

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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(Salzburg, Austria)

THE WHITE HOUSE
EXCHANGE OF REMARKS
BETWEEN THE PRESIDENT
AND
ANWAR SADAT
PRESIDENT OF EGYPT
AND
QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION
THE RESIDENZ

1:35 P.M. (Salzburg Time)

THE PRESIDENT: President Sadat and myself have concluded extensive discussions. It has been a pleasure for me to personally meet President Sadat, and I am appreciative for the opportunity of establishing a relationship with him.

I explained the considerations that are important from our point of view of the dedication that we have for a permanent peace, based on a fair and equitable settlement. The meetings were conducted, I think, in a very constructive manner.

After leaving here, in the weeks ahead I will have further consultations that I trust will lead to the overall objective that I seek of a permanent peace that will be in the best interests of all of the parties.

PRESIDENT SADAT: Ladies and gentlemen, if I may add some words, I consider that the big achievement in this meeting is that I have made the acquaintance of President Ford. I have always said before I met him and when I saw the Congress deceiving him that he is an honest and straightforward man.

Now I must add that he is a peace loving and peace struggler, also, added to what I said before.

We have intensive talks, and a complete survey of the whole situation, and we have discussed lots of considerations. I shall be going back to my country, and we shall be discussing all the various aspects and, at the same time, I shall be always in contact with President Ford.

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May I seize this opportunity to extend an invitation for President Ford to visit our country and to meet with our people, and we shall be very happy to have him among us.

Thank you.

MR. NESSEN: We will have a few questions.

Miss Thomas.

QUESTION: I would like to address my question to both Presidents and it is a two-part question.

Mr. Presidents, first, did you reach any kind of an agreement on a second stage disengagement which would involve step-by-step diplomacy; and, two, did you discuss in any way the final form of a peace settlement within the context of the pre-war 1967 borders?

THE PRESIDENT: As I said in my opening statement, we took into consideration all of the circumstances that are necessary for any agreement, whether it was step-by-step or a comprehensive agreement.

The considerations were on the broadest basis so that we could have a complete and total picture of what the problems are in seeking the solution that is what all of us want, which is peace on a fair and equitable basis, that being in the best interest of not only in the Middle East, but the world at large.

QUESTION: My question is to Mr. President Ford.

How do you expect the reaction in the Senate after the reassessment of the U.S. policy in the Middle East, and don't you consider the letter of the Senators to be delivered to you before this meeting with President Sadat as a sort of pressure?

THE PRESIDENT: The reassessment that I have been conducting for the last several months has included a great many suggestions from within the United States, experts in both political parties.

It has included the observations and suggestions of those from other nations throughout the world, of course, including the Middle East.

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I have never felt that the suggestions that have come from any source in the context of pressure. We have sought to assemble all of the information that would be aimed at seeing all of the difficulties, all of the benefits.

There is a wealth of information that is vitally important, and on the benefit of those recommendations, my reassessment will be concluded with a plan that I will submit at the appropriate time.

QUESTION: President Sadat, if I may, sir, I believe you have said that real peace between Egypt and Israel is not possible in this generation. Have you changed your mind or, in fact, has Egypt changed its position in any way since last March?

PRESIDENT SADAT: Well, I didn't say, for the first thing, that peace cannot be achieved. On the contrary, in my speech I said in spite of the fact that it is a very complicated and difficult problem, but it is very easy to reach a solution, when we solve the very simple fundamental basis of the whole conflict.

I said, and I say always, that the biggest achievement we can do is that we end the state of belligerency that has already taken more than 27 years up til this moment. The peace process will be a long one, so it should be clear, and I think I made myself clear.

QUESTION: President Ford, just to follow up your answer to Miss Thomas, what do you envisage the next step to be in the movement towards the settlement of the Middle East crisis?

THE PRESIDENT: We have not made any decision as to the next step. There are, of course, a number of alternatives. I think it is premature at this time for me, not having concluded the full consultation that I had programmed, to indicate in any way whatsoever that a final decision has been made.

The objective is clear. It has been from the outset, and it will be the aim of whatever recommendation that I make as a result of the reassessment.

If I might, I would like to add the discussions between President Sadat and myself have reaffirmed the bilateral relationship between Egypt and the United States, a bilateral relationship that I feel has been constructive, and the discussions that we have had for the last day or so have reaffirmed the continuity of this relationship.

THE PRESS: Thank you, Mr. Presidents.

END (AT 1:45 P.M. Salzburg Time)