

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

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CABINET MEETING
(Excerpt on Foreign Policy)

DATE & TIME: Wednesday - January 23, 1974
10:00 a. m.

PLACE: Cabinet Room
The White House

SUBJECT: Secretary Kissinger's Report on
Egyptian-Israeli Disengagement Agreement

Kissinger: I want to underline what the President and Vice President said. When something works it looks easy, but one has to look at what other things might have happened. It would be difficult now if we had a crisis on auto-bahn, or something, while we were working on the Middle East. It is easy for Jackson to posture against the Soviets because we have them all quieted down. The fact is the President has quieted the world down. In 1970 we had four crises going on.

In the Middle East last October, the Europeans and Japanese panicked and started to compete for Arab favor. At the middle of the month it looked as if we were isolated in support of Israel and the Soviet Union could keep the turmoil going by escalating its demands. We got a ceasefire, and then it blew up. We had a momentary crisis with the Soviet Union and an alert -- which even the Arabs thought was essential. The Arab moderates felt themselves trapped by the radicals, the Soviets, and the Europeans.

What we had to get across is that everyone else could posture but only we could deliver. Only the United States had the leverage on Israel.

The President, therefore, sent me to the Middle East with a message that we won't promise what we can't deliver, but we will deliver what we promise. Sadat's wisdom though was indispensable. His willingness and his patience gave us time to get things turned around.

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The stalemate stemmed from the tendency of the Arabs to confuse great proclamations with achievement. And the Israelis equate security with military force.

We had to break the international front - - a coalescence of the Arabs, the Soviet Union, the Europeans, and Japanese, but do this without antagonizing the Soviet Union. So we developed the Geneva framework to keep the Soviet Union involved. Geneva brought the parties together for the first time.

The moral force of the United States in the world is overwhelming. After billions of Soviet expenditures and effort in the Middle East, it was the United States which they all turned to. Sadat couldn't accept the Israeli proposal for force limitations but could accept the President's proposal in the interest of peace in the world. It could only have been done with us. The negotiations were direct, but we provided the essential catalyst.

This is the first time Israel has ever moved back of her own accord. We have now disengaged the military forces of the two sides and averted a possible resumption of the war and a possible great power confrontation. The achievement of surprise is now impossible. With forces that are at all equal, victory in a desert war comes only with surprise.

One of the most encouraging developments was to see the two sides changed from looking at each other as devils to a recognition they had a common problem. Problems which had been deadlocked, after the agreement were settled almost immediately.

We still face enormous problems in the future. Our first need is to help prevent Sadat's isolation in the Arab world. That was the reason for my visit to Syria. They are wacky but it was an enormous step for them to send a disengagement proposal to Israel, which they did. It was unacceptable, but we can get a negotiation going and Sadat is no longer isolated. If we can get a Syrian disengagement, we can then move with Sadat for a permanent settlement. Then we can work on the Palestinians. The Israeli problem is that there is the Religious Party in the Cabinet which regards the West Bank as part of Biblical Israel.

None of this could have happened without Soviet acquiescence. All they had to do was to put out proposals that were more Egyptian than Sadat put out. They are not happy, but it was crucial they did not interfere. Without detente it couldn't have happened.

President: On embargo, you can say that without disengagement, no lifting of the embargo would take place -- but don't predict that it will. Just say we are working on it.

One political point -- Golda has always told me that she doesn't need our men there -- that with our arms they can beat the Arabs every time. But even if that is true, it is possible only if we hold the ring against the Soviet Union. If the Soviet presence had moved into the Middle East, we would have had a serious problem. If that had happened, it wouldn't matter how much Congress appropriated.

We are not trying to freeze out the Soviet Union. It's just that we intend to play a role in the Middle East.

With regard to Arab moderates, it is essential they side with us because the Soviet Union could support the revolutionaries. Even the radicals, who are anti-Israel and because of that anti-U.S., are not pro-Soviet but pro-themselves. We have to play this carefully. The Soviet Union is close and we are far away. If the Soviet Union didn't have other fish to fry with us, we would have a bigger problem in the Middle East.

Israel is totally dependent on us, the moderate Arabs partly. The radicals even need us in a way.

Without detente, the Soviet Union could have opposed our initiative and blown it sky high. Why did they play the role they did? It was in their interest -- which would not have been served by confrontation with us because it would have hurt with respect to Europe, SALT, China. This is why detente is right and will continue.

Kissinger: This is why the constant Congressional pressure against the Soviet Union can destroy detente. If the Soviet Union gets nothing from it, they won't continue this posture.

President: That is right. The military will react against SALT, the Congress against MFN. But we must do what is right for detente. We must recognize that the Soviet leadership could change. The same with the PRC. They could be a tremendous nuclear power in 15-20 years. When you hear the nitpickers, remember it is not done with mirrors nor is it accidental. It is not because Brezhnev loves us -- but because his alternatives are worse.

✓ Cabinet mtg 23 Jan 74
10:00 AM

K Went to meeting about PVP said. When something works it looks easy, but one has to look at what other things might have happened. Would be ok. even if we had crisis on autobahn, etc while we working on ME. Easy for you know to posture against SC because we have them all pinned down. First is P has pinned it all down. In 1970 we had 4 crises going on.

In ME: last Oct, E Euro & Arabs panicked & started to compete for Arab power. At end of month it looked as if we were isolated in support of I & SC could have been killed by escalating demands. We got a PFI & it blew up. We had a crisis w/ SC - which was a Arab threat was essential. The Arab moderates were trapped by radicals, SC, & Euro.

What we had to get across is that everyone else could posture but only we could deliver. Only US had leverage on I.

Russ sent me to ME w/ msg that we won't promise what we can't deliver, but will deliver what we promise. Secret ambitions, tho, was indispensable. His willingness to ~~was~~ patient gave us time to get things turned around.

Strategic stemmed from Arab infusion of great problems w/ achievement & I equation of security w/ military force. ~~to lead~~

We had to handle a united front - Arab, SC, Euro, but w/ out antagonizing SC

- So we delayed Geneva framework to keep SC involved

- Geneva brought parties together for 1st time

The moral force of US in world is overwhelming. After business of secret negotiations & effort in ME - it was US which they turned to



Sadat could not accept I proposed for force limitation
but could accept P proposal in interests of peace
in world. It ~~was~~ could only have been done w/ us.
There were negotiations were direct, but we
provided essential catalyst.

This is 1st time I has moved back ~~on~~ on our record.
We had now closing eyes & faces & asserted a possible
resumption & great peace expectation.

- Surprise is negligible & w/ faces at all general
meeting in direct was cards only w/ surprise

One of most encouraging elements was ~~it~~ changed
from looking at each other as enemies to negotiation
they had a common problem. Problems which
had been dealt, after a agreement was
settled almost immediately (~~and~~ deal)

Problems

- Present Sadat's reaction. That reason for
my visit to Syria.

- They worried but it was intrinsic steps
for them to send proposal to I. It
was unacceptable, but we ^{can} get a
negotiation going, & Sadat is no
longer isolated.

- If we can get Syrian disengagement, we
can then move w/ Sadat for permanent
settlement

- Then we can work on Palestine. I problem there
is religious party in cabinet.

None of this could have happened w/o Su agreement
all they had to do was to put out proposals more
E than Sadat put out. They not happy, but
it was crucial they did not interfere - w/o details
it could not have happened.

P On lookups, you are saying that w/ a changing agreement
and things would take place - but don't forget
it will. Just say we are working on it.

On political front - Golde has always told me that
she doesn't need any ~~man~~ ^{man} - that w/ our arms they
can beat - Arabs every time - But, coming true, it
is possible only if we hold a strong against -
SU. If I could prepare had traced into ME,
we would have had Arms problem. If that
happened, wouldn't matter how much Congress
approved.

Not trying to purge out SU, just that we
wanted to play a role in ME.

W/ regard to Arab merchants, it is better they
sit w/ us because SU could support substitutions,
Economic radicals, who are anti I & because of that
anti-US, are not per - seen but for themselves.
Let's have to play this carefully. SU is close
w/ me for army. If SU didn't other fish to fry w/ us,
we would have bigger parts in ME.

I estimate depiction is, moderate Arabs partly,
radicals even - need us in a way.

W/o detente a SU could have opposed our initiative
& blown it high. Why did they play a role
they did? It was in their interest - which would not
have been served by confrontation w/ us because it
would have hurt w/ respect to Envo, SALT, China -
This is why detente is right & will continue.

K This is why a constant Congressional presence against
a SU can destroy detente. If SU gets nothing
from it, they won't continue.

P That's right. The military will react against
SALT, a Cry against ME. But we must

As what is right for detente, we must recognize
that Sino-Soviet relations could change. Some W/PRE
could be tremendous - much power in 15-20 yrs.
When you hear a jet packers remember it is
not done w/ missiles unaccelerated. It not
because Big boys are - but alternatives are used.