

Appendix to "A Self-Inflicted Wound? Henry Kissinger and the Ending of the October 1973 Arab-Israeli War"
by Galen Jackson and Marc Trachtenberg

New Israeli Documents on the 1973 War

In 2014 the Israelis released some important new material relating to the 1973 war. Those newly-released documents were summarized in the Israel State Archive's blog entry for October 6, 2014, "From Low Probability to the Yom Kippur War: Telegrams from Golda's Bureau to the Israeli Embassy in Washington, 5-7 October 1973" ([link](#)). The material itself was posted on the ISA's webpage on "The Yom Kippur War, October, 1973" ([link](#) to 2018 version); an updated version was posted in 2021 ([link](#)). Both webpages contain links to two important collections of documents: a 409-page collection of "Telegrams sent from the Israeli Embassy in Washington to the Prime Minister's Office during the Yom Kippur War, 5-31.10.1973" (original [link](#)) ([new link](#)) (called "*Israeli Telegrams*" in the footnotes); and a 361-page collection of "Scans of Telegrams sent from the Prime Minister's Office to the Israeli Embassy in Washington during the Yom Kippur War, 5-31.10.1973" (original [link](#)) ([new link](#)). We've also posted copies of these two collections online, to make sure they'll remain available and are readily findable: [link](#) to first collection; [link](#) to second collection. Alternate links for the [description of the first collection](#) and the [description of the second collection](#), both with archival references, have also been posted online.

Most of those documents are in Hebrew, but there are 82 pages of English-language documents in the first collection and 29 pages in the second. Even the Hebrew documents, especially in the first collection, are interspersed with very interesting handwritten annotations in English.

In 2021, the ISA posted 64 new documents relating to the war on its website, together with a series of 14 English-language introductions, summarizing the new material ([link](#) to introductions) ([link](#) to documents). Those documents, according to the ISA webpage on the war, reveal "for the first time the record of the conduct of the war by Israel's leaders, including 14 transcripts of wartime government meetings, 21 political-security consultations with the war cabinet held by the prime minister, and 26 handwritten diary entries by Eli Mizrahi, the head of the Prime Minister's bureau, which were transcribed and typed a year later." Although most of the documents are in Hebrew, two documents relating to Kissinger's meetings with Israeli leaders during his visit to Israel at the end of the war are in English: Kissinger meeting with Meir et al., October 22, 1973, 3 p.m. ([link](#)), and continuation of that meeting with Israeli military leaders present, 4:15 p.m. ([link](#)).

Extracts from Israeli Documents

The passages that follow are drawn from the collection of *Telegrams sent from the Israeli Embassy in Washington to the Prime Minister's Office during the Yom Kippur War* discussed above. Translations of extracts from the documents are given below in quotation marks; paraphrases have no quotation marks. The documents have been cited in the text in the footnote indicated in the listing below; the documents are marked in the corresponding footnote with an asterisk. The translations were made by Shaiel Ben-Ephraim.

Document 1 (n. 79): Dinitz to Gazit, October 23, 1:10 p.m. (reporting 12:05 p.m. conversation with Kissinger) [frames 276-77]

Israelis justify continuing offensive. Dinitz: no way to know where ceasefire line was. Kissinger: "If so, and there's no way of knowing, what do you care if a resolution is passed calling for a return to the lines that existed when the ceasefire went into effect?" Dinitz answers that this would be opening up a "Pandora's Box."

Document 2 (n. 81): Dinitz to Gazit, October 23, 1973, 1:15 p.m. reporting 12:40 p.m. meeting [frames 277-78]

"Enclosed a repeat of Scowcroft's talk with me which took place at 12:40 Washington time as conveyed to Israel to Lior on the phone at 12:45:

The General told me the Soviets are very upset that the Americans are being difficult regarding clause 2 of the Soviet proposal which calls for a return to the previous lines. The Soviets claim it is not important who fired the first shot, fact

is that the Israelis are advancing and improving their position all the time and it is impossible that there should be an American objection to the principled decision of a return to the previous lines.

The General added that Naftali [code for Kissinger] is now with the President and in speaking from the President's chambers asked Naftali and the General to tell us to cease fire immediately. I replied to the General that as long as we are being fired upon we must shoot back and cannot be sitting ducks. CODED MESSAGE.

The General replied saying we should at least stop CODED MESSAGE.

I told him that in the heat of battle sometimes there is a need to take this hill or that hill in order to preserve human life. The General said his role is to pass Naftali's request. In addition, the general said they, the Americans, were informing the Russians that they, the Americans, have asked us to immediately cease military activities. The Russians on their part will ask the Egyptians for the exact same thing.

CODED MESSAGE

I promised the General I will immediately pass the message on to the PM.

I must remark that the General spoke in a serious tone. Obviously the Americans are in close and constant touch with the Russians here."

Document 3 (n. 81): Dinitz to Gazit, October 23, 1973, 6 p.m. reporting 3:00 p.m. meeting [frames 281-82]

"Following the conversation at 1500, Kissinger asked me to stay for a private conversation. It lasted around 20 minutes.

A. The Decision.

Kissinger said we must understand that the important thing is not the resolution but rather how we implement it. He is certain we can find 200-300 unimportant and insignificant yards from which we can withdraw. He does not expect us to return to the positions from which we started.

I told him that we are not talking about a few hundred meters but rather significant changes, I repeat significant which came about as a result of Egyptian aggression and our ability to repel it. I told him I would not be surprised if we had completed surrounding the 3rd Army and if we are sitting in the city of Suez. Kissinger commented that this was interesting and that while talking to the PM she told him it is important to us to reach Port Taufiq. I told him, I don't know exactly where we are, but I want it to be clear to him that we are not discussing 200-300 yards. Kissinger said he understands but it would help them a lot if we were to agree to withdraw 200-300 yards after the resolution and then say regarding the rest that it is impossible to know where the border is, etc. They will not pressure us to return to our previous positions. They will give us all the covert support for our move and even in public Scali will say something about the uncertainty of where the lines were. I told him that in my opinion they were starting a process of deterioration which will be difficult to stop later on. It will be far simpler to just tell the Russians from the start that that they are not going with them on this matter. The Egyptians opened fire. They attacked. They tried to take over our positions. We repelled them and improved our situation. That is natural and under no circumstance should we reward the aggressor and the violator of a ceasefire. Kissinger said that regarding the resolution they cannot back out now. If they were to allow the Russians to hand in the resolution on their own, it would get 14 votes even if the US abstained. Therefore, by being the handmaidens they can have influence on the resolution and its implementation, and they will help us by doing so and not allow a sanctions clause or pressure to execute the resolution. I told him that I disagree with their entire approach. Kissinger said I know that he is extending [sic] our progress in the field and even advised Meir to do so before he arrived in Washington. I told him that despite that we did not act in that manner and the PM asked me to make it clear that it was the Egyptians and not us who opened fire. Kissinger continued and said from this you understand I want the improvement of your position in the field as much as possible, all I want is not to cause significant damage to relations with the Soviets and the Arab world for the good of all of us.

2. I told Kissinger that one of the basic things bothering the PM in this approach is the fear that we are standing on the verge of a new stage where every step will be coordinated between Egypt and the USSR and then between the USSR and the US while we face a fait accompli. Kissinger said he can understand this fear on the basis of the two last examples, but he can promise me that it will not develop in that way. On the contrary, the PM told him that we will work on our strategy together in the negotiations and we will do so. This is his desire and this is how he hopes to run matters. Kissinger added that if anyone knew about the degree of intimacy between us he would be fired immediately.

I told him that what is needed is for us to work out a shared strategy and then throw the Russians out of the picture. For what do they need partners for a diplomatic initiative. What do they owe them in this context? Kissinger said that is exactly his strategy. Even the Arabs are slowly beginning to understand that only the US can determine certain things in the region and are starting to run towards it. At a certain moment, through a shared strategy, he would throw the Russians out of the picture. He is telling me this in the strictest confidence, so that I will understand his strategy. We must work together, and he will never expect us to do anything that is against our interests. Following further exchanges along these lines, I told him that I continue to emphasize that they have made a mistake and are opening themselves to further pressure in future. In any event it is now clear to him that our position is that we will not withdraw from the strategic positions we occupied today, and the fighting continues.

Kissinger repeated that he does not expect us to withdraw from strategic positions but rather that we make a small and insignificant gesture.

Kissinger ended the conversation by saying he will now hurry to instruct Scali by phone.”

Document 4 (n. 81, n. 82): Shalev to Gazit, October 23, 1973, 18:30, reporting Dinitz-Kissinger 3:15 p.m. conversation [frames 283-86] Kissinger again says Israelis should move back a few hundred yards.

Document 5 (n. 82): Dinitz to Meir, October 23, 1973 [no time, but this is clearly the Israeli account of the 7:20 and 8:30 p.m. Kissinger-Dinitz phone conversations [frames 291-92 in *Israeli Telegrams*; [link](#) to first telcon and [link](#) to second telcon in Department of State Kissinger Transcripts Collection]

“After our phone conversation I passed the following over to Kissinger:

I have just talked to the Prime Minister. She has authorized me to tell you, that you are authorized to tell the Soviets and Egyptians, that if the Egyptians stop shooting, we will stop shooting as well.

In addition the PM gives you a personal promise, ceremonially, that if the Egyptians put out an order to cease fire, and actually hold their fire, we will also stop shooting despite the advantages we would obtain if we were to continue.

Regarding that place the PM discussed with you, there was an argument over it, but we decided not to do so in order to allow the ceasefire the opportunity to work in practice.

In addition, the PM has asked me to inform you that the suggestion regarding 200-300 yards is not to her liking. She asks to emphasize that just as we were willing to accept a ceasefire yesterday, we are willing to accept it today. It is Egypt that renewed the fighting and the result is as it is. The Egyptians know exactly what happened and so do the Russians and there should be no discussion of the 200-300 yards that you suggested.

To this Kissinger replied: the Prime Minister is the leader of the people and she must decide. In my personal opinion, if you could buy some time by discussing the 200-300 yards, why not give up some of your integrity? After all, within a short while it will become clear that 25,000 Egyptians do not have water or supplies and then you have the upper hand anyway.

I suggested that in the meantime he deliver to the Soviets what she has authorized be delivered, and tomorrow we will see how matters develop.

Kissinger said he will do that and tomorrow we will discuss tactics.

Kissinger asked what is the situation in the city of Suez. I told him for his personal knowledge that the city is surrounded, but we did not enter it. When Kissinger discussed the shape of the Egyptian military on the eastern side of the Canal I told him that in any event they had no business being there and why did they enter if not to perpetrate aggression.

Kissinger agreed and said we should play a diplomatic game since the facts are on our side anyway.”

Document 6 (n. 85): Dinitz to Gazit, October 24, 1973, 2:00 p.m. (reporting 10:35 a.m. meeting) and 3 p.m. (reporting message given to Eagleburger at 1 p.m.) [frames 292-93]:

73 241400 מוק 73
אל : גזית , לנמען בלבד
מאת: דיניצ
סודי כיוון: לו 267

לאלט מחזור מדויק של חשיפה עם גנרל חייג בשעה 1036 בבקר
שעות רוטינגטון (רוב הדברים כבר נמסרו לכם בעל מל):

THE GENERAL WAS SITTING IN THE PRESIDENT'S ROOM. GENERAL HAIG
TOLD SIMCHA : PRESIDENT STRONGLY OPPOSED TO RESUMPTION OF
HOSTILITIES AND FEELS VERY STRONGLY THAT THE FIGHTING MUST BE
BROUGHT UNDER IMMEDIATE CONTROL. IF IT CONTINUES HE WILL CONSIDER
DISASSOCIATING HIMSELF FROM ISRAEL BECAUSE THE THING IS OF VERY
SERIOUS NATURE.

SIMCHA TOLD THE GENERAL : PLEASE PASS ON TO THE PRESIDENT THE VERY
SOLENN WORD OF THE PRIME MINISTER THAT WE DID NOT INITIATE ANY
MILITARY ACTIVITY SINCE THE CEASE-FIRE TOOK EFFECT AT 7 O'CLOCK
A.M. WE HAVE NOT ADVANCED ONE MILLIMETER. ALL THAT WE WERE TRYING TO
DO WAS TO CONTAIN ATTEMPTS BY THE THIRD ARMY ON THE EAST SIDE
OF THE CANAL TO BREAK OUT EASTWARDS TO THE PASSES AND WESTWARDS
TO OUR FORCES ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE CANAL. OUR FORCES ARE UNDER
STRICT INSTRUCTIONS ONLY TO REPLY TO FIRE AND TO CONTAIN EGYPTIAN
ATTEMPTS TO ADVANCE. *****

*****. WE HAVE INVITED THE AMERICAN
MILITARY ATTACHE TO SEE THINGS FOR HIMSELF AND WE WILL PROVIDE HIM

WITH ALL THE INFORMATION IN OUR POSSESSION. PLEASE TELL THE PRESIDENT THAT THE MOMENT THE EGYPTIANS CEASE FIRE, WE WILL CEASE FIRE. WE HAVE AGREED TO THE PLACEMENT OF U.N. OBSERVERS AND HAVE ALLOCATED PLACES FOR THEM. I AM IN A MINUTE-BY-MINUTE CONTACT WITH THE SECRETARY AND INFORMING HIM OF ALL MOVES. THE LAST REPORTS THAT I HAVE FROM DAYAN PERSONALLY ARE THAT THE FIGHTING IS DYING OUT AND WE HOPE THAT THE CEASE FIRE WILL BE RESPECTED AND OBSERVED BY THE EGYPTIANS. YOU CAN ASSURE THE PRESIDENT THAT WE ARE FULLY MINDFUL OF THE POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS AND WE WILL NOT PUT THE PRESIDENT IN A POSITION IN WHICH THE WHOLE POLITICAL ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ FRAMEWORK THAT HAS BEEN BUILT UP WILL BE PUT IN JEOPARDY.

AT THIS POINT THE GENERAL ASKED SIMCHA TO STAY ON THE LINE AND SIMCHA HEARD HIM SPEAK TO THE PRESIDENT AND ALSO HEARD THE PRESIDENT SPEAKING. GENERAL HAIG RESUMED THE CONVERSATION WITH SIMCHA AND STATED AS FOLLOWS : THE PRESIDENT THANKS FOR THE INFORMATION AND HE IS RELIEVED TO HEAR WHAT YOU SAID. IF THE SITUATION IS NOT AS YOU SAY IT IS, THE PRESIDENT WILL BE FORCED TO ~~TAKXXXXXXXXX~~ TAKE DRASTIC ACTION AND AS I SAID BEFORE, DISSOCIATE HIMSELF FROM ISRAEL, BUT WE ARE RELIEVED TO LEARN FROM YOU WHAT YOU HAVE SAID AND WE ARE THANKFUL.
