

August 12, 1970

NSC Special Review Group Meeting, August 12, 1970, "Middle East"

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Summary:

A summary of decisions made in the NSC Special Group meeting. The group decided to proceed with the delivery of weapons previously promised to Israel, and discussed plans for the consideration of future weapons requests, as well as expectations for the upcoming negotiations.

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English

Contents:

Original Scan

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NSC SPECIAL REVIEW GROUP MEETING

Wednesday, August 12, 1970

Time and Place: 11:35 A.M. -12:25 P.M., White House Situation RoomSubject: Middle EastParticipation:

Chairman -	Henry A. Kissinger	CIA -	Richard Helms David H. Blee
State -	U. Alexis Johnson Joseph J. Sisco Alfred L. Atherton, Jr.	JCS -	Adm. Thomas H. Moorer LTG Richard T. Knowles
Defense -	David Packard Robert J. Pranger	NSC Staff -	Harold H. Saunders Jeanne W. Davis

SUMMARY OF DECISIONS

It was decided:

1. to proceed with delivery of the weapons promised Israel before the ceasefire as quickly as possible;
2. to undertake a study of the objectives of the equipment Israel is requesting and what we are prepared to support;
3. to consider any new Israeli requests in the framework of these objectives, subjecting them to technical evaluation by Defense, integrating the political factors in the IG and resolving any differences in the Special Review Group, if necessary;
4. to investigate the possibility of linking military assistance for Cambodia, and possibly Korea, with Israel in presentation to the Congress;
5. State to prepare a rough scenario for the Jarring negotiations, if possible before the President leaves for San Clemente;
6. to meet next week to consider the financial issues and the question of the strategy we should be prepared to support for the Israelis.

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Mr. Kissinger said he had called this brief meeting to get everyone on board as to where we are and to see if we can get an integrated document for the future covering Israel's military and economic requests and a diplomatic scenario for the upcoming negotiations. With regard to Israel's weapons requests, he referred to NSSM 98, which asked Defense to continue its technical evaluation of Israel's requests. This evaluation would then be integrated in the IG with the political requirements. If the issues cannot be resolved at that level, the package can then be reviewed by the Special Review Group, if necessary. Any promises made before the ceasefire should be fulfilled forthwith, but any new Israeli requests should be put in the framework of a study of objectives. We need to find out what we are trying to support Israel in doing. What is the objective of the weapons Israel is requesting: to destroy the SAM system? to give Israel a surge capability for a one-time strike? to defeat a shallow air defense system? to silence Egyptian guns on a continuous or surge basis? He saw some eight possibilities of what we want to accomplish. Given the sophistication of the UAR system and Israel's mushrooming requirements, we need a US understanding as well as a joint US-Israel understanding of what we are trying to support. The President thought we should deliver the package of things we had promised the Israelis, get this behind us, and then submit all future requests to this kind of integrated analysis.

Mr. Packard and Mr. Sisco agreed.

Mr. Johnson asked about the Shrikes.

Mr. Packard said Defense was ready to go on the package; that the requests had been through the technical committee and were now on Secretary Laird's desk for signature.

Mr. Kissinger said we had used this package to get a ceasefire and that we should now proceed on it.

Mr. Sisco remarked that we were not completely committed to the full package. He understood that we were committed on individual items which contain the elements of what the Israelis have asked for. State agreed with Defense that this is the basic package. There is a serious political problem, however, in that we are in a very delicate situation -- a crisis of confidence -- with Israel. We have had to shove some things down their throats in the last week -- with good reason and it was the right thing to do -- but we now needed some indication of a positive decision at least in principle at the earliest possible date. We need to give some indication of what we can provide and when.

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Mr. Packard said we could go ahead on the package he had given State.

Mr. Sisco agreed that this would meet the problem.

Mr. Kissinger added that this is what the President wants to do.

Mr. Packard said we may not have enough Shrikes to meet their full request -- not enough to provide for a major attack against the whole area. We could, however, given them a minimal capability and he suggested we might want to shave the numbers of some of the other requests to make them comparable.

Mr. Sisco noted that they had asked for 300 CBUs and we might cut that amount by 50 to make it proportional.

Mr. Pranger noted that the numbers would depend on the objectives to be served.

Mr. Kissinger asked what they could do with 300 CBUs.

Mr. Saunders asked if they used only one on each SAM site.

Adm. Moorer replied that it took more than one.

Mr. Sisco added that we were talking only about those SAM sites within 50 kilometers.

Mr. Packard asked how many sites there are within 50 kilometers.

Mr. Sisco replied 30 or 32 occupied sites.

Mr. Atherton corrected that to 35 occupied sites.

Mr. Johnson added there was a total of 250 sites, but most of them were empty.

Mr. Sisco said it would be of the greatest help if Mr. Packard could call in Ambassador Rabin tomorrow and tell him that we are ready to go on the package.

Mr. Kissinger said the President wants to do something now without haggling, so as to get it behind us. He said his instinct would be to go along on the 300 CBUs. He thought knocking off 50 CBUs was not worth bringing to the President. He asked how the 300 figure was arrived at.

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Mr. Pranger replied that Israel had asked for a maximum and minimum capability for the zone. Defense experts had run a hypothetical raid on a site and had come up with the 300 figure. It was not a service-coordinated figure.

Mr. Packard said Defense would check the validity of the figure.

Mr. Kissinger said it would be better to deliver 250 today than 300 next week.

Mr. Sisco said he would not argue about the figures. It was more important psychologically that we go to the Israelis tomorrow with a package.

Mr. Kissinger agreed that we should be able to say to the Israelis "we made you take it last week -- here is something to help."

Mr. Sisco said he was trying very hard to get the Israelis to put forward a forthcoming position in the negotiations. The psychological effect of an agreement in principle on their arms request would be of the greatest help.

Mr. Packard said, on second thought, he thought we should stick to the figures in the package and not try to cut down. He agreed too little would not be good, and thought we should proceed with the full package.

Mr. Kissinger agreed, saying we would have to squeeze the Israelis to prevent the aborting of the negotiations.

Adm. Moorer said it should be made clear that the purpose of the Shrikes was only to force the other side to turn off their electronic equipment since the Shrikes home in on the radar.

Mr. Packard agreed we want an integrated attack. The Shrikes force the other side to cut off their radar and the CBUs follow up with the attack.

Mr. Johnson asked Mr. Packard if he could move tomorrow with the Israelis.

Mr. Packard agreed, saying he understood the political problem.

Mr. Johnson and Mr. Sisco said this would be of the greatest help.

Mr. Sisco suggested he be absolutely explicit with Rabin -- that this equipment was being provided for use only in case the ceasefire breaks down.

Mr. Packard said he would make this clear.

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Mr. Kissinger raised the issue of the Skyhawks and the \$4.2 million for their modification.

Mr. Packard said there were some problems. He said the Israelis were now afraid that if the Skyhawks were modified they might not have the capability of handling the Shrikes. It was a question of what the Israelis really want and we have to look at the details.

Mr. Sisco said we were already committed to this.

Mr. Kissinger added that the Israelis had two Presidential letters.

Mr. Johnson asked if the A-4's or F-4's would be used to deliver the Shrikes.

Adm. Moorer replied both.

Mr. Sisco said the Israelis were operating on the assumption that the Shrikes would be used on the Phantoms. They are worried about the Skyhawk delivery because they understood that final arrangements would have to be made by August 10 to insure delivery in September. He understood, however, that they had in fact a few more days. If a decision were made now, we could deliver 5 Phantoms and 4 Skyhawks in September as planned.

Mr. Packard said he will get the Israelis in and agree on the details -- probably tomorrow when he talks to Rabin about the arms package.

Mr. Kissinger and Mr. Sisco agreed that this would be very helpful.

Mr. Kissinger turned to the economic side, saying Secretary Laird had accurately pointed out that the costs to Israel are mounting up. He understood the situation would become acute at the turn of the year.

Mr. Johnson said he had underway a study on the whole Foreign Military Sales problem. We assume the present bill is dead. The only alternative seems to be to hang the FMS authorization on the Defense Procurement Bill by adding it to the Jackson amendment to the DP bill. The Jackson amendment is hortatory, asking that we do things for Israel. We would add two paragraphs which would, in effect, give us FMS authority for other countries. We have to do it quickly, however.

Mr. Packard asked how we could move quickly enough.

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Mr. Sisco said the Defense lawyers were having difficulty with the Jackson amendment approach since they did not believe this would grant bona fide authorization. He said Jackson intends it to be binding, and we could give it as explicit and legally binding an interpretation as we wished to.

Mr. Johnson agreed that the present Jackson amendment does not really do anything. We propose to add two paragraphs to it which would take care of Israel and other countries as well with regard to FMS. He said he was circulating language for these two paragraphs for comment. He pointed out that the FMS legislation is still in effect -- all we need is the authorization.

Mr. Kissinger asked if we would then have, in effect, the same authorization as last year, knocking out both Cooper-Church and sections 9 and 10.

Mr. Johnson agreed, saying the Congress could, of course, add these limitations again if they wished. He said we now needed to decide on a figure for Israel.

Mr. Sisco noted that the Israeli Embassy could help tremendously on this tactic if they would -- they have \$119 million riding on it.

Mr. Kissinger asked what about Iran -- could we include Iran under this tactic?

Mr. Sisco said we could.

Mr. Johnson said we were thinking of a \$750 million figure, which was very large, and we would have to decide how much of this would be for Israel.

Mr. Sisco said he thought \$750 million was a correct figure even though it was large. He thought the Israelis could bring the cannon power to bear on the Congress to pull it off.

Mr. Kissinger asked, semi-facetiously, if we could include \$50 million for Cambodian MAP?

Mr. Sisco said if we go through the pain of making the request and unleash the Israelis, the prospects of success or failure were as good at the \$750 million figure as at any other figure.

Mr. Packard remarked that this was a tricky tactic, but we might as well go for broke. He said he would look into the question of a figure.

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Mr. Kissinger asked about timing.

Mr. Helms asked if the Jackson amendment was not due to come up immediately after the ABM vote?

No one knew precisely.

Mr. Johnson asked if we can go up with this idea before the FMS is really dead.

Mr. Packard said we could not.

Mr. Kissinger said he had understood Dick Cooke of Bill Timmon's staff to say that Fulbright had indicated in conference that he might be willing to drop sections 9 and 10 if Cooper-Church stayed in.

Mr. Johnson said he would run this down. It would still not give us enough for Israel, but we might then go back for a supplemental.

Mr. Kissinger said he would like to see us wrap Israel, Cambodia and Korea together.

Mr. Sisco remarked that we might get Israel, since we would have an energetic Congress on this issue right before the election.

Mr. Kissinger said if we got a supplemental for Israel, we might be able to change the President's mind on Cambodia if the two were linked.

Mr. Sisco said we could tinker within the \$750 figure since there would be no line items.

Mr. Saunders noted that this was a sales figure, however, and doesn't apply to Cambodia.

Mr. Johnson said this was the most imaginative idea yet and he would explore the possibility of linkage.

Mr. Packard said we should also look at the timing.

Mr. Johnson agreed.

Mr. Packard said if we could not do this, we would have to go for a supplemental for Israel alone. We cannot move, however, until the FMS bill is really dead.

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Mr. Kissinger said he had understood from the Congressional people that Fulbright was making compromise noises in conference yesterday. We had been holding firm and saying we would wait until September.

Mr. Johnson said we may want to reconsider this stand.

Mr. Kissinger asked that we check the facts and plan to discuss this aspect at a meeting next week (tentatively Wednesday, August 19, at 4:00 p.m.), along with the financial issues and the question of the strategy we should be prepared to support for the Israelis. He asked for a brief rundown of the diplomatic picture.

Mr. Sisco said Jarring was proceeding this week to discuss time, place and level of negotiations. He thought they would probably begin next week and probably in New York. The Arabs wish to talk at the Ambassadorial level and the Israelis at the Foreign Minister level. Jarring prefers the Foreign Minister level and had had the US pass a private message to the Israelis suggesting that they publicly name their Foreign Minister as their negotiator to help him with the Arabs. He thought the principal focus of the talks would be in the opening two weeks of the General Assembly -- in mid-September. He thought both sides would stall some, but both would be under great pressure to move. Jarring would do his best to keep the momentum going.

Mr. Kissinger asked how we could prevent a deadlock in the talks.

Mr. Sisco said we had two short-range objectives: (1) to try to get the parties to engage in serious negotiations by making serious proposals; and (2) to try to create conditions so as to make it impossible for the parties to disengage. He expected both sides to put forward their maximum positions at the outset. If Jarring is skillful, he thought there were ways to build on the US proposal. For the first time we have an explicit commitment from Nasser to recognize Israel and to make peace. For the first time, we have an Israeli commitment to withdrawal. Accordingly, Jarring has something to work with. We have suggested he might try at first to clear away some of the underbrush -- some of the less critical issues such as freedom of passage of waterways. We have to think what we can do to provide Jarring something more to work with in connection with the critical period at the opening of the GA. We also have to give Israel time to cool off after the events of last week.

Mr. Kissinger asked if the Arabs would stand still for this period. Their greatest fear is of a ceasefire without progress in negotiations.

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Mr. Sisco said he thought it possible that Nasser agreed to a ceasefire because the Arabs were beginning to hurt, but agreed that we would have to have some progress in the 90-day period if the ceasefire is to continue. Any progress would help. He thought the US might have to modify the position taken in our October and December papers. We might have to react to the new peace language the Soviets have given us. If we go back with new language, the Israelis could say that we are giving away their bargaining power. We would have to orchestrate very carefully what we can and should inject substantively into the negotiations and when. It was a very delicate situation. We have broken one Israeli Cabinet over a very modest US proposal. Anything else we may do will mean a further Cabinet crisis.

Mr. Atherton agreed that Golda Meir had been pushed almost beyond her limit.

Mr. Helms asked if we could not expect help from the Israeli people.

Mr. Sisco agreed, saying the people on both sides are ahead of their governments. He questioned if Golda Meir was the person to lead Israel to peace -- he thought she was looking backward, not forward.

Mr. Kissinger asked what the parties would talk about next week.

Mr. Sisco said he thought Jarring would proceed in a general way. He might say: If I can get a commitment in principle to X, Y and Z, would you be willing to take a positive position on A, B and C. If he were skillful, he would do this orally, then put pen to paper and try to build up an agreement step by step. The basis would be the US proposal.

Mr. Kissinger asked if we could get through the US elections before the border issue comes up.

Mr. Sisco said he doubted it. He said he was now beginning to draft a "full agreement" including borders. We could either feed this to Jarring to give both sides, or we could give it to the Israelis.

Mr. Kissinger said under no circumstances do anything in October! He asked Sisco to get a rough scenario for the President before he goes to San Clemente.

Mr. Sisco said he would try, but it might take a bit longer to get something that was meaningful. He said, in any event, he would get it to San Clemente as early as possible during the President's stay, if he did not have it before he left.

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