

DECLASSIFIED

Authority NND 969045

By WDP NARA Date 10/18/00

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE  
EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

PARTICIPANTS: Earl of Cromer, Ambassador of Great Britain  
Charles D. Powell, First Secretary

Henry A. Kissinger, Secretary of State  
Peter W. Rodman, NSC Staff

DATE AND TIME: Wednesday, October 31, 1973  
9:05 - 9:40 a.m.

PLACE: Secretary Kissinger's Office  
The White House

Amb. Cromer: Can you tell me about the Fahmi visit? Did he have anything constructive?

Sec. Kissinger: Let me say one thing first -- I just saw the President, so you can say I am instructed to say this. He's extremely pained at your Prime Minister's refusal to endorse the alert.

Amb. Cromer: That is not true. It is absolutely not true. What he said was quite good actually. [to Powell:] Charles, do you have it?

Sec. Kissinger: We'll get this straightened out. The New York Times had a piece saying he pointedly refused to endorse it.

Amb. Cromer: I get the impression they are not on our side. I have the same problem with the London Times. They were claiming I didn't have any idea what was going on.

Sec. Kissinger: We kept you better informed than any other government.

Point two is, we had a report that one of your senior officials, Parsons, said the Foreign Secretary was under the impression that what I said to him at the airport reflected our own predilection, and not the view of the Soviets. But we wanted it because it made it easier to get Israeli agreement. I can show you what the Soviets gave us.

TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE  
EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY

DECLASSIFIED

Authority NND 969095

By WDP NARA Date 10/18/00

TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE  
EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY

-2-

Powell: Here it is [the Prime Minister's speech].

Cromer: Read it.

Kissinger: [reads cable] But it does say he doesn't know whether it was the only possible decision that could have been taken. It doesn't say that, knowing the facts, it was the right decision.

Cromer: It would have been helpful ... After the Cuban crisis, you sent emissaries all around. The Rumsfeld briefing was not very complete.

Kissinger: But you know the facts. We're talking about the British Prime Minister, not NATO. I'm sort of fatalistic about our European relationship.

Cromer: We know you are fairly gloomy about it. You have told McCloskey you are gloomy.

Kissinger: That's true. I think the behavior of our European allies puts our alliance in jeopardy. Whether we say it publicly makes no difference.

Cromer: It does. Saying it publicly it makes it more difficult to put it right.

For six years we have been saying to your State Department it was a potential blow-up. Then there is this inaction. Then a blow-up. Then it gets escalated into an East-West thing. The Europeans were originally looking at it as an Arab-Israeli thing, not an East-West blow-up. This is where it went wrong.

Kissinger: But it is impossible to point to one generous forthcoming act by the Europeans since MBFR.

Cromer: But the same thing is true in GATT.

Kissinger: I'm sick and tired of the declarations in all their forms. We may have to go through the motions.

Cromer: We will have to go through the motions.

Kissinger: Symbolically it shows something when the allies won't agree to the word "partnership" between the United States and the Nine.

Cromer: The problem is with the French, who say it doesn't translate into French and that it symbolizes subservience.

TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE  
EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY

DECLASSIFIED

Authority NND 969045

By WDP NARA Date 10/18/00 E  
EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY

-3-

Kissinger: How?

Cromer: I don't see how. We have no problem with it.

Kissinger: It cannot be beyond the wit of man to find a French word that doesn't connote subservience.

Cromer: The word doesn't present us with any problem -- or anybody else.

Kissinger: You had instructions to come here with something.

Cromer: Two things -- One is whether Fahmi had anything constructive.

Kissinger: I'll tell you in a minute. What is the second thing?

Cromer: And a message is coming to you on some ideas for peace.

Kissinger: We appreciate that.

Cromer: On the Israeli elections, we see your point, but we nevertheless think something should begin first.

Kissinger: Oh yes, it is clear that something should be seen to be done, but the real pressure can only be brought afterwards.

Cromer: We have one thought on the POW's. The second is that if the Egyptians can start clearing the Canal, with the understanding that Israel can use it, this could help.

Kissinger: But they are blockading the other end of the Red Sea.

Cromer: It would all have to go together.

Kissinger: We're glad to consult intimately with you in all this. We appreciate it.

Cromer: This is all bilateral.

Kissinger: But it would be helpful if we occasionally heard a British diplomat supporting us. Who is Parsons?

Cromer: He is a Mideast expert. It would be in our interests to pull it off.

TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE  
EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY

DECLASSIFIED

Authority NUD 969045  
By WDP NARA Date 10/18/00

TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE  
EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY

-4-

Kissinger: I told you when I got the report and I told you you were right.

Cromer: We have no reason to urge Sadat not to accept a ceasefire.

Kissinger: The problem with the Third Army is that if it isn't trapped by the Israelis it will trap the Israelis. If they put SAMs over both sides of the narrow Israeli salient, and dominate the air over the salient, the Israelis are trapped. This is what they tell us.

This is what we discussed with Fahmi. The weird thing is that he started with a proposition that sounded reasonably attainable -- that if we could get the roads open, they would agree that in perpetuity only non-military traffic could move through the UN checkpoints. So I thought only the questions of the blockade and POW's were left. On the POW's, we worked it out for an exchange once the ceasefire lines were established, and he said he would use his good offices on the blockade.

It turned out he meant by "in perpetuity" only the three to four days until the Israelis left the roads; then the roads were theirs!

If we work out these three points, then we'll put pressure on the Israelis.

Cromer: Our idea was sort of a buffer zone between the Egyptians and the Israelis.

Kissinger: That doesn't help the supply problem. One of the tragedies is it had to end with this figure-eight arrangement.

If the Egyptians start the offensive again, and push into the salient...

Cromer: The UN observers would have to stop that.

Kissinger: We'd have to sell that to the Israelis. We're for resupply of non-military equipment.

You can see every night on CBS vociferous attacks on me from Israeli generals and citizens. I'm not exactly a national hero there.

Cromer: I think not.

Kissinger: I think Fahmi will accept. Then all I have to do is convince Golda.

Cromer: As to the question of peace discussions, we would like to see the

TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE  
EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY

DECLASSIFIED

Authority NND 969045

By WDP NARA Date 10/18/00

TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE  
EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY

-5-

UN Secretary General in the act. Because if it is merely done between the two superpowers, it's more vulnerable.

Kissinger: We have no objection to that.

Our idea is at some point we put the arrangement to the Security Council to get their endorsement.

Cromer: I think anything but the Security Council itself would be unacceptable.

Kissinger: It would be unacceptable to the Israelis.

We have no objection to your playing a major role.

If your Foreign Secretary thinks I cooked up this two-power arrangement and it wasn't a Soviet initiative, I can show you the proposal.

Cromer: I haven't seen that.

Kissinger: We saw Parsons was saying this.

Cromer: Some of our friends are being disruptive.

Kissinger: We got it from our mutual friends. I don't know who he is. Was Parsons at the airport?

Cromer: Yes; probably.

Here's the draft -- on the opening of the Suez Canal -- you'll have the final version later today. These are just ideas to put into the pot. We stand ready to help. [Tab B].

Kissinger: Why don't I peel Roy Atherton off after I leave Tehran, to go to London? I'll peel off Atherton and Saunders. I would like your integrated ideas on a settlement.

Cromer: [Reads the message to the President.]

Kissinger: We'll certainly make a major effort. It'll be a painful one, but we'll do it. We are absolutely determined to do it. We are absolutely determined not to let the situation go back.

We all agree that peace talks should start no later than the last ten days of

TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE  
EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY

DECLASSIFIED

Authority NND 969045

By WDP NARA Date 10/18/00

TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE  
EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY

-6-

November.

One other thing. The Soviets are always harassing us to do things jointly. They want a joint special truce observer in Cairo.. That we'll refuse. I see no reason for a truce observer to be in Cairo. It does us no good for us to have someone on that side.

But one thing we're playing with -- we're thinking of appointing someone to represent us in the peace talks, and the Soviets would appoint someone to represent them. And we would have these two get together, so something is seen to be happening. If they travel through the Middle East, it's all right.

Cromer: Just to create the impression that something is happening.

Kissinger: When I am in Egypt, I'll try to get a fixed date, say November 26. But this is something to fill the time until November 26.

Can you get a reaction by 2:00? Or will you get upset about a Soviet-American condominium that has to be broken up by an united Europe?

Cromer: You are getting suspicious in your old age.

Kissinger: I'm getting experienced.

Cromer: One thing, the text of the Brezhnev letter, you gave me the sense of it. It would help if they could see it in London. Or have the sense of it.

Kissinger: I would be glad to. I'll have the text sent to you.

Cromer: We got under pressure on the embargo first in the Commons, then on the alert.

Kissinger: There was pressure on the embargo because it was too anti-Israeli.

Cromer: But then the Opposition went to town on the alert.

Kissinger: But seven out of eight of their airborne units were on alert, then no transports were flown for two days. It was a clear standown. We paid no attention. Then we get the letter saying, "If you won't do a joint force we'll take steps unilaterally. You must adhere immediately. We await a clear and immediate reply."

TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE  
EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY

DECLASSIFIED

Authority NND 969045

T By WDP NARA Date 10/18/00 E

EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY

-7-

We think we did it coolly. We had the impression it might happen the next morning. I asked Dobrynin, do we really need to wake the President for this? He said yes. I asked him, can you give me an assurance you won't act tomorrow? He said no.

The painful fact is that not one of our European allies said anything in support.

It is very different from the Cuban missile crisis. We deliberately low-keyed it. I did in my press conference, so the Soviets wouldn't be in the position of being seen to have backed off.

Cromer: You wanted NATO to say the President did the right thing.

Kissinger: I don't care what Belgium thinks. But if one or two of our major allies had supported it. It is bad enough when the barracudas here tear him apart whatever he does, but with the allies feeding it ... It is not in the interest of the non-Communist countries.

Cromer: Are you still worried about the Soviet fleet? I see they're up to ninety ships.

Kissinger: Yes. And we have information that a Soviet ship carrying nuclear weapons passed through the Bosphorus, and then came back without them.

Cromer: You told the Russians?

Kissinger: Yes.

Cromer: Only you and we know.

Kissinger: The Senate Foreign Relations Committee will know because I'm going to brief them now.

[They get up. HAK opens his book of exchanges with the Soviets.]

Kissinger: Here, you can read it here and I'll send a copy over to you.

Notice that it says "Mr. President." It's the only message we received in four years which doesn't begin with "Esteemed Mr. President." or "Dear Mr. President."

[Cromer reads it. A copy was sent to the British Embassy later than morning. Tab A.]

TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE  
EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY