

**Transcripts of Secret Talks between Egyptian National Security Adviser, Hafez Ismail and
US National Security Council Adviser, Henry Kissinger Concerning Egyptian Proposals
for Negotiations with Israel –Excerpts Selected by Editor
(25-26 February 1973 and 20 May 1973)**

Memoranda of Conversations Henry Kissinger, National Security Adviser with Hafez Ismail, Armonk, New York, 25–26 February 1973, National Archives, Box 59, DSR, Kissinger, 1973–77 cat A; Memorandum of Conversation Henry Kissinger with Hafiz Ismail, 20 May, NA, 59, National Archives,, NPMP, NSCF, HAK, 135, 1973–77, 25, cat "C,"

Late in 1972, Egyptian President Sadat decided to appoint veteran diplomat Hafez Ismail to a newly created position, Egyptian National Security Adviser. Sadat's intention was to dispatch Ismail to have secret talks with Henry Kissinger, who had the same rank and title in the Nixon administration. Three times in early 1973 Ismail and Kissinger met in Armonk, New York (February 25-26) and in Paris (May 10). Sadat's objective was to inform the U.S. that Egypt was prepared to end its conflict with Israel, offering the establishment of normalized relations, if Israel withdrew from the territories acquired in the 1967 war. Ismail focused his discussions on Egyptian interests, and less on representing Syrian, Jordanian, or Palestinian interests. Kissinger acknowledged that he knew very little about the Middle East and had spent most of his time up to that point focusing on the Vietnam negotiations.

In the second February meeting, Ismail spoke about Syrian and Jordanian requirements, but his dominant focus was what Egypt wanted and needed in a negotiated settlement where the U.S. would play a central role. Ismail suggested that when the negotiations would be carried on with Israel, there could already be a disengagement of Israeli forces from Sinai. Put differently, Egypt wanted to negotiate with Israel prior to the 1973 war using the very method that was adopted after the war, namely movement in steps or phases. What is remarkable about this secret conversation is how forthcoming Ismail was in seeking a settlement with Israel, one in which territory would be returned and normalized relations established.

The contents below are excerpts of the full conversations of the first two meetings only. The complete memorandum of these conversations can be found at www.israeled.org

Ken Stein, October 2011

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MEMORANDUM THE WHITE HOUSE WASHINGTON TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE
EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

PARTICIPANTS:

Mr. Muhammad Hafiz Ismail, Egyptian Presidential Adviser for National Security Affairs
Dr. Muhammad Hafiz Ghanim, Central Committee, Arab Socialist Union
Dr. .Abd-al--Hadi Makhluaf, Office Director for Mr. Ismail
Mr. Ahrnad Mahir al Say-yid, Notetaker Mr. Ihab Said Wahba, Notetaker

Dr. Henry A. Kissinger, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs Mr. Harold H. Saunders, NSC Senior Staff Mr. Peter W. Rodman, NSC Staff
Mrs. Bonnie Andrews, Notetaker

PLACE: Armonk, New York

DATE AND TIME Sunday, February 25, 1973 1:50 - 6:30 p.m.

[After introductions and handshakes at the door, the group sat in front of the fireplace in the drawing room for an initial informal conversation. The discussion touched upon Dr. Kissinger's various negotiations, the South Asian crisis of 1971 and the current evolution on the Subcontinent, and the Vietnam settlement.

[In the course of the conversation, Dr. Kissinger remarked that one objective of American policy in the current period was to establish the perception that not every problem in the world was necessarily an American problem. He cited Egypt's expulsion of the Soviet military advisers as an example: There was no way the United States could have brought about that result; it would happen either by an Egyptian decision or not at all.

[Mr. Ismail observed that the event did not seem to have been recognized, or reflected anywhere. It was recognized, Dr. Kissinger replied, but the problem was how to reflect it.

[On that note, Dr. Kissinger and Mr. Ismail rose and moved to the dining room to begin the formal discussion.]

Dr. Kissinger: [Pointing to his thick black loose leaf notebook in front of him] If everything else fails, I will read this book to you, cover to cover.

Well, I think you have met my colleagues: Mr. Rodman who works with me, and Mr. Saunders who handles Middle East problems, and Mrs. Andrews who handles me.

Mr. Ismail: Is that an easy task?

Mrs. Andrews: No!

Dr. Kissinger: And I want you to know we have been looking forward to this meeting.

I want to tell you how we have conducted similar talks in the past, so we can agree on what we are doing today. Our government is conducted right now in an extraordinarily complex way. What is done in official channels often has a way of becoming public.

And I believe one of the difficulties in previous Middle East negotiations is that there has been an enormous amount of posturing, brilliant debates in the press, and no real progress, because theory has tended to dominate over a practical strategy.

In matters of priority, the White House channel has been engaged directly. There have been public contacts, and also private ones. Those are the ones I have been engaged in -- with the Chinese, with the Soviet Union, during the monetary crisis in 1971 with the French, and of course with the Vietnamese. My channel, the White House channel, cannot operate unless there is a great deal of discipline on both sides, unless both sides are honest with respect to what they do in one channel and what they do in the other. Because if either side tries to play one channel against the other, it would blow up. And in this case it would be doubly dangerous.

Also, there has to be some understanding about where one is trying to go. There is no sense getting the White House involved if it is just going to repeat everything that happens in the other. I am talking about our experience in the past.

I must say candidly that just because a private channel has been established it does not necessarily mean rapid progress. The China initiative took 18 months; with Vietnam it was 3 1/2 years. In the case of Berlin -- you talk to Gromyko on those -- it took six months to educate the Russians about the two channels. They thought it was a trick. Once they understood it, it took six months to settle it. SALT took about a year. So there are various ways of doing it.

The Berlin negotiation -- once they understood it -- could be done in six months because they and we controlled all the assets. We agreed, and we could bring our allies along because they too wanted a settlement. In the case of the SALT agreement the problem was a technical problem, and it was important that we understood each other. In the case of Vietnam we couldn't even agree on what to settle. So for three years we were sparring. The North Vietnamese now agree: for three years they just weren't ready for an agreement. Once they were ready for the essential move -- to separate the military and the political -- it was settled very fast. With the Chinese it was a very complex problem. We hadn't been in touch in twenty years. Just finding out how to talk was difficult.

Now, how does this apply to the Middle East? First, if I had followed my convenience and the state of my knowledge, I would have put off these talks. Until February I was fully engaged in settling Vietnam. I couldn't address the Middle East. The last two weeks I have been in Hanoi, Peking, Tokyo and other places. And frankly I haven't thought in great detail about the Middle East. But on the other hand we thought it important that we have an initial exchange of views, so when the Israeli Prime Minister comes, the President and I at least know the outline of the problem. So if you are patient with me, for at least one session in which I am not familiar with all the nuances of the problem . . .

Our thought would be, if you agree, that we should have a very frank exchange today and tomorrow. You will tell us as candidly as you can what you think and feel, I will tell you preliminarily our thoughts. And I am prepared to meet again at a mutually agreeable time. I had offered to come only to make it morally possible for you to come here. I would meet anywhere. The best place is actually America, because for me to go to Europe, there is no way for me to go for this alone without my attracting much publicity. But I have an excuse to be in Europe in early May. So we could meet then. But there is no way I could get to London and Paris without creating great excitement. So we would wonder if there was some way you could come back here. But that's a technical issue.

Now my approach to these talks is this. There is no sense in my talking unless we are willing to move things forward. If we want to waste time, we have institutions with a demonstrated ability to do that, and there is no sense getting me involved.

Secondly, I never promise anything that we don't intend to deliver. And candidly, on the other hand, I don't want to make promises can't keep. So there is no sense doing anything -- drawing maps, and so on, unless we know exactly what we want to accomplish, unless we have some idea of what is doable. Otherwise we will just be buying ourselves three months of good will, and great distrust afterwards. You must have the sense that when you deal with the White House, our

word counts. I would rather tell you honestly we can't do something than to tell you something we can do and later we would not deliver.

Now I have no great proposals to make at this meeting. And you didn't expect any. But I thought we could have a frank exchange of views, or at least tell us what is on your mind. But I took the liberty of giving you our approach.

This meeting would not be taking place unless we wanted most seriously to have a solution to the log jam in the Middle East. But I wanted to discuss in a general way what the problem is, and what approach we can use.

Would you like some coffee?

Mr. Ismail: Well, just some tea.

Dr. Kissinger: Did all your associates come from Egypt with you?

Mr. Ismail: Yes. Let me introduce them. Dr. Ghanim is a member of the Central Committee of the Arab Socialist Union, but he is here as an assistant in our White House. It is also white. When you come, you will see it for yourself. Dr. Makhluף is my chef de cabinet. And these two middle-aged diplomats from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs are attached to my office. I can depend 100% on their integrity and the way they conduct themselves.

Well, I must say, Dr. Kissinger, that we have welcomed very much this contact with us to meet on a high level to discuss the Middle East question. We appreciate it very much because it is the White House, and we believe it is a very serious effort to discuss the question and find a solution. Especially after five and a half years, the situation seems to be bogged down with no way out in view. We are, of course, approaching these discussions bearing in mind what you have said about the seriousness of that approach and the need for complete secrecy and complete trust in each other, so that we can find a way out of that dilemma in the Middle East.

On the other hand, we feel also, the work that has been done in five and a half years is not put aside. We are not just starting from scratch. There have been 4-power talks, 2-power talks, and certain contacts between our two governments, and there have been certain policy statements made by the American Government which we consider to be very serious.

Here we find ourselves confronting a very complicated problem, not involving one country but involving three countries besides Israel. Also, the problem comes from twenty-five years, not five. It goes back to 1948. Although I speak in the main of Egypt, I must say frankly that we cannot think in terms of a separate Egyptian settlement unless it is in the context of the very general framework of a Middle East settlement. Why I say so is because unless we attack the origin of the problem there is not going to be a stable peace as human beings look forward to.

We start these negotiations from a purely nationalistic stand. It is Egypt that is talking to you, Dr. Kissinger. Egypt is not a satellite. Egypt is not doing anything in the interest of this or that

power. We have demonstrated that back in July. You said to me just before, "It was you, Egypt, who asked the Russians to go out."

Dr. Kissinger: I said it was your decision. I said if we had asked that, it wouldn't have worked.

Mr. Ismail: But you did ask it, a long time ago!

Dr.Kissinger: I didn't know you paid so much attention to me at that time!

Mr. Ismail: We do, we do. But we didn't do that to please the Americans. We did it for our independence. We did not ask them to leave for this or that reason but we have told them we don't want to see a confrontation between the U. S. and the Soviet Union. If that had happened, it would have been a catastrophe for all of us in the area.

We feel earnestly the need for that area to come to peace, because it has not had time to look after itself, to take care of itself, to progress. We want it and we need it. But, of course, we know that a lot of other parties need peace too, outside the area, because of the complexities of the interests and the very high stakes involved. We know that the United States wants peace in the Middle East. And we know also that without the contribution of the United States there can be no peace in the Middle East.

However, as I said to your President and I reiterated in the State Department, we feel if we really are interested in getting things moving a very important preliminary today would be a certain measure of shift in American policy with respect to the countries in the area. Because, as we see it, the present American policy of a balance of force, balance of power, is working in the interests of a continuation of the occupation of Arab lands, in opposition to any genuine effort to reach peace. Therefore, when we see American participation in this area, we see it from a point of neutrality, and a very strong participation, a participation that will continue until things have been settled. I mean, not to take the issues to a point and then leave them, but to keep on until a final solution is brought about. But such participation should be conducted in a quick tempo. I mean, the area cannot stand years for handling things and solving partially questions here and there and try to go on slowly toward a final solution.

I am sure that Dr.Kissinger: is aware of what we have been saying, the Egyptian position, and what I have said in the State Department during lunch. I stated certain principles which in our mind represent the framework for our thinking about a settlement.

How long would you like me to go on talking? As long as I want?

Dr.Kissinger: Please. I would appreciate it.

Mr. Ismail: Right. I just wanted to know what procedure to follow. If I move from generalities to more specific considerations. . .

Dr.Kissinger: You should do what makes you most comfortable.

Mr. Ismail: All right. I was once challenged in Paris -- when I was Ambassador there -- by a newsman, who asked me, "How do you see the Middle East in ten years time?" That was a good question. I have always thought that unless we look into the far future and see how we really see the Middle East and set ourselves on that course we shall not be doing anything of importance. We should only get a kind of temporary easing of the situation without getting down to the roots of it. As we see it in the Middle East in five years time, ten years time, the area will I hope include a number of political units, strong, healthy, independent, cooperating between themselves, freed from external influences as much as we can keep them away, and free to cooperate with and with the possibility to participate and contribute for other foreign political units outside and other countries. We want an independent Middle East.

In this respect I must say we have lived with the Jewish communities in Egypt and all other Arab countries. We have lived happily together, and we have not done anything like Russia or Hitler's Germany or the Spanish. I don't want to go much into this question of Semitic and anti- Semitic.

Dr.Kissinger: No, I know Arab countries have a tradition.

Mr. Ismail: It is clear that they have offered something to the Egyptian way of life. Therefore, we can see a day when all of our countries in the area may have a common understanding. Of course, I think that will be difficult because of the high emotions at the present time in the area, and because of other factors, external influences. I mean, as long as Israel does not recognize itself as a Middle Eastern country, why should we? How can we?

If that is an objective for us to head towards, we see the starting point as a settlement of the present armed conflict in the area. This will lay a good basis for the development of the normalization in the area. So this must be our immediate objective now, to get a settlement, a settlement that is based on all the resolutions of the United Nations, all of them. That is based also on the interpretation given by the big powers, especially by the big powers, of 242, and based on the existing international agreements which are related to the area, such as the 1888 Constantinople Convention on the Suez Canal.

Dr. Kissinger: I thought that was a Security Council resolution. [laughter] No, I know the Constantinople Convention.

Mr. Ismail: Those interpretations recognize two things: the international borders and the Palestinian human rights. Those are the two pillars of a settlement. We feel that the international organizations including the present one, the United Nations, and the big powers, have been responsible at least since 1917, with the Balfour Declaration, for creating a new political factor in the area, and we believe it is still their responsibility to define the limits of that presence. I mean they cannot -- Britain, France, the United States they cannot just say, "We will impose on you the State of Israel, and now you go ahead and define the limits of that state." We would like those powers to say how they envisaged the new state in the area. They are required not only to state that but also to guarantee in the future that this presence does not overflow its limits.

We believe that the problem is very, very complicated, and we don't know how many but there are several aspects for it. There are different questions that have got to be settled. Therefore we think the problem lends itself to a settlement in several stages, in an overall framework. Maybe on different fronts with each sector, but we believe also that those phases and stages must be very well linked together so that they can lead as to the goal that must be in front of us.

I also think that a settlement should be an overall settlement. Not a settlement for Egypt, or for Egypt and Jordan, but for Egypt and Jordan and Syria. Probably Lebanon may come in later on. It wasn't a party in the 1967 conflict but it might be found necessary that it comes in. So there must be an overall settlement.

It must be a final settlement. We don't just start a partial settlement here, a settlement there, then hanging on for the next 25 years.

It must be just, as just as we can. If there is justice in life, it must be just. Otherwise we are just sowing the seeds for a new conflict.

It must be immediate. We must settle it in the immediate future, and not just, as some Israeli leaders think, leave it for another 15 years and then bring about normal intercourse between the countries and then formal peace will come. Maybe in Europe or Asia, but it is difficult to think it could happen in the Middle East. Unless we think that the problem started 25 years ago and therefore we think the problem is as good as the German or Korean or Vietnamese problem.

The major question we have to deal with in the Middle East is the question of the Palestinian problem. This is really the origin of the conflict. The Balfour Declaration, the National Home in Palestine, the Mandate of Palestine, the war of 1948. It is very interesting, this phase of 1947, 48, 49 -- the division in 1947, the intervention in 1948, the armistice in January-February 1949. I am sure you are aware of the events. In preparation for a political settlement which did not materialize. Because in Lausanne in May 1949 a series of meetings were held, and Israel left the table and we never again met and we did not settle the issues.

We believe the most logical approach to the problem is to reduce the problem to its exact size. And that is this. There is, or has been, a conflict between the communities living within Palestine. At some point, it has overflowed outside its borders. We should reduce it to its original size, and find a way how Israelis and Palestinians should live together within Palestine -- or live apart, whichever they choose. If and when they agree together, we can negotiate the political settlement. To help reach that, we have got to eliminate the other aspects of the conflict, that is, to effect the complete disengagement on the Arab-Israeli front, that will lead logically to a further solution of the Palestinian-Israeli, problem, and finally to peace.

I don't want to get into how the Palestinian problem should be solved. I think at one time the Palestinians offered to have a democratic [?] state, to include Arabs and Jews. If that is not possible --and I think it is not possible -- then maybe they might agree among themselves on ways to divide the country. Although it is not divisible politically, or geographically or economically, they might agree on that.

Of course, I am not speaking for the Palestinians. I am just giving you how Cairo sees the problem. I think the Palestinians might be interested in such an approach, but I am not going too much into that.

In dealing with the Egyptian part of the settlement, I may say that the same principles that I have been talking very quickly to you of a general settlement are applicable. The objective will be to bring about a state of peace, and an end to the state of war. Egypt wants a full settlement, a final one, an immediate one. We, on our side -- the major problem is the question of sovereignty, that is to say, the recognition of Egypt's international borders, the sovereignty of Egypt, the control by Egypt of its own land. We can offer, on the other hand, taking into consideration the legitimate -- not very, but legitimate -- concerns of Israel about security. We can think about international security measures; we can think about guarantees by the big powers, by the Security Council. We can offer certain peace commitments. If we can reach a formula, as the President said during our talks that recognizes -- I don't remember exactly his words, I'm not quoting -- if we can find a formula that recognizes Egyptian sovereignty and meets the legitimate concerns of Israel with respect to security, we believe that the main knot would have been solved. The main problem will have been solved on the Egyptian-Israeli settlement. Then we can work out how we approach that goal -- one stage, two stages. But we say that the disengagement would have to be quick, because we are not prepared to accept a withdrawal that is going to hang on for years. But we see a disengagement that can be realized before the end of this year. It is already five and a half years; it will be six and a half before that time, and we believe that this is as much as we can think about.

I said legitimate and illegitimate concerns on the part of Israel regarding security, and I meant that. Because we feel that security is the bringing of a peace agreement, or the presence of the international community in one way or another. We see it above all in the renouncement by the Zionist movement of their further ideas and objectives in the area. Because if we look at the situation very objectively, we know the Arabs are on the defensive, defending their lands and their people. There is an outside wave we have coming in, which in 1948 and 1949 was not sufficiently satisfied then with the situation and, therefore, postponed a political solution until 1967, when they extended across the frontiers of Egypt and Syria and got hold of the West Bank. We see security in the amount of long-range equipment and armament that Israel has and that Israel develops, and in its research laboratories. We see it in its nuclear activities, as much as we see it in the medium-range surface-to-surface missiles. We have got to put that all in balance, as stated by the State Department. And there are a lot of statements made by the State Department that I take very seriously, including a statement about Sharm al-Shaikh being politically and psychologically important. If Sharm al-Shaikh is a matter of political and psychological significance then I believe it is not a matter of security. If they want an Israeli presence in the Sinai, again it is not a question of security but a political and psychological question.

So let me sum up what I have been saying. We think that it is time to bring in new elements to the conflict, so we can see a quick and rapid solution. Because everyone has an interest in the reestablishment of peace in the Middle East, and because peace is our objective.

And to reach it, it must be a settlement overall, for example, including not only Egypt but the Palestinians, Syria, and Jordan. We see a basis for a solution in the Security Council resolutions,

in the public stands of the major powers, and in the international agreements that are at the present time in force. We believe that the United Nations and the big powers should be a party and should help bring about a solution, because they have been involved and are still involved. We think the problem will lend itself to solution on phases, but the phases must be well-balanced within them and between them, and linked together leading finally to the final solution. We see the two elements of the solution as complete withdrawal by Israel to the international borders, and secondly we see the vital importance of the settlement of the Palestine question. We feel that a major part of the solution could be, should be, fulfilled this year.

There is one small point, but I believe in a few days time Madame Meir will tell you they have elections this year. But elections don't come up in our calculations. It is enough for us to wait for the American elections. [laughter] They can put to the people the questions of peace and war and we will see what the people have got to say about that.

The whole situation in the area is pregnant with danger. The danger of mistakes, such as a few days ago, if we call what happened the other day a mistake. The danger of unprovoked incidents such as the attack against the camps in the North of Lebanon. I think you must have here [in your black book] a chapter here about Arab emotions, Arab sentiments, Arabs being unpredictable, and not lending itself to the computer.

Dr. Kissinger: You have this thing about computers. When I was at Harvard I was a disgrace because I couldn't use the computer. I don't know how to use them. But what you say is very important, about the psychology of the people involved.

Mr. Ismail: I hope someday you will see for yourself. You must come some day.

Dr. : I have never been in an Arab country. I have had many students from Arab countries.

Mr. Ismail: Was Ghorbal one of them?

Dr. Kissinger: No. But Badawi, in London. And one of the editors of Al -Ahram, Ali el-Garnxnal.

Mr. Ismail: Heykal? [laughter}

Dr.Kissinger: Heykal I've never met. He is writing articles about me, though.

Mr. Ismail: Yes. "Kissinger and I" like "The King and I". You should not blame us about what he writes.

Dr. Kissinger: Yes, there are people who want me to see him. My theory is I prefer to talk to officials, so there was nothing to write about. I don't know what self-appointed intermediaries say.

Mr. Ismail: Kendall.

Dr. Kissinger: As a general rule I deal with official representatives. You have to assume if I want to be in touch with the Egyptian government I will deal with an official representative or whomever your President designates. I won't talk with a private person. I won't pick out a private person as an intermediary.

Mr. Ismail: Well, I think that I have said almost all of what I wanted to say.

Dr. Kissinger: I appreciate your presentation, which is extremely helpful. Let me ask some questions about it. First, let me ask about some procedural questions, not about our relations but about the context within which our dealings take place with other governments.

You said a settlement is the responsibility of the great powers, the United Nations, as well as the powers in the area. Now let me talk specifically about the Soviet Union. First of all, we recognize that the Soviet Union has major interests in the Middle East, and we do not ask that countries choose between us and the Soviet Union. It is no longer that kind of world. Basically our interest in the Middle East is that the countries preserve their independence and a self-reliant policy, and we can assume if they come to us that they should also come to other countries. It is up to them to decide what their interests are.

But practically now, you are no doubt aware that the Soviet leaders have approached us about discussions about the Middle East. I don't know how much you discussed this when you visited in Moscow.

Mr. Ismail: Yes. They said you wouldn't answer their questions in September. They said you always said, "We are not prepared, we are not prepared." So I said, when the Americans want to talk with you next time, you should say "We are not ready, we are not ready!"

Dr. Kissinger: On other subjects! I am not sure we appreciate this advice.

Mr. Ismail: Well, they told us what happened in May and certain discussions about different items that have been discussed. And that in September you did not reply to them when you were there.

Dr. Kissinger: That is true. That is essentially true. But that is now not the key problem. It is this: What happens when we talk to you and they talk to us -- it is total chaos descending. We must know what to say to them. We have to know what you tell them so we stay in step. We have no intention to double cross anybody in this. And secondly, what if they want to have bilateral discussions with us? What is the appropriate response if we are also talking with you? And how do we keep these various things in phase with each other?

Mr. Ismail: It is extremely difficult. This is a part we can think about.

Dr. Kissinger: Good. Will you give that some thought? Because if we tell everybody everything, in which case we are in a trilateral negotiation, then it is hard to explain why Israel is excluded. Or other steps. But this is something we should decide on before we break up this discussion.

Now, when you were in Moscow, did you tell then you were gal ngto meet with me separately? Or you didn't know yet you were coming.

Mr. Ismail: No, at that time we said we had put in a proposal that I would make an official visit.

Dr.Kissinger: When were you there?

Mr. Ismail: The 7th of February.

Dr.Kissinger: Right. So you had made the proposal before I left on my trip.

Mr. Ismail: Yes. Before you left. I said I would make the trip and see the Secretary of State. And then the President -I would go to Washington and impose myself on him.

Dr.Kissinger: No, it worked out very well. We were delighted to arrange it.

Mr. Ismail: Yes.

Dr.Kissinger: Okay we will leave this procedural matter until tomorrow. Now let me sum up the essence of your arguments. If I understand it, you are saying that there are really two basic settlements you are envisaging here. One is the settlement between all the countries in the area, including Israel, with respect to the military issues produced by the 1967 war. That is to say, the Israeli withdrawal, some security guarantees, and I suppose some security provisions that might be negotiated. And you define the essential element as a return to the mandated borders of Palestine.

Mr. Ismail: On the Egyptian front.

Dr.Kissinger: I was going to ask you where that leaves Jordan.

Mr. Ismail: You have spoken with King Hussein. We are not yet on speaking terms with him, so we don't know his view. He says he is prepared to leave it to the Palestinians to have self-determination. We will not put obstacles to an agreement as far as he is concerned.

Dr.Kissinger: So what would you mean by the mandated frontiers? For Egypt? Or Egypt and Syria?

Mr. Ismail: Egypt and Syria. But with a small proviso with respect to Gaza. It used to be linked with Egypt.

Dr.Kissinger: After 1947.

Mr. Ismail: Yes. And after a short period of occupation in 1946. But we feel responsible for Gaza and for the future of Gaza. And we think that unless a general solution is found for the Palestine question, that Gaza should have the right of self-determination under the auspices of the United Nations within the lines of 1949. Probably this is a principle that might be applied also to the

West Bank, But at least we are speaking about Gaza. It is up to them whether they want to join Jordan, or want to be independent. That is all right.

Dr.Kissinger: I can't face the prospect of another independent entity in the Middle East! It should be related to something.

All right. So this is phase one, or this is one of the phases. And secondly the second and final phase — which could occur simultaneously but is intellectually separable -- is a settlement between the Palestinians and Israel about the future of, shall we say, Mandated Palestine. Is that a fair statement?

Mr. Ismail: As we see it from Cairo, we see it like this: these areas that are under United Nations supervision, an entity can be worked out, a political entity.

Dr.Kissinger: What areas under U.N. supervision?

Mr. Ismail: Gaza and the West Bank. Then they can settle their differences with Israel. They can settle their differences and define the way they want to live together, or apart from each other.

Dr.Kissinger: Now, let me ask you: This is really for my education in a problem I'm just getting into. When you say the Palestinians and Israelis should settle this, who speaks for the Palestinians? King Hussein? Would you accept what he settles?

Mr. Ismail: We would not raise any obstacles in front of King Hussein settling this question.

Dr.Kissinger: So theoretically one might argue that the solution could be part of a global solution in the sense that King Hussein could settle the Palestine part as part of his settlement with Israel. I am just talking theory now. I have no evidence either is willing to do that.

Mr. Ghamin: And what about Gaza? In Gaza, too, we have to ask the people there, because it is not related.

Dr.Kissinger: I am talking about the West Bank.

Mr. Ismail: He has promised, after Israel withdraws from the West Bank, to give his people self-determination. That will be an internal problem.

Dr.Kissinger: So there are two problems: First, how does one get peace in the Middle East? And the second is how to get peace in the Hashemite Kingdom. The first is a world problem, an international question. The second is not; it is an internal one.

If I understand you correctly, you are saying that a settlement between Egypt and Israel will produce progress towards peace, but not final peace until the Palestine problem is solved.

Mr. Ismail: Yes. Because there is an aspect, namely the refugee problem, and that is a 25 year old problem. There are several United Nations resolutions on that. No one has challenged the

right of the refugees to determine either repatriation or compensation. On the contrary, everyone has accepted that principle.

Dr. Kissinger: I understand that. I am just trying to understand what a final settlement would look like. It is one thing if one can say that a settlement can produce a state of peace, whatever that means. I was so ignorant of the Middle East question that when I heard someone mention the text of 242 I said I didn't think it had any operational meaning. "Lasting peace," etcetera. I frankly didn't think it had any operational meaning that I could deal with. But now I almost think it means something. Now I use it with the same facility as my colleagues!

Bureaucratically, I am convinced that one of our problems is to get away from generalities and try to give it content. Security Council Resolution 242 passed only because all parties thought they could give the phrases the meaning they preferred. Obviously the Israelis mean something else from phrases like "secure and recognized borders" than what you mean.

It is one thing to say a negotiation will produce peace. It is another thing to say that it will produce something between a ceasefire and peace but dependent on yet another negotiation. Because if you talk about another negotiation, then all the same pressures apply. This is why I am asking you these questions.

Now if you say that Hussein has competence -- I don't think I noticed any enthusiasm on your part, but you say you won't challenge it -to settle the political structure of the Palestine problem, then who handles the refugees negotiation and the Gaza negotiation?

Mr. Ismail: Gaza we handle.

Dr. Kissinger: That should be part of the Egypt-Israeli complex of issues.

Mr. Ismail: The refugees is a general problem.

Dr. Gharnin: May I say a few words? We imagine that a final political settlement in the Middle East will include a settlement of the basic problems, problems regarding the sovereignty, boundaries, Syria, Jordan, Egypt and Israel. Also the settlement of the whole Palestine problem. We have only some general principles concerning how such a settlement will be achieved. But we believe it should be achieved by stages, by phases. And when we try to imagine the procedure, it can be either by an Egyptian-Israeli peace settlement as a point of departure or both a Jordan-Israel and Egypt-Israel settlement going together. But there should be a point of departure being a first step to take for the achievement of such a political settlement. But there should be other steps--a Syrian step, a Palestinian step. Mr. Ismail is not speaking for the Syrians, but he hopes the Syrians will accept the model we take. He is not speaking for the Palestinians, but we are defending the right of the Palestinians for self-determination. Now this can be a problem for the King of Jordan to deal with. We can deal with the question of Gaza. We are for their self-determination.

So we begin with the general principle of a total political settlement for the Middle East because this must be achieved. We cannot have partial armistices, or truces, or a semi-state of war or

waiting for other negotiations, bearing in mind that we want a Middle East living in peace, and it can't live in peace unless we find a way to get rid of the basic causes of the problem.

For our part, beginning with an Egyptian settlement in the phase of a total settlement will be a very important start. We don't object to King Hussein simultaneously or even beginning before, but we are ready to begin the Egyptian settlement. And here also we imagine the main question, which Mr. Ismail has explained, is the question of the sovereignty of Egypt related to the security of Israel--we don't consider the other problems for the moment. Security—some of Israel's claims about security are exaggerated. They say they want our lands for security. We feel the basic obstacle to an Egyptian settlement is to find how to compromise, how to reconcile the needs of the security of Israel with our sovereignty over Arab land.

This is our imagination. We need a political settlement. So even if we begin with the first part, an Egyptian settlement, we need some paragraphs on the basic political settlement, and such elements are in the 242 document. But we have to begin our Egyptian settlement with an indication that we are going forward to a whole settlement—maybe some basic principles and maybe even some procedures. Then go ahead with the Egyptian settlement. And this can be phased.

And we hope we will achieve some progress concerning this Egyptian-Israeli settlement, because we don't see any major real problems. If we are not misunderstanding. If Israel does not want peace and security but expansion, then there will be a major problem. But if not, there is not.

Dr . Kissinger: Can I ask you, what would be the outcome of that negotiation? Suppose it were possible to reconcile Egyptian sovereignty with Israel's concern about security. What would be the 'result of that negotiation, other than that Israel would withdraw? After that negotiation but before the other negotiation, what would be the state of Egyptian-Israeli relations?

Mr. Ismail: A commitment to full withdrawal can be accompanied with certain peace commitments on the part of Egypt toward Israel.

Dr. Kissinger: Can you give me an example of what you mean by that? You can be sure, incidentally, that these conversations will be kept strictly confidential. We will decide among ourselves what we can tell to the Soviets or with someone else.

Mr. Ismail: It would mean an end of the state of war.

Dr. Ghanim: But it will not mean full peace, because full peace will mean a full settlement. And end to the state of war, but not full peace.

Dr.Kissinger: That is what I am trying to understand.

Mr. Ismail: An exchange of ambassadors, for example.

Dr.Kissinger: Liaison offices. [Laughter] I understand.

Mr. Ismail: Things like that. A trade agreement, and so forth. These things are excluded.

Dr. Kissinger: Excluded.

Mr. Ismail: Yes.

Dr. Kissinger: But what is included? At some point we must speak to the Israelis. They will say, "What do we get?" We will say, "end of the state of War." What's that? A cease-fire? They will say they already have that.

Mr. Ismail: No, that is not it. The end of the state of war, non-intervention for any motives, free passage in international waterways. An endeavor on the part of Egypt with respect to individuals' and organizations' activities against Israel. It is not a full commitment, because it is an uncontrollable thing, you understand.

Dr. Ghanim: Security commitments.

Mr. Ismail: There would be certain security measures of an international character. Maybe observers, an international force in one or two strategic points. And all these have been discussed before and Egypt has accepted them. It may be what my colleague Dr. Ghanim here calls a peace that has yet got to be developed but that depends on both parties. It depends above all on a complete settlement. Suppose we reach agreement with Israel and there is not settlement on the - refugee problem. We will have to wait until there is a settlement before Egypt feels prepared to look into more....

Dr. Ghanim: Normalization.

Mr. Ismail: Normalization of relations.

Dr. Ghanim: Dr. Kissinger knows what is normalization between two states. But peace is what we want. We want real normalization of relations in the area. We can achieve a peace agreement, and we believe you can help us, Dr. Kissinger. But what we really want in this area is to live in peace. What is happening in the area since 1947, for 25 years, is terrible.

Mr. Ismail: It will be some time before Madame Meir can come to Egypt to shop.

Dr. Kissinger: This is a realistic assessment.

Dr. Ghanim: We are being very frank.

Dr. Kissinger: Yes, you are being frank. If we do all this, the Israelis will ask, how will the state of our relations differ from 1966? Supposing we present your thinking to the Israelis at some point. If they say, "This only gets us back to the state of 1966. Then we had an armistice that theoretically had ended a state of war." What should we say? How would you answer that question? Their perception, of course, is different from yours about the origin of the 1967 war.

Mr. Ismail: The difference would be--passage in the Suez Canal; there would be non-intervention, which means the end of the boycott on third-party goods. At the present time, we go to ICI and say you are developing goods inside Israel and we cannot deal with you. That kind of thing would come to an end. For example, on international agreements we put a reservation. So that kind of recognition.

Dr. Ghanim: Reservation about not applying to Israel.

Dr. Kissinger: In multilateral agreements?

Dr. Ghanim: Yes. It would be wholly different, Dr. Kissinger, because since 1948 up to now we have been in a state of war. Now the state of war will end with a peace agreement.

Dr. Kissinger: Would that imply that you then recognized the existence of the State of Israel? That does not mean that you have diplomatic relations. You and we don't have diplomatic relations but you don't challenge the existence of the United States as a political entity.

Mr. Ismail: Sometimes we do. [Laughter] It is in 242.

Dr. Ghanim: Acknowledgment of the existence of Israel is already there, in 242.

Mr. Ismail: It is a commitment.

Dr. Kissinger: Well, the Israelis always maintain that no state is in the position they are in, where their neighbors refuse to recognize their existence. Leaving aside the frontiers as an issue for negotiation, would the end result of this negotiation be that—legitimacy may be a big word--that Israel, say within the mandated frontiers, is accepted as legitimate? Is that what your colleague means by the end of the state of war?

Mr. Ismail: That brings us to technicalities. Suppose at that time Israel refuses an agreement with Syria or Jordan, that would bring up an interesting problem.

Dr. Kissinger: But supposing. . . I understood your point you made to the President, that the Arabs didn't invite the Israelis to settle and therefore the obligation of the Arabs toward the Israelis not _what the Balfour Declaration imagined. But I mean, if Israel had been there all along, or Jordan suddenly spilled over its borders, they would obviously be in a state of war, I could see you would refuse to conclude a peace, exchange Ambassadors, and so on, until there was a full settlement. But you would not necessarily challenge the existence of Jordan. The failure to have a full peace should not imply nonrecognition of a state's right to exist. Normally, states that are not at peace or cannot get satisfaction do not automatically conclude that the other does not have a right to exist.

So I can see your argument that there could not be a peace unless it is global. But that doesn't look at the question of whether Israel exists or not. That doesn't necessarily mean that you cannot accept the existence of Israel until Israel accepts a global settlement.

Dr. Ghanim: Let me read some paragraphs from 242.

Dr. Kissinger: I hope you don't misunderstand my question.

Dr. Ghanim: This we already accepted and I will read this to you.

Dr. Kissinger: I hope you realize the cultural shock for me to switch from the Vietnamese to the Middle East.

Mr. Ismail: Don't you see some similarities?

Dr. Kissinger: Yes, there are some.

Mr. Ismail: North Vietnam spilling over its borders; a settlement within South Vietnam between the two warring parties?

Dr. Ghanim: I am reading paragraph number one.

Dr. Kissinger: If there are similarities, I don't know if my nerves can take another brawl.

Mr. Ismail: I think it will be.

Dr. Kissinger: A brawl.

Dr. Ghanim: Paragraph one "affirms that the fulfillment of Charter principles requires the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East which should include the application of the following principles: (1) Withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from territories occupied in the recent conflict; (2)-4 his is what I want to read--"Termination of all claims or states of belligerency and respect for and acknowledgment of the sovereignty, territorial integrity, and political independence of every state in the area and their right to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries free from threats or acts of force."

This we have already accepted, Dr. Kissinger.

Dr. Kissinger: But you are not recognizing Israel as a state.,

Dr. Ghanim: This we have accepted with respect to all states.

Dr. Kissinger: But if we are candid with each other--the genius and the disaster of Resolution 242 is its vagueness. It is too general. By "secure and recognized borders" you mean the 1967 borders; by "secure and recognized borders" Israel means the borders it can get. By "states", you mean states you recognize. Each side can take the resolution to mean what it wants. This is the vagueness.

Dr. Ghanim: No. By this Security Council Resolution we meet its concern about recognition. We acknowledge its existence, independence, and sovereignty, and recognition. I want to be

frank. It is a minor difference, and it is mainly a question of normalization. Meaning that normalization is something different from recognition or acknowledgment.

Dr. Kissinger: That I understand fully. I think normalization is an expression about a country's foreign policy. That is an exercise of foreign policy. Whether countries accept each other's existence as entities, or fail to --that has psychological or legal consequences.

Dr. Ghanim: But the commitment is not vague, Dr.Kissinger.

There is a commitment of acknowledgment of existence, independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity.

Dr. Kissinger: Do I understand that Egypt would be prepared to incorporate that into the end of the state of war?

Mr. Ismail: Say that again.

Dr. Kissinger: Would Egypt be willing to state that as part of an end to the state of war? Suppose one could reconcile Egyptian sovereignty and Israeli security, the consequence of which you say would be an end to the state of war—with free passage, a commitment to work toward normalization. Could it also include repeating those phrases of 242 about recognizing the existence of Israel? You don't have to answer that now. But it would make a great difference.

Mr. Ismail: We understand. Of course, we believe that if there is a general understanding of principles that will be a settlement for Syria and Jordan, then that opens the way toward a much clearer commitment on the part of Egypt. But if the Israelis say, "No, we can apply these principles only toward Egypt,' then that would be a very big obstacle.

Dr. Kissinger: Should we take a few minutes break? Don't misunderstand my questions. It is my effort to get a clearer understanding. The curse in the relations in the past between our two countries is that in order to avoid difficulties we have used general phrases.' It is much better that we know the issues ahead of time instead of only after we get into the middle of it. These questions are bound to come up.

[The meeting recessed at 3:47 p. m. for refreshments, informal conversation—and photographs. The meeting resumed in the dining room at 4:45 p.m.]

Dr. Kissinger: I propose if this is agreeable, that we talk for another hour and a half or so and then we decide what we should discuss tomorrow, and say meet again about 10:00 tomorrow morning. If that is agreeable.

Mr. Ismail: Oh yes,

Dr.Kissinger: Now may I ask a few more questions, or would you prefer to make a statement on something I have said?

Mr. Ismail: I would like to listen to all your questions. Maybe we will see if there is a relationship between them. So we have the first questions, about recognition and the one we discussed before.

Dr. Kissinger: Yes, the question of recognition. And to put it crudely, what is the quid pro quo for Israel. Whatever the question of security is, they, whatever happens, they will say they are losing some security by moving back. Their question will be, what do they gain in return -- in terms of political status, or pacification of the area.

This was the purpose of those preliminary questions. Now, the other set of questions have to do with the nature of the settlement as you envision it, that is, the relationship between the military elements -- the ending of the inheritance of the 1967 war — and the final Palestine settlement. In this connection, we have had only preliminary talks with King Hussein. We recognize that no lasting settlement is possible in the Middle East that does not include Egypt and that does not have full Egyptian cooperation. You are absolutely the key country in that respect. So we did not know whether we should encourage King Hussein to make a settlement before you, wait for you, or get it concurrently. That assumes that such a settlement is possible. I am not sure about that. From the Israeli point of view no situation is as good as the present situation. But from your point of view, if a settlement is possible, which would be the better way: that Jordan precede you, or follow you, or go together?

Dr. Ghanim: As a point of clarification. You said that no situation is better for Israel than the present. Is this with respect to just Jordan? Or Egypt?

Dr. Kissinger: As I pointed out before, I frankly have not been engaged in Middle East diplomacy -- frankly because it seemed it wasn't going anywhere. So I don't have any answers. But my impression is that the basic issue, as Mr. Ismail pointed out, is the relationship of sovereignty to security. And from the point of view of Israel -- in terms of security, physical security — the present situation is the most desirable. From the purely physical military point of view, there is no line better than the Suez Canal or the Jordan River. Therefore, one has to argue that the real security of a country depends on more -- on conditions, political and moral, that exist. If one looks at history, one can see how one country's absolute security means insecurity for its neighbors. This is Mr. Ismail's point -- Arab fears. So the argument has to be to Israel, "Yes, you're giving up physical security but you are gaining a state of peace — better relations, the intangible aspects of security. "

I am thinking ahead of what Israel gains in the realm of security.

Dr. Ghanim: Just a point of clarification.

Dr. Kissinger: Now, what are your views on the Jordanian settlement?

Mr. Ismail: [Long pause] I hate to say whether you start with Jordan or start with Egypt.

Dr. Kissinger: And it may not be in our power to influence it anyway.

Mr. Ismail: I honestly can't commit myself on that. I will think it over. I don't have an answer for it.

Dr.Kissinger: Will you? That's all right. We don't need an answer. And it is a good enough answer to say you don't have a preference. That can be an answer.

Mr. Ismail: I will think about it.

Dr.Kissinger: We did not engage in any detailed talks with the Jordanians, because we wanted to wait for our talk with you. And, of course, there is the problem of Jerusalem which has its special complications.

Mr. Ismail: Yes.

Dr.Kissinger: You said that the outside countries, the great powers, should state how they visualize the State of Israel. You said that?

Mr. Ismail: Yes.

Dr.Kissinger: Could you explain that phrase to me?

Mr. Ismail: It is in response to the continual demands by the British and American State Department and Foreign Office about direct negotiations. Because we feel that the United Nations was responsible for recognition of Israel in the area, the big powers are responsible for recognizing Israel. Now we are asked to recognize Israel's frontiers and say whether they can go this far or that. It is for the big powers to interpret 242. They have done it singly: The British at Harrogate, the Americans by Dean Rusk and then Rogers' plan of 1969. Therefore, we feel it is the duty of the big powers to say, "Look here, this is as far as you can go." Or not to put the burden on us to say it. It is a difficult position. As you said, the Israelis have no interest in withdrawing. They prefer this to any other situation as far as the territorial situation is concerned.

Dr.Kissinger: At least no self-evident interest.

Mr. Ismail: Unless they get something in return. That is what I meant by the big powers have got to exercise their influence -- not only the US but France, Russia. Perhaps even China. We may even go to the non-aligned. It is more a political issue.

Dr. Ghanirn: The question also has its technical side. The British gave the Balfour Declaration and mentioned a national home without giving a definition of the national home. And in the Mandate there was mention of it, without deciding what was the national home. The United Nations in 1947 decided to partition Palestine and they put some borders for the Jewish state and Palestine, but it seems that these borders were not implemented. What is the position of those who created Israel? Israel is a very special case because it was created by decision of an international organization -- first by the League of Nations, secondly by decision of the General Assembly. But what is the border of Israel created by them, and how far can they go in expanding?

Dr.Kissinger: I have the impression that you don't want them to go anywhere, though. You want them to specify the 1967 frontiers, for example.

Dr. Ghanim: For example. We can accept or reject. But what did they have in their mind? You had something in your mind in 1967 when you accepted the Resolution 242. What did you have in mind?

Dr.Kissinger: In 242.

Mr. Ismail: This will help bring some sense into the heads of the people in Israel. If they see the United States and Russia, and the French and British. . . And Dr. Jarring, selected by an international organization, presented an interpretation of 242 and it was rejected by Israel.

Dr.Kissinger: You mean February 1971.

Mr. Ismail: Yes. So we say we cannot bargain while they occupy our land. I think that after we get the land out of the question, we can talk about anything, but not with the territory as a bargaining card in their hand. They will say, "No for this part and then we negotiate for that part." This is not acceptable in our view. We say, "Get the land out of our bargain, because they have no right to that." We say the big power organizations have in mind certain limitations to this kind of country, so Israel will have to abide by that and not to decide everything by saying "We are staying here until we get what we want."

Dr.Kissinger: How do you visualize that concretely? By a four-power agreement, or unilateral declarations?

Mr. Ismail: Individually, and a unilateral position taken by the United States. When Mrs. Meir comes here, tell her what you have in your mind.

Dr.Kissinger: Oh, I see.

Mr. Ismail: There may come a time when we think that the individual efforts will be to avail and we shall have to go a step further. And has I said to Waldheim, maybe there will be a time when we will have to go to- your Security Council and it will have to do something, if it is not solved. This is what I meant.

Dr.Kissinger: Do you envision something beyond what Rogers said in 1969?

Mr. Ismail: Yes. I envisage practical measures at some time, if Israel goes on refusing 242 as a basis for a settlement or refusing everyone's ideas.

Dr.Kissinger: Then let me ask this directly. Since you have said that the big powers' decision could be done unilaterally, it merges with the question I was going to ask next: What do you think the US can do at this point? Secondly, where do you think the talks between you and me —

or between Egyptians and Americans — can go, and how do they eventually link up with the Israelis?

Mr. Ismail: The reason up to now that our talks have not picked up momentum is because we cannot reach an agreeable basis as an interpretation of 242. Until we reach that line, we cannot link up with the Israelis through the US. Unless something like the Dean Rusk pro forma[sic] is worked out.

Dr.Kissinger: Isn't that the same as Rogers?

Mr. Ismail: No, Rogers is a little more deformed a proposal, because the American position has been deteriorating month after month. Until a point soon, when the State Department will ask us to negotiate direct talks with the Israelis while they are in the Suez Canal. So the first important objective we should try to reach is to reach an acceptable interpretation of 242, because up to now we have failed to do that. When we reach that phase through those talks, then we can look forward to some other means, for further elaboration of those elements of a settlement. Until then, and until the Israelis accept this agreeable basis, we think the US should exercise its influence in different ways. [He smiles.] I don't know how you can exercise that influence, but you know better than me.

Dr.Kissinger:[laughs] It is my misfortune that I deal with people who think we have more influence than we in fact possess.

Mr. Ismail: But you have, because the continued supply of arms is helping to keep Israel on the ground that it is holding. We believe that the settlement can only be feasible if Israel comes to a situation where it does not have that much confidence without a threat of war. Or at least a situation where Israel thinks it just can't go on and. keep hold of those lines, both politically and militarily. Politically also.

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MEMORANDUM THE WHITE HOUSE
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MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

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Dr. Henry A. Kissinger, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs Mr. Harold H. Saunders, NSC Senior Staff Mr. Peter W. Rodman, NSC Staff
Mrs. Bonnie Andrews, Notetaker

PLACE: Armonk, New York
DATE AND TIME: Monday, February 26, 1973
10:25 - 3:35 p.m.

Mr. Ismail: To start, I would like to confirm that in our contacts with the U. S. we are seeking a settlement in the Middle East and we believe that the U. S. can play a dominant role in that respect. We very much appreciate the interest that the President of the U. S. has given to that. We feel he is almost getting personally committed to see that there is progress along those lines. On that basis we conduct our policy. We shall follow up the channel you have suggested. We shall keep the secrecy of the channel you have opened and not link it up with other channels. And whatever our Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the State Department are doing is a separate thing.

I am in general agreement with you about meeting in the beginning of April. We will see if we can do it here, in the States. In between, in the meantime...

Mr. Kissinger: We shall be in touch.

Mr. Ismail: In the meantime we will be in contact, so we can exchange ideas in preparation for that. Now, how do we see the role of the U.S.? . We take into consideration certain difficulties and factors that you consider to be limiting your freedom of action. We understand that. We are not silly or stupid to forget about that or to think the U. S. can just turn a page. On the other hand, now, we feel also that the U.S. has got enough possibilities to convince Israel, to exercise your influence. Instead of considering the lobby here to be a limiting factor, we hope your Government could turn it around, so that instead of it being a limiting factor in the U. S. that it will work there in Tel Aviv instead of Washington. But that is an internal question and we won't argue about this.

Now, we take this stage, in which we are discussing together the situation.; we feel that we can fix- our objective in that phase as the reaching of fundamental principles, the heads of agreement. We can have that as an objective. Yesterday we discussed ways to proceed, and I think that we have excluded the first one, which was to try to come to an agreement with you and you then try to bring along Israel. Another approach is, that you will discuss with us, and then you will get the Israeli point of view, and maybe you can work out something that will satisfy Egyptian desires on sovereignty at the same time taking into account the desires of Israel for security. I think that was the basic point that President Nixon brought up.

Dr.Kissinger: Exactly.

Mr. Ismail: If we agree with you, then under this approach the American role is how to bring about Israel to accept that. If we agree with you, we don't expect you to come back to us and say the Israelis can't go along with this or that... Because that is what happened in 1970-71. Rogers spoke to our President and he said: "We have nothing to ask from the Egyptian Government, and we almost agree on certain principles." And then he went to Israel, and then came back to Washington, and we got the answer that the Israelis would not accept, and the whole thing fell down. In this case we felt that the U. S. did not exercise its full influence with the Israelis — or

worse, that the U. S. was not really interested in defending those common ideas and sort of let the whole thing break down.

Dr.Kissinger: I'm not sure there was a clear understanding of what those common ideas were. We never understood -- in the White House at least — that the ideas had gone beyond an interim agreement.

Mr. Ismail: Sisco discussed with the President a couple of hours on the interim settlement; then Sisco left, and Bergus presented the "phantom paper. " It was a confusing process, really.

Dr.Kissinger: Yes.

Mr. Ismail: Therefore, if we at some time come to an agreement with you about certain fundamental principles, then starts the American role of bringing about Israeli consent. This is an approach.

At the present time we consider that we are starting this first phase, which has as its objective the definition of heads of agreement, of finding fundamental principles. As we go along, if we feel the agreement is moving toward finalization of these principles, we might start to think of what the next stage will be -- what procedure, what objective. At the present time, I feel it is too early to commit ourselves about the second stage.

You asked when we thought Israel should be brought in.

Dr.Kissinger: Yes.

Mr. Ismail: I honestly cannot answer this question. I will put the ball back in your part of the court! When you feel it is time to get in contact with the Israelis and tell them what is going on, then you will be telling us you are doing it, and then we can go on. But we leave it to your feel as to the appropriate time -- the development of these talks, the atmosphere. Because we won't want to leave the Israeli participation hanging on for a long time. I think that we would like them to come in and start to be in the picture as soon as it is practicable.

I will put the Russians here, where it is more logical. With respect to the Soviet Union, again it is a very, very delicate question.

Dr.Kissinger: For both of us.

Mr. Ismail: I will tell you frankly why. Until we feel our feet on solid ground, it is important for us that the Soviets know generally what is happening. They know very accurately, without any doubt, that we are working on our own, have freedom of action, that we are contacting the U. S.

Incidentally, I told someone that you joined the meeting with the President and that I saw you later on for a few minutes and we talked a bit. So I could say later that I had seen Dr.Kissinger and then we discussed these things.

Dr. Kissinger: We agreed on that.

Mr. Ismail: But I would like to stress this point, that we are moving on our own- They know generally what is in our minds and how we feel about the basic principles, with respect to the fundamental elements of a settlement—borders, navigation, this and that. -We have told them that we are not changing them and, therefore, we have told them that we would like them to sort of stand up beside us. And I think that they may be contacting you and talking about this. In general terms, yes, but they are not authorized to talk about details of this point or that point. But generally speaking they will be in contact with you and asking you about the situation in the Middle East.

And this time we hope they will not get the answer "we are not prepared"!

Dr. Kissinger: As you said yesterday. I think it is fair to tell you that they were not exactly beating down the door in September to get an answer to this question. It is possible that I told them it is a bad time to get to this question. I spent four days in Moscow and I don't remember anybody saying, "Now about the Middle East?" It is a nuance that is important. It is not exactly that we were importuned to discuss and we resisted. In September frankly there was not that urgency to the issue.

Mr. Ismail: Probably the State Department was not ready.

Dr. Kissinger: Frankly, the State Department was under instructions. We did not want to get another emotional exercise started that would get everybody stirred up and in public positions without knowing where we were going. Not until we knew more about what would come of our exchanges.

Mr. Ismail: Yes. We shall keep them generally informed about my present visit to the U.S., fully informed about my discussions in the State Department. When I say generally informed, I mean my meeting with the President and spending a short time with you. I mean the general atmosphere, what we generally talked about. But I will not speak about this place. When something is about to happen in our dialogue that is of importance one way or another, then I shall agree with you about informing the Soviet Union.

Let me tell you very frankly that we have a problem that we have to solve. We are under no obligation to bring in this or that. Whoever is prepared to deliver Israel is welcome to do it.

Well, I leave the procedural questions and go on to questions of more substance. It is our understanding that the U. S. is interested in the establishment of peace in the Middle East and that the Security Council Resolution 242 contains the basic principles for that solution. Within that general context there is going to be an Egyptian solution. It contains two basic questions. The first one is this about territories; or sovereignty--Egyptian sovereignty and Israeli withdrawal from Egyptian territory--reconciled with the legitimate and reasonable concerns of Israel with respect to security. Secondly, because of our moral attachment to the people in Gaza, we feel that they should have the right of self-determination through the auspices of the United Nations.

Mr. Kissinger: As part of an Egyptian settlement?

Mr. Ismail: Well, there will be an obligation in that respect but whether it is part of the Egyptian paper or not I can't visualize at this point. It may be a separate document. But it will be that the people of Gaza will be given the right of self-determination and under the Charter of the U.N., and the auspices of the U. N. Of course, how to determine what their future is is something that will get linked up with the developments on the Jordanian sector. It will have to be related with that.

Again, there are the 1948 refugees who are in the Gaza, and who represent a part of the refugee problem, who are all over the place. I think again on that point there will be some kind of an obligation that the refugee problem will be solved according to the U. N. resolutions. But the United Nations will probably be the ones who will look after the solution of that problem. We cannot overlook it as long as we talk of the Egyptian part, especially Gaza, because there are so many of them in that sector. But of course it is one part of the general problem of the refugees of 1948. Okay.

I would like to say just a word about the other two Arab countries, Syria and Jordan.

With respect to Jordan, King Hussein is quite qualified to bring about a settlement. If he breaks the principles, we shall hold up our position and say we object to that. But if he thinks this is the way he wants to do it, if he wants to give up a corridor along the Jordan River and make rectifications, well, okay, that is up to him. We will object but he can get along. But Jerusalem is quite a different question. Our basic position on Jerusalem is that the Arab part of Jerusalem is Arab. There is no wavering on that. It is our idea expressed with respect to the Jordan problem. As you said, whether he will be in a position to offer the West Bank self-determination might be considered an internal question for him, a question he will have to settle with the Palestinians. If they want to join with him that is okay. If they break with him, all right. It is up to them. We have no fixed views.

As to Syria, the situation from the Egyptian point of view is a much more serious question because Syria is a partner with Egypt now in the Confederated Arab Republic. We feel it is very important that Syria gets a settlement on similar principles like the Egyptian settlement. We understand the problems of both sides, Israel and Syria. Syria has not said that it accepted the 242 Resolution. The Israelis say they don't talk about the whole question.. We will see how things develop.

This brings us to the question of the inter-relationship between the different settlements as we get along the road. Yesterday I gave you a sort of vague answer about whether Jordan can be first, Well, I will try to express myself like this: We in Egypt have a problem that we would like to see solved in the coming months, before the end of the coming year. Where does Jordan fit in, or Syria? I don't know. Maybe, and it is just an idea that we worked out this morning, if we can reach the fundamental principles for an Egyptian settlement, then probably we can start the motors elsewhere, for Jordan and Syria, all over the place. It would be a good time then to start discussions with Jordan and Syria. That means that they will be a step behind. I mean, we reach an agreement about the heads of agreement, and they start the same process to come up to that.

So, a new stage will start then, a new stage to work out the final provisions for an Egyptian agreement.

I don't want to commit myself very much on this point, but I want to say that when we reach a final agreement we want to see that the Jordanians and Syrians have reached agreement on the heads of agreement. Is this too complicated? Do you understand what I mean.

Mr. Kissinger: Yes, I understand very well.

Mr. Ismail: So on the whole front we are moving, at different speeds. We don't want to give the impression ... we don't want to give other Arab countries any reason for harassing the whole operation. If they feel there is a general movement, we can deal with whatever propaganda and obstruction there will be against you and us and the whole process. It is a very essential point.

If we leave aside now the Jordan and Syrian questions and we see more how we develop on the Egyptian front, we see in the first stage the heads of agreement, and then in the second one we come to the final provisions, and then the third, which will bring us to implementation of the provisions. We hope to move on very quickly, because—although it is an internal problem-- by the first of September we might be getting this referendum about our union with Syria. And we would like to see things to a great extent settled between now and summer. So, as I told you a few minutes ago, if we feel that we can reach an agreement on the heads of agreement by the end of May, then we can start on the final provisions.

Whether or not we start some type of disengagement while we are talking about the final provisions, well, it is an idea that I would like you to think about, and we will think about also. It is not an interim agreement, but a kind of preliminary to peace.

[Dr.Kissinger: makes a check on paper in front of him. Mr. Ismail laughs.]

Dr.Kissinger: You answered one of my questions.

Mr. Ismail: It could be linked with other preliminary questions, like release of prisoners, or of Palestinians who are interred for no reason. I mean one and two things like that to help create the atmosphere and to help give our work more momentum.

That is, generally speaking, how we visualize the Egyptian approach towards a settlement.

You asked us about a few other points. I think we discussed that idea of acknowledgement of independence. We would like to fix one or two points here.

We think the end of the state of war will come with the final withdrawal of Israel from Egyptian territory. We shall acknowledge respect for the sovereignty, political independence, and territorial integrity of Israel and the right to live in peace. We shall acknowledge all those commitments with the final withdrawal. A recognition of Israel in explicit words we think may be logically related to a settlement on the Jordan and Syrian fronts, because it generates more

important developments in the area. And we would like to see, before making that commitment, that on the whole front we have reached a settlement.

Of course, the end of the state of war in itself has a certain significance with respect to a number of commitments on the part of both countries. On the part it means, for example, freedom of navigation. It would mean also an end on our part to see that Egyptian soil is not a base for acts by individuals or organizations against the people or property of citizens of Israel.

I think this just about covers your questions, unless you have others.

Dr.Kissinger: Well, I appreciate these very thoughtful comments which did address every question which I put to you yesterday.

Let me make a few comments and then go on to some more detailed discussions of some points.

First, with respect to the role which the U. S. can play in the Middle East. As I understand it, your thought is that we should now speak to Israel to elicit their general thinking and by the time we meet next time, we would • have some general ideas which address both Egyptian and Israeli concerns. Then next time we would discuss those and try to reduce them to some general propositions we can agree on. And then if we and you agree, it is our responsibility to again approach Israel to see if we can get those accepted unchanged.

Mr., Ismail: Yes.

Dr.Kissinger: That is what I was afraid of! This is difficult.

Mr. Ismail: That is the least we can ask. We want to make your role easy!

Dr.Kissinger: Tell me what you would want me to do if you wanted to make it difficult! [Laughter] How that process would be conducted you have left vague.

Mr. Ismail: I said between now and April we could think about it.

Dr.Kissinger: Yes.

Mr. Ismail: We don't want to wait until we have reached the end of agreement and then start the next phase. We would like to discuss the next phase while we are progressing now so that when we come to an agreement on the heads of agreement we are sure what we are doing next. We don't want to waste a lot of time.

Dr. Kissinger: Yes. At this stage we will certainly have to involve the Israelis.

Mr. Ismail: In the second stage.

Dr. Kissinger: According to your outline, we would come up with a paper encompassing our best judgment of how we could reconcile the Egyptian and Israeli positions. We then take it to the

Israelis and then they accept it -- according to your outlines -- without any change and without any negotiation with you. After they accepted it there would be a negotiation to work out the details.

Mr. Ismail: More or less indirect.

Dr. Kissinger: It is at this point then that you believe that something like the proximity discussions could be the form of negotiation.

Mr. Ismail: Something different from what we are doing now.

Dr. Kissinger: Something that involves the Israelis directly? And then the negotiations with Jordan and Syria would follow roughly the same procedure. One step removed, but more or less the same process.

Mr. Ismail: We will try to convince the Syrians.

Dr. Kissinger: But who do they talk to first? To us, to work out the heads of agreement? The Jordanians I can understand.

Mr. Ismail: I don't know how we will work that out. I will take that question back and see if I can get an answer.

Dr. Kissinger: But the process follows more or less the same outline.

Now, at the end of this process when you say we move from the provisions of the agreement to the implementation., I assume the provisions have some sort of time sequence -- who does what when? [Ismail nods] And, of course, that would start after the provisions are agreed to. And you would then be prepared to sign a separate Egyptian agreement as long as there was something in train to indicate that the process might take the same form for Jordan and Syria.

Mr. Ismail: Yes.

Dr. Kissinger: And the Egyptian part of this you wanted to have a substantial part completed by September 1, at least the heads of agreement, or the provisions -- we have to be realistic -- whatever is doable.

Mr. Ismail: Heads of agreement, the provisions. A disengagement might be ...

Dr. Kissinger: That gets us to the next step. As I understand it -- please correct me -- the so-called interim solution -- within the context of the heads of agreement and while the provisions are being settled, you can envisage some steps like an opening of the Canal. One would have to find some phrase.

Mr. Ismail: Opening phase.

Dr. Kissinger: Opening phase, a preliminary step to indicate a starting of the process that is in motion. I understand now what you have in mind regarding sequence.