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Presidential Libraries Withdrawal Sheet

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MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

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State dept ltr 10/7/10
By dcl NARA, Date 12/7/10

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BIPARTISAN LEADERSHIP MEETING

DATE & TIME: Tuesday - November 27, 1973
8:30 a.m.

PLACE: Roosevelt Room
The White House

President Nixon: Henry will give you a review of the Middle East.

Secretary Kissinger: I will summarize what the President tried to do during the war, where we hope to go over the next few months, and a few words on the oil embargo.

During the war there were two objectives: (1), a rapid ceasefire, and (2), to put the U.S. in a position to have a major influence in a settlement. Therefore, we had to do many things which leaned to one side: First, the airlift. If we had allowed a victory of Soviet arms over American arms, the whole balance of power would have shifted. Secondly, the President maintained a personal contact with the Arabs. With the Soviet Union we used our relationship to moderate the conflict and worked with them to bring it to a newer stage.

Let me explain what our view is of detente. We want a relationship with the Soviet Union not because the domestic structures of the United States and the Soviet Union are coming closer. Not because they have changed their goals. Detente is necessary because of the vast strategic arsenals of nuclear weapons on both sides. It is an imperative of our policy to prevent a nuclear war.

Obviously detente does not prevent incompatible actions in many areas. Nor does it mean that we acqueisce in the policies of severe repression in the Soviet Union.

When I went on the trip to the Middle East, first, we faced the Arab demand for a return of Israeli forces to the 22 October lines. Second, we had to get a negotiating process started. Third, I told the Arabs

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that only the United States could bring them negotiations and territory. I told Sadat he had an historic opportunity. He could argue about the ceasefire line or he could work for a conference which could bring about a true peace. Sadat is a wise man. As a result, we negotiated the 6-point plan to consolidate the ceasefire and begin the negotiating process.

The negotiations are now being organized. This week the Soviet Union and the United States will appeal to the parties to convene a conference.

The reason for doing this under U. S. -Soviet auspices is that a wider forum would widen the quarrel as much as the parties. The Chinese and Soviets would quarrel and the British and French would quarrel with us.

Our forum is not yet fully put together but I think it will be this week. Israel can't do much before January. The first portion will probably be devoted to separation of forces -- hopefully to inject some UN forces so that the subsequent negotiation can be freer from the prospect of fighting.

The second phase is the difficult issue of Israel's border, security arrangements between Israel and the Arabs, and outside guarantees. We don't want guarantees such that the United States and Soviet Union are automatically charmed into every little dispute.

Our impression is there is more disposition in the Arabs for moderate discussion than at any time since World War II. Nevertheless, there is severe pressure from the rich radical states -- Iraq and Libya. Potentially also from the Soviet Union, although not yet. Also regretfully, the British, French, and Japanese, who take positions near those of the radical Arabs. (The EC made a demand for the October 22 line just after Sadat had given it up, making his position tough.)

The prospects are bright, but it will be difficult.

There will be some painful time for Israel, who will have to withdraw from some territories. But Israel can't want to keep on with these debilitating wars.

Let me talk about the oil embargo. It is very important that we not make public statements on this.

I had an extensive conversation with King Faisal. He is ...., a conservative, a friend of the United States. But he is between Iraq and South Yemen. He therefore tried to leapfrog the radicals and appear as the leader of the Arab cause. Their public views are always fierce, but privately I think they are looking for a way out of it.

How do we get out of it?

The Europeans and Japan have gone to the Arabs and said "What do you want us to do?" This is intolerable. If we give in to this: (1) It encourages the radical elements. (2) It gives an opportunity to the Europeans to escalate the proposal. (3) It gives an opportunity to the Soviet Union to escalate the proposal. For example, the Africans are now proposing to keep the embargo until the United States stops its racist policies. We could be faced by blackmail from all raw material producers.

We will talk with the producers, but not under blackmail. There is some chance they will back off the embargo and give negotiations a chance.

The Israeli problem is traumatic. They have relied totally on military supremacy and now know they can't do that.

Let me add a word on the Soviet Union. People say that if detente is so great, how come these confrontations? If we didn't have problems with the Soviet Union, we wouldn't need detente.

There were some things the Soviet Union did we didn't like, but in some other ways they were restrained. They gave no encouragement to terrorists. There was never a day when the President and Brezhnev were not in contact. They made a crisis about the Third Army and the President took strong action in order to forestall the introduction of Soviet troops. Once the action was taken, our communications were able to move us quickly to a settlement.

This is the meaning of detente and on the whole it has worked. If we keep our nerves and pursue our goals, we have a good chance for a real peace.

President: Could you spell out some dates, Henry?

Kissinger: I hope the conference will start by the middle of December.

President: Lets talk candidly. We want the embargo lifted, but don't say anything which would make it hard for the Arabs.

Kissinger: If you want to say personally that our task is not made easier by oil threats....

Ford: Can we talk about the conference participants?

Kissinger: No. Make it an internal Arab problem.

Question: What is Syria's hang up?

Kissinger: There isn't that much hang up. They have sought contact with us. Their problem is Iraq and the Baathist parties. We don't have relations with Syria so the Soviet Union has to bring them to the conference.

President: Syria is geographically closer to the Soviet Union.

Fulbright: What happens if the Israeli elections are postponed?

Kissinger: We can't wait past December 31. We can stall til then on organizational details but not after.

Fulbright: What can we do to help Israel realize they must rely on guarantees as well as military strength? What sort of guarantee can we give?

Kissinger: Before the war, Israel thought that any conflict would be a repetition of 1967. Israel thought they couldn't be in a better position, and there was no real pressure to make them change.

Now things are different -- the war, and their diplomatic isolation. Basing their policy on automatic U. S. -Soviet hostility on every issue is risky. Of course they put faith in their ability in the U. S. to mobilize strength. We must make clear that we are committed to Israeli security, but it must be sought in other than purely military ways.

I think territorial belts of security are better than guarantees. The only guarantee Israel would take seriously would be a U. S. guarantee. A European-U. S. or a UN guarantee they would laugh at. The Soviet Union could guarantee the Arabs.

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Fulbright: How about joint, for both sides?

Kissinger: Okay, as long as it could be implemented individually, with no veto.

Fulbright: How about Jerusalem?

Kissinger: There are two non-military aspects: Jerusalem and the Palestinians.

On the Palestinians and Gaza there is a possibility. Jerusalem is a tough problem. A way must be found to remove the Arab holy places from Israeli control. Egypt doesn't care much about Jerusalem; Faisal is obsessed by it, but doesn't care much about the Sinai.

Intellectually, Jerusalem is solvable with a Vatican-type setup.

Scott: Are the Israelis more or less intransigent than American Jews?

Kissinger: Less. Israel's problem now is the election campaign. Since October 22, Israel's position has evolved and they are willing to talk about things. But the American Jews are so tough and tend to hypo the Israelis and give them illusions.

Fulbright: Isn't that an illusion?

President: It is in this Administration.

Fulbright: Not in Congress.

Kissinger: Let's make clear: We are trying to preserve Israel's security. We have no intentions of sacrificing Israel, and some day they will thank us.

Albert: Why do the Europeans think the destruction of Israel would end the blackmail?

Kissinger: This is a sad chapter in the history of Europe. There is no good answer.

Mailliard: Are you going to Europe?

Kissinger: I am going to the NATO meeting and the President has told me to lay it out cold. There will be screaming.

Scott: Do the American Jews know the extent of Israeli losses?

Kissinger: We will be working with the American Jews. The President is the best friend Israel ever had. In time they will realize that. Israel can't go on with military solutions. They cannot win a war of attrition.

Stennis: How much is this conference our conference and what are our stakes?

Kissinger: The answer is delicate. It is in our interest to involve the Soviet Union so they don't take an extreme position, but we also must make it clear to the Arabs that a settlement can come only through American influence. This is a narrow course to follow. We do it to bolster the moderate Arabs and demonstrate that the extremists won't get the Arabs anywhere. We will therefore fight radical proposals but move to force Israeli acceptance of moderate proposals.

Young: How important is opening the Canal?

Kissinger: That would be part of any military withdrawals. Don't worry about Canal opening the Indian Ocean to the Soviet Navy. We can watch them in the Indian Ocean and elsewhere.

Stratton: What is the significance now of Resolution 242?

Kissinger: In the family -- 242 doesn't mean a thing.

President: It means 1967 for the Arabs and for Israel it means what they have plus ten percent.

Kissinger: We want to distinguish between demilitarized belts and frontiers. Sadat seems to understand the security belt idea.

Fulbright: It is not right to say 242 doesn't mean anything.

President: It means different things to different people. To us it means what is negotiated.

Let me sum up:

We are for Israel's security and we are against any effort to impinge on that. We demonstrated it twice in this conflict -- by the airlift and by the alert. The Israeli hawks have to talk this way. But Israel has no friends. They are totally dependent on the United States. As long as we provide the weapons, Israel can lick the Arabs for twenty-five years, but they can't keep the Soviet Union at bay. What they must ask themselves is what we would do if the Soviets call our hands. This last time we did.

-- There is no detente with regard to philosophy; the same with China.

-- We and the Soviet Union disagree on China; our interests in Europe are opposed. But we no more have yearly crises on the autobahn. And in the Middle East. In Southeast Asia, their interests were never so involved that they might get involved. That is true in only three areas: China, Europe, and perhaps in the Middle East. This time, in the Middle East, they decided that relations with us were more important than the Middle East.

-- Everyone here is for Israeli survival. But it can survive only if it has American support in the face of possible Soviet moves in the Middle East.

The American people will be moved by our friends in Congress for weapons but they will back off if they see American forces going into the Middle East against the Soviet Union.

Israel can't base its policy on military security. We need that supplemental so they don't think we are blackmailing them. A settlement has to cost Israel some territory. That is why we are for 242. It avoids our having to come down on one side or the other.

The U. S. is committed to movement on peace. In that case, only the U. S. and the Soviet Union matter and that is why the Soviet Union must play a role.

The third thing, the United States now has good relations with virtually all of the Arabs.

We can work with all of them for a settlement. We don't want to embarrass the Soviet Union.

Kissinger: We want to give the moderate Arabs an incentive to work with us.

O'Neill: 'Til 1972 Egypt had Soviet troops there and kicked them out. What happened?

Kissinger: The President said in 1970 we didn't like the Soviets in Egypt. Sadat was dissatisfied with progress with the Soviet Union there, so he threw them out. They were dissatisfied with the situation after they threw them out and started a war. I must admit the prospects are more favorable than if the war hadn't happened.

Mansfield: Do Egypt and Israel have the capability to make nuclear weapons?

Kissinger: .....
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McClellan: What incentive do the Arabs have for a peace? Israel has no friends; they have the oil.

Kissinger: The Arabs have learned that in their lifetime they cannot win a way, though they can bleed Israel. The radical Arabs certainly want Israel's destruction. The moderate Arabs, though, fear that the cost of belligerency jeopardizes the stability of their regimes.

I can make a case that Israel is more secure with a border near the 1967 border and a security zone than with the present borders and their forces in contact. With a security zone, the Arabs must move from under their SAM belt. Not all the Arabs will seek peace, but peace would break the unity of the Arabs because they have different motivations.

President: There is another reason. All Arabs are nationalists. The United States has faults, but no one thinks that relations with the United States infringe their independence. That is not true with the Soviet Union and the Arabs know that. That may be partly responsible for Egypt's throwing out the Soviets in 1972. I think the moderate Arabs would prefer the United States to play a role in a settlement than to be beholden to the Soviet Union.

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McClellan: As long as there are respites, there is hope, but I am not optimistic on the prospects for a durable peace.

President: You are realistic, but we have no other choices and we must play a role with both sides. Who wants a showdown with the Soviet Union? Only the columnists.

Mansfield: Mr. President, you and Kissinger are to be commended.

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REASON FOR WITHDRAWAL	National security restriction
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DESCRIPTION	Brent Scowcroft's handwritten notes of Nixon, Kissinger, and the Bipartisan Congressional Leadership meeting
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