

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

PARTICIPANTS:

1974-1-14
Sadat
Kissinger
Meeting

Anwar al-Sadat, President of the Arab

Republic of Egypt

Ismail Fahmi, Minister of Foreign Affairs

Maj. General Mohammed Abdel Ghany el-

Gamasy, Egyptian Chief of Staff

Henry A. Kissinger, Secretary of State
 Ambassador Ellsworth Bunker, Ambassador-
 at-Large, Head of U. S. Delegation to
 Geneva Peace Conference
 Joseph J. Sisco, Assistant Secretary for
 Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs
 Peter W. Rodman, NSC Staff *WRC*

DATE AND TIME:

Monday, January 14, 1974
 10:30 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

PLACE:

The President's House
 Aswan, Egypt

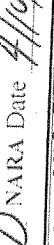
[Secretary Kissinger and President Sadat conferred privately from about 10:30 to 10:45 a.m., discussing a map which the Secretary had carried with him from Israel. About about 10:45, General Gamasy was summoned to join the discussion. At 11:15 a.m., Ambassador Bunker, Assistant Secretary Sisco, and Peter Rodman were brought into the meeting.]

Secretary Kissinger: Sisco was up until 4:00 a.m. Saturday night. We did it in turns. I started at 7:30.

President Sadat: They said in the papers that a working committee was set up [between the U.S. and Israel].

Secretary Kissinger: Yes, working groups.

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[Photographers were admitted, for a brief photo opportunity.]

Secretary Kissinger: I told the press that by tonight we would know whether it was a Kissinger plan or a Sisco plan. [Laughter]

Minister Fahmi: It depends on its success. [Laughter]

I told Joe that if it is a Joe plan, we'd send him to the Valley of the Queens. We'd preserve him.

Secretary Kissinger: Why preserve him? [Laughter]

I have presented to the President the evolution of my knowledge of Israeli thinking and also the political situation in Israel as we see it -- which is a divided Cabinet trying to form a new Cabinet, in which factions have this idea or that idea but it is difficult to get together. We insisted, on this visit, that there had to be a plan, and that they couldn't play the game with us of offering models and then taking them back.

First they suggested to replace Israeli forces with UN forces -- which I rejected. Then I showed the President a map they gave us Saturday, which was official -- they would leave the West Bank, you would stay in the Second and Third Army areas, and the UN takes this area, and there would be forward zones on both sides, and then the main lines. We rejected this, on the ground that the Egyptian presence on the Canal had to be unbroken and I couldn't face President Sadat with this proposal. Also, I didn't think it right that Egypt had to give up this territory. [See map at Tab A]

They wanted me to present this and come back to them. I said no.

Now their proposal is this: that there would be an Egyptian line, a UN line, and the Israeli line. This they say -- and I believe it -- is absolutely their final main line. They will not go off this road. I told the President, although I have no authority to do this, that I believe morally it is not possible or easy to ask Egypt to give up any territory they conquered. So I told the President I would be prepared to go back to Israel to ask that it go to Egypt, not the UN. [See map at Tab B]

So it is an unbroken line to the furthest extent of your present line plus the unbroken line.

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By NARA Date 4/10/78
I have no authority but I will strongly urge it.

President Sadat: I told Dr. Kissinger to push the UN line forward in front of our line.

Secretary Kissinger: I am positive they won't go back further here.

President Sadat: The main line.

Secretary Kissinger: Yes. Your President wanted me to discuss it. I think -- and my associates were present at all my meetings -- that their original idea was like the Yariv idea, ten to twelve kilometers and no more. But I think they will go as far as this road. In the south I haven't discussed with them with the same intensity.

Here [the artillery line further back] is another line I haven't discussed with the President. They are willing to withdraw their artillery to this line if you are willing to withdraw your artillery.

President Sadat: From the East or West Bank?

Secretary Kissinger: From the East Bank.

Let's go through it all. In their view, in the Egyptian area on the East Bank they say there should be in the whole area two to three battalions. I told them this is impossible.

President Sadat: That's right.

Secretary Kissinger: I am a lousy negotiator on their behalf, but I want to tell you my idea of what is possible and what is not. The zone is with no tanks, no artillery; APC's are possible, and anti-tank guns are possible. They want this whole withdrawal to take three months -- then they said two months. I said it has to be shorter.

They have agreed to open the two roads to Suez City and the road to Kabrit within 48 hours of the first withdrawal. I promised you this.

President Sadat: Yes.

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Secretary Kissinger: Their basic theory is that the artillery of each side should be such that it does not cover more than the forward zone. Theirs would be back here, thirty kilometers.

They also are willing in this zone of thirty kilometers to have any limit of deployments that you are willing to have in your zone.

President Sadat: In the Western Bank.

Secretary Kissinger: Yes. So if you have, say, 300 tanks, they will do the same. They don't insist on it. But if you are willing.

They also want a line of 18 kilometers here with no artillery, then only 155 mm in the zone between 18-30 kilometers, and then 175 mm beyond the thirty kilometers.

If you want this, it can be done. I personally think it will be impossible to distinguish by photography between 155 and 175 mm, and I believe the practical consequence is that it means unrestricted artillery.

General Gamasy: Impossible.

Secretary Kissinger: In my judgment, yes.

President Sadat: Quite right.

Secretary Kissinger: They also want that anti-aircraft missiles be placed in such a way that they can't reach beyond the forward edge of your forward zone. Again I had a long argument with them about this, and they are willing to do the following -- which shows that the argument is heavily political. They don't mind that you can build emplacements for them as long as you don't move missiles in. But they say you can do it in 24 hours.

President Sadat: All our sites now are in this range on the West Bank. Beyond Qantara.

Secretary Kissinger: Your range is about 40 kilometers.

President Sadat: The maximum is 35 kilometers.

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Secretary Kissinger: You have better ones than the North Vietnamese, they don't hit much at the maximum range. Our experience in Vietnam is they are easy to avoid at the maximum range.

President Sadat: Quite right.

Secretary Kissinger: Now, I've presented to you their full plan, which caused us unbelievable anguish to produce -- even though you won't like it.

My judgment is this: I believe the number of battalions should be increased. I've already told them this is an unreasonable proposal. I don't know what they are willing to accept.

President Sadat: That depends on how many they put on the main line. I can't do it unless they tell me what they will have.

Secretary Kissinger: Their theory is your main line is the Canal and theirs is here. They will put symmetrical forces in their forward zones. I have told you there will be no tanks, no artillery in the forward zone. So this would be symmetrical.

Behind this main line they are willing, if you have only, say, 300 tanks between the main line and thirty kilometres, they'll do the same. We haven't discussed it all, but I believe it has to be a simple line.

President Sadat: It must be simplified at this stage.

Secretary Kissinger: I have given you the worst now.

Let me now go through it. I'll give you my assessment later.

President Sadat: Please.

Secretary Kissinger: There are seven essential conditions they said they had to have: [reads from memo at Tab C] The first is that the Agreement must renew the commitment to the ceasefire. I see no problem here.

President Sadat: No.

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Would you line now?

President Sadat: No, because we first have to agree, you and I, on the principles on which they will work.

Secretary Kissinger: I think we should form a working committee but we have to tell them what to do in this working committee.

President Sadat: Exactly.

[At 11:50 Kissinger and Sadat go out to discuss alone. While waiting, Gamasy, Fahmi, and Sisco go over the map.]

General Gamasy: Here is our main line now. We can't consider moving our main line here.

Minister Fahmi: Reciprocity is illogical. If they want us to put only 300 tanks here, it is defending the whole country. Their tanks aren't defending anything, and they are on Egyptian territory.

General Gamasy: [Opens up his own map] This is what we expected you would bring.

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Minister Fahmi: We can't keep only 300 tanks to defend against a shock attack. If they change their mind and try to kick us out of the East Bank.

General Gamasy: We have our anti-aircraft on our main line. There are very few artillery pieces of ours that can hit their forces in their forward zone. We have very few 122 mm pieces.

Ambassador Bunker: What about 130 mm? With 27-kilometer range?

General Gamasy: We have very few. And they have very few 175 mm that can hit our forces. The concept of their plan is to draw their forces back a little and behind this line to do whatever they like. And ask us to draw our main forces back.

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Minister Fahmi: To take our forces back from the East Bank. And all of this is on our own territory.

Assistant Secretary Sisco: I understand you reject symmetry.

Minister Fahmi: Politically what they are doing is redeploying their own forces and diminishing our defensive forces on our own territory, to guarantee their safety and diminish our safety. This is what they are doing.

Before we crossed the Canal we were much stronger. If we remove the rockets and keep only 300 tanks. . . . We were much stronger even before October 6. We had 2,000 tanks.

General Gamasy: This [the Egyptian artillery line] is a very important line. Why do they have this?

Assistant Secretary Sisco: It's the parallel of their line here. They'd accept whatever limits you would accept.

Minister Fahmi: You see, they pick and choose. One time they ask for reciprocity and similarity; on other points they don't. They give themselves a security zone but not one for us. And they keep the main [north-south] road. The UN zone has no road in it; it's useless.

General Gamasy: That means the UN has to work inside our troops.

Then if we have two - three battalions, about 1,800 men, for the 180 kilometers, that means we can do better with police than with these three battalions.

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Minister Fahmi: This shows what is in the back of their minds. This is meant to undo the effects of October 6, not only politically but militarily.

We have a special corps, of Nubians, to control the frontiers. They would be better than the 1,500 men they would give us. They want to reduce the Second and Third Armies to 1,500 men.

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General Gamasy: We heard all this from Yariv.

Assistant Secretary Sisco: But we have Cabinet approval for this.

General Gamasy: The Cabinet approved this?

Assistant Secretary Sisco: Yes. There are many factions in Israel.

General Gamasy: I think they proposed this just to have us reject it.

Before the war, we had five infantry divisions on the West Bank. Now they are on the East Bank. They [the Israelis] know this. They [our troops] were working -- and are -- under the security of the air defense system we have. Now under this proposal we have to have these five divisions back on the West Bank, without the air defense system, and with only 300 tanks.

Mr. Rodman: There was no figure for tanks. It was just a symmetrical limit: whatever you have, they will have.

Assistant Secretary Sisco: It's a mutual limitation.

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General Gamasy: With the permission of my Foreign Minister, we still have prisoners of war with Israel and they won't hand them back. I think they should, and it would be a good attitude.

Assistant Secretary Sisco: I am sure if this is agreed on, something can be worked out.

They expressed concern to us about the number of ceasefire violations. This is what they say to us. They say: "Make it clear to the Egyptians that we have been very restrained and if these violations continue it will be very difficult to continue this restraint." They say you're shooting at their boys when they are improving their positions. They say there is no prohibition of improving positions and you are doing the same.

I just feel under an obligation to convey what they said.

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Minister Fahmi: They say this in Geneva. If they continue, we may have to react.

Assistant Secretary Sisco: They say the violations are on your side. They say you're fortifying positions, too.

Minister Fahmi: But it's Egyptian territory.

Assistant Secretary Sisco: You can't use that argument for everything, Ismail. It is part of the Six Points.

General Gamasy: I gave Yariv our word of honor that Mizrachi and Levi, the two spies, along with other agents, will be exchanged at a later date. There was one prisoner they were especially interested in, Dan Avidan, who was held for four years, whom I brought with me to 101. This was a hint.

Assistant Secretary Sisco: They give you 100 percent credit for treatment of their prisoners. But they expressed the view to us about the pattern of ceasefire violations.

General Gamasy: Siilasvuo mentioned that to us, but our Minister said one thing: If they stop the engineering works, we'll stop shooting. We don't mind their improving the works, but they are making a new Bar-Lev line. It means they are staying there forever.

Assistant Secretary Sisco: That's helpful to know.

Minister Fahmi: They also have to respect the other points of the Six Point agreement.

For example, there are sick people in the Suez City who are dying because the medical facilities there are inadequate. They are dying. If we did this to them, they would be crying and screaming.

General Gamasy: We have an isolated position in Kabrit. They refuse to allow supplies to them. It's only a company. They said, "Evacuate them." We said no. Siilasvuo raised this with Dayan and he said no. Not to allow supplies for 100 soldiers while allowing supplies for thousands makes no sense.

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We have three points:

- the prisoners of war
- the wounded and sick civilians in Suez City;
- the supply of Kabrit.

Minister Fahmi: The Minister of War said it was so serious in Suez City that it was going to be an epidemic. He was going to make a speech and I told him not to. There were very few, now there are 200.

Assistant Secretary Sisco: They say to us: "Yes, we are building these positions, which is not prohibited. If they stop shooting at us we will allow convoys in." They talk about dead bodies. What about this from your point of view?

General Gamasy: The minute they made difficulties on these points -- refusing to evacuate the sick and wounded and to allow supply Kabrit -- we refused to give the dead bodies. We gave some but we stopped. I tell you this frankly. Especially when we came to a deadlock at 101.

I am sure if we announce that we have one prisoner of war, they will cry, and we will get our prisoners on the second day.

We took some of their prisoners to visit Jewish families and a synagogue in Cairo. They were amazed to see they were well-treated.

Assistant Secretary Sisco: I know from the time of the Six-Day War you have never mistreated Jews in Egypt.

General Gamasy: Another funny thing. We spent two weeks with Yariv to get him to allow newspapers into Suez. Then he agreed. We sent in newspapers and magazines; they let in the newspapers but not the magazines. I don't like to raise these minor points but it shows their attitude.

Minister Fahmi: The Agreement Henry drafted says, for the Third Army, "non-military equipment" but for Suez City it says "food, medicine, and water."

General Gamasy: So they don't allow razors for shaving. It's not "food,"

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Minister Fahmit: They won't allow the citizens, civilians, in Suez City to go to Cairo for registering, or for errands. You know in our country everything is centralized in Cairo.

We are ready to respect the Six Points in their entirety, every point.

Assistant Secretary Sisco: The danger is that once it breaks down, you may not be able to limit it to tit-for-tat.

Minister Fahmi: They want us to influence the Syrians to do everything. But if you compare what they do to what the Syrians do, it is identical.

[At 1:30 p.m., Dr. Kissinger and President Sadat returned.]

Secretary Kissinger: [to General Gamasy] I have already told your President: We thought you would be defeated in 48 hours. On the Tuesday after the war started, the Israelis came to us and said they had lost 400 tanks.

Should I sum up our understanding of our conversation?

President Sadat: Please. You're much cleverer.

Secretary Kissinger: But not as wise.

The President and I had discussions not only of the technical provisions but also of the pros and cons of moving quickly against moving slowly at Geneva. The technical provisions might be better if done at Geneva, but we assessed the advantages of moving quickly.

That is our assessment.

The Egyptian line defends Egypt; the Israeli line doesn't defend Israel. So for the Egyptians to move back their own defense line on Egyptian territory is politically unacceptable. I must say I find this a very persuasive argument.

So I am prepared to go back to Israel with something I had never heard -- to abandon all these distinctions between zones. The Israeli forces will move back to this line, and the Egyptian line is defined here -- so there is

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no Egyptian withdrawal required. So we'll describe any limits not in terms of withdrawal but in terms of distance between the Egyptian line and the Canal and the Israeli line.

The second point President Sadat said is that it is very difficult for Egypt to sign in a document limitations of forces on their own territory.

President Sadat: Quite right.

Secretary Kissinger: So we thought of various possibilities, such as letters to the Presidents, etc. Then the President had an idea, that should be explored -- that we should write a letter to both President Sadat and the Israeli Prime Minister proposing certain limitations. So it is not an obligation to each other.

President Sadat: It's an American proposal.

Secretary Kissinger: And there is no suggestion of who imposed what upon whom.

The working group should prepare two documents -- an agreement to be signed at 101 and an American proposal to the two sides which would spell out some of the limitations. With the proviso that I have no idea what the Israeli reaction will be. It can say in the Egyptian-Israeli document that there will be limitations -- which are not spelled out -- in the two zones, and that all other limitations can be described in terms of distances to and from the Egyptian line.

On limitations, the President thought the number of forces on the East Bank should be increased substantially from what the Israelis suggested. It should be left blank in the document; I know what he has in mind but I know I won't make the decision. He is not now prepared to accept no tanks.

President Sadat: Quite right.

Secretary Kissinger: Then the President and I agreed on the proposition that in these zones, which are described geographically, neither should deploy weapons that can reach the other's line.

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Up to thirty kilometers from the Egyptian line and thirty kilometers from the Israeli line, there should be no artillery and no surface-to-air missiles. This should be written in the document as a blank, not as a line.

Secretary Kissinger: Do you want that? Are there any airfields there?

President Fahmi: Yes.

Secretary Kissinger: I'll look into that. It doesn't seem unreasonable to me.

That we then ask the drafters to do two documents:

- the Agreement to be signed by Israel and Egypt;
- the American proposal to Israel and Egypt on limitations.

President Sadat: Right.

Secretary Kissinger: I warned the President that to my certain knowledge this proposal would almost certainly be published.

President Sadat: Not from the American side.

Secretary Kissinger: I don't want to put Egypt in an embarrassing position. But there is no way Israel will not publish it somehow, in their Parliament, etc.

The distances of where forces can be deployed should be left blank. I know the President's thinking on tanks and missiles. But I don't think we should go there with these numbers.

Then I told the President that of the Israeli demands . . .

President Sadat: Political ones.

Secretary Kissinger: Political ones. We drop the one on foreign troops and volunteers.

We drop the one on passage of Israeli ships through the Canal, and we drop the one on civil flights.

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On Bab Al-Mandeb, we agreed that the President will write me a letter as to the actions of Egyptian forces.

That leaves one point that I didn't raise with you, about the withdrawal of United Nations forces. They say "the parties will undertake not to demand unilaterally the withdrawal of the UNEF. The withdrawal of the UNEF will require the consent of both parties." What is your view on that?

President Sadat: Indefinitely?

Secretary Kissinger: That withdrawal requires the consent of both sides,

Minister Fahmi: Its place is not in the disengagement agreement; it should be in the final agreement.

Secretary Kissinger: I've told the Israelis, "How can you put something permanent in the disengagement proposal which is not a final agreement?"

Minister Fahmi: That is right.

And if you look at this paragraph, it treats the Sinai as a part of Israel. "The evacuation of UNEF from Egypt and Israel." There is no UNEF in Israel. It shows they treat Sinai as part of Israel. It is a mistake but it shows their mentality.

Secretary Kissinger: I would recommend we defer this issue. I don't think the agreement will fail on this issue. I'll tell them you refused it and maybe they will have another idea.

I have told President Sadat that we do not want to put you in an embarrassing position, to weaken the position of the most moderate Arab leader we've had the pleasure of working with. We know you don't want to make a separate peace.

We agreed that now that we are working, it would make no sense to interrupt it by going to other places now. So you could inform your brethren. I will go to Damascus. Maybe I can go to Jordan.

Minister Fahmi: If you do, Damascus will be furious.

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Secretary Kissinger: But I will be going there.

[President Sadat and Minister Fahmi confer.]

President Sadat: He has a point. It will seem as if there is an axis -- Cairo-Amman -- and Syria is forgotten.

Secretary Kissinger: Well do whatever you suggest. We will go to both later.

I also have in mind the President's view on the south here.

May I make a practical suggestion?

President Sadat: Yes.

Secretary Kissinger: That I meet now with my colleagues and we do two documents, then present them to you at 4:30, and then plan to leave here at 8:30, and that I notify Israel now that I plan to arrive at 10:45 and return here tomorrow night.

They will probably need more than a day to consider it; they will need a Cabinet meeting.

So I will probably be back Wednesday. There is no day that is inconvenient for you?

President Sadat: No, no.

Secretary Kissinger: Probably I will have to go back once more to Israel, and once more here will do it. Because the tank issue and the line issue will be unresolved.

Assistant Secretary Sisco: What do we say to the press?

Secretary Kissinger: I don't think we should say anything now.

But we agreed that at some point we should say it is a complex issue, a difficult negotiation." I have an Egyptian map that I am now taking to Israel.

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Nevertheless, good progress was made today, and I am optimistic that progress will be achieved."

So those who oppose the agreement won't think it is on the verge of breaking down.

My worry is that the General here hasn't solved the problem of communicating with the North Koreans who are here, and they will shoot me down.

[Laughter]

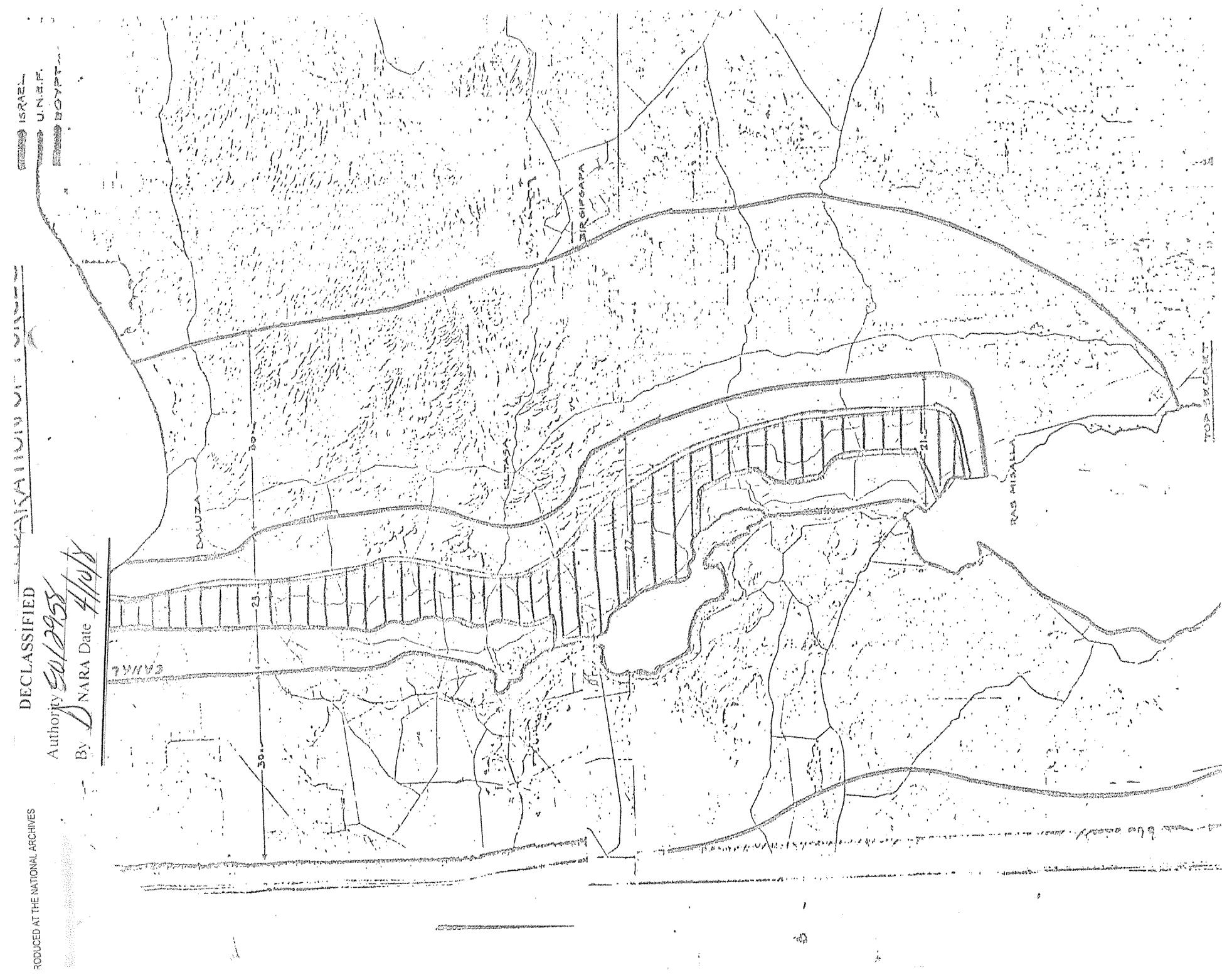
President Sadat: They are very near. [Laughter]

Secretary Kissinger: In what language do you communicate?

General Garnasy: Korean. [Laughter]

President Sadat: I have an idea. We will send Disco as a test. [Laughter]

Secretary Kissinger: Good idea.



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