Arab country, reserving that for the Geneva Conference.

Now, in response to some of the specific points made by the General Secretary:

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Every move the United States has made in this area has been at the request of the parties. None has been initiated by the United States. For example, my last trip resulted from a visit of two Arab Foreign Ministers, whom we had not invited and whom in fact we had attempted to discourage. I then wrote a letter to your Foreign Minister and proposed a way of keeping you informed. We would have been open to counter-proposals -- but we never received a reply.

What is it that the United States wants in this area? First, we are realists. We recognize that gratitude is an unreliable basis for the conduct of foreign policy, and we have seen enough, especially in the Middle East, to know that whatever has been done in the past it is no basis for the future, and I'm sure the Soviet Union can confirm this. We recognize the Soviet Union has major interests in the Middle East and we have no intention of achieving a unilateral advantage. And we recognize also that no major decisions can be taken in the Middle East to the detriment of the other without serious consequences for the stability of the area.

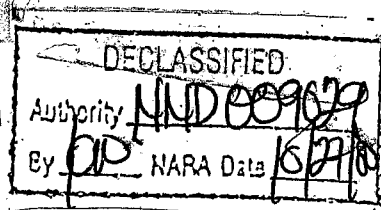
It is also a fact that the importance of the countries in the area increases to the extent they can play us off against each other. We occasionally receive messages that have that intention, and I've no doubt that you occasionally receive messages that have that intention. But I'm sure your many reports from the area will not be able to cite any instance when the United States has said one word against the Soviet Union or against Soviet interests. On the contrary.

But I agree that perhaps appearances have been deceptive, and we agree that great care must be taken not to encourage other countries to take advantage of the situation.

Now, what is it we have attempted to do? I am very conscious of the efforts of several of my predecessors who engaged in very formal diplomacy without result in the Middle East.

We also, as you know, have an extremely complicated domestic situation, complicated by events of the past year and complicated because of the influence of certain pressure groups. That imposes on us necessities of complicated tactics that are in no sense directed at the Soviet Union.

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What we have attempted to do is to promote for the first time since the beginning of the Israeli State, or certainly for the first time since 1967, a process of systematic withdrawal of Israeli forces. In our judgment this could only be achieved step by step, without prejudice to the ultimate settlement. To be too formalistic jeopardizes the process we are attempting to start, and to criticize what has been achieved can only make it more difficult to achieve a permanent and just settlement, to which we have committed ourselves.

Therefore we have attached importance to the initial process of disengagement. We have been disproportionately active in this phase because we have been the only country with the influence to move Israel to take the steps that were needed. So this explains our actions in this phase. We do not believe it would help disengagement to convene the Geneva Conference at this point, but we are prepared to convene it after the Syrian disengagement is accomplished. But we recognize your concerns, and as the President has written to you, we are prepared to proceed even in this phase in cooperation with the Soviet Union.

I am therefore prepared to accept the proposal of the General Secretary that the Foreign Minister and I meet regularly in Geneva to keep each other informed, to exchange ideas, and to proceed cooperatively. And in all we do we will proceed on the basis that there are no unilateral gains to be made and that the common objective should be a just and lasting peace.

That is all I want to say.

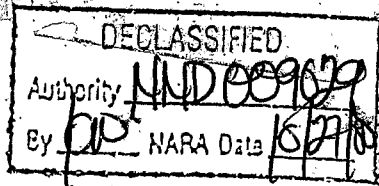
Brezhnev: Of course, meetings between Kissinger and Gromyko and exchanges of views between them are not all there is to the Geneva Conference.

Dr. Kissinger: I agree.

Brezhnev: And you can meet virtually every day, or Ambassador Stoessel can meet with our representatives here as frequently as the situation warrants. But we for our part have no intention of burying the Geneva Conference.

Dr. Kissinger, you say the past should not be criticized. But that is exactly what I am doing. And I am criticizing that past from a

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position of principle, because it was done in circumvention of our understanding with you. Whether you like it or not, it is something that has caused bewilderment and doubts on our part. Which is exactly why I'm saying all this to you with such frankness. Especially since we have been very frank talking about more serious things.

Dr. Kissinger: I cannot accept the phrase, "in circumvention of our understandings." That is a phrase I cannot accept.

Gromyko: How then can your actions be qualified?

Brezhnev: I fully realize I must react with necessary confidence and trust to your statement that there are no secret deals whatever. And I recall in this connection the words uttered by the late President Nasser who said, "We have the press and radio, but if you want to know the secrets, go to the market place." That's what they call the "secret code." President Nasser told me that. It exists to this day.

Dr. Kissinger: So in that case you know there are no secret deals.

Gromyko: In that sense, yes!

Dr. Kissinger: I've told you there are no secret deals. I won't debate it.

Brezhnev: That we accept.

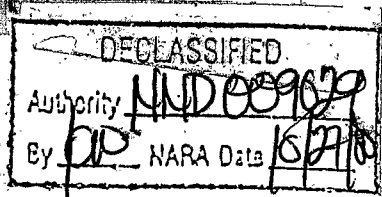
Dr. Kissinger: What secret deals would we want?

Brezhnev: I can only repeat I accept your statement as a true one.

Dr. Kissinger: I repeat, we have made no secret deals. I can say we have confined our efforts to what has been made public.

Brezhnev: Let's look into the substance of this matter. I've already said that disengagement of forces is in some ways a positive measure. But what happens now? Has the explosiveness of the situation disappeared? The Arabs see it this way: the non-use of force relates merely to the present disengagement, but they see their hands as free if Israel refuses to accept a complete settlement in the future. Syria refused to accept

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that principle altogether; Iraq rejects it out of hand. And the Arab world generally sees it that way. And it is not hard to see that all of this has not really resulted in any increased tranquility, but the situation remains more acute.

Dr. Kissinger: I don't agree that the general relationships remain more acute. But I do agree that this phase is an initial phase and is not a final one. We thought that what we have done is in everybody's interest because it unfreezes the situation. It is easy to make doctrinaire statements; it is difficult to move things forward. As you know, we have no contact with Iraq and we have no information about your activities in Iraq. So I can't judge what the attitude of Iraq is. Our attitude is that the disengagement phase is the beginning of a process and not the final stage.

Brezhnev: I'll certainly make no secret of the fact that we have a good relationship with Iraq.

Dr. Kissinger: We certainly don't object to that.

Brezhnev: We've no secret treaties aimed against a Middle East settlement.

I recently received Hussein.

Dr. Kissinger: Hussein?

Gromyko: Sadam Hussein, deputy to Bakr.

Dr. Kissinger: I thought you meant the King!

Brezhnev: But we did not touch on the problem of troop disengagement. He displayed no initiative on that, and, as you know, they take a negative view on it. So I didn't raise it. Especially because I knew they were objecting. So if you saw the record of that meeting, you wouldn't find a single word about it. I remained silent about it; he did too. I didn't want to put him in a position of having to reject it.

Where do we go from here? I have set out some of our thinking.

Dr. Kissinger: Our thinking is that after the disengagement phase is completed, the Geneva Conference can be reassembled, and that

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while the disengagement phase is going on, the Foreign Minister and I meet regularly, so the actions of our diplomats can be concerted.

Brezhnev: We can set aside as much time as you and he need -- in a neutral zone, in the Lenin Hills here.

Dr. Kissinger: No, in Geneva.

Brezhnev: We have beautiful parks here -- Ismailova Park, for example. A very beautiful park.

Dr. Kissinger: If we meet in parks, we will offer one in Washington also. I don't think we should put the whole responsibility on you.

Brezhnev: You went to Syria and you gave them some of your suggestions, and as we know, they gave counter-suggestions, and you then suggested they send someone to Washington.

Gromyko: Just to receive a new proposal, but there is no such proposal.

Dr. Kissinger: We hope to receive one when Dayan comes to Washington.

Brezhnev: You know Asad is coming to the Soviet Union. He has long since been requesting such a meeting, but due to other engagements it wasn't possible. But he's coming in the first half of April, and he will tell us what you are proposing and what he is proposing.

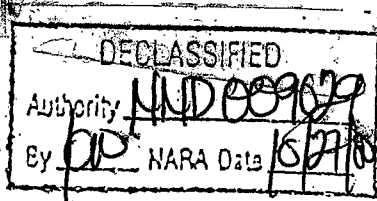
Dr. Kissinger: We have no objection to his informing you.

Brezhnev: We haven't set up any formal agenda but he will probably ask us to protect their rights; he'll probably ask us for some military aid.

Kissinger: That last is certain. He's even asked us for military aid.

Brezhnev: You know in this period we have suspended sending even those supplies we were supposed to send under long-term agreements. Sadat even accused us of not sending those supplies even during the events, and he gave it as one of the reasons he wasn't able to destroy Israeli forces.

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Dr. Kissinger: [Laughs] There were a few other reasons. It's hard to destroy forces when you are not moving forward.

Brezhnev: Why didn't you give Asad arms?

Dr. Kissinger: Because we didn't want to fuel an arms race in the Middle East.

Brezhnev: But you sent sufficient arms to Israel. Isn't that fueling the arms race -- pouring petrol over it? In fact, the Arabs continually refer to the arms shipments from the U. S. to Israel and blame us for not sending more. You know how severe their criticism is.

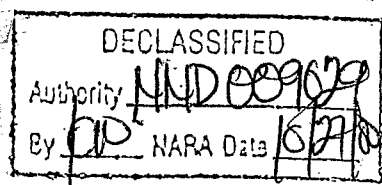
Dr. Kissinger: No, and I think they tell each of us what we want to hear.

Brezhnev: I don't know what they tell you; I do know what they tell us. But it is quite clear to me we should make every effort to get Syria to join the Geneva Conference. At any rate, if we get the Geneva Conference going, with Syria and the participation of our two countries, and Israel, Egypt and Jordan, and the Arab people of Palestine should take part, there will be arguments but they will be talking.

Dr. Kissinger: We are not opposed to getting the Geneva Conference together. We think the best time is after Syrian disengagement.

Gromyko: You say the best time to reassemble the Geneva Conference would be after disengagement between Syria and Israel. But why do you pose the question in that way? Why don't you say the Geneva Conference could promote disengagement between Israel and Syria, through a joint military group with Israel, Syria, United States and the Soviet Union, and Egypt? Don't you think that would be the best method of bringing Syria into the Geneva Conference? When we discussed the Conference at the beginning, we agreed it was a joint task. Maybe you say it is not to the liking of all sides. But as we know, Syria accepts that. But you would prefer to discuss that between Syria, Israel, and the United States. You don't want to qualify it as not a separate action by the United States, but how else can one qualify it? That's not how you said in Washington -- and I am quoting your words -- when you said you wouldn't copy the methods of the Egyptian disengagement. As Comrade Brezhnev said, it is all very well to consult one another, and the venue isn't important. If I go to the United Nations General Assembly, it would be appropriate if we met in New York or Washington.

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Why don't we convene the Conference? We certainly want to establish peace. If Israel is indeed in favor of ensuring its security, it won't find a state more interested in that than the Soviet Union. When we stated as much at Geneva, you will recall what you said. Minister Eban told me that our statement about our desire to guarantee Israel's boundaries as a state would be welcomed wholeheartedly by Israel.

Dr. Kissinger: I don't think it is possible to bring about a disengagement by the procedure the Foreign Minister has described. And I do not think the issue should depend on procedural matters. I believe we can exchange information and act cooperatively, since in any event you will be informed by the Syrians.

Gromyko: You favor that role for the Soviet Union -- just to be a receiver of information?

Dr. Kissinger: No, I said cooperative action. Neither of us should take the position that we should prevent things from happening just because we don't participate. I can see situations where the Soviet Union is in a position to make things happen, and we won't object to that.

Gromyko: But in what, then, should that cooperation take place? Since you have no objection to the Soviet Union receiving information.

Brezhnev: Dr. Kissinger, I haven't heard any [clearer] case of direct ignoring of the Soviet Union's role than the one you just described.

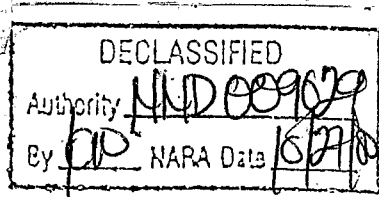
Dr. Kissinger: How is the Soviet Union ignored?

Brezhnev: You have gone back on the understanding reached between us once on Egypt; now you want to do it on Syria. What other violations will there be?

Dr. Kissinger: If the two parties come to an agreement, one of whom is a close ally of yours, we don't see how this prejudices the Soviet Union, since the United States gets no benefit from this except progress towards peace.

Gromyko: The first point is, there is no agreement between Syria and Israel as yet.

Dr. Kissinger: Right.



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Gromyko: There is only the possibility of such an agreement, and Syria has publicly stated their agreement to the Soviet Union participating. But you say no.

Dr. Kissinger: As far as we are concerned, the Syrians can engage the Soviet Union in whatever manner they think appropriate. We have never said we opposed it.

Gromyko: That remark strikes wide of the mark, because the Syrians said they are in favor of the Soviet Union participating and you say no. You don't want to get around one table the Soviet Union, Egypt, Syria, and the United States. Why not?

Dr. Kissinger: Our understanding is this is not the preferred position of some Arab states, and we believe Israel also disagrees in the disengagement phase.

Gromyko: One can't in this context speak of "certain Arabs," but one must speak concretely of Syria -- and Syria does agree. As regards the consent and non-consent of somebody, we are talking about the United States and an understanding between the United States and the Soviet Union.

Dr. Kissinger: The important thing is not to rely on formalism, but to get a settlement. When we met in October, there was no reading of this which implies the parties have no right to settle anything without the participation of the Soviet Union and the United States.

Gromyko: It appears that as soon as the question is broached of the Soviet Union participating, you call it formalism and doctrinaire. What happened with the understanding reached?

Dr. Kissinger: No, I think we should remember what we are trying to achieve. Neither the participation of the Soviet Union nor the participation of the United States is an end in itself. I have said that after disengagement, the Geneva Conference should be reassembled. I have also agreed to meet with the Foreign Minister before further decisions are made. If there were more effective means to get a disengagement, we would accept them.

Gromyko: Which is exactly what we are proposing. And Syria said so publicly.

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Dr. Kissinger: Not to us.

Gromyko: But they have publicly stated on their own behalf that they are in favor of resolving this problem with the participation of the Soviet Union. But then the United States, with whom we have an understanding on the subject, objects.

Dr. Kissinger: That is absolutely not correct. We have no understanding with them on that.

Gromyko: You have not met with them?

Dr. Kissinger: But we are not without communication with them.

Gromyko: You can ask them any time you want to.

Kissinger: It is our judgment this procedure will make an agreement impossible or will at least lead to a protracted stalemate.

Gromyko: But what you are proposing -- these joint contacts in Washington, Moscow, or elsewhere -- is just the semblance of the Soviet Union's participation and cooperation. Whereas in substance you are in favor of acting separately.

Dr. Kissinger: It depends on your definition of acting separately.

Gromyko: From whatever aspect.

Dr. Kissinger: I have difficulty understanding the proposition that the parties have no right to settle anything without the participation of everybody.

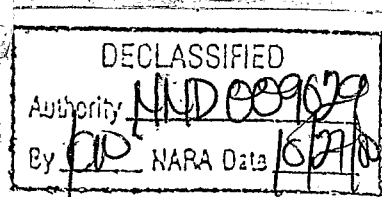
Gromyko: Which parties? Here there are two, Syria and Israel. It is one thing if you said the United States is not participating, but you favor the participation of the United States.

Dr. Kissinger: Everything we have done is at the request of the parties.

Gromyko: Surely that argument works both ways, especially when we tell you that one of the parties, Syria, is in favor of Soviet participation. But it leaves no impression.

Dr. Kissinger: I hadn't heard that.

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Gromyko: The public statement said it.

Dr. Kissinger: In very ambiguous terms.

Gromyko: And in no uncertain terms, and if you need any elucidation, I can tell you that that composition is accepted by Syria.

Dr. Kissinger: If we receive a formal request by Syria, we will discuss it with Israel and see where we are.

Gromyko: We know full well that Israel will act as the United States wants it to act.

Dr. Kissinger: That is certainly not the impression of any of us who have gone through the anguish of negotiating with Israel.

Gromyko: We can only react with disappointment to your words. What will happen when and if we meet in Washington? You will just confirm what you said today? I see no possibility of cooperation. There will be meetings in Geneva, in Washington, but no content.

Dr. Kissinger: That depends on us. If we agree to act cooperatively, it depends on actions needed.

Gromyko: That is just the question. The question is, are we just to have consultations in the form of an outer shell, or filling in that shell with real content?

Dr. Kissinger: We are prepared for serious discussions.

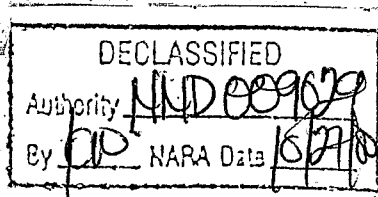
Gromyko: What should those consultations consist of, if no substance?

Dr. Kissinger: We are prepared to discuss substance.

Gromyko: Where is that substance if you are even against our participation in the discussions?

Dr. Kissinger: Because participation in the discussions between the parties doesn't mean we can't form a common view of a possible outcome.

Gromyko: We are trying to promote achievement of a common opinion, and one that will promote an agreement. You will recall that the last time we were in Moscow we initialed a text which said that the two parties would act jointly. Why not do it?



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Dr. Kissinger: I said we are prepared to discuss it jointly. I don't know why being in a room with the two parties has to constitute the nature of our cooperation.

Gromyko: Well, how else? Through correspondence? You don't restrict yourself to correspondence -- you travel and talk.

Dr. Kissinger: So does the Foreign Minister.

Gromyko: But that is not cooperation if you and we travel and talk separately.

Dr. Kissinger: It's a question of efficiency.

Gromyko: Then nothing remains of the framework except splinters. We received your letter about the framework -- but what it meant was that the Soviet Union remains an outside observer. The purport of the letter was that you were traveling to the Middle East. [Referring to the Secretary's letter to Gromyko of February 19, 1974, attached at Tab A].

Dr. Kissinger: No. First, we didn't ever receive a letter about the Foreign Minister's visit to the Middle East.

Gromyko: I told you in Washington.

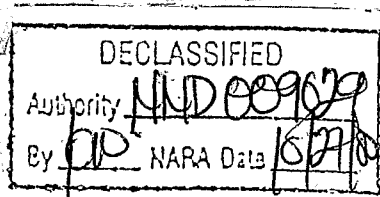
Dr. Kissinger: Second, my trip was related to a request of four heads of state who sent two Foreign Ministers, and it was related to the lifting of the oil embargo. I sent you a letter about being willing to meet your Ambassadors -- but I would have listened to counter proposals. I was on a long weekend when those two Foreign Ministers came. We even tried to stop them.

Gromyko: They dropped in contrary to your wishes?

Dr. Kissinger: Unbelievable as it may sound, yes. They simply sent a telegram saying they were coming.

Gromyko: It doesn't boil down to a visit of two Foreign Ministers. The question is cooperation between us.

Dr. Kissinger: I am just telling you what happened. The Four Arabs met in Algeria; then, two Foreign Minister came. One of the conditions for lifting the embargo was that I come to the Middle East. You can

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confirm this with President Asad, I am sure. We didn't know they were coming or what they were going to ask for. Then we sent a letter saying we could meet with your Ambassadors.

Gromyko: To be informed.

Dr. Kissinger: For consultation. To be available for consultation.

Gromyko: But what bearing does all this have on the question of Syria? No one but Syria can speak for Syria. The Syrians tell us they are in favor of the Soviet Union's participation and the specific group.

Dr. Kissinger: [Reading from the letter to Gromyko at Tab A] First, "I wanted to inform you of these developments in the spirit of the understanding between our Governments. ... In that same spirit, I would like to suggest that your Ambassadors in Damascus, and perhaps Algeria and Cairo, be available for consultations...."

Gromyko: They all received their instructions. Did any of our diplomats refuse such a meeting?

Dr. Kissinger: But you were coming to the Middle East. That created a new situation.

Gromyko: Your trip to the Middle East didn't create a new situation?

Dr. Kissinger: I have no objection to the Foreign Minister visiting the Middle East.

Gromyko: I fly towards Cairo and find Dr. Kissinger has already taken off. So obviously you were against a docking operation!

Dr. Kissinger: A docking operation would have been a little difficult with planes.

Gromyko: Not planes, but humans!

Dr. Kissinger: We never received a reply to this letter. It didn't seem to me proper to call an Embassy when I hadn't received an answer from the Foreign Minister.

Gromyko: It appears that you find it inconvenient to call us on substance -- in Washington, in Cairo, in Damascus.

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Dr. Kissinger: It was up to your side either to make a counterproposal or accept my proposal for consultations. It is unfair to accuse us of finding it inconvenient when we never received a reply to this letter.

Gromyko: That in that letter you mainly repeated what you told me orally when I met you. You merely informed me you were leaving; you didn't offer consultations with me in Geneva or elsewhere.

Dr. Kissinger: Maybe it was unfortunately phrased. I have told your Ambassador I was willing to meet with you in Geneva but I wasn't going to order the Soviet Foreign Minister to come to Geneva. I had not thought of Damascus; I didn't think it appropriate to arrange it in the capital of a country with whom we had no formal diplomatic relations.

Dobrynin: But only after the trip you mentioned it.

Dr. Kissinger: My thought was, if the Foreign Minister had replied and said, "Consultations with our Ambassadors are not at the right level," I would have proposed Geneva.

Dobrynin: You mentioned it only after the trip.

Dr. Kissinger: We were debating internally whether to propose it in the second or the first communication. We were handicapped by the fact we had no really good communication in Washington.

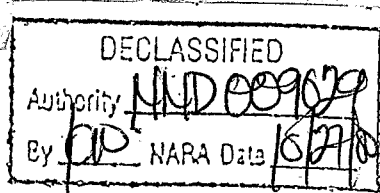
Gromyko: That relates to the past. We should now give thought to the future, how to ensure cooperation in the future, even exchange information.

Dr. Kissinger: We agree on convening the Geneva Conference, so it is only one step between us. But we are prepared before that for the most precise exchange of information, and concerted action. And our reason is that we believe that to obtain what is necessary -- some withdrawal beyond the October 6th line -- is a very difficult operation. So it is not to get any benefit for the United States.

Gromyko: We know that withdrawal to the lines of October 6th is quite unacceptable to the Syrians. They told us themselves.

Dr. Kissinger: I know. That is the problem of the present negotiations. It is no secret. We have no desire to hide the positions.

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Brezhnev: I have been silent but I was listening attentively. And I must say that all that has passed between you [Kissinger and Gromyko] points up the correctness of what I said before: I never before heard such an open statement of U. S. intentions to exclude the Soviet Union's participation. It remains but to note that the two sides stated their views on this question and it leaves hands free to act at one's own discretion.

Dr. Kissinger: That would be very unfortunate. I want to state that formally.

Brezhnev: What else can I do? I have here the statement initialed by Dr. Kissinger and the Foreign Minister [the October 22 understanding on auspices, Tab B].

Dr. Kissinger: Yes. [Reads] "The Soviet Union and the United States will ... maintain the closest contact with each other and the negotiating parties."

Korniyenko: Before that.

Dr. Kissinger: "The active participation of the United States and the Soviet Union." At that time you knew very well the issue was how to promote contact between the parties.

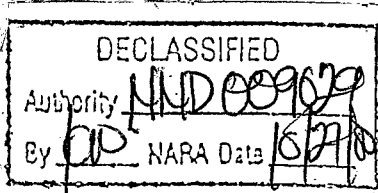
In any case I want to state formally, so the record is clear: The United States has no intention to exclude the Soviet Union from the negotiation.

Brezhnev: Neither do we have such intentions, nor did we even contemplate it. And we certainly had no inkling the United States would ever deem it possible to act in such a way. I just re-read the message of President Nixon. I see your hand in it. The letter makes reference to various forms. I don't want to speak about forms; I want to speak about substance, and the substance is we have UN sanction to act under our auspices. Because at that time, the British, French were all slightly offended at us but they finally agreed we could act jointly. In matters such as this we need good faith, not playing games.

Dr. Kissinger: I agree, but also act in a manner that will promote progress.

Brezhnev: Could our participation be opposed to that? Do you have any evidence?

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Dr. Kissinger: We are not opposed to Soviet participation. We think at the present stage, when the two sides are not even in contact, we should be flexible as to method. And we agree the Geneva Conference should be reconvened as soon as the Syrian disengagement is achieved.

Brezhnev: But we don't have any understanding about that; it is something quite artificial. You say those two Foreign Ministers arrived in Washington almost unannounced. What is my reaction to the telegram from the Egyptian Foreign Minister, Ismail Fahmi, saying he is coming to Washington? And he raises forty questions to me. But I didn't act unilaterally. The Syrians didn't want to go to Geneva; I wrote them a letter. This was in the framework of our understanding with you.

So we never even took half a step in contravention of the understanding we reached. Whereas you, having taken steps in contravention, want us to approve further steps in contravention. All I said to Fahmi when he arrived was that everything should be taken in the framework of the Geneva Conference as agreed. The only question I put to him was how to understand the statement that no further military or semi-military measures would be taken. I took no step to resume military shipments, though he asked.

Dr. Kissinger: What did you mean by...

Brezhnev: One of his requests was to deliver supplies under the agreement. To this day, we have not sent him two cartridges. That is an honest statement of keeping an understanding. Whereas in fact I could have said that in my view the most flexible way to influence the U.S. was to send military supplies. I could have sent 300 planes and 1,500 tanks. But I didn't. So I gave my word and was true to it.

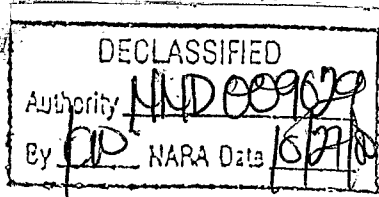
Dr. Kissinger, maybe we should give additional thought to this. I want to raise one other point. This is the second day of our discussions here. Do you think it is at all possible if you could prolong your stay here for another day or two? Because we think it very important to find agreement on the questions before the visit of President Nixon.

Maybe it would be worthwhile to make a recess now for lunch, and reconvene at 5:00 to continue our discussions.

Dr. Kissinger: All right.

Brezhnev: For another five hours of work!

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Dr. Kissinger: I am prepared. I agree to meet at 5:00. On extending my stay: As you know, we are expecting a visitor in Washington on Friday [General Dayan]. And I was going to leave Washington on Saturday on a trip I had postponed on many previous occasions. And also I have a schedule in London on Thursday. Let me consider it this afternoon.

Brezhnev: Please.

Gromyko: For three hours, disengagement. [laughter]

Dr. Kissinger: But let me say one thing, Mr. General Secretary -- which is more important Five kilometers one way or the other on the Golan Heights is less important than U. S. -Soviet relations. We have no intention of excluding the Soviet Union from active full participation. And this is our basic attitude.

Brezhnev: Of course, I can liken no relationships, economic or political, between anyone, to our relationship. This concerns two such powers as the United States and the Soviet Union. And we certainly want to remain dedicated to those principles established in 1972 and 1973. Today I re-read for the third time President Nixon's letter to me. It is the paragraph where he speaks about the need to go on moving forward, which prompted me to send an immediate reply.

Dr. Kissinger: The one delivered on Saturday, which was very well received.

Brezhnev: I was reacting to what was to me the main content of the letter, that we should continue on that course. And that prompted me to reply. Of course, as President Nixon knows, all these questions -- strategic arms, the Middle East, Europe -- are linked. And we should continue on that road. I surely trust you could not have noticed either yesterday or today any desire on our part to gain unilateral advantage.

Dr. Kissinger: No, the spirit of discussions has been very constructive.

Brezhnev: Well, bon appetit!

Dr. Kissinger: What have we been doing?!

Brezhnev: At your house you will have a full lunch. This is just a diplomatic snack.

[The meeting then ended]

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THE SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON

Delivered to
Vorontsov - Del
8:55 pm

February 19, 1974

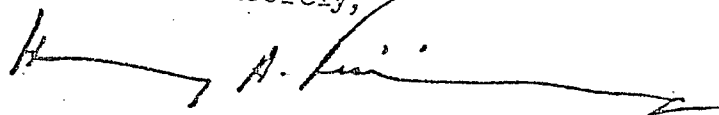
Dear Mr. Minister:

As you know the Foreign Ministers of Egypt and Saudi Arabia have been in Washington for talks during the past few days. Their mission resulted from prior talks between Syria, Algeria, Egypt and Saudi Arabia. As a result of these talks, the President has agreed to the suggestion that I visit the Middle East in the near future -- probably beginning February 25 -- in an effort to assist in bringing about negotiations for Syrian/Israeli disengagement in the context of an exchange of POW lists and Red Cross visits. The specific purpose of my visit would be to produce an appropriate framework for the negotiations acceptable to the parties.

I wanted to inform you of these developments in the spirit of the understanding between our Governments agreed upon in Moscow last October and reaffirmed during your recent stay in Washington. In that same spirit, I would like to suggest that your Ambassadors in Damascus, and perhaps Algeria and Cairo, be available for consultations during my prospective stay in the Middle East. At the same time, we would of course maintain our channel through your Embassy here in Washington.

I look forward to seeing you soon.

Yours sincerely,



Henry A. Kissinger

His Excellency
Andrey Andreyevich Gromyko,
Minister of Foreign Affairs of the
Union of Soviet Socialist Republics,
Moscow.

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Authority	NND 009029
By	CP NARA Date 10/17/70

Initialed
22 Oct. 1973

UNDERSTANDING

It is understood that the phrase "under appropriate auspices" in point 3 of the Security Council Resolution shall mean that the negotiations between the parties concerned will take place with the active participation of the United States and the Soviet Union at the beginning and thereafter in the course of negotiations when key issues of a settlement are dealt with. Throughout the entire process of negotiation the United States and the Soviet Union will in any case maintain the closest contact with each other and the negotiating parties.

A.G. AK