

TELCON
Gen. Haig/Sec. Kissinger
Saturday, Oct. 6, 1973

12:45 pm

H: I wanted to tell you the President feels he definitely has to come back to Washington.

K: I think you are making a terrible mistake.

H: We are not going to announce it and we will not go back until 7:00 tonight.

K: I would urge you to keep any Walter Mitty tendencies under control.

H: That is not the problem. He has a situation with Agnew which prohibits his staying down here. On top of that he knows if he is sitting here in the sun and there is a war going on he is in for terrible criticism.

K: What time are you leaving.

H: We would leave about 7:00 and announce it around 3:00 or 4:00. We could do it low key.

K: There is no low-key way to do it.

H: That is true but he feels very strongly that he is just not going to sit down here.

K: What does he think is going on?

H: He thinks nothing is going on.

K: Are you with him now?

H: No, I just left him.

K: What we don't need now is a war council meeting and getting ourselves into the middle of it. We are not in the middle of it. To the American people it is a local war. Let them beat them up for a day or two and that will quiet them down.

H: We have no doubt about that but suppose you get a negative response.

K: So what. Our line is we are for a ceasefire and a return to pre-ceasefire positions. Let the Soviets take another line and we will start moving the fleet around a little bit which will take 48 hours to surface. I just think we should be tough in substance but not have any dramatic moves.

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Haig

Sat., Oct. 6, 1973

H: We are returning to Washington.

K: What is he going to do.

H: It is conceivable we will have an announcement about the Vice President. That is the first thing.

K: That is a slightly different problem.

H: You bet it is and what I am telling you is the two are going to be linked together. He cannot be sitting down here in the sun with what is going on in the VP thing. It is not firm yet but we will know very shortly.

K: If that other thing is happening then I can see a reason for coming back from the point of view of diplomacy. I would keep his return for later. Supposing the Soviets get tough and if he then returns that would be a good move. If he returns early it looks like an hysterical move. I am giving you my honest opinion. If the Soviets took a position of having kicked us in the teeth that would be a signal that return is a signal that things are getting serious. We will not have heard by 3:00. We probably won't know until the first thing in the morning.

H: Alright. I will try to hold this down here.

K: I would hold him until the first thing in the morning.

H: O.K.

K: We have put him into the involvement with all morning phone calls. Ron can put that out too.

H: Right. O.K.

K: But don't you agree, speaking personally?

H: I know, except I know about the other problem.

K: You are a better judge of that. The problem I am handling in my judgment is if we played this as a crisis -- say nothing, act tough, without stirring up the atmosphere.

H: Right. I will be in touch. I will go back to him on this thing.

K: Thank you.

END