MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

PARTICIPANTS:  President Nixon
Members of the Cabinet
Brent Scowcroft, Deputy Assistant to the
President for National Security Affairs

DATE AND TIME:  March 8, 1974

PLACE:  Cabinet Room

SUBJECT:  Cabinet Meeting: Briefing on Middle East

Kissinger:  I will describe the basic strategy and how our recent
moves fit into our strategy.

The situation we faced in October and November of last year
was: We faced a coalition of the Soviet Union and the Arabs united
against us. All the issues were lumped into one ball of wax. We
had to make it clear to the Arabs that the Soviet Union could give them
only arms whereas only we could give them a settlement. We had to
break up the ball of wax. What helped was having Sadat. He is a
moderate leader. He's not like Nasser. He's not intoxicated by
his own rhetoric.

The President:  When Sadat came in, most people thought he could
never replace Nasser, who was charismatic. They were wrong.

Kissinger:  The estimates were that Sadat couldn't last three months,
and Sabri was the strong man. He is in jail now.

We wanted to frustrate the Arabs as long as they relied on
Soviet arms and pressure. We had to hang in there for three or four
years until the Arabs realized this.
The President: What he means is we had to prove only that the U.S. could bring peace. We maintained a military balance in October and we laid the grounds for a diplomatic settlement.

Israel must be convinced that four more wars would be detrimental to them. We don't want to club Israel, but to show them it is in their interest.

Kissinger: We had to withstand military pressure and political pressure in two Soviet summits before the message got through. Sadat, even during the airlift, didn't propagandize against us. The only people who complain about the alert are the Americans. They have not been upset by it -- they understood.

The President: The Soviet Union wanted each of us to send in a couple of divisions. When we said no, they said "we will go alone." That was when we went on the alert.

Schlesinger: There were misgivings in the Pentagon about the closeness of our association with Israel. But it was the right policy.

Kissinger: The Arabs can't be strong enough to defeat Israel, because only because they don't do they have to rely on us for progress.

The President: What we have been able to do is to get the trust of the Arabs -- that is, if hostilities stopped we would continue to work for permanent peace. We are moving; we have the Arabs' trust. Israel measures trust in terms of tanks and Phantoms.

Kissinger: Israel basically agrees this is the only way to go, but we will still have problems.

The President: This will take one meeting with Arab heads of government and the Foreign Ministers, but we have to have movement before the Brezhnev summit.

Kissinger: Our idea in October was that we would move Israel and the Soviet Union would move the Arabs. We are now in a position where we can best move both. We not only don't need the Soviet Union, but their style is bad for the Middle East. Their negotiating style is too pedantic.
The President: We are going to play a role in the whole Middle East. The Egyptian breakthrough is of historical importance. The Middle East is important. Vietnam was important. But relations between the super powers is most important. We can't brag about pushing the Soviet Union out of the Middle East. Let them preserve their pride.

Kissinger: So this scheme resulted in the Egyptian disengagement. The negotiation with Syria is different. They see themselves as the vanguard of pan-Arabism, etc. The big four asked us to start the Syrian process going.

Sadat's chief of staff at one point walked out, saying this was a political deal and he would have no part of it. Sadat brought him around in a few hours. This would be inconceivable in Syria.

We started by thinking in Kilometer 101 terms. But we would have had an exchange of rejections and counterproposals.

Asad has, though, proposed a line, and it's not west of the '67 line. If we get a Syrian disengagement, we can go back to Egypt for a territorial settlement because Syria will have signed a document with Israel. We could fail with Syria, however.

The Soviet Union is extremely frustrated. We succeeded with the Egyptian disengagement because they didn't know what was going on. Now, in a clumsy way, the Soviet Union is trying to push its way in. It is not in our interest to drive them to an explosion. They can't bring a settlement, but they certainly can prevent one. It is a vital U.S. interest to keep them sufficiently involved to keep them in line. They could frustrate it by making extreme proposals or by stirring up the radicals.

The President: There can't be peace in the Middle East if the Soviet Union opposes it and unless we play an active role. The Soviet Union can't produce a settlement but it could disrupt one.

Kissinger: We can't frustrate them at every turn -- like MFN.

The President: Good point. The radical right and the radical left are now joining to oppose MFN. Of course their system is oppressive. The question is what do we do about it? I previously supported the
Cold War approach. But it didn't work. We are now trying to find areas of agreement. Under the old policy, only 400 Jews emigrated. In 1973 it was up to 32,000.

If we freeze them, we must spend $100 billion more on weapons. Even then, we used to be many times stronger in the '40s and '50s. So what do we do about it? We must maintain our strength, but keep our contacts -- which means we have a voice inside the Kremlin, not just shouting outside. MFN just means to stop discriminating against them in trade policy. The Soviet Union is not going to change its system because we won't give them MFN.

If the trade bill has a credit restriction, I will veto it.

The UN, Cuba, Berlin -- they were good on all these. We have gotten far more from detente.

We are doing what is right.

Kissinger: The ardor of the liberals for Solzhenitsyn will cool when they know he is to the far right of Goldwater. Solzhenitsyn is a Slavophile and a Czarist.

The President: He isn't as good as Tolstoy. Three Tolstoy books should be read -- War and Peace, Anna Karenina, Possession, and a collection of religious essays.

We won't give up our ideals, but we will talk with our potential enemies because the alternative is a runaway arms race and a possible catastrophe. We don't think our talking will get them to change their policies.

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We are aware of the power areas -- U.S., Soviet Union, Japan, PRC -- not Europe right now. Call our policy a balance of power policy.

Kissinger: Yes, but that doesn't mean we don't distinguish our friends from our enemies.

The President: We can't appear we are panting for an end of the embargo. That is the best way to keep it from happening.
K. We will show them strategy and how our men move.

- Satellite in Oct. No moves at all against us, no big
  anything.
- So could you come only the settlement
  would be broken up badly way
- What help could bring Sallet
  not integrated by the war

P. What Sallet came in, we thought couldn't replace
  Vietnamese, who are Chinese. Better to stay away.

K. Est. Our Sallet couldn't last 3 or 4 weeks.
  We wanted to frustrate our, as long as they
  see carnage, pressure. We had to hang in there
  3-4 weeks until others relieved this.

P. What the men is not to know only US could bring peace.
  We maintained a military presence in out of hand
  works for big settlement.

I must recommend that it means some could be
  determined action be undertaken to check I don't show
  their intention.

K. We had to watch military presence and put pressure
  to begin the before the message got there.

Sallet, men coming and hitting propaganda against us.
  Many people are convinced that about the Americans.
  Japanese not be expected by it. They individual.

P. So until we don't send in army, Division, when
  men, they said we go alone - that would.

Salleu There were messages on population about change
  from equipment. Yes, but it was right policy.

K. There can be strong enough to defeat I believe only
  their ceremonial. They have to rely on us for progress.
What we have been able to do is to get a first phase of Aches, and if this is successful we would continue with the permanent phase. We cannot, we have lost trust. I came here to talk in terms of tanks and phobias.

I basically agree; this is exactly what I hope will still have a problem.

This will take some military effort and some effort for us. That we have to have movement before we can.

Our idea in that we would agree that we would move toward Aches one move in this area and one move back. We not only don't want to but this style is bad for ME negotiating style.

We are going to play a role in what ME. The E leadership is one ofLY analysis. ME is important, but not the most important. But surprising is most important. We can't negotiate past the short of ME, but then we will have this problem.

So the above result is E change. Syria is different (Para-Arabic, etc). The chief asked me to start a Syrian process going. So does chief of staff above point out saying this is a political and we would have in part of it be the

I have to make an agreement in Syria. But it need to be the story, the first time (like Syria) changed of Syria, and only a little bit of time.

If we get a Syrian change, we can go back to E for a standstill settlement because Syria will have
capable of doing it, we could find it.

- France, however.
- SU is extremely frustrated, but succeeded w/ E.
- doing because they didn't know what was going on. I see a clear way. SU is trying to push it very far. It isn't in our interest to defend them to avoid a dragged-out battle. They can't be brought to the table, but they must be brought to the table. Do we need this N. in order to keep them in line. They could be brought by making the
- impossible by threatening a vehicle?

P: Can't be made an ME even if SU opposes it - unless we play an active role. It can't produce a situation that could threaten us.

R: We can't frustrate them at every turn - like ME.

P: Good point. Reached right & reached left are now joining to oppose ME. Of course their system is opposed. Question is, what are they about? Needing to find our own approach, we are now trying to find open areas of agreement. Under our policy, only consciousness.

- 1973 (not sure of date). Germany is still our most important market, not just a friendly country.

R: With more, we must spend less to maintain our up to. Even then - we need to do many times more in this. But what is our goal? Can we now have some strength, but keep contacts - which means we have to come now under a Kremlin, not just another material.

ME: Past means to stop discrimination, not just.

S: SU will go. Change its system would be a waste. But we must move now.

R: Don't talk too direct otherwise, don't mix it.
V.N. Ceylon. Berlin - they were gone all right. We
have got to face reality, then.

We are doing what is right.

The second order of a bystander for Syria will fall when
they come to it. The export of foodstuffs, especially in
a famine like this is a point.

P. He said to you of the treaty. If they really want to
read - war & peace, Anne Frank, Possession, &

The collection of religious groups.

We won't give up our addicts, but we will talk
with them potential enemies because of the future. It
is a turning point, and possible catastrophe.

We don't think our talking will get them to change their
policies.

We are working - US, U.N. Japan, PCC
and European powers. Callum says, if.

Yes, but that doesn't mean we can't negotiate
inside from events.

P. We can't accept our past handling, our goals, and

That is the way to keep it from happening.