

payback

ten days in october 1973

a play by jonathan myerson

cast

HENRY KISSINGER, 50, US Secretary of State
JOSEPH SISCO, 54, Assistant Secretary of State
ANATOL DOBRYNIN, 54, Soviet Ambassador to the US
AL HAIG, 49, White House Chief of Staff
GOLDA MEIR, 75, Israeli Prime Minister
RICHARD NIXON, 60, US President
SIMCHA DINITZ, 44, Israeli Ambassador to the US
JAMES SCHLESINGER, 44, US Secretary of Defense
JACOB JAVITS, 69, Republican Senator

and, in one scene each

SOLDIERS
REPORTERS

about the research process and content:

This play is largely derived from the published and available transcripts of telephone conversations and memoranda of meetings made available by the White House and State Department.

Under BBC guidelines, all portrayals (of both the living and the dead) must be fair and balanced. So this necessitated a microscopic examination of the many hundreds of pages of conversations recorded during this period to validate any of the dramatic constructions. Many of the footnotes refer to these.

The 60-minute play was broadcast in January 2011.

SCENE 1. NEW YORK. WALDORF ASTORIA. HENRY KISSINGER'S
HOTEL ROOM. SATURDAY 6TH OCTOBER. 6.15am.

SISCO IS KNOCKING ON THE DOOR.¹
 POLITE AT FIRST

SISCO Mister Secretary. Sir. Mister Secretary.

KISSINGER Go away.

NOW MORE INSISTENTLY

SISCO Sir. Sorry. I think you need – you need to wake up, sir.

KISSINGER Go. Away.

SISCO Mister Secretary, something's happening. The Ambassador
 said I was under instructions to wake you whatever –

KISSINGER FLINGS THE DOOR OPEN, SHOCKING SISCO

KISSINGER What if maybe I am not alone?

SISCO (I'M GOING TO KEEP GOING) Sir, Mister Keating said – he
 was certain you would - something's happening –

KISSINGER Where?

SISCO Israel.

KISSINGER Nothing is happening, Sisco. If you hadn't grown up
 surrounded by pasta-swilling Catholics, you'd know that
 today is Yom Kippur and in Israel absolutely nothing is
 happening. Not even breakfast.

SISCO The Egyptians, sir, the Syrians – the Prime Minister, says
 they're about to attack. Mrs Meir says, she's done what you
 told her.

SLAM INTO:

TITLES

FROM THIS POINT ON, SCENE TITLES SHOULD BE READ OUT AS
CAPTIONS...

SCENE 2. WALDORF ASTORIA. THIRTY MINUTES LATER. 6.40am

WITH KISSINGER.

DOBRYNIN HAS PRETTY GOOD ENGLISH BUT AN ACCENT.
ON THE PHONE:

KISSINGER You're my first call, Anatol.² Like always.

DOBRYNIN What time is it?.

KISSINGER Sorry to spoil your beauty sleep, my friend, but we have information from Jerusalem that the Egyptians and Syrians are planning an attack within the next six hours.

VOICE (PARTIALLY OVER KISSINGER'S SPEECH) Henry Alfred Kissinger, born in Bavaria in 1923, US National Security Advisor and, for the last three weeks, US Secretary of State.

DOBRYNIN Egypt and who?

KISSINGER Syrians. And now I'm hearing your people are evacuating from Damascus and Cairo.

DOBRYNIN Cairo as well?

KISSINGER So if the reason you're evacuating is fear of an Israeli attack, the Israelis are asking us to tell you and the Arabs –

DOBRYNIN You've spoken to the Israelis? Aren't they all in New York for the UN? I saw Eban was there yesterday.

VOICE (PARTIALLY OVER DOBRYNIN'S SPEECH) Anatol Dobrynin, Soviet Ambassador to Washington, since 1962.

KISSINGER They want you to be absolutely clear that they have no plans whatever to attack.

DOBRYNIN Israelis?

KISSINGER Have no intention of attacking.

DOBRYNIN Attack who?

KISSINGER We need you to get through to Damascus and tell them -

DOBRYNIN The Syrians?

KISSINGER Yes, the Syr – come on, Anatol, please, there's going to be a full-scale war before you've even got hold of the message.

DOBRYNIN I understand. You want me, you want us both, to calm down our friends.

KISSINGER It's crucial for our friendship,. We don't want some explosion in the Middle East.

DOBRYNIN I will see what – But these are their own lands, occupied..

KISSINGER We both agree that must be talked about. First we need to make sure -

DOBRYNIN Israel holds Syrian territory, Egyptian territory.

KISSINGER Anatol. We've spent a long time at détente, you, me, everyone. This is the test of it.

DOBRYNIN I agree.

KISSINGER And those people, the people who are against this policy, our friendship, they'll be looking to see if we can handle it.

DOBRYNIN Let me – I will speak to Moscow.

CUT TO:

SCENE 3. JERUSALEM: THE KNESSET: PRIME MINISTER'S
OFFICE. SATURDAY 6TH OCTOBER. 11.50am EASTERN
MEDITERRANEAN TIME/ 4.50am WASHINGTON TIME

TENSION IS RUNNING HIGH³.

IN THE CORRIDOR OUTSIDE, CABINET MEMBERS ARE GATHERING.

DINITZ All I'm saying is, back in Washington, all they tell me is, our defensive line on the Canal is impenetrable.

MEIR Simcha, I want you to take them these photos, look, here – (RECON PHOTOS) – on the other side of the canal, the Egyptians have mobilised a hundred and twenty thousand reservists, there's bridge-laying equipment, boats, pontoons. Our people say at least two thousand artillery pieces, thirteen hundred tanks.

VOICE (PARTIALLY OVER THIS) Golda Meir, Prime Minister of Israel, born in Russia, raised in Milwaukee, seventy-five and recently diagnosed with lymphoma.

MEIR In the north, the Golan Heights, the Syrians have moved up a whole armoured brigade – forty-five thousand men, four hundred tanks.

DINITZ What did General Dayan say? Surely he argued for some sort of pre-emptive strike?

VOICE (OVER THIS) Talking to Simcha Dinitz, born in Tel Aviv, her former Political Advisor, now Israeli Ambassador to Washington, but now in Tel Aviv for his father's funeral.

MEIR He says he's 'schizophrenic' – as a General, he knows we should use our air force to eliminate their artillery, as a Cabinet Member, he knows we must not.⁴

DINITZ What does the rest of the Cabinet say?

MEIR That's the gescheft – in ten minutes, I got to go in, break it to them I already took the decision. Already told the Americans. On my own responsibility.

DINITZ Do the Americans realise what they are asking? We sit tight and take a pounding?

MEIR I make a pre-emptive strike, I spend the rest of my life explaining why we started a war.

DINITZ Doctor Kissinger is always very clear. I heard him tell Rabin the same. If we fire the first shot, we “don’t get so much as a nail” from them.⁵

MEIR We need bullets, shells, tanks – who wants nails?

DINITZ On my way in, I saw them calling the boys out of the synagogues, swapping their prayer shawls for revolvers – I should stay, join my unit.

MEIR You’re a little old for that, boychick. I need you to go back to Washington now, tell him to his face. You tell Doctor Kissinger we know this is a fight for our freedom, our independence, but we also stand by our friends.

DINITZ Our one friend.

MEIR Tell him that, Simcha. Go now, the airports will close soon – tell the doctor.

AS DINITZ EXITS, SIRENS ARE STARTING UP.

CUT TO:

SCENE 4. KEY BISCAVNE, FLORIDA. 8.35am.

WITH HAIG
ON THE PHONE⁶ TO KISSINGER IN NEW YORK

KISSINGER Looks like we've got a war here in the Middle East.

HAIG Really?

KISSINGER I've spoken to the Israelis, see if they were working a number, attacking on their holiest day.⁷ I spoke to the Egyptians, they gave me garbage about some Israeli naval attack in the Gulf of Suez . I've kept the Russians fully informed – Dobrynin could be playing me along but...
[UNSTATED: *I don't think he is*]

HAIG You believe him? I know you two have a relationship but it's not impossible they're planning something.

VOICE General Al Haig, White House Chief of Staff, since the resignation of Bob Haldeman over the Watergate cover-up.

HAIG If I was them, I'd kick us when we're down. Look at the situation our President's in.

KISSINGER How is he?

HAIG He could go either way. Borderline. Right now.

KISSINGER Scribbling?

HAIG Sits in there, hours on end, writing on that pad. Tearing off the sheet, writing another. The floor's like this yellow carpet.

KISSINGER The drink?⁸

HAIG Not every day. Everything that comes in from DC, I only show him the good stuff. Hold the rest back.

KISSINGER Another good reason for him to stay there.

- HAIG Which is what I'm saying about the Russians. They see what's happening, Watergate squeezing the blood out of his veins, now we've got our Vice President's fiddling his taxes, they say Let's Push A Few Buttons – wouldn't you?
- KISSINGER Most I think is possible is the Russians told the Egyptians nothing's going to change till things get stirred and those maniacs have gone in and stirred a little too much.
- HAIG What I'm saying.
- KISSINGER We still need to command these events, Al.
- HAIG That's right.
- KISSINGER We're working towards a neutral resolution in Security Council – an end to the fighting, everyone goes back to status quo ante.
- HAIG What do the Russians say about that?
- KISSINGER We're waiting on Moscow. Nothing happens until they know what they think.
- HAIG And I'll say the President was woken at – what? – six am.
- KISSINGER Make it six thirty. Say he's on top of the situation, regular reports . Using our strong relationship with Moscow to prevent –
- HAIG You want to put détente at the top?
- KISSINGER Détente is our friend at a time like this. Imagine Kennedy and Khrushchev shouting at each other down a phone about this.
- HAIG You and Dobrynin making jokes, you're sure that's better?
- KISSINGER We can't go backwards. [*from détente*]
- HAIG The Chief really wants to be at the White House.

KISSINGER Keep him right there, we don't want him running round Washington getting hysterical. Those Walter Mitty tendencies.⁹

HAIG How does it look, President down in the Florida sun and there's a war in the Middle East and his Veep's about to go to court?

KISSINGER (SURPRISE) Agnew's really going to fight it?

HAIG (NO) He's not taking our calls but everyone says he's talking a deal with the prosecutor.

KISSINGER I'd like to say I'm sorry.

HAIG We should be in DC.

KISSINGER (SERIOUS) It would be a grave mistake, Al – the whole world'll say there's a reason to – Leave things to me, alright?

HAIG I'm thinking, see?, We can bring the President in when it will do him some good.¹⁰ He's a respected world statesman, that's what got him re-elected. Now there's this war, and OK, nobody wants bloodshed but he can bring the sides together and help everyone forget this Watergate screw-up.¹¹

KISSINGER (YOU DO IT MY WAY) Al. Leave it to me, alright? At the moment this is just a local war. I'll do what I can. You keep him in Florida.¹²

HAIG This isn't the first one we've been through together.

KISSINGER We're in good shape.

CUT TO:

SCENE 5. INTERVIEW.

REMEMBERED LATER

ISRAELI RADIO OPERATOR

We thought it would take the Egyptians two, three days to bridge the canal. Within hours they were on our side and through the sand ramparts – they had these high-pressure hoses – later we heard they bought them from this company in Germany – they laid the first pontoon in about an hour, they had tanks, thousands of soldiers, they were streaming past our bunker, into the Sinai. They weren't that bothered about us, we were trapped inside our bunker. They could leave us there. Their tanks, Russian T54s, yes, they were shelling us. The rest, we saw thousands of them going forwards, past us, into the desert. Armoured troops carriers, helicopters – we could see the plan was to establish a line twenty clicks behind us. Get ready for the counter-attack. We watched wave after wave of boats. The soldiers all seemed to be carrying these rucksacks. We didn't know what to do.

CUT TO:

SCENE 6. WALDORF ASTORIA. 12noon WASHINGTON TIME

WITH KISSINGER

ON THE PHONE TO JERUSALEM, IN THE BACKGROUND, AIR RAID SIRENS

KISSINGER Is that what I think it is? You down in the bunker?

MEIR (DERISIVE) You think? The Egyptians have crossed the Canal in five separate places, our soldiers will soon be captured or killed.

KISSINGER And in the North?

MEIR The Syrians are almost in sight of the Sea of Galilee.

KISSINGER I just spoke to the Egyptian Ambassador, he says it was you launched the first attack, torpedo boats, in the Gulf.

MEIR (RIDING OVER HIM) It's Yom Kippur, it's the Day of Atonement, the streets are deserted. You, more than anyone, should understand that.

KISSINGER I have to weigh things up.

MEIR Doctor Kissinger, my young men are dying in their bunkers. We are fighting a defensive strategy on two fronts, with tremendously powerful forces arrayed against us. Because I vetoed a pre-emptive strike.

KISSINGER You will still win. It'll be a turkey shoot up on the Golan.

MEIR It is the price of victory that concerns me. My Chief of Staff says we should have bombed the Egyptians when they were sitting like eggs¹³. Bombed Damascus.

KISSINGER We are pushing for a Security Council debate, an immediate ceasefire.

MEIR 'Immediate'?

KISSINGER We're in no hurry to get to a vote.

MEIR We need until Wednesday, maybe Thursday. We should be into counter-attack by then. Can you hold it off?

KISSINGER But we need to speak first, that way we propose the motion, and include a return to pre-war lines.

MEIR Get Eban to speak – two hours and he won't've even got to the introduction.

KISSINGER We'll tell our man to go slow too.

MEIR But if we're going to make this work, we need urgent military resupply. Inevitable – we were forced to adopt a defensive strategy.¹⁴

KISSINGER That can be talked about.

MEIR We'll send a list. And a jumbo jet.

KISSINGER Send it quietly, alright?

MEIR It's already on its way to New York.

CUT TO:

SCENE 7. INTERVIEW.

REMEMBERED LATER

AUSTRALIAN LIEUTENANT

I was at the UN Observation Post Winter, just north of Kuneitra on the Golan Front. I watched about two hundred Syrian tanks rolling towards me. Four columns, two on each side of the road, turret hatches open and commanders spines stiff, like at attention. It wasn't like an attack. It was like a parade ground demonstration. As they approached my bunker, the column divided and like a tide, flowed past me on either side. They were all going south.

To begin with, the Israelis flew in their Phantoms and Mirages. Did some damage. Then the Syrians brought up their SAM-6 missiles – these had never been seen in combat before. By the end of the day, I reckon the Israelis were losing three out of every five aircraft they sent over. I wasn't seeing any parachutes.

CUT TO:

SCENE 8. FLORIDA, KEY BISCAWAYNE. SUNDAY 7th OCTOBER. 4PM.

WITH NIXON
ON THE PHONE TO WASHINGTON

NOT PANICKED, KISSINGER IS KEEPING IT RELAXED

NIXON I've read all the cables. I've seen the recon. Where are we now?

KISSINGER This thing ends without a total blow-up – with the Arabs or with the Soviets – it will be a miracle and triumph.

NIXON Poor dumb Egyptians, they'll get across the canal and then the Israelis'll snip behind them and blow all the bridgeheads, cut them off.

VOICE (OVER THIS) Richard Nixon, 37th US President, re-elected the previous year in a landslide, winning all but two states.

NIXON They're going to sacrifice – what? – thirty, forty thousand men – just to show they can?

KISSINGER These guys – Sadat, Assad – they don't stand for election. They tell their people it was a great victory, no-one argues.

NIXON Except it's their land, Henry. It drives them crazy to see those Israelis stomping all over it.

KISSINGER (UNCONCERNED) I suppose that's right.

NIXON Imagine if we had Canadians camped out all over Ohio, saying it was theirs.

KISSINGER Sometimes I think maybe.

NIXON That's why we need to initiate things at the UN.

KISSINGER When I told the Russians the motion needed to include a return to pre-war lines –

NIXON They weren't so keen?

KISSINGER Exactly.

NIXON We need to be the peacemakers here.

KISSINGER Mister President, you have made peace in Vietnam, you have created détente with Moscow, you have opened up to China. We can easily do this.

NIXON Keep me informed, Henry.¹⁵

CUT TO:

SCENE 9. STATE DEPARTMENT. 7.25pm.

WITH KISSINGER
ON THE PHONE TO DOBRYNIN

KISSINGER We have to sort this between us, Anatol.

DOBRYNIN It's the weekend. This is not normal.

KISSINGER So we won't go to the Security Council tonight. We'll hold off until nine tomorrow. Give you a chance to go to church.¹⁶

DOBRYNIN We are in a difficult position, publicly, I mean.

KISSINGER We need a ceasefire and a return to status quo ante. By Tuesday, you'll be asking us, the Egyptians will be begging for it. Once the IDF is fully mobilised.

DOBRYNIN The Arabs are only trying to regain lands occupied by Israel.

KISSINGER I am not saying it's easy.

DOBRYNIN You're asking them to turn around and go back with nothing.

KISSINGER They can only hold on for another twenty-four hours. Then they'll retreat to their capitals and wait for winter.

DOBRYNIN We join you in this at the Security Council, they'll say we are in collusion with Israel and USA.

KISSINGER If we can do this, think what it says about everything we have been through, to make this relationship.

DOBRYNIN There is that.

KISSINGER It goes the other way, we'll be up on the rostrum in the General Assembly, calling each other names.

DOBRYNIN The Israelis maybe. Not me.

KISSINGER It will be a bloodbath. I will be very brutal. Teach a few facts of life to people who like to make speeches – show them what’s more important, rhetoric or action.

DOBRYNIN I can hear them, our friends in Cairo: ‘You ask us to give back territory that belongs to us.’

KISSINGER It’s a whole new strategy: the threat on one’s own defeat.

DOBRYNIN Ingenious.

KISSINGER Can you get me an answer from Moscow by eight tomorrow morning?

DOBRYNIN Let’s say nine. That’s five o’clock.

KISSINGER Tell them they have to go to early mass. We need a formula, Anatol.

CUT TO:

SCENE 10.RADIO NEWS REPORT.

REPORTER

Meanwhile in Washington it is thought that the Appeal Court will make its ruling on the Watergate tapes by the end of this week. Judge John Sirica in the district court has ordered the President to surrender these tapes. But the President's lawyers have argued that to supply the tapes would destroy the confidentiality of all presidential conversations. Special Prosecutor Archibald Cox maintains that every single one of these tapes concerns the Watergate affair. If it transpires that the President knew about the break-in, he's guilty of criminal conspiracy. If he refuses to hand over the tapes, there's a lot of talk on the Hill about impeachment. This is his last possible appeal and so we're just days from the court deciding the fate of the President. Now, over to our reporter, who is covering the issue of Vice President Agnew and the continuing investigation into his tax affairs.

CUT TO:

SCENE 11. THE OLD EXECUTIVE OFFICE BUILDING. THE
PRESIDENT'S DEN. MONDAY 8th OCTOBER. 10pm.

NIXON HAS BEEN DRINKING – AND HE CAN'T HOLD HIS DRINK. HE IS
SUNK IN SELF-PITY, GLOOM AND HIS ARMCHAIR.

KISSINGER ENTERS, BRISKLY

KISSINGER Welcome back to Washington, Mister President.

NIXON That Greek bastard's going to do a deal, you know.

KISSINGER Sir?

NIXON Agnew. He's doing a deal.

KISSINGER That's....good, isn't it?

NIXON He's a shit-sucking worm, he'll do anything to stay out of jail.

KISSINGER Who wouldn't?

NIXON It means he'll have to resign, Henry. How's that going to
look when I've already got the Special Prosecutor with his fist
up my -

KISSINGER The situation in the Middle East is -

NIXON I'm the President of the United States, you know.

KISSINGER Sir.

NIXON They'll say I have to hand over my tapes.

KISSINGER You can beat them, sir.

NIXON The same week the Appeal Court wants me to grovel for
some nitsy-bitsy Harvard lawyer¹⁷, I've got my own Vice
President jumping ship just so's he can stay out of jail.

KISSINGER Do we have a replacement in mind?

NIXON What does that matter?

KISSINGER Sooner it's done, the sooner we can – [*put it behind us and*]

NIXON You want a drink?

KISSINGER Should you – (HE STOPS HIMSELF) – I really need to brief you on this situation.

AS NIXON POURS HIMSELF ANOTHER WHISKY

NIXON I got the military news. How bad is it over there?

KISSINGER The Egyptians have crossed over and got themselves dug in. All along the canal. In the north, the Syrians are coming down the Golan Heights.

NIXON Those doggoned¹⁸ Syrians, they surprised me. The Jews losing men?

KISSINGER There's a whole lot of blood getting spilled. They've got Russian-made missiles. SAM-3s and -6s, we think. Picking the Israeli Air Force out of the sky. They've never experienced anything like it.

NIXON They've got to be worried?

KISSINGER And maybe sixty, seventy tanks they've lost. That doesn't happen to the Israelis.

NIXON Peace now, that would be great achievement.

KISSINGER It's a little premature, perhaps.

NIXON Peace is one of the greatest achievements of all.

KISSINGER I need to see which way the Russians jump. We've suggested a motion involving a return to status quo ante. We need to smoke them out¹⁹ – were they behind this or not?

NIXON We can stay neutral here.

KISSINGER You're happy to see Israel defeated?

NIXON I was just thinking. A little light spanking.²⁰

KISSINGER Russian tanks, sir. (AMAZED) You want them to win?

NIXON We've got to be concerned here – when the Israelis finish clobbering the Egyptians, the Syrians, they're going to be even more impossible to deal with than before.

KISSINGER I'm not sure that's –

NIXON Golda Meir wouldn't move an inch to rescue her own grandmother – she's a human roadblock.

KISSINGER I realise you and she found it hard to –

NIXON They could feel so strong as a result of this that they'd say "Well, why do we have to settle?" Understand?²¹

KISSINGER You'd rather they didn't win?

NIXON We must not have this thing hang over for another four years and have us at odds with the Arab world. We're not going to do that anymore. They can't do that to us again.

KISSINGER (CONFIDENT) The Israelis'll push them back tomorrow. If we can hold this for forty-eight hours, it could be a great triumph for you, Mister President.

NIXON And then we can brief this shit out of this one.

KISSINGER It'll do you a lot of good.

NIXON But we don't take sides. Nobody ever knows who starts the wars out there.

KISSINGER We need to get them the sidewinder missiles. And the other military stuff already approved. Got the list here.

NIXON Sure, but we don't want them getting the wrong idea – LBJ didn't resupply Israel after the Six Day War, and he was right. Kept us trusted by all sides.

KISSINGER This is money in the bank, Mister President.

CUT TO:

SCENE 12.INTERVIEW

ABDUL ALATI

I was a student at Agricultural College in Alexandria and then I joined the army in 1969. I was twenty-three that year and was one of those trained with the new anti-tank missile. The code name was Sagger.

These missiles, the Israelis knew nothing about them. We could carry them in a rucksack on our backs. It was a guided missile but also, it trailed a thin wire, fine like a hair, behind it. With this, we could control it from a little box, steer it up close to the enemy tank.

We went to our forward position, unpacked them, took about three minutes, and the Israeli tanks, they accelerated to their maximum speed, anything to avoid our rockets, but we could still get them as long as they stayed in range. We hit eight M48s that day. Every single missile was worth an Israeli tank.

CUT TO:

SCENE 13. STATE DEPARTMENT. TUESDAY 9th OCTOBER. 1.45am
WASHINGTON TIME.

KISSINGER Defense has got something against you guys.²² I don't know what.

DINITZ But Jim Schlesinger, he's....? [UNSAID: *Jewish*]

KISSINGER Maybe him, maybe some SOB in the Pentagon.

DINITZ The situation, we can't press forward without planes.

KISSINGER You need spares.

DINITZ Planes. Whole planes.²³

KISSINGER Anti-tanks is a whole lot easier than planes, short-term. You need to get El Al over here, you need to charter some commercial cargo flyers, there are big planes out there, you just have to pay. Fill them up, we can get you plenty of stuff.

DINITZ They don't take tanks, jets.

KISSINGER Thing is, they're telling me King Faisal is 'very angry'. I don't want to –

DINITZ We need forty new fighter-bombers, our air force has been –

KISSINGER You can't fly into that SAM missile wall anyway. Stay back, win it on the ground.

DINITZ They have Russian missiles. Our tanks are useless.

KISSINGER You've got to tell Jerusalem what's possible here. The domestic situation.²⁴

DINITZ I'm getting calls all the time, Congressmen, Senators, wanting to know what they can do.

KISSINGER I've got no problem with them asking for support.

DINITZ Right.

KISSINGER As much as possible.

DINITZ Right.

KISSINGER Neither of us wants a ceasefire in place, with the Egyptians
half way across the Sinai, do we?

CUT TO:

SCENE 14.INTERVIEW.

MAJOR EREZ

I called in air support at first light. Four A-4 Skyhawks flew in combat formation towards the Syrian forces assembled below. The men, that was the 53rd Battalion, they cheered when they saw the Star of David markings. And then the four planes exploded in mid-air. A second flight of Skyhawks appeared, and two more exploded.

CUT TO:

SCENE 15. OEOB. TUESDAY 9th OCTOBER. 11am.

NIXON IS QUIETLY, VICIOUSLY ANGRY.
SCHLESINGER TRYING TO GET HIM TO FOCUS

NIXON If Spiro Agnew had one use, one lousy stinking use, one use, it was to stop them getting rid of me. Think about it, Jim – ‘President Agnew’, God help this country. And they knew it.

SCHLESINGER Sir, this proposal, from the Secretary of State. I have considerable concerns. It feels like he’s promoting a major re-armament for Israel.

VOICE James Schlesinger, Secretary of Defense, former Director of the CIA.

SCHLESINGER I have considerable concerns.

NIXON They’re saying the Appeals Court will announce tomorrow, day after, day after that. The scumbag couldn’t wait a week, two?

SCHLESINGER This proposal from the Secretary of State. I do have to register serious reservations about – ²⁵

STEAMING IN THROUGH THE SIDE DOOR:

KISSINGER I’m sorry, Mister President, there was –

NIXON That pissar Heath²⁶ on board yet? How we doing at the UN?

KISSINGER He’s asking to speak with you.

NIXON If London phones again, please, you handle him. I can’t take that voice of his any longer. Sounds like he’s got a terrier clamped round his balls.

SCHLESINGER Henry, this proposal of yours for a major resupply effort.

KISSINGER Little more than they already had on order.

SCHLESINGER (AS IF!) Thirty Phantoms? Sixty tanks? We don't have that kind of – we'd have to withdraw them from European deployment.

NIXON (CONTINUING, ENJOYING IT) Lock Heath in a room with Agnew, last man standing.

KISSINGER You want to see the Russians win this?

SCHLESINGER They're playing you, Henry.

NIXON The Israelis?

SCHLESINGER Sure, they've been caught off guard. But these reports of massive losses – CIA reckons – here (HANDING THE REPORT) – they've halted the Egyptian attack in the Sinai, already pushing them back on the Golan.²⁷

KISSINGER We know the Russians long ago stockpiled their friends in Egypt, Syria.

SCHLESINGER (BEGGING FOR SUPPORT FROM THE PRESIDENT) Mister President, this memo from the CIA's Energy Analysis Team. The Arabs are already uneasy with our position.

KISSINGER (TO NIXON) Mister President, we've all been getting calls, there's senators²⁸ looking to see a total Israeli victory here.

NIXON The Senate – they really hate us, all of us. We make peace, I settle Brezhnev, Mao, Vietnam, what do they do? (AS IF) Do they welcome me back, say Well Done?

KISSINGER With all due respect, Mister President, this is not the time to make more enemies on the Hill. You want them to beat you with this stick too? Letting Russia win?

SCHLESINGER We start sending Phantoms and Pattons to the Israelis, you can wave goodbye to Saudi crude. It's here – (PAPERS) – CIA analysis. If Israelis start to score victories and it's our weapons, our oil interests have quote had it unquote.

KISSINGER Saudis want our dollars too much.

SCHLESINGER Just a ten point hike in the oil price, do you know what that'll do to the domestic economy?

NIXON That's why we've got to show them we care. We're the new peacemakers, détente goes to work. This'll shut down those hawks in the Senate. (ENERGY GROWING) We're back in business. I like it. You go to work, Henry.

KISSINGER Our commitment to resupply, Mister President, El Al only operates seven cargo aircr –

NIXON You handle all that, Jim. Let them have consumables – bullets, socks, things like that. Nothing that shifts the military balance.²⁹

SCHLESINGER Sir.

NIXON Nothing that moves on its own, right?

SCHLESINGER Sir.

NIXON (TO KISSINGER) Got it, Henry?

KISSINGER Thank you, Mister President.

NIXON Go off and get me a peace conference.

CUT TO:

SCENE 16. INTERVIEW.

REMEMBERED LATER

LT-COL RESHEF By now many of my units were down to two or three tanks. A situation arose where two of my tanks faced fifty Egyptian tanks. I had to rearm and refuel my formations three times while actually engaged with the enemy. Ordinarily an infantry platoon would be equipped with one big anti-tank weapon and two smaller ones. But every third Egyptian seemed to be carrying his own and they were the most sophisticated things I had ever seen. By the third day, we were at stalemate. We couldn't move forwards, they didn't seem to want to.

CUT TO:

SCENE 17.

INTERVIEW.

ALATI

We had crossed with only 24 hours food and four pints of water and all the ammunition and weapons we could carry or drag. They gave us trolleys. We were all dug in, holding the line but we were living hand to mouth.

CUT TO:

SCENE 18. THE WEST WING. TUESDAY 9th OCTOBER. 12noon.

KISSINGER You won't veto, that's what you're saying?

DOBRYNIN That's right, Henry, we get a third party to propose a ceasefire resolution, we don't veto, you don't veto, everyone's happy.

KISSINGER (HE ISN'T HAPPY) Ceasefire in place?

DOBRYNIN I had Waldheim on to me.

KISSINGER What did he say?

DOBRYNIN He's getting flak. "Why is the UN doing nothing to stop the fighting?" they say.

KISSINGER Be careful, that man leaks like a sieve.

DOBRYNIN So maybe we get the British to propose this motion?

KISSINGER You could see.

DOBRYNIN I'll talk to Cromer. We get on.

KISSINGER I'll find out what my people say.

DOBRYNIN Henry, Henry, you make all the decisions.

KISSINGER That's right, Anatol, you arrange for me to be a member of the Politburo and I can make you Vice President.³⁰ (THEN:) I'll get back to you.

CUT TO:

SCENE 19. THE POTOMAC. TUESDAY 1pm.

THE RIVER PASSES SLOWLY UNDER THE BRIDGE

- JAVITS They need Phantoms, Al. We've been hearing talk of shipping out two a day.
- HAIG I'm not briefed on the details of this, Senator.
- JAVITS Except nothing's left US soil, I can tell you that, and certainly nothing's arrived in Israel.
- VOICE Jacob Javits, Republican Senator for New York and Ranking Minority Member on the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations.
- HAIG Like I said, I could arrange for you to talk with –
- JAVITS What's wrong with him, Al?
- HAIG (BAFFLED) Senator?
- JAVITS You know I'm a big fan of the President, you know I with him on the Watergate tapes, you know I want to –
- HAIG That's right, Senator.
- JAVITS So why's he so keen to see our friends in Israel suffer?
- HAIG There are wider concerns.
- JAVITS Foreign Relations is in two hours. I have an obligation to – the Egyptians, that's a Russian client state, you're happy about this?
- HAIG I'll speak with the President.
- JAVITS He's got more than enough trouble. (A THREAT) He doesn't want a Congressional Investigation into this as well.
- HAIG I'll convey your concerns.

JAVITS

Don't force us to make trouble for him, Al.

CUT TO:

SCENE 20. WHITE HOUSE. TRUMAN ROOM. TUESDAY 9th. 7.25pm

DINITZ IS FREAKED, PANICKY

KISSINGER IS TRYING TO CALM HIM BUT TAKING IT SERIOUSLY

DINITZ Forty-nine aircraft down, Henry.

KISSINGER They have those missiles.

DINITZ Five hundred tanks lost.

KISSINGER (ASTOUNDED) Five hundred?

DINITZ Well over four hundred, we're still compiling. Some were poorly maintained, broke down on their way.

KISSINGER How could you – ? Why am I only hearing this now?

DINITZ Hundreds in the Sinai alone.

KISSINGER Victory by Wednesday, you said.

DINITZ SAYS NOTHING

THEN:

DINITZ We don't know how they're – we never expected losses like this.³¹

KISSINGER No-one must know.

DINITZ We've got a whole load of Centurion tanks and the Brits won't send us the parts.³²

KISSINGER You just can't mention Suez to them.

DINITZ We're down to our last hundred operational tanks.

KISSINGER You have to keep that quiet. If it gets out, then all the other Arabs are going to bundle in for the knock-out –

DINITZ My Prime Minister, she would like to come and talk to the President.

KISSINGER Are you out of your mind? Is she?

DINITZ She must make it clear how serious our need for resupply –

KISSINGER Leader of her nation flies half way across the world in the
middle of a war, what does that say?

DINITZ She would like you to put this urgent request to the
President. In person.

KISSINGER Defense has been ordered to send you ammunition, supplies,
everything you need.

DINITZ Jets? Tanks?

KISSINGER (IGNORING THIS) You need to make progress, push them
back. Thing is, you talked before. About “letting things
develop slowly”.

DINITZ Obviously we would – no more than the necessary.

KISSINGER You’ve got make sure your generals are aware. The tactical
situation. We can drag it out at the Security Council but it’s
best if you...faster, yes?

CUT TO:

SCENE 21. WHITE HOUSE, THE RESIDENCE. TUESDAY 10pm.

HAIG IS EATING, NIXON IS NOT

HAIG You should eat something.

NIXON Don't talk to me like my mother. What about nuclear?

HAIG Just some fish, white fish?

NIXON If the Syrians have got some special weapon – do you think Israelis'll go nuclear?

HAIG We don't currently believe they have the capacity.

NIXON They've got warheads.

HAIG No missiles to launch to them.

NIXON Defense told me they could strap them to a few planes.³³

HAIG That rips open the whole Middle East. They know they can't step back from that.

NIXON The question is: will she? If the existence of the whole country is threatened. Take out Cairo, no, Alexandria, Aswan, show them they mean business. Will she?

HAIG (I DON'T KNOW) You know her better than I do.

NIXON We've got a nuclear war in the Middle East, that's no time to get rid of your president.

HAIG Well, maybe –

NIXON See what Henry says. If they could do it. If there's anything we can leak to the Press.

HAIG Sir.

NIXON Get them thinking, make them realise they need someone in charge who knows what he's doing.

HAIG Sir.

NIXON What's that, halibut?

HAIG Plaice, I think.

NIXON (DISGUSTING) Bottom feeder.

CUT TO:

SCENE 22. WEST WING. WEDNESDAY 10th OCTOBER. 11:45am.

WITH KISSINGER
ON THE PHONE
A BUSY OFFICE ROUND KISSINGER

KISSINGER Things happening here today, Anatol.

DOBRYNIN More girlfriend trouble, Henry?

KISSINGER A major domestic problem, which as you will see – even you will recognise it's major.³⁴

DOBRYNIN Mmmmm.

KISSINGER Coming to head early this afternoon.

KISSINGER KICKS A DOOR SHUT

DOBRYNIN So the UN Ceasefire resolution? We need to be pushing it -

KISSINGER That's what I'm saying, there will be a decisional delay on this.

DOBRYNIN Today, tomorrow, what are we talking?

KISSINGER We are thinking very seriously about what you said.

DOBRYNIN This is a major chance for both of us.

KISSINGER What I've told you, about this domestic situation –

DOBRYNIN (*You mean*) The Vice President, yes? Resigning today?

KISSINGER (AN IMPLIED 'YES') I tell you this because I trust you.

DOBRYNIN I understand.

KISSINGER It affects nothing. If anything, it makes us stronger.

DOBRYNIN Of course.

KISSINGER In terms of foreign policy.

DOBRYNIN I understand.

KISSINGER We don't want anything ramped up with other countries.

DOBRYNIN Of course.

KISSINGER You'll hear from me, right?

DOBRYNIN I'm right here. We want to do this ceasefire thing as soon as you're ready.

KISSINGER Like I said, a situation. You need to give me time.

CUT TO:

SCENE 23.RADIO NEWS

REPORTER

Just minutes ago, in the Federal Court, Vice President Spiro Agnew pleaded *noli contendere* to a charge of tax evasion. This was the centrepiece of a negotiated resolution. As a result, Agnew was fined \$10,000 and put on three years' probation for accepting bribes during his tenure as Governor of Maryland. Former Maryland Attorney General Stephen Sachs described the plea bargain as the "greatest deal since the Lord spared Isaac on the mountaintop". The soon-to-be former Vice President is believed to be on his way to the White House right now to tender his resignation.

CUT TO:

SCENE 24. THE WHITE HOUSE. WEDNESDAY 10th. 2pm.

KISSINGER IS CONFUSED, WRONG-FOOTED
HAIG HAS STOPPED KISSINGER IN THE CORRIDOR, PEOPLE CONTINUE
TO WALK PAST

HAIG It's you that has to do it, Henry.

KISSINGER Do what?

HAIG Agnew, he's come to resign.

KISSINGER I was informed.

HAIG It's the Secretary of State has to officially take it from him.³⁵

KISSINGER Who decided I do this?

HAIG The Founding Fathers, Henry.

KISSINGER (WHAAAT?) It's in the Constitution?

HAIG Are you alright?

KISSINGER I've got a few things on my plate, Al.

HAIG You and me both.

KISSINGER Does he do it in person? I'm supposed to be talking to
Moscow. I'm supposed to be with the Egyptian Ambassador
in less than –

HAIG This takes precedence, I think.

KISSINGER (IT'S COMING TOGETHER) Yes, I'll tell Dobrynin I have to
postpone again.

HAIG He keeps on at me about these Senators, Henry – ragging
him for not helping Israel.

KISSINGER I've just been telling Defense that we need to –

HAIG (HARD, TO KISSINGER) I think you need to speak to your people. Whoever you know on the Israeli payroll. This is not a time we need Senators and Congressmen whipping us for not protecting their little friends. It's not like we ever get any of their votes, not ever. Never once, not one Jew ever voted for Richard Nixon.³⁶

KISSINGER We need to massively increase resupply.

HAIG We cannot be seen to –

KISSINGER We can do it quietly.

HAIG He wants you to shut them up, Henry. Tell Mrs Meir to stop, Henry.³⁷

KISSINGER I can't tell a democratically elected –

HAIG How are things going at the UN?

KISSINGER It needs time. (PERFECT EXCUSE:)³⁸ But you want me to deal with the Vice President.

HAIG That was Thomas Jefferson wants you to do that.

CUT TO:

SCENE 25.

NEWS.

RADIO

And now we're going over the Special Prosecutor Archibald Cox, who has just left the court building.

CAMERAS FLASHING AS HE SPEAKS

COX

I'm very satisfied with this outcome yes. The Federal Appeals Court has unequivocally ordered President Nixon to hand over the Watergate tapes. In other words, it has ruled that the President must comply with Judge John Sirica's order in the District Court.

JOURNO

And if he refuses?

COX

No man is above the law, not even our President.

JOURNO

Do you reckon this could lead to impeachment?

COX

I'm sure in the end, the President will see the sense of obeying the court order.

CUT TO:

SCENE 26. RUSSIAN EMBASSY, WISCONSIN AVENUE. THURSDAY
11th. 2pm.

WITH DOBRYNIN
ON THE PHONE:

DOBRYNIN Finally, Henry. I think maybe you are kidnapped.

KISSINGER You know, things, Anatol. More complicated than I....

DOBRYNIN My fingers are sore. I ring you so many times.

KISSINGER The Appeal Court decision, the tapes thing, it's wiped things
out here for –

DOBRYNIN (HARDER) You and I both know you don't bother yourself
with that.

KISSINGER I still need access to - *[the President]*

DOBRYNIN Forget that, please. The Israelis are saying they are thirty
miles from Damascus. Boasting about it.³⁹

KISSINGER (TRYING TO KEEP IT JOKEY) Like Saint Paul.

DOBRYNIN Please, no more jokes.

KISSINGER We have spoken to them.

DOBRYNIN If they keep bombing Damascus, they should expect
something in Tel Aviv.

KISSINGER You would force us in. Anatol, if any Soviet ground forces or
planes, we will intervene.⁴⁰

DOBRYNIN We cannot ignore what is happening in Syria. Our friends
are in pain.

A MOMENT, THEY ARE THREATENING EACH OTHER

KISSINGER We saw – you have put three airborne divisions on alert.

DOBRYNIN I made it clear to you four days ago that we would not veto a ceasefire resolution at the UN. We invited you to join us in that.

KISSINGER That was a very constructive step.

DOBRYNIN (EXASPERATION GROWING) And yet nothing has been – first you tell us to wait for the British, then the Australians, then –

KISSINGER We've picked up signals. You are engaged in a massive airlift across the Middle East. That's not helpful.⁴¹

DOBRYNIN (GENUINE) I know nothing about this. I would know if anything has been – there has been no change of policy. What evidence do you have?

A MOMENT WHEN KISSINGER HAS NO ANSWER FOR THIS, THEN:

KISSINGER And your people, encouraging Algeria, Jordan to join in.⁴²

DOBRYNIN Who says this?

KISSINGER That doesn't matter – why are your people doing this?

DOBRYNIN There could be peace within hours if you and I decided.

KISSINGER Why not propose it yourselves?

AFTER THE FAINTEST PAUSE:

DOBRYNIN Sadat is not ready.

KISSINGER What? This is what we've been working towards?

DOBRYNIN I am as disappointed as you.

KISSINGER Then maybe you should stop blaming us, get your own house in order.

CUT TO:

SCENE 27. WHITE HOUSE: EAST ROOM. FRIDAY 12th OCTOBER
9pm.

THE ASSEMBLED CROWD (SENIOR STAFF, CONGRESSMEN AND
DIPLOMATS) APPLAUD POLITELY.

NIXON Please, everyone, drink, some food. Please. Everyone.
Mingle.

WE ARE WITH:

SCHLESINGER Good speech.

KISSINGER The new Veep's or – ?

SCHLESINGER The Boss'.

KISSINGER Very graceful. Short.

SCHLESINGER I don't know how he keeps going.

KISSINGER That's why we have to give him the chance to - he wants
something to show them that Watergate doesn't matter.

SCHLESINGER It shouldn't matter. Johnson bugged his opponents, and
Kennedy.

KISSINGER They didn't talk about it. On tape. In the Oval Office.

NIXON (BOUNDING UP. HE'S UP, ALERT, EXUBERANT. ARM
ROUND EACH OF THEM) This has got them, eh, we got
them with this one, my boys.

KISSINGER Sir.

NIXON Gerald Ford's one of theirs, Congress love him.

SCHLESINGER Good choice, sir.

NIXON And they're not going to chuck me out now – leave a man
like this in charge of foreign affairs?

KISSINGER Not at a time like this.

NIXON He's barely even been out of Michigan. How's he going to negotiate with Brezhnev?

KISSINGER With Mao!

NIXON Henry, these reporters, saying we're not looking after our friends in Israel.

KISSINGER If you want us to give your order, then we can.

NIXON We can't go wading in. The one thing the Russians won't tolerate is us sending in US planes. Tell the Israelis they've got to charter planes to pick up the stuff. I want you to turn the screws on those airlines, hard but discreet.

SCHLESINGER They can't ignore a Presidential order.

NIXON We need to be seen to take an even position here.

KISSINGER It doesn't help when your madman of a deputy⁴³ is running round, telling everyone I'm driving the Saudis crazy.

SCHLESINGER He'll do what the President wants.

KISSINGER Except the way he interprets what the President wants sometimes isn't – ⁴⁴

NIXON Continental Airlines, I don't understand, they've always been right behind us, great patriots – if someone told them we needed planes, they'd do it.

KISSINGER Unless someone at Defense winked at them, (AT SCHLESINGER) said if it doesn't happen until next week, our hearts won't break.⁴⁵

NIXON Our whole diplomatic strategy is based round the Israelis making advances, right, Henry?

KISSINGER If a catastrophe happens, because they didn't get the ammo, the missiles, someone's going to be called to account. If they look impotent.

SCHLESINGER I sat with them, for an hour this afternoon, the Israeli military attaché – they simply didn't mention ammunition problems.⁴⁶

KISSINGER (URGENT, DISCREET) Look out.

NIXON (TURNING) What?

KISSINGER (CLOCKING HIM AS HE APPROACHES) Anatol, glad you could join us.

DOBRYNIN Honoured, deeply honoured, Mister President..

NIXON They must be enjoying this in Moscow, Dobrynin?

DOBRYNIN A fine occasion, sir.

NIXON (*I meant*) Our situation.

DOBRYNIN Let me be honest with you, sir, they do not understand.

NIXON I barely do myself.

DOBRYNIN A great man, a powerful leader, this is just mischief, they think, his enemies make mischief.

NIXON And we thought you'd want to hit us while we're looking the other way?

DOBRYNIN They do not think you are distracted.

SCHLESINGER (VERGING ON SYCOPHANTIC) And they're right there.

DOBRYNIN Mister President, if I could take this opportunity – the UN Resolution we are pursuing -

NIXON I like the sound of that.

DOBRYNIN For several days now, we have been waiting for you, your people, to talk to the British to –

NIXON (JOKE) You can wait forever for a Brit to do something.

DOBRYNIN And they tell me that it is your State Department that is raising objections to –

KISSINGER That’s hardly fair, Anatol.

NIXON I want peace talks, Henry, Anatol. You two arrange it. You tell Comrade Leonid I said so. (MOVING AWAY, HAILING SOMEONE) David, good to see you here. Surprised you all, didn’t I?

KISSINGER You were invited here as a guest.

DOBRYNIN I should not talk to your President?

SCHLESINGER I’m hearing Moscow didn’t like the Australian motion for the Security Council.

KISSINGER We are approaching the point where we will have to do something.⁴⁷

DOBRYNIN This is not fair.

KISSINGER As a friend, I’m saying this. If we are played with, we will do something, with reluctance.

DOBRYNIN You do not need to –

KISSINGER You should not try to pick up any easy victories.

DOBRYNIN There are no easy victories.

KISSINGER Right.

DOBRYNIN I will – (MOVING OFF) – we will talk tomorrow.

KISSINGER I’m ready for your call.

DOBRYNIN HAS MOVED OFF

KISSINGER How long will it take to get the 82nd Airborne ready?⁴⁸

SCHLESINGER (WTF?) What?

KISSINGER Not use them, not do anything, just so they know about it.

SCHLESINGER You want to escalate things?

KISSINGER Not to do anything – those Siberian bastards, they only understand brutality. (WRISTWATCH) Excuse me, I have to see the Israeli ambassador.

CUT TO:

SCENE 28. WHITE HOUSE: NSA OFFICE. 11.25pm.

FACE TO FACE

KISSINGER I've been holding off the Russians, the Pentagon, my own President, stalling on a ceasefire resolution and you haven't launched your offensive?

DINITZ We can't risk it.

KISSINGER I was ready to open the diplomacy tonight, with you well advanced.⁴⁹

DINITZ We don't have the firepower, the reserves.

KISSINGER All day I have been avoiding, blaming the new Vice President thing, saying we couldn't, diddling around with Dobrynin at the thing just now.

DINITZ We run out of ammunition in one day, maybe two. The offensive would grind to a halt. The Syrians would notice this.

KISSINGER (HE IS TESTING HIM) The Secretary for Defense, I was just with him, he says you're trying to lock us in here.

DINITZ I don't –

KISSINGER There's no military necessity, he says, this is just a manoeuvre for you to fill your warehouses.

DINITZ We are at war. On two fronts. We have suffered almost a thousand dead.

KISSINGER I know that.

DINITZ As a proportion, how would America feel if it had a hundred thousand dead? Twice as many as you lost in all your time in Vietnam.

KISSINGER OK.

DINITZ It's just....sometimes....you talk about Vietnam like it was....

KISSINGER A war I ended?

DINITZ First time a German has ever ended a war.

THEY BOTH LAUGH. TEST OVER.

KISSINGER We're going to get that cargo into the air, Simcha.

DINITZ Thank you.

CUT TO:

SCENE 29. OEOB: NIXON'S DEN. SATURDAY 13th. 10am.

NIXON IS SURROUNDED BY NEWSPAPERS

NIXON Yesterday they loved me. Ford is a masterstroke they said.

KISSINGER He is.

NIXON (NEWSPAPERS) Now look at them – it's hand all over the tapes or it's impeachment. Those tapes are my private property.

HAIG How about this, sir, we offer him summaries. Counsel suggested we get a senator to listen to them, prepare –

NIXON It's not like I ever said anything about any break-in, is it?

KISSINGER Sir.

NIXON And I did not conspire to cover up any –

HAIG We don't hand over the tapes, we get summaries made, by someone independent, yes?

NIXON Maybe. Yes, maybe. Get me the oldest, deafest Democrat you can find.

HAIG Sir.

KISSINGER Sir, we asked for this meeting because I am seeking your support for increased –

NIXON (NEWSPAPER) You seen this?

HAIG Sir?

NIXON Democrats say they welcome Gerald Ford, a safe pair of hands.

HAIG That's a compliment.

NIXON (MOCKING:) "I'm a Ford not a Lincoln." Who wants a Ford? You go to the showroom, who says "What I really want is a Ford"? We all want Lincolns. You grow up where I did, it's the guy with the Lincoln you want to be.

SCHLESINGER I am aware that there have been issues about getting this resupply to Israel.

KISSINGER It's been sabotaged, Jim. Downright sabotage. (TO NIXON) Sir, I need your orders to make this a wholly American military operation. All the way.

SCHLESINGER The Egyptians have only secured a twenty-five mile strip on the East side of the canal, that's containable.

HAIG And they can't move any further without missile cover.

KISSINGER They're SAM-6 missiles, Designed And Made In Moscow. You want Russian missiles, Russian tanks to win this? You want the world to see that it's Moscow you want as your friend because they get you the hot stuff?

SCHLESINGER What do we say at the UN? How can we move any kind of ceasefire resolution?

KISSINGER If we had got this resupply underway four days ago, as promised, we wouldn't need drastic measures now.

SCHLESINGER The Israelis never told us they were running out.

KISSINGER They're screwed it,⁵⁰ I agree, they don't know how much ammunition they're getting through. But that doesn't change the fact that not one goddamn shipload has moved.⁵¹

HAIG Is that true?

KISSINGER (CONTINUING) And it's our policy that's about to get screwed as well.

NIXON What do you want to do?

KISSINGER Load up the C5s, C131s, and our people can fly the stuff straight into Tel Aviv.

- HAIG (EVEN HE IS SURPRISED) Henry?
- KISSINGER Mister President, you asked me to keep them quiet on the Hill, this is how we do it.
- HAIG Let's just stop and think a moment here: Just as the Arab states are winning something for the first time, you want to show you're weighing in against them? That'll kick the whole Arab world. Radicalisation is inevitable.
- KISSINGER What do you think will happen if this war continues? They're not going to get radicalised?
- HAIG What happens to détente?
- KISSINGER What do you think they're doing? They've been resupplying their clients, thousands of tons. Hundreds of flights.
- SCHLESINGER (LAUGHING) We've been expecting this. We had a sweepstake over at the Pentagon, 'When Would Henry Pull This One Out?'⁵²
- HAIG It's not true?
- KISSINGER Transport planes flying into Cairo over Hungary, Romania. Moscow has broken our compact, not to intervene. Mister President, that gives us every right to –
- SCHLESINGER So we blame Russian Treachery?
- KISSINGER Better than letting your lunatics in Defense create policy by stalling.
- SCHLESINGER That's a low blow, Henry.
- KISSINGER I can contact Faisal, the Saudis'll side with us if it's Anti-Communist.
- HAIG (HOPING TO CALM IT DOWN) What we need here is a policy, right, guys?
- SCHLESINGER Fine by me.

KISSINGER I thought that was why this meeting was called.

A MOMENT AS THEY ALL LOOK AT NIXON. EXCEPT:

NIXON (NEWSPAPERS) I've got approval ratings that look like I murdered someone.

HAIG We can work on that, sir.

NIXON Of course, we resupply Israel, all their friends on the Hill – Jackson, Javits, Symington – they suddenly become our friends.

KISSINGER You're doing something strong, you send those C5 Galaxies over, we up the number of Skyhawks, send them ten, twelve –

SCHLESINGER They'll have to be withdrawn from NATO forces on the Rhine.⁵³

KISSINGER M60 tanks, Stinger missiles, we show Moscow who's the boss.

NIXON (LIKING IT) Right.

KISSINGER That's you taking hold and being the man.

NIXON Of course, we've got to squeeze the Israelis after this.

KISSINGER Absolutely.

NIXON And the Russians have got to see it. We have got to squeeze them goddam hard.⁵⁴

KISSINGER Moscow will know.

NIXON We make them sit down and talk to those Arabs.

SCHLESINGER Why will the Israelis need to talk, once they're stocked up to start World War Three?

KISSINGER They'll owe us, Jim, they'll need us.

NIXON (THINKING HIS WAY INTO THIS) Right, that's the way it's going to be done.

SCHLESINGER We don't need to do this. Defense Intelligence Agency says right now they've got enough ammunition for ten days minimum. Probably a month.

NIXON I need those arseholes in the Senate to shut up. That's all, Jim, that's what I need. That's our policy right now.

KISSINGER Visible, patriotic resupply and they all go silent, sir.

HAIG A few good headlines right now, sir, wouldn't do any harm.

NIXON Do it, Henry. American planes, all the way, American pilots. We're going to get blamed just as much for three planes as three hundred.⁵⁵ Give them the works.

HAIG They're going to love you on the Hill, sir. This is –

MIX TO HUGE TRANSPORT PLANES TAKING OFF

AND

SCENE 30. JERUSALEM: PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE. SUNDAY 14th. 8am EMT

OVERHEAD, HUGE TRANSPORT PLANES NOW COMING IN TO LAND

MEIR How do I thank you?

KISSINGER What time is it there?

MEIR Eight in the morning.

KISSINGER They were supposed to come in at night.⁵⁶

MEIR What's to be so ashamed of, 'Heinz'?

KISSINGER I don't want photographs flashing round the world, our planes flying in.

MEIR You send over these flying monsters and you expect no-one to notice. (SHE HOLDS THE PHONE UP) Listen, can you hear that?

KISSINGER I don't want any special welcoming parties, not you, not -

MEIR Too late, the people went down to the beach, when they heard. They were standing on the sand, weeping.

KISSINGER (DRY) Wonderful.

MEIR Don't be ashamed. It is a mitzvah.

KISSINGER Mitzvahs score no points at the negotiating table.

MEIR What's to negotiate about?

KISSINGER We have to break the deadlock.

MEIR They can lose as many wars as they want. We only get to lose one.

CUT TO:

SCENE 31.INTERVIEW.

MAJOR EREZ

Finally they sent us infantry and tank reinforcements – they weren't needed up north any more. We started assembling for our counter-attack in the Sinai. We were almost ready. What we didn't expect was an Egyptian break-out. They moved out, without anti-aircraft cover. Our planes went in, they did it all. It was a bloodbath.

CUT TO:

SCENE 32. THE WEST WING: NSA OFFICE. TUESDAY 16th. 9am.

THEY ARE FACE TO FACE, DOBRYNIN NOT HAPPY.

DOBRYNIN I thought, you and me, we were...

KISSINGER We're prepared to stop when you stop.⁵⁷ It won't be massive yet.

DOBRYNIN Stop what?

KISSINGER For four days, you've been flying cargo into Cairo, into Damascus.

DOBRYNIN You know that was insignificant. Food, bandages.

KISSINGER For five days, we held off. Now we are obligated to maintain the balance.

DOBRYNIN We've photographed Phantoms, M60s, Skyhawks, rolling down the tarmac at Ben Gurion International.

KISSINGER You can't believe we would accept a military setback in the Middle East.⁵⁸

DOBRYNIN Any progress you ever made with the Arab world, you're ripping it up.

KISSINGER We've made it clear to Faisal, to the Shah.

DOBRYNIN The Shah? A schoolyard bully.

KISSINGER Sadat should take the offer of a ceasefire now.⁵⁹

DOBRYNIN And give up all hope of regaining his own territory?

KISSINGER Tell Moscow to save itself the effort, we will not accept the Egyptian position, the pre-67 borders.

DOBRYNIN And what about the utility of détente?

KISSINGER We will never let détente be used for unilateral advantage. There's no law that says you have to fly in a hundred and forty supply planes.

DOBRYNIN This is hardly –

KISSINGER You never lied to us before.

DOBRYNIN We worked hard. To bring our positions close. You have made a ceasefire impossible now.

KISSINGER Or were you just stringing us along all this time, rejecting motion after motion?

DOBRYNIN We all know what is at stake if this escalates.

KISSINGER We will stop our airlift immediately there is a ceasefire.

DOBRYNIN I'll tell Moscow.

KISSINGER (COLD) Thank you.

DOBRYNIN (COLDER) Thank you.

CUT TO:

SCENE 33. WHITE HOUSE. PRESS ROOM. WEDNESDAY 17th
OCTOBER. NOON. EST.

HAIG IS ANNOUNCING TO THE ASSEMBLED PRESS CORPS

HAIG Ladies and Gentlemen, the President of the United States.

THE PRESS CORPS STANDS AND THEN SITS AGAIN

NIXON Thank you. I'll take questions.

QUESTION Sir, we've seen the delegation of Saudi ministers and they seem to have been reassured. Can you say the same for the entire Arab world?

NIXON They are quite aware that all we are doing here is maintaining the balance.

QUESTION Can you be sure that is all? I've read reports that the Soviets were barely flying anything into Cairo?

NIXON Both Moscow and Washington have their clients in the area. We both, through détente, agreed to restrain our clients. We have informed the Kremlin that Brezhnev and Nixon are going to sort this.⁶⁰ (NEW QUESTIONER) Yes?

QUESTION I took this off the Associated Press wire on my way in. The Arab states are cutting oil production by five percent every month until the Israelis give up all land seized in 1967.

NIXON I find it hard to believe that their own economies can withstand that sort of loss of revenue.

QUESTION And OPEC will call an emergency meeting next week to suggest a price rise, in the order of fifty to seventy percent.

NIXON That's why we're pushing for ceasefire negotiations, followed by a peace conference involving all parties. There will be no oil price rise. Yes?

- QUESTION How are you going to get the Israelis to move back if you have now armed them for the next ten years. They've got everything they need, why do they need to come to your peace conference?
- NIXON I dispute that analysis.
- QUESTION The Appeal Court demanded you hand over the tapes five days ago. Have you?
- NIXON We have proposed writing summaries, and then allowing a Senator – we have suggested John Stennis – a Democrat, to check the accuracy of those summaries.
- QUESTION And if the Special Prosecutor declines that offer?
- QUESTION Are you considering a Desist Order?
- NIXON As I said –
- HAIG Thank you, that's enough questions.
- NIXON Thank you, everyone. Thank you.
- HE LEAVES THE STAGE TO A BARRAGE OF QUESTIONS
AS NIXON STEPS AWAY AND DOWN THE CORRIDOR
- NIXON Is that all they want to know about?
- HAIG It makes good copy.
- NIXON I'll sack him.
- HAIG Sack....?
- NIXON Cox, that jumped-up Harvard dipstick. He doesn't get to make demands of the President. Sack him, Al. Get the Attorney General to sack him.
- HAIG I don't think he would –
- NIXON If he won't sack Cox, sack the Attorney General as well.

HAIG We can talk about –

KISSINGER (APPROACHING ALONG THE CORRIDOR) That was a very effective performance, sir.

NIXON Maybe I can win a Nobel Prize too, Henry.

KISSINGER (HE IS REALLY PUMPED UP AND SELF-CONGRATULATORY) You have handled this, sir. This has been the finest foreign affairs moment of your whole administration. You are now at the centre, anyone wants a settlement, they come through you, through the US. We own these events from now on.

AND MIX TO A COLLAGE OF ACTUALITY OF THE SMALL VICTORIES AND PAINFUL BLOWS RECEIVED BY THE US IN THIS PROCESS, ENDING WITH 11/9/2001

AND COMING OUT TO, STILL IN THE ROSE GARDEN:

KISSINGER It's us they've got to talk to now. They have to come to us. We're the peacemakers.

END

¹ *Crisis: The Anatomy of Two Major Foreign Policy Crises* by Henry Kissinger p14

² *Crisis* p15

³ Burkett p318-320

⁴ NSA Telcon 7/10/73 0820, Dinitz reporting meeting with Meir

⁵ Kissinger said this

⁶ *Crisis* p27

⁷ Telcon 6/10/73 0835

⁸ *Nixon and Kissinger: Two Partners in Power* by Robert Dallek p497: July 1972 "as news of the president's hospitalisation spread, staff members speculated that the cause was not 'viral pneumonia' but alcoholism or, as someone at the hospital put it, "the need to dry Nixon out"...Nixon would make late-night phonecalls which were notable for their slurred speech and incoherence."

Dallek p524: "October 11th...Kissinger to Scowcroft: "When I talked to the President he was loaded".....What seems most striking in this exchange is how matter-of-fact Kissinger and Scowcroft were about Nixon's condition, as if it were nothing out of the ordinary. It was as if Nixon's drinking to excess had become part of the routine with which they had to live

⁹ NSA Telcon 6/10.73 12.45pm for 'Walter Mitty'

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- ¹⁰ NSA Telcon 6/10.73 1310
- ¹¹ Dallek p520: "Not even a war....could divert attention from the White House crisis. It was not for want of trying - the White House made every effort to focus concern on what was possibly the most serious international crisis of Nixon's presidency."
- ¹² Dallek p525: "Neither Kissinger nor Haig trusted Nixon to deal with the Middle East. When US oil executives sent the president a memorandum...Haig passed it first to Kissinger for comment before sending it on to Nixon."
- ¹³ <http://docstalk.blogspot.com/2010/10/israel-releases-1973-war-papers-to-warn.html>
- ¹⁴ 7/10/73 untimed Telcon between Shalev and Kissinger, Shalev delivering the message from Golda Meir
- ¹⁵ Dallek p522: "Kissinger consistently took the lead in deciding how Washington should respond to the war...on the evening of Oct 7, for example, Nixon asked Kissinger if there was any message from Brezhnev. "Oh yes, we heard from him." Henry replied. Nixon wanted to know, "What did he say?"
- ¹⁶ 6/10/73 7.25pm
- ¹⁷ Dallek p517: "Nixon privately calling Cox a 'partisan viper'...Harvard law professor"
- ¹⁸ from Telcon 7/10/73 10.30pm
- ¹⁹ NSA Telcon with Shalev 6/10/73 10.55am
- ²⁰ 8/10/73 7:08pm: "when they finish clobbering the Egyptians and the Syrians....will be even more impossible to deal with than before....and we must have a diplomatic settlement there....You see, they could feel so strong as a result of this, they'd say: Well, why do we have to settle?"
- ²¹ Memcon 8/10/73 19:08
- ²² NSA Telcon 6/10/73 6.05pm
- ²³ 9/10/73 01:45
- ²⁴ 9/10/73 11:37
- ²⁵ Dallek p523: "Schlesinger resisted a major rearmament of Israel as likely to provoke an Arab oil boycott. He believed it was one thing to assure Israel's survival, but another matter to endorse its hold on captured territories.....Later that afternoon, he [Kissinger] persuaded Nixon to ignore Schlesinger's advice and allow him to begin a large-scale resupply of Israel....A distracted Nixon was content to let Kissinger set policy direction."
- ²⁶ *Years of Upheaval* by Henry Kissinger: "Nixon's relationship with Heath was like that of a jilted lover who has been told friendship was still possible but who remembers the rejection....it was doomed." YOU p 141
- ²⁷ *Crisis* p147, this is how HK reports the CIA's analysis
- ²⁸ call from Senator Church, *Crisis* p151
- ²⁹ *Crisis*, p153 HK's summary
- ³⁰ this gag from Telcon 12/10/73 7pm with Vorontsev
- ³¹ *Crisis* p 145-7, HK's summary of a meeting with Dinitz
- ³² Burkett p328
- ³³ *Kissinger's Year: 1973* by Alistair Horne p242 "The use, in extremis, of Israel's nuclear weapon 'Jericho' was even discussed"
- ³⁴ NSA Telcon 10/10/73 11.45am *Crisis* p165
- ³⁵ YOU p501
- ³⁶ Horne p28: "He had to endure..."the railings against Jewish power which were part of the casual conversation among Nixon's inner

circle.....David Frost agreed: "Henry must have heard him [Nixon] on more than one occasion say something like 'those Yids'."

³⁷ from Dallek, p524: "During a morning conversation with Kissinger [on Oct 11] he focused on pres stories that "we are not supporting Israel. I will not tolerate this."

³⁸ from Horne p250: "the day that Agnew resigned....It was also an excuse now for Kissinger to continue stalling on the cease-fire until Israel had more time..."

³⁹ *Crisis* p194

⁴⁰ *Crisis* p208

⁴¹ *Crisis* p168, HK to AD

⁴² *Crisis* p168

⁴³ NSA Telcon 13/10/73 00:49

⁴⁴ NSA Telcon 12/10/73 23:45

⁴⁵ NSA Telcon 12/10/73 *Crisis* p213

⁴⁶ NSA Telcon 13/10/10 *Crisis* p217

⁴⁷ *Crisis* Telcon 13/10/73 13:40

⁴⁸ NSA Telcon 13/10/10 *Crisis* p236

⁴⁹ *YOU* p512

⁵⁰ NSA Telcon 13/10.73 12:49

⁵¹ NSA Telcon 12/10/73 23:54

⁵² Memo of WSAG Meeting 14/10/73 09:16

⁵³ from *YOU* p513: "A DIA estimate we received early the next day [12th] said Israel could continue military operations at the existing rate of expenditure for another ten days....I immediately [about midnight on 11th-12th] called Schlesinger, who expressed astonishment; he simply did not believe an army could run out of ammunition without warning. (And told Haig a few hours later that it seemed to him more a manoever to lock us in than a military necessity. By then it made no difference. Only a show of determination could now arrest the creeping Soviet escalation....I stressed to Schlesinger that those who were afraid of Arab reaction should remember that the gravest threat to our Arab interests came from a prolongation of the war and the concomitant radicalization of the area...[HK then sets about summarising the days:]...I consistently pressed for more urgent deliveries than my colleagues...After Saturday 13, we could present our massive resupply of Israel as a reaction to the Soviet airlift

⁵⁴ Horne p254

⁵⁵ *YOU* p515

⁵⁶ *A World of Trouble: America in the Middle East* by Patrick Tyler p147 "The Giant C5A Galaxies and C141 Starlifters were ordered to make night landings and then get out of Israel before sunrise."

⁵⁷ *Crisis* p238 (13/10 4:25pm)

⁵⁸ NSA Telcon 13/10/73 19:55

⁵⁹ *Crisis* p242

⁶⁰ *Crisis* p253