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MEMORANDUM

Restricted NSC Mtg  
on Mideast - June 29, 1971

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

INFORMATION

SECRET/NODIS/CEDAR

June 26, 1971

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MEMORANDUM FOR DR. KISSINGER

FROM: Harold H. Saunders *Hal*  
Richard T. Kennedy

SUBJECT: Briefing Book for NSC on Mid-East

Your book is an exact duplicate of the President's.

Your memo to him at the next tab explains the present problem in a nutshell and proposes a series of questions to pose in discussion following briefings by Cushman and Sisco.

The President's talking points embody this approach and conclude by suggesting that he ask that Secretary Rogers prepare a game plan for the rest of the summer, including especially how to play the aircraft issue with Israel.

The analytical memo is built around the memo discussed with you earlier but presents a somewhat broader picture since that one concentrated heavily on details of the Canal proposal.

The last memo in the book is a memo done for you earlier on the latest intelligence on Soviet military shipments to the UAR, revised for the President.

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MEMO TO  
THE PRESIDENT

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TOP SECRET

RESTRICTED MEETING

June 29, 1971

Middle East Review

THE PRESIDENT

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MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

INFORMATION

~~SECRET/NODIS/CEDAR~~

June 28, 1971

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM. Henry A. Kissinger

SUBJECT Restricted NSC Meeting on Mid-East--Tuesday, June 29

The purpose of this meeting is to assess where our diplomatic initiatives in the Mid-East stand and to begin to sort out a strategy from here.

The situation is described more fully in the paper at the tab marked "Analytical Memo." In short the problem is this.

--The gap between Israeli and Egyptian positions on an interim Canal settlement is still wide. What was originally conceived as a minimal move has now been built into a half-step to an overall settlement. That decreases likelihood of Israeli agreement.

--The Israeli aircraft pipeline is about to run dry. There is no clear plan for what Israel must do to turn the tap back on.

--The Jarring mission is in suspense and is considered by some to be dead.

--The Soviet position in the UAR continues to grow steadily. There is no plan for involving the USSR in the diplomatic process.

The only active proposal for moving this impasse now is the State Department's proposal to invite UAR Prime Minister Fawzi to Washington to probe for flexibility in the UAR position. Unless there is some realistic prospect for bringing the two sides closer, this would dramatize the interim settlement negotiations more than prospects for success warrant.

In conducting the meeting, I suggest asking

--General Cushman to describe the latest on the Soviet presence in the Mid-East.

--Secretary Rogers or Mr. Sisco to brief on the diplomatic state of play.

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Then you might lead a general discussion of the following questions

--Is a Canal settlement now felt to be possible? What would it take to close the gap?

--What is the intention on Israeli aircraft requests? What specifically do we want Israel to do before we give them more aircraft? How would we explain our present stance publicly if Congressional pressure mounted?

--What should be our response to Soviet arms shipments to Egypt? To the buildup in the Soviets' own position?

Your talking points at the next tab reflect this approach. In addition to the fuller analytical memo on the situation, you will find a memo at the last tab detailing the latest intelligence on the Soviet shipments to the UAR and presence there.

Your talking points conclude with the suggestion that Secretary Rogers be asked to provide you with a game plan for the next three months (until the fall UN General Assembly session). This should deal carefully with the Israeli aircraft issue. Without a precisely drawn strategy, there is danger of stumbling soon into an open confrontation with Israel.

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TALKING POINTS

June 28, 1971

TALKING POINTS

Middle East

1. Several trains of events are coming together which make this a good time to take stock of where we are and where we are going in the Mid-East. There has been active diplomacy on the Canal settlement, the Soviet-UAR treaty, new intelligence on the Soviet military relationship with the UAR. The Israeli aircraft pipeline is about to run dry.

2. Ask General Cushman to brief, particularly on Soviet activity in the Mediterranean and the UAR.

3. Ask Secretary Rogers and Mr. Sisco to brief on the state of diplomatic play.

4. Pose the following questions for discussion.

--Do Secretary Rogers and Mr. Sisco feel the gap can be closed on a Canal settlement? What would it take?

--If it is doubtful the gap can be closed, should Fawzi be invited to Washington?

--The Israeli aircraft pipeline is about to run dry. What do we want Israel to do before it is turned back on?

--It looks as if the Soviets are further strengthening their own position in the UAR. How will they read our suspending aircraft shipments to Israel?

--Should we involve the USSR more in our diplomacy?

Ask Secretary Rogers to send you a game plan for the rest of the summer (until the UN General Assembly).

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ANALYTICAL MEMO

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

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June 26, 1971

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

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under provisions of E.O. 12958  
R76

FROM: Henry A. Kissinger

SUBJECT: Current State of Play in the Mid-East

The purpose of the NSC meeting on the Mid-East is to assess the present situation and to set a strategy for the next several months, at least until the fall UN General Assembly.

The present situation contains these elements:

- The Jarring mission is in suspense. Jarring in February asked both sides to commit themselves on the two key issues in a final settlement, peace and territory. Israel is not able now to make that commitment. The alternative would have been to try for a partial settlement first.
- Progress toward an interim settlement on the Canal seems near impasse. What started as a proposal for modest mutual pullback has now become, at least in Egyptian eyes, a half-step to complete Israeli withdrawal.
- Sadat has strengthened his position and shown readiness to work with the US, but with no movement following Secretary Rogers' trip the Egyptians are increasingly voicing disillusionment.
- Soviet military shipments and the Soviets' own position in the UAR also continue to grow steadily. There is no plan for relating the USSR to our diplomatic efforts.
- The aircraft pipeline to Israel runs dry in June (Phantoms) and August (Skyhawks). When this fact becomes known, the Arabs and Soviets will be encouraged to think that we are beginning to squeeze Israel. Yet the Israelis do not see any US request to which they can accede without, in their view, undercutting their negotiating position.
- If diplomatic efforts stall, the prospect is for UN debate in the fall General Assembly and possibly rewriting of the basic UN resolution. Beyond that, if there is no promise of further diplomatic progress, Sadat's choice and whatever Soviet restraint may be exerted will

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govern whether and when some UAR military effort is undertaken. If a UAR move appears imminent, an Israeli move is likely.

Since the effort to achieve an interim settlement on the Canal will be the focus of discussion, it is worth looking at how that idea evolved.

Given flat Israeli refusal to negotiate a peace based on withdrawal to essentially pre-war borders, the idea of an interim settlement was broached to Mrs. Meir in October. The purpose was to stabilize the Suez front, thereby to buy time for peacemaking and for developing some confidence that the two sides could work out reasonable agreements together.

Since both Egyptians and Israelis took up this idea in January-February, it has been transformed from a modest mutual pullback and thin-out of forces along the Canal into a withdrawal on the way to an overall settlement along the lines of the "Rogers Plan." From its beginnings as a time-buying alternative to Jarring negotiations it has been transformed in the State Department concept to a way-station in the Jarring negotiations. Whereas Sadat in January seemed willing to consider any kind of movement, he has since been encouraged to insist on movement only as part of a Jarring settlement. Israel's hard negative response to Jarring March 26 -- coupled with US diplomacy -- contributed significantly to the hardening of his position.

During and following Secretary Rogers' trip, Israeli and UAR positions were clarified. Each side was given indication of some US understanding. Sisco returned to Cairo with clear understanding that Israel would not withdraw east of the key Sinai mountain passes; Bergus in Cairo contributed ideas to a UAR paper which would extend UAR control east of those passes. The positions now are:

--The UAR would extend its control east of the passes (40-60 miles east of the Canal), extend the ceasefire six months with a possibility of renewal, send UAR military forces across the Canal, state that this is the first stage in a settlement along the lines of the Rogers Plan."

--Israel is thinking of a very small withdrawal (10-40 miles) staying west of the key passes, insists on indefinite ceasefire, refuses to permit UAR military forces across the Canal, resists any linkage between an interim Canal settlement and an overall peace settlement.

The situation now is that, by pressing for concessions that Israel is unwilling to consider now, we seem to have lost the opportunity to work out an interim settlement and buy time.

The question today is whether and, if so, how to try to salvage an interim settlement or whether to turn to some other course.

State Department is considering two related moves: (a) inviting Prime Minister Fawzi to Washington to explore with him whether there might be enough flexibility in the UAR position to give us a basis for trying to persuade Israel to make further concessions, (b) putting forward a US proposal defining a possible compromise between UAR and Israeli positions.

The argument made for this approach is that Fawzi is the most reasonable Egyptian to talk to and only by getting him here -- Sadat earlier offered to send him -- can we talk to him rather than Sadat or Riad. The argument is also made that it is necessary to show more movement. On putting forward a US position, the point is made that the two sides will not move closer by themselves.

The argument against this approach is that, whereas our objective in pursuing an interim settlement was to slow the pace of diplomacy, this would speed it up. Unless we are prepared for a major contest of wills to press Israel back behind the passes, if that is possible, having Fawzi here with little prospect of further movement would just lead to letdown. On putting forward a US position, the Israelis have told Sisco this would end the US role as go-between.

The tactical alternatives to the approach the State Department is considering are quieter diplomatic approaches:

--One would be to conduct further discussions with the Egyptians in Cairo through normal channels.

--Another would be to find a way for a heart-to-heart approach to the Israelis indicating the need for movement but giving them their choice.

--~~A~~ third, which would risk strong Israeli reaction if Israel were not aboard first, would be to see whether the Soviets would work toward UAR concessions.

On a broader front the issue is whether to seek some Israeli concessions now or to make some move -- further aircraft for Israel or strengthening our own forces in the area -- to strengthen Israel's position and wait for further Egyptian concessions with the risk that the ceasefire will break down in six months or so.

The argument made for seeking some Israeli concessions now is to give Sadat something to justify prolonging the ceasefire. More fundamentally, it is that steady entrenchment of the Soviet position as the Israelis stand fast brings the US and USSR closer to confrontation.

The argument against seeking Israeli concessions now is that it is doubtful the US could win a confrontation of wills in the short run unless the concessions were too minor to do any good.

Only when this question is decided will there be a rationale for allowing a hiatus in the shipment of aircraft to Israel or continuing shipment.

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