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4/25/75

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

John Scofield

very interesting

Joseph C. Harsch

Mideast timetable

One month from now the Syrian mandate expires for the United Nations troops who are patrolling the neutral zone along the Golan Heights. U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger hopes very much that he will be able to persuade the Syrians to agree to a renewal. The chances seem to be about even that at the last moment the Syrians will agree, but for only two months this time, and reluctantly.

The reason for two months is important. The Egyptians have just renewed their mandate for the UN troops on the Sinai front. But the renewal was for three months, and it expires on the last day of July. Hence a two-month Syrian renewal would put them in step with their Egyptian allies. And hence July 31 becomes an extremely important deadline on the diplomatic calendar.

This explains the frequent current remarks heard from both Israel and the Arab countries that July will either bring a new step toward peace, or another war.

Israel is in fact better prepared for such a war than Egypt, which has had only minor resupplies since the 1973 war. Syria has been better re-equipped than Egypt due to its easier and closer relations with Moscow. But Israel has been massively resupplied not only in quantity, but also in the quality of latest American weapons. The assumption is that Israel could defend itself easily against any thrust from either Syria or Egypt.

Yet there is no such thing as a final and decisive military victory for Israel. It is a cardinal principle of Soviet foreign policy that both Syria and Egypt must survive. Soviet troops were poised to intervene in the 1973 war when Israeli troops threatened to capture the Egyptian Third Army. Israel is simply not allowed by Moscow and Washington to capture either Damascus or Cairo.

So the real question is whether July will see a deferred next step to peace which Dr. Kissinger thought he was going to have by now, or another war which will put a further

drain on Israel's badly strained economy and on America's willingness to go on indefinitely supporting a beleaguered Israel.

Israel is economically viable in a peaceful situation. But Israel cannot sustain itself in a beleaguered stockade as at present without outside help. The inflation rate is running now at 15 percent. The pending Israeli request for American aid during the 1975-1976 fiscal year is \$2.2 billion. In the absence of peace it is estimated that Israel will require a further \$2 billion of American aid every year for the next 10 years. In other words Israel is economically independent only when living at peace with its neighbors.

In a condition of continued hostility Israel is decisively dependent on the American taxpayer. That taxpayer is already in vigorous rebellion against foreign aid. So far, the average American is overwhelmingly pro-Israel. The polls put it at two to one. So far, Israel gets from Congress just about everything it wants. But at what point might the taxpayer revolt against foreign aid touch even Israel's needs?

A month ago Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin became a national hero by refusing Egypt's terms for an interim partial peace in return for an interim partial Israeli withdrawal in Sinai. But since then there seems to have been some earnest second-thinking going on in Israel. Foreign Minister Yigal Allon was in Washington this week, presumably with some sweetening of the Israeli position for Dr. Kissinger. Both Egypt and Israel are said to be urging him to come back and renew his mediation efforts.

This situation can lead to another step toward peace in the Middle East, but, as one American expert put it, "this depends on a miracle in May and another in July." Dr. Kissinger is a famous miracle worker, but this is a heavy miracle workload even for him. The only certainty is that between now and the end of July there will be a lot of diplomatic activity about the Middle East.

*"First the blade, then the ear,

then the full grain in the ear."*

THE CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

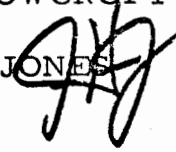
April 25, 1975

ADMINISTRATIVELY CONFIDENTIAL

MEMORANDUM FOR:

BRENT SCOWCROFT

FROM:

JERRY H. JONES 

The attached article was returned in the President's outbox with the following notation to you:

-- Very interesting.

cc: Don Rumsfeld