

THE WHITE HOUSE

2381

WASHINGTON

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ (GDS)

MEETING WITH EUGENE V. ROSTOW
YALE UNIVERSITY PROFESSOR OF LAW

Thursday, April 17, 1975

5:30 p. m. (20 minutes)

The Oval Office

From: Henry A. Kissinger

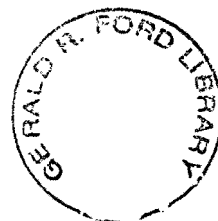
I. PURPOSE

A personal discussion with Professor Rostow. The meeting will provide an opportunity to review the course of our Middle East settlement negotiations. As President, you have not met privately with Professor Rostow.

II. BACKGROUND, PARTICIPANTS & PRESS ARRANGEMENTS

A. Background: Since his departure from Government service as Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs in 1969, Eugene Rostow has resumed his teaching duties at Yale Law School. He has maintained his keen interest in international affairs and has a particular interest in the Middle East. His past positions have tended to be fairly close to those of Israel. In an article written for the April 4 edition of the New Republic, he puts forward his present view of how a settlement should be achieved. He sharply criticizes the step-by-step process and any effort to get Israel to make territorial concessions without prior Arab assurances of peace. He advocates a comprehensive settlement with the return to Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 as the ultimate framework for the conduct of negotiations toward a final settlement.

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DECLASSIFIED

E.O. 12958, Sec. 3.5

NSC Memo, 11/24/98, State Dept. Guide

By LL, NARA, Date 1/20/00

He suggests, finally, that a return to Geneva might be desirable, in that a renewed Geneva Conference would be squarely based on the Security Council Resolutions. He sees no sensible alternative to inclusion of the Soviet Union in the negotiations, and concludes that a primary goal of US policy should be to induce the Soviet Union to accept peace based on the Security Council Resolutions for which they voted.

B. Participants: Professor Rostow and Secretary Kissinger

C. Press Arrangements: White House photo session at the beginning of the meeting.

III. TALKING POINTS

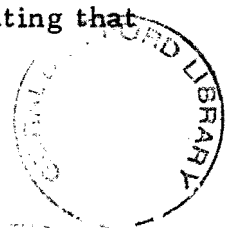
-- I am pleased that we have been able to meet. We share a deep interest in foreign affairs and a mutual concern about the future course of the US in the international area.

A. Middle East

-- I would appreciate your views about the course of settlement efforts in the Middle East.

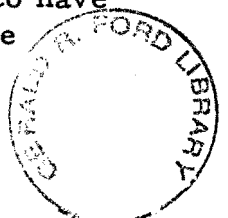
-- Let me give my own perception. In brief review, our strategy has been developed against the six years of political stalemate which preceded the October War of 1973. As you know, the Israelis sought recognition from the Arabs and secure borders different from those of 1967; the Arabs refused to recognize Israel but sought a full return to the 1967 borders and Israeli recognition of the "rights of the Palestinians." These positions were irreconcilable, all negotiation efforts failed, and the ensuing stalemate led straight to the October War.

-- The war changed the power relationships and the perceptions of Israel and the Arabs. Both recognized that there had to be movement toward a settlement. But they did not know how; the barrier of a generation of hatred and suspicion was too great to be broken down all at once and allow an overall settlement. We judged that the most practical approach was to proceed by a series of small steps, thereby building mutual confidence and demonstrating that



agreements, once made, could be respected. Israel was strongly in favor of this approach, preferring to set aside earlier diplomatic efforts based on Security Council Resolution 242 and discussions between the US and the USSR.

- The initial disengagement agreements with Egypt and Syria convinced the Arabs, as well, that the step-by-step approach was the best, and that the route to a settlement in the Middle East was through the United States rather than the USSR. There was also a substantial improvement in our bilateral relations with Arab states, while the USSR was losing ground. The immediate post-war pressures on Israel from the USSR, Western Europe and Japan disappeared.
- A certain degree of momentum was required to sustain this favorable situation, however. We had been in the closest possible contact with Israel since last July on how this could best be done and we agreed to their suggestions on tactics and timing. However, on two occasions Israel's judgment was that it could not afford to meet the minimal conditions needed for an agreement: first by Jordan prior to Rabat, and most recently by Egypt.
- It may be that Israel did not receive the quid pro quo it desired in the strict, legal terms of the agreement which Sadat was willing to accept. But the biggest quid pro quo was outside the agreement, namely enabling the United States and Israel to continue to control the negotiating process, keeping Soviet influence at a low level in the Middle East, and allowing Sadat and other Arab moderate leaders to dominate the radicals and continue to work for a peaceful settlement with recognition of Israel and its right to live in peace. Unfortunately, there was no agreement.
- We are now faced with a breakdown of the negotiations and probably an eventual resumption of hostilities unless further movement in some context becomes possible. The U.S. is prepared to go to Geneva, but retaining control of the talks or protecting Israel's interests, as we have been able to do thus far, is very problematical in that context. The Israelis themselves see the dangers of this. They have no wish to have the Soviets share in establishing the terms of their future survival. Yet there is no realistic alternative in view.



- We have a difficult period ahead. We are now in a period of intensive policy review, whose purpose is to examine how we can best protect our own several interests in the area, and to determine where and how to proceed diplomatically. Any ideas you have would be very much appreciated.

B. Vietnam

- The situation in South Vietnam is grim. The losses in the northern part of the country have badly shaken the confidence of the Army and of the population.
- For this reason, the battles now going on around Saigon are critical. A victory by the Government could give the South Vietnamese a breathing spell in which to rebuild the forces they evacuated from Danang and other areas, and restore much of their lost confidence. I have been greatly encouraged by the stand being made by the 18th Division at Xuan Loc (SWAN LOC). This division was attacked by three Communist divisions but has fought very well and held its ground.
- The best hope for the Vietnamese now seems to be for them to stiffen their defenses and try to achieve a new stalemate. From there, perhaps some real negotiations could develop. Additional military aid is essential to accomplish this. General Weyand pointed this out in his report to me. Without this aid, he does not believe they can survive, even in the short run.

