

TELCON - General Al Haig, Nixon's Chief of Staff, who was
 Haig/Kissinger with the President in Key Biscayne
 10/6/73
 8:35 a.m.

K: We may have a Middle East War going on today.

H: Really.

K: ~~I want you to know what is happening.~~ I am sending a report to the President and to you of the events this morning. We got a report at 6:00 this morning that Israelis were expecting Syrian and Egyptian attack within 6 hours.

H: Yes.

K: First I thought it was an Israeli trick for them to be able to launch an attack although this is the holiest day. I called the Israelis and warned them to restrain. I called the Egyptian For. Min. urging restraint. I called Dobrynin. I gave all of our communications to Dobrynin and he called Moscow. I got a return call from the Israelis giving us assurances that no pre-emptive Israeli would be taken. The Egyptian called me back to say Israelis were launching a naval attack in the Gulf of Suez and 15 mins. later a call came from the Israelis saying that the Egyptians and Syrians were bombarding all along the front and launching air attacks. Now it is not conceivable that the Israelis would launch an attack with single action in the Gulf of Suez. That has to be the prediction and all ~~I want you to know~~ is that we are on top of it here. You should say that the President was kept informed from 6:00 a.m. on and I will let you know what is going on.

H: Have there been any border crossings?

K: As of this moment I just know of a report from Jerusalem relayed to me by the Israeli minister. -- Air attacks all along the Egyptian and Syrian fronts. I don't know what Israeli counter action is. I have a report from the Egyptian that Israeli naval units are shelling them in the Gulf of Suez and they will be driving them off.

H: What is your view of the Soviet attitude?

K: My view is that they are trying to keep it quiet and they are surprised.

H: Do you believe that?

K: Yes. I think it is to insane for them to have started it.

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H: You never know. A lot of difficulties here.

K: That is the one factor. I think our domestic situation has invited this. I think what may have happened is the Soviets told the Egyptians, that there will not be any progress unless there is stirring in the Middle East and those maniacs have stirred a little too much. It looks to me now that the Israelis are certainly going to hit back hard. They have already partially mobilized. Probably, I will be going back to Washington and will decide in a few hours. I am having Scowcroft call a WSAG meeting. We are locating the 6th Fleet. No two ships are in any one place. It will probably take us a week to round up the sailors. We will have to move it by tomorrow if something is going on.

H: O.K. Henry.

K: Don't let Ziegler shoot off at the mouth without our known. Your position is that the President is on top of the situation and getting regular reports. from the UN (New York) this morning. We have nothing further to say. If there are any announcements to be made I will check with you as to whether they should be made from here or the White House.

H: I will say the President received a report at 6:00.

K: Say 6:30. Say I have been in contact with all of these people and we will give no comment. We have sent message to Saudi Arabia and Jordan and urged them to restrain.

H: O.K.

K: You stay near the phone. If you are with the President tell the switch board to put me through.

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