

Memcon between Dinitz and Kissinger, 7 October 1973

[First page illegible]

TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE
EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY

We spent today in the following operations: we knocked down nine out of the ten or eleven bridgeheads established on the Canal.

Kissinger: Let me know if we are doing enough.

Dinitz: We took out nine out of the ten to eleven bridges. Secondly we have bombed nine Egyptian airfields. The third operation is bombing Egyptian armor on our side of the Canal. We estimate there are close to 400 tanks on the eastern side. The cable to us said there were "good results" in all these targets, and heavy casualties inflicted.

Today we had to move aircraft to the northern front because it was more difficult there. We are feeling more optimistic on the Egyptian front, where there will be a counterattack on a large scale.

On the northern front, it was less pleasant; the Syrians succeeded in moving between our positions in several places, including Qunitra. At 10:00 p.m. local time, we were holding. There was very heavy fighting.

Mordechai, why don't you call the Embassy and let them know about the equipment?

[Shalev goes out to call his attaché about the equipment, and then comes back.]

Shalev: He says we asked for 200 Sidewinders. He's happy to get the 80 tonight, but hopes for the rest tomorrow.

Dinitz: Can you do it?

Kissinger: Probably.

Dinitz: On the Golan Heights, let me read from the cable. Mordechai, you have it.

Shalev: [reads cable] "We caused heavy damage to the Syrians in the land battles and air battles. On both fronts, our forces are increasing in strength. After a day of heavy tank-to-tank battles, the Egyptian army concentrated several hundred tanks east of the Canal and established main bridgeheads

TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE
EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY

TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE
EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY

on the central and southern portions of the Canal. Our forces created defense lines opposite these bridgeheads. Our aircraft attacks have continued since then. . ."

Dinitz: In other words, over night.

Shalev: [continues reading:] "... and we destroyed nine bridgeheads. Egyptian armor suffered very heavy damage from our air force and tanks. Our forces are becoming stronger and stronger in the Sinai, including units called up in the last twenty-four hours."

[Shalev is called out to take a phone call from the Israeli attache.]

Dinitz: [Continues reading:] "Our air force has concentrated on four missions: on hitting the airfields in the depth of Egypt; the ground-to-air missiles in Syria; the bridgeheads on the Canal; and air support to the attacking ground forces. In all these, our people report "good results.""

By tomorrow noon, we will be at our full striking capacity; we need two to three good fighting days.

Kissinger: You've seen what we have done.

[Shalev comes back.]

Shalev: There was a mistake. We only asked for 100, so 80 is good. If we can get more, fine.

Kissinger: My advice is to get what you can out of the country tonight.

Dinitz: The Prime Minister called me when I was in London on the way back to tell you she appreciated what you've been doing. On the military list, she says top priority is on the planes.

Kissinger: While the fighting is going on, it will be difficult.

Dinitz: If it is possible to fly them part way, for example to one of your bases in Italy, our people can pick them up. If you don't want to fly into the war zone.

Kissinger: Let me see. It will be difficult.

TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE
EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY

JTOP SECRET/SENSITIVE
EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY

Dinitz: The other items of importance are ordnance, ammunition, and accessories for aircraft. This is old stuff. If you are having difficulty, you can point out this is different from new stuff we never had before. But these are extremely important. We also need ammunition against tanks. We are fighting against several thousand tanks now -- actually in the fighting, not counting ones in reserve.

Kissinger: I do want to know what you need as priority items.

Dinitz: Yes. Then electronic equipment.

Kissinger: I'll see whether I can get it tomorrow.

Dinitz: Then on the political side. The Prime Minister says she appreciates what you have done.

Kissinger: Let me tell you where things stand on the UN. I spoke to the Secretary General. The meeting is scheduled for 3:30 tomorrow afternoon. I'm counting on Eban to talk for six hours.

Dinitz: I told him thirteen hours!

Kissinger: I told the British they should be in favor of delay. They favor a ceasefire; we favor also a return to the lines. I told them we shouldn't let this disagreement hold us up. I think we'll get through tomorrow before a vote, which will give us Tuesday also. I understand your strategy. You should move as fast as possible.

Dinitz: Let me tell you about our Cabinet meeting on Saturday morning, which I attended. Before it the Cabinet meeting, I was in a meeting alone with the Prime Minister and the Defense Minister. We had a briefing by the Chief of Staff. The Chief of Staff said there was every indication that the Arabs would strike at 6:00 a.m. He asked permission to strike first, because they were sitting like eggs. She said, "No, I don't want to have a preemptive strike and then have to spend the rest of my life explaining why we struck first." She asked Dayan for his view. He said he was schizophrenic. As a general he felt they should strike, but as a member of the Cabinet he knew that they should not. Then at 10:30 she saw Keating. I didn't know what she would say to him because the Cabinet hadn't met yet. But she said straight out, "We will not strike first." Then afterward she told me, "What did I say?" I said, "You can defend it to the Cabinet." She said, "Yes, but it is a terrible responsibility." Then

TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE

TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE
EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY

at the Cabinet, she started the discussion by saying straight out that she had told the American Ambassador there would be no first strike. There was a silence. Then a somewhat dovish member said, "There are lives at stake; that may not be the right decision." She got angry. She said, "You shouldn't talk in those terms. We fight for our freedom and our independence, but this means not only border fighting, but standing by our friends" -- meaning one friend.

I left immediately afterward to the Lydda airport because the airports would be closed later.

Kissinger: Because of Yom Kippur.

Dinitz: Yes. Even though I felt bad about leaving in the middle of that situation. On the way to the airport, I saw young boys taken from the synagogues. Right out of the synagogues. They were folding their tallises, and getting their revolvers. It was very dramatic sight. I heard sirens at two o'clock. Real sirens.

Kissinger: You've had a rough week. [Reference to the fact that Ambassador Dinitz had flown back to Israel on October 2 because of the death of his father.]

Dinitz: Yes. In every sense. It was a hard decision.

Kissinger: But it was right. You would have been killed if you had struck first. It's hard enough as it is.

Dinitz: I told her after Keating left, "Dr. Kissinger had always told me, whatever happens, don't be the one that strikes first. He told this to Rabin too." She said, "You think I forgot?"

Kissinger: Through tomorrow it's easy, because everyone will delay. Scali has been instructed to talk long. We won't table anything. We'll talk about returning to the status quo ante. If someone tables a resolution, we will table a resolution.

Dinitz: What about the General Assembly?

Kissinger: On the General Assembly I spoke to the Secretary General. El-Zayyat, Eban, and the Syrian will give informative reports, and Waldheim

TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE
EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY

TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE
EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY

has agreed that there will be no other speakers. We agreed to the General Assembly because the need for the key people to speak there will delay the Security Council until the afternoon.

I am assuming that by Wednesday night you will be in good shape.

Dinitz: We will be. On Yom Kippur we mobilized 100,000 alone.

Shaley: I have three members of my family -- two sons and a son-in-law -- in the field. They are in armor.

Kissinger: This is only for the Prime Minister. I have had a message from Ismail. They say they did it -- they didn't even claim you started it -- they say they did it only to prevent further provocation. They say they will not deepen their bridgeheads beyond where they are.

Dinitz: They can't!

Kissinger: Second, if you agree to withdrawal from the territory, they will agree to negotiate under the auspices of the Security Council or the Permanent Members of the Security Council, and to internationalization of the waterways.

The second, I have a message from the Russians -- that they pulled out all their advisers without consulting the host country.

Dinitz: That we observed on Thursday.

Kissinger: We tried to get them to cosponsor a resolution for a return to the ceasefire lines. There was no way they could agree to that, even with good will.

Dinitz: You think they knew in advance? And tried to prevent it?

Kissinger: I really think they tried to prevent it. In all their communications with us, they were very mild. They moved their fleets away from the coast. Really, they are playing your game. They haven't proposed any resolutions. If they were playing the Egyptian game they'd be proposing a ceasefire.

[Kissinger and Dinitz conferred alone in the Secretary's inner office until from 8:10 to 8:20 p. m.]