

# The White House Middle East Policy in 1973 as a Catalyst for the Outbreak of the Yom Kippur War

## ABSTRACT

We focus on the part that was played by the U.S. Administration, in particular by National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger, in the failure of efforts to bring about an Israeli-Egyptian settlement in 1973, the year in which the Yom Kippur War broke out. Documents recently declassified in the United States and Israel support that the behavior of the White House, especially of Nixon's influential NSA, Kissinger, in the Middle East arena that year not only failed to prevent war but also indeed catalyzed its outbreak. We shall claim that in the examined period Kissinger led a "stalemate policy", which in practice meant undermining any peace initiative that surfaced if it was not in accordance with Israel's position on a possible settlement. With this in mind, the Egyptian government understood that the United States would have no real interest in promoting a peace process, pressuring Israel to withdraw from the Sinai Peninsula and perhaps also from other territories occupied in the Six-Day War. This assessment prompted the Egyptians to abandon diplomacy and (together with Syria) attack Israel in October 1973. They assumed that such a move would get the White House directly involved in the peace process in the Middle East and lead to the return of Egyptian territories occupied by Israel in the Six-Day War.

## INTRODUCTION

THE QUESTION OF WHY NO PEACE SETTLEMENT WAS REACHED BETWEEN Israel and Egypt in the period between the ceasefire agreement of 1970 and the outbreak of the Yom Kippur War in 1973 has been researched by few

scholars. Some lay the blame on the Arab side, especially on the Egyptian policy of refusing, at the time, to reach a comprehensive peace with Israel.<sup>1</sup> Others primarily blame PM Golda Meir's government. They claim that despite lofty declarations made at the time regarding its desire for peace, Israel had *de facto* adopted a policy that sought to keep the occupied territories under Israel's control, and thus prevented the development of intensive negotiations with Egypt.<sup>2</sup>

We focus on the part played by the U.S. administration, in particular by National Security Advisor (NSA) Henry Kissinger, in the failure of efforts to bring about an Israeli-Egyptian settlement in 1973, the year in which the War broke out. We do not argue that the White House exclusively carried the responsibility for the outbreak of the War. The policies of Meir's government, as well as those of the Egyptian President, Anwar Sadat, are no less culpable. However, this does not absolve the White House and especially the architect of U.S. foreign policy in those days, Kissinger, from responsibility for the outbreak of the war. Documents recently declassified in the United States and in Israel support, we maintain, the possibility that the behavior of the White House, and especially of Nixon's influential NSA, Kissinger, not only failed to prevent the War, but also to a great extent, catalyzed its outbreak.

During the period examined, Kissinger led a "stalemate policy", which undermined any peace initiative that surfaced if it was not in accordance with Israel's basic position on the issue. We propose that this policy led the Egyptians to conclude that the *status quo* in Egyptian-Israeli relations that had existed since the ceasefire of August 1970 was convenient for both the United States and Israel. In this *status quo* Egypt accepted a ceasefire along the Suez Canal, while Israel continued to deploy its forces along its other bank. Israel, the main U.S. ally in the Middle East, emerged victorious from the battlefield. From a U.S. perspective this was highly advantageous: it would make it apparent to all countries in the region that it was more profitable to seek U.S., rather than Soviet, patronage.

The Egyptian government understood that the United States would have no real interest in promoting a peace process, pressuring Israel to withdraw from the Sinai Peninsula and perhaps also from other territories occupied in the Six-Day War. It seems this assessment prompted the Egyptians to abandon diplomacy and attack Israel (together with Syria) in October 1973. They rightly assumed that such a move would get the White House directly involved in the peace process and lead to the return of Egyptian territory.

## THE WHITE HOUSE STALEMATE POLICY

Since the early days of Nixon's Administration, in January 1969, it was clear that there was disagreement between the White House and the State Department regarding the desirable solution to the Israeli-Arab conflict in general, and the Israeli-Egyptian conflict in particular. The State Department, under Secretary Rogers and his assistant for Near Eastern Affairs Joseph Sisco, who were keen to broker a peace agreement to end the Israeli-Arab conflict, argued that the United States had to reach agreement with the USSR regarding the nature of the settlement. This cooperation between the superpowers would help restore U.S. standing with Arab countries, in particular with Egypt and Jordan. Furthermore, the United States should adopt a "balanced policy" towards the parties to the conflict. Within the framework of a peace agreement, Israel should give up most of the Arab territories occupied in 1967. Other officials urged that military aid to Israel should be conditional on its willingness "to accept those positions".<sup>3</sup>

NSA director Kissinger believed that the State Department's approach to Middle Eastern affairs was mistaken because any settlement reached with Moscow's blessing would naturally be based on the position of the Arab world and thus give open recognition to the Soviet grip on the region. He claimed that the Kremlin's final goal was to draw the United States out of the region. On the practical level, these assessments led Kissinger to adopt a policy that essentially favored the *status quo* in the Middle East. Hence, Kissinger opposed State Department pressure on Israel to reach an agreement at the cost of considerable territorial concessions. He believed that the continued stalemate served not only Israeli interests, but also U.S. interests. This stalemate Kissinger claimed would make it clear to the Arab states that the USSR was unable to advance any initiative in the Middle East and would thus make them turn to the United States to act as a mediator between them and Israel. He argued that this state of affairs would weaken the standing of USSR in the Arab countries, and particularly in Egypt.<sup>4</sup>

These substantial differences in approach created a situation in which there was no uniform and consistent U.S. policy. Both Israel and Egypt were aware of the sour relationship between the White House and the State Department. They gradually understood that without a clear and consistent U.S. policy, the chances of reaching an agreement under the aegis of the United States were slight. Furthermore, between 1969 and 1973 Kissinger, with the knowledge and support of Nixon, did all he could to undermine State Department initiatives. Thus, for example, Nixon and

Kissinger undermined the Rogers Plan of 9 December 1969, which aimed to end the conflict between Israel and Egypt.<sup>5</sup>

In response to the Rogers Plan, Nixon formulated his stalemate doctrine, which played a crucial role in U.S. policy up to the outbreak of the Yom Kippur War. The day after Rogers' speech, on 10 December, Kissinger formulated the main principles of what he believed to be the policy that the United States should pursue, which seemed to oppose any substantial attempt to reach a settlement:

The longer Israel holds its conquered Arab territory, the longer the Soviets cannot deliver what the Arabs want. As that time drags on, the Arabs must begin to conclude that friendship with the Soviet Union is not very helpful—that it led to two defeats, one of which the U.S. rescued the Arabs from, and continued impotence in regaining what they lost.<sup>6</sup>

Nixon publicly supported the Rogers Plan for ceasefire in the War of Attrition between Israel and Egypt, which came into force on 7 August 1970. Nevertheless, Nixon and Kissinger refused to support the Rogers Plan of spring 1971, which aimed to broker an interim agreement between Israel and Egypt regarding the Suez Canal.<sup>7</sup>

Nixon and Kissinger's refusal to support the State Department's efforts to promote the peace process was understandable so long as Egypt was fully a Soviet client. The White House refused to become directly involved in the peace process because any settlement reached would strengthen the USSR's hold on Egypt and on other countries in the region and would have repercussions for other loci of conflict between the Superpowers, such as Vietnam and Europe. Declassified documents show that even when Egypt clearly signaled to the United States that it wanted to break away from Soviet patronage and promote the peace process with Israel under U.S. auspices, the White House held on to its stalemate policy, avoided direct involvement in the process, and made no effort to convince Israel to be more forthcoming in its positions.

The White House's behavior regarding the Israeli-Egyptian conflict from the end of the War of Attrition and up to the outbreak of the Yom Kippur War followed from three premises that Kissinger and Nixon had adopted, and which turned out to be disastrous in October 1973:

1. Since the situation is not one of crucial crisis, the *status quo*, in which Israel enjoys the continuation of the ceasefire in the Suez Canal area while it continues to occupy the Sinai Peninsula, can be maintained.<sup>8</sup>

2. Egypt would not dare attack Israel as long as the latter enjoyed clear military superiority and as long as Egypt was aware of this superiority. Kissinger made a statement to this effect to Hafez Ismail, President Sadat's advisor on national security affairs, in May 1973.<sup>9</sup>
3. An Israeli withdrawal from the Suez Canal without a peace agreement would necessarily be interpreted as a victory for Egypt, a Soviet ally, and as a defeat for Israel, the U.S. ally, in the region. The Administration had no interest in supporting a plan leading to such a result.

### THE KISSINGER-ISMAIL MEETINGS IN FEBRUARY–MAY 1973

Shortly after he succeeded Nasser as President of Egypt, it was clear to Sadat that the road to the return of the lands Egypt lost to Israel passed through Washington, rather than through Moscow. In order to gain the White House's support for this goal he was willing to substantially reduce Soviet military presence in Egypt. When in May 1971 Rogers visited Egypt, as part of his attempt to promote an interim settlement on the Suez Canal, Sadat told Rogers, "If we can work out an interim settlement . . . I promise you, I give you my personal assurance that all the Russian ground troops will be out of my country at the end of six months."<sup>10</sup>

Despite this promise, Nixon and Kissinger decided not to give public support to the State Department's efforts to promote a partial settlement on the Suez Canal area. Even Sadat's daring move in expelling the Soviet advisors in July 1972<sup>11</sup> was not enough to change the White House's stalemate policy.

In spite of their disappointment with this U.S. response, Egypt persisted in its overt efforts to promote the peace process, on its terms, through involving the White House. The Egyptians were aware of the cold shoulder the attempts of the State Department to promote the partial settlement on the Suez Canal had received from the White House. Sadat understood that without an initiative from Kissinger or from Nixon himself, there would be no development towards a settlement with Israel that would allow him to regain the Sinai Peninsula. Sadat therefore decided to send his confidant and advisor on national security affairs, Hafez Ismail, to meet with Kissinger, to try to involve the White House in moving the peace process with Israel forward.

It appears that the U.S. Administration did not perceive this new channel to be as important or urgent a matter as the Egyptians considered

it to be. Sadat wanted to start the talks between Ismail and Kissinger in October 1972, but Kissinger repeatedly delayed the meeting. In his memoirs Kissinger claims that he had to postpone the meeting with Ismail because he was preoccupied with the negotiations on Vietnam, but it seems more likely that he preferred to postpone the meeting because promoting the Middle East peace process was not a top priority. The meeting eventually took place in late February 1973.<sup>12</sup>

It seems that Kissinger considered the meetings with Ismail to be of little importance. He viewed these meetings as yet another means for continuing his stalemate strategy. This attitude was reflected in a conversation he held three days before the first meeting with Ismail with Israel's Ambassador Yitzhak Rabin:

Nothing will come out of this meeting unless they come in with a new proposal. And if they do that, I will tell them I will study it . . . Contrary to Rogers and Sisco, I believe I should sell my involvement only in return for something from them. At this meeting I have to let them feel we are taking them seriously; otherwise there would not be enough to fill two hours, let alone two days.<sup>13</sup>

While Kissinger did not consider the meeting with Ismail to be an opportunity to break the stalemate in the Middle East, Egyptian intentions and expectations were different. In the talks between the two on 25–26 February Ismail presented the most far-reaching proposal made by Egypt up to this point in its negotiations towards a settlement with Israel. The proposal was to settle the Egyptian-Israeli conflict in several stages within the framework of a comprehensive agreement. Ismail repeatedly emphasized that Egypt could not wait and that most of the settlement had to be implemented in 1973. He added that a slow peace process would undermine Egypt's standing in the Arab world and that Israel's withdrawal from the entire Sinai should be completed by the end of the year. Ismail's proposals included the following main elements:

1. Egypt was willing to accept any settlement between Israel and Jordan and the Palestinians in the West Bank that would be agreed by all parties to the conflict. This settlement should be based on the Palestinian right to self-determination in the Gaza strip, which would mean the establishment of a Palestinian autonomy in this region under UN supervision.

2. As to the Israeli-Egyptian conflict, Ismail made it clear that the most important issue in the proposed settlement would be the way in which Egypt's sovereignty in Sinai could be reconciled with Israel's demand to guarantee its security on the Egyptian border. Ismail expressed understanding towards Israel's security concerns and referred to them as "legitimate and reasonable".
3. Egypt made a commitment, in return for a complete Israeli withdrawal from Sinai, to recognize the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Israel (up to the 1967 borders), to end the state of war with Israel, to commit to non-interference in Israel's internal affairs for any reason, to allow free passage to Israel on international waterways in the Suez Canal and in the Straits of Tiran, to accept the presence of international forces in one or two strategic locations in Sinai, including Sharm el-Sheikh, and to act to end the Arab embargo on states trading with Israel.
4. Egypt would ensure that its territory would not be used as a base for terrorist activity by organizations or individuals against Israeli citizens or property.
5. Some parts of Sinai (Kissinger made reference to the areas east of the Mitla and Gidi passes) would remain demilitarized.
6. Ismail was even willing to consider complete normalization of relationship with Israel, including an exchange of ambassadors, and open tourism and trade agreements between the two states. Nevertheless, he emphasized that Egypt would only be ready for this when the Arab-Israeli conflict was settled on the whole, including a settlement with the Palestinians.<sup>14</sup>

Kissinger did not seem to be overly impressed with Ismail's proposals and responded to them with a distinct lack of enthusiasm. From the Egyptian point of view these were far-reaching proposals regarding its relations with Israel. Such generous proposals had not been made by Egypt since the end of the 1948 war. Nevertheless, under the circumstances this was not enough to lead to a breakthrough of any magnitude towards a settlement of the conflict. Israel's actions were based on the assessment that it had significant military superiority over Egypt and on the firm belief that this time, after the 1967 war, it should not give up on the option of a full peace settlement with the Arab world. An Israeli withdrawal was thus considered an option only as part of a peace agreement. According to Ismail's proposals Israel was supposed to withdraw completely from Sinai in a

non-belligerency agreement, while a full peace agreement would wait until the central problem in Israeli-Arab relations—the Palestinian problem—was settled. Ismail was no doubt aware that such a settlement was not a realistic prospect for the foreseeable future.

Kissinger's lukewarm and even outright cold reception of Ismail's proposals should be examined in this context. These proposals promised no breakthrough in the peace process. In his usual outright manner, Kissinger presented his view of the situation in all its painfulness, from an Egyptian perspective. He made it clear to his Egyptian guest that time worked in Israel's favor, that the United States would never forsake Israel and that the United States had no intention to pressure Israel to fully adhere to the Egyptian demands, nor to effect its international isolation. Kissinger claimed that the Egyptian position would not be accepted by Israel, who would insist on making no unconditional commitment to withdrawal from Sinai before the start of direct negotiations between the parties. He added that the continued state of stalemate in the peace process, while it maintained its occupation of Sinai, was an ideal situation from an Israeli perspective, so if Egypt wanted to change the *status quo* it would have to adopt more realistic positions.<sup>15</sup>

Compared with the unexcited reaction of the NSA, Israel's response to Ismail's proposals to Kissinger was more enthusiastic. Rabin admitted that Ismail's proposals included some "interesting remarks". Rabin was supportive of continued contacts between Kissinger and Ismail, predicated on Israeli recognition of Egypt's sovereignty over the entire Sinai Peninsula, coupled with an acceptance on Egypt's part of Israeli military presence (possibly camouflaged as civilian) at some points in Sinai. Ismail did not reject such an option out of hand in his meetings with Kissinger, and it would seem a real opportunity for moving the peace process forward had appeared. After Rabin described Ismail's proposals to Meir, she authorized him to inform Kissinger that she was willing to consider the idea. However, Kissinger did not take this idea seriously and did nothing to promote it with Ismail.<sup>16</sup>

The United State's cold shoulder to Ismail's proposals was deeply disappointing for Sadat. Apparently, he estimated that his proposals would also be recognized by the Administration as an expression of willingness on Egypt's part to make a far-reaching compromise in order to reach a settlement with Israel. In return, he hoped, the United States would agree to pressure Israel to show some flexibility in its positions too. He estimated that expulsion of the Soviet advisors would be interpreted as a sign of willingness to break from the Soviet "embrace". In return, he hoped the

Administration would be willing to make some steps in his direction on the issue of continuing the peace process. His hopes gradually faded. The new Egyptian estimate was that the United States adopted Israel's position of keeping outposts in the Sinai for the long term, under the guise of security arrangements.<sup>17</sup>

For the Egyptians, the position adopted by the United States, which in effect was also Israel's position, that Israel would keep some presence in Sinai after a peace agreement is reached, could not have been a suitable basis for promoting the peace process. Egypt's principled demand was that Israel withdraw completely from Sinai. Sadat expressed this position unequivocally in May 1971, when he made it clear to Rogers and Sisco that the return of the entire territory of Sinai to Egypt was a condition for any final agreement between Israel and Egypt, on which Egypt would never be willing to compromise, that there would be no compromise on even a single grain of sand in Sinai. Egypt would not accept negotiations with Israel and "would not relinquish one inch of Arab land or any of the rights of the Palestine people."<sup>18</sup>

If the message was not clear enough, Kissinger's harsh words at the end of the meeting with Ismail put the U.S. position in the most unambiguous manner:

My advice to Sadat is to be realistic. We live in a world of facts and we can't build on hopes and fantasy. The fact is that you have been defeated so don't ask for a victor's spoils. There have to be concessions on your part so that America can help you . . . How is it possible, in your defeat, to impose conditions to the other party?<sup>19</sup>

This led Sadat to conclude that there was no chance in the foreseeable future to make the White House pressure Israel to be more forthcoming in its positions towards Egypt; "There is no hope for peace through the U.S. as long as Israel does not want peace."<sup>20</sup>

Meir arrived in the United States for a state visit in late February 1973, immediately after Ismail's talks with Kissinger. Unlike previous visits, this time Meir felt at ease before her meeting with Nixon. She rightly estimated that he had no intention of pressuring Israel to be more forthcoming in its positions, so as to push the peace process with Egypt forward. Meir told the Israeli daily *Al HaMishmar* on 16 April that, "In diplomatic terms this was perhaps the easiest [of her visits to the U.S.]. Everybody [in the U.S. Administration] is wailing about why nothing is being done but nobody blames Israel." Meir complimented Nixon on keeping all his promises made

to her and made it clear that she felt no pressure from the United States to make concessions or show greater flexibility.<sup>21</sup>

The meeting between Nixon and Meir took place on 1 March. Nixon and Kissinger said that the threats made by the Arab countries to use the oil weapon against the United States if it failed to pressure Israel to promote the peace process, as well as public opinion within the United States, would require Israel to make statements to the effect that it was not interested in the continued stalemate. Both emphasized that there was no intention to pressure Israel to soften its positions.<sup>22</sup>

Nixon and Kissinger told Meir that the United States was interested in ending the stalemate in the peace process. However, these comments were made “for the minutes” and did not in fact reflect the U.S. Administration’s position at the time. The Administration’s two top diplomats knew all too well that as long as they were not willing to back these words with actions, they would remain a dead issue. Nixon and Kissinger stressed that they did not intend to make supplying arms to Israel conditional on any progress in the peace process. They knew that without tangible pressure their abstract aspirations would be meaningless. They considered it sufficient that Israel publicly express its desire for advancing the peace process without making any commitment to take concrete steps in this direction. Kissinger told Meir that he did not consider Ismail’s proposals a sign of flexibility on Egypt’s part.<sup>23</sup>

It was rather Meir who was willing, at least in this particular meeting, to show considerable flexibility to test how serious Ismail’s proposals were and to try to promote at least a partial settlement on the Suez Canal. She was willing to take on material risks and concessions for this purpose. She agreed to a partial withdrawal, from the Suez Canal area, with the continuation of the Israeli withdrawal from Sinai to be open to negotiation in the future. She also agreed, for the first time, to the presence of Egyptian police, in limited proportions, in the Canal area and noted that while Israel insisted on the right of its ships to pass through the Suez Canal, she did not intend to insist on this right being implemented as part of the partial settlement. Meir agreed to an Israeli withdrawal to the Mitla and Gidi passes as part of the partial settlement and that the United States should continue its contacts with the USSR and Egypt leading to a full agreement.<sup>24</sup> Meir’s forthcoming attitude received no follow-up and thus did not try further to promote her proposals. Meir might have understood that without any pressure from the White House Israel had better maintain the *status quo*, in which the ceasefire at the Suez Canal continued and held on to the entire Sinai peninsula.

Nixon and Kissinger were taken by surprise by Meir's attitude. It seems that Nixon feared public Israeli statements expressing willingness to compromise in a possible settlement with Egypt would encourage the State Department to try yet again to start up the dormant peace process. He therefore asked Meir to avoid informing the State Department of her willingness to make these concessions. Meir agreed and proposed that alongside the public attempt to promote an interim settlement between Israel and Egypt, Kissinger would continue, in his secret channel of negotiations with Ismail, to examine the general principles of a final agreement, as long as he kept Israel informed and coordinated the U.S. position with it.<sup>25</sup>

Even after he heard Meir's willingness to make sizeable concessions, Kissinger did not change his assessment that substantial progress in the peace process was highly unlikely. He revealed his intention to continue the stalemate strategy to Simcha Dinitz, the new Israeli ambassador, in late May 1973:

We are following the strategy I explained to your Prime Minister. We are pushing nothing, we are wasting time. We are using the [talks with the] Egyptians to kill off talks with the Russians [referring to the talks Kissinger held at the time with the Soviet Foreign Minister, Gromyko, and with the Soviet ambassador to the U.S., Dobrynin, on agreed steps to promote the peace process between Israel and Egypt, leading up to the U.S.-Soviet summit that was due to be held in June 1973]. The Egyptians also told them [the USSR] to stay out [of the talks between the U.S. and Egypt on ways to promote the peace process], so we are not under great pressure from them [the USSR] at the moment about the peace process.<sup>26</sup>

It thus seems that Kissinger used these two channels, the Soviet and the Egyptian, to make each other futile and to buy time. Moreover, Kissinger made clear to Dinitz that he had no intention of meeting Ismail during April 1973, as they had agreed at the end of their previous meeting, and that the meeting would take place no sooner than May that year. He did not envision any real progress in the Egypt-U.S. talks. It follows that Kissinger did not intend to use new Egyptian proposals, if any, to push the peace process forward: "I told them [the Egyptians] I won't talk to them unless they have something new and different from the public position . . . If they give me something new that doesn't lead anywhere."<sup>27</sup>

Kissinger further "reassured" Dinitz that he should not expect any understandings with the USSR on the Middle East, either in the discussions leading up to the summit or at the summit itself:

With the Russians there is practically nothing going on . . . I will react in a slow-moving way to their proposals. If it [discussions on the Middle East] moves slowly and drags through the summit, that is their problem . . . I am not going to propose a meeting [with Soviet officials, to discuss Middle East issues before the summit]. They will have to propose a date. We won't accept the date they propose. And Brezhnev is going to Germany. That will take his time [so that he will not have time for Middle East discussions].<sup>28</sup>

Kissinger told Dinitz that he did not know how long it would be possible to maintain the stalemate strategy and that the situation in the Middle East might easily ignite.<sup>29</sup> This reveals that Kissinger was aware of the depth of the Egyptians' frustration due to the lack of progress in the peace process and to the stalemate situation for which he himself was to a large degree responsible. Although he was aware that this frustration on the part of the Arab states, and especially the Egyptians, might lead to a full-fledged confrontation between Israel and the Arab countries, Kissinger maintained his stalemate policy, like an acrobat walking on a tight rope, betting that despite their frustration the Egyptians would not dare attack Israel (that soon turned out to have been disastrous).

The United States caused further humiliation to the Egyptians several weeks after Ismail's departure and Meir's visit. On 14 March the *New York Post* revealed that at the meeting between Nixon and Meir a new weapons deal between the United States and Israel was agreed upon that included the sale of fighter aircraft. They had indeed agreed secretly to the United States supplying Israel with at least 100 Phantom fighter planes over the next several years. Nixon demanded that Meir not leak information about the deal to the media.<sup>30</sup>

On 20 March Ismail wrote to Kissinger complaining about the weapons deal. Kissinger, in his typically insolent manner, was quick to deny any such agreement, but the Egyptians did not believe the denial. From Sadat's point of view, the U.S. reply to Ismail's compromise proposals was essentially negative and the decision to sell more Phantoms to Israel was an unequivocal expression of this attitude.<sup>31</sup>

The failure of the Ismail-Kissinger talks and the news of the weapons deal led Sadat to conclude that the only way to break the stalemate and push forward the peace process was through renewing hostilities. Thus, in the spring of 1973 Sadat began consolidating broad political support in Egypt for war. On 6 March he held a confidential meeting with the Central Committee of the Socialist Arab Union and several delegates from the People's Council of Egypt, in which he announced that his decision to start a war

against Israel was final and unshakeable. He defined the goal of the war, to be fought jointly with Syria, as “breaking the ceasefire”. On 5 April, Sadat called a meeting of the Egyptian government, in which he announced that in view of the U.S. policy, according to which the U.S. conception of the way to solve the conflict should be imposed upon the Arabs (clearly resonating Sadat’s conclusions from the recent communication with Kissinger), war was unavoidable.<sup>32</sup>

It seemed that by mid-April Kissinger had also reached the conclusion that the *status quo* could not hold for long. He told Dinitz on 11 April that Israel should work out basic guidelines for an interim settlement with Egypt as soon as possible, so as to limit Soviet involvement in the peace process and thwart the Arab countries’ attempts to pressure the United States into a more active involvement in pushing forward the peace process through their control of the oil market.<sup>33</sup> As a diplomat of great experience and wit, Kissinger must have realized that such general statements as this were not sufficient to move the peace process forward, and that a more massive involvement by the Administration was necessary to awaken the peace process from its state of deep coma. Kissinger did not mention the option of armed conflict as a possible threat in case the peace process did not move forward. His main fears had to do with a possible Arab oil embargo and with increased Soviet presence in the Middle East.

During the conversation Kissinger betrayed his attitude towards renewing the peace process. He made it clear that there would be no pressure on Israel and no direct White House involvement. So far he had been successful in conducting futile negotiations with both the USSR and Egypt on the issue of an Israeli-Egyptian agreement, thus buying time, but he could not guarantee that this tactic would remain successful for more than a few months. He added that if the Arabs decided to use their oil to pressure the United States, Israel might find itself in a most delicate situation, as U.S. public opinion would demand the Administration apply strong pressure on Israel and force it to make significant concessions to Egypt. For the time being he did not intend to apply any sort of pressure on Israel. Despite his serious doubts regarding the possibility of reaching a settlement between Israel and Egypt at that stage, he demanded that Israel publicly state that it was not interested in the continuation of the stalemate in the Middle East peace process and make proposals of its own to promote it. In spite of these demands, Kissinger told Dinitz that he had no intention to direct White House involvement in promoting an Israeli-Egyptian settlement before either the Egyptians or the Soviets.<sup>34</sup> The following day Dinitz told Kissinger that he would forward what he said to Meir to allow her to

examine Ismail's proposals from February and try to make use of them in promoting the peace process.<sup>35</sup>

On 18 April a confidential meeting of Israel's top decision-makers took place in Meir's house to discuss the likelihood of another war with Egypt in the coming months and to examine the various alternatives Israel would have in such a case.<sup>36</sup> Present, apart from Meir, were Minister of Defense Dayan, Minister without portfolio and Meir's closest political advisor Galili, IDF Chief of Staff Elazar, Head of the Intelligence Corps General Zeira, and the Director of Mossad Zamir. Also present were Director General of the PM's Office and Meir's confidant, Mordechai Gazit, and aides to some of the other participants.

The discussion was convened in the wake of warnings that Israeli intelligence began accumulating during the second week of April 1973, about Egypt's intention to start a war against Israel. These warnings came from different sources, but the meaning was similar. They pointed to Egypt's disappointment about the attempt to move out of the deadlock through the Kissinger channel and to Sadat's determination to go to war. These messages stated several dates for the outbreak of war. Israeli sources mentioned 15 and 19 May.<sup>37</sup> It was clear to almost all of them that rejecting Ismail's initiative meant war. Nevertheless, none raised the option of accepting his offers for discussion. Israel, it appears, was determined to insist on the principles it formulated following the Six-Day War, even at the cost of risking war.

Gazit instructed Dinitz to convey information about the Egyptian preparations for attacking Israel to Kissinger personally, which he did on 23 April. In early May, based on this information, the National Security Council (NSC) assessed the likelihood of war in the Middle East in the following months.<sup>38</sup> U.S. intelligence had information confirming that Egypt and other Arab countries had shifted forces in the course of spring 1973 in a way that could be interpreted as preparations for war against Israel. This included bringing SAM-2 and SAM-6 surface-to-air missiles forward to the west bank of the Suez Canal, moving three squadrons of Mirage aircraft from Libya to Egypt and conducting flights in them with Egyptian pilots on board, moving 16 Hawker Hunter fighter planes from Iraq to Egypt, moving 16 TU-16 bombers from the Aswan area to the Cairo area, and raising the level of alert for the Egyptian air force on 20 April.<sup>39</sup>

However, the document also stated that U.S. intelligence was not sure whether these steps reflected an Egyptian intention to start a war in the following months or rather an intention to exert psychological pressure on Israel and the United States and force the Administration to start a new initiative to promote the peace process. Another possible interpretation was

to view these moves as defensive actions that Egypt was taking against the possibility of an Israeli strike. The document stated that at that time the Arab countries had no rational grounds for starting a war because they were well aware of Israel's total military superiority. The final assessment was that Sadat probably did not intend to start a war in the next six weeks and also not before he knew the results of the UN discussions on the Middle East that were scheduled to begin in late May.<sup>40</sup>

Thus, the NSC estimated in early May 1973 that the Egyptians did not intend to go to war the following months. In doing so it chose to ignore Sadat's public statements, in which he repeatedly emphasized that without any foreseeable developments in the peace process Egypt intended to start a war soon so as to force Europe and the United States to push the process forward. In an interview with *Newsweek* on 9 April, Sadat said:

The time has come for a shock. Diplomacy will continue before, during, and after the battle. All west Europeans are telling us that everybody has fallen asleep over the Middle East crisis. But they will soon wake up to the fact that America has left us no other way out. The resumption of the hostilities is the only way out. Everything is now being mobilized in concert for the resumption of the battle which is inevitable.<sup>41</sup>

About one month later Sadat again made his position clear to the Egyptian people. He stated that the struggle against Israel could not be confined to the military arena; this struggle should be conducted in many spheres, including the sphere of energy, the diplomatic sphere, the sphere of the Arab world, and others. Egypt should be ready to struggle in all these spheres. Nevertheless, he also emphasized that if he delayed the confrontation with Egypt's enemies to 1974 he would consider himself to have betrayed his country. This is no doubt an extreme formulation of Sadat's commitment to act to push the peace process in the direction of the Egyptian position already in 1973.<sup>42</sup>

It seems that the dominant U.S. assessment like the predominant one in Israel, was that these were all empty threats, which Sadat had no real intention to realize. Although Kissinger was well aware of the information about Egypt's intention to go to war, he continued his stalemate policy, and was in no hurry to engage in pushing the peace process forward.

At the meeting between Ismail and Kissinger on 20 May, Ismail did not intend to make new proposals to move the peace process forward; rather, he came to discern White House intentions for the Middle East. By April Sadat was already determined to go to war, and therefore did not authorize

Ismail to make any new offers to Kissinger. It follows that the Egyptians did not expect anything from this meeting, and Kissinger did nothing to dispel this feeling.

Ismail wanted to agree with Kissinger on clear and unequivocal principles regarding the nature of the final settlement between Israel and Egypt, but Kissinger refused to make any commitment as to the U.S. positions on the issue. He explained that there was no point to expect any serious developments in the peace process until after Israel's elections in late October and proposed that their next meeting take place after this date.<sup>43</sup>

Kissinger was well aware of the intense frustration the Egyptians felt from the continuing stalemate in the peace process, as well as their intentions to start a war against Israel if no real developments happened in the next months. However, it seems he was not intimidated by these threats. He told Ismail that he had no intention to be the scapegoat of Egyptian accusations regarding the continued stalemate despite his desire to promote the peace process; it was quite possible that at this meeting no substantial understandings on the manner of the White House's involvement in the process were reached.<sup>44</sup>

Kissinger told Ismail that he was not overly optimistic about the chances of moving the peace process forward quickly because the *status quo* was the most convenient situation for Israel, and so it was unreasonable to expect it to agree to far-reaching concessions before negotiations between the two countries began. Ismail understood from Kissinger that the implementation of a partial settlement at the Suez Canal was not to be expected before 1974, and that the chances for significant progress towards a final settlement between the two countries before 1975 were very small.<sup>45</sup> To this Egypt could not agree. Ismail had already made clear to Kissinger in February Sadat's demands for real progress in the peace process before the end of 1973.

Kissinger's memorandum to Nixon on 2 June reported that in his conversation with Ismail in May he received the impression that Ismail had grave doubts as to the White House's resolve to take any real action to push the peace process forward.<sup>46</sup> Ismail came out of the meeting utterly frustrated. He doubted the U.S. ability to be an honest broker and claimed that the United States, in its unreserved support for Israel, was responsible for the stalemate in the peace process. In a conversation with an American diplomat in Cairo, he said that the United States would be responsible for the "apocalypse" that was about to unfold in the Middle East.<sup>47</sup>

## THE UNITED STATES-SOVIET SUMMIT OF JUNE 1973

The stalemate was also evident in the discussions between the United States and the USSR in 1973. Leading up to the Brezhnev-Nixon summit in June 1973, not only Kissinger, but also State Department officials estimated that the chances of reaching substantial understandings between the two powers, which would allow pushing the peace process between Israel and Egypt forward, were meager without a change in the White House's policy. The State Department did not hide this from Israel. Thus, on 18 June on the eve of the summit, Dinitz reported to the MFA that in a phone conversation with Sisco he was told that he "should not expect dramatic results from the summit on the topic of the Middle East." When Avner Idan, Israel's deputy chief of mission in Washington, asked Alfred Atherton, deputy assistant secretary of state for the Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, whether "the Middle East is going to be discussed at the summit as planned", he was told that "nobody in the top echelons of the State Department made preparations for a practical discussion since the gap between the two powers on this issue is so great that for now it cannot be bridged."<sup>48</sup>

At the summit both parties preferred to set the Middle East issue aside. The attempt to reach agreement on principles for the Middle East conflict was delayed until the last day of the summit on 23 June after all other issues had been discussed. Kissinger and Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko worked on a joint statement of principles on the Middle East, but Gromyko soon gave up on reaching any kind of understandings with the United States on the matter, and noted that there were substantial differences between the two parties and that therefore it was not likely that any kind of joint declaration on this subject could be agreed upon. Gromyko and Kissinger represented the positions of Egypt and Israel precisely and thus agreed that the large gap between the positions of the two sides could not be bridged.<sup>49</sup>

In a last-moment attempt, Brezhnev tried to make the United States agree confidentially on a settlement that would be forced on the parties to the conflict by the superpowers, in which Israel would withdraw from all the territories it occupied in 1967. He tried to pressure Nixon to agree to a full Israeli withdrawal from Sinai and even promised in return a more flexible Soviet position on the nature of the future settlement in Vietnam. However, Nixon told him that the United States was not willing to commit to a full Israeli withdrawal from the territories occupied in 1967 and that a full withdrawal from Sinai would not necessarily lead to a stable and sustainable peace between Israel and Egypt.<sup>50</sup>

Brezhnev even promised that in return for an agreement between Israel and Egypt the USSR would renew diplomatic relations with Israel. He tried to pressure Nixon at least to reach understandings on the necessity of an Israeli withdrawal from all the territories occupied in 1967, but Nixon replied, "We will not be able to settle this matter tonight." Nixon tried to finish the meeting as soon as possible and promised him that the peace settlement in the Middle East would be a top U.S. priority in the coming year.<sup>51</sup>

The meeting thus ended without results. The joint statement issued by the two superpowers on 25 June at the end of the summit, included an insubstantial reference to the Middle East and did not hide the disagreement between the parties:

The parties expressed their deep concern with the situation in the Middle East and exchanged opinions regarding ways of reaching a Middle East settlement. Each of the parties set forth its position on the problem. Both parties agreed to continue to exert their efforts to promote the quickest possible settlement in the Middle East. This settlement should be in accordance with the interests of all States in the area, be consistent with their independence and sovereignty and should take into due account the legitimate interests of the Palestinian people.<sup>52</sup>

The superpowers agreed to disagree on the way to solve the conflict in the Middle East.

#### PRESIDENT NIXON'S ATTITUDE TOWARD KISSINGER'S STALEMATE POLICY

It appears that Nixon was not pleased with Kissinger's stalemate policy and had even made an attempt in early 1973 to convince him to drop it, or at least to moderate it. After his reelection in November 1972 and after the Vietnam agreement was finally signed in January 1973, Nixon planned to devote more attention to the Middle East. In February he repeatedly expressed his concern with the continued stalemate in the peace process and blamed Israel's lack of flexibility for it. Free from electoral considerations and from fear of losing the Jewish vote, Nixon decided, so we believe, to adopt a tougher line towards Israel with regard to the conditions of a future settlement with Egypt. On 2 February the Middle East issue was discussed at a meeting with the British PM Edward Heath in Camp David. Nixon

mentioned that he was now free from all the internal limitations he had to take into account during the previous year, because of his election campaign, and therefore intended to pressure Israel in 1973 to push the peace process forward.<sup>53</sup> Nixon wrote in his diary that he exerted great pressure on Kissinger to convince him to take urgent action *vis-à-vis* Israel and force it to change its uncompromising position on withdrawal from Sinai. Nixon also mentioned the possible risks to the U.S. interests in the Middle East if the stalemate in the peace process continued—deterioration in U.S. relations with the Arab world, strengthening of radical factions among the Arabs, and strengthening of the Soviet grip on the Middle East.<sup>54</sup>

Kissinger disagreed with Nixon's assessment. In his memorandum on 23 February in reply to Nixon's request to supply new alternatives to the U.S. Middle East policy, Kissinger estimated that delaying the peace process by a few months would not harm U.S. interests in the region. Nixon replied to Kissinger that he completely disagreed with this assessment, and that he had no intention to further delay direct U.S. involvement in the peace process because the situation in the region was highly volatile and a full confrontation might erupt at any moment. Nixon also said that U.S. behavior in the Middle East in previous years made Israel believe that it would retain U.S. support despite its unrealistic positions *vis-à-vis* the Arabs.<sup>55</sup>

In mid-March 1973, after Ismail and Meir visited Washington, Nixon became even more concerned about the continuing stalemate. He repeatedly told members of his Administration that Israel was to blame for this stalemate. In a Cabinet meeting on 18 March he explained why he thought there was no progress in the peace process in his first term in office:

Israel's lobby [in the U.S.] is so strong that the Congress is not reasonable [in fully backing Israel's policy]. When we try to get Israel [to be] reasonable, the excuse is an Israeli election, the U.S. election, or something else . . . We have to have policies which don't allow an obsession [of the Congress] with one state to destroy our status in the Middle East.<sup>56</sup>

Despite making these statements on the urgent need to push forward the peace process and despite blaming Israel for the stalemate in the region, Nixon avoided any public initiative or move that he backed to promote the peace process and practically left it to Kissinger to manage U.S. policy in the region on his own. The unfolding of the Watergate scandal in March and April 1973 not only took away most of the president's time but also quickly undermined his political standing. Nixon avoided direct public confrontation with Israel, which would soften its positions and allow the

peace process to proceed, fearing conflict with one of the domestic players unconditionally backing Israel. Members of Congress voiced their strongest objection to pressuring Israel and Nixon chose to avoid confrontation with the Congress, as his political future lay in the hands of the body that was to start impeachment procedures against him a few months later. In June Harold Saunders, of the NSC, admitted in a conversation with a British diplomat that the stalemate in the peace process was unavoidable because Nixon feared confrontation with the Israeli lobby and its representatives in Congress when his standing was so badly shaken.<sup>57</sup>

### THE ROGERS PLAN OF JUNE 1973

While Kissinger did not consider it necessary to launch a new U.S. initiative in the Middle East, believing that the *status quo* could be maintained, and while Nixon, preoccupied with the Watergate scandal, was giving his NSA a *carte blanche* in managing Middle East affairs, Secretary of State Rogers made his final attempt to push the peace process forward in the spring and summer. This last Rogers Plan has not so far been mentioned at all in historical scholarship, probably because it was thwarted by Nixon before it was born. Documents reveal that even in his last days as secretary of state he tried to break the stalemate in the peace process, but the White House stopped this attempt, three months before the Yom Kippur War broke out.

On 28 June Rogers presented his plan to Nixon and asked for his approval. Rogers proposed that the United States would act to convince Israel and Egypt to start confidential negotiations mediated by the United States, aiming to settle the conflict between them based on UNSCR 242 and on their agreement that this resolution neither mandated nor contradicted an Israeli withdrawal to its borders on 4 June 1967. Rogers intended first to approach Dinitz and discuss this proposal with him. Having received Israel's response, he would then discuss it with Nixon, before presenting his proposal to the Egyptians.<sup>58</sup>

Rogers was aware of the damage that U.S. interests could suffer as a result of the continued stalemate in the Middle East. In his presentation of the plan to Nixon, he elaborated extensively on why he thought the conditions were ripe for a new U.S. initiative and recounted the grave risks that faced U.S. interests if the stalemate in the peace process continued:

Israel is pleased with the outcome of the Summit discussions and with our present arms relationship. It should therefore be as receptive as it ever will

be to a proposal which we would emphasize we consider important to our national interests in the area. On the Egyptian side, Sadat is looking for a diplomatic alternative and recognizes that the U.S. must play a key role . . . Making this effort could also relieve Egyptian pressure in the Security Council for an outcome that could polarize positions further [in the Middle East], make both Egypt and Israel even more inflexible, and possibly force us to a veto which would both inhibit our ability to play a constructive middleman role [between Israel and Egypt] and add to the unhappiness with the U.S. position in the Arab world generally. Such an effort on our part would be particularly welcome to Faisal [king of Saudi Arabia] as evidence of the kind of activity on our part that he has long sought.<sup>59</sup>

This initiative was thwarted by Nixon before it saw light. As Theodore L. Eliot Jr., executive secretary at the State Department, describes it:

General [Alexander] Haig, Assistant to the President, called me this morning to say that the President does not wish the Secretary to proceed with the initiative outlined in the Secretary's Memorandum for the President of June 28. Haig said that the President is awaiting a response from Brezhnev following the discussion he had with Brezhnev last week on the Middle East and does not wish anything else to be done on this subject until a response from Brezhnev has been received.

Eliot communicated this response by the President to Sisco and to Rogers himself.<sup>60</sup>

This explains Nixon's objection to Rogers' initiative by his wish to wait for Brezhnev's response to the proposals made to him a few days earlier. However, another explanation of Nixon's position is forthcoming: at the time, after Kissinger had *de facto* taken over U.S. foreign policy, and when Rogers' position was shaky, Nixon, and surely Kissinger, did not wish to see Rogers' political power restored once such an initiative would in fact be launched. It is possible that Kissinger was the one who convinced Nixon to veto the plan Rogers proposed. When Rogers suggested his plan to Nixon, the personal relationship between them was severely undermined; Nixon even sent Haig to convince Rogers to resign, so that he could appoint Kissinger to replace him.<sup>61</sup>

On 16 August Rogers submitted his resignation to Nixon. This allowed Kissinger to be appointed to the job he wanted so much. Nixon announced Kissinger's appointment as secretary of state, in addition to retaining his position as NSA, on 22 August. This was the end of the dual U.S. Middle

East policy. Kissinger's stalemate strategy emerged as the winner in the competition with the State Department, not only ideologically but also personally. At this stage Nixon was almost completely preoccupied with his own political survival following the unfolding Watergate affair, and the issue of the Middle East moved to the bottom of his priorities. Kissinger, who had impressive foreign policy achievements in Asia and *vis-à-vis* the USSR credited to him, waited for the right time and opportunity to apply his conceptions to the Middle East.

One could only guess whether, had it received backing from Nixon, Rogers' last plan would have prevented the outbreak of the October War some three months later. It seems that adopting this plan could have prevented the energy crisis that broke out some months afterwards and had a severely negative effect on the U.S. economy, as well as on the economy of its allies in Western Europe.

## CONCLUSION

A more active involvement of the White House in the peace process during 1973 would not necessarily have prevented the outbreak of the Yom Kippur War. It is true that Washington's influence over Israel and Egypt was certainly limited. Incorrectly assigning the sole blame for the intentional inaction in seeking a negotiated Egyptian-Israeli agreement before the War to Kissinger or placing it solely on the shoulders of the United States, sustains the mistaken belief that Israel and Egypt would automatically go along with whatever Washington stated or dictated. Moreover, Israeli strategic thinking in these years was dominated by the idea that parts of the Sinai, east of the El Arish-Ras Muhammad line, should be kept by Israel even after a peace agreement with Egypt was reached. Jerusalem was well aware that Egypt totally rejected this position, and therefore one might argue that Israel was not ready for comprehensive peace with Egypt.

It seems that neither was Sadat himself ready to sign a separate peace with Israel. Ismail's proposal in February 1973 did not take the possibility of establishing full peace with Israel out of the question, but it only envisioned that with signing such an agreement the Palestinian problem was solved. Egypt was well aware that the Palestinian issue was "taboo" for Israel. Thus, it appears that in 1973 Sadat was not prepared for a bilateral agreement with Israel, as he would be in 1978–79. The Camp David Accord proved that only when both sides in the dispute really want to reach a settlement can an agreement be negotiated, and then too

only with massive involvement by the U.S. government and especially the president.

President Carter's personal involvement in the peace process between Israel and Egypt was crucial for reaching the historic agreement between the two countries. He did not hesitate to make the peace process in the Middle East a top priority of his government and did not hesitate even to apply his full weight in order to reduce the gaps between the parties' positions.<sup>62</sup> Moreover, Carter was personally involved in all stages of the negotiations between the two countries and was willing to risk his political future to achieve a peace agreement between Israel and Egypt. In contrast, in 1973 the White House, Nixon, and Kissinger chose not to be involved in the peace process in the 12 months before the outbreak of the War.

Egypt's attempt to court the White House through 1973 in order to change its stalemate policy remained unsuccessful. The White House refused to help push the peace process between Israel and Egypt forward even when Egyptian leaders made repeated and explicit threats to resume hostilities against Israel. In spite of the information received by U.S. intelligence about Egypt's preparations for renewed warfare, Kissinger did not take Sadat's threats seriously and remained, just like the Israelis, caught in the conception that the Arab countries will not dare attack Israel because of its clear military superiority. While Nixon began to doubt the wisdom of the stalemate policy, he preferred to focus his attention on the struggle for his own political survival.

In the months leading up to the outbreak of the War, the United States was not prepared for what was to come. U.S. intelligence assessments agreed with the Israeli assumption that Egypt would not risk attacking the IDF at the Suez Canal and the Bar-Lev Line.<sup>63</sup> Kissinger was sure that his policy in the Middle East would sooner or later yield the outcome that he wanted: Egypt completely stopping its reliance on the USSR, accepting a more far-reaching compromise on the final settlement with Israel, and assigning the role of exclusive mediator between it and Israel to the United States. Even after he succeeded Rogers as the secretary of state, Kissinger did not hurry to address the situation in the Middle East, believing that the Egyptians had no other option. The outbreak of the war surprised him. He was shocked to learn of the surprise attack launched by Egypt and Syria against Israel on 6 October.<sup>64</sup>

This attack, initiated by Sadat, aimed not so much to force the Israelis to enter negotiations with Egypt as to force the White House to drop the stalemate policy masterminded by Kissinger and move towards active initiative in pushing forward the peace process between Israel and Egypt.

## NOTES

1. Golda Meir, *My Life* (Tel-Aviv, 1975) 289–91; Mordechai Gazit, *The Peace Process: 1969–1973* (Tel-Aviv, 1984); Menachem Meir, “Sadat Turned Away Golda’s Hand, Extended for Peace,” letter, 5 July 2001; “Sadat Did Not Want Peace,” *Ha’aretz*, 16 October 2006; Simcha Dinitz, “The Israeli-American Dialogue During the War,” in Haim Opaz and Yaakov Bar-Siman-Tov (eds.) *The Yom Kippur War: A Reexamination* (Jerusalem, 1999) 153–6 [all in Hebrew]. Dinitz and Gazit were consecutive directors general of Meir’s PMO (Prime Minister’s Office). Menachem is Meir’s son.
2. Uri Bar-Joseph, “Last Chance to Avoid War: Sadat’s Peace Initiative of February 1973 and its Failure,” *Journal of Contemporary History*, 41 (2006) 545–56; William Quandt, *Peace Process: American Diplomacy and the Arab-Israeli Conflict Since 1967* (Berkeley, 1993); Yossi Beilin, *The Price of Unification: The Israeli Labor Party Up to the Yom Kippur War* (Ramat Gan, 1985); Uri Bar-Joseph, *The Watchman Fell Asleep: The Surprise of Yom Kippur and its Sources* (Or Yehuda, 2001); Gad Yacobi, *By a Hairsbreadth: On How a Settlement between Israel and Egypt Was Missed and The Yom Kippur War Was Not Prevented* (Tel-Aviv, 1989); Sharon Mankovich, “Response to Peace Initiatives: Israel’s Policy towards Egypt, 1969–1973,” master’s thesis, University of Haifa, 2005 [all in Hebrew].
3. Salim Yaqub, “The Politics of Stalemate: The Nixon Administration and the Arab-Israeli Conflict,” in *The Cold War in the Middle East: Regional Conflict and the Superpowers 1967–73*, ed. Nigel Ashton (London, 2007) 35.
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5. Quandt, *Peace Process*, 80–3.
6. NSC Memorandum, 10 December 1969, NA (National Archives), NPMP (Nixon Presidential Materials Project), NSC files (hereafter NSCF), 109.
7. Yitzhak Rabin, *The Rabin Memoirs* (Boston, 1979) 190–218; Gideon Rafael, *Destination Peace: Three Decades of Israeli Foreign Policy* (New York, 1981) 250–86. Following the failure of two missions by UN mediator Gunnar Jarring in January and February 1971, the State Department attempted several times to foster a workable Egyptian-Israeli agreement. See Quandt, *Peace Process*, 118–22.
8. Kenneth W. Stein, *Heroic Diplomacy: Sadat, Kissinger, Carter, Begin and the Quest for Arab-Israeli Peace* (New York, 1999) 66.
9. Mohamed Abdel Ghani El-Gamasy, *The October War: Memoirs of Marshal El-Gamasy of Egypt* (Cairo, 1993) 176.
10. Quoted in Craig Daigle, “The Russians are Going: Sadat, Nixon and the Soviet Presence in Egypt, 1970–71,” *Middle East Review of International Affairs*, 8 (2004) 6.
11. Quandt, *Peace Process*, 134–7; Kissinger, *White House Years*, 1295–7; Bar-Joseph, *The Watchman Fell Asleep*, 92–3.
12. Kissinger, *White House Years*, 1300.

13. MoC (Memorandum of Conversation) between Rabin and Kissinger, 22 February 1973, NA, NPMP, NSCF, HAK, 135, Rabin/Dinitz Sensitive Memcons.

14. MoCs with Ismail in New York, 25–26 February 1973, NA, 59, DSR, Kissinger, 1973–77, 25, cat “C,” Kissinger Shuttle, 1974–75.

15. *Ibid.*, 27, 42, 44, 46.

16. Henry Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval* (London, 1982) 216; Yitzhak Rabin, *Service Log* (Tel-Aviv, 1990) 384 [Hebrew]; Meron Medzini, *The Proud Jewess: Golda Meir and the Vision of Israel* (Tel-Aviv, 1990) 407 [Hebrew].

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20. *Idem.*

21. Stenographic protocol of interview of PM Meir for *Al HaMishmar*, 16 April, ISA (Israel State Archives), 106, 828/2; U.S. Embassy Israel to State Department, 16 April 1973 <http://aad.archives.gov/aad/createpdf?rid=13631&dt=1573&dl=823>.

22. MoC between Nixon and Meir, 1 March 1973, NA, NPMP, NSCF, 1026.

23. *Idem.*

24. *Idem.*

25. *Idem.*

26. MoC between Dinitz and Kissinger, 30 March, NA, NPMP, NSCF, HAK, 135, Rabin/Dinitz Sensitive Memcons, 3.

27. *Idem.*

28. *Ibid.*, 3–4.

29. *Ibid.*, 4.

30. Nixon and Meir conversation, 1 March. See Quandt, *Peace Process*, 539, n. 5 and 6.

31. Tab B, Kissinger and Dinitz conversation, 11 April 1973.

32. Bar-Joseph, *The Watchman Fell Asleep*, 146–7.

33. Kissinger and Dinitz conversation, 11 April 1973.

34. *Idem.*

35. Kissinger and Dinitz conversation, 12 April 1973.

36. Bar-Joseph, *The Watchman Fell Asleep*, 172–90; “Last Chance to Avoid War: Sadat’s Peace Initiative of February 1973 and its Failure,” 545–56; Mankovich, *Response to Peace Initiatives*, 148–54, a discussion that is also based on Bar-Joseph’s studies.

37. Bar-Joseph, *The Watchman Fell Asleep*, 168; “Last Chance to Avoid War,” 552.

38. NSC Staff Memorandum, “Indications of Arab Intentions to Initiate Hostilities,” n.d. [early May 1973], NA, NPMP, HAK, 135, Kissinger/Rabin (Dinitz), 1973 Jan–July (2 of 3).

39. *Idem.*
40. *Idem.*
41. Stein, *Heroic Diplomacy*, 68. Quoted from Sadat's interview to correspondent Arnaud de Borchgrave in *Newsweek*, 23 April. Quandt (539, n. 5 and 8) adds that immediately after completing the interview with Sadat, de Borchgrave rushed to deliver the text to Kissinger.
42. U.S. Embassy Egypt to State Department, 16 May 1973 <http://aad.archives.gov/aad/createpdf?rid=25754&dt=1573&dl=823>.
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50. MoC between Nixon and Brezhnev, 23 June 1973, NA, NPMP, NSC, HAK, 75.
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64. Stein, *Heroic Diplomacy*, 95.

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