

**FOREIGN
RELATIONS
OF THE
UNITED
STATES**

1977–1980

VOLUME VIII

**ARAB-ISRAELI
DISPUTE,
JANUARY 1977–
AUGUST 1978**



**DEPARTMENT
OF
STATE**

Washington



Foreign Relations of the United States, 1977–1980

Volume VIII

Arab-Israeli Dispute, January 1977– August 1978

Editor Adam M. Howard
General Editor Adam M. Howard

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
OFFICE OF THE HISTORIAN
BUREAU OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

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About the Series

The *Foreign Relations of the United States* series presents the official documentary historical record of major foreign policy decisions and significant diplomatic activity of the United States Government. The Historian of the Department of State is charged with the responsibility for the preparation of the *Foreign Relations* series. The staff of the Office of the Historian, Bureau of Public Affairs, under the direction of the General Editor of the *Foreign Relations* series, plans, researches, compiles, and edits the volumes in the series. Secretary of State Frank B. Kellogg first promulgated official regulations codifying specific standards for the selection and editing of documents for the series on March 26, 1925. These regulations, with minor modifications, guided the series through 1991.

Public Law 102-138, the Foreign Relations Authorization Act, established a new statutory charter for the preparation of the series, which was signed by President George H.W. Bush on October 28, 1991. Section 198 of P.L. 102-138 added a new Title IV to the Department of State's Basic Authorities Act of 1956 (22 U.S.C. 4351, et seq.).

The statute requires that the *Foreign Relations* series be a thorough, accurate, and reliable record of major United States foreign policy decisions and significant United States diplomatic activity. The volumes of the series should include all records needed to provide comprehensive documentation of major foreign policy decisions and actions of the United States Government. The statute also confirms the editing principles established by Secretary Kellogg: the *Foreign Relations* series is guided by the principles of historical objectivity and accuracy; records should not be altered or deletions made without indicating in the published text that a deletion has been made; the published record should omit no facts that were of major importance in reaching a decision; and nothing should be omitted for the purposes of concealing a defect in policy. The statute also requires that the *Foreign Relations* series be published not more than 30 years after the events recorded. The editors are convinced that this volume meets all regulatory, statutory, and scholarly standards of selection and editing.

Sources for the Foreign Relations Series

The *Foreign Relations* statute requires that the published record in the *Foreign Relations* series include all records needed to provide comprehensive documentation of major U.S. foreign policy decisions and significant U.S. diplomatic activity. It further requires that government

agencies, departments, and other entities of the U.S. Government engaged in foreign policy formulation, execution, or support cooperate with the Department of State historians by providing full and complete access to records pertinent to foreign policy decisions and actions as well as providing copies of selected records. Most of the sources consulted in the preparation of this volume have been declassified and are available for review at the National Archives and Record Administration (Archives II), in College Park, Maryland.

The editors of the *Foreign Relations* series have complete access to all the retired records and papers of the Department of State: the central files of the Department; the special decentralized files ("lot files") of the Department at the bureau, office, and division levels; the files of the Department's Executive Secretariat, which contain the records of international conferences and high-level official visits, correspondence with foreign leaders by the President and Secretary of State, and the memoranda of conversations between the President and the Secretary of State and foreign officials; and the files of overseas diplomatic posts. All of the Department's central files for 1977–1981 are available in electronic or microfilm formats at Archives II, and may be accessed using the Access to Archival Databases (AAD) tool. Almost all of the Department's decentralized office files covering this period, which the National Archives deems worthy of permanent retention, have been transferred to or are in the process of being transferred from the Department's custody to Archives II.

Research for *Foreign Relations* volumes is undertaken through special access to restricted documents at the Jimmy Carter Presidential Library and other agencies. While all the material printed in this volume has been declassified, some of it is extracted from still-classified documents. The staff of the Carter Library is processing and declassifying many of the documents used in this volume, but they may not be available in their entirety at the time of publication. Presidential papers maintained and preserved at the Carter Library include some of the most significant foreign-affairs related documentation from White House offices, the Department of State, and other federal agencies including the National Security Council, the Central Intelligence Agency, the Department of Defense, and the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Editorial Methodology

Documents in this volume are presented chronologically according to Washington time. Memoranda of conversation are placed according to the time and date of the conversation, rather than the date the memorandum was drafted.

Editorial treatment of the documents published in the *Foreign Relations* series follows Office style guidelines, supplemented by guidance

from the General Editor and the Chief of the Declassification and Publishing Division. The documents are reproduced as exactly as possible, including marginalia or other notations, which are described in the footnotes. Texts are transcribed and printed according to accepted conventions for the publication of historical documents within the limitations of modern typography. A heading has been supplied by the editors for each document included in this volume. Spelling, capitalization, and punctuation are retained as found in the original text, except that obvious typographical errors are silently corrected. Other mistakes and omissions in documents are corrected by bracketed insertions: a correction is set in italic type; an addition in roman type. Words repeated in telegrams to avoid garbling or provide emphasis are silently corrected. Words and phrases underlined in the source text are printed in italics. Abbreviations and contractions are preserved as found in the original text, and a list of abbreviations is included in the front matter of each volume.

Bracketed insertions are also used to indicate omitted text that deals with an unrelated subject (in roman type) or that remains classified after declassification review (in italic type). The amount and, where possible, the nature of the material not declassified has been noted by indicating the number of lines or pages of text that were omitted. Entire documents withheld for declassification purposes have been accounted for and are listed with headings, source notes, and number of pages not declassified in their chronological place. All brackets that appear in the original text are so identified in footnotes. All ellipses are in the original documents.

The first footnote to each document indicates the source of the document, original classification, distribution, and drafting information. This note also provides the background of important documents and policies and indicates whether the President or his major policy advisers read the document.

Editorial notes and additional annotation summarized pertinent material not printed in the volume, indicate the location of additional documentary sources, provided references to important related documents printed in other volumes, describe key events, and provide summaries of and citations to public statements that supplement and elucidate the printed documents. Information derived from memoirs and other first-hand accounts has been used when appropriate to supplement or explicate the official record.

The numbers in the index refer to document numbers rather than to page numbers.

Advisory Committee on Historical Diplomatic Documentation

The Advisory Committee on Historical Diplomatic Documentation, established under the Foreign Relations statute, reviews records,

advises, and makes recommendations concerning the *Foreign Relations* series. The Advisory Committee monitors the overall compilation and editorial process of the series and advises on all aspects of the preparation and declassification of the series. The Advisory Committee does not necessarily review the contents of individual volumes in the series, but it makes recommendations on issues that come to its attention and reviews volumes as it deems necessary to fulfill its advisory and statutory obligations.

Declassification Review

The Office of Information Programs and Services, Bureau of Administration, conducted the declassification review for the Department of State of the documents published in this volume. The review was conducted in accordance with the standards set forth in Executive Order 13526 on Classified National Security Information and applicable laws.

The principle guiding declassification review is to release all information, subject only to the current requirements of national security as embodied in law and regulation. Declassification decisions entailed concurrence of the appropriate geographic and functional bureaus in the Department of State, other concerned agencies of the U.S. Government, and the appropriate foreign governments regarding specific documents of those governments. The declassification review of this volume, which began in 2010 and was completed in 2012, resulted in the decision to withhold 1 document in full, excise a paragraph or more in 1 document, and make minor excisions of less than a paragraph in 16 documents.

The Office of the Historian is confident, on the basis of the research conducted in preparing this volume and as a result of the declassification review process described above, that the documentation and editorial notes presented here provide a thorough, accurate, and reliable—given the limitations of space—record of the Carter administration's policy toward the Arab-Israeli dispute.

Adam M. Howard, Ph.D.
General Editor

Stephen P. Randolph, Ph.D.
The Historian

Bureau of Public Affairs
October, 2013

Preface

Structure and Scope of the Foreign Relations Series

This volume is part of a subseries of the *Foreign Relations* series that documents the most important issues in the foreign policy of the administration of Jimmy Carter. Two volumes in the subseries, *Foreign Relations, 1977–1980, volume VIII, Arab-Israeli Dispute, 1977–78* and *Foreign Relations, 1977–1980, volume IX, Arab-Israeli Dispute, 1978–80*, document U.S. foreign policy as it relates specifically to the Arab-Israeli dispute. This volume begins in January 1977 and documents the Carter administration's immediate efforts to find a comprehensive settlement between Israel and Egypt, Syria, Jordan, and Lebanon and to seek a resolution for the Palestinians living in the West Bank and Gaza. The volume narrows its focus to Egypt and Israel after Egyptian President Anwar Sadat's November 1977 visit to Jerusalem. Documentation in the rest of the volume focuses more closely on U.S. efforts to help secure a bilateral agreement between Egypt and Israel. The volume concludes in August 1978 with the White House announcement of a summit to be held at Camp David, Maryland in September 1978, where U.S. officials would work in seclusion with Egyptian and Israeli officials in an attempt to produce a bilateral agreement. *Foreign Relations, 1977–1980, volume IX, Arab-Israeli Dispute, 1978–80* documents the Camp David summit, the negotiations leading to the Egyptian-Israeli Peace Treaty in March 1979, and the follow up negotiations that continued between Egypt and Israel for the remainder of the Carter administration.

Focus of Research and Principles of Selection for Foreign Relations, 1977–1980, Volume VIII

The focus of this volume is the Carter administration's efforts to help negotiate settlements to the Arab-Israeli dispute. The first part of the volume documents the Carter administration's initiatives to reconvene the Geneva Conference, which was first established in December 1973 to find a comprehensive settlement to the Arab-Israeli dispute. After talks with the various parties stagnated and Sadat made his momentous visit to Jerusalem in November 1977, the administration came to view a bilateral negotiation between Egypt and Israel as the most realistic avenue to an eventual settlement. Accordingly, the period from December 1977 to August 1978 documents the ways in which the Carter administration worked to find a path to a bilateral

peace agreement that would also include limited self-rule for Palestinians living in the West Bank and Gaza.

President Carter prioritized a negotiated settlement between Israel and its Arab neighbors from the very start of his administration, and he played a central role in the negotiations rather than leaving the bulk of it to his secretary of state, national security adviser, or a special envoy. Accordingly, documents selected for this volume reflect this unprecedented presidential involvement in seeking a negotiated settlement to the Arab-Israeli dispute. Carter's prominent role is highlighted in the memoranda of conversation that feature his discussions with Israeli and Arab leaders. Through the record of these conversations, especially the verbatim versions, he and other leaders exhibited their distinctive negotiating styles as well as their personal rapport with each other.

In addition to Carter's memoranda of conversation, this volume includes documentation on many of Secretary of State Vance's meetings with Arab and Israeli leaders. Vance played a major role in laying the groundwork for Carter's Middle East policy. When memoranda of conversation of these meetings could not be found, summaries of these meetings in telegram form were printed. In some cases, where the summaries offered a unique perspective not provided by memoranda of conversation, the summary was printed in addition to the memoranda of conversation.

Another significant figure during these negotiations was National Security Adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski. Brzezinski supplied Carter with the National Security Council's (NSC) analysis and channeled intelligence, which is best seen in the various memoranda he sent to Carter. In several of these memoranda, Carter wrote extensive marginalia notes, which provide readers with important insight into Carter's thinking regarding the NSC's analysis and recommendations. Brzezinski also engaged in some conversations with Israeli and Arab leaders, as documented in this volume.

During the first half of 1978, Carter looked to Alfred Atherton, Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs since 1974, to serve as Ambassador-at-Large in an effort to break through the deadlocks between the Israelis and Egyptians. Atherton engaged in shuttle diplomacy during the first half of 1978, traveling between Israel and Egypt in an attempt to resolve specific issues relating to the negotiations such as an agreed Declaration of Principles. The more prominent of these meetings in March 1978 and July 1978 are documented primarily through summaries of the negotiations in telegram form.

Due to the important role domestic politics played during tense negotiations among American, Arab, and Israeli leaders, certain documents relating to the administration's contact with American supporters of Israel are printed. Additionally, with the increased role of

Congress in the years immediately following Watergate, some documents involving congressional contact with Arab and Israeli leaders have been printed.

Acknowledgments

The editor wishes to thank officials at the Jimmy Carter Library, especially Ceri McCarron, Brittany Parris, David Stanhope, and James Yancey. Thanks are also due to the Central Intelligence Agency for arranging access to the Carter Library materials scanned for the Remote Archive Capture project. The Historical Staff of the Central Intelligence Agency were accommodating in arranging full access to the files of the Central Intelligence Agency, and Sandy Meagher was helpful in providing access to Department of Defense materials. The editor also thanks the staff at the National Archives and Records Administration facility in College Park, Maryland, for their valuable assistance.

Adam M. Howard collected, selected, and edited the documentation for this volume under the supervision of Edward C. Keefer, then General Editor of the *Foreign Relations* series. The volume was reviewed by Kathleen B. Rasmussen, then Chief of the Asia and General Division. Erin F. Cozens and Rita Baker performed the copy and technical editing, and Kerry Hite coordinated the final declassification review under Carl Ashley, Chief of the Declassification Division. Do Mi Stauber Indexing Services prepared the index.

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Sources

Sources for Foreign Relations, 1977–1980, Volume VIII, Arab-Israeli Dispute

This is the first of two volumes in the *Foreign Relations* series documenting U.S. engagement in the Arab-Israeli dispute from 1977 to 1981. It focuses on Egyptian-Israeli negotiations over the return of the Sinai and attempts to define self-rule for the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza. Although events in Lebanon and engagement with Syria and Jordan receive coverage in this volume, the documents relating to the Egyptian-Israeli negotiations are more prominently featured due to their importance in establishing the first peace treaty between Israel and an Arab state. The purpose of this access guide is to inform the reader where to locate the most relevant material for the period from January 1977 to August 1978.

Research on this topic should begin at the Carter Library in Atlanta, Georgia. Because President Carter played such a prevalent and personal role in the negotiations, the White House drove policy relating to the Arab-Israeli dispute, and the records reflect this. The richest collection in the Carter Library for researchers is the Middle East File (Collection 25), located in the Records of the National Security Adviser files, Staff Material. The Middle East File provides the most comprehensive assortment of files relating to the administration's involvement in the Middle East with memoranda of conversation from meetings between Carter and Arab and Israeli leaders. Additionally, the collection contains memoranda from National Security Adviser Brzezinski to Carter, strategy papers, background papers on various issues of interest to the administration, and letters between Carter, Arab leaders, and Israeli leaders. Finally, there are also records within this file that include an overview of the major meetings and events that occurred during the administration's negotiations on the Arab-Israeli dispute. The NSC Institutional Files (Collection 132) contain the minutes of the Policy Review Committee and Special Coordination Committee meetings as well as the papers and memoranda related to those meetings. An alternative place to look for such documents is in the Records of the National Security Adviser files, Staff Material Office File (Collection 17), which helps to fill in the gaps that appear in the NSC Institutional Files. The Plains Files (Collection 128), which President Carter used to write his memoir *Keeping the Faith*, contain a variety of documentation on this subject, notably his letters to Begin and Sadat as well as handwritten notes from his meetings with both leaders. These handwritten notes

also include material relating to private discussions Carter held with Begin and Sadat that occurred after the official negotiations, and therefore do not appear in the memoranda of conversation covering those official meetings.

The Department of State Lot Files are the next richest resource for researchers to examine. These include the lot files for Secretary of State Cyrus Vance, Under Secretary Philip Habib, Deputy Secretary Warren Christopher, Assistant Secretary Alfred Atherton, and Ambassador Herman Eilts. These files can be laborious to work through since many of them are not well organized. Still, an examination of these resources offers researchers access to documents that are not necessarily available in the Carter Library. For example, Secretary Vance's memoranda of conversation are almost exclusively located in his lot file. Assistant Secretary Alfred Atherton's lot file contains a variety of documents related to his shuttles to the Middle East during the winter and spring of 1978.

The Department of Defense's records for this topic include memoranda of conversation between Secretary of Defense Harold Brown and Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin and Israeli Defense Minister Ezer Weizman. The records of the Secretary of Defense, his deputy, and his assistants are at the Washington National Records Center and contain some files that are also available in the National Security Adviser files at the Carter Library. No Central Intelligence Agency records were used in the volume; however many intelligence documents that reached the highest level are in the National Security Adviser files at the Jimmy Carter Presidential Library.

This documentation has been made available for use in the *Foreign Relations* series thanks to the consent of the agencies mentioned, the assistance of their staffs, and especially the cooperation and support of the National Archives and Records Administration.

Unpublished Sources

Department of State

Central Foreign Policy File. See National Archives and Records Administration below.

Lot Files. For other lot files already transferred to the National Archives and Records Administration at College Park, Maryland, Record Group 59, see National Archives and Records Administration below.

Lot 84D241 Records of Secretary Cyrus R. Vance

National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Maryland

Record Group 59, Files of the Department of State

Central Foreign Policy File

Jimmy Carter Presidential Library, Atlanta, Georgia

Brzezinski Donated Historical Material

Geographic File

Records of the Office of the National Security Adviser

Brzezinski Material

Brzezinski Office File

Country Chron File

Cables File

Country File

President's Correspondence with Foreign Leaders File

Subject File

Trip File

VIP Visit File

Staff Material

Chron File

Freedom of Information/Legal File

Middle East File

Trip/Visits File

Office File

Outside the System File

Subject File

National Security Council Files

NSC Institutional Files

Office of the Chief of Staff's File

Hamilton Jordan's Confidential Files

Plains File

President's Daily Diary

Washington National Records Center, Suitland, Maryland

RG330, Record of the Department of Defense

Published Sources

Brzezinski, Zbigniew. *Power and Principle: Memoirs of the National Security Adviser, 1977–1981*. New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1983.

Carter, Jimmy. *White House Diary*. New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 2010.
Chicago Tribune

The Los Angeles Times

The New York Times

Quandt, William B. *Camp David: Peacemaking and Politics*. Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, 1986.

United States. Department of State. *Department of State Bulletin*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1972–1977.

XVI Sources

United States. National Archives and Records Administration. *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Jimmy Carter, 1977, 1978*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1977, 1978.

Vance, Cyrus. *Hard Choices: Critical Years in America's Foreign Policy*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1983.

The Washington Post

Abbreviations and Terms

ADF, Arab Deterrent Force

AID, Agency for International Development

AIPAC, American-Israel Public Affairs Committee

Amb, Ambassador

AmEmbassy, American Embassy

AMOCO, American Oil Company

AMX-30, French-designed battle tank

APC, Armored Personnel Carrier

AWACS, Airborne Warning and Control Systems

C-130, U.S. military transport aircraft with four engines

C-141, U.S. strategic airlifter

CBU, Cluster Bomb Unit

CBU-71, U.S.-designed cluster bomb

Cherokee, a telegraphic distribution channel for the eyes only messages between the Secretary of State and an Ambassador

CIA, Central Intelligence Agency

CIP, Center for International Policy

Codel, Congressional delegation

conf, conference

DCM, Deputy Chief of Mission

Dept, Department

DIA, Defense Intelligence Agency

DMC, Democratic Movement for Change (Israeli political party)

DMZ, demilitarized zone

DOD, Department of Defense

EC, European Community

EUR, Bureau of European Affairs, Department of State

EUR/SOV, Office of Soviet Union Affairs, Bureau of European Affairs, Department of State

Exdis, exclusive distribution

F-4, U.S. long-range supersonic fighter jet

F-5E, U.S. light tactical fighter

F-15, U.S. all-weather tactical fighter

F-16, U.S. multi-role jet fighter

FBIS, Foreign Broadcast Information Service

FLN, *Front de Libération Nationale* (National Liberation Front)

FMS, Foreign Military Sales

FNU, first name unknown

FonMin, Foreign Minister

FY, Fiscal Year

FYI, for your information

XVIII Abbreviations and Terms

GA, General Assembly

GE, General Electric

GMT, Greenwich Mean Time

GOE, Government of Egypt

GOI, Government of Israel

GOL, Government of Lebanon

HIRC, House International Relations Committee

IDA, International Development Association

IDF, Israel Defense Force

IL-76, Soviet airlifter with four engines

ILMAC, Israel-Lebanon Military Armistice Commission

IMF, International Monetary Fund

INR, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Department of State

INR/RNA, Office of Research and Analysis for Near East and South Asia, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Department of State

JC, Jimmy Carter

JCS, Joint Chiefs of Staff

Limdis, limited distribution

ME, Middle East

memcon, memorandum of conversation

MEPC, Middle East Peace Conference

MFA, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

MIG, Soviet fighter aircraft

NAC, North Atlantic Council

NATO, North Atlantic Treaty Organization

NEA, Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, Department of State

NEA/EGY, Office of Egyptian Affairs, Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, Department of State

NEA/IAI, Office of Israel and Arab-Israel Affairs, Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, Department of State

NEA/UAR, Office of United Arab Republic Affairs, Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, Department of State

Niact, Needs Immediate Action

NIE, National Intelligence Estimate

Nodis, no distribution

Noform, No Foreign Dissemination

NRP, National Religious Party (Israel)

NSC, National Security Council

NSDM, National Security Decision Memorandum

O/A, on or about

OAU, Organization of African Unity

ODDI, Office of the Deputy Director of Intelligence, Central Intelligence Agency

OMB, Office of Management and Budget

OPEC, Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries

OSD, Office of the Secretary of Defense

PA, People's Assembly (Egypt)
PDRY, People's Democratic Republic of Yemen
PL, Public Law
PLO, Palestine Liberation Organization
PM, Prime Minister
PNC, Palestine National Council
PRC, Policy Review Committee
Pres, President
PriMin, Prime Minister
PRM, Presidential Review Memorandum

reftel, reference telegram
RG, Record Group

S, Secret; Secretariat of the Department of State
SA-7, Soviet-designed shoulder-launched surface-to-air missile
SAG, Saudi Arabian Government
SALT, Strategic Arms Limitation Talks
SAM, surface-to-air missile
SC, Security Council
SecDel, Secretary's delegation
SecGen, Secretary General
Secto, series indicator for telegrams from the Secretary of State or his delegation to the Department of State
septel, separate telegram
SFM, Sinai Field Mission
SI, Socialist International
Sov, Soviet
S/S, Executive Secretariat, Department of State
S/S-O, Deputy Duty Officer, Executive Secretariat, Department of State
SSA, Security Supporting Assistance

T-54, Soviet-designed battle tank
T-55, Soviet-designed battle tank
T-62, Soviet-designed battle tank
T-72, Soviet-designed battle tank
Tosec, series indicator for telegrams from the Department of State to the Secretary of State or his delegation
TOW, Tube-Launched Optically-Tracked Wire-to-Command Link
TS, Top Secret

UAE, United Arab Emirates
UK, United Kingdom
UN, United Nations
UNEF, United Nations Emergency Force
UNGA, United Nations General Assembly
UNIFIL, United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon
UNRWA, United Nations Relief and Works Agency
UNSC, United Nations Security Council
UNSYG, United Nations Secretary General
UNTSO, United Nations Truce Supervisory Organization
US, United States
USA, United States of America
USDel, United States Delegation

XX Abbreviations and Terms

USNATO, U.S. Mission to NATO

USSR, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

USUN, United States Mission at the United Nations

VIP, very important person

VP, Vice President

WH, White House

WJC, World Jewish Congress

Persons

Aaron, David L., Deputy Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs

Abbas, Mahmoud, founding member of Fatah and a Palestine Liberation Organization official

Abdullah bin Aziz al Saud, Prince of Saudi Arabia

Abu Iyad, Deputy Chief and Head of Intelligence, Palestine Liberation Organization

Adenauer, Konrad, Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany from 1949 until 1963

Adham, Kamal, adviser to King Faisal of Saudi Arabia; Chief of the Saudi Intelligence Secretariat

Alami, Musa, Palestinian nationalist and founder of the Arab Development Society in 1952

Allon, Yigal, Israeli Foreign Minister from June 1974 until June 1977

Arafat, Yassir, Chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organization's Central Committee
al-Assad, Hafez, President of Syria

Atherton, Alfred L., Jr. (Roy), Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs from April 1974 until April 1978; thereafter Ambassador at Large with responsibility for Middle East peace negotiations

Austin, J. Paul, Chief Executive Officer of Coca Cola Company from 1966

Ayub Khan, Mohammed, President of Pakistan from 1958 until 1969

Badran, Mudar, Jordanian Prime Minister from 1976

al-Bakr, Ahmed Hassan, President and Prime Minister of Iraq

Barak, Aharon, Israeli Attorney General from 1975 until 1978

Bar-On, Hanan, Minister of the Israeli Embassy in the United States

al-Baz, Osama, adviser to Egyptian President Sadat

Begin, Menachem, Israeli Prime Minister from June 21, 1977

Bellow, Saul, Nobel Prize-winning American author

Ben Gurion, David, Israeli Prime Minister from May 1948 until January 1954 and November 1955 until June 1963

Bingham, Jonathan Brewster, member, U.S. House of Representatives (D-New York)

Bin Shaker, Prince Zayd, Commander in Chief of Jordanian Armed Forces

Bitar, Salah ad-Din, Syrian Prime Minister from 1963 until 1966

Blumenthal, W. Michael, Secretary of the Treasury from January 1977 until August 4, 1979

Bolling, Landrum, Chief Executive Officer of the Council of Foundations; informal channel between the White House and the Department of State and top Palestinian leaders

Boumediene, Houari, President of Algeria from 1965 until 1978

Bourguiba, Habib, President of Tunisia

Boutros, Fuad, Lebanese Foreign Minister

Boutros Ghali, Boutros, Egyptian Foreign Minister from 1970

Bowie, Robert, Director, National Foreign Assessment Center, Central Intelligence Agency

Brandt, Willy, Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany from 1969 until 1974

Brezhnev, Leonid, General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union from 1964

Brown, George S., General, USAF, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff until June 20, 1978

Brown, Harold, Secretary of Defense

Brzezinski, Zbigniew, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs

Bunche, Ralph, Under Secretary General of the United Nations for Special Political Affairs from 1961 until 1971

Callaghan, James, British Prime Minister from April 5, 1976 until May 4, 1979

Carter, Hodding, III, Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs and Department of State Spokesman from March 1977 until June 1980

Carter, James E. (Jimmy), President of the United States

Case, Clifford P., II, Senator (R-New Jersey)

Ceausescu, Nicolae, President of Romania

Chamoun, Camille, President of Lebanon from 1952 until 1958; leader of the Lebanese National Liberal Party; chairman of the Lebanese Front from 1976 until 1978

Christopher, Warren M., Deputy Secretary of State from February 1977 until January 1981

Church, Frank, Senator (D-Idaho)

Clift, A. Denis, Assistant to the Vice President for National Security Affairs

Cooper, Richard N., Under Secretary of State for Economic Affairs from April 1977

Cronkite, Walter, CBS News journalist

Davies, Rodger P., Ambassador to Cyprus from May 1974 until his assassination in August 1974

Davis, Jeanne W., Director, National Security Council Secretariat, from 1970

Day, Arthur R., Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs

Day, Peter, member, National Security Council Staff

Dayan, Moshe, Israeli Defense Minister from June 1967 until June 1974; Foreign Minister from January 1977 until October 1979

De Gaulle, Charles, President of France from 1959 until 1969

Desai, Moraji, Indian Prime Minister from 1977

Dinitz, Simcha, Israeli Ambassador to the United States from 1973

Dobrynin, Anatoli F., Soviet Ambassador to the United States from 1962

Draper, Morris, Director, Office of Lebanon, Jordan, Syrian Arab Republic, and Iraq Affairs, Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs and South Asian Affairs, Department of State

Dulles, John Foster, Secretary of State from 1953 until 1959

Duncan, Charles W., Deputy Secretary of Defense from January 1977 until July 29, 1979

Eban, Abba, Israeli Foreign Minister from 1966 until 1974; Israeli Knesset member

Ehrlich, Simha, leader of the Israeli Liberal Party; Israeli Finance Minister and Deputy Prime Minister

Eilts, Hermann F., Ambassador to Egypt from March 1974

Eisenhower, Dwight D., President of the United States from 1953 until 1961

Eitan, Rafael, General, Chief of Staff of the Israeli Defense Force from 1978; Chief of the Israeli Northern Command from 1974 until 1977

Eizenstat, Stuart E., Executive Director, White House Domestic Policy Staff, and Assistant to the President for Domestic Affairs and Policy

Elaraby Nabil, Egyptian Deputy Representative to the United Nations from 1978 until 1981

Evron, Ephraim, Director-General of the Israeli Foreign Ministry

Fahd ibn Abd al-Aziz al Saud, Prince, Saudi First Deputy Prime Minister from 1975

Fahmy, Ismail, Egyptian Foreign Minister from 1973 until November 1977; also Deputy Prime Minister from April 1975

Faisal ibn Abd al-Aziz al Saud, King of Saudi Arabia from 1964 until 1975

Findley, Paul, member, U.S. House of Representatives (R-Illinois) from 1961
Fisher, Max, Special Adviser to President Ford
Ford, Gerald R., President of the United States from 1974 until 1977
Fulbright, J. William, Senator (D-Arkansas) until 1974; Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee until 1974

al-Gamasy, Mohammed Abdel Ghani, General, Egyptian Chief of Staff from 1973; Deputy Prime Minister from April 1975
Gazit, Shlomo, head of the Israeli Military Intelligence Directorate from 1974 until 1978
Genscher, Hans Dietrich, German Foreign Minister from May 17, 1974
Ghorbal, Ashraf, Egyptian Ambassador to the United States from 1973
Gilligan, John J., Administrator of the Agency for International Development
Giscard d'Estaing, Valery, President of France from 1974
Goldberg, Arthur J., Ambassador to the United Nations from 1965 until 1968
Goldmann, Nahum, President of the World Zionist Organization from 1956 until 1968; President of the World Jewish Congress from 1948 until 1977
Gromyko, Andrei A., Soviet Foreign Minister from February 1957
Gur, Mordechai, Lieutenant General, Chief of Staff of the Israeli Defense Force from 1974 until 1978

Habib, Philip C., Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs from June 1976 until April 1978

Haddad, Saad, General, founder of the South Lebanon Army

Haig, Alexander M. Jr., Brigadier General, USA, Deputy Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs from June 1970 until January 1973; White House Chief of Staff until September 1974; Supreme Allied Commander Europe from June 1974 until June 1979

Hamilton, Lee H., member, U.S. House of Representatives (D-Indiana); Chairman of the Subcommittee on the Middle East of the House International Relations Committee

Haslan, Charles L., General Counsel, Department of Commerce

el-Hassan, Khalid, member of Palestine Liberation Organization Executive Committee

Hassan II, King of Morocco from February 26, 1961

Hertzberg, Arthur, President of the American Jewish Congress from 1972 until 1978, Vice-President of the World Jewish Congress from 1975, and President of the American Jewish Policy Foundation from 1978

Hertzog, Chaim, Israeli Ambassador to the United Nations from 1975 until 1978

Hertzberg, Arthur, American rabbi, Judaic scholar, and Jewish activist

Humphrey, Hubert H., Senator (D-Minnesota) from January 1971 until January 1978

Hussein (Husayn) bin Talal, King of Jordan

Hussein al-Tikriti, Saddam, Vice Chairman of the Iraqi Revolutionary Command Council and Assistant Secretary-General of the Ba'ath Party

Hyland, William G., member, National Security Council Staff

al-Ibrahim, Hassan, Jordanian Foreign Minister

Jackson, Henry (Scoop), Senator (D-Washington)

Janka, Leslie A., Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Near East and South Asia Affairs

Jarring, Gunnar, Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary General for the Middle East peace process from November 1967

Javits, Jacob K., Senator (R-New York) from 1957 until 1981

Johnson, Lyndon B., President of the United States from 1963 until 1969

Jones, David C., General, USAF, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff from June 1978
Jordan, Hamilton, Assistant to the President from 1977 until 1979; White House Chief of Staff from August 1979 until June 1980

Kaddumi, Faruq, Palestine Liberation Organization Foreign Minister
Kamel, Mohammed Ibrahim, Egyptian Foreign Minister
Katz, Shmuel, Israeli historian and journalist
Katzir, Ephraim, President of Israel from 1973 until 1978
Kennedy, John F., President of the United States from 1961 until 1963
Kenyatta, Jomo, President of Kenya from 1964 until 1978
Khaddam, Abdul Halim, Syrian Foreign Minister
Khalid ibn Abd al-Aziz al-Saud, King of Saudi Arabia from March 1975
Khalidi, Walid, Palestinian historian and co-founder of the Institute for Palestinian Studies in 1963
Khoury, Victor, General, Staff Brigadier of the Lebanese Army from March 28, 1977
Kissinger, Henry A., Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs from January 1969 until November 1975; Secretary of State from September 1973 until January 1977
Klutznick, Philip, President of the World Jewish Congress from 1977
Knoche, Enno, Deputy Director of Central Intelligence from July 1976 until August 1977
Knowland, William F., Senator (R-California) from 1945 until 1959
Kollek, Teddy, Mayor of Jerusalem
Korn, David, Policy Planning Staff, Department of State
Kreisky, Bruno, Chancellor of Austria
Kreps, Juanita, Secretary of Commerce until October 31, 1979

Lake, W. Anthony, Director, Policy Planning Staff, Department of State
Lance, Thomas B. (Bert), Director of the Office of Management and the Budget from January until September 1977
Lewis, Samuel W., Ambassador to Israel
Lipshutz, Robert, White House Counsel
Luns, Joseph, NATO Secretary General from 1971

Mansour, Anis, Egyptian journalist and writer
Mayzar, Muhammad Abu, head of Fatah's Foreign Relations Department
McGiffert, David, Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs
Meguid, Abdel, Egyptian Representative to the United Nations
Mendes-France, Pierre, French Prime Minister from 1954 until 1955
Mengistu Haile Mariam, President of Ethiopia
Mobutu, Sese Seko, President of Zaire
Mondale, Walter S., Vice President of the United States
Moore, Frank, Assistant to the President for Congressional Liaison
Mubarak, Hosni, Vice President of Egypt from 1975
Murphy, Richard W., Ambassador to Syria from August 1974 until April 1978

Nasser, Gamal Abdel, President of Egypt from 1956 until 1970
Newsom, David, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs from April 1978
Nixon, Richard M., President of the United States from 1969 until 1974
Nooter, Robert H., Deputy Administrator of the Agency for International Development
Numeiri (Numayri), Mohammed al-Jafaar, President of Sudan

O'Neill, Thomas P. (Tip), member, U.S. House of Representatives (D-Massachusetts); Speaker of the House from January 1977
Owen, David, British Foreign Secretary

Parker, Richard, Ambassador to Lebanon from February 1977 until October 1978
Pelletreau, Robert H., Deputy Chief of Mission, U.S. Embassy in Damascus
Peres, Shimon, leader of the Israeli Labor Party; Defense Minister from June 1974 until June 1977; Acting Prime Minister from April 22 until June 21, 1977
Perez, Carlos Andres, President of Venezuela
Pickering, Thomas R., Ambassador to Jordan from February 1974 until July 1978
Podgorny, Nikolay V., Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Soviet Union from December 1965 until June 1977
Poran, Ephraim, Brigadier General, Military Secretary to Israeli Prime Minister Begin
Powell, Jody, White House Press Secretary
Proxmire, William, Senator (D-Wisconsin) from 1957

al-Qadhafi, Muammar, Chairman of the Libyan Revolutionary Command Council and Commander in Chief of the Libyan Armed Forces
Quandt, William B., member, National Security Council Staff for the Middle East and North Africa from January 1977 until August 1979

Rabin, Yitzhak, Israeli Prime Minister from June 1974 until April 1977
Ramsbotham, Sir Peter, British Ambassador to the United States until 1977
Riad, Mahmoud, Egyptian Foreign Minister until 1972; Secretary General of the Arab League from 1972 until 1979
Ribicoff, Abraham A., Senator (D-Connecticut)
Richardson, Elliot L., Under Secretary of State from January 1969 until January 1973
Rosenthal, Benjamin S., member, U.S. House of Representatives (D-New York) from 1961

al-Sadat, Anwar, President of Egypt from October 1970
Sanders, Ed, Adviser to President Carter for Jewish Affairs from July 1978
Sarkis, Elias, President of Lebanon
Saud Faisal ibn Abd al-Aziz, Prince, Saudi Deputy Minister of Petroleum and Mineral Resources and Foreign Minister after 1976
Saunders, Harold H., Director, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Department of State, from December 1975 until April 1978; Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs from April 1978 until January 1981
Sayeh, Hamid, Egyptian Minister of Economy and Economic Cooperation
Schechter, Jerrold, White House Press Officer and Associate Press Secretary from January 1977 until February 1980
Schindler, Alexander, President of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations from 1973; Chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations
Schlesinger, James R., Assistant to the President from 1977 until 1978; Secretary of Energy from August 1977 until August 1979
Scranton, William, Ambassador to the United Nations from March 1976 until January 1977
Seelye, Talcott, Ambassador to Syria from July 1978 until August 1981
Senghor, Leopold Sedar, President of Senegal
Sharaf, Abdul Hamid, Jordanian Chief of the Royal Court from 1976
Sharett, Moshe, Israeli Foreign Minister from 1948 until 1956
Sharon, Ariel (Arik), Israeli Agriculture Minister
Shastri, Lai Bahadur, Indian Prime Minister from 1964 until 1966

Siad Barre, Mohammed, President of Somalia

Sick, Gary, member, National Security Council Staff for the Middle East and North Africa

Sidqi, Aziz, Egyptian Prime Minister from January 1972 until March 1973

Siilasvuo, General Ensio, Chief Coordinator of the U.N. Peacekeeping Forces in the Middle East from 1975

Smith, Timothy, Deputy White House Appointments Secretary

Smith, Walter B., II, Director, Office of Israel and Arab-Israel Affairs, Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, Department of State

Smith, William Y., Lieutenant General, USAF, Assistant to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff from November 1975

Sober, Sidney, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs

Solarz, Stephen J., member, U.S. House of Representatives (D-New York)

Solomon, Anthony, Under Secretary of the Treasury for Monetary Affairs

Stern, Michael, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs

Stevens, Ted, Senator (R-Alaska)

Stevenson, Adlai E., Senator (D-Illinois)

Stone, Richard, Senator (D-Florida)

Sultan ibn Abd al-Aziz al Saud, Prince, Saudi Minister of Defense and Aviation

Suslov, Mikhail, member of the Soviet Politburo from 1952

Talal, Hassan bin, Crown Prince of Jordan

Tamir, Doron, Brigadier General, Chief Intelligence Officer of the Israeli Defense Force

Tarnoff, Peter, Executive Secretary of the Department of State and Special Assistant to Secretary Vance from April 1977

Tito, Josip Broz, President of Yugoslavia

Torrijos Herrera, Omar, Panamanian Chief of Government from October 1972 until October 1978; Commander of the Panamanian National Guard from October 1968 until August 1978

Truman, Harry S., President of the United States from 1945 until 1953

Tuhami (Tuhamy), Hassan, Egyptian Deputy Prime Minister and President Sadat's special envoy

Vance, Cyrus, Secretary of State from January 1977 until April 1980

Veliotis, Nicholas A., Deputy Assistant Secretary of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs from 1977 until 1978; Ambassador to Jordan from August 1978 until February 1981

Vine, Robert D., Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs

Waldheim, Kurt, United Nations Secretary General from 1972 until 1981

Weizman, Ezer, Israeli Defense Minister from June 1977

Weizmann, Chaim, President of Israel from 1949 until 1952

West, John C., Ambassador to Saudi Arabia from June 1977

Williams, Harrison A. (Pete), Senator (D-New Jersey) from 1959

Yadin, Yigael, Israeli Deputy Prime Minister

Zablocki, Clement, member, U.S. House of Representatives (D-Wisconsin)

Arab-Israeli Dispute, January 1977– August 1978

1. Presidential Review Memorandum/NSC 3¹

Washington, January 21, 1977

TO

The Vice President
The Secretary of State
The Secretary of Defense

ALSO

The Secretary of the Treasury
The United States Representative to the United Nations
The Director, Office of Management and Budget
The Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff
The Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT

Middle East

The President has directed that the Policy Review Committee, under the chairmanship of the Department of State, undertake an analysis of policy alternatives on the immediate short-term issues in the Middle East and on the broader question of an Arab-Israeli peace settlement.

Issues of immediate concern that should be specifically addressed include:

—*The Israeli request for an additional \$800 million in Security Assistance and Foreign Military Sales credits in FY 1978.* Alternatives for dealing with this request should be considered in light of the broad Arab-Israeli setting, the effect on the total Middle East aid package, and views of Congress.

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Subject File, Box 6, Boycott: 1/77. Secret.

—*Anti-boycott legislation.* The current legislative efforts to combat the Arab boycott² should be analyzed in terms of probable diplomatic and economic consequences, as well as the probable effect of this legislation on Arab boycott actions. Saudi Arabia's position on this issue should be assessed, with special attention to the Saudi role in current inter-Arab and OPEC discussions.

The study should also analyze the choices to be made over the next six months concerning peace negotiations in the Middle East. Positions to be taken in high-level consultations with European, Soviet, and Middle Eastern leaders should be considered. In particular, the following topics should be addressed:

—*Policy on the reconvening of the Geneva Conference.*³ Positions of the various parties should be reviewed, with an assessment of the prospects for serious negotiations beginning this year. Alternatives to Geneva should be explored.

—*Policy on the Palestinians.* Analyze the options for handling the question of Palestinian representation in the peace settlement process, including the question of U.S. contact with the Palestine Liberation Organization.⁴

—*Timing of any new initiative.* Considering the Israeli internal situation, inter-Arab politics, and Saudi restraint on oil prices, analyse the optimal timing for a new U.S. diplomatic initiative aimed at promoting a settlement.

The review should be no more than 20 pages in length. It should be submitted to the Policy Review Committee by January 31, 1977.

Zbigniew Brzezinski

² The Arab League declared a boycott on December 2, 1945, prohibiting trade between Arab countries and Israel. By 1948, this boycott had evolved into three components: a continuation of the primary boycott established in 1945, a boycott of any companies that operated in Israel, and a boycott of those companies that had relationships with companies that operated in Israel.

³ The Geneva Conference first convened on December 21, 1973, in Geneva, Switzerland under the co-chairmanship of the United States and Soviet Union. Foreign Ministers from Israel, Egypt, and Jordan attended the conference in an attempt to implement U.N. Resolution 338, which called for negotiations among Israel, Egypt, Jordan, and Syria "aimed at establishing a just and durable peace in the Middle East." Syria chose not to attend because the United States and Israel refused to recognize the PLO as the representative body for the Palestinians at the conference since the PLO refused to recognize Israel's right to exist. The Foreign Ministers left Geneva by December 29 with the stated intention to reconvene at a future date, but this never occurred. See *Foreign Relations, 1969–1976*, vol. XXV, Arab-Israeli Crisis and War, 1973, Document 415.

⁴ U.S. official policy precluded contact with the PLO based on the PLO's refusal to recognize Israel's right to exist. However, some contact had been made by the Nixon administration, most recently in March 1974. See *Foreign Relations, 1969–1976*, vol. XXVI, Arab-Israeli Dispute, 1974–1976, Document 30.

2. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, January 31, 1977, 2:30–3:00 p.m.

PARTICIPANTS

General Moshe Dayan
Simcha Dinitz, Ambassador of Israel
Zbigniew Brzezinski, National Security Affairs Adviser
William B. Quandt, NSC Staff

General Dayan congratulated Dr. Brzezinski on his appointment as National Security Affairs Adviser to the President. He stated that expectations were high that the new Administration would provide leadership. He then asked if the US had formulated its ideas on how to achieve peace in the Middle East. Dr. Brzezinski replied that he thought we would have a better idea after Secretary Vance's trip to the area. It did seem to him that there was an opportunity to make progress.

Dayan expressed the view that all of the countries in the area were more forthcoming now, but that one move cannot solve the problem. The problem is to bridge the large gap between what the Arabs want and what Israel wants. He did not feel that Israeli domestic politics would have much effect on the diplomatic process. The next government will not follow a very different policy. Israel will continue to offer some withdrawal in return for real peace.

Dr. Brzezinski asked him what lines he had in mind in a peace settlement. Dayan described a line from Sharm al-Shaykh to al-Arish as a possibility, with a buffer zone in between the forces. He admitted that his views concerning Golan were ambivalent. But on the West Bank he was certain that any attempt to divide the area, such as the Allon Plan,² would be worse than an effort to get Arabs and Israelis to live together in the area.

In Dayan's view, Israel need not formally annex Golan or Sharm al-Shaykh. He is not referring to final borders because he cannot now envisage a final peace. Israel in any case will not agree to remove all of its settlements in areas beyond the 1967 lines even for peace. Syria, he felt, would never make peace if Israel kept parts of Golan. Jordan, however, might accept Israeli settlements within their territory, at least on an interim basis. But peace is far off. Only an end to the state of war is

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Chron File, Box 130, Quandt: 1/77. Secret. The meeting took place in Brzezinski's office.

² The Allon Plan was conceived in July 1967 by Israeli Foreign Minister Yigal Allon. It called for a partition of the occupied territory between Israel and Jordan. Israel would maintain a row of fortified settlements along the Jordan River to provide a security buffer from future Arab attack while leaving the rest of the West Bank demilitarized.

now possible. Perhaps something could be done for the Arab refugees nonetheless.

Dayan stated that he takes the Arabs seriously when they say they are prepared to sign peace treaties with Israel. But Israel is not willing to pay the price that they are asking for peace. If he had to choose between Sharm al-Shaykh and peace, he would choose Sharm. Maybe after ten more years Israel can leave Sharm, but not before. He acknowledged that this placed Israel in an awkward position with respect to world and even US opinion.

Discussing the contingency of reaching agreement first on the shape of peace, then implementing it over a long period, Dayan asked how willing the US would be to guarantee such an agreement. He recalled the 1967 crisis as an example of how difficult it could be for the US to live up to its commitments.

Returning to the discussion of territory, Dayan emphasized that the only issue at Sharm al-Shaykh and on Golan was security. (He later added the settlements now on Golan.) But the West Bank is different. There non-security issues count. Israel has every right to be there. Any division of the area is unacceptable. Perhaps in ten or twenty years a formula for coexistence can be found. A West Bank-Gaza state is not a solution. On Golan, Dayan again stressed that he had opposed taking the Heights, but was now reluctant to abandon the settlements there.

In Dayan's view, if Israel were offered peace tied to full withdrawal, he would oppose peace. All that is now possible is non-belligerency and some further withdrawal in Sinai. Perhaps some arrangement could also be worked out with Jordan.

3. Minutes of a Policy Review Committee Meeting¹

Washington, February 4, 1977, 3:05–4:09 p.m.

SUBJECT

Middle East

PARTICIPANTS

The Vice President
A. Denis Clift

State:
Secretary Cyrus Vance
Alfred Atherton

Defense:
Secretary Harold Brown
Charles W. Duncan
Leslie A. Janka

Treasury:
Secretary Michael Blumenthal
Jerry Newman

Commerce:
Secretary Juanita Kreps
Charles L. Haslan

OMB:
Bert Lance
Ed Sanders

CIA:
Enno Knoche
David Blee

JCS:
Gen. George S. Brown
Lt. Gen. William Smith

NSC:
Dr. Zbigniew Brzezinski
David Aaron
William Quandt
Jeanne W. Davis

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

Aid to Israel

It was the consensus of the group that, on strictly military and assistance grounds, Option 1²—no increase over the Ford budget of \$1.5 billion assistance to Israel—would be justified. However, out of a desire to achieve a favorable political atmosphere for Secretary Vance's trip to the Middle East, we propose to explain to Ambassador Dinitz that, while we believe that \$1.5 billion (\$1 billion FMS, \$500 million SSA) is adequate, we will ask for an increase of \$285 million in FMS in the FY 78 budget to bring the total up to the FY 77 level. One billion would therefore be FMS and \$785 million SSA. Ambassador Dinitz will be told that we will expect Israeli support for this position and will be made to understand that the lack of such support could lead to a fall-

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Subject File, Box 66, Middle East: Peace Negotiations 1977 Volume I [IV]. Secret; Sensitive. The meeting took place in the White House Situation Room.

² An undated paper entitled "Response to Presidential Memorandum/NSC-3: Middle East" is in the Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Subject File, Box 77, PRM 3: Initial Middle East Interagency Review: 1–2/77.

back to the \$1.5 billion figure rather than to any increase over \$1.785 billion.

It was agreed that we should try to conclude our consultations with the Israelis on aid levels prior to Secretary Vance's trip and that OMB should attempt to delay the budget submission from February 18 to February 21.³

Anti-Boycott Legislation

On anti-boycott legislation,⁴ it was agreed that the Commerce and Treasury Departments would consult with key members of Congress to see if some adjustments to the implementing regulations for both the Tax Reform and the Export Control Acts⁵ might be sufficient to meet Congressional concerns and thereby avoid new anti-boycott legislation.⁶

If these consultations indicated a firm Congressional intent to proceed with new legislation, it was agreed that we should seek some changes in the "compromise bill" to modify its more troublesome aspects. At the same time, we should explore with the Arabs possible changes of their boycott enforcement practices to ease the burden on American firms. Secretary Vance might raise this during his trip to Saudi Arabia.⁷

Peace Negotiations

On the issue of peace negotiations, there was consensus on the urgency of an American initiative. It was agreed that Secretary Vance's trip should include discussions of substance as well as procedure, with the following general objectives:

- to seek to reach agreement on broad principles of a settlement first, followed by a staged process of implementation of specific agreements.
- to obtain a more explicit Arab definition of "peace."
- to separate the question of secure defense lines from that of final recognized borders.

³ Brzezinski sent the PRC meeting's Summary of Conclusions to Carter in an attached February 4 memorandum. In the margin next to the section "Aid to Israel," Carter wrote, "ok—Tie increase to cancellation of plane sale to Ecuador." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Subject File, Box 66, Middle East: Peace Negotiations 1977 Volume I [IV])

⁴ For background on the boycott, see footnote 2, Document 1.

⁵ The Export Administration Act, first enacted by Congress in 1949, created an extensive export control system for U.S. trade. The 1976 Tax Reform Act revised the U.S. tax code for individuals and companies.

⁶ On the Summary of Conclusions that he received from Brzezinski, Carter wrote, "Shapiro-Rockefeller memo is good" in the margin next to this paragraph.

⁷ In the margin next to this paragraph in the Summary of Conclusions, Carter wrote, "ok."

It was suggested and generally agreed that some form of pre-Geneva round of discussions would be desirable to clarify the long-term objectives of the parties and to get from them more precision as to their positions. It was also agreed that the Soviets should be kept informed of the progress of our conversations with the parties, but should not be involved in the substance of negotiations at this stage.⁸

(The meeting began in the absence of Secretary Kreps and OMB Director Vance)

Secretary Vance: Let's start with the security assistance item. We have four options:

- 1) \$1.5 billion: \$1 billion FMS and \$500 million SSA (no increase over the Ford budget)
- 2) \$1.785 billion: \$1 billion FMS and \$785 million SSA (increase of \$285 million economic assistance over Ford budget)
- 3) \$1.75 billion: \$1.25 billion FMS and \$500 million SSA (increase of \$250 million in FMS over Ford budget for Israel with proportionate increases in the Arab aid level totalling \$70 million)
- 4) \$2.285 billion: \$1.5 billion FMS and \$785 million SSA (increase of \$500 million FMS and \$285 million economic assistance over Ford budget for Israel and \$163 million in SSA for the Arab states)

Let's go around the table for your views.

Secretary Brown: In my view, Options 3 and 4 don't make sense. That's a path along which we don't want to go. Adding to our military sales wouldn't be credible on the Hill. It's your judgement, of course, but I think you would be savaged. The real options are 1 and 2.

Secretary Vance: I agree.

Secretary Brown: It's a matter of tactics. Option 1 is enough with regard to the military situation. Our estimate is that the Israelis can handle the situation with what they have until 1981. On non-political grounds Option 1 makes sense. However, if we start with Option 1, we might find ourselves with Options 3 or 4 once the Congress gets through with it. Option 1 allows you more negotiating room if you have to sweeten the pot for the Israelis in order to get them to do some things later on. Whether it is Option 1 or 2 depends on the domestic as well as the negotiating situation.

Dr. Brzezinski: I agree Option 1 makes the most sense, but Option 2 may be justified by the political situation plus other elements.

(OMB Director Lance arrived)

Mr. Knoche: It is our view that Israel has never been stronger militarily since 1973. Their margin is steadily growing as a result of the

⁸ At the conclusion of the final paragraph of the Summary of Conclusions, Carter wrote, "ok—My meetings with leaders can fulfill some need for first meetings."

cut-off of spare parts to the Arabs by the Soviet Union and the situation in Lebanon.⁹

Secretary Vance: Harold (Brown) says Option 1 from a military requirements standpoint but that the political aspects may drive us toward Option 2.

Gen. Brown: They can't justify any more money.

Secretary Brown: The difference between 1 and 2 is in economic assistance, but they can move the money around.

Secretary Blumenthal: If we pick Option 2, have there been any soundings on the Hill to see what the reaction would be?

Secretary Vance: They will stand still for Option 2 but not for 1. The funding must be at least at last year's level.

Secretary Blumenthal: So you would start with Option 1 or 2 in hopes of containing the Congress?

Secretary Vance: They would probably be satisfied with Option 2. From the international standpoint, if I can go the the Middle East with Option 2 it will be a plus with the Israelis and probably satisfactory to the Arabs. That puts the issue out of the way. I feel strongly Option 2 is the way to go. Roy?

Mr. Atherton: I favor Option 2 because it is not a change in signals. Any other course would be seen as a change in signals and would be disturbing.

(Secretary Kreps arrived)

Secretary Vance: Fritz? (Vice President Mondale)

Vice President Mondale: If we can get Option 2, based on some prior agreement with (Israel Ambassador) Dinitz, okay. But we've got to convince the Israelis that the fights on the Hill don't help them. We don't want the Israelis to get the idea that Option 2 is just where they start. We don't want the \$1.785 billion to be the beginning of a floor fight. If the Israelis say they want more and there is a floor fight, chances are that they will get more.

Mr. Lance: We would go for Option 1, of course, strictly from the funding standpoint, but we understand that there is a need to resolve the issue if it is not to have an adverse impact on Secretary Vance's trip. We can go along with Option 2 and have it settled.

⁹ In July 1972, President Sadat expelled Soviet military advisers from Egypt, and in March 1976, he abrogated Egypt's 1971 Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation with the Soviet Union. This led the Soviet Union to reduce the number of spare parts it provided Egypt's military. The situation in Lebanon refers to the civil war that had been continuing there since 1975. Documentation on the U.S. response to the Lebanese civil war is in *Foreign Relations*, 1969–1976, vol. XXVI, Arab-Israeli Dispute, 1974–1976.

Secretary Vance: We may have to turn the Israelis down on their desire to sell the Kfir aircraft to Ecuador.¹⁰ If we hit them on that, then hold them to the \$1.5 billion, we will have immense problems. They will suffer a loss of about \$300 million in foreign exchange.

Secretary Blumenthal: Where did the additional \$285 million figure come from? Is there anything in between?

Secretary Brown: It is essentially a shift from military sales to economic assistance. \$1.785 billion was last year's total.

Secretary Blumenthal: So it's the same as last year?

Secretary Vance: Yes.

Mr. Atherton: Congress actually appropriated a little less, but the figure is consistent with last year's.

Gen. Brown: We also have the XF-17 co-production problem.¹¹

Secretary Brown: I have two questions about Option 1. If Dinitz agrees, can we count on him? Can the Israelis control their supporters in the Congress?

Vice President Mondale: Absolutely not. No, that's too bald. If the Israeli Government is satisfied with Option 2 we can use that dramatically on the Hill. But we can't possibly do it if we begin at a higher figure.

Secretary Brown: We have to have them lined up long before the bill goes up.

Secretary Vance: I agree.

Secretary Brown: During the actual Middle East negotiations, you may have to offer some additional sweeteners—a security guarantee, additional assistance, etc. Would that be sufficiently distant so that we are sure we're talking about FY 1979? We might wind up with more in FY 1978.

Secretary Vance: We will make no change unless it is part of the negotiations.

Secretary Brown: Then the balance among the options would be different.

Mr. Knoche: We believe that Option 2 would not inflame the Arabs, but Option 3 would.

¹⁰ Israel Aerospace Industries produced the Kfir fighter jet during the 1970s. In early February, the Carter administration decided to block Israel's sale of 24 Kfir fighters to Ecuador because they were equipped with American jet engines. Additionally, the administration refused to supply cluster bombs to Israel, despite a previous Ford administration agreement to provide them. (Frances Ofner, "Syrian Pullback in Lebanon Aids Vance's Tour," *Christian Science Monitor*, February 14, 1977, p. 4)

¹¹ Northrop produced the design for the twin-engine XF-17 fighter aircraft during the 1970s, which ultimately evolved into the F/A-18 Hornet fighter aircraft.

Dr. Brzezinski: It might help for Dinitz to know that the consensus was for Option 1 but that, for reasons of the negotiations, we agreed to Option 2. Otherwise, he might interpret it as a starting point.

Secretary Vance: The Israelis have indicated to Roy (Atherton) that Option 2 would be acceptable with some change in the mix.

Secretary Brown: That's cosmetic. They can move the money around.

Mr. Knoche: It's the question of moving more to FMS that troubles the Arabs.

Secretary Brown: The Israelis can move internally.

Secretary Vance: So the consensus is that, apart from the political and the domestic considerations, we would favor Option 1. However, with all things taken together, we favor Option 2, provided the Israelis will not ask for more.

Dr. Brzezinski: "Provided" is too strong. We should indicate that we are willing to adjust our position to Option 2 in order to create a favorable atmosphere for your trip and for the negotiations, and we expect their support.

Secretary Vance: "Provided" means that they won't lobby against us.

Secretary Brown: We should make it clear that if they don't accept Option 2, we will move back to Option 1, not ahead to Option 3.

Secretary Vance: I agree.

Mr. Lance: How should we handle this in the budget?

Secretary Vance: We won't do anything now. I will have to talk to the President.

Mr. Lance: I understand that.

Secretary Vance: I will have a conversation with Dinitz to be sure he understands.

Secretary Brown: The budget normally goes up on the 18th?

Mr. Lance: Yes, but we can delay it to the 21st.

Secretary Vance: (to Mr. Lance) I'll come back to you after I talk with the President and depending on the outcome of my conversation with Dinitz.

Now let's look at the Arab boycott issue?

Dr. Brzezinski: Aren't you going to talk about the negotiations?

Secretary Vance: The negotiations will come last. The boycott discussion begins on Page 9 of the paper, and we have five options:

1) oppose any new anti-boycott legislation that goes beyond existing law or government regulation;

2) pose no objection to proposed Congressional action, which would mean early hearings and passage of the "compromise" bill;

3) go along with the “compromise” bill but seek to modify some of the more troublesome aspects;

4) try to delay action on any new legislation until the Administration has had an opportunity better to determine the possible consequences; this period of delay could be used to seek further pragmatic modifications of boycott enforcement by the Arabs and to try to agree on a simple short-term renewal of the Export Administration Act pending further review of the situation.

5) in conjunction with either Option 1 or 4, explore with the Arabs possible voluntary modification of boycott enforcement practices to ease the burden of the boycott on American firms.

Let’s go around the table.

Secretary Brown: I think opposing any new legislation is not sustainable politically and is wrong. But I see real dangers in raising no objection to the “compromise” bill. It raises real problems in our relations with the Arabs without doing the Israelis much good. My own view is that we should try to delay action if we can, while we work on Congress to see if we can change the “compromise” bill to take care of our political and economic interests with the Arabs.

Secretary Vance: You mean Option 4 coupled with 3?

Secretary Brown: Yes. It depends on your Middle East trip, of course.

Secretary Vance: Hearings are scheduled to start on February 28 before (Senator) Proxmire. I am appearing before (Congressman) Bingham’s House Committee on March 1.¹² Someone will have to be prepared to say something. The rest of you will be called too.

Secretary Blumenthal: I already have been. Our soundings on the Hill indicate that the reason for the pressures for additional legislation is that Congress is disappointed with what the Administration did in the implementing regulations. They want to be sure the intent of the Congress will be served. If we could have a little time, the Executive Branch could look at the implementing regulations. If we could strengthen them in such a way that the Arabs could still live with them, this might satisfy Congress. It’s worth trying. We could tell the Arabs that we have prevented additional legislation but have tinkered with the regulations.

Secretary Vance: Secretary Kreps?

Secretary Kreps: Mr. Haslan has been following this.

¹² Vance testified before a Senate Banking subcommittee on February 28 that the administration would support passage of a law barring U.S. companies from complying with the Arab boycott of Israel. On March 1, in testimony before the House International Relations Committee, he clarified that position, noting that the administration would support either new legislation or amendments to existing bills. (Bernard Gwertzman, “Carter Seeking Bill To Thwart Boycott,” *New York Times*, March 1, 1977, p. 1; “Vance Clarifies Policy on Antiboycott Bill,” *New York Times*, March 2, 1977, p. 7)

Mr. Haslan: It might be possible to do what Secretary Blumenthal has suggested. We can't simply oppose new legislation. We either have to strengthen our enforcement process or the Administration must create its own bill. It might be possible to delay the immediate hearings and to put together some acceptable legislation. We would suggest a combination of Options 4 and 5, plus a request for additional time from the Congress to create an Administration bill.

Secretary Vance: I understand that when the Export Administration Act expires we have to have some legislation.

Vice President Mondale: They can always pass an extender.

Secretary Vance: I think it has expired now.

Mr. Sanders: We can operate under the Trading with the Enemy Act.¹³

Vice President Mondale: But you would have to declare them an enemy.

Secretary Blumenthal: Congress might be willing to live with an extension of the Act if they believed the implementing regulations would be changed.

Secretary Vance: (to Mr. Haslan) On the possibility of a new bill, did I understand that you did not think it would take long to draft a new bill?

Mr. Haslan: It could be done in a fairly short time. But taking the initiative would argue for a delay in the hearings with regard to Secretary Vance's trip. We could show the Congress some elements of a new bill, but the Administration would have the initiative on timing and would have some control over what would go into the new legislation.

Secretary Vance: The House International Relations Committee told us that they expected that we would ask for more time in an attempt to stall, and that when we did, they would unload on us. We should, in good faith, do what we can. Blumenthal's suggestion makes sense.

Secretary Blumenthal: The present guidelines are related to the Tax Reform Act, not the Export Act.

Vice President Mondale: It's both—the Ribicoff amendment relates to the Tax Reform Act.

Secretary Blumenthal: I think the regulations regarding the Tax Reform Act are satisfactory.

Secretary Vance: To some, but not to (Congressmen) Rosenthal and Bingham or to (Senator) Proxmire. We should explore Mike's (Blumenthal) suggestion.

¹³ The Trading with the Enemy Act, first enacted by Congress in 1917, restricts trade with countries identified as hostile to the United States.

Mr. Knoche: With American policy moving toward the peace negotiations, if we made the situation clear to the Arabs, they will work with us [*less than 1 line not declassified*]

Dr. Brzezinski: As a matter of political reality, we may be sure that pressures for anti-boycott legislation will surface. We are morally committed; the President is on record.¹⁴ I think the best combination is Options 3 and 5. We should try to influence the substance of the bill and we should also deal with the Arabs, possibly on Cy's (Vance) trip, to get them to adjust their enforcement. This would be less destructive and less politically difficult. The Saudis are scared but cooperative. This might satisfy the political need while meeting our moral obligations.

Secretary Vance: I agree on the combination of Options 3 and 5, but Blumenthal's suggestion is not inconsistent with that approach.

Secretary Blumenthal: It is Option 5, plus. Let's explore first whether a review and some tightening of our regulations would be sufficiently satisfying to the Congress so that they would not press for legislation.

Dr. Brzezinski: My political judgement is that this is so much a matter of principle that the Congress won't back off.

Secretary Blumenthal: Our soundings indicate that they might. We have talked with (Senators) Stevenson and Ribicoff. Option 3 would be our fallback.

Dr. Brzezinski: There's no harm trying. My guess is that we will end with a combination of 3 and 5, but that's not a bad package.

Secretary Vance: I agree. I will talk to (Senators) Proxmire, Williams, (Congressmen) Rosenthal and Bingham. They are the strongest advocates of very tough legislation.

Dr. Brzezinski: You might also talk to Shapiro, the head of DuPont.¹⁵ He is the head of a committee on the subject.

Secretary Blumenthal: Since these are Treasury regulations, we'll take the soundings as to Option 4. If they're interested, fine. If not, we can go to the combination of 3 and 5.

Mr. Haslan: The Treasury regulations go only to the Ribicoff amendment. The main regulations are under Commerce Department coordination.

Secretary Blumenthal: Treasury and Commerce can make the soundings together to see what changes would satisfy the Congress, short of a new bill.

¹⁴ On October 19, Presidential nominee Jimmy Carter blamed "President Ford for the continued existence of the Arab boycott of companies doing business with Israel," and Carter vowed "to put an end to it if he is elected." (James T. Wooten, "Carter Vows To End Boycott of Israel," *New York Times*, October 20, 1976, p. 28)

¹⁵ Irving S. Shapiro served as Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of the DuPont Corporation from December 1973 to 1981.

Secretary Vance: Let me summarize: Commerce and Treasury will undertake some work on the Hill. Then, unless the results of their soundings indicate some modification, we will concert and recommend a course along the lines of Options 3 and 5.

Secretary Brown: Option 5 could boomerang. When you start dealing with the Arabs, they might be amenable in private, but it will be hard to keep it private. If it goes public, the Arabs would have no choice but to take an extremely intransigent position. If we think Option 5 would blow, we might be better to try Option 3 alone.

Secretary Vance: I'll have a better feel for it after my trip.

Now let's turn to the peace negotiations—page 18 of the paper. We see three phases of activity: 1) internal US consideration of the problem, focusing on the broad choices and objectives, preferably reaching some rough conclusions prior to my trip to the Middle East; 2) initial consultations with Middle East leaders, the Soviets, Waldheim and others, and eventually with the Congress; 3) active pursuit of whatever course of action the President has decided upon, including a comprehensive effort to obtain US public and Congressional understanding and support. Fritz (Vice President Mondale)?

Vice President Mondale: I knew it was a mistake to start this meeting without a prayer!

Secretary Blumenthal: I just don't know enough about it.

Gen. Brown: I know there is an urgent need to get on with it.

Mr. Lance: I agree.

Mr. Knoche: We have a little intelligence background that might be helpful. The Egyptians, Syrians and Saudi Arabians all want to appear to be constructive and are pressing the PLO to adopt a moderate position. This gives the PLO problems, and they haven't developed a position yet. If the Arabs and Palestinians can reach an accommodation, the Arabs will probably agree to go to Geneva without the PLO. We have completed a new intelligence estimate on Egypt¹⁶ which indicates that they are not likely to initiate hostilities during 1977. Sadat's position has seriously deteriorated, however, and he needs to take some move to recoup his prestige. His ties with the West are being questioned, and his speech yesterday was very hard hitting.¹⁷ The situation in Egypt is becoming critical and Sadat's future depends on what the US does. He

¹⁶ National Intelligence Estimate 36.1–1–77; Central Intelligence Agency, History Staff Files.

¹⁷ On February 3, Sadat made a speech denouncing riots that took place two weeks before over price increases for food and various consumer goods. He signed a decree outlawing various political actions, including demonstrations and strikes, and providing severe jail sentences for those who took part in such actions. (Bernard Gwertzman, "Vance Mission to the Mideast," *New York Times*, February 4, 1977, p. 6)

needs to be able to demonstrate the wisdom of tying himself to Washington. There are dangers in Sadat's own relationships with the military. Saudi Arabia is the real force behind the scenes, and they are moving toward Geneva. The Israel elections are May 17 and the situation there is fragile. They have only a limited understanding of what they want from resumed negotiations. We must resist pushing them too far, too fast. The Soviets are watching the situation carefully. They are anxious not to foreclose the possibility of their participation in Geneva where they can appear to be the Arab champion in Egypt and Syria.

Dr. Brzezinski: The options leave us with a limited choice. We have to move toward a more active role. We can't wait. I believe the situation is more propitious than it has been in the past 23 years. But I think we need to give the Israelis and the Arabs a more substantive sense of what is required. I think we should consider the possibility of something prior to a Geneva meeting. Possibly a pre-Geneva stage in which we would try to define the ranges of agreement with the Israelis and the Arabs, without the Soviets. Then Geneva could formalize these areas of agreement.

Secretary Vance: Are you talking about a formal meeting?

Dr. Brzezinski: An informal, collective process. It could be either bilateral or collective. I see three basic issues: 1) I think we should try for a settlement first, then enter a long process of implementation. This is the opposite of the Kissinger "step-by-step" approach¹⁸ toward an indeterminate future. We should take one big step toward a determined future, then implement it by small steps. 2) We need a more explicit definition by the Arabs of what they mean by "peace". We won't get it at Geneva with the Soviets and the Palestinians there. 3) We need to get across the notion of separating secure defense lines from recognized borders. Israel may need secure defense lines beyond recognized frontiers. If we go to Geneva before we have some agreement on these things, the Soviets will wreck it. So Cy's (Vance) mission is not just procedural, it is substantive as well.

Secretary Brown: I have one thing to add. There may be more urgency for formal action before September. The Vance trip recognizes that. We can't say when we might get to formal action, but Dr. Brzezinski's intermediate steps may enable us to wait longer before going to Geneva.

¹⁸ Under Kissinger's "step-by-step" approach, which lasted from January 1974 until September 1975, the United States passed on seeking a comprehensive peace settlement in the Middle East in favor of brokering two disengagement agreements between Israel and Egypt and one disengagement agreement between Israel and Syria. See *Foreign Relations*, 1969–1976, vol. XXVI, Arab-Israeli Dispute, 1974–1976.

Secretary Vance: I agree that the trip must be substantive. The key points need to be cleared up. But we also need greater clarity on procedural things. There are a lot of generalities on both sides. We should seek greater precision. It will be difficult but we should try. We should try to get a feel for the limits of give on either side.

Secretary Brown: Do we know where we want things to come out? We should.

Dr. Brzezinski: Right.

Secretary Vance: I agree.

Dr. Brzezinski: The Eban pull-out of the election is an interesting development.¹⁹ He is supporting Peres who is a peace candidate. This means Eban thinks Peres might win, and he might live up to an agreement, if pushed.

Secretary Vance: We need a tentative conclusion on where we think we want to come out.

Dr. Brzezinski: Don't give the impression we are trying to impose a blueprint on them. Let them develop some ideas on their own under Cy's (Vance) stimulation and encouragement.

Secretary Vance: I think the time is shorter than some others do. It will be very difficult to put off Geneva beyond September. We shouldn't go before we have a clear idea where the meeting will go, but there are so many things rattling around there that it would be disastrous to try to push it off. (to Mr. Knoche) I understand you may not share this view.

Mr. Knoche: I don't disagree.

Secretary Vance: (UN Secretary General) Waldheim will press very hard for Geneva. He will argue for a one-day meeting, which will establish a series of working groups and then break up. That's just not sensible. How do we deal with Waldheim? We may be pressed by the Arabs.

Mr. Knoche: We have a news report that the Israelis will tell Waldheim they won't attend a Geneva Conference with the PLO. They will tell Secretary Vance that the step-by-step process should continue and ask him to consider a US initiative to get it started again.

Secretary Brown: Does the Secretary General remember when he had a speech all ready and he couldn't give it because the parties were still squabbling about the seating?

¹⁹ Former Israeli Foreign Minister and Ambassador to the United States Abba Eban challenged Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin for the Labor Party nomination as Prime Minister in early 1977. Eban withdrew himself from consideration on February 3 and backed Defense Minister Shimon Peres instead for the May 17 election. ("Eban Drops Out of Israeli Race," *Washington Post*, February 3, 1977, p. A16)

Mr. Atherton: And that was without the Palestinians even being there. It was a question of who sat next to the Israelis.

Secretary Vance: He remembers, but he plans to try for an early ceremonial meeting. I have urged him not to take a firm position until both our trips are completed. He is meeting with the President on February 25²⁰ and he has agreed nothing will happen immediately after that. Maybe as a result of the trips we can convince the Arabs not to press for a meeting until we know where we're going. They tell Roy (Atherton) and me one thing, but the situation in the capitals may be different.

Mr. Atherton: They may press for a UN Security Council meeting. The trick of your trip is to avoid getting locked into a time-table but to do enough to convince the Arabs that we are not just giving them the run around and stalling for time. We must bend our efforts to reconvene Geneva in the latter part of the year, but we must convince them we are doing more than talking about talking about talking.

Secretary Vance: We have to have a better feel for the substance of their positions.

Mr. Atherton: I agree.

Dr. Brzezinski: The Waldheim trip may be a tactical advantage for you. He will talk loudly about Geneva, which will scare the Israelis and make the Arabs happy. You come along and talk substance. You can tell the Arabs we are not ready for Geneva, but how about a serious meeting before Geneva. To the Israelis, you should show concern about a Geneva meeting and the Soviet role therein but say that Waldheim is pushing it. We would prefer to have a preparatory meeting to deal with substance. You can use Waldheim as a nuisance-maker and possibly get something from both sides.

Vice President Mondale: We might be able to make use of (German Foreign Minister) Genscher's forthcoming trip to the Middle East. The French Foreign Minister is going too.²¹

Secretary Vance: Maybe the latter is not going.

Vice President Mondale: You are aware of our efforts to keep the European Community countries from saying something, and they were cooperative. But the price of that effort may be to bring in the Europeans as much as we prudently can. We might tell Genscher what we are looking for; he might be able to help.

Secretary Vance: The British have suggested informally that they would like to have me stop off in London on my way back since the

²⁰ Carter met with Secretary General Waldheim on February 25 from 11:30 a.m. to noon. (Carter Library, Presidential Materials, President's Daily Diary)

²¹ Louis de Guiringaud served as French Foreign Minister from August 27, 1976 to November 29, 1978.

British are in the chair in the EC. I have told them it just wasn't possible but that I will get in touch with (Ambassador) Ramsbotham on my return. He can convey our views. The idea is a good one if we can think of something constructive to give Genscher.

Vice President Mondale: I think he would be pleased to help us if he could.

Secretary Vance: Let's talk about Soviet participation: to what extent and at what time? Are there differing views on this? Fritz (Vice President Mondale)?

Vice President Mondale: I'd like to ask Mr. Knoche if he has any evidence which could lead us to believe that the Russians might play a constructive role at Geneva.

Mr. Knoche: No. They will build their strategy on the Arab position.

Vice President Mondale: That means they will join with the most militant. The Arabs always ask the Russians what their position will be and they never tell them. They will just stir up the rhetoric.

Secretary Vance: I have asked Dobrynin what their views are and he was very general. I said I would inform them of the results of my trip. He was appreciative and said this information would be helpful in their position as co-chairman of the Geneva Conference. He didn't press me. He suggested I stop in Geneva to initial a treaty in another area, which was just a ploy to try to link my trip to Geneva. I said it was impossible and he didn't press.

Secretary Brown: What incentive would there be for the Russians to be constructive at Geneva. Could we find one?

Secretary Vance: If there is a conflict, they are worried about confrontation.

Secretary Blumenthal: Is there any reason to feel that the parties could come to a settlement without the cooperation of the Soviets?

Secretary Vance: No.

Secretary Blumenthal: Many Arabs want a settlement. Could we try to find a way to get the Russians to assist?

Dr. Brzezinski: The issue is not whether or not to leave them out; the issue is when to bring them in. For the first time in 23 years, the Arabs are not trying to play off the US and the USSR. There is merit in focusing first on a substantive discussion without the Russians. But in the final play, the Russians should participate and, indeed, should be guarantors of a settlement.

Secretary Blumenthal: Is there some way to associate them with the first phase?

Dr. Brzezinski: They should be kept informed.

Secretary Vance: Yes; I can brief them after the trip as co-chairman of the Geneva Conference. They were very appreciative of our reference to them as co-chairman.

Dr. Brzezinski: You could meet with Gromyko.

Secretary Vance: Yes. They said if a settlement was reached, they would be prepared to be a guarantor, either with the US or with the US and others.

How about the PLO? Any new ideas?

Dr. Brzezinski: If there are semi-formal initial talks, the PLO problem becomes easier.

Secretary Vance: I have to convince the Arabs that they must come off their position that they won't recognize the State of Israel—that there won't be a Geneva conference without it.

Mr. Knoche: [*less than 1 line not declassified*] report that Arafat would settle for the West Bank and Gaza,²² but he can't say so publicly. The movement is so fragmented that Arafat can't prevail.

Secretary Brown: Unfortunately we can't use [*less than 1 line not declassified*] as a substitute for a public statement.

²² See Document 5.

4. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, February 5, 1977

SUBJECT

Peace Prospects in the Middle East

PARTICIPANTS

Israel

Mr. Moshe Dayan, Knesset Member and former Defense Minister
Ambassador Dinitz

U.S.

The Secretary
Assistant Secretary Atherton
Mr. Walter B. Smith II, Director, NEA/IAI (notetaker)

¹ Source: Department of State, Office of the Secretariat Staff, Records of Cyrus Vance, Secretary of State, 1977–1980, Lot 84D241, Box 10, Vance Exdis Memcons, 1977. Secret; Exdis. Drafted by Walter B. Smith (NEA) and approved in S. The meeting took place at the Department of State.

The Secretary said he was looking forward to his approaching visit to Israel.

Ambassador Dinitz observed the Israelis were also looking forward to it.

The Secretary explained he was trying to educate himself on the Arab-Israeli problem. He asked Mr. Dayan to explain the situation as he saw it from the standpoint of Israel. Mr. Dayan said that, being out of the government, he did not know the official viewpoint well. From his own standpoint Mr. Dayan said he was very optimistic. He was more optimistic than anyone else he knew in Israel. It was the prospect of not having another war that led Mr. Dayan to be optimistic. Sadat was genuinely heading for peace—perhaps not a peace agreement, but a peaceful situation. The same was true in the case of Jordan, which had stayed out of the 1973 war completely. It also was true of the Palestinians. When in the 1973 war Israeli trucks had to be taken from the West Bank and sent to the fronts, not one nail was laid on the roads in their path. Fighting between Israel and Jordan would have been at the expense of the Palestinians, as would another war.

Mr. Dayan said the Arabs wanted to see realities established. The Egyptians had reopened the Suez Canal and had repopulated the cities there.² The Palestinians were also interested in realities. Most Palestinian refugees living in Gaza would prefer to leave the camps and put their personal funds into building their own housing. Given the opportunity to do this, they would pay no attention to the PLO policy about waiting in camps to return to Israel proper. The refugees were interested in owning their own houses, TV's, and refrigerators.

Mr. Dayan continued that if he were asked what could be done, he would point to the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, Jordan, and Gaza. Jordan wanted to settle its refugees, who in any case were Jordanian citizens and therefore could obtain work. By definition, a refugee was a person living in a camp and having no papers and therefore no work. If the refugees in Jordan could be given decent accommodations, they would be like all the other Jordanians. If U.S. or other international funds could be made available to Hussein, not to force the refugees out of the camps but to offer help to them, the refugee problem would be largely solved. Neither Jordan nor Israel wanted a Palestinian state. The Palestinians of Jordan were all the same family. If the 1948 refugees from Israel proper who were living in Jericho until they fled to East Jordan in the 1967 war could settle with normal lives inside Jordan, there would be one large family living in both East Jordan and on the

² Egypt reopened the Suez Canal on June 5, 1975, after Nasser closed it in June 1967 after the 1967 Arab-Israeli War.

West Bank, and everyone would see that a division of the West Bank from Jordan would be undesirable.

The Secretary asked for Mr. Dayan's estimate of the strength of the PLO and its leadership. Mr. Dayan said the PLO was ideologically strong. If one asked West Bankers and Gazans who their leader was they would say Arafat, not King Hussein. But if one asked the West Bankers to give back their Jordanian citizenship, they would refuse. If an Arafat government were established, and if all the world recognized it, enabling the bearer of an Arafat passport to travel anywhere, the West Bankers still would not surrender their Jordanian passports. Thus, despite Arafat's strength as a leader, the reply of the West Bankers was different on practical matters.

Mr. Dayan said that the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza also did not want involvement in terrorism. Perhaps Arafat too now saw that terrorism got him nowhere. There was very little support in the occupied territories for PLO terrorism.

The Secretary asked Mr. Dayan how strong the radical wing of the PLO was. Mr. Dayan observed that everyone among the young liked to speak in radical terms, even in the U.S. But the new West Bank mayors, despite their radical credentials, went to Amman and kissed the King's hand. Mr. Dayan would not say that the mayors were more common than their predecessors, but they were less tied to family tradition. They were part of a new generation over which the grandfathers did not rule. Nevertheless, their way of life remained conservative.

The Secretary asked if Mr. Dayan saw the Saudis as more active politically than in the past. Mr. Dayan replied the Saudis were supporting Hussein and other moderates. They were striving for goals by political rather than military means. They were close to the U.S. and had a distaste for the USSR, and they saw a better chance to get back occupied territory by U.S. pressure than through Egyptian soldiers who needed Soviet guns.

The Secretary asked for Mr. Dayan's appraisal of Syria. Mr. Dayan replied by asking if President Asad would actually come to Washington to meet with the President. The Secretary said he did not know. Mr. Dayan commented that Asad had been doing especially well. In the Lebanese civil war Asad entered into a dispute with the Palestinians, the Egyptians, and the Soviets, but he brought about an end to the war, induced the Palestinians to accept his terms, befriended Jordan, and left Egypt with no choice but to accept the situation. The Soviets were left with nothing, while Syrian prestige rose in Lebanon. Asad was now in a good position. Mr. Atherton noted Asad had set a record for durability as a Syrian leader, having been in office since 1970.

The Secretary asked Mr. Dayan what possibilities he saw from his standpoint for a meeting of the Geneva type in 1977.

Mr. Dayan said that when Israelis spoke of Geneva, they did not necessarily mean a geographic location. Geneva was the place where Israel signed documents. Negotiations were needed beforehand. The Secretary agreed, pointing out that the U.S. had repeatedly called for adequate preparation before a reconvening of Geneva. But it was important that we came to grips with a Middle East settlement this year.

Mr. Dayan agreed emphatically. He added that he could not agree that real forward movement would be possible without the Soviets. He could not see Syria or Egypt moving without the involvement of the USSR. The Soviets could torpedo peace progress, for example, through the PLO. If the Soviets saw the U.S. and Israel moving without the Palestinians, they would want to torpedo it.

Mr. Dayan said he had completely disagreed in 1973 with former Secretary Kissinger on the Soviet aspect. Mr. Dayan had thought the Soviet idea of having Soviet troops included in the UN forces was a good one. The USSR in the past had said it would guarantee Israel's security only after total withdrawal. Israel and Egypt would not have dared violate a line close to the Canal if Soviet forces had been guarding it. Mr. Dayan did not know what international guarantees would mean without the inclusion of symbolic forces from the two super powers.

Mr. Dayan expressed the opinion there should be an attempt to launch negotiations immediately after the Israeli election. If the U.S. tried to push the Soviets out, it would not get far with Syria and there would be new problems in the area daily, for example with the PLO. The Secretary recalled that he and Mr. Dayan had discussed this question before Christmas in New York. The Secretary agreed there could be no real progress without the Soviets, who could throw spanners in the wheels if they were not included. Mr. Dayan said the U.S. could find out with Syria how essential the Soviets were.

The Secretary asked what Mr. Dayan thought the shape of a possible settlement would be, assuming that negotiations were started this year. Mr. Dayan replied he did not think the future of Jerusalem would be a problem. King Hussein did not want the city divided and did not want to push out the Jewish population. Hussein envisaged an open city with freedom of movement and the shrines under the control of the respective religions. If one set aside the issue of sovereignty and addressed the practical question of how Jordan foresaw the relationship between the Jewish and Arab populations in Jerusalem, one would find the Jordanian concept not far from the existing situation today. Hussein, of course, felt there should be a change in sovereignty.

Mr. Dayan did not believe that Israel and the Arabs could move to a final peace settlement in one step. Solving the issues of a refugee settlement and borders would take time. As for what would be practical

now, Mr. Dayan was of the opinion that Israel might withdraw to the last 30 or 40 kilometers in Sinai, with the creation of a buffer zone under UN supervision and limited forces zones. With Syria, Israel should not withdraw from the Golan Heights but should agree to some changes there provided Syria ended the state of war and settled the 60,000 refugees from the 1967 war. If Syria developed a plan to settle Kuneitra³ with civilians, not soldiers, and agreed to UN forces in a buffer zone, Israel should pull back its troops from Kuneitra.

As for the West Bank, Mr. Dayan said he knew of no better plan than his own. He had told Allon to go ahead and try the Allon Plan⁴ but had expressed doubt that the Arabs would accept it. The West Bank now was too interlinked with Israel. The West Bank had no industry and its workers would want continued employment. Also, Jerusalem was closely linked with Ramallah and Bethlehem. One of the mayors of the latter two towns had told Mr. Dayan that Israel should not let these links be cut. Mr. Dayan saw nothing constructive to be gained from cutting the ties between Israel and the West Bank and felt that they should remain together with free movement between them.

Mr. Dayan said no Government of Israel would accept total withdrawal even if the Arabs said they were ready to sign peace treaties. Total withdrawal today would be too fast. What was feasible was something in between: a major withdrawal in Sinai, a little withdrawal on the Golan, and arrangements for asking the Palestinians in the territories what they wanted for their future without a removal of the Israelis there. Whatever Israel might suggest at this point in negotiations, the Arab side would not accept, and similarly, the Arab side would propose total withdrawal which Israel could not accept.

Turning to Gaza, Mr. Dayan said not everyone realized that King Hussein did not want to give Jordanian citizenship to the inhabitants of Gaza. Thus, they were a group with no papers. Right now they had employment in Israel and were content. One could not leave these people with no citizenship. If they were cut off from Israel they would have no employment.

The Secretary asked whether Mr. Dayan thought it would be possible to have an ultimate settlement that would be reached in phases. Mr. Dayan did not feel that the final destination could be agreed upon now. What Israel and the Arabs could agree on was that the kind of set-

³ Kuneitra, a Syrian town located close to the border with Israel, suffered extensive damage during the 1967 and 1973 Arab-Israeli Wars and became a focal point during the disengagement negotiations between Israel and Syria in May 1974. See a map of Kuneitra in *Foreign Relations, 1969–1976*, vol. XXVI, Arab-Israeli Dispute, 1974–1976, Appendix B, Map 3.

⁴ See footnote 2, Document 2.

tlement that could be reached now would not be the final one. But implementation in stages would not be workable.

The Secretary asked why Mr. Dayan saw this as impractical. Mr. Dayan replied that if Sadat died and another Nasser came to power in Egypt, there was a serious question whether he would be committed to the remaining stages. Also, when Israel approached President Johnson in 1967 concerning freedom of navigation, which had been promised in 1957 by Secretary Dulles,⁵ Johnson replied that he could not be committed by Dulles' words 10 years earlier. Mr. Dayan in light of Vietnam was even more hesitant about U.S. assurances. Secretary Kissinger received the Nobel Peace Prize, having put pressure on South Vietnam. When North Vietnam subsequently attacked, the U.S. said it was not a U.S. problem. The U.S. might tell Israel to withdraw from the Golan and Syria might then occupy Galilee. If there were no U.S. soldiers, Israel would have to take care of its security on its own. Israel could contemplate further steps toward peace only after having acquired confidence from a period of time of living with the Arabs.

The Secretary asked if Mr. Dayan would feel differently in the event of formal guarantees. Mr. Dayan replied affirmatively, adding that no one should underestimate the importance of formal guarantees, especially where security was concerned. Nevertheless, the U.S. Sinai Field Mission⁶ was to be pulled out immediately in the event of war between Egypt and Israel. Mr. Dayan believed it would be difficult for the U.S. to make a commitment binding for any President, for example, to fight to keep open the Strait of Tiran.

The Secretary asked what else Israel needed beyond peace treaties in terms of economic and other relations with the neighboring countries. Mr. Dayan replied that Israel needed to see realities being created on the ground. In his opinion, Egypt's actions in reopening the Canal and repopulating the cities there were much more important than a piece of paper.

Jordan's decision to stay out of the 1973 war was similar. Israel would have had to disrupt the peaceful life of the West Bank to fight Jordan. The way Arabs and Jews had learned to live together in Jeru-

⁵ Three months after the 1956 Suez Crisis, the U.S. Government promised Israel, in the form of an aide-mémoire, a guarantee of freedom of navigation in the Gulf of Aqaba and the Straits of Tiran if Israel removed its forces from the Sinai and Gaza Strip. See *Foreign Relations*, 1955–1957, vol. XVII, Arab-Israeli Dispute, 1957, Document 78.

⁶ The U.S. Sinai Support Mission supported Egyptian and Israeli surveillance stations in the Sinai Peninsula with U.S. civilian personnel operating three watch stations. It began operation in January 1976 after Israel and Egypt agreed to its creation as part of the second disengagement agreement between Israel and Egypt. See *Foreign Relations*, 1969–1976, vol. XXVI, Arab-Israeli Dispute, 1974–1976, Documents 226 and 238.

saalem was a wonderful example. Their relationship was much better than it had been under the British mandate.

Mr. Dayan said Israel would examine each proposed arrangement in the light of what it would mean on the ground. The other important thing from Israel's viewpoint would be to solve the problem of the refugees. As long as they were in camps there could be no peaceful solution, as human beings were involved. The refugees were saying the same thing that the Jews used to say: they want to go back home. The answer was to see them settled.

5. Memorandum From Acting Director of Central Intelligence Knoche to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski)¹

Washington, February 8, 1977

SUBJECT

Interest of PLO Chairman Yasir 'Arafat in Establishing a Dialogue with the United States Government

1. The following information was obtained on 2 February 1977 [*1½ lines not declassified*] Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) Chairman Yasir 'Arafat is seeking ways of establishing a dialogue with United States Government officials but is uncertain about how to accomplish this. On [*less than 1 line not declassified*] January 1977, 'Arafat discussed the problem in Beirut [*6 lines not declassified*] 'Arafat expressed interest in having [*name not declassified*] contact you to discuss ways in which a dialogue could be established. 'Arafat indicated that the idea for a dialogue originated with Egyptian President Anwar Al-Sadat.

2. This information is also being provided to the Secretary of State, The Honorable Cyrus R. Vance. No other dissemination is being made.

E. H. Knoche

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Chron File, Box 130, Quandt: 2/4-9/77. Secret; Sensitive.

6. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Jerusalem, February 16, 1977, 10:30 a.m.–12:20 p.m.

PARTICIPANTS

Foreign Minister Allon
MFA Director General Avineri
Deputy Director General Evron
Ambassador Dinitz
Moshe Raviv, Director, North American Desk
Mr. Hassin, Political Advisor to the Foreign Minister
Yehoshua Raviv

The Secretary
Mr. Habib
Mr. Atherton
Mr. Saunders
Mr. Carter
Mr. Lake
Mr. Quandt
Mr. Dunnigan
Mr. Crump
Mr. McKune

Foreign Minister Allon repeated the welcome he had expressed earlier in his private meeting with the Secretary.² He was glad the Secretary could come to Israel shortly after entering on duty. The Secretary will soon find how difficult his new job can be and will find that sometimes the Israelis are part of that difficulty.

The Foreign Minister expressed his thanks for the excellent work done by the United States on the Nabatiya question.³ To Israel this

¹ Source: Department of State, Office of the Secretariat Staff, Records of Cyrus Vance, Secretary of State, 1977–1980, Lot 84D241, Box 10, Vance Nodis Memcons 1977. No classification marking. Approved in S. The meeting took place in Allon's office in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The memorandum of conversation contains a number of handwritten revisions. Vance arrived in Jerusalem the evening of February 15, then traveled to Cairo, Beirut, Amman, Riyadh, and Damascus before returning to the United States on February 21.

² No record of this private meeting has been found.

³ In late January 1977, approximately 500 to 1,000 Syrian soldiers entered the South Lebanese town of Nabatiyah, roughly 7 miles from Israel's northern border. These forces, a contingent of a larger Arab peacekeeping force sent to Lebanon to maintain the peace after the Lebanese civil war, sought to disarm the various factions fighting in the area. The Syrians' presence close to Israel's "red line," an area Israel described as being south of the Litani River, raised alarm in the Israeli Government. Israel asked the United States to inform the Syrians that they were operating too close to the Israeli border and needed to vacate the area immediately after disarming the Palestinian groups. The United States engaged in negotiations through early February to resolve the situation, and Israel credited the United States with easing the situation by convincing Syria to peacefully remove its troops from the area. (William E. Farrell, "Description of U.S. Help with Syrians Given to Israeli Cabinet," *New York Times*, February 14, 1977, p. 11)

meant more than the presence of a certain military unit; it was the first time in 18 months that the Syrians had tried to establish a *fait accompli*. Israel deserved better treatment from Damascus because the Syrians knew how patient Israel had been. He hoped that this would be the last case of such a move and even Sarkis should understand that he must be more careful in the future. As a result of the lesson of Nabatiya the Secretary might wish to ascertain in Beirut and Damascus (and perhaps even in Cairo) what the Arab views are regarding avoiding such misunderstandings in the future. Israel for its part is ready to reach agreement regarding where the red line should be and what the deployment of forces on each side of that line should be. Israel has reached disengagement agreements with others, why not with Lebanon?

Lebanon should be allowed by its Arab brothers to make such an agreement with Israel. This should be done to make clear that there is no misunderstanding and that Lebanon and Israel do not have territorial claims on one another. The Minister recalled a comment by Israel's first Foreign Minister Sharett in which he said he did not know which Arab state would first sign an agreement with Israel but he was sure Lebanon would be the second.

Allon said he hoped the Syrian withdrawal from Nabatiya would be completed during the Secretary's visit and repeated Israel is ready for an agreement on this subject.

The Secretary responded that he was glad the U.S. was able to be useful. He believed progress had been made in resolving the short-term problem. Regarding the long-term problem he will discuss this in Damascus and Beirut and will be back in touch with Israel.

The Foreign Minister said he assumed that joint strategy and consultations between the U.S. and Israel would continue and he noted the kind words of the President and Secretary regarding Israel. In that context, he wished to proceed to discuss certain specific topics.

The Minister said he understood that the UN Secretary General had sent an official to brief the Secretary about his recent visit to Israel⁴ but he felt it was important to provide Israeli impressions of the Waldheim visit. Israel had informed the SYG that Israel is willing and ready to participate in a reconvened Geneva Peace Conference without delay, provided it follows the original model regarding participation, processes, and co-chairmen. Israel is ready to do so even before its general election; if the time is ripe Israel will participate, regardless of domestic political considerations and in spite of remarks to the contrary by polit-

⁴ During a 9-day tour of the Middle East in an effort to revive the Geneva Conference, Waldheim visited Israel and met with Israeli leaders on February 10 and February 11. (William E. Farrell, "Waldheim Confers With Israelis; Little Gain Towards Parley Seen," *New York Times*, February 11, 1977, p. A8)

ical opponents. Israel does not want to be responsible for blocking any moves toward peace. Israel is a democracy and he could not promise what the next government would do but he believed it would follow the same policies. In any case, the present government is ready to participate at Geneva.

Israel also informed the SYG that the Syrian idea of a joint Arab delegation to Geneva is unacceptable to Israel, for two reasons: first, such a delegation would be contrary to the provisions of the original MEPC and second, Israel has learned it cannot negotiate with a choir. Sometimes a choir is needed—for example, for a ceremonial opening—but negotiations have never succeeded with a group. It was the consensus of the original MEPC that Egypt and Israel and then Syria and Israel would negotiate among themselves; this was done and, in fact, the disengagement agreement with Egypt was signed at Kilometer 101⁵ and not in Geneva.

Israel is aware that Egypt is against a single Arab delegation. Syria sees itself as the new center for Arab moves and Israel knows that Egypt opposes the Syrian single delegation idea because of this Syrian viewpoint.

Regarding the question of the Palestinians, the Foreign Minister said Israel and the U.S. are in full agreement and he referred to the Secretary's statements in his recent interviews. He suggested the Secretary read the Palestinian National Covenant⁶ and he would understand Israeli feelings regarding the PLO. He said that last week in Europe where the PLO has made some headway, he had said that the Covenant was an Arabic view of *Mein Kampf*. Later, several Europeans told him they never read the Covenant and were shocked when they found what it contained.

The Minister said this Israeli position is beyond argument or debate. He wanted to assure the Secretary that Israel will not sign any agreement with Jordan unless there is provision for settling the Palestinian question. This question has been open too many years because of Arab disagreements and Arabs should not lecture Israel on the Palestinian question. The Minister was sure that a solution could be found in

⁵ Kilometer 101, a U.N. checkpoint located along the Cairo-Suez road in the Sinai, was the place where Israeli and Egyptian military officials attempted to negotiate a separation of forces after the October 1973 Arab-Israeli War. On January 24, 1974, the first disengagement agreement between Israel and Egypt was signed at Kilometer 101 even though the agreement had been reached on January 18 during Secretary Kissinger's shuttle diplomacy between Israel and Egypt the previous week. See *Foreign Relations*, 1969–1976, vol. XXVI, Arab-Israeli Dispute, 1974–1976, Documents 10 and 16.

⁶ Adopted on May 28, 1964, the Palestinian National Covenant or Charter established the Palestinian Liberation Organization and set forth the central tenets of the organization. In the ensuing years, the PLO added several amendments to the covenant, most notably in July 1968, when seven new articles were added.

the Jordanian framework. Hussein has not given up hope of recovering West Bank support and Palestinians from the West Bank could be included in a Jordanian delegation to Geneva; this would in fact give a more authentic Palestinian character to the delegation.

As a result of the crisis in Lebanon, there has been a change in the attitude of the Arabs. Israel has perceived hints they would like to have Jordan back in the negotiating picture. Israel will draw new boundary lines to satisfy its own defense needs and Arab needs for sovereignty, but it has hints that some Arab governments think that MEPC should be reconvened without the PLO. For example, European sources recently met with a high Syrian official who said Palestinians should be included in a Jordanian delegation. The negotiation is presently about how to choose those Palestinians. The Minister repeated that if the MEPC is postponed it will not be because of Israel.

The Secretary asked that the Minister confirm his understanding of what he had heard: Israel says that if the Palestinians participate at Geneva they must do so as part of the Jordanian delegation. Would that hold even if the PLO changes its covenant and accepts 242?⁷

Allon replied that this is not an easy question to answer. Without its covenant and refraining from terrorism and recognizing the right of Israel to exist and recognizing 242—the PLO ceases to be the PLO. In those circumstances Israel would have no reason to boycott its participation. But who would decide these steps—would a new Rabat be necessary to undo the Rabat Conference?⁸ If such Palestinians were invited by Hussein, how could Israel challenge them? The Minister noted a recent statement by the former mayor of Hebron who visited Amman last month and was received royally by the King—while all Arabs respect the Rabat conference, there was another Arab conference—that of Jericho which established the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.⁹ The former mayor also said that the Palestinians must organize themselves in a dif-

⁷ U.N. Security Council Resolution 242, adopted on November 22, 1967, contains two key principles: 1) the withdrawal of Israeli forces “from territories occupied” in the June 1967 War; and 2) the end “of all claims or states of belligerency and respect for and acknowledgment of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of every State in the area.” It is printed in *Foreign Relations, 1964–1968*, vol. XIX, Arab-Israeli Crisis and War, 1967, Document 542.

⁸ The Arab League Summit Conference, held at Rabat, Morocco, in October 1974, was attended by leaders from 20 Arab countries. On October 28, the conference voted unanimously for the creation of an independent Palestinian state anywhere “on Palestinian land that is liberated” from Israeli control. Additionally, the conference recognized the PLO as the “sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.” (Henry Tanner, “Arab Leaders Issue Call for a Palestinian State; Arafat Given Main Role,” *New York Times*, October 28, 1974, p. 1)

⁹ In December 1948, Arab representatives met in Jericho and agreed that the West Bank and East Jerusalem, both controlled by Transjordan at that time, should be annexed to Transjordan.

ferent way in a non-PLO organization. Allon said when this tiger becomes a horse let me know and I will think about riding it.

The Secretary said that if the PLO recognizes Israel's right to exist and renounced its Covenant this would be a different situation. The Foreign Minister agreed and said that it would not be the same organization. He said that the Arab strategy, particularly Sadat's strategy, is based on the belief that only America can deliver Israel. In the event that Israel refuses to be delivered, Sadat hopes to achieve a split between the U.S. and Israel, but he is deluding himself. Israel takes very seriously statements of support by U.S. leaders. It is particularly important for Arab leaders to see that a compromise is possible and for them to know that one should be sought. This can be done on the basis of defensible borders for Israel, a constructive solution to the Palestinian question, and the handing back to Arab countries of the greater part of the territories taken in 1967.

The Foreign Minister referred to the end of the state of war initiative proposed last year—in which the U.S. was to consult with the Arab governments on the possibilities of such an agreement, and provided that, if the Arab countries were interested, the U.S. and Israel came to an understanding beforehand on the meaning of the end of state of war.¹⁰ Israel has not received any formal American response on this initiative which may be a good sign. A bad sign would be a negative answer. Israel accepted the word of former President Ford, given in the course of negotiations over the last interim agreement, that the U.S. would not ask Israel to make further agreements with Egypt and Jordan for less than peace. By agreeing to look into the end of the state of war, Israel has already made its concession.

The Foreign Minister said that it is very important to understand, on this, the Secretary's first trip to the Middle East, that Israel's requirement for defensible borders is "what makes the whole difference" and enables Israel to make a territorial compromise with the Arabs. The 1967 war was forced on Israel by the Arabs, and in looking at the maps and the green line,¹¹ it can easily be seen that in certain places, the '67 line is only nine miles from the sea coast. Modern weapons make topography and geography indispensable elements in any settlement. It is possible to carve out defensible borders for Israel without annexing Arab population. The Arab leaders must reconcile themselves to the fact that Israel is not simply playing for prestige in asking for defensible

¹⁰ Rabin discussed this initiative with Kissinger and President Ford in January 1976; see *Foreign Relations, 1969–1976*, vol. XXVI, Arab-Israeli Dispute, 1974–1976, Document 257.

¹¹ The green line refers to the boundaries established in 1949 by the armistice agreements made between Israel and its Arab opponents (Egypt, Syria, Jordan, and Lebanon) that ended the 1948 Arab-Israeli War.

borders, but that Israel intends to defend itself by itself. With defensible borders, not only can Israel be its own master for the future, but also an asset for the West in times when there are regional problems when it may be useful for the West to have friendly forces in the area.

The Foreign Minister rebutted UN Secretary General Waldheim's stated opinion that it is essential not to miss the current opportunity to find a solution to the Middle East problems because there are moderate Arab leaders who may be gone tomorrow. In arguing this way, Waldheim admits that the situation among the Arab governments may change overnight and that the Middle East is an unstable region. For Israel, an agreement without defensible borders would be a piece of paper and not a paper of peace.

The Secretary said that the Foreign Minister can be assured that nothing will divide the U.S. and Israel. He asked whether he understood correctly that Israel, in asking for an overall settlement, demanded a real peace, a normalization of relations with neighboring countries, defensible borders, and a solution to the Palestinian question.

The Foreign Minister agreed.

The Secretary then asked what connection, if any, Israel made between defensible borders and the application of time-phasing to any future agreements; and he also asked whether he properly understood that Israel's position on guarantees was that they were no substitute for defensible borders but may become an item for discussion in the later phases of a negotiating process. To the first question, Allon responded that time is a neutral element, and that the Arab strategy is to liquidate Israel by stages. Geographical arrangements are indispensable to a future peace agreement and are needed to give Israel the ability to defend itself in case future agreements are violated.

In response to the second question, the Foreign Minister distinguished between guarantees and military alliances. Guarantees, he said: "I hate like poison." He related one of his conversations several years ago with French President Giscard d'Estaing, who told him that defensible borders are an excellent idea but since no one could achieve them for Israel, it ought to accept guarantees instead. Allon had asked Giscard to assume that France was the guarantor and that Israeli intelligence was warning France of an imminent attack: would not French intelligence wish to have independent verification of the possible attack? Of course, Giscard replied. And if they did verify the coming attack, would Giscard wish to send the French Army in to defend Israel? At that point, Giscard said "I don't mean military guarantees, I mean political guarantees," to which Allon responded "Ah, now I see what kind of guarantees not to accept." Allon said he would accept guarantees and well-policed demilitarized zones *in addition to* defensible borders.

Without those guarantees and demilitarization the future lines would have to be even further east, further north and further west. Israel can accept defensible borders as currently conceived only in combination with guarantees, and vice versa. When it comes to drawing maps—a stage which has not yet been reached—it will easily be seen that the minimal amount of territory that we are talking about is only a small percentage as compared to the vast lands of the Arab countries.

The Secretary said that if he understood correctly, Israel would accept guarantees and defensible security borders depending on the combination of circumstances at the time.

The Foreign Minister agreed and said that defensible borders was a term deliberately chosen. Israel demands “defensible” borders and not “secure” borders.

The Foreign Minister said he was very happy to see that President Carter, before he was elected, had said that he supported defensible borders for Israel. He said that when the Secretary arrives in Damascus, the Syrians will no doubt tell him that defensible borders don’t exist in this modern age of weaponry. But in Israel’s view, missiles alone cannot win a war and defensible borders are just as necessary now as they ever were if not more. The purpose of defensible borders is not simply to defend a settlement here or there, but to defend an entire country.

The Foreign Minister then said he would appreciate it if the Secretary would clarify the U.S. view of the Soviet role in the peace process. He said that the Soviets had sent around an unsigned circular to UN representatives, including to the Israeli Ambassador, and from this they expected an Israeli answer—but this was just playing.

The Secretary said that the U.S. believes that the Soviet Union can play a blocking role in any possible future settlements if it chooses to do so. If there is to be progress toward a settlement, it is necessary to act in such a way that the Soviet Union will not feel compelled to take a blocking position. They are after all co-chairmen of the Middle East Peace Conference and it will be necessary to help them save their faces. This does not mean that in any resumption of the peace process they must come in early but at the same time it does not mean they must be excluded. The Secretary said that this was the U.S.’s general approach regarding the Soviet Union’s role in the Middle East, and that to keep the Soviet Union in the picture, he would be making a general report to the Soviet Ambassador on his Middle East trip when he returned to Washington.

The Foreign Minister asked if the Soviet Union would be satisfied with this minimal role for itself. The Secretary replied that they would be for the time being.

Allon said “But they would not be involved directly in the process immediately.” The Secretary responded that they would not.

Allon joked that he did not want the Secretary to think that Israel wants to involve the Soviets. They are co-chairmen of the Peace Conference, but Israel accepted them only because the U.S. asked it to do so. There have been many statements lately by foreign officials proudly announcing that they recognize Israel’s right to exist. Allon said he was sick and tired of hearing something which is a natural fact to him, and he had recently told one European Foreign Minister (sarcastically) “And I recognize the right for your country to exist, too.”

Israel accepts that the U.S. has to cooperate to some extent with the Soviet Union, but beyond that, they have not done anything to date to deserve more. Israel does not want American soldiers to help it in the event of another war. Even the presence of Americans at the Sinai Field Mission is not required for the purpose of defending Israel, but has a role only in the peace-keeping. Israel also wants the U.S. to understand that it does not accept that Soviet troops should play any role between Israel and its neighbors. (*Note: Allon then read from notes—presumably a 1973 U.S. demarche re the USSR role at Geneva—concerning the U.S.’s appreciation for Israel’s reservations about the Soviet role as co-chairman of the Middle East Peace Conference.*)

The Secretary said that one thing which is good to keep in mind about the Soviet Union in the current context is that they see the U.S. now has some influence with the Arabs.

Allon agreed and said that the U.S. had made progress in this area and would make more. Ambassador Dinitz added that the Arab countries themselves want Soviet participation in this area much less now than in times past.

The Foreign Minister then turned the subject to Spain, saying that the former Spanish Foreign Minister had promised Israel some time ago that they would normalize relations with three countries—the Soviet Union, Mexico and Israel. Israel had advised the Spanish Foreign Minister to make no public statement about the matter because this would draw Arab pressures; but this advice was not heeded and the Spanish Foreign Minister made a public statement. Israel coordinated closely with the Spanish, asking them what response to make to the public statement, and thereafter expressing as agreed Israel’s favorable appreciation of it. Since that time, Spain has resumed relations with the Soviet Union and with Mexico, but they are telling Israel that Arab pressures prevent Spain from moving to normalize relations with Israel. Former Secretary Kissinger and NATO General Luns had previously spoken to the Spanish on Israel’s behalf. Israel does not consider the question of relations to be simply a question of dignity—“If they don’t want relations, let them go to hell”—but it is a matter of giving in

to Arab blackmail. Israel is planning a campaign on this issue against the Spanish Government through Jewish communities in Spain and elsewhere, but Israel would prefer to avoid this little war if possible, and would appreciate the U.S. again speaking to Spain on Israel's behalf.

The Secretary assured the Foreign Minister that the U.S. would do so. The Foreign Minister said that Egypt, contrary to the provisions of the Sinai II agreement,¹² had spearheaded Arab pressures on Spain. The Foreign Minister said that he had told the Secretary's predecessor that in any future agreement, there must be ways of ensuring compliance to all the terms. At the time of Sinai II, Egypt had specifically undertaken not to interfere with Israel's normalization of relations with third countries.

Chargé Dunnigan asked the Foreign Minister how matters stood with Portugal. The Foreign Minister said that the Portuguese had promised to open a Consulate within a year, and Israel was waiting to see whether the Portuguese live up to it.

The Foreign Minister then asked the Secretary to consider two final matters; the first concerning Syrian Jews. Some Israelis had insisted in 1974 that Israel not sign any agreement with Syria unless they promised to let all Syrian Jews go. Israel has raised this matter a number of times, and in one way or another, has received assurances that the Syrian Government would give Israel satisfaction. Although there has been some relaxation lately by the Syrians on this question it is far from any humanist's expectations. This tiny community of 4,000 Jews is a miserable remnant of a once flourishing community, and Israel will appreciate the U.S. doing what it can to help solve the problem.

The Secretary assured the Foreign Minister that he had already intended to raise this subject with Syrian President Assad.

The Foreign Minister then turned to the question of Soviet Jews, and asked that the new Administration raise this question in its first contacts with the USSR. "We have had enough. If they give us a few, why not more?" the Foreign Minister asked.

The Secretary said that he had already raised the subject with the Soviet Ambassador in Washington and also intended to raise it at higher Soviet levels. He said that he would appreciate receiving further information that Israel would want us to pass along to the U.S.S.R. on the question of Soviet Jewry. He said that the State Department keeps close track of the number of emigrants leaving the Soviet Union, and that the latest figures for January showed a drop over the previous

¹² Reference is to the second Egyptian-Israeli disengagement agreement, reached in September 1975.

three months, but represented an increase over the figures of last January.

The Foreign Minister expressed his appreciation for the first-class job that the American technicians were performing at the SFM and then said that there were other U.S.-Israeli bilateral issues to be discussed at the later meeting in the afternoon.

Mr. Evron interjected that a few minutes remained for further discussion and the Foreign Minister said that he would be happy to answer any questions.

The Secretary asked for the Israeli view on oil drilling in the Gulf of Suez. He said the U.S. is seriously concerned that Israeli actions in that area could jeopardize the search for peace. He referred (without elaboration) to an incident which had occurred yesterday as the latest example of problems in the Gulf of Suez.¹³

The Foreign Minister said that he would begin by defining the different zones in the Gulf, over which Israeli and American experts have differed. The Israeli view of it is that the Gulf of Suez is divided in half between Egypt and Israel, with Israel controlling the eastern half. No outside oil explorations or operations have taken place in the Israeli-controlled zone except for one field operated by Americans which lies just east of the median line, "the only enclave we tolerated." One argument previously posed by the U.S. against the Israeli position was that at the end of the Six Day War our forces had not reached by sea the Gulf of Suez up to the median line. The Israelis had disagreed with the U.S. and besides, after 1973 even that legalistic argument has no bearing at all.

As for the recent troubles with AMOCO, when AMOCO began moving east of the line they did not consult with Israel—they simply behaved as oil companies everywhere do. Israel's position is that if the Egyptians are interested in changes in the Gulf of Suez, they should negotiate with Israel.

The Foreign Minister mentioned that something very interesting happened at the last Egyptian-Israeli joint commission meeting.¹⁴ General Siilasvuo told the Israelis that Egyptian General Gamasy had said to him that "if the Israelis have a problem in the Gulf of Suez, why don't

¹³ On February 14, the State Department rebuked Israel for drilling in the Gulf of Suez for oil, which the State Department deemed an illegal act and "not helpful to efforts to get peace negotiations under way." (Bernard Gwertzman, "U.S. Rebukes Israel on Sinai Oil Drilling as Vance Takes Off," *New York Times*, February 15, 1977, p. 1)

¹⁴ One of the provisions of the second disengagement agreement was the establishment of an Egyptian-Israeli Joint Commission to consider problems arising from the agreement. See *Foreign Relations, 1969–1976*, vol. XXVI, Arab-Israeli Dispute, 1974–1976, Document 226.

they talk with us at the Joint Commission instead of going all the way across the ocean to the U.S.?”

The Foreign Minister said that Egyptian behavior in the Gulf of Suez is an attempt to disregard the fact that Israel is there. He reiterated that Egypt should get in touch with Israel if there are problems. Returning to AMOCO, the Foreign Minister asked, “How far did we ask them to move west? a mile or two?” Evron said that it was 900 yards and only an anchor, not a rig. The Foreign Minister remarked that he was afraid the oil companies were taking advantage of the Secretary’s presence in this area.

The Secretary said that the State Department’s legal adviser took the position, first, that it is not lawful for an occupying power to open new wells in occupied territory, and second, that it is legal for a country to undertake exploration in areas previously held by it but now under occupation.

Hassin said that he assumed that the Secretary was referring to the position expressed by the U.S. in its demarche of last October, to which the Israeli response has not been formulated. We have it, he said.

The Secretary reiterated that the U.S. views the Gulf of Suez as a very sensitive area. He said that he looked forward to reading the paper on the Israeli position, and that he would also look into General Gamasy’s remark re the Joint Commission.

Evron said that according to General Magdoub, General Gamasy was in favor of discussing the Gulf of Suez issue with the Israelis at the Joint Commission, but Fahmi was against this. Evron added that he had talked earlier in the morning with Asst. Secy. Atherton about the Suez issue and could discuss it further with him.¹⁵ The Secretary agreed.

The Foreign Minister asked about the status of U.S. supplying of nuclear power stations to Egypt and Israel. The Secretary said that there were studies now in process concerning proliferation and related subjects and that these would be completed in early March. It is expected that President Carter will make a policy determination by the end of March on these questions.

The Foreign Minister asked: “And meanwhile are you blocking the French initiative in Pakistan and Iraq?”

The Secretary said that this was a very sensitive matter, but that the U.S. understood that at present, both sides are willing to show flexibility in their positions, if only the other would propose it.

Meeting adjourned at 1220.

¹⁵ A memorandum of conversation of this meeting has not been found.

7. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Jerusalem, February 16, 1977, 12:30 p.m.

PARTICIPANTS

Israel

Prime Minister Rabin
 Foreign Minister Allon
 Defense Minister Peres
 Chief of Staff Gur
 MFA Director General Avineri
 Director General of Prime Minister's Office Eiran
 MFA Deputy Director General Evron
 Ambassador Dinitz
 Prime Minister's Press Spokesman Pattir
 Director of Prime Minister's Office Mizrachi
 Director of Intelligence Major General Gazit
 Prime Minister's Advisor on Terrorism Harkabi

U.S.

Secretary of State Vance
 Philip C. Habib, Under Secretary for Political Affairs
 Alfred L. Atherton, Jr., Assistant Secretary for Near Eastern and South Asian
 Affairs
 Harold H. Saunders, Director, Intelligence and Research
 Hodding Carter, III, Department Spokesman
 W. Anthony Lake, Director, Policy Planning Staff
 William B. Quandt, Staff Member, National Security Council
 Thomas J. Dunnigan, Charge d'Affaires ad interim
 John E. Crump, Political Counselor

SUBJECT

Discussions between Secretary Vance and Prime Minister Rabin

The Prime Minister opened the meeting by expressing his welcome to the Secretary and his party. He appreciated very much that the President and the Secretary had decided that the first trip abroad by the Secretary in his new position would be to the Middle East and that the first stop would be in Israel. This is part of the special relationship between Israel and the U.S. He hoped this special relationship, which has

¹ Source: Department of State, Office of the Secretariat Staff, Records of Cyrus Vance, Secretary of State, 1977–1980, Lot 84D241, Box 10, Vance Nodis Memcons, 1977. No classification marking. Approved in S. The meeting took place in the Prime Minister's Office. The memorandum of conversation contains a number of handwritten revisions.

existed through three decades and was mentioned in the letter from President Carter² will be continued and developed.

The relationship between the U.S. and Israel is based on a common desire for peace and tranquility in this part of the world, in addition to shared basic values. The development of this special relationship, especially in recent years, requires a) frank and intimate consultations before taking actions and b) a strong Israel. We have learned that although we have differences of opinion we must try to focus mainly on what we have in common, to find solutions, and to overcome our differences. The Prime Minister said he was sure that the President and the Secretary will add new facets to the cooperation between our two countries aimed at advancing our cooperation.

The Prime Minister said he wished to review where Israel stands: Israel believes that the common effort since the end of the Yom Kippur war had brought about Resolution 338³ and had established the MEPC as a framework for agreements—in this connection he noted that the first plenary session was followed by the first agreements reached between Arab states and Israel since 1949.

As a result of developments in the Arab world in their relations with the major powers and to a lesser extent in their relations with Israel, it may now be possible to continue a new phase in the relationships which began at the end of 1973.⁴ Israeli policy was, is, and will be to seek actively a real peace; this means a peace negotiated, signed and maintained by the Arab states and Israel. Such a peace must include three major issues: the nature of peace, boundaries, and a resolution of the Palestinian issue.

Peace is a combination of two basic elements: an end of the state of war, with all the implications that brings, and the structures of peace or normalization of relations. Anything less would not be considered by Israel as constituting an overall settlement.

Regarding boundaries, the Prime Minister said Israel's policy is that once the above-described peace is achieved, it is ready for territorial compromise in all sectors. He commented that he is not seeking to

² Carter's February 14 letter noted "the special relationship between Israel and the United States." Carter invited Rabin to Washington in March, citing "the importance of early and full exchanges between our two governments." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Trips/Visits File, Box 102, 2/14–21/77 Vance Trip to the Middle East: 2/18/77–3/77)

³ U.N. Security Council Resolution 338 was adopted on October 22, 1973, and called for a cease-fire between forces fighting in the October War within 12 hours of its adoption. Additionally, the resolution called for the parties to immediately work toward the implementation of Security Council Resolution 242.

⁴ A reference to the December 1973 Geneva Conference. See footnote 3, Document 1.

give back territories but for peace he would do so. It will not be a total withdrawal to the 1967 borders—what changes there are, questions of sovereignty, and questions of control of territory are all open to negotiation.

Regarding a solution of the Palestinian issue the Prime Minister said he does not consider this to be the crux of the matter. The crux is the reluctance of the Arabs to recognize Israel as a viable Jewish state. Nevertheless, without a solution of the Palestinian issue no durable peace can follow. He noted the following conditions. The Palestinian issue has to be solved in the context of negotiating a peace treaty with Jordan. In the original Palestine there should be two and only two states. In the Jordanian/Palestinian state the Palestinians must be able to find a way of expressing their identity but the state-to-state agreement must be between Israel and Jordan. A third state would not solve anything but, on the contrary, would contain the elements of further difficulties. Israel would continue to refuse to negotiate with the PLO but it would agree to the inclusion of certain Palestinian leaders in any Jordanian delegation to the MEPC.

At the present time the gap between the two sides on these issues appears too wide to be bridged. However, to prevent a stalemate and to encourage long-range trends in the Arab world and to overcome the 28-year trend toward war, Israel is ready to move in either of two paths: (a) an overall settlement reached in the context of an MEPC, or (b) a more limited agreement. He noted that Israel has lived the last 20 years with limited agreements or with limited arrangements reached without agreements.

Israel remains ready to return to the MEPC under its original terms. Israel sees the MEPC as the framework for ongoing operations. It could consist of a plenary session and subsequent disengagement negotiations within that framework. He believed Israel should try to achieve progress in the second half of 1977, not with the expectation that it will reach an overall settlement, but it must be prepared to search for other options if an overall settlement is not achieved.

Israel remains more than ready to cooperate with the U.S. The U.S. knows Israel's positions regarding who should and should not attend Geneva. Israel must retain its strength and he expressed appreciation for the \$285 million added to the President's budget for support of Israel. He noted that Israel hopes for additional support for its military budget in order to maintain its military strength as well as its economic viability. He hoped that together we can cope with certain problems which are sure to arise in this area of unexpected developments.

For all these reasons we have developed a relationship of cooperation and understanding and this has enabled us to prevent issues such as Lebanon and the Gulf of Suez from becoming major issues. He

hoped that the Secretary on his visit would convey Israel's views to its neighbors and discuss with them Israel's goals and what it is trying to achieve. Together we must discuss not only our purposes but mechanisms and procedures, although sometimes it is more difficult to reach agreement on these than on broad lines of policy.

The Prime Minister noted increased U.S. capability in the Middle East has resulted from its gaining the confidence of both sides, by not taking positions and not imposing solutions, and thus keeping its ability to offer good offices. He hoped the U.S. is committed to Israel and the strength of Israel and will continue to work for understanding so that all in the Middle East could enjoy the fruits of U.S. efforts.

The Secretary responded that he brought warm wishes to the Prime Minister from President Carter and he noted there is, indeed, a special relationship between our two countries and that relationship is the reason for stopping first in Israel. The U.S. remains fully committed to the maintenance of the strength of Israel. The security and preservation of the State of Israel is fundamental to our policy. We will seek together to find a solution to our very difficult problems.

The Secretary said his role is not to bring a blueprint or a plan but to facilitate movement toward a solution. He shared the Prime Minister's hope that we can commence that movement in the second half of 1977. He would convey the attitudes and objectives of Israel to the leaders of other countries in the hope that we may begin to move toward a solution.

Defense Minister Peres introduced Major General Gazit, Director of Intelligence. Gazit recalled that three and one half years ago Israel was hit by surprise when the combined Egyptian and Syrian forces attacked on both fronts. Israel had had general estimates of the situation and the feeling that Arab objectives of regaining territories and going on to destroy Israel had not changed, but believed that the Arabs would not attack because the military balance was in Israel's favor. Gazit said his worry now is over the possibility of a repeat of this situation and the Arab threat Israel would face in case such an attack occurred. While he joined in the hope for successful negotiations, he knew Arabs and their positions: No peace, no settlement, no acceptance of an independent Israel as long as the slightest hope exists for the destruction of Israel. He must, therefore, be prepared for the worst possible military position.

Gazit reviewed changes since 1973. First, regarding the element of surprise, Egypt and Syria were satisfied with the surprise they attained in 1973 although they are aware they failed in the tactical sphere. They know Israel will not misread their intentions again and they must be prepared to do more if they wish to succeed in the next war. Following the Riyadh and Cairo accords and the re-establishment of a united mili-

tary leadership,⁵ Israel sees some of the same military figures from 1973.

Regarding the military threat which has evolved since 1973, the most notable characteristic is the change on the northern or eastern front. Israel had long considered the western front to be its major danger and had concentrated its forces there. In October 1973 there were five Syrian divisions on the east front compared to ten Egyptian divisions on the west with proportional numbers of tanks and aircraft. Today there are 15 divisions on the east with the same ten divisions on the west, with twice as many tanks and half again as many aircraft. Given the geography, the length of the front and the proximity of Israeli targets, Gazit said Israel faced a hell of a problem on this front.

What will be the role of Jordan in the next war? There will be no question of Jordan not joining as was the case in 1973. Jordanian non-participation then enabled Israel to pull out its forces facing Jordan and redeploy them. The importance of the Jordanian front stems from its length as the longest land border of all the confrontation states, its proximity to Israel's vital areas, and the fact that it is a border which permits other Arab forces to pass through into Israel. Therefore, Israel must assume Jordan will join the next war, especially if it comes as the result of an overall Arab effort. Inter-Arab factors would not permit Jordan staying out of the next war; he noted particularly the new and close ties with Syria. Jordan will soon receive an anti-aircraft system which will remove its former pretext of not having air cover as a reason for not fighting. Jordan's addition to Arab armies would mean two armored and two mechanized divisions, which are mobile and well-equipped, 700 tanks and 90 aircraft.

Gazit then discussed Arab expeditionary forces which in previous wars had been too late, too little and of poor quality. Today those forces are more dangerous. *Iraq* is the most important change because it no longer has its Kurdish problem, it can send five divisions (two armored, one or two mechanized and one or two infantry), 130 aircraft and two special forces brigades. The forces can arrive quickly; Gazit noted the recent acquisition of 750 tank transporters. Many Iraqi forces could arrive within 35 hours and all could arrive within less than five days.

Saudi Arabia. Saudi troops arrived in Jordan and Syria late in the 1973 war and stayed more than three years. Saudi Arabia is a dangerous potential force because its proximity to southern Israel, its long sea border and the possibility of blockading shipping and road traffic

⁵ Agreements reached at the October 1976 Arab peace conference in Riyadh and the Arab League Summit meeting the same month in Cairo ended the Lebanese civil war and authorized the Arab Deterrent Force to supervise the cease-fire.

add up to reasons Israel should count on Saudi Arabia joining a joint Arab effort. Its forces would total one or two tank brigades, one or two mechanized brigades, one or two infantry brigades, one brigade of special forces and 130 aircraft, all of whom have trained for such deployment.

Libya. Gazit said Libyan forces are not important as expeditionary forces; the most important aspect is its military stockpiling. This armament could be delivered to other Arab states before, during or after a conflict for re-supply purposes. Libya, for example, could supply eight or nine hundred tanks to any Arab state. It is the same equipment although its degree of maintenance may be a factor.

Lebanon. Previously there was never a threat from the north but the last 18 months have brought a new and different Lebanon which Gazit characterized as “one big question mark.” Lebanon is now different politically, economically, and especially militarily. There are Syrian forces in Lebanon (approximately 30,000) which amount to three divisions of combined armored, mechanized and infantry forces. Israel does not know how long Syrian forces will stay in Lebanon and, while there is no immediate threat, possible Syrian redeployment would change the northern border a great deal because of the danger to Israeli settlements and the avenues of attack from the north. In addition, Lebanon is now a more radical country and might invite Arab expeditionary forces.

Gazit said another change since 1973 is in the qualitative comparison between Israeli and Arab forces. While the confrontation states have shown no important changes in the number of units it would be a mistake to think the equation has remained at a standstill. There has been a major Arab effort to change the quality of manpower, training, and materiel.

Better quality of manpower has come about because of higher level of education in Arab forces. If one compares the ratio of educated to non-educated soldiers between 1948 and 1977 the percentage of educated is now much higher. The quality of training has increased also and this is particularly noticeable in the level of exercises in all services. Gazit noted that the Syrian forces, in spite of their preoccupation with Lebanon, carried out more exercises in 1976 than in 1975. However, the most important change in quality has been in the modernization of equipment. Israel believes there are now some T-72 tanks in Syria and most Arab forces now have T-62 or AMX 30 tanks in place of older equipment. Self-propelled artillery has replaced towed equipment, new Soviet made APCs, modern aircraft such as the MIG-23, assault helicopters and more anti-aircraft missiles, especially SAM-6 missiles, have been supplied. The more remarkable increase, however, is in auxiliary systems, including night vision devices, laser range-finding equipment, electronic systems, communications scramblers, etc. While

the ratio of Israeli/Arab losses during aerial combat in 1973 was 1/55, modern air-to-air missiles, reflecting the greater sophistication of Arab aircraft, would change that ratio.

There has been a great increase in Arab arms procurement from the west; up to the end of 1975, Arab countries had bought arms worth \$5.8 billion from the east and \$1.6 billion from the west; since January 1976 they have bought \$6–7 billion from the east and \$21.6 billion from the west. In addition, the basic Soviet advantage of quick delivery should not be overlooked. The Arab states know that if they call on the USSR, there will not be any delay and that air and sea supply will be accomplished almost immediately.

In response to the Secretary's question about the role of stockpiles, Gazit said that Syria, Iraq, Jordan and Saudi Arabia have no problems with spares or ammunition. While Egypt was formerly thought to have such difficulties, the recent rate and scale of military exercises have led the Israelis to believe those problems have been overcome. Gazit believed none of the Arab states would have a problem carrying out a war of 30 days duration.

To support his remarks Gazit displayed a chart⁶ showing the western front composed of forces drawn from Egypt, Libya, Algeria and Sudan consisting of 10 divisions, 20 brigades, 3,240 tanks and 640 aircraft. The eastern front would be composed of forces from Jordan, Syria, Iraq and Saudi Arabia and would consist of 15 divisions, 6–7 brigades, 4,420 tanks and 730 aircraft. In the Mediterranean the Israelis would face a naval force of 32 missile boats, 12 submarines and 10 destroyer/frigates. In the Red Sea it would face 17 missile boats, one submarine and two destroyer/frigates.

Chief of Staff Gur then discussed Israeli philosophy in meeting this total Arab threat. He said the hope is to deter the Arabs from executing any action against Israel; such deterrence would be the greatest possible accomplishment of the Israeli Armed Forces. No deterrent can be fool-proof, but Israel hopes to keep the Arabs from taking any military steps. This would keep open the possibility of military action and would give the Government of Israel freedom for political steps it considers necessary. Israel wants to be sure the United States knows that before taking any military action Israel has considered all alternatives and is using military action as a last resort.

Israel has had much experience in the past against combined Arab forces and feels it must be able to defend itself against the Arabs who surround it. The only open channels of communication are the air and the sea and Israeli defense plans must ensure that those channels re-

⁶ No chart has been found.

main open. Israel must seek a quick victory to minimize its losses and must achieve a decisive victory without losing too many people or too much equipment. At the same time it is imperative that Israel be able to do this without calling for help—for moral, military and especially political reasons. The threats made by the Arabs after the Yom Kippur War to renew military action leads Israel to the belief that it must end any future war in such a way that it is clear to the Arabs that resort to war is finished and it is time for the political process; that political process must not be undertaken under the threat of renewal of military action.

The Government must be able to pursue any political program even if that means giving up territory. If the Government decides to give up territory, it must not harm Israel's basic strength, but must balance military strength against territory. It must also balance quantity against quality. In that regard Gur made the following comments:

a) Each front must be able to defend itself.

b) Israel must have a large strategic reserve which can be moved to the area where it is needed—there must be a large reserve unit in the center of the country ready to move to the decisive front.

c) The Arabs have manpower and money in large quantities so Israel must use its manpower wisely in advance—it must use its small potential to the best advantage. While the ratio of one to three is the average, this is not always acceptable, especially in view of the qualitative improvement of Arab weapons. Israeli quality must continually improve.

d) While Arab armies use regular forces, most of Israel's strength is in its reserves; therefore, Israeli regular forces must be equipped as well as possible to defend to the utmost while reserves are being mobilized; for that purpose Israel needs modern weapons and equipment.

Israel is smaller in territory, therefore, the Armed Forces' equipment must enable them to hold that territory since the loss of only five miles means a large number of population centers come under fire.

A particular problem is that of the transfer of military equipment between Arab states; to meet this problem Israel must maintain large stocks of equipment and supplies. In addition, Israel is convinced that territory is much more important than formerly because only on extensive territory are fortifications and maneuvers of forces possible. The loss of territory means the loss of population.

In the agreements with Egypt,⁷ according to Gur, Israel gave up territory and proximity to Egyptian population centers. As a result the Egyptians feel safer and feel no direct threat to their population centers

⁷ A reference to the two disengagement agreements between Egypt and Israel.

and to the Canal. Israel also gave up important defensive territory in the Sinai. In addition, the buffer territory established between Egyptian and Israeli forces means that the Egyptians can achieve territorial gains by its military forces without being in contact with Israeli forces (for example, Egyptian forces could move forward 20 to 30 kilometers without firing a shot). These factors could be dangerous to Israel. While it is thought that Israel gained in political terms, it paid in military terms. Nevertheless, Israel has become stronger militarily as a result of its agreement with the U.S. and the goal of the U.S. to become the strongest power in the Middle East has been to Israel's advantage. Gur also noted the great military cooperation between the two countries which is more extensive than ever before, particularly in the field of visits [*less than 1 line not declassified*]

In summary, Gur said there are certain items of military equipment which if received late are of no value—for example, aircraft without pilots having been trained. Israel must be sure that its balance of forces can prevent or deter Arab use of force. Israel must be able to prevent political gains by military forces. To accomplish these goals, Israel hopes that the understanding with the United States regarding military equipment needs will continue and that Israel will be supplied so that the progress toward settlement can continue.

Peres said that if one looks back over recent years several conclusions are evident: major events in the Middle East have been unforeseen, for example, the Six Day War and the Yom Kippur War, and these unforeseen events have brought about a totally different Middle East. Secondly, some things that appeared unacceptable to the Arabs five years ago have now been accepted, for example, interim agreements. Thirdly, peace has not been achieved, tension has grown and Israel has suffered great shocks because it lacks depth of territory and because of lack of political warning (there usually is no period of deterioration in relations but on the contrary an immediate progress to war).

Fourthly, there is, nevertheless, some hope in the present situation, especially when the U.S. plays a part in the Middle East. It has become axiomatic to Israel that the presence of the Soviet Union means war while that of the U.S. means peace—when the USSR was strong in the area, there was threat and tension, while one now feels an improvement and for this Israel is thankful. U.S. policy is based on a strong Israel and this is an important factor for peace. U.S. assistance to Israel supplies material but not personnel.

While carrying out negotiations, Israel will have to continue to deal with the problem of maintenance of its strength. A major worry is that the changing Middle East winds might bring a sudden attack. While the Arabs can reach decisions and move against Israel in six hours, it takes Israel 36 hours to mobilize and this can be a traumatic 36

hours. Israel cannot spread its regular forces, it must maintain its vigilance, it must continue to modernize its arms and look to the future development of its forces.

Regarding Israel's relations with its Arab neighbors, Peres admitted that an inclination to settle the conflict is greater now than ever before but there still is no element of realistic compromise. Israel remains worried because the Arabs are building up their armed forces and have spent billions since 1973. That build-up has been moderated by the agreements with Egypt and Syria, which are by and large satisfactory. Israel has the highest regard for the U.S. watch station in the Sinai and believes that the combination of Egyptian, Israeli, and U.S. watch stations is a unique contribution. Israel's hopes in this regard were justified and its fears did not materialize. However, the Syrians are more pedantic and strict in their construction of agreements; while they are less worried about the details they insist on renewal every six months.

Israel is trying to create more peaceful conditions along its borders. Peres noted the Open Bridge policy⁸ and said that more than four million Arabs have crossed the bridges in each direction since 1967. The West Bank enjoys full employment, has more than one third its population in schools and continues its close connections with Jordan. The Jordanian government plays a practical role in the West Bank—it pays the salaries of 6,000 of 10,000 public officials, it supports municipalities with loans, it pays for religious officials, etc. This shadow Jordanian presence is encouraged by Israel and Israel hopes to maintain a humane presence in the territories. It is a matter of some pride to Peres that while there have been some sporadic demonstrations, there have been no fatalities in the last six months. Israel supported free and honest elections which brought into office city officials who are extremist in speech but realistic in administration.

In Gaza 170,000 of 400,000 residents are refugees but there is now full employment after years of chronic unemployment. Israel has started a housing scheme. Although Gaza is still governed by mandate Palestinian law, it is the most tranquil part of the area under Israeli administration and Israel intends to continue its policy of normalization. Israel feels that whatever happens, it must behave as a responsible government and permit a normal life for the Gazans.

⁸ The "open bridge" policy refers to the Israeli policy adopted after the June 1967 war to allow the free movement of people and goods over the Allenby and Adam Bridges, which connect the West Bank to Jordan.

Regarding the Good Fence with Lebanon,⁹ Peres said that Israel decided the borders would be open from the start and noted the Israeli clinics have now treated a total of 18,000 Christians and Muslim Lebanese. Residents of Lebanon also work and shop in Israel and sell their produce there. He believes that Israel has created a model of better relationships, of growing human relationships of the sort it wishes in the future.

The danger of attack still exists. If the winds in the Middle East change, if a leader disappears, if the mood changes, all these may bring dangers. The future depends very much on the U.S. and the Minister then discussed U.S./Israeli arms relations.

Until 1973 Israel had worked on a ten-year plan for arms procurement. This was then cut to a three-year plan which was agreed to in principle, subject to annual negotiations. Prime Minister Rabin, in his visit last year, worked out the first year's procurement and Peres, in his last trip, submitted a plan for the second year.¹⁰ These plans involved tanks, guns, helicopters and hydrofoils and some particular problems have surfaced.

Israel considers it must maintain a military industry as part of its overall strength for three reasons. First, it must have the installations to repair equipment rather than depending upon storage of large inventories. Second, military industry is an important part of the economy; Israel has developed an aircraft industry which employs 90,000 persons, as well as shipyards, and a military electronics industry. Third, Israel would like to produce here in order to limit its requests to the United States to avoid publicity, drama and shipping costs. Fourth, there are employment reasons. An additional reason is that the Arabs can buy anything Israel can buy, but Israel can maintain a slight edge in quality by home production and adaptations.

To support this industrial base, Israel has approached the United States with three requests: a) F-16 co-production. President Ford approved F-16 sales to Israel.¹¹ GOI was thinking of 250 planes in the 1980–1990 timeframe and has requested permission to buy 50 outright, to assemble 50 in Israel and to produce 150 entirely in Israel. This scheme would give Israel a reliable spare parts capability and an inde-

⁹ The "good fence" refers to a popular term used to describe the border between Israel and Lebanon after the outbreak of the Lebanese civil war. Maronite Christians, who were friendly with Israel, controlled southern Lebanon with the South Lebanon Army (SLA).

¹⁰ Rabin visited the United States on a 10-day trip from January 27 to February 5, 1976. Peres visited the United States in December 1976.

¹¹ The United States approved the F-16 sales to Israel in September 1975 as part of the second disengagement agreement between Israel and Egypt. See *Foreign Relations, 1969–1976*, vol. XXVI, Arab-Israeli Dispute, 1974–1976, Document 234.

pendent supply source. b) Tanks. Israel now produces a good tank here. It was agreed in the consolidated list that 430 tanks would be purchased.¹² Israel now proposes that 178 be produced in Israel and the equivalent \$106 million (of which \$36 million would be spent in the U.S. for tank engines) would be given to Israel in direct aid. This scheme would enable Israel to maintain its tank production industry. c) Hydrofoil. U.S. is advanced in the use of aeronautic techniques, particularly as developed by the Grumman and Boeing firms and Israel has selected the Grumman technology. Israel has asked to produce the boats in Israel and the company has agreed, but political approval has not yet been granted.

Peres then turned to a discussion of the Kfir fighter sale to Ecuador and noted that Ecuador falls between French and Israeli planes while Israel falls between U.S. Administrations. The Kfir is an Israeli plane with a U.S. engine and it cannot be produced without some exports. There is a limited potential market for sales because Israel is closed out of any market where the U.S. or USSR sells planes.

Israel thought Ecuador was a safe possibility because the need for aircraft was agreed upon and it was only a question of where the planes would be bought. Israel informed the United States informally of its sales efforts, received a mixed reaction but then came under pressure from Ecuador to close the deal.

Commenting that it was a matter of great pride to Israelis that they are able to produce modern aircraft, Peres said he would appreciate it very much if the Secretary would reconsider the matter. Israel does not wish to go against U.S. policies but would like to coordinate military sales as much as possible. He proposed that some sort of machinery be established for this coordination and said that Israel is ready to coordinate. He said that Israel is aware that Latin America is a sensitive area for military sales. If there is a "court of appeals" in the Department of State, Israel would like to resort to that court. The sum involved—\$150 million—is not large but it is a very touchy subject to the Israeli public and he appealed again for reconsideration.

Peres then raised the question of financial assistance and referred to the generous help from the United States. He said that \$1.5 billion annually in military aid had been generally agreed on, but then the value of money fell, the cost of weapons rose and the system of payment changed. Even without an F-16 purchase, \$1 billion annually in assistance would leave Israel \$3.5 billion short in covering existing orders under the consolidated list in the years ahead. Israel would like the Sec-

¹² Presumably a reference to the list of military equipment attached to NSDM 315, January 31, 1976; see *Foreign Relations*, 1969–1976, vol. XXVI, Arab-Israeli Dispute, 1974–1976, Document 260.

retary and the President to reconsider the level of military assistance. He noted that Israel puts the heaviest burden on its people of any democracy in terms of tax burdens, reserve military duty, etc. In closing, Peres said he hoped to be able to continue the very agreeable relationship and cooperation in defense matters.

Prime Minister Rabin noted that the discussion had not yet touched on economic subjects and said this was the worst problem Israel faces. Most of the internal problems in Israel are due to economic factors. He summed up by saying that Israel is strong today, is strong enough for negotiations, is willing to take risks for peace and to move toward a meaningful peace. He thanked the United States for its understanding and said that Israel is now militarily in much better shape than it was three years ago and can look forward with greater confidence in proceeding with the diplomatic process.

1977–78 will bring real problems as we consider what must be done and how we must combine our efforts. Israel understands this is only the Secretary's first stop on his visit but he suggested we continue our combined diplomatic efforts and work for machinery to remove the small obstacles such as Lebanon, Suez and military exports from our relationships.

The Secretary responded to several of the points raised by Peres. He said our military relationship with Israel remains unchanged. The new Administration has not yet finished its study of the consolidated list of requests for military assistance and has no position on that as yet. He agreed with Peres that the idea of a study of coordination of third country military sales is an excellent one and we will proceed to consider it. The problem of Kfir sales to Ecuador is a sensitive and difficult problem for the United States as well as Israel and was part of our whole policy regarding military sales to Latin America. It was a difficult decision for us and was not taken lightly in view of our own diplomatic problems but he would be less than frank if he left the idea that the decision would be reversed. The U.S. will examine the requests from Israel for co-production, etc. and will be in touch.

In response to a request from Allon that he sum up their earlier discussion on Lebanon,¹³ the Secretary said he would raise the long-term question of Lebanon with the Syrians and Lebanese and would be in touch again with Israel. Rabin said the Israeli position should be clearly understood: Israel preferred that the vacuum in southern Lebanon be filled by the terrorists rather than the Syrians. He feels there should be a truly Lebanese force as soon as possible and

¹³ See footnote 2, Document 8.

would prefer that Lebanon take on the responsibility for the forces in south Lebanon and that Syria return to the January 23 lines.¹⁴

The Secretary said we have urged the Syrians and Lebanese to take these steps but we are honestly not sure of their capabilities. Peres said he would estimate that in south Lebanon there are 1,500 to 2,000 armed individuals, many of whom are former Lebanese soldiers; Sarkis could recognize them as part of the Lebanese army. They could take orders from him and this would solve the problem. There are existing forces, they are armed, and they are organized.

Rabin asked about CBUs. The Secretary said that in his judgment the President will decide not to make CBUs available to Israel. It will be part of a conclusion not to sell or make them available to any foreign country. He did not know when this decision would be made, he did discuss it with the President before leaving, and it was a difficult decision.

Peres said that the military problem Israel faces is different than those faced by the U.S. in Vietnam and yet the Vietnam aftereffect applies to Israel. Israel needs CBUs because: a) Israel is surrounded by mine fields and CBUs are useful to destroy mines, and b) Israel is surrounded by anti-aircraft missile coverage and CBUs are needed against concentrated missile deployment. Israel is suffering from the after-effects of Vietnam in the U.S. Israel wants CBUs not just because they were promised but because they are needed.

In response to the Secretary's comment that other weapons would serve the same purpose, Gur replied that CBUs are an example of the high technology weapons needed by Israel. To eliminate missile sites, a certain number of bombs and planes would be required. CBUs reduce the number of planes to one fourth and this is important to Israel.

Several days ago he heard an American general describe anti-tank helicopters as a "dirty weapon" because of implications from Vietnam. Egypt has such anti-tank helicopters already. Whether a weapon is "dirty" depends on its use, not on the weapon itself. There are 200 missile sites around Israel. CBUs are needed because surface-to-surface missiles are not accurate enough to destroy anti-aircraft missile sites. Aircraft must be used and CBUs would make a big difference. The Secretary commented this was the first time he had heard anti-tank helicopters referred to as dirty weapons. The CBU not only has associations from Vietnam; the U.S. armed forces has some doubts about its efficiency.

¹⁴ A reference to Syrian forces positioned in Lebanon as of January 23, 1976. From January 20 to 22, 1976, Syria imposed a cease-fire in Lebanon through the influence of Syrian-controlled Saiqa and Palestine Liberation Army forces. Al-Saiqa was a Palestinian Baathist political and military organization created by the Syrian Baath Party in 1966.

Peres said Israel had been asked to undertake to restrict any use of CBUs and had agreed to do so. Allon added that Israel had also heard that U.S. missile experts are unsure about the CBU but Israeli experts are convinced of its utility. Although Israel is heavily armed, it is still a small country and the Arabs around it have new weapons and the CBU is a weapon which is almost indispensable to Israel's defense.

Rabin said he would not argue about the efficiency although he recalled having discussed such weapons with General Haig and having been impressed. He wished to look at the question from a different perspective: a former President says yes to Israel's request for CBUs and this is public knowledge.¹⁵ A new President says no and certain implications arise in the public mind. The reversal of the decision is the problem Israel faces and it is a problem vis-a-vis the whole world because everybody asks what has happened. The destructive capabilities of the weapon is of crucial importance; if it can assist or facilitate the Israeli air force, this is of first priority to Israel. It adds tremendously to Israeli capability militarily but has the extra political implications of a reversed decision.

The Secretary said the U.S. understands the Israeli view and this makes the President's decision even more important, especially when a question remains regarding the weapon's performance. Gur said that all weapons against military sites are only partially effective. Stand-off weapons require good weather and are technically difficult. In any case, a weapon is needed for the final kill and this must be done by an aircraft and the CBU is the best weapon for this final assault because it does not require a high degree of accuracy. Israel is convinced it is a good weapon for the purpose intended.

The Secretary said that he had taken note of Israeli views and will communicate any final decision.

¹⁵ The *New York Times* reported on October 13, 1976, that Ford had approved the sale of advanced weapons to Israel, including cluster bombs. (Bernard Gwertzman, "Ford Move on New Arms to Israel Is Termed Political," *New York Times*, October 13, 1976, p. 3)

8. Telegram From Secretary of State Vance to the Department of State¹

Jerusalem, February 17, 1977, 0101Z

Secto 2017. Subject: Conversation in Israel. For the President From Secretary Vance.

1. My discussions in Israel today, I think, reflect accurately the Israeli perception of their situation. Their basic concern is for Israel's military and economic strength and, closely related, for U.S. support. They are, of course, thinking about how peace negotiations might proceed, but an important part of the discussions today was also spent in discussion of the military threat to Israel and the need for a continuing flow of U.S. military supply, including a prolonged pitch for the CBU and for cooperation in enabling Israeli industry to export its military products.

2. At the same time, the Israelis have made an effort both in their public statements and most clearly in private conversation to take the position that they are ready to resume peace negotiations at any time, even before their elections, although they recognize that realistically it is unlikely that anything can be started until the latter half of the year. In taking this position the Israelis are more conscious of the need to appear willing to negotiate, rather than because of expectations that much can be done at this time.

3. I had an hour's private talk with Foreign Minister Allon riding from the airport near Tel Aviv to our hotel in Jerusalem Tuesday evening.² Today, I began with a private breakfast with Prime Minister Rabin followed by larger meetings with the Foreign Minister and his staff and then, over lunch, with Rabin, Allon, Defense Minister Peres, the Chief of Staff and other officials.³ At the end of the afternoon, I met privately with Golda Meir and later with Peres.⁴

4. Rabin in those meetings described the peace effort as having to resolve three questions:

A. Establishment of peace. The problem, he said, is to determine the nature of the relationship that will exist between Israel and its

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Trips/Visits File, Box 102, 2/14–21/77 Vance Trip to the Middle East: Briefing Book: Vol. II [I], 2/77. Secret; Niact Immediate; Nodis; Cherokee. Drafted by Saunders. Cleared by Atherton, Habib (who did not initial the telegram), and Tarnoff and approved by Vance.

² February 15; no memorandum of conversation has been found.

³ No memorandum of conversation of Vance's private breakfast meeting with Rabin has been found. For his meeting with Allon, see Document 6. For the lunch meeting, see Document 7.

⁴ No memorandum of conversation has been found.

neighbors at the end of the peace negotiations. It is important to end the state of war with all of its practical and legal implications, but that is not enough. It is essential to go beyond that to establish a structure of peace, a normalization of relations which would include open boundaries and the free flow of people, information and goods.

B. The boundaries of peace. Once full peace can be achieved, Israel will be ready to move back from its present military lines, but Israel cannot accept the principle of complete withdrawal from the territories occupied during the 1967 war. In private conversation, Rabin indicated that there may be ways to enhance Israel's security that would permit greater withdrawals than are now anticipated, but at no time did he suggest that there is any significant support in Israel for withdrawal to the 1967 borders. He stressed the concept of "defensible borders" rather than dwelling on the idea of borders that define sovereign territory. This means, at least in theory, that in the negotiations it might eventually be possible to work out an Israeli security presence for a period of time in places outside the borders that divide Israeli and Arab sovereignty.

C. A solution to the Palestinian issue. Rabin began by acknowledging that there is a Palestinian issue, unlike some of his countrymen who in earlier times tried to brush it aside. He argued strongly that the issue must be resolved in negotiations between Israel and Jordan and in context of the present Jordanian state. That is, Israel opposes the creation of a separate Palestinian state and feels that Palestinian identity can and must be worked out in the relationship of the West Bank of Jordan and the center of the Jordanian state on the East Bank. Rabin continued to maintain that Israel cannot consider the PLO as a party to the negotiations but would not oppose the inclusion of certain Palestinian leaders—whomever the Arabs may back—in a Jordanian delegation.

5. In summing up, Rabin said that Israel is ready to consider as an objective of the negotiations either an overall settlement or to keep open the option of a series of more limited agreements. He stressed Israel's willingness to continue to participate in the work of the Geneva Middle East peace conference, but he stressed the importance of taking a flexible view of the conference, pointing out that its work could be done in plenary sessions, in bilateral negotiations or in a number of other exchanges. He asked that I convey to Israel's neighbors that Israel's objective is a real peace and that Israel will be flexible in devising ways to negotiate that peace.

6. My feeling after this first day of talks is that the trip will have value in crystallizing a common understanding of the base from which the efforts to start peace negotiations will take off. I will go to Cairo tomorrow and begin the process of learning what that base is on the Arab

side. I anticipate that the gaps between positions on the main issues will not begin to close during this trip. But by the time I return to Washington, we should begin to have a sense of what will be needed to develop a concrete course of action so that the visits of the Middle East leaders to Washington for their talks with you will help to narrow the differences on the final objective of negotiations and on how we should proceed to organize them.

7. I should say finally that the Israelis made a conscious effort to project the atmosphere of a friendly visit. They tried in their public presentations to dampen wide-spread concern about our recent decisions on the cluster bomb and the export of the Kfir fighter to Ecuador.⁵ In private the atmosphere was one of understanding that you have to deal with problems that have global implications. However, they did ask me to report to you their strong request for reconsideration. On the cluster bomb, they emphasized that, unlike US use in Vietnam, the Israelis would be using the bomb against military positions such as missile sites and minefields and not against population. Rabin also noted that he has a problem of dealing with Israeli public concerns about US intentions since President Ford had earlier committed himself to provide the cluster bomb, and a change in the US position raises questions for Rabin about whether the US is backing away from Israel. On the Kfir fighter they pointed out that their effort to build a defense industry which will make them more self-sufficient depends heavily on their finding an export market for the output of their industry. Looking to the future, they asked whether we could not together establish a mechanism for our revising our export decisions where US consent is required with us early in the process. Again, they asked for a reconsideration of the decision. I told them that I would, of course, report their requests but discouraged them from expecting any change in either the Kfir or cluster bomb decision.

8. At the later meeting with the other cabinet members present, I responded that although the decision had not yet been finally made by you on the concussion bomb, it was my belief that you would decide that the bomb should not be made available to the Israelis or to any other country, and they should guide themselves accordingly.⁶ Secondly, I indicated that with respect to the Kfir, I felt that the decision

⁵ For Vance's and Rabin's public remarks after their February 16 meeting, see Department of State *Bulletin*, March 14, 1977, p. 210.

⁶ Carter sent a message on February 16 to Vance that he was to transmit to Rabin notifying him "that we will announce tomorrow our decision not to transfer CBU's to Israel or to any other nation." (Message WH77027 from the White House to Jerusalem, February 16; Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, President's Correspondence with Foreign Leaders File, Box 9, Israel: Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, 2-7/77)

was consonant with our long-standing policy with respect to the introduction of advanced weapons systems into Latin America and expressed less than hope that the decision would be reversed. Tomorrow morning I will tell Allon that the decision has been made with respect to the concussion bomb, so that they will have enough advance notice to be prepared for Jody's 12:30 press conference. They would prefer that we wait until the end of my trip but I believe I have prepared the way sufficiently so that it will not come as a rude shock.

9. Later this afternoon, I met with Shimon Peres who had some interesting suggestions to make with respect to a number of matters. Like the others that I spoke to today, he is willing to accept a return to Geneva negotiations, but prefers to think in terms of practical steps that can be taken in the immediate future to reduce tensions and provide the mutual restraint which will enable the Israelis and the Arabs to begin working together in a way heretofore rejected. In this regard, he specifically requested that we approach the Saudis to arrange for the following kinds of cooperation:

(a) In the Gulf of Aqaba, the Israelis and the Saudis would agree to reach a private understanding not to fortify the coast. In his words, they would both agree to keep both coasts "naked." At the mouth of the Gulf, of course, Israel would wish to retain its control (not sovereignty) through a military presence at Sharm el-Sheikh.

(b) The Israelis would like to cooperate with the Saudis against radical movements anywhere in the Middle East. They believe this was in conformity with Saudi interests and that the Israelis could help with information and other forms of counter-radical action.

(c) The Israelis would be prepared to cooperate with the Saudis in the Sudan, Kenya and Ethiopia in order to help resist the pressures from radical states against these nations.

(d) The Israelis would like to find ways and means to make practical arrangements on almost any subject in which the Saudis would be interested. This was to be done quietly, either directly or through us. They knew this would be in the interests of countering attempts at subversion directed against the authority of the Saudi royal family.

10. Peres then addressed the question of what to do to avoid the danger of war during the period negotiations would begin in the search for a final solution. He said that basically Israel would be for an overall settlement, but he could not see any way to do it because of the thorny issues involved. He thought it would be bad to seek an overall settlement and fail because it would have raised expectations. Therefore, before building a machinery for permanent peace, it was better to start by building dams against war and against surprises from either side. When pressed, however, he said that these could move in parallel. He spoke of creating instruments to control movements within territories.

Once this was accomplished there could then be a reduction of forces, rather than a reduction of arms. A thinning out of forces with watch stations to prevent surprises would result in a reduction of worries by either side about the actions of their opponents. He went on to point out that this might have to be done in different ways along fronts and emphasized that in making these suggestions he didn't mean to suggest the need to postpone negotiations, but rather to provide a way for some room on the ground between the contesting parties. Peres summed up his views by saying that much could be achieved in the Middle East in the next five to ten years, provided that the danger of war was reduced, that negotiations continue, and that the US continue to provide the necessary economic support, not only to Israel but especially to the Arabs as well.

11. I am reporting these variations of the Israeli positions to you to demonstrate the kind of thinking that they are indulging in, both in order to show some degree of flexibility as far as we are concerned but also in the expectation that we will carry this message to the Arabs. The Israelis clearly do not see a structured solution easily arrived at through a Geneva Conference. Therefore, they are casting around now for things that might be done to give the appearance of movement, while negotiations begin. The problem with moves like this is that unless they are suggested within the framework of a negotiation working toward an overall settlement, the Arabs will read them as diversionary efforts.

12. In the exchange of toasts at the end of Allon's large dinner,⁷ he went out of his way to express confidence in the US and our relationship. I made a special effort in my toast to reassure the Israelis of the fundamental solidity of our relationship to help offset some of the public concern that the cumulative effect of our decisions on the Kfir and the concussion bombs foreshadowed future changes in our overall policy toward Israel.

13. At the end of the day, Allon and I held a joint press conference. Particularly in response to questions about Israel's position toward the Palestinians, Allon formulated Israel's basic position in the most positive possible way.

14. I delivered your letter of invitation to Prime Minister Rabin.⁸ It was very well received. We will work out the dates at the appropriate

⁷ According to the *New York Times*, Allon's dinner took place on February 16 at the Israeli Parliament. (Bernard Gwertzman, "Vance opposes a Seat for P.L.O at talks Unless It Accepts Israel," *New York Times*, February 17, 1977, p. 3)

⁸ See footnote 2, Document 7.

time. The Israeli leadership appreciated the fact that we have gone forward on this matter despite their domestic political situation.

Vance

9. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Cairo, February 17, 1977, 12:30–2:30 p.m.

PARTICIPANTS

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ismail Fahmy
 Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Mohamed Riad
 Ambassador Osama Al Baz, Foreign Minister's Chef de Cabinet
 Amr Musa, Foreign Minister's Office
 Mohamed Barada, Foreign Minister's Office

 Secretary of State Vance
 Under Secretary Habib
 Assistant Secretary Atherton
 Ambassador Eilts
 DCM Matthews
 Political Counselor Lowrie (Note taker)

The meeting began at 1230 and lasted for two hours. Foreign Minister Fahmy said he took great pleasure in officially welcoming the Secretary. He was sure that it would be the beginning of a long road of constructive cooperation from which both nations would benefit. Since 1973, Egypt's relations with the US have experienced major events and the two countries have gotten to know each other. They share the objective of peace in the area. Fahmy said "we should continue to speak with the same frankness and friendliness" as in "the exploratory period." Egypt wishes to accomplish during the next four years even more dynamic and concrete steps.

Fahmy said that during the last three years the US has contributed to preventing explosions in the area and has helped Egypt generously economically for which Egypt is appreciative. He particularly thanked The Secretary and President Carter for the latest aid package² which

¹ Source: Department of State, Office of the Secretariat Staff, Records of Cyrus Vance, Secretary of State, 1977–1980, Lot 84D241, Box 10, Vance Exdis Memcons, 1977. Secret; Nodis. Drafted by Lowrie. The meeting took place in the Foreign Minister's office.

² On February 2, the Carter administration transferred \$190 million in aid funds to Egypt to assist Egypt's economy after January riots over price increases for food and various consumer goods disrupted the country. ("U.S. Plans to Bolster Aid to Egypt By \$190 Million to Ease Unrest," *New York Times*, February 2, 1977, p. 17)

was very well received and publicized in the area and will have an impact on "some of our mutual friends". Fahmy said Egypt has great economic problems and will ask for more aid and for US support in international organizations and with other countries. Without good economic conditions, Fahmy said, there can be no stability, particularly in an area where there is already instability because of the "no war, no peace" situation. Egypt's economy needs "overhauling". The Russians do not like this and don't help, but Egypt is pressing forward.

Fahmy said economic stability is linked to political stability, particularly in a country with the strategic importance of Egypt. The enemies of the Arabs wish to see them divided and Egypt weak and "they will not leave us alone." Egypt is, however, an independent country and there is little "they" can do here, but they are trying to go around Egypt in Africa and elsewhere.

Fahmy said he wished to emphasize economic and political stability because they influence Egypt's security and the role it can play in the peace process. However, security is not just economic or political stability for countries like Egypt. Because of its strategic importance and because it is a developing country the "military aspect is paramount." It is for this reason that the Russian campaign against Egypt started with the army by refusing to supply weapons or overhaul aircraft or sending spare parts. Now the Russians are attempting to block all arms sales from countries in Eastern Europe that are "completely" under Soviet control. Fahmy said the Russians even prevented India from providing arms which resulted in some strain in Egyptian-Indian relations. He said the Russians did this at a time when trade and technical assistance continued in order to squeeze the army and create discontent in order to bring about a coup d'état or at least cause major problems. Therefore, the "military aspect is a matter of life and death for countries like Egypt." This is why Sadat took the decision to find alternate sources of arms and Egypt is now obtaining arms from France, the UK, Yugoslavia and will continue to look for arms wherever it can get them. Fahmy said the army is not a problem now, but "we don't want it to develop into one." He thought it would not be a problem as long as the army and public are convinced that the political leadership is doing its best to take care of the problems posed by the Russians. He said "I hope you understand that this is directly linked to Egypt's political and economic stability and the peace settlement." Egypt does not wish to spend money on arms; it has problems of obtaining enough food and a population explosion that will result in 70–75 million in the year 2000. This is why Egypt wants peace, not at any price, but a just peace and it is ready to take the necessary measures. "No other country in the area can take steps like Egypt. We can take steps that are unbelievable and the other Arabs will have no choice but to follow as recent history has proved."

To sum up his presentation, Fahmy said on economic relations with the US there is no problem, but Egypt will want more assistance, both direct and indirect. On political relations, there is no problem and we understand each other well. On the military side, Fahmy said “in all frankness” Egypt is “not satisfied.” It understands the US domestic problem but hopes that something can be done. As early as 1974 Dr. Kissinger had said that bilateral military relations for defensive weapons should develop in three stages: first, commercial sales until the public and Congress get used to the idea; secondly, fifty-fifty commercial and aid-grant sales; and thirdly, one hundred percent aid-grant sales.

Since then however, Fahmy said, there has been nothing but six C-130s. Egypt had given a list of defensive arms it wished to obtain from the previous Administration and had received a written reply from General Scowcroft³ listing what arms could be offered together with delivery dates and cost. Then nothing further happened. This did not and will not keep Egypt from getting arms from other sources. However, Fahmy said, if there is agreement that the US and Egypt want to develop their relationship in the coming years, something should be done in this area.

Fahmy said he had been instructed to provide a list of requested arms.⁴ The Secretary would note that some items from the previous list were not on the new list, that is because they were obtained elsewhere. The list for defensive weapons “should not frighten anybody.” It had been prepared by Minister of War General Gamasy and approved by the President. Egypt is not pressing for a decision this month and realizes that the Secretary must consult with President Carter. The list can remain secret until the US has had time to study it (Fahmy handed over the previous list, the letter from Scowcroft and the new list to The Secretary). Fahmy said he wished to emphasize that to assure political, economic and military stability his government needed to show the army and public opinion that its policies are effective. However, if the US does not approve the list nothing will happen in the army since the army is under control and Egypt will get arms from other sources.

In this context, Fahmy said, he must refer to the imbalance of arms with Israel. Since 1974 he understood the US had supplied about \$5 billion in arms to Israel. Israel is qualitatively and quantitatively much superior. If this imbalance continues it is not good for peace prospects since Israel will continue to be very rigid. When the gap is not so big Israel will be more flexible. He is aware of the theory that if Israel feels completely secure it will become more flexible but this theory has pre-

³ Neither the list nor the written reply has been found.

⁴ The list has not been found.

vailed in Washington for 25 years and he does not consider it valid. Only when the Israelis are not sure they can count on the US will they listen. If they are certain of US support they will start to put conditions forward that they know will be rejected. Even if Egypt were to feel superior militarily to Israel some “crazy man” would be tempted to seize power and start a war. It is in the nature of things that one with the upper hand does so. Fahmy said Egypt is trying to close the gap of military imbalance so that the “wagon of peace can move”.

Following this 35 minute presentation Secretary Vance said President Carter and he are keenly aware of the leading political role President Sadat and Fahmy have played in foreign affairs and in beginning to move the Middle East situation toward peace. He recognized that the road to peace will be long and difficult. He considered bilateral relations of the highest importance and said the US will seek to further strengthen them. In multilateral affairs the US will also wish to work closely together particularly on the peace process. On the economic side the US will continue to help and the Administration is requesting of the Congress in FY 78 increased aid totaling over \$900 million, including \$114 million in PL 480 commodities. He was pleased to note that there is no problem in bilateral political relations and hoped it would continue this way. On military relations, The Secretary said, the Administration is in the process of reviewing all military sales. This matter is of deep concern to President Carter who hopes to reduce arms sales and get other countries to do so. The US recognizes this is a complex and difficult task but as the major arms supplier in the world, the US has the responsibility of making this effort and ensuring that arms sales are compatible with its overall foreign policy and to cooperate with other countries in doing so. In the Middle East the Secretary said the US hopes to reduce sale of arms. He would welcome Foreign Minister's thoughts on how it might be done. The Secretary said that one key would be progress towards a Middle East settlement which is one of the purposes of this mission. The two goals of his mission are (1) to demonstrate the US seriousness of purpose to work for a peace settlement and (2) the desire to understand the positions of all the parties. The U.S. hopes to be a facilitator of peace, it has no plan and he has come to learn.

With regard to the list of requested arms the Secretary said he would not comment on it but wished to study it before responding. The U.S. he said looks forward very much to strengthening bilateral relations with Egypt in the years ahead.

The Foreign Minister thanked the Secretary and said that Egypt truly appreciated US help and its unique role. Fahmy said the crux of the problem is that peace and progress cannot come from a position of weakness either for Israel or for Egypt. Egypt has many problems, with

Russia, with Libya and the Sudan. Egypt's destiny is to fulfill its responsibilities. For example, during the July coup attempt in the Sudan⁵ only Egypt could respond and it established an air bridge to send 1,500 Sudanese soldiers to support the government. Fahmy said that if the Sudanese soldiers had not been in Egypt, Egyptian troops would have gone. Egypt can never accept a communist or hostile regime in the Sudan. Egypt's responsibilities for regional security are enormous and it is for this reason he has talked of a "security belt." The Saudis had been interested but have dropped out. However the Moroccan Foreign Minister⁶ is now thinking along the same lines.

Fahmy said he appreciated the Secretary's position that he would have to look at this question of arms. He was pleased to note the use of the word "overall" and he hopes that the US study will conclude that military relations with Egypt should not be kept at zero (or only six C-130's), but increase. Progress toward peace cannot, he said, be generated unless real security exists. Fahmy said the introduction of sophisticated and highly destructive weapons such as promised to Israel by former President Ford during the campaign will make a mess of the whole situation.⁷ Fahmy said if this offer is carried out it will have a "devastating effect on the Egyptian military." They will ask for similar weapons from whatever source possible. Such arms are not necessary.

The Secretary replied that the US had a clear understanding of Egypt's position on the military relationship. With regard to the Sudan, he asked what Egypt thought should be done in the Horn of Africa? Fahmy said he would like to discuss this subject later.

Fahmy said that the Sinai II agreement has been well implemented except for occasional provocations by the Israelis. He was not speaking of minor violations that both sides have committed and which are dealt with in the Joint Commission. Israelis have taken provocative actions such as drilling for oil in the Sinai. No country, Fahmy said, can accept such a situation. Egypt has come to the US and it appreciated the US legal position and public statement. However, it cannot accept the continuation of this provocation. The Secretary responded that the US had raised this subject with the Israelis yesterday (Feb. 16)⁸ and had reiterated the US legal position with particular reference to the current incident. It had urged a solution and restraint. The Secretary said he respectfully urges that Egypt also exercise restraint. The US will use its good offices to attempt to keep the problem from escalating. Fahmy

⁵ In July 1976, Sudanese forces in opposition to President Gafaar Nimeiry launched a coup that Nimeiry quickly defeated.

⁶ Ahmed Laraki was the Moroccan Foreign Minister from 1967 until 1971.

⁷ See footnote 12, Document 7.

⁸ See Document 7.

said Egypt promised to exercise restraint. However, if it continues without resolution, the Israelis will claim it has become an established right. Nevertheless, Egypt would not take action to provoke Israel without consulting the US.

The Secretary asked if the Foreign Minister could give him the Egyptian vision of what an overall settlement of the ME problem would encompass? Fahmy replied that when Sadat says he is ready to accept something, Israel immediately interprets it to mean it is “in its pocket” and then asks for more. When Sadat had been the first Arab leader to agree to end belligerency and sign a peace agreement, Israel had immediately asked for diplomatic and trade relations. Fahmy said the end of belligerency will not take place except in the context of an overall settlement. The key is “acceptable.” The Arabs had refused until October 1973 to recognize Israel’s existence and to deal with it. The ME is like a human body in which a foreign organ has been transplanted. The body rejected this organ for 25 years but somebody (namely the US) gave antibiotics until the body was prepared to accept the transplant. The US succeeded and the body is now prepared to accept the organ. But the foreign organ is not prepared to accept the body. Fahmy asked the Secretary to tell the Israelis that Egypt is ready to sign a peace agreement and end belligerency. “They will say no, we want diplomatic relations, open frontiers and tourism. This is all Israeli acrobatics, to disguise the fact that they don’t want peace.”

Fahmy said the crux of the problem is the Palestinians. The Israelis say they will not sit with the PLO because it is “terrorist” but Israel sat with the PLO in the Security Council.⁹ What is the difference between the PLO sitting in the Security Council during the Middle East debate and sitting in Geneva which after all resulted from UNSC Resolution 338? The fact is, Fahmy said, the Arabs must solve the Palestinian problem politically to have peace for themselves. As long as the Palestinian problem remains, no Arab state can be assured of peace.

The Secretary said that the Israelis would agree about solving the Palestinian problem. They define peace in terms of a peace treaty, withdrawal from territory and the solution of the Palestinian problem. However, the PLO still stands by its charter and rejects resolutions 242 and 338 as the basis for negotiations.¹⁰ He added that the Palestinian problem is broader than that of the PLO since it requires recognition of the legitimate interests of the Palestinians. Fahmy said the Israelis continue to hide behind semantics to avoid peace. If tomorrow the UNSC is convened on the ME, Israel would come and sit with the PLO. It is illog-

⁹ See *Foreign Relations*, 1969–1976, vol. XXVI, Arab-Israeli Dispute, 1974–1976, Document 252, footnote 3.

¹⁰ A reference to the Palestinian National Charter; see footnote 6, Document 6.

ical that they cannot also come to Geneva. In addition, they want the PLO to recognize them first. This demand for recognition shows that the PLO represents a nation. Otherwise, why does Israel ask for recognition? Fahmy asked what right Israel has to choose who represents whom? Does he have the right to choose who represents Israel? "I might prefer Golda or Peres or Rabin." Twenty-one chiefs of state have agreed that the PLO represent the Palestinians.¹¹ In addition the US during the Lebanese War had come to him (Fahmy) to ask that he arrange for meetings between US representatives in Beirut and the PLO and Fatah to assist in the evacuation of American personnel. The US had planned to send in the Sixth Fleet to do this. "I stopped the Sixth Fleet. I said let me arrange it. It would have been a big mistake to send in the Sixth Fleet. Fatah cooperated 100 percent in evacuating US personnel. I did this on more than one occasion and received messages of appreciation from President Ford and Kissinger." Fahmy said one must live with the facts of life. The US Congress makes a problem about sitting with the PLO but the US was able to do so to protect its own citizens. For the past three years Egypt has been told the US was to have contacts with the PLO, but they have always been delayed because of US elections, etc. If Egypt is ready to accept Israel it means automatically that the Palestinians will accept Israel and live peacefully with it perhaps with a link with Jordan.

The Secretary said that there were two separate questions: the solution of the Palestinian problem and the procedural question of how to get to Geneva. He asked what are the positions of the Arab countries and the Palestinians on the procedural question? Fahmy responded that there was no difference among the Arab states. Syria, Jordan and Egypt have all informed UNSYG Waldheim that they are ready to go to Geneva and that the PLO should be represented as an independent delegation. The Secretary said this was the crux of the procedural problem. Fahmy said that he could not and would not wish to negotiate for others, including the Palestinians. Only the Palestinians can do this. Egypt can only press them to change their Charter and they will do so. He added parenthetically that he had been with Arafat this morning. Fahmy thought the Israelis must have told the Secretary that they were in no hurry. "We offer them peace and they say no—no hurry." Fahmy said that Egypt has rejected a unified Arab delegation but if he played the Israeli game he would agree to a unified delegation led by Arafat, Abu Iyad and Kaddumi. Israel calls the PLO "terrorists" but if they recognize Israel, it will accept them as nice people. In addition, they would accept the PLO as members of the Jordanian delegation. The Israelis are not consistent. What Egypt asked from the US, Fahmy said, is a

¹¹ A reference to the Rabat Conference; see footnote 8, Document 6.

package deal on a settlement. It could be given, publicly or privately, to Israel and Egypt and both sides will negotiate it with you. "Maybe Geneva is not necessary at all. Give me a package deal, not 20 kilometers."

The Secretary asked if Arafat would be willing to change the PLO charter in a way that would not affect res. 242? Fahmy said he is trying hard with PLO, but if Arafat accepts 338 Israel would say no. Fahmy said that if the cochairmen of the MEPC issued an invitation in which it invites the PLO to participate in the MEPC stating "having in mind that all countries in the area have a right to live in peace and security within their own boundaries, including the Palestinian people or state," he will force Arafat to come tomorrow. He reiterated that the Arabs are moving toward peace but Israel is running from the US. He asked who is saying no now? The Secretary said that in his interview in Israel he had made clear that he was seeking the views of all the other parties before making decisions but when asked specific questions he would reply honestly. Fahmy asked for an answer to his proposal on the invitation to the PLO based on above language. He said Egypt is ready to work on the Palestinians to change their Charter and come to Geneva under a "good umbrella" but the US should not ask PLO to commit suicide. Fahmy considers the Palestinian problem as another face of the procedural problem. He said Egypt could not negotiate for others but at Geneva it will use its weight with Syria, Jordan and the Palestinians to move things along.

The Secretary asked if Egypt would be prepared to go to Geneva without preconditions? Fahmy responded he would be prepared to have any subject put on the table and he himself would put everything from A to Z on. He would, for example, ask for the same security guarantees for Egypt that Israel asks for. He said Egypt accepts Res. 242 and, in the final analysis, it would be willing to discuss everything with the Israelis including how the area will develop in the next 50 years. The Secretary asked if that meant normalization of relations? Fahmy said 242 provides for living in peace, and Israel should normalize relations with the PLO and form a common market with the Palestinians. As for Egypt, he said he was not ready as a precondition for Geneva to say he would discuss diplomatic relations, but he asked how could he prevent it. He would discuss everything. If there are disagreements it would be for the US and Russia to facilitate agreement. With regard to diplomatic relations, Fahmy said, international law must be respected. Egypt cannot be told that Israel will not withdraw unless it could have a diplomatic mission in Cairo. This would be a diminishing of Egyptian sovereignty.

The Secretary asked what Fahmy saw coming out of a comprehensive settlement? Fahmy said complete withdrawal to the '67 borders and "secure boundaries." Asked to define "secure boundaries," Fahmy

cited Sinai II and the establishment of early warning stations, SFM and UNEF. He said demilitarized zones and other devices could be added to these installations, on the other borders. This would provide “ground security.” Political security was also required and if Egypt signs a peace agreement it would mean that it accepts Israel. Israeli flags would fly on Israeli ships passing through the Canal and visiting Egyptian Canal cities. Egypt would be prepared to grant this immediately and it should not, therefore, be necessary for any force or UNEF to have soldiers at Sharm al Shaykh. He stressed that the peace agreement to be permanent must be just since leaders come and go.

The Secretary asked what the Foreign Minister envisioned for the Palestinians? Fahmy said a West Bank–Gaza state with some kind of link with Jordan. Egypt had already discussed this linkage with Arafat and King Hussein. The Secretary asked if this would be an independent Palestinian state or a confederation. Fahmy said probably two independent states under a confederal system.

Fahmy urged that real movement toward peace be made during 1977. The Secretary said that the US has said there must be movement during the second half of 1977. It is, however, probably unrealistic to get substantive movement during the first half in view of the Israeli elections. Fahmy agreed that they could not get to substantive questions before the second half of 1977 but urged starting earlier. The Secretary said he did not rule out some kind of meeting before the second half of 1977 but was only being realistic. Fahmy said “we are not pushing anyone for substantive meetings before the second half.” Egyptian view is to get the PLO to change a little, the Israelis to change a little, meet in Geneva, and then adjourn. The Secretary asked if there wasn’t a danger in raising expectations by merely putting on a show in Geneva. Fahmy said the UNSC will in any case be meeting in March after Waldheim submits his report.¹² He said Egypt would, in any case, not want to go to Geneva until there was agreement on the scenario that would be followed. It would be a major step even though it may be impossible to discuss substantive issues. The Secretary asked what the rush was to get there if no one is ready? Fahmy said he had predicted that Rabin would move up the date of elections to stall. If Egypt had an agreement that it could discuss substantive issues at Geneva in May with the PLO in attendance, he was ready to agree. Since Egypt had no such agreement, it must press for an early meeting. At the Security Council meeting in March he did not plan to ask for a resolution in

¹² Waldheim submitted a report to the Security Council in February on consultations he held regarding the early reconvening of the Geneva Peace Conference. The Security Council held three meetings in March to consider his report. See *Yearbook of the United Nations, 1977*, pp. 284–288.

order not to embarrass the US. If there is a resolution and the US vetoes it he plans to go to the General Assembly under the “Uniting for Peace” resolution.

The Secretary emphasized that the Administration is committed to helping to get the parties together. Fahmy said the parties should play the game as grownups. They cannot fool each other and all sides know it. They should try to examine all alternatives in more businesslike way. Egypt cannot leave 1977 nor accept the Israeli argument of no movement until the end of the Sinai II agreement in 1978. Egypt is obliged to move forward. The Secretary pointed out that the Israeli government had said it was prepared to go to Geneva in the second half of 1977.

The Secretary asked what Fahmy wished to do about press queries on the arms request. Fahmy said to say nothing. But the Secretary said he could not do that. Fahmy said he would leave it to the Secretary. He personally would say nothing. The Secretary said the possibility of a list being presented had already appeared in the American press. He would give more thought to the handling of the press queries and discuss it with Fahmy later. Meeting ended at 1430 hours.

10. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Cairo, February 17, 1977, 7–8:45 p.m.

PARTICIPANTS

Egyptians

President Anwar El Sadat

Vice President Mubarak

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ismail Fahmy

Ambassador Osama Al Baz (Note taker)

Americans

Secretary of State Vance

Ambassador Eilts

Under Secretary Habib

Assistant Secretary Atherton

DCM Matthews (Note taker)

While photographers were taking pictures the President commented that he had been fasting all day, as is his custom on Thursdays. He and Secretary Vance agreed that they would meet with the press immediately following their own meeting.

President Sadat began by stating this was a happy occasion for him to meet and welcome Secretary Vance to Egypt as a friend and representative of a friendly country and a friendly President with whom he hoped to have the best of friendly relations. He wanted to seize this opportunity to express deepest gratitude for the prompt and substantial American assistance after Egypt's recent economic crisis;² the American action had touched all Egyptians deeply. The President looked forward to solidifying the friendship between our two countries.

President Sadat said that Secretary Vance had come at a crucial moment in the Middle East and he wished to thank him for the initiative of having come so promptly after taking office. Cooperation between Egypt and the US in the peace process had begun in November 1973; since then we have been working together for a permanent peace in the area. Now everything is ready for further advances; the Arab position has been determined and they were now ready to start a new momentum to peace. In an aside, the President said the Soviets had been "furious" because Sadat had said the US could play the only important role for peace. He went on that with the help of President Carter and Secretary Vance we can together provide momentum for peace and justice, and it is for this reason the President welcomed the Secretary's

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P850128–2040. Secret; Nodis. The meeting took place at Sadat's Presidential home called the Barrages.

² See footnote 2, Document 9.

visit. From the Egyptian side he could assure us of every possible help, understanding and cooperation to reach peace in the area. This is the responsibility of the US and not of the Soviet Union.

The President went on to review the importance of the US role in the peace process. For more than 25 years the Arabs and Israelis had no confidence in each other and needed someone to come between them in whom both could have confidence. They both now have full confidence in the US and in President Carter. The Soviets have no real role to play except perhaps a negative one. The President concluded his opening remarks by repeating his welcome to Secretary Vance as a friend and representative of a friendly President and country, and he reiterated Egypt's thanks for our economic assistance.

Secretary Vance expressed his appreciation for the President's remarks and said he extended warmest regards from President Carter and from himself. We have long admired President Sadat's statesmanship and help in the search for peace. We are glad we could help with Egypt's economic problems and we will try to continue to do so.

As to the purpose of his trip, Secretary Vance said he felt the importance of bringing peace to the area and had therefore undertaken his first mission abroad to come to the Middle East to meet its leaders and to emphasize the importance we attach to continuing momentum towards peace. He had also come to learn the problems of the area, the positions of the countries involved and to obtain a better appreciation of how the US could be a mediator. The Secretary looked forward to working with the Egyptians as friends and he believed that we can indeed start the momentum. The Secretary said that we will cooperate in a spirit of friendship with the President in the search ahead. We expect to counsel with Egypt at each stage of the process so that we know where we stand and can concert our views.

At this point the Secretary said that we hoped very much that President Sadat could come to visit the US and meet President Carter and then handed a letter to President Sadat from President Carter.³ President Sadat responded that it would be his pleasure to come to meet President Carter.

³ In Carter's February 14 letter to Sadat, he expressed his appreciation for Sadat's efforts to "bring a better life to your people and to end the long and tragic conflict that has dominated so much of the recent history of the Middle East." Carter also sought Sadat's views on devising security arrangements for future agreements as well as Sadat's counsel regarding "the best means of meeting Palestinian interests." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Trips/Visits File, Box 102, 2/14–21/77 Vance Trip to the Middle East: 2/18/77–3/77)

Secretary Vance suggested it would be helpful to him to have the President's thoughts as to how to proceed and his vision of the ultimate objectives of the peace process.

President Sadat then gave a resume of his relations with the US and his attempts to get the US involved in the Middle East. Egypt had been in a state of confrontation with the US for 18 years when he took office in October 1970. Shortly thereafter on December 24, 1970 he had sent his first message to the President of the United States. Two months later he had made the first public initiative in the Arab world towards peace, and only he could have done so. On February 4, 1971 he stated he was ready for a peace agreement with Israel if Israel moved its forces back from the Canal to the passes and if Egyptian troops could then cross to the other side of the Canal. He had suggested this process could take six months to complete and he would then be ready to resume diplomatic relations with the US. Here the President commented that when Eliot Richardson had come to Egypt after the death of Nassar he had reported to Washington that Sadat only had a maximum of two months to remain in power before he would be overthrown. The President went on that his February 1971 proposal was essentially the same as what in fact had happened after the October war. He had made it in the hope that it would defuse the situation and let Jarring continue his mediation efforts.⁴ However, nothing happened as a result. Secretary Rogers had come in May 1971 to see what could be done. Mrs. Meir had told our Ambassador in Tel Aviv that if any Arab leader was ready for peace, she would put all her cards on the table. Sadat had pointed out to Secretary Rogers that he had stated this in his proposal three months earlier. In May 1971 President Podgorny had visited Cairo and had signed a Treaty of Friendship with Egypt. In July 1971 Secretary Rogers sent Sadat a series of questions concerning the Treaty and asked whether it would impede Egypt's ability to seek a resolution of the Middle East problem. Sadat had replied that the Treaty placed no restrictions on his freedom of action and would therefore pose no problem in the search for peace. In July 1972 President Sadat had ordered the Soviet forces out of Egypt and they had departed. Still nothing happened as far as the US was concerned and Sadat waited for a response from Dr. Kissinger. Two weeks later Dr. Kissinger asked for a meeting with the Egyptian side and Sadat named his Councilor to meet with Kissinger, but this could not be arranged until February 1973. Kissinger then told Sadat's Councilor that Egypt must be practical

⁴ A reference to U.N. Special Representative Gunnar Jarring of Sweden, who was charged with mediating the Arab-Israeli dispute by U.N. Secretary General U Thant in November 1967 as prescribed in U.N. Security Council Resolution 242. Jarring presented his report on January 4, 1971, but it made no headway toward an Arab-Israeli settlement as both sides held divergent views on the meaning of Resolution 242.

because it had been defeated; the US could help “only in the margin of that defeat.” By then Sadat was preparing for the October war. After the war Secretary Kissinger came, diplomatic relations were resumed, the six points were agreed upon,⁵ relations with the Soviets became very tense and the peace process was started.

The President went on in his historical review to say Secretary Kissinger had been a man of trust—he had met with Kissinger in the same room that we were in now—and had reached the First Disengagement Agreement.⁶ In the course of working out this agreement in Aswan the negotiations reached a deadlock because neither the Egyptians nor the Israelis had any confidence in each other. Sadat had therefore asked for an American proposal to break the deadlock, which Kissinger then made. The result was that the First Disengagement Agreement was an American proposal. This demonstrated the need for confidence in a negotiator. Egypt now has more confidence in the US than even the Israelis do, despite all the assistance the US has given them. Sadat said he wished to emphasize this because it proves without the US the parties cannot reach anything.

President Sadat went on that then came Watergate, then President Nixon resigned shortly after his visit to Egypt. Then in June 1975 Sadat met with President Ford in Salzburg⁷ and they agreed to attempt a second step despite the failure of the effort in March of that year.⁸ Sadat proceeded to open the Suez Canal on June 6 and returned the refugees to the cities despite the fact that they were under the guns of the Israeli

⁵ A reference to the November 11, 1973, Six-Point Agreement between Israel and Egypt, signed at Kilometer 101 on the Cairo-Suez road by Egyptian General Mohammed Abdel Ghani Gamasy and Israeli General Aharon Yariv. The six points focused on the maintenance of a cease-fire between Israeli and Egyptian forces, the movement of non-military supplies, the use of U.N. supervision, and plans for the turnover of prisoners of war. See *Foreign Relations, 1969–1976*, vol. XXV, Arab-Israeli Crisis and War, 1973, Document 324.

⁶ The first disengagement agreement, agreed to by Israel and Egypt on January 18, 1974, and formally signed at Kilometer 101 on January 24, disengaged Egyptian and Israeli forces after the cease-fire in the October 1973 war. It also led to Israel withdrawing its troops west of the Suez canal as well as from a small area east of the Canal. The U.N. helped create buffer zones in the area Israel vacated and stationed a second United Nations Emergency Force to keep Egyptian and Israeli forces separated. See *Foreign Relations, 1969–1976*, vol. XXVI, Arab-Israeli Dispute, 1974–1976, Document 16.

⁷ Ford met with Sadat in Salzburg June 1–2, 1975. For memoranda of conversation of those talks, see *Foreign Relations, 1969–1976*, vol. XXVI, Arab-Israeli Dispute, 1974–1976, Documents 177 and 178.

⁸ Negotiations for a second Egyptian-Israeli disengagement agreement broke down in March 1975, despite Secretary Kissinger’s shuttle diplomacy in the region during that month.

forces. Finally in September 1975 the second disengagement agreement was reached.⁹

Having completed his historical review, President Sadat responded to Secretary Vance's request for his views on how to proceed. He said that now the time is ripe for a permanent solution, a "global solution" to establish peace here once and for all. His comments about the importance of the US role applied now and in the future. The US must pursue this role despite the great trouble we would have with Israel, which he knew would be severe. After the second disengagement agreement there had been severe attacks on Egypt by Syria and Libya, but then came the meetings in Riyadh and Cairo¹⁰ and now the major Arab countries agreed with Sadat's policies. The same result would apply to the Palestinians. Sadat had publicly proposed a "certain declared relationship" between Palestine and Jordan; no one else in the Arab world could have said this and gotten away with it. Asad had said he himself could not make such a statement but Sadat had gone ahead. All was now ready for the process to continue. Sadat believed that Geneva was the proper place for discussions because all the parties would be there. Egypt's view was that all parties concerned should come to Geneva. However, without the help of the US for agreement on the broad outlines of a settlement, there would be no positive results in Geneva and it would have no point. The Soviets would simply auctioneer and play the most extremist role. The Israelis would play for time because they fear peace. Sadat had only realized this after Golda Meir left the Israeli government; she had guts and could face the Knesset. In fact she was the only man in Israel and the only hope for Egypt, he remarked with amusement. President Sadat went on that without US help to bring an agreement on an outline of the whole thing, there was no need for Geneva; otherwise there would only be speeches. Asad has realized that the US is the key to peace and he agrees with Sadat on this, although he cannot say so publicly.

The Soviets have nothing to offer except their ability to undermine and create chaos so that the Arabs will have to ask for Soviet assistance. Since November 1973 and the six points Egypt has received nothing from the Soviets except some military supplies due under earlier agreements. The only exception was when Brezhnev had cancelled his planned visit and some Soviet arms had been sent as a palliative. The Soviets had replaced all of the Syrian arms lost in the October war by October 22, 1973, and Syria had even lost 1200 tanks in one day. The

⁹ The second disengagement agreement was reached on September 1, 1975. The text of the agreement is in *Foreign Relations*, 1969–1976, vol. XXV, Arab-Israeli Dispute, 1974–1976, Document 226.

¹⁰ See footnote 5, Document 7.

same was true with Israel; the US had replaced all its arms by October 22. Sadat on the other hand had received no replacements. The balance of power in the Middle East lay not with Syria or Israel but with Egypt.

The President concluded by returning to his views on how to proceed by saying that if we can convene in Geneva this year and agree on a framework for peace, we can then return later to negotiate an agreement. He assured the Secretary of Egypt's cooperation, saying, "I shall never let you down".

Secretary Vance said he deeply appreciated receiving the President's views and comments. He shared Sadat's opinion that the time is ripe to move ahead. He agreed that Geneva is the proper place and noted that he had said that we should seek to convene Geneva in second half of 1977. From a practical standpoint it would not be possible to do so before the Israeli elections and we must realistically look to the fall of 1977 when we can be properly prepared for the conference. The U.S. will devote as much time and effort as necessary, go wherever needed to play its proper role in the process. The Secretary agreed with Sadat's views about the Soviets; however, they could play a blocking role. He, therefore, thought it important to refer continually to them as Co-Chairman of the conference, to make it clear that they had obligations to seek peace and help bring it about. They should not be put in a position of being publicly humiliated or be forced to lose face.

With regard to the substance of the peace settlement, the Secretary believed there were three elements involved: peace, withdrawal and resolution of the Palestinian problem. There was general agreement that these are the three key issues. There are differences of view as to how to define these issues and what they mean, and Geneva was the proper place to discuss them. The Secretary had not listed the issues in any order of priority.

The Secretary said that the most difficult procedural problem is the PLO and its participation; to get to Geneva this must be resolved. During his visit yesterday,¹¹ the Israelis had listed three issues concerning the PLO: its Covenant which called for the destruction of Israel, and resolutions 242 and 338 which the PLO refused to accept. President Sadat interjected that they would continue to refuse to accept 242 and 338 because of differences among the Palestinians (not just among the PLO). Secretary Vance asked for the President's thoughts about the three issues of peace, withdrawal and the Palestinian problem.

President Sadat responded that he thought the Palestinian question should be given first place because the real problem is not the Sinai or the Golan Heights. Sadat said he had declared his position and the

¹¹ A reference to Vance's talks with the Israelis. See Documents 6 and 7.

Palestinians at first attacked him as a result. He thought they should have a state on the West Bank and Gaza Strip connected by a corridor; the corridor would mean coexistence because it would run through Israel. His proposal would put the responsibility on the Palestinians to conduct themselves properly and to end terrorism and hijacking, with which all the Arabs were fed up. He felt we should let them have their own state to give them a greater sense of responsibility.

President Sadat said he believed that before we convene in Geneva there must be an official declaration on PLO relations with Jordan. He had told Arafat a few days before Secretary Vance's arrival that he needed to be able to tell the Secretary what had been arranged. Arafat had agreed that there should be a "United Arab State" of the PLO and Jordan similar to the Egyptian-Syrian-Libyan Confederation. Sadat had given King Hussein a number of papers on the Confederation, its leadership, its Federal Parliament and its cabinet, with each member of the Confederation having its own similar institutions.

Sadat said that Israel could have whatever guarantees it wished including signing a defense treaty with the U.S. This was all right with Egypt but Sadat would ask for the same for the Arab world, except for the defense treaty.

The President said the most difficult problem was Jerusalem. Only he could make such a proposal, but his view was that the whole city should be internationalized, both the Israeli and Arab parts. None of the Arabs would ever agree to Israeli control of part of the city. With the question of the Palestinians and their participation in Geneva, Sadat could do something and had gotten Arafat to agree to his proposal. Thus he could manage to find a solution to this aspect, but on Jerusalem he could find no compromise.

Returning to the question of guarantees, the President said that at Sharm al Sheikh the Israelis could either take his word, such as a statement in a peace agreement that the Gulf of Aqaba was an international waterway, or a U.N. contingent could be sent there. As regards questions of borders, he would agree to demilitarized zones on a reciprocal basis taking into account the relative sizes of the two countries, Israel being much smaller than Egypt. He would agree to having UN forces in the DMZ.

Secretary Vance asked whether the DMZ would be worked out bilaterally or in a bigger forum. President Sadat responded that it could take place in Geneva in a committee with US help. He was ready to accept UN forces but not under any circumstances Soviet forces. The Soviets could be co-guarantors but their soldiers could not be there. Sadat believed the same kind of early warning system as was presently in the Sinai passes could be installed along the borders. The Israeli warning system would have to be in their own territory and the Egyptian would

be on its side of the border; the DMZ would be on both sides of the border.

Turning to withdrawal, Sadat suggested that this should not be given too great importance because otherwise the Israelis would stall and ask for a three or five year phased withdrawal. In the 1956 evacuation in the Sinai,¹² Israeli forces had been withdrawn in a two-month period; he was willing to give them six months but not a long period for withdrawal. The President summed up saying he was looking for a permanent peace. He was ready for any guarantees except that he would not sign a military pact because this was not Egypt's policy. When he had agreed to the American presence in the Sinai, the Soviets had been furious and he had been criticized by some of the Arabs; however, now the Arabs agreed with what he had done in giving the US the upper hand.

The Secretary asked whether in speaking of withdrawal Sadat was talking about withdrawal to the 1967 borders. The President responded "quite right", though there could be certain rectifications on Jordan's border on a reciprocal basis with some villages being exchanged. However, this could not be done in the Sinai. Sadat said he had a letter dated December 9, 1971 from Secretary Rogers stating that the US recognizes the international border of Egypt, which meant the 1967 border.¹³ The West Bank was different because it did not have an international border with Israel. When the Secretary asked about the Golan Heights, Sadat said the same principle applies.

The President noted that he had learned something surprising during Waldheim's visit. When the First Disengagement Agreement was worked out, President Asad said he would accept only observers and not forces: the observers turned out to be from the UN. The Golan was entirely different from the Sinai because almost every inch was cultivated while the Sinai was almost all desert. Asad had therefore not wanted forces but only observers on top of Golan. Waldheim had now said Asad agrees to having UN forces on the Golan and not just observers. Foreign Minister Fahmy commented that the UN observer forces had been greatly inflated to fulfill the role of forces but were called observers to meet Asad's problem.

Returning to the question of withdrawal, President Sadat reiterated that this should not be done over a long period because Israel would stall as it had tried to do before.

¹² A reference to Israel's withdrawal from the Sinai Peninsula after pressure from the United States and Soviet Union compelled it to leave shortly after it had taken over the Peninsula during the 1956 Suez Crisis.

¹³ The letter has not been found.

Turning to the question of peace the President said he was ready, the Soviets could be included as Co-Chairman and he would accept whatever the Israelis wanted. Then the state of belligerence would officially be ended for the first time since the existence of the state of Israel and everything would be "normalized".

Secretary Vance said he wished to pick up one technical point concerning the corridor between the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. He asked if this would involve cession of territory or easement of land. The Secretary explained the latter was a technical term and he was asking whether Israel would give up land as an international corridor or grant rights of access for free passage. The President said he would leave that to the experts and the Foreign Minister commented that this was a simple problem and the corridor should be a UN one.

Secretary Vance said he was interested in several terms the President had used and wondered whether the latter had meant anything specific in his use of the term "global". The President responded that he had not and that he agreed with President Carter's statement in *Time* Magazine "let's drop power politics and try world order."

Secretary Vance suggested that we return to the problem of the PLO. President Sadat said he was doing his best to find a solution. He was going to tell the Secretary something which he was going to pretend he had not said. Four days ago he had met with Arafat about PLO participation in Geneva. (He had first asked him about his relations with King Hussein, which was to be declared before the Geneva conference; Sadat had then informed Hussein of Arafat's agreement to a confederation.) Sadat had asked Arafat about alternatives on PLO participation. He had explained that Secretary Vance was coming and he wanted to discuss with him what could be done, much as he had done with Secretary Kissinger. Sadat gave three alternatives from Arafat as to how the PLO could be represented at Geneva:

(1) Representation through the UN. This would not be acceptable to Israel because it completely distrusts the UN.

(2) Representation through the Arab League. Sadat had pointed out that the Assistant Secretary General is an Egyptian general. Here Sadat explained to the Secretary that two years before the Arab League representative would have been a Jordanian officer which would have been unacceptable to the PLO; however, they were now more moderate. Returning to the possibility of Arab League representation, Sadat said he had told Arafat that the Israelis would complain about the Arab League because it contains Qaddafi and other rejectionist elements.

(3) Representation by General Gamasy in his role as head of the Joint Command between Egypt and Syria, shortly to include Jordan. Sadat said he had agreed to this idea if the staff were Jordanian; thus King Hussein could bring back their land to the Palestinians.

Sadat concluded that he had not told the Secretary any of the above and the Secretary laughed and agreed. The President then asked Foreign Minister Fahmy to explain the results of his discussion with Arafat earlier that morning.

Foreign Minister Fahmy said that Arafat had arrived the day before and had wanted to consult before the Secretary arrived. Arafat had agreed to change the Covenant and its 10 points¹⁴ during the March 12 Palestinian National Council meeting. This would involve a difficult negotiating process and Fahmy could not be sure what would result. President Sadat commented that there were extremists on both the Israeli and PLO sides.

Fahmy went on to say that Arafat had one front under his leadership and Egypt was pushing for a logical and final solution for the Palestinian problem. He asserted that the PLO had reduced its demands and was not asking for the moon. The President could bring about the necessary shifts in position. On Geneva Arafat had said “give me an invitation”. Fahmy had responded by asking him about resolution 242 and said he pointed out that even its reference to the Palestinians as refugees could be positive because the Palestinians could claim their right to go back to their homeland. Fahmy had reminded Arafat that the US had sponsored UN Resolutions on the right of return for many years.

Fahmy commented that the Palestinians are under pressure. At the same time they believe they have gained politically through Arafat’s speech to the UN,¹⁵ the large number of countries which have recognized them and their gains in Africa and Asia. In response to Arafat’s request to Egypt to give the PLO an invitation to Geneva, Fahmy had responded that if Egypt did and the PLO did not show up it would be the PLO’s responsibility. Fahmy told Arafat he was ready to find a formula if Arafat would accept an invitation stating that every state in the area had a right to live in peace and security, to which Arafat had responded that this was acceptable if mention was made of the right to a Palestinian state. This formula Fahmy thought was in accordance with Resolution 242. He said that an invitation need be extended only to the PLO, since the other parties were already members of the Geneva Conference and did not need invitations. Fahmy went on that this was really a question of semantics. He thought that if the PLO can get an invitation, vague as it is, they would show up at Geneva.

¹⁴ In June 1974, the Palestinian National Council adopted the Ten Point program, which called for Palestinian authority over any piece of “liberated” Palestinian land as well as an active effort to establish a secular, bi-national state where all would enjoy equal rights and status.

¹⁵ On November 13, 1974, Arafat addressed the U.N. General Assembly. A translated transcript of the speech is in the *New York Times*, November 14, 1974, p. 22.

The Secretary asked about other Palestinians and whether Arafat could speak for the bulk of them. President Sadat responded that at Rabat the Arabs had given responsibility to Arafat, who was the most moderate PLO leader although very weak. Sadat said he could not predict what might happen in the future about the Palestinians, particularly when those on the West Bank were able to make their views known. He concluded that we should leave the future of Palestine leadership to the Palestinians to decide.

Undersecretary Habib said he had been interested in President Sadat's use of several terms during the discussion, such as "global", "permanent peace" and "normalization". The Israelis would be particularly interested in the last term.

President Sadat responded that the Israelis were trying to plant misunderstandings over the question of normal relations. They have said that Sadat had claimed that real peace could only come in the next generation. Sadat denied that he had said this. He had said that he was willing to reach a peace agreement on equal terms between the Israelis and the Arabs and end the state of belligerency. There have been no peace agreements in the past which have stated that the parties must establish diplomatic relations, have open borders, and conduct economic and commercial relations. These questions are all part of a nation's national sovereignty. President Sadat had said that these matters should be left for future generations to decide on the basis of the conduct of the parties involved. Before that, let us have a peace agreement. The Israeli contentions go back to an idea of Ben Gurion. The President emphasized that he desired a permanent peace with guarantees and defined borders. Peace should not be postponed for three generations and it should not be an armistice agreement but a peace agreement normalizing things after 28 years of bitterness between the two countries. Sadat pointed out that the US had not recognized the Soviet Union until many years after the 1917 revolution.

Secretary Vance commented that while he could not speak for the Congress, he had asked some Congressmen whom he believed were well informed whether the Congress would approve a role for the US in peace-keeping operations to support a just and lasting peace. The Congressmen had said that they felt the Congress would agree.

The Secretary asked whether there was anything further they could think of to bring about mutual restraint and avoid incidents that might provoke an explosion. President Sadat responded that on his side he saw no need for further ways of ensuring restraint. The Secretary could be assured that there was no risk of an explosion from Egypt and under the Sinai Agreement the situation would be quiet until October 1978. The Secretary said that he had also asked the Israelis to exercise restraint. The President said he was glad to hear the Secretary had

done so, but asserted the Israelis often provoked incidents, such as harassment in the Gulf of Suez. The Secretary said he had also talked to the Israelis on this subject and urged them to show restraint.

Foreign Minister Fahmy also mentioned the incident involving a drone which had strayed into Egyptian territory with the danger that the reaction of the Egyptian air defense forces might be uncontrollable. The President noted that the Air Force had asked that two of its aircraft do the same thing over Israeli controlled territory.

The Secretary asked if the Joint Commission could not play a useful role in resolving minor matters of this sort. Foreign Minister Fahmy responded that the Joint Commission was working well, but it should not engage itself in matters of principle such as drilling in the Gulf of Suez. Undersecretary Habib agreed that matters of principle should not be addressed by the Commission, but that minor incidents such as the recent problem with the AMOCO barge setting anchors seemed to be appropriate for the Commission. Mr. Habib said that General Gamasy had told him at lunch that many things had been resolved in the Commission.

In response to a comment that the US had a major role to play in defusing dangerous situations, Secretary Vance said that we had succeeded in doing so in Southern Lebanon, which seemed to be in better shape than earlier, and the US was continuing its efforts to keep the situation calm. President Sadat responded that this had to be a US responsibility.

Assistant Secretary Atherton asked for Egypt's views on the timing process of the Geneva Conference and what steps should be taken in view of the Israeli elections. President Sadat responded that during Waldheim's visit, the Egyptians had proposed a commission be established in the bureau of the Secretary General to work on the problem. This proposal could be made by Egypt with American support, since the US is the major element in the problem. However, the Israelis refused this suggestion, which had been made to try to give momentum to the peace process. The President commented that the result of the elections in Israel will be a government just like the present one and they will, therefore, have to call for new elections. Vice President Mubarak commented that we will get Mrs. Meir back, to the amusement of the participants.

Undersecretary Habib asked where sovereignty would repose in President Sadat's model of the "United Arab States" and whether this might be in the crown. President Sadat responded that it would not be in the crown but in the two heads of state meeting every two months, as in the confederation between Egypt, Syria and Libya. Undersecretary Habib said that he hoped it would not be like the current situation between Egypt and Libya and President Sadat heartily agreed. He noted

that the arrangement with Syria was going well. President Sadat said that he would not now recommend that sovereignty rest in the Jordanian crown. There was a psychological problem, as was seen when he had proposed the link between the PLO and Jordan, which had caused a great uproar. However, that would not exclude the possibility of some such arrangements in the future, since after several sessions with the King, things might work out that way.

Secretary Vance said that this had been a very helpful discussion and that he appreciated it very much. He then noted that he and the President would be meeting with the press and wondered what they should say. For his part the Secretary thought he should say that it had been a helpful and informative meeting, that he would be going on to other states in the area to discuss the situation with their leaders and that he was looking forward to the leaders in the area coming to the US to discuss the problem with President Carter.¹⁶

Secretary Vance then said that President Carter had announced to-night that the US would not sell concussion bombs to Israel.¹⁷ President Sadat said that he had just heard that and the news had just come over the Israeli radio. Secretary Vance said this had been a difficult decision, but he had agreed with it. President Sadat characterized it as a “very positive and constructive” move and Foreign Minister Fahmy called it “very wise”.

Secretary Vance referred to the question of nuclear reactors for Egypt and Israel. He said the Carter Administration was making a study of nuclear reactors on a world-wide basis; the study would not be finished until the end of this month and then a couple of weeks would be needed to consider it. In the meantime, nothing had been decided.

The Secretary said he wished to emphasize how much he appreciated the content and atmosphere of this discussion.

Ambassador Eilts asked what should be said to the press about the question of arms. Secretary Vance responded that the request had now been withdrawn and that we would consider the general question after his return to Washington. In response to press queries, the Secretary felt he thought we should say that he had discussed the question of arms transfers generally and specifically to the Middle East, and that we hope to reduce the sale of arms to the Middle East. We would say that we have no specific request, but if one is received we will deal with

¹⁶ The transcript of the news conference held by Vance and President Sadat after their February meeting is in the Department of State *Bulletin*, March 14, 1977, pp. 211–214.

¹⁷ The White House announced on February 17 that Carter had cancelled the sale of cluster bombs to Israel and any other country. (David Binder, “President Cancels Israeli Bomb Sale,” *New York Times*, February 18, 1977, p. 11)

it in accordance with the three principles that the Secretary had stated publicly.¹⁸

The Secretary also said that in the meeting with the press mention should be made of the invitation of President Sadat to visit the US. On the PLO, he would say that this was a major issue to be discussed and that while no conclusions had been reached he had obtained a better appreciation of the problem.

President Sadat then read the letter from President Carter, expressed his appreciation for it and asked what time was proposed for the visit. Secretary Vance said that we were thinking of the first week of April if that were convenient, and President Sadat said it would be. Secretary Vance explained that President Carter would like President Sadat to be the first Arab leader to visit the US.

At 8:45 p.m., meeting concluded and press was called in.

¹⁸ An apparent reference to Vance's statement in his first news conference on January 31 on reducing arms sales abroad; see Department of State *Bulletin*, February 21, 1977, p. 144–145.

11. Telegram From Secretary of State Vance to the Department of State¹

Cairo, February 17, 1977, 2356Z

Secto 2031. For the President From Secretary Vance. Subj: Discussions in Egypt.

1. My meetings in Cairo today with Pres Sadat and FornMin Fahmy² were in many ways the mirror image of my talks yesterday in Israel.³ The experience of discussing the problems of ME peace one day with Israelis and the next day with Egyptians sharply highlights the differing perceptions, emphases and political imperatives of these two principal antagonists and is a sober reminder of the difficulty of the task before us as we seek to move this area toward peace. The suspicion and distrust of each other's intentions are profound and are matched

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840072–1137. Secret; Niac Immediate; Nodis; Cherokee.

² See Documents 9 and 10.

³ See Documents 6 and 7.

by an almost total inability on each side to understand the other's political realities. Whereas the Israelis want the peace process to move at a measured pace and fear being pressed to make basic decisions too rapidly, the Egyptians reflect a sense of urgency about getting the process started and having early, visible activity to point to. The Israelis emphasize the need for concrete evidence of an Egyptian commitment to peaceful and normal relationships, insist that their security requires retention of some occupied Arab territory and oppose the idea of a separate Palestinian state or any dealings with the PLO. The Egyptians consider PLO participation in the negotiations and establishment of a Palestinian state the crux of the problem, insist on total recovery of territory occupied by Israel in 1967 and equate peace with the signing of a peace agreement and the termination of belligerency without the positive attributes of peace which Israel seeks—open borders, the exchange of persons and goods, etc.

2. In my talks with both Sadat and Fahmy, I covered in detail the same procedural and substantive issues that I discussed with the Israelis. It is clear that Sadat is the strategist and thinks in broad general terms while Fahmy is the tactician to whom Sadat leaves questions of detail. With both, however, the issue of the Palestinians was uppermost in their minds. It is clear that they have been giving considerable thoughts to ways in which the impasse over PLO participation in a reconvened Geneva Conf might be overcome. Fahmy had seen PLO leader Arafat earlier today and told me Egypt was pressing him hard to modify the PLO position on recognition of Israel. Fahmy claims Arafat is prepared, when the Palestine National Council meets in Cairo March 12, to introduce modifications in the PLO Covenant which presently rejects the existence of Israel as a sovereign Jewish state. It remains problematic, however, whether Fahmy's optimism is justified. Sadat said he was working on the PLO and Jordan to declare a formal confederation prior to Geneva—a concept clearly designed to help meet Israel's concern about a totally independent Palestinian state. On other aspects of a settlement, in addition to insisting on the primacy of the Palestinian question and the need for total Israeli withdrawal to the 1967 borders, Sadat said he was prepared to accept any forms of security arrangements and international guarantees of a settlement, including a US-Israeli military pact. He also said repeatedly Egypt was prepared for "permanent peace" but does not envisage this as including initially direct relations and interaction with Israel which he says are sovereign matters for every govt to determine.

3. On the question of the timing of a conference, both Sadat and Fahmy spoke of reconvening in Geneva the next month or two as tangible evidence of progress, even though they recognize no substantive results are possible before the Israeli elections. I stressed that realis-

tically, it was difficult to see how Geneva could reconvene before the second half of 1977. I had the impression that Sadat, at least, could live with such a timetable provided there was sufficient on-going activity of a bilateral and preparatory nature in the meantime. I pressed Fahmy hard on the question of whether Egypt was prepared to go to Geneva without prior conditions. In the end he said that provided the Palestinian participation question could be revolved and the conference was convened on the basis of Resolutions 242 and 338 Egypt would agree that nothing would be excluded from discussion at the conf.

4. In our discussion of bilateral matters, both Sadat and Fahmy were effusive in their appreciation for our economic assistance and in particular for your approval of the recently announced \$500 million impact package in the wake of the recent riots.⁴ Both reiterated repeatedly their firm determination to work with us in the peacemaking process and their complete confidence in you. Sadat said at one point: “I shall never let you down”. I was struck by their outspoken animosity toward the Soviets and their desire to work only through the US. In turn, I conveyed to Sadat your recognition of his leadership role in the Arab world and in the peacemaking process. When I gave him your letter of invitation to Washington,⁵ he was visibly delighted and accepted with alacrity.

5. In my meeting with Fahmy, after expressing satisfaction with our political and economic relationships, he expressed concern on two points. The first was what he called “Israeli provocations” citing in particular the problems raised by Israeli drilling activities in Amoco concessions in the Gulf of Suez and interference with Amoco operations in the eastern part of the Gulf.

6. Secondly, Fahmy stressed at length the problem posed for Sadat by the cut-off of Soviet arms supplies, putting this in the context of Sadat’s need to retain support of the army if he was to pursue his peace policies successfully. Fahmy then surfaced a list of military equipment which Egypt would like to obtain from us. I explained the status of our review of arms transfer policy, and your hope that other states, including those in the Middle East, would work with us to try to reduce the level of arms sales. After some discussion, Fahmy agreed not to present the list to us at this time.

7. At the end of the evening I had a private talk with Sadat.⁶ I will give you more details later but the most significant thing was his straightforward commitment to doing anything he could to bring

⁴ The U.S. aid involved a transfer of \$190 million to Egypt. See footnote 2, Document 9.

⁵ See footnote 3, Document 10.

⁶ No record of this private talk has been found.

about a settlement. In this regard he said that he could bring the other Arabs along by virtue of his substantial influence which he was prepared to use.

8. Following our meeting, Sadat and I held a joint press conference. Sadat expressed his appreciation for our economic help and his continued determination to work with us for peace. At the same time, he took the initiative to refer to the decision not to sell CBU's to Israel, which had just been announced, calling this a "statesmanlike" decision. He also announced publicly that he had accepted your invitation to visit Washington the first week of April.

Vance

12. Telegram From the Embassy in Jordan to the Liaison Office in Riyadh¹

Amman, February 19, 1977, 1743Z

1023. Subject: Memcon on US–Jordanian Meeting.

1. The Embassy forwards uncleared memcon on US Jordanian meeting held in Amman today, February 19.

2. Participants: Jordanians

His Majesty Hussein I, King of Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan

His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan

Prime Minister Mudar Badran

Chief of the Royal Court Abdul Hamid Sharaf

Lt General Zayd Bin Shaker, Commander in Chief, Jordan Armed Forces

American:

Cyrus R. Vance, Secretary of State

Thomas R. Pickering, Ambassador (notetaker)

Philip C. Habib, Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs

Alfred L. Atherton Jr., Assistant Secretary for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs

Place: Hashemiyeh Palace, Amman

¹ Source: Department of State, Office of the Secretariat Staff, Records of Cyrus Vance, Secretary of State, 1977–1980, Lot 84D241, Box 10, Vance Exdis Memcons, 1977. Secret; Immediate; Nodis.

Date: 0830–1115 am February 19, 1977

Subject: U.S.-Jordanian Discussions

3. The meeting commenced with a breakfast and only gradually evolved into discussions of substantive questions. During the meal, King Hussein, Bin Shaker and Sharaf all mentioned Jordanian need for military and economic assistance. The King in passing emphasized his concern about future stability in Egypt. Egypt did not have too many options for the future and was counting on a peace settlement to exist. Sadat was in a precarious position in the King's view.

4. Mr. Habib mentioned that the Israelis were looking at the possible use of watch stations to oversee a peace settlement. These would not substitute for Israeli strong points or settlements in the Jordan Valley or elsewhere. President Sadat also saw value in watch stations.

5. Sharaf with Atherton and the King discussed at some length the background of Resolution 242. Sharaf made the point that the language is clear and it is only the Israelis who have strayed away from the correct interpretation which calls for full withdrawal with minor border rectifications possible.

6. The Secretary asked the King about how the process of peace negotiations could get started. The King said that it would be necessary to get the PLO into the process. Jordan recognized the Israeli difficulties. Jordan itself had no love for the PLO. Without changing Rabat² Jordan itself could not get into the negotiations. There should be some way to ease Israeli objections. Jordan was studying the possibility of reciprocal recognition. In return for Israeli recognition of the rights of the Palestinians on their own soil the Palestinians would recognize the right of Israel to exist within the 1967 boundaries. The Palestinians should be given the rights of self-determination. Jordan has begun a dialogue with Palestinians about their future relations but it has not really started yet. Jordan cannot understand why Israel fears a mini-state in the West Bank. There were other ideas such as a unified delegation but Egypt would not agree to one Arab delegation (with the PLO being independently represented there). Jordan also favored functional working groups but in order to ensure that the PLO could not hold up Egypt through a veto on its own, Jordan thought that the use of majority voting in such groups might help to solve the Egyptian problem. However both Egypt and the PLO insist on separate delegations. The PLO wants to be invited but is not really sure that it will go even if it is invited. There is some talk about putting the Palestinians on a Jordanian delegation but then Palestinian identity would be lost. Jordan is in the process of trying to define more thoroughly these various options.

² See footnote 8, Document 6.

7. Mr. Habib asked about whether an Arab consensus existed. The King replied that they were agreed on many issues and that many Palestinians are reasonable people who want the right to live in peace but are not prepared to continue to live under conditions of the occupation. Most of the Arab states are agreed on this. They also believe that it depends upon the United States as to what will happen. The Arabs want to know how and when the United States will act. The Arabs talked frequently together but they cannot come and say what they want when they haven't been getting any response from the Israelis.

8. The Secretary asked whether it was realistic to aim for Geneva in the autumn of 1977. The King said he thought so and the Secretary noted that if that is the premise it helps us set a timetable for doing various things such as attempting to deal with the PLO problem and other preparatory work.

9. The King added that he thought that a conference could take place if Israel accepted total withdrawal and the return of Arab sovereignty over Jerusalem, which should be a meeting place for all people. Jordan could agree to minor border rectifications and if Jordan had a notion that Israel was really ready for complete withdrawal, when the idea of the PLO having to be at the talks might not present such a problem. In the case of Israeli agreement to total withdrawal Jordan could look again at what it might do, but short of that Jordan is helpless.

10. The Secretary noted that the Israelis believe there are three basic problems, (A) what they call peace, (B) territory and (C) the Palestinian issue. For them the most important question is peace which they equate with the return to normal relations. If that can be resolved they would look differently at territory. And if territory can be agreed, perhaps the Palestinian problem can be resolved. They agree the Palestinian problem must be resolved but put it off for later until the other two issues which they regard as primary are worked out. The Israelis are not thinking now of total withdrawal only of border rectifications. If over time a peace agreement is reached, they may have more views.

11. Mr. Habib stated the Israelis were very firm on the fact that no third state should exist to the east of them. The King said that the Arabs talked about links between the East and West Bank in the form of a federation in which the Palestinians could attain their identity. Mr. Habib thought the Israelis were thinking along those lines as well. He also noted that something that had been said in the conversation implied that the Jordanians believe the United States can define or form a consensus on peace. The King replied that if anyone can do it, it was the United States. Sharaf added that the Arabs themselves have a consensus on the substance of peace and on the PLO as well. The three confrontation states agree that Israel must exist within the region within

the 1967 boundaries. They accept the need for a state of peace and they all believe the Palestinians should be linked to Jordan. The Secretary probed Jordanian views about the end of the state of war or of belligerency and asked whether Jordan was talking in terms like Sadat of peace in several “generations.” The King responded that in his view peace in the Middle East is like it would be elsewhere in the world. He was realistic and he did not think limits should be applied. The Israelis had to make the decision. They could either have territory or peace, but not both. There were other issues such as the rights of the Palestinians to return or to have compensation, but that was involved in a UN resolution and could probably be worked out. Sadat had tried to distinguish between a peace treaty or agreement, but the King did not know what he meant. The King was for the existence of a state of peace and not for isolating Israel if the Arabs could get their territory back.

12. Mr. Atherton pointed out that the Israelis distrust the Arabs and believe Arab hesitation on the question of a peace agreement is really a device to get their territory back. They feel there is no substantive meaning to the Arab professions of good will and good intentions and this reveals the profound depth of Israeli distrust. Sharaf commented that this was a self-generated fear on the Israelis’ part. He asked how anyone can satisfy the Israelis about the Arab state of mind. It is a false issue and there is no way to give believable assurances. The Arabs can deal with guarantees and legal definitions, with a UN presence, demilitarization and so forth. But good will is a psychological state of mind. The Secretary agreed, but said that this was not a false issue for the Israelis—it was a psychological state of mind that had to be taken into account—it also very much needed to be changed. Mr. Habib thought this mind-set was the reason for the Israeli emphasis on defensible secure borders. Sharaf agreed that the psychological problem was real and the Arabs had lived with it but he added that the Israelis also desired to acquire territory and used the need for firm assurances to pursue this end. If there is anything we can do in practical terms, that is fine. But if they use the need for assurances to defend a theoretical or ideological desire to acquire more territory, then the Arabs can’t satisfy them.

13. The Secretary asked how we could begin to attack this psychological problem of motives and reciprocal concerns. The King replied that the Arabs would be helped if they knew what the end of the road was. Resolution 242 defined it in vague terms but it was not a good definition. Resolution 242 had been changed and nothing had happened. The Secretary remarked that he understood the King’s point and that there were still deep psychological concerns and fears on both sides.

14. Sharaf added that the Arabs had become more explicit on the question of peace but the Israelis were hedging on the issue of territory.

He asked if they could have more parallel commitments. Both Jarring and Kissinger worked on it but not much was produced. He saw a role for the United States in exploring this point.

15. The King added that the Israelis seemed to want direct negotiations and that the Arabs in effect were doing this by telling the Israelis publicly what they want but they find absolutely no reciprocity. He does not know how much further the Arabs can go. There is no problem. When the Arabs say a comprehensive settlement the Israelis say step-by-step. When the Arabs change, then the Israelis reverse themselves. Their game is obviously to stall and buy time. What the future holds is definitely not clear.

16. Mr. Habib pointed out that territory is particularly difficult because it is linked to the Palestinian problem. Sharaf agreed and said that the Arabs preferred to avoid calling it a territorial problem and singled it out as an “occupation” problem. The Israelis appear to insist that the territory belongs to no one and that both sides are haggling over it from an equal basis. The Arabs look at it as getting their territory back. The Israelis say they could go back with “peace”. When Arabs say they will give them peace then the Israelis ask for defensible borders. Then the Israelis say no third state can exist to the east of them. Jordan is also not for a 3rd state but Jordan itself is a third state between Israel and Saudi Arabia. Israel wants secure borders but if the Allon Plan were put into effect it would have more territory to defend in a more awkward way. The Arabs found out that the only time progress was made was after the 1973 war. It would be unfortunate if another war were required to get more movement. Now Sadat and Asad and the King were all prepared to provide assurances on peace and it would be good if the United States could play a constructive role on the key issues of territory and the Palestinians. The King could not move out alone now. In the past he had led the country with courage but he could not make peace alone after 25 years of Arab grievances. There is fear that we might lose more time and the moderate leaders in the Arab world would be severely pressed. Jordan has been hard put in the past. You only have to look at the 1970 troubles³ and its present economic problems. Jordan was adjusting now its relations with Syria. It had open bridges with the West Bank. But there must be decisive US participation in resolving the problem.

17. The King reinforced this statement by noting also that the Arabs cannot continue waiting for too long a time—that the problem cannot be allowed to languish. Otherwise there will be a build up to a

³ A reference to the Jordanian crisis of September 1970. See *Foreign Relations*, 1969–1976, vol. XXIV, Middle East and Arabian Peninsula, 1969–1972; Jordan, September 1970.

military conflict. If there is no progress, the extremists will benefit. Sadat has been badly shaken by his economic problems and without an advance on the peace front, the future is bleak for him.

18. The Secretary explored the issue of withdrawal and asked whether the Arabs would permit some border rectifications. The King in reply said that if it was on the West Bank, probably minor reciprocal rectifications could take place. Syria and Egypt are responsible for Sinai and Golan and might have different views. Secretary asked for the King's views on Jerusalem. The King mentioned "dual" sovereignty a unified city open to free movement and the capital of Israel and a "Palestine" with the right of all the religions to use the city. Secretary asked if dual sovereignty meant Arab sovereignty over the Arab sector and the King said yes. The Crown Prince added that there should be a "proliferation of flags" in Jerusalem in the context of a unified administration. He then turned to the West Bank and said the Israelis wanted a series of strong points located in the crescent around the perimeter of the West Bank. Can't we also think of having some of the Arab villages within the 1967 boundaries of Israel traded off in return for possible means of working out reciprocal arrangements to meet this Israeli desire. The Secretary asked him to spell this out further and the Crown Prince explained the location of some of these villages. The King added that there might be some value in keeping this option in mind, although he doubted the Israelis would be very easily convinced.

19. The Crown Prince continued by describing some of the "demographic realities" of Palestinian presence in the Arab world. Jordan had more refugees and more Palestinians than any other state. More thought had to be given to the problem of how they made their livelihood in the future and where they would go. Suppose UNRWA should collapse? There are many Palestinians in the Gulf and the situation could be serious. Sharaf added that this is one aspect of the role of Jordan in the future that should be researched further. The Jordan economy complements the West Bank and Gaza. Demographically perhaps only Jordan could absorb a large number of Palestinians. All of the possibility dictated a territorial entity linked in some way to Jordan. The Crown Prince said he felt that if Jordan had reconstructed and developed the West Bank in 1948 in a real way or had accepted his grandfather's proposal for the King of Palestine in 1936, there might well be no Palestinian problem today. Sharaf remarked that there could well also be a Palestinian state only on the East Bank. Sharaf said East Bankers always worried about this possibility. He said the Jordanians are seriously concerned when the Israelis make statements about having the Palestinian state on the East Bank.

20. Mr. Habib noted that the Israelis talk about ceding sovereignty but keeping some presence in the West Bank. Sharaf said the Arabs

were used to this. The Israelis recognized the 1947 partition resolution which was their birth certificate. It provided for a smaller area. Israelis transcended that in 1948 and the gradual acquisition of land continued. The Crown Prince asked about a possible Israeli consensus emerging from the elections. The Secretary said he thought there would be no real consensus but the coalition might be slightly modified. The results will be close. Mr. Atherton mentioned that the National Religious Party might be excluded. The Secretary reported that both Rabin and Yadin said they thought they could form a coalition without the NRP.⁴ Mr. Habib thought that there would be a “second generation” leader but without much authority.

21. The King then talked about the interests of Jordan’s future and its relationship to Syria. He pointed out the historical relations between Jordan and Syria and the challenge of finding a link between a republic and a monarchy. Jordan was now talking seriously about how they would go ahead in the future. There was a reasonable regime in Syria and they were in particularly close touch and he had high regard and respect for President Asad. In Lebanon the Syrian attitude had been good and Syria had played a constructive role. Looking to the future Jordan and Syria might come up with some form of federation which Jordan hoped would be relevant to others in the context of a broader Arab federation.

22. In the past Jordan had been concerned that Syria’s instability, Lebanese anarchy, and Iraqi extremism could all be linked by some form of a radical crescent in the Middle East. Asad had demonstrated great courage and did not support the extremists. In Lebanon itself Jordan was in touch with its friends and had a great deal of hope in the new younger generation. On a military relationship with Syria, this had to begin with training and doctrine. He hoped to alter the Syrians toward the Jordanian view as the right approach. The King told the Secretary he would find Asad impressive and that he should expect to spend hours in discussion with him. The King then made the point that he felt it necessary to be cautious on the future of Geneva. Sadat was too openly optimistic. He said he also thought he should play an active role to ensure that the Arabs do not break up again. Only we Arabs can lose if we begin splitting apart. The Secretary said he agreed strongly with this point. That it was very important to avoid Arab fragmentation, and nothing could be more serious. Mr. Habib asked what the Secretary should do regarding President Asad. The King said it will be important to indicate that the US is in favor of progress and intends to help in accomplishing this. The King did not feel that Asad was suspi-

⁴ Yigael Yadin founded the Democratic Movement for Change in 1976, and the National Religious Party formed in 1956 as an Orthodox Jewish political party.

cious of the United States. Asad realizes this is the beginning of a new administration, that the Secretary is on a fact-finding mission, and that he is willing to wait to see what happens.

23. Sharaf said that the King could take credit for a good bit on the evolution in Asad's position. For two years Asad had been becoming more moderate. The King noted that Asad was now in touch with a lot of people in the area and mentioned Iran and others as helpful influences on him.

24. The King said he thought the Middle East had opened up. Jordan used to be alone in its view. Now they were pleased to see other Arabs adopting the Jordanian outlook, but they would be equally unhappy to see all of this fail. The Secretary said that he saw Jordan's role as a key to bringing things together and as a bridge position, and emphasized that he wanted to have the King's advice and guidance on a continuing basis. The King agreed to stay in close touch in the future.

25. Mr. Habib asked about conditions in Iraq. The King replied that it was unstable and unpredictable and had resources enough to do damage in the region and particularly to Syria. Iraqi intelligence organizations had carried out blatant operations in Jordan. They played a malevolent role in the Gulf, particularly in Bahrain and their pressure on Kuwait was serious. They also had some presence in Lebanon. President Ceausescu of Romania appeared now to be trying to play some role in bringing Iraq and Syria back together again (possibly at Iraqi instigation), but Baath Party differences were strong.⁵ Iraq was very dangerous and was recruiting students who could be used as terrorists. Iraq was like Libya in this sense. The Secretary asked about the Iraqi leadership and the King said that the number two man, Saddam Hussein Tikriti, was bright and intelligent. The Iraqis were expansionists and had border problems with a number of their neighbors. The King also said that at the same time he wanted to build bridges to even the most radical of the leftists. The Secretary asked for the King's advice on whether the US should try to build a bridge with Iraq. The King replied "why not?" The Secretary remarked that at the present time we were cool toward Iraq in spite of some few hints from them about improving relations. The King said he thought it was worth exploring such openings very carefully. Mr. Atherton asked about what President Asad's views of this might be. The King did not reply but did say he had been shattered to find out that Iraq had now built a nine division army and was buying \$3 billion worth of modern arms from the So-

⁵ The Baath Party originated during the 1940s as a secular nationalist party movement challenging colonial rule in the Middle East. In 1963, the Baath Party gained power in Syria and in Iraq, although in Iraq it only ruled for part of that year. By 1968, however, the party regained control in Iraq.

viets. The Crown Prince said that if President Bakr dies there might be a clash between the army and the party militia with a move to the left that would help the Soviets.

26. The King said that at the last summit meeting in Cairo⁶ he had tried to talk to everyone including South Yemen and Somalia. He was surprised at their reaction. They were flabbergasted that anyone would take some time with them and were polite in return. Isolation tends to push them further away. He had been invited to visit both countries but had not yet made up his mind to go. Some form of a link often helps. Turning to a new subject the King said in the Gulf Jordan is doing all that it can. In the UAE the army is led by a Jordanian general who has difficulty in getting full cooperation. In Qatar things are good and Oman is coming along very well but they do need help and Iran is reducing its forces there. With Iran Jordan's relations are perfect and it is seeking more cooperation with Saudi Arabia. Its relations with Egypt are good, but there are only sporadic contacts with Libya.

27. The Secretary said he wanted to turn once more to the Palestinian question and asked what the U.S. could do to be helpful. Is this something the U.S. should not become involved in? Should we leave it for the Arabs to work out the relationship with the PLO. The King said you might consider getting in touch with them. It might not hurt to do this now. The Secretary said it is very difficult now for us to do anything like that. The King said the PLO includes every contradiction in the Arab world and it might be difficult to determine which part or faction to be in contact with.

28. Mr. Atherton asked what the King thought would happen at the Palestinian National Assembly.⁷ The King replied that changes are possible, and that the PLO has lost ground in Lebanon and it is undergoing an internal reappraisal. Changes in the leadership might take place, the PLO is much more isolated now than it has been, it is looking to the possibility of accepting a West Bank and Gaza state, and will have to face the issue of whether to participate in negotiations. Not all of the PLO member groups see eye to eye. But we have always thought it might not be a bad idea to let the extremists make the concessions. They probably will not be able to face up to that.

29. The Secretary asked how strong Arafat is among the Palestinians. The King said that within the PLO Arafat was still strong, but the PLO really only represented five to ten percent of all of the Palestinians. In the 1970 confrontation, the Jordanian army was almost fifty percent Palestinian and it stayed loyal. Jordan does not want to create

⁶ See footnote 5, Document 7.

⁷ The Paletinian National Council met in Cairo March 12–22.

those conditions again. It had great sympathy with the people in the occupied territory who had stayed behind and had had to stick it out. Mr. Habib asked about whether West Bank Palestinians could exert leadership in the PLO. The King said that he was not that close to be able to answer but Israel should use the West Bank leadership to build a new Palestinian consensus. Most of the West Bankers had ties with Jordan as did people from Gaza. The Crown Prince continued by saying the West Bank should be allowed to become the point of fusion in the area. Now it is only a cheap source of labor for Israel. Israel is afraid of the PLO and therefore permits the West Bank moderates no latitude in developing good relations among themselves. The West Bank leadership needs to coalesce. The Labor Party in Israel was aggravating the whole situation in developing its own position. Israel did not look at the West Bank as an area that should be handled with care and circumspection. Instead the Israelis used the West Bank as an area where the trade should all be one way in their favor and they hold some tens of millions Jordanian dinars in Geneva banks. They then refused to allow the re-opening of one Arab bank there to assist with the economic development of the territory.

30. Sharaf shifted the subject to mention Jordan's need for greater economic support from the United States. He understood the Ford administration had cut back all assistance levels. He hoped that the Carter administration would restore these levels. Mr. Habib indicated that the levels had been restored and the King asked the Secretary to fight for this in Congress. The Secretary said he would do so and that he had been having personal contacts and telephone calls with individuals on the Hill on many subjects. Sharaf also mentioned that the King had good relations with the Congress and Mr. Habib urged these be developed further when the King comes to the United States. The Crown Prince mentioned that Jordan hoped that in connection with activities on the political front towards peace there would also be economic activities in the area as well and asked for a mini-Marshall Plan. Jordan was working hard to develop the country in terms of its social needs and needed more help in this area.

31. General Bin Shaker explained Jordan's military role in the Gulf and its hope to continue to sustain these efforts. [2 lines not declassified] The King said he wanted to thank the Secretary for his words which indicated support for US-Jordanian relations both now and for the future. Frankly the King said he was concerned. He wanted to know if we could continue our joint efforts. Jordan played a role in Oman and the Gulf and Yemen in close conjunction with the US. But without US help Jordan could not afford to do this. Jordan had actual physical needs in doing these things. The King said he was sad and disturbed by what had happened after all these years of very close relations. But Jordan

had done nothing without the closest consultation with the U.S. Over the years we have talked together in great confidence. We provide you with a great deal of help and information. The King said he felt the press disclosure was all aimed at him and he didn't know why although he understood that Adenauer and Jomo Kenyetta had also been mentioned.⁸ The Secretary said that he wanted to assure the King that he continued to have our greatest respect and confidence. The United States depended upon his advice to shape our goals for the future. It was his guess that the information had been leaked from a very low level and he did not know the reason for this. The King could be sure this did not reflect US Government views. The King then continued that his whole life had been Jordan and all that he had was in this country. He had always wanted Jordan's relations with the US to develop and improve. Often Jordan did things for the US in the past for which Jordan had been nearly crucified. The King said he would appreciate anything which could be done to redress the situation now. In the future he did not know what could be done. We had worked together so often and so closely in the past. We had been in closest possible touch on issues as terrorist activities. Jordan had valued the cooperation but wanted to know what it should do now. Should I stop the King said. The Secretary replied that the answer was not clear. He would want to look into the problem as soon as he returned to Washington and to find out how much we would continue in the future and be back in touch. The King then again emphasized Jordan's common objectives with the United States and its great confidence in the relationship and its desire to face jointly with the US any threats that might come up. The Secretary again said he would look into the issue very carefully and would be back in touch with the King through the Ambassador.

Pickering

⁸ On February 18, the *Washington Post* reported that the U.S. Government had made secret payments to King Hussein for several years. (Bob Woodward, "CIA Paid Millions to Jordan's King Hussein," *Washington Post*, February 18, 1977, P. A1) That same day, the White House issued a statement praising the King's leadership role in the Middle East and refusing to confirm or deny the charges. (Charles Mohr, "U.S. Tries To Minimize the Impact of Report on C.I.A. Aid to Hussein," *New York Times*, February 19, 1977, p. 1) The *New York Times* also reported that day that several other leaders had received payments. (David Binder, "More Heads of State Are Reported To Have Received C.I.A. Payments," *New York Times*, February 19, 1977, p. 9)

13. Telegram From the Embassy in Lebanon to the Liaison Office in Riyadh¹

Beirut, February 19, 1977, 0815Z

744. For the Secretary. Subject: Private Meeting Between President Sarkis and Secretary Vance Feb 18.

1. Following is exchange between Secretary Vance and President Sarkis in Beirut on Feb 18 from 1230 to 1315 hours as recorded by interpreter/notetaker Alec Toumayan:

2. Sarkis: I want to welcome you first, and hope that you will have a pleasant stay although it will be a very brief one. I hope that you will achieve all the results that you are anticipating in this, your first official trip outside of the United States, and I wish you the greatest possible success.

3. Vance: Thank you very much, Mr. President. I am very pleased to be here. I felt that it was very important that I meet with you also, even though the principal reason for my trip is to meet with the Arab and Israeli parties directly involved in the confrontation. But it was important to meet with you to demonstrate our concern over the devastation suffered by your country² and demonstrate our full support for the measures you are taking to restore the authority of the central government, measures which we know will be successful. One of the things I am glad to be able to announce to you today is that we will make \$50 million available to Lebanon as aid in food, medical products and reconstruction for housing and port facilities. We hope this assistance will help begin the long and arduous road toward reconstruction. We hope further that this demonstration will encourage other countries to join in making funds available to Lebanon for assistance.

4. Earlier, during a meeting with your Foreign Minister,³ we discussed two issues; one was the Geneva Conference and the possible participation of Lebanon in it, the second was the situation in Southern Lebanon and the immediate crisis that has occurred there in the last two weeks,⁴ in the course of which we acted as intermediaries between the parties. Concerning the first subject, I summarized the results of my visits in Israel and Cairo. I found wide differences of opinion on substantive matters, and I would define these matters of substance perhaps

¹ Source: Department of State, Office of the Secretariat Staff, Records of Cyrus Vance, Secretary of State, 1977–1980, Lot 84D241, Box 10, Vance Exdis Memcons, 1977. Secret; Immediate; Exdis. Also sent immediate for information to the Department of State.

² A reference to the Lebanese civil war.

³ No record of this meeting has been found.

⁴ See footnote 3, Document 6.

in an over-simplistic way as consisting of peace, withdrawal and the Palestinian question. I found even wider differences of opinion on procedural matters, especially where the PLO is concerned. But I am encouraged to find in both Israel and Cairo a situation which can be summarized in the flat statement that if the procedural questions can be resolved, then all interested parties will go to Geneva without any pre-conditions on substantive issues and prepared to discuss all questions. I made clear, Mr. President, that we see the role of the United States as trying to work among the parties to work out common positions and narrow down differences. I believe that that is the role we should play. It would thus be inappropriate for us to state our opinions on what a preferred solution would be or express in detail our opinions concerning the views of the different parties. I refer of course to our public statements, because naturally we have our own views which we shall communicate privately to the parties, not in public. Is that a sensible attitude in your opinion, Mr. President?

5. Sarkis: Allow me to respond to the various points you have raised. First of all I want to thank you for the aid you have just announced, as well as for all the other efforts your great democracy has exerted on our behalf. We know you have done much to help restore calm to our country. But I will demand even more, because during this critical phase of our history we need the efforts of the United States to insure that law and order and calm continue to prevail in the country and to preserve our territorial integrity and independence and our sovereignty.

6. Concerning Geneva, Mr. Secretary, just to speak of it is a positive step in itself. The concept is rich in promise. The fact that the contending parties agree to meet and discuss and negotiate is one step forward. Concerning the role of the United States, I agree with you, Mr. Secretary, that it is entirely appropriate that the United States not impose its positions upon the parties. But because of your worldwide responsibility and of your moral responsibility, particularly vis-a-vis friendly nations, the role of the United States should be to try by every means, even while following the procedure you have mentioned, to bring the parties together, even through the exertion of pressure commensurate to your size to contribute to a meeting of negotiations at Geneva. The role of the United States should be positive, it should be that of an arbitrator, but a positive one. I hope that that is the only role that you foresee for the United States—that of an efficient, constructive arbitrator imposing upon the parties the viewpoint that you deem necessary.

7. Vance: I agree with the suggestion that we play a positive and affirmative role and that we make our views clearly known to the parties.

But I am somewhat troubled by your use of the word “impose.” I would prefer persuasion.

8. Sarkis: Yes. I have in mind moral pressure essentially to lead to the first step of the Geneva Conference, the procedural stage. To me it is inconceivable that a negotiation should not take place because of a lack of agreement on procedure. I hope that procedure will not be stumbling block.

9. Vance: I fully concur. I have indicated that our view was that a Geneva meeting should take place during the second half of '77. It would not be practical to have it before, because the Israeli election will take place in May and it will then take some time for the Israelis to organize the coalition that will rule them.

10. Sarkis: I fully agree.

11. Vance: The question was raised earlier about a participation of Lebanon at Geneva if it should choose to participate. It is the view of the United States that Lebanon has a very clear interest in a final settlement because it is directly affected by one or more of the issues involved, and for our part we would welcome a participation of Lebanon at Geneva if it chooses to ask to become a member. I have pointed out also that procedurally we cannot, as Co-Chairman, invite you alone. Because it was decided by the Conference in 1973 that the concurrence of all original parties is required, but that should prove to be no obstacle.

12. Sarkis: I need not say that Lebanon will do all it can to help Geneva succeed and that Lebanon will be ready to participate when the time comes. And let me be a bit more specific about when that time should be. If I understand the agenda you have outlined, there will be three stages, three objectives to be attained: peace in the Middle East, the Palestinian question, withdrawal of the Israeli troops from occupied territories. That last question does not concern us, but for peace in the region we are prepared to do the utmost and also do all we can towards solving the Palestinian question. Our relations with Israel are based on the 1948 Armistice,⁵ which we carry out very strictly. Those frontiers are recognized internationally and there is no change involved here.

13. There is an essential point that I would like to mention. In 1969, when I was Governor of the Bank,⁶ I was visiting in Washington, and in the Department of State I was told by Ambassador Davies, who has since been killed in Cyprus, that the day before we had talked to Golda

⁵ The armistice agreement between Lebanon and Israel was actually signed on March 23, 1949, and it ratified the border between the two countries.

⁶ Sarkis served as the Governor of the Bank of Lebanon from 1968 to 1976.

Meir, and that it was the understanding of the U.S. Government that she accepted the borders of Lebanon as final. On the map the border with Lebanon appears as a solid line; with the other Arab countries it is a dotted line.

14. Concerning the Middle East, we are ready to participate and help a Geneva meeting to lead to peace in the region. We are very much interested in a solution of the Palestinian question because it is a heavy burden upon us.

15. Vance: Another question we discussed was Southern Lebanon and recent events there, as well as what could be done in the future to try and avoid incidents of that kind. I indicated that we appreciate the statesmanlike manner in which you had handled this difficult situation and defused a dangerous situation. Our role is to make sure that the parties involved understand one another's concerns, and we shall be happy to continue to perform that role. We also understand that the problem is due to the fact that you have not yet been able to reconstitute the national forces, either the security forces or the army.

16. When I was in Israel the Israelis raised the question, and President Sadat also raised it last night. The Israelis deny their part. We spoke of your difficulties and of the lack of Lebanese troops. They understand the difficulty, but at the same time it did not dispel the deep concern they feel concerning Syrian forces. The step you took of pulling back the Arab security force to Ayshiya is a very constructive step. President Sadat also raised a question with me. He wondered why Lebanese troops could not be used. He mentioned a number of 500 troops. But your Foreign Minister says that it not possible because of the deep divisions that exist in the army in the south and the lack of cooperation between the two factions there. Do you have any idea, Mr. President, how soon you will be able to develop Lebanese forces to perform that function?

17. Sarkis: Going back to the matter of what priorities we have set for ourselves, we thought it would be wise not to take up the army case right away because it is such a serious, delicate and complex matter. We have set as our highest priority the need to restore calm, resolve the social problems, and it is only recently that we have taken two legislative decrees, one regarding the army and the other regarding the security forces. It is therefore quite recently that we have begun to look into the army situation, which is a very complex one, and I can set no date. We have only been looking at the dossier for five or six days. I hope to be able to submit a plan to the Chamber within three to six months.

18. I want to respond to the Israeli viewpoint. The presence of so-called Syrian troops, which are placed under Lebanese authority in place of Lebanese troops and which are located where they are, can in no way constitute a threat to Israel. There are only 500 scattered

sparsely through a wide area in which you have many villages where the inhabitants—Christians and Moslems—are entitled to security. These soldiers are present in small numbers.

19. Vance: The Israelis are sincerely concerned over these Syrian troops.

20. Sarkis: I have proposed that these troops be replaced by non-Syrian troops, as I told your Charge, Mr. Lane. They could be troops from the Emirates, from Saudi Arabia or from the Sudan. But there is a lack of justice vis-à-vis these Christian and Moslem villagers.

21. Vance: I have here a letter from my President for you which he asked me to give you with his best wishes.⁷

Parker

⁷ A copy of the signed and dated letter from Carter to Sarkis is in the Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Materials, Middle East File, Trips Visits File, Box 102, 2/14–21/77 Vance Trip to the Middle East: 2/18/77–3/77.

14. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Damascus, February 20, 1977, 3:30 p.m.

SYRIAN PARTICIPANTS

Abd al-Kalim Khaddam, Minister of Foreign Affairs
Abd al-Karim 'Adi, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs
Abdullah al-Khani, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs
Samih Abu Fares, Translator

U.S. PARTICIPANTS

Cyrus R. Vance, Secretary of State
Ambassador Richard W. Murphy
Philip C. Habib, Under Secretary for Political Affairs
Alfred L. Atherton, Jr., Assistant Secretary for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs
Isa Sabbagh
Robert H. Pelletreau, DCM

¹ Source: Department of State, Office of the Secretariat Staff, Records of Cyrus Vance, Secretary of State, 1977–1980, Lot 84D241, Box 10, Vance Exdis Memcons, 1977. Secret; Nodis. Drafted by Robert H. Pelletreau. The meeting took place in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The meeting began at 1530 local. Following introductory courtesies, Foreign Minister Khaddam welcomed the Secretary and expressed his conviction that the Secretary's visit must produce positive results. He regretted the Secretary could not stay longer, but he hoped he would come back for another visit.

The Secretary expressed his thanks for the Minister's kind and gracious welcome and conveyed President Carter's greetings to the Minister. The Secretary stated both the President and he attributed great importance to Syria and to the Middle East. They considered the importance of this trip paramount in terms of the priority to be accorded issues facing the United States both in the Middle East region and throughout the world. The Secretary said he believed the people of the area do wish to achieve peace, and the United States intends to do everything in its power to help attain this objective. The United States recognizes that this task may be very difficult. Differences on both substantive and procedural issues were deep seated. Nevertheless, the United States must persevere in this direction. That is why, the Secretary continued, he welcomed the opportunity to come to Syria to obtain the views of the Minister and President Asad on how the United States and Syria could best proceed in this common pursuit. The Secretary said he had benefitted greatly from the meetings he had held up to this point and what he had learned would be of great value to the President and him in preparing the course of action the United States would take in pursuit of a peaceful solution. He said he was prepared to discuss his impressions but would find it most enlightening and useful to learn the Minister's views and to have his ideas on how to overcome the dangers and obstacles that divide the parties.

Foreign Minister Khaddam said he understood that the purpose of the Secretary's visit was to study the situation as he saw it on the spot. Because of Syria's conviction of the importance of the role of the U.S. in solving this problem, it was incumbent on Syria to be cooperative and to contribute to presenting as clear a picture as possible to the Secretary. In order to know the nature of the problem, Khaddam said, it was necessary to know the nature of the area. It was one of the most sensitive areas of the world, overlooking three continents. Eight Arab nations were in Africa, twelve were in Asia. Contact with Europe was constant, and the area could be said to border on three seas and two oceans. People had been living in this area for thousands of years. They represented historical values and an ancient civilization. The Middle East, bordering on the Soviet Union, had great wealth, particularly in oil. The Arab nations had more than 70 percent of the world's oil and also a great deal of monetary power from oil and other sources. Throughout history the area has had an impact on international peace and security, and indeed on world civilization. Throughout history

also, the area had contributed to liberalizing movements in Asia and Africa, and it is clear that the area has an important influence on the world's economy. If the states of the area wanted to take a given decision or play a given role in international forums, they could have a decisive influence. If they sided with the Soviet Union, for example, it would gain automatic hegemony over the world's economy and pose a great threat to Western economies. Likewise, if the area were to stand with the West, that within itself would give the West a preponderance of power.

Khaddam continued that the area suffers from an important and sensitive problem, one that is complicated and also is painful to continue. This problem has two aspects. The first is that of the dispersed people of Palestine living in the miserable conditions economically and socially and suffering all the hardship of dispersal through no fault of their own. The second aspect is the occupation of the territory of certain Arab states in contradiction to resolutions and the Charter of the United Nations.

The Foreign Minister said he did not wish to review the whole sequence of events in the area, but he did want to note that at the time of Balfour Declaration² there were only a few thousand Jews in Palestine. The Arabs had paid a high price for siding with the West in two world wars. In World War I they had stood against the Turks in order to gain their liberty, but they were deceived by the British, the French, and the Allies who encouraged the Zionist movement. In World War II the Arabs again stood with the Allies and were rewarded with creation of the State of Israel. All this, of course, was part of history, the Foreign Minister said, but the United States would be well advised to heed this sequence of events in fashioning the future. Ever since its establishment in 1948, Khaddam continued, Israel had tried to portray itself to the world as persecuted and under constant threat from knife-bearing Arabs. But to see through the falseness of this image, one needed only to look at the size of Israel in 1948 and note that the territory Israel now occupies is at least seven times as large.

To the question of whether the Arabs wanted peace or not, the Foreign Minister's question was, "Yes, the Arabs want peace". As to whether Israel wanted peace or not, the Minister said he would leave it to the Secretary to decide on the basis of his convictions.

Syria, Khaddam continued, wants a peace that will be just, permanent, and stable. Unless peace includes all these elements, any agree-

² On November 2, 1917, the British Government released the Balfour Declaration, which stated that it looked with favor on the establishment of a Jewish home in Palestine but that non-Jewish communities' civil and religious rights should not be prejudiced against.

ment will be transitory and contain within itself the seeds of future wars. In order for peace to be just, permanent, and stable, however, it must deal with substantive issues. All past ways of dealing with the problem, the Minister asserted, had been merely palliatives. In fact, steps taken over the past two years had actually complicated the situation in the area. In the Minister's opinion, Israel's desire for peace had been clearer in 1973 than in 1976. The steps taken or "achieved" had only encouraged Israeli intransigence.

Khaddam said that the Charter of the United Nations and international legitimacy, in his opinion, provided the basis for a solution, and this solution contained two elements. The first element was to ban the concept of obtaining territory by force, and this meant Israeli withdrawal from Arab territory occupied in 1967. In this connection, the Minister said he wished to point out that Israel's proposition that it would withdraw to secure borders had no validity in this modern age. Israel justified its occupation of Golan on the basis that the Golan Plateau overlooked the Hula Valey and made it vulnerable to attack. With the weaponry of modern warfare, however, Syria would have no difficulty shelling the Hula Valley settlements from near Damascus. This meant there was no such thing as a secure border. Furthermore, Israel was building more settlements on the Golan and by its logic tomorrow would be claiming even more territory to protect these new settlements. It was a vicious circle of expansion justifying further and further expansion under the pretext of seeking secure borders. The international community, the Foreign Minister declared, could not logically accept the premise that any state could be allowed to define its borders as it wished in terms of its own view of secure borders. Under this logic, secure borders for the United States would be in Moscow and for the Soviet Union in Washington. Secure borders for any people, in a true sense, the Minister said, do not stem from their delineation by one side alone on the basis of its power. They could only be assured by nations establishing peace and uprooting thoughts of war. This was the first element of peace.

The second element was the Palestinian people. Their plight did not begin in 1967, but with their dispersal in 1948. The tension in the area which their situation created led directly to the 1967 war. A solution must be found to the situation of the Palestinian people. The Israelis say that they are willing to seek a solution in the framework of negotiating with Jordan, but the problem of the Palestinian people is not confined to the West Bank. There are some 300,000 Palestinians in Syria and another 300,000 in Kuwait. There are about one million Palestinians in Jordan and several hundred thousand in the rest of the Arab World. What happened in Lebanon was also a result of the Palestinian dispersal, and unless this problem is solved, the Palestinian issue and the Palestinian presence will remain factors of turmoil in the area.

The Foreign Minister continued that even if Egypt, Syria, and Jordan were to sign an agreement with Israel on the basis of the 1967 War, in all frankness and honesty, such an agreement would not last because it did not take into account the Palestinian problem. Any serious solution must start with a solution to this problem. The United States might point out that the Israelis would refuse even to recognize the existence of Palestinians and that they refuse to recognize or deal with the PLO. They protest that the PLO does not recognize Israel. Syria, the Minister declared, believes that thinking of this nature is only trying to evade the problem. Neither Syria, nor Egypt, nor Jordan recognize Israel, yet Israel is willing to talk and negotiate with them. Israel's answer is aimed only at obfuscating efforts toward peace. Even if Syria, Egypt, and Jordan were to agree to recognize Israel, Israel knows that the Palestinian people would remain an element of turmoil in the area.

The Minister stated that almost the whole world had acknowledged the PLO as the sole representative of the Palestinians. The PLO has observer status at the United Nations and it has been invited to attend the Security Council as a party to discuss problems concerning it. When the Security Council invited the PLO to participate, this was in effect recognition by the Security Council of the PLO. The United Nations Security Council Resolution of November 1975, for example, set a date for discussing the Middle East problem in the light of UN resolutions.³ That resolution lent validity to previous resolutions of both the Security Council and the General Assembly. Therefore, from both a legal and procedural point of view, the Israeli argument did not stand up.

The Minister continued that the question now is how a peace containing these elements could be achieved. There is no doubt, he said, that the United States has a major role to play, one which could be played in the service of international legitimacy and the United Nations framework. The Geneva Conference should be convened on this basis. It should also be convened on the basis of seeking an overall settlement to the conflict. The Minister here recalled that in past discussions with Americans and Europeans, the Syrians had frequently been told that Israel would accept certain positions and not accept others. Syria could not understand this approach. If a solution really rested on whether Israel would accept this or that proposition, the Minister said he could not be optimistic. If, on the other hand, the solution rested on

³ A reference to U.N. Security Council Resolution 381, adopted on November 30, 1975, which called for the reconvening of the Security Council on January 12, 1976, to continue the debate on the Middle East problem, including the consideration of all relevant U.N. resolutions.

logic and just responsibilities stemming from United Nations resolutions, then there was hope for a just and permanent peace.

An example of Israel's attitude, the Foreign Minister said, and one which the Secretary knew well was the crisis of Southern Lebanon. Israel very well knew that Syrian forces in Lebanon had but one function, to help bring about security and peace in that country under the command of President Sarkis. Syrian forces would not remain in Lebanon for one minute after the Lebanese forces themselves could assume responsibility for security or for one minute after President Sarkis asked them to leave. The Lebanese President had ordered a few hundred Syrian troops to go to the Nabatiyah area to restore respect for Lebanese law. These troops numbered no more than 300 and constituted no danger to Israel. In fact, the entire Syrian force in Lebanon represented no danger to Israel as it was dispersed throughout the country. In spite of the fact that Lebanon was an independent country and a member of the United Nations, the Minister noted, it seemed that the Lebanese President could not move his forces as he deemed necessary in order to maintain internal security. What was this mentality of Israel, the Minister asked?

Khaddam declared that the Arabs had great hope that the new U.S. Administration would realize the unnatural situation in the area. If the current chance for peace were lost many changes would result. For that reason Syria attached great importance to the visit and to firm and decisive steps on the part of the United States Government. That was why Syria was talking frankly and with an open heart. Its premise was that the U.S. and the Arabs could have good relations and the bases for these relations should be the achievement of a just and permanent peace in the area. Israeli blackmail, on the other hand, would not be conducive for peace. The impression was widely shared internationally that now was the time to bring about peace.

This impression, the Foreign Minister said, was strongly held on the Arab side but unfortunately it did not appear to be shared by the Israelis. It had been announced only a few days ago, for example, that Israel intended to establish new settlements in Sinai and the Gaza strip.⁴ Israel had also announced its intention to explore for oil in the Gulf of Suez and the U.S. had criticized this decision.⁵ In addition, the Israelis had decided to consider Jerusalem as their capital, knowing the sensitivity of this issue to both Christian and Muslim Arabs. The Israelis

⁴ The *New York Times* reported on February 13 that Israel was extending its area of settlements into the Sinai. (Moshe Brilliant, "Israel Intensifies Sinai Settlements," *New York Times*, February 13, 1977, p. 9)

⁵ See footnote 13, Document 6.

know, Khaddam asserted, that even if war continues far into the future the Arabs will not give up an inch of Jerusalem. The Israelis are also asking how peace can be achieved without guarantees. In fact those who need guarantees are the Arabs for they are the victims of aggression. These guarantees could be international. Also, peace itself is a form of guarantee.

The United States, Foreign Minister Khaddam said, has achieved progress in its relations with Arabs and has aroused the hope that it is in earnest about achieving a solution. As King Hussein has said, the Arabs do not wish to raise their hopes unreasonably for if these hopes collapse the situation will become extremely grave. There is now, however, an historic opportunity for reaching a comprehensive and just settlement to the conflict.

The Secretary thanked Foreign Minister Khaddam for his clear analysis of the situation as he saw it. In essence the Minister thought the problem boiled down to two issues, withdrawal and the Palestinians. On withdrawal, the U.S. has supported this concept since its inception. UNSC Res. 242 dealt with withdrawal. With regard to the Palestinian people, the U.S. has said that no solution will be possible without settling the question of the legitimate interests of the Palestinian people.

Khaddam interrupted to question the Secretary on the distinction between “legitimate interests” and “legitimate rights”. The Secretary replied he was a simple man and used simple words, to which Khaddam replied in turn that he was asking the question of the Secretary as a lawyer.

The Secretary said that the U.S. believed the Geneva Conference could be reconvened in the second half of 1977 and that it should treat substantive issues in order to reach an overall and final settlement of the problem. He said he had found no disagreement in any country he had visited to holding the Conference in the second half of 1977 nor to the proposal that the objective should be a comprehensive settlement. He asked Khaddam whether he agreed. The Minister replied that Syria did not disagree in principle but he wondered what steps could be taken between now and the convening of the Conference. The Secretary said he would reach this point shortly but he wished first to say that he understood the Israeli position on withdrawal and the political question to be that the Israelis agreed both subjects should be discussed without preconditions. Turning to Khaddam’s question about the difference between legitimate interests and legitimate rights, the Secretary said that in his view the legitimate interests of the Palestinian people would include the question of how their future should be dealt with including steps to provide a homeland for the Palestinian people. This would be a subject to be discussed and decided at the Conference. It would be for the parties to work out and not for the United States to

dictate or impose. If the parties were unable to agree the United States would be willing to use its good offices in an attempt to bring them together. But it would not be appropriate at this point to try to dictate a solution. Regarding the linguistic and semantic differences between legitimate rights and legitimate interests, this difference related to whether there was an entity already in existence or which does not yet exist. The important point, the Secretary emphasized, was that the problem of the Palestinian people must be solved and should not get lost in semantics. Khaddam agreed.

The Secretary noted that they had talked about withdrawal and the Palestinian people but the Israelis raised a third point—peace. The Israelis defined peace as the restoration of normal relations between neighboring states. Sadat, on the other hand, held the view that peace was an end to the state of war or belligerency. There was, therefore, a difference between the Israeli view and the Egyptian view. What was the Syrian view. Khaddam replied by pointing out that there was no war at present between the United States and Cuba but there was no normal relations either. Likewise no normal relations existed between the U.S. and China or between the U.S. and Vietnam. A state of peace therefore did not of necessity imply a normalization of relations. In the same vein Khaddam noted that if Mexico became a Communist state, it would not be in a state of war with the U.S. but the U.S. might well take certain actions such as blockade which would be short of a state of war. Peace, he repeated, does not automatically mean normalization. In this Syria shares the viewpoint of President Sadat.

The Secretary noted that between now and the convening of the Geneva Conference in the second half of 1977 several procedural questions must be solved. One of these combines procedure with elements of substance in the opinion of some and that is the question of the PLO. This is a fundamental procedural question which must be resolved in advance of Geneva. Khaddam interjected that this was very much a substantive question. The Secretary repeated it contained elements of both procedure and substance and asked for the Minister's views. He said he was sure the Minister was aware of the fact that Israel said that since a covenant existed according to which the PLO would not recognize the existence of the State of Israel, this was a block to reciprocal action by the Israelis. The Israelis also point out that the PLO does not recognize UNSC Res. 242 or 338 as the basis for convening Geneva. Khaddam in reply said he would comment first on the Israeli viewpoint. Syria, Jordan and Egypt do not recognize Israel nor is there any implication in their respective constitutions or other official documents of the right of Israel to exist. The textual references in the Constitution of the Confederation of Arab Republics and decisions taken at the 1967

Summit in Khartoum⁶ could not in any way be said to imply recognition. Yet, Israeli representatives appeared willing to go to Geneva to meet with representatives of these states. The Minister continued that when representatives of the PLO and Israel sit at the same table they are two people sitting there; they are not ghosts. Each represents certain facts of life. The question, therefore, is not a semantic or textual one but a living fact of life. Furthermore, the Minister stated, any official recognition by the PLO of Israel's existence means an automatic relinquishing of rights usurped by Israel. But if on the other hand Israel were to recognize the PLO it would not lose anything. Israel was occupying the territory whereas the Palestinians were in camps.

UNSC Res. 242, the Minister stated, dealt with the 1967 war and not with the question of the Palestinians. The Resolution was the result of the Security Council debate after the 1967 war. How, he asked, could the Palestinians be expected to recognize this Resolution when it was not concerned with them. Res. 381, on the other hand, stated in its first Section that the Security Council would meet on January 13, 1976⁷ to debate the situation in the Middle East including the Palestinian question in the light of pertinent UN resolutions. If this Resolution were taken as a basis for discussion of a settlement perhaps this would be acceptable to the Palestinians and at the same time the Israelis could not object. This Resolution in fact referred to UNSC Reses 242 and 338 as well as UNGA resolutions referring to the legitimate rights of the Palestinians. When the Palestinians asserted that UN Res. 242 was not directed at them, they were right both legitimately and actually. That Resolution did not treat their problem but rather the problem of Egypt and Syria and Jordan at the time when the West Bank was under Jordanian control. If Israel wanted peace, Foreign Minister Khaddam affirmed, it must accept the PLO at Geneva. At one time, the Minister recalled, the Arabs were not moving in this direction. They used to refuse to attend any conference, but when they came to realize that peace was necessary for the area they agreed to go to the Conference without any complexes. Accordingly, it is a political decision which must be made by Israel—whether it wants peace or not.

The Minister appealed to the US Administration to assess fully and thoughtfully the dangers of trying to isolate the Palestinians from any overall peace. This, he said, would be detrimental to peace and to sta-

⁶ The 1967 Arab League Summit in Khartoum culminated with the Khartoum Resolution of September 1, 1967. The resolution called for no peace with Israel, no recognition of Israel, and no negotiations with Israel. Additionally, it called for an end to the Arab oil boycott that had been put in effect during the June 1967 Arab-Israeli War, an end to the civil war in North Yemen, and economic aid to Jordan and Egypt.

⁷ Resolution 381 states that the Security Council would meet on January 12, not January 13, 1976.

bility in the whole area. The Minister continued that it would be useful to world peace for the US to bring pressure on Israel on this point. He recalled the results of the 1967 and 1973 wars. He said he believed that the economic difficulties and the inflation which the world experienced at that time were a direct result of the 1973 war. Tensions in one area could not necessarily be confined to that area alone. The Syrian citizen has an interest in peace, but so does the French citizen and the American citizen. All the world shares this interest and it is necessary to bring pressure on the recalcitrant party.

The Minister said he hoped the Secretary would accept it in the right spirit when he said that the Arab world had adopted a moderate policy regarding peace. If this policy produced no result it was inevitable that these moderate policies would cease either through violence or because their advocates would have to change their views. Syria knew this was not in the interest of the area. The 17th and 18th of January in Egypt witnessed a real popular revolution.⁸ It was not only against the lack of food but also against President Sadat's policy of moderation. The Egyptians were showing their frustration with a policy which had not produced results. The same thing could happen in any Arab country and end the policy of moderation in the area. As a leader of the moderate policy, Syria firmly believed in such a policy itself but public opinion was sensitive to other influences. In some areas a single rumor could topple a regime, such as the story that unseated Willy Brandt in West Germany.⁹ Factors contributing to public opinion were not completely under the control of the government. It would be useful, the Minister said, for the US to discuss whether a moderate policy in the Arab world could continue in the absence of an overall solution. Syria deeply believed that this subject was worthy of US attention and firmly wanted the US to come in with measured steps towards peace. In addition, the Minister added, Syria wished to redirect funds spent for arms to its national development, but so long as the Israelis were located less than 60 kilometers from Damascus, Syria could think no further than the defense of its capital and its country.

The Secretary said he had been saddened to listen to the same arguments by leaders in each of the countries he had visited, including Israel, that they needed to reduce the amounts spent for defense in order to invest more funds in development. Secondly, all leaders agreed on the need for moderate forces to predominate in the area. Identical senti-

⁸ See footnote 17, Document 3.

⁹ A reference to the Guillaume affair in which Brandt's personal assistant, Gunter Guillaume, was identified by West German security as an East German spy. This led to criticism of Brandt and played a role in Brandt's decision to resign as West German Chancellor on May 7, 1974.

ments were shared by all the leaders but the bitterness and inability to move towards peace remained. If all the countries of the region share the same basic desire, then there must be a way to move towards peace, the Secretary stated.

Khaddam said he agreed and repeated that he was asking for a move from the US. The next question was whether a move towards peace had to be made only by the occupied party. Who, Khaddam asked, was occupying whom and who was threatening whom. The Secretary, he asserted, knew the magnitude of US arms support to Israel and of the Soviet arms support to the Arabs. The Secretary knew that the balance remained in favor of Israel. Did this mean that the US expected the Arabs to capitulate? If they did so it would only complicate the situation in the area. Moderate policies would be doomed since no nation was willing to accept occupation and subjugation forever. The Minister agreed that movement was necessary but he said the US should address the party not wishing to move.

Khaddam continued that several years ago no one in Jordan, Egypt, Syria or Saudi Arabia would have stood up and said he was for peace. This moderate policy, therefore, should lead to something tangible. On the Israeli side there had been no change in its declared position since 1967. But moderation had grown among the Arabs. If, Khaddam said, the question of 300 Syrian soldiers in Lebanon had caused the Secretary to address 12 letters to the Lebanese President, what could be expected from the US on large issues. In all friendship, he added, he considered this incident a test of the US. If President Carter had told Prime Minister Rabin if he interfered in Lebanon the US would take stern measures, the crisis would have ended. In any case, Sarkis had solved the problem in another manner.

The Secretary said that surely the Minister knew he was not suggesting that the Arabs capitulate. The Minister nodded his agreement. On Southern Lebanon, the Secretary continued, he appreciated the action which Syria had taken in helping Sarkis deal with the problem of reunification and the restoration of law and order in Lebanon. He also appreciated Syria's position as the Minister had stated it, that when Sarkis had an adequate Lebanese force at his disposal Syria had no intention of remaining in Lebanon. On the special problem of Nabatiyah,¹⁰ the Secretary remarked that the absence of advance notice that Syrian forces were moving into a new area had led to a chain of events. The US had been asked to act as a calming influence and a conduit for messages to reduce tensions. Khaddam interjected a question whether any country in the world had to ask a neighboring country for permis-

¹⁰ See footnote 3, Document 6.

sion to move 200 soldiers in order to restore order within its own territory. The Secretary replied that this was not the question but whether a situation had been created which was potentially explosive. Under those circumstances, the US had exercised its good offices to act as a conduit and to help solve the problem. Fortunately, as the Minister had said, President Sarkis' action had resolved the crisis.

Khaddam wondered if 300 Syrian soldiers could cause such alarm in Israel why were not the thousands of Syrian troops on the Golan causing a similar alarm? The Secretary stated that the US had delivered as many restraining messages to Israel as it had delivered to Sarkis and to the Syrians. Khaddam opined that in his view the US could have handled the crisis in a way more beneficial to its interests including bringing tranquility to the area. If the US had said to Israel that any foolish action would meet a firm response by the US, Prime Minister Rabin would not have dared to move. This would have been a good way for the new Administration to start dealing with Israel. The Secretary reiterated that the US had spoken as strongly to Rabin as it had to any of the other parties. Khaddam noted that if in a wrestling match the same pressure was applied to a healthy man and a weak man the weak man would of course suffer more. Sarkis needed everyone's help to reconstruct his country. The Secretary agreed and noted that in Beirut he had spoken publicly in support of Sarkis.¹¹ Khaddam indicated his approval. The Secretary said he had pledged US assistance in the form of humanitarian aid and for reconstruction and had called on other nations to help in this effort.

The Foreign Minister said that he wished at this point to say a few words about Lebanon. It was a sad and painful tragedy. Everyone was responsible for helping Lebanon regain its feet by offering both material and moral assistance to Sarkis. The situation was improving. Small problems came up which were being dealt with but in general, calm and security in Lebanon were spreading. Syria hoped all nations would continue to offer material and moral support. He asked the Secretary for his impressions of Sarkis.

The Secretary said he had had a good meeting with Sarkis.¹² Sarkis said he was gradually bringing the situation under control. He admitted, however, he was having difficulty mobilizing his internal security forces and his army. He thought the first units might be ready in three months. The Defense Minister, however, had said it would be

¹¹ Although there were no reports of Vance specifically supporting Sarkis publicly, he did announce on February 18 in Beirut that the United States would provide \$50 million in relief aid to help repair damage incurred during the Lebanese civil war. (Bernard Gwertzman, "Sadat Declaration is Lauded by Vance," *New York Times*, February 19, 1977, p. 9)

¹² See Document 13.

closer to six months. In addition, the President noted that his economic problems were severe and he needed both short term and long term assistance. The US had told Sarkis it would do what it could along with other nations to help. Sarkis, the Secretary said, had many serious problems still confronting him but he seemed to be making progress. The Secretary remarked that Sarkis had mentioned his great appreciation for Syrian assistance.

Khaddam noted that Syria had tried to help Sarkis even in internal matters. When he faced an internal problem with one faction or another Syria tried to help. Some Lebanese politicians had vested interests but Syria invited them to visit Damascus or sent someone to visit them. In the crisis Syria considered Sarkis to be one of the best possible people to have assumed power in Lebanon.

The Secretary asked whether the Minister thought Sarkis' estimate of three months or the Defense Minister's estimate of six months was closer to the mark as the probable time for initial Lebanese units to be organized. Khaddam replied it all depends on the effort that was made. With intensified efforts a force might be ready in three or four months. Syria was encouraging Sarkis to intensify his efforts in this direction. Syrian efforts in Lebanon were costing it a good deal, Khaddam added.

Returning to Geneva the Minister asked whether the Secretary was suggesting a freeze before the conference convened. The Secretary replied he was not because a lot of ground had to be covered between now and the reconvening of the Conference. The more that could be accomplished the quicker the Conference could get to substantive matters.

Khaddam asked whether Syria could conclude that "step-by-step" was no longer valid. The Secretary replied that in his view it was time for an overall solution. Khaddam said he agreed that a final solution was the proper objective. Syria's quarrel with the US had been because of "step-by-step."

The Secretary asked the Minister's views on another procedural question on Geneva—whether Syria favored combined or separate delegations. Were there differences between Syria and Egypt on this point? The Minister replied that Syria's discussion with Egypt had not been conclusive. In Syria's view a unified delegation was preferable. Efforts would be more concentrated and it might even help solve certain procedural problems, but Syria did not wish to quarrel with Egypt on the point and in fact had not discussed it fully.

The Secretary asked whether at a reconvened Geneva conference subcommittees should be formed on the basis of functional or country-by-country problems. Khaddam replied that Syria did not favor bilateral subcommittees. Subcommittees rather should deal with the issues. Peace with Egypt, for example, would be no different in substance than

peace with Syria and the same was true regarding the issues of withdrawal, guarantees, ending the state of war, rights of the Palestinians and any other subject agreed upon. Subcommittees should be formed to discuss topics.

The Secretary asked whether it would not be best to work out the structure of such subcommittees during this interim period. Khaddam replied that Syria's position was clear but Syria did not know Israel's views. He agreed that subcommittees should be formed on the basis of topics, such as "guarantees," for example. The same guarantees should exist between Syria and Israel as between Egypt and Israel. Regional and bilateral subcommittees could get bogged down on such points, the Minister added. The Secretary asked whether there should be guarantees. Khaddam replied affirmatively but said it was not a question of Israel alone having guarantees nor could territorial occupation be considered an acceptable form of guarantee. The Security Council could give guarantees, as could the international community. Furthermore, to move towards peace was in itself a guarantee. Syria did not oppose guarantees.

The Secretary asked whether there was not a relationship between guarantees and borders and whether guarantees would help in determining borders. The Foreign Minister replied that guarantees were one thing, but the delineation of borders was another. Syria would not give up one inch of its territory but it had no objection to discussing guarantees of its borders. Boundaries were to Syria a point of principle unless of course Israel might also agree to return to Syria the bits of territory pilfered in 1960 and 1962.¹³

The Foreign Minister asked whether the US and Syrian understandings were the same regarding the meaning of withdrawal, that is, that withdrawal should be from all the occupied territories. He recalled that President Nixon had assured the Syrians that the US agreed with them on this point. The Secretary replied that the US position on withdrawal was as stated in UNSC Res. 242 and it was up to the parties to determine this withdrawal in negotiations. Khaddam retorted that if boundaries had to be negotiated they would have to go back to 1947.

The Secretary noted that if Geneva were reconvened Israel had stated its readiness to go without preconditions. What was Syria's position? The Minister asserted in reply that it was not Syria who was making conditions. New settlements, for example, were *de facto* conditions being created in the occupied territories. Syria hoped the US would make another statement condemning such settlements. Syria was ready to go to Geneva, Khaddam said, on the basis of two prin-

¹³ Israel and Syria engaged in several border clashes during the early 1960s. These led to accusations of Israel stealing land from Syria.

ciples, not on conditions. These principles were securing peace through withdrawal and the achievement of legitimate Palestinian rights. The Secretary asked whether in Syria's view then these subjects could be discussed without preconditions. Khaddam replied that when the conference reconvened Syria wanted it to discuss all these questions. If agreement were reached, fine. If agreement was not reached, Syria would have to look to other means to achieve its goals.

The Secretary indicated he was not quite clear on this point. Khaddam then stated that Syria's only condition was that these topics be discussed. Success would mean reaching solutions in accord with the principles involved. If not, however, Syria would have to be prepared to look to other means. Khaddam then asked about Saudi Arabia's attitude towards the problem of Jerusalem.¹⁴ The Secretary replied that the Saudis had not raised Jerusalem except as an issue that had to be solved. There was no discussion of viewpoints. King Hussein, however, had discussed his views at length and very clearly.¹⁵ Khaddam interjected that King Hussein's views were similar to Syria's. Hussein believed the PLO should play its role. On Jerusalem, the Secretary replied, the King had not referred to the PLO.

¹⁴ Vance met with King Faisal, Crown Prince Fahd, and Foreign Minister Saud in Riyadh on February 20. No record of the discussions has been found. For Vance's and Saud's remarks to the press on his departure, see the Department of State *Bulletin*, March 14, 1977, pp. 218–219.

¹⁵ See Document 12.

15. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Damascus, February 20, 1977

SYRIAN PARTICIPANTS

President Hafez al-Asad
 Foreign Minister Abd al-Halim Khaddam
 Abdal Karim 'Adi, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs
 Abdullah al-Khani, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs
 Asad Elias, Notetaker

U.S. PARTICIPANTS

The Secretary
 Ambassador Murphy
 Philip Habib, Under Secretary for Political Affairs
 Alfred R. Atherton, Jr., Assistant Secretary for Near East and South Asia
 Isa Sabbagh
 Robert H. Pelletreau, Deputy Chief of Mission

After an exchange of pleasantries on the weather and on energy, the Secretary said he brought to the President warmest greetings from President Carter. He then delivered a letter from President Carter to the President.²

Asad said he welcomed the Secretary's visit particularly as it was his first visit to Syria. This, of course, did not mean he would not welcome him another time. The President also welcomed Mr. Habib and Mr. Atherton, who was a familiar face.

The Secretary said that President Carter had felt it imperative that he make this trip at this time to emphasize the importance which the President placed on finding a solution to the Middle East problem. In addition, the Secretary said that both the President and he had felt it would be most helpful if he could have an opportunity to meet with leaders in the area and their advisers at first hand in order to discuss the substantive and procedural issues involved and to gain a better understanding of these issues as the United States moves to formulate its plans to assist in the search for a peace settlement. The Secretary said he had found his discussions to date very informative and useful and thought he had gained a better understanding of the points of differ-

¹ Source: Department of State, Office of the Secretariat Staff, Records of Cyrus Vance, Secretary of State, 1977–1980, Lot 84D241, Box 10, Vance Exdis Memcons, 1977. Secret; Nodis. Drafted by Robert Pelletreau on February 21 and approved in S on June 23. A typed notation in the upper left-hand corner of the page reads "Draft." The meeting took place at the Presidency.

² An unsigned and undated letter from Carter to Asad is in the Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Trips/Visits File, Box 102, 2/14–21/77 Vance Trip to the Middle East: 1/77–2/17/77.

ence and points of agreement on substantive and procedural matters. In several areas he had found agreement among everyone. First, that there should be an effort to reconvene Geneva in at least the last half of 1977. Second, the object of this meeting would be to discuss an overall Middle East settlement. All sides had also agreed that if procedural questions could be overcome there should be no preconditions to discussion of the substantive issues. There were, the Secretary added, deep differences regarding the various substantive issues and there was also a deep difference at the moment regarding the question of the PLO and its participation.

President Asad reiterated his welcome and asked the Secretary to thank President Carter for his interest in the area and for his recent correspondence including the letter which the Secretary had delivered. He said that Syria also appreciated the fact that the Secretary's visit at this early stage indicated the importance the United States attached to the area. No doubt, the President continued, the Secretary had had to endure a series of lectures during his trip. He recalled that when he had first met Secretary Kissinger they had agreed to begin their talks with a general tour d'horizon.³ Dr. Kissinger had begun and talked at length before finally excusing himself saying he had been a professor and had forgotten himself. The President had replied that he had been a soldier and soldiers had a tendency to be brief but there were exceptions to this rule. The President said he mentioned this episode because he suspected that the Secretary had heard several lectures. He had no intention of repeating things the Secretary had already heard. He said that the Secretary must have gotten a clear idea of Syrian views from Foreign Minister Khaddam. In addition, Syrian views should be well known to him from prior discussions with which he must have familiarized himself. He had always expressed his views frankly. A criticism he had was that United States diplomacy had helped to drive wedges between the Arabs and that had been a U.S. objective. He said that when he had pointed this out to Secretary Kissinger, Kissinger had denied it saying that the U.S. wanted the Arabs to be unified in their search for peace. But, the President added, actions had to be judged by results. Perhaps it was easier for the United States to envisage peace when the Arabs were split than to envisage it when they were united. Perhaps, also, this was giving the United States the benefit of the doubt. It was Syria's position and fundamental belief that movement towards peace could only be achieved with the Arabs united. Division between Syria and Egypt could never be conducive to peace or result in genuine successes. If the Arabs were able to move together, they would be more

³ Kissinger and Asad met for the first time on December 15, 1973, in Damascus. See *Foreign Relations, 1969–1976*, vol. XXV, Arab-Israeli Crisis and War, 1973, Document 393.

capable of achieving results and less likely to commit mistakes. Since all the Arabs now wanted peace, why not let them move together towards peace? The Arabs, of course, were responsible for their own relationships but in circumstances of struggle between them, no one could work for peace.

The President stated that the Arabs were now agreed that a comprehensive solution to the Middle East conflict should be sought. On this, they were unanimous. The Arab position was that Israel must withdraw from all the territory occupied during the 1967 war. The President said he wished to emphasize the word "all". He recalled that this had been said many times in the past but he wished to emphasize it again since it was his first meeting with the Secretary. Even if a state of war continued for hundreds of years with clashes every other year, Syria would not give up one inch of its territory under any pretext or condition. The President said he and Sadat had agreed on this common fundamental position. It was also Syria's fundamental position.

The second point, Asad said, concerned the rights of the Palestinians, and the third was termination of the state of war. Over the years, much had been heard about the meaning of termination of the state of war—whether it was settling a problem through peace or becoming neighbors or engaging in commercial, economic, and diplomatic exchanges. Syria, the President said, could envisage two situations—peace or war. When Syria referred to ending the state of war, it meant it had moved to a condition of peace. Israel, however, for various reasons and perhaps psychological impulses, wanted to impose certain things which Syria could not envisage happening and did not have in mind in the process of moving from a state of war to a state of peace. When Israel demanded recognition as a prerequisite of peace, Syria might be tempted to say Israel wanted to impose conditions on this subject on the Arabs, or Syria might be tempted to say that Israel aimed at placing obstacles on the path to peace. Syria could not really believe that Israel was naive enough not to recognize that what Syria wanted was to end the state of war. Recognition on the other hand was an attribute of national sovereignty. The President said he would not put it past Israel to try to say which diplomats Syria should be sending to serve there, and rejecting this one or that one as a former terrorist or anti-semitic or something else. President Nixon, Asad recalled, had visited China but the United States still did not recognize China. The subject of recognition was one thing and a condition of peace was another. Many nations without a state of war between them had no diplomatic exchanges and did not recognize each other. In pressing this point Israel was trying to impose elements extraneous to the substance of peace. Syria wanted to achieve termination of the state of war as one of the three basic elements of a settlement. As for the future, if what was

achieved was good, then something more might come of it. If what was achieved was not good, then something bad would result.

The President said that Syria favored reconvening the Geneva Conference but he wanted the Secretary to know that he was not very optimistic about the conference and therefore not very excited about it. Syria supported the conference in principle and had done so since 1973 because it saw no better alternative. Even though Syria had not participated before, Syria nevertheless supported the conference. The basic problem, however, was not the reconvening of Geneva. The basic problem was the substance rather than shape or form. Even if solutions were found to procedural questions the substantive issues would still have to be faced.

Another issue, Asad said, was the method of discussion at the conference. Syria wanted the conference to discuss principles. This point had been agreed with President Nixon. It was agreed that the discussion should focus on topics and not be held on a country-by-country basis. But any method that led to a solution based on principles was agreeable to Syria.

The President said that Syria thought Israel wanted another kind of peace, an agreement on a condition of tranquility and perhaps the ceding of certain villages, the retention of settlements in the occupied part of Golan, the retention of settlements on the West Bank, annexation of all of Jerusalem, establishing military bases along the Jordan River (meaning the West Bank would remain under Israeli hegemony), and retaining settlements in Sinai and part of the territory of Sinai. In light of all these aspects of the peace desired by Israel, it was clear that Israel would lose nothing by calling for a permanent cessation of hostilities. Israel's concept of peace was very different from the Syrian concept.

The President said he would like to say frankly that he could not and would not be able to continue this policy without the assurance of U.S. support. There were, he said, encouraging signs from the new administration, despite its short existence. Syria believed these U.S. initiatives were commensurate with the U.S. role in the world and in the Middle East area. Why, for example, must Israel be assured an unlimited flow of arms? The U.S. knows better than anyone that the military balance is in Israel's favor. It was not conceivable that the Arabs would acquiesce in the results of election campaign decisions without complaining. President Ford must have been very excited (to have agreed to such sophisticated weapons sales). Syria had heard that Israel had received arms which were not even in the United States military arsenals. Israel certainly did not need this kind of weaponry for defense. What Syria asked of the United States was that it take an objective and

neutral attitude consistent with its role as a great nation and with its interests.

Syria was confident, the President went on, that if the struggle continued, its inescapable ultimate result will not be in favor of Israel. The development of life and the nature of things were not in Israel's favor. Israel was the aggressor and life tended to move along paths closely parallel to justice. Even when those striving for just causes lacked strength, this would not always be the case. Time was on the Arab side.

President Asad said that Syria was very serious and earnest in seeking peace, but it sought peace, not capitulation (in Arabic *salam* not *istislaam*). Although conceptually, the word "peace" implies justice, the President said, he wished to emphasize this by adding the adjective "just" to Syria's desire for peace. He said he believed the United States was capable of expediting the movement towards peace. He repeated Syria was objective and hopeful about the new U.S. administration.

The Secretary thanked the President for speaking so clearly and concisely about the issues as he saw them. The Secretary said he wholeheartedly agreed with the President's statement that movement towards peace would be more easily accomplished with the Arabs unified. He said he wished to assure the President that the United States had no intention or desire to drive a wedge between the Arabs.

With regard to basic issues, the Secretary continued, his talks in Israel had revealed the same three basic issues as the essence of a settlement. There were differences on the question of total withdrawal but there was agreement that the issue of withdrawal was fundamental. There was also agreement that the question of the Palestinian people was a core issue which must be resolved. Differences existed with respect to the meaning of peace. Israel would define it as more than termination of the state of war. But Israel was also prepared to discuss all questions without preconditions at the Geneva Conference. Regarding methods of the conference, the Secretary continued, he tended to agree that the preferable way to proceed would be through discussing topics rather than on a bilateral basis. He said he did not know the position of Israel on this subject. He had gathered that President Sadat leaned more toward bilateral talks, but perhaps he was wrong on this point.

Asad said Syria had not discussed this question with Egypt either. Syria considered this question premature but it had agreed with Egypt that all the territory occupied in 1967 must be returned. If there had been disagreement with Egypt on this basic point, Syria would not go to Geneva. In fact, the reason Syria had not gone before was disagreement with Egypt on this point. If the Arabs went to Geneva without prior agreement, Israel would be the only winner. Syria had had this experience before.

The Secretary asked the President to explain his views on two issues: the rights of the Palestinian people, and how to deal with the substantive/procedural question of the PLO and how it should participate. The President replied that if the Arabs, the United States, and others agreed on what the rights of the Palestinians were then the procedural questions could be solved more easily. The Arabs would then have the freedom to discuss it. But since the substantive question was not clear, it needed the proper people to discuss it. That was why the Arabs had agreed that the PLO was the proper party to discuss the issue. During the Rabat Summit conference,⁴ Asad recalled, King Hussein had said he was being offered a settlement to the Palestinian question which involved withdrawal of only a few kilometers. Later Asad asked Secretary Kissinger whether what was being offered was a settlement or merely a disengagement. Kissinger replied it was a temporary settlement. But even this showed it was not merely a disengagement. The Arabs had agreed that the PLO should be the party to discuss the Palestine issue. Asad said he had suggested to UN Secretary General Waldheim that he might want to raise this question with the Israelis. The Israelis say they object to the PLO but they also object to the Palestinians having any rights.

Assume, Asad said, that the PLO were set aside, then how would the rights of the Palestinians be achieved? The Israelis say it must be within the context of negotiations with Jordan, but this treats only the form and not the substance of the issue. Even if it were discussed within the Jordanian framework the substantive question would still have to be asked whether the Palestinians would regain their rights. Thus, the Arabs had agreed that the PLO must represent the Palestinian question.

The Secretary noted that President Sadat had suggested that this question might be resolved in advance in a Jordanian/Palestinian framework.⁵ He asked Asad whether he had any precise idea how such an arrangement would work. Asad replied that when he had talked with Sadat they had discussed this possibility in general terms but not in detail. They did not try to reach a conclusion. Sadat might have reached a position on types of relations between a Palestinian entity and Jordan, but, the President said, he did not think that Sadat had a clear idea on the nature of these relations. The Secretary commented that this was his view as well.

Asad said Jordan was also bound to ask what was the nature of its role. If it was only to facilitate getting around a problem, Jordan might not be willing to play the role of a facade, especially if that role had a

⁴ See footnote 8, Document 6.

⁵ See Documents 10 and 11.

price tag (held risks). Then too, the President said, as far as the PLO was concerned, on what basis could it agree to such a relationship with Jordan?

In frankness, the President said he did not believe in these smaller entities but rather in the totality and unity of the Arab nation. Partition among the Arabs would never produce benefits for the Arab world. History and colonial heritage had divided the Arabs. Today, however, even powerful European states were seeking unity. Therefore, it was even more logical for the Arabs with their common language, culture, and history to seek unity. There was no doubt that some powers had an interest in perpetuating smaller states. The President said that he did not want to digress further but had wanted to distinguish between current issues and their wider, deeper background. In summary, he said, he could not reply adequately to the question regarding the further relationship between Jordan and the PLO.

The Secretary said he was not clear what realistic alternatives existed with regard to participation of the PLO. President Asad replied that alternatives were hard to see. Although it was not exactly an alternative, Syria believed the Arabs should go as a unified delegation. Such a delegation would not cancel the aspect of an independent PLO representative. If the PLO did not agree on the basic issue, whether there was a unified Arab delegation or a separate Palestinian delegation would make no difference. Nothing would happen, the President said and added that he could not say more now.

The Secretary said he had discussed with King Hussein and President Sadat alternatives for longer range relations between a Palestinian entity and Jordan. Each had given three or four possible alternatives as to how it might be handled. President Asad replied that at this time dealings between Syria and the PLO were not as good as they might be. Contacts were good, he said, but at this stage Syria was not discussing substantive matters with the PLO, as it had in the past. This did not mean that Syria did not know Palestinian views, but Syria was loathe to speak in the name of the Palestinians. The Secretary asked whether the March 12 meetings of the Palestine National Council would clarify these issues. Asad replied, perhaps, but it would not necessarily do so. A predisposition existed to discuss them but the Palestinians were not now capable of deciding what the conference might ultimately take up. Asad said he was not fully aware of the nature of possible alternatives as seen by other Arab leaders but he would probably be discussing this subject with them. He knew from a recent statement that Egypt was dangling the notion of some sort of Palestinian entity within a Jordanian framework but it was not clear. He did not wish to say something to the Secretary of which he was not 100 percent sure.

The Secretary noted that the Soviet Union was co-chairman of the Geneva Conference and had the responsibility, as did the United States, to cooperate in a search for a peaceful solution. The United States expected the Soviet Union would cooperate and the Soviet Union has indicated that is the manner in which it wishes to proceed. The Secretary went on to say that the United States was deeply committed to play a constructive role in the search for a peaceful solution. He believed the United States could play this role because it had good relations with both sides and it could help move the discussion in a constructive fashion. In this respect the United States looked forward to working in closest consultation with Syria. Asad replied that he hoped these consultations would continue and lead to positive results. He said the Secretary could be assured that Syria's dealings with him would always be frank and honorable.

President Asad confessed that Syrian/Soviet relations were passing through a stage of frigidity. Syria did not want this but the Soviet Union had started it through bringing up differences regarding Lebanon. Since the Lebanese situation had improved some contacts had taken place but there had been as yet no substantive improvement. Syria's policy and attitude were clear cut, Asad asserted. Syria appreciated the Soviet Union's previous support but insisted on making its own decisions based on its national interests. If the Soviet Union was Syria's friend it should have confidence in Syria's policies and support them. Syria wanted the Soviet Union to respect its national decisions. The two could then be friends.

The Secretary said he thought his visit to Lebanon had served a useful purpose though it had been brief. He had indicated United States support for President Sarkis in his efforts to reunify the country. Lebanon also needed assistance in its reconstruction efforts and to relieve suffering as a result of the conflict. The Secretary said he had made a statement in support of Sarkis.⁶ Sarkis himself had felt this might be useful. In addition, Sarkis was concerned over the difficulty of reconstituting his internal security forces and his army. He thought it would take three to six months. A plan was being prepared for him by the Minister of Defense which would allow Lebanon to move with greater speed in reconstituting these forces. In addition, President Sarkis' economic problems were severe in both the short and long term. The United States has agreed to support him over the short term and would also be studying what it might do along with others to help over a longer period. The United States would be talking with others to try to enlist their help.

⁶ See footnote 11, Document 14.

President Asad asked whether the Lebanese had requested any equipment. The Secretary replied that they had made no specific requests but had spoken of their needs in general terms. Asad said he had recently met with Sarkis and urged him to move as rapidly as possible to reform the Lebanese army. He knew that this would not be easy but a start had to be made. Syria's ability to help was not great. It could assist in training, and perhaps, organization, but it was not in a position to re-equip the Lebanese army.

On the question of South Lebanon⁷ President Asad said he thought the United States' position could have been firmer. It was not logical that Israel should have a right to say which troops could move where inside Lebanon. This was the right of a sovereign state. Could Sarkis, for example, ask such questions about movements inside Israel? Israel's concern in this case was manufactured. The forces in question posed no threat. Like the rest of the Arab forces in Lebanon they have been cleared for security not for war. This can be seen in the way they are deployed. If the objective were to face Israel, Syrian troops would be more effective in their traditional formation than in Lebanon. The result has been that the Israelis are claiming a great victory. Asad said that if this matter had really been of basic concern to Syria, it would never have backed out. Asad had told this to Sarkis frankly but had also said he was leaving the matter up to Sarkis for a decision. Israel, Asad asserted, had intended to take advantage of the new United States administration and test it.

Asad said he had advised Sarkis to try to pull together a Lebanese military force but so far the Lebanese capabilities were inadequate. The thirty soldiers they sent to Nabatiah were easily driven back.

The Secretary agreed that the only solution was to accelerate the development of an indigenous force in Lebanon. He said that he could assure the President that the United States had counselled restraint on the Israelis during the time messages were being exchanged. The Secretary added that publicity from Israel had been regrettable to say the least. Because of this Israeli position, there had been no security in Southern Lebanon.

Asad returned to the point of providing military equipment. The Secretary explained that the United States had a problem with providing equipment to police activities under U.S. law.

President Asad said Syria's wish was to end the problem of Lebanon as quickly as possible. From the very first day of its involvement Syria had sought to protect the interests of both the Lebanese and the Palestinians. Syria's involvement in Lebanon had gained it nothing but

⁷ See footnote 3, Document 6.

heavy expenses. Lebanon itself has no ability to repay these outlays and the Arab financial aid is merely symbolic. It does not amount to even one month's expenditures. In addition, there were pressures against Syria from the Eastern bloc as well as France and the United States.

The Secretary said President Sarkis had told him he was most appreciative of Syrian help. Asad replied that Sarkis was working hard and seriously to overcome his problems. He was the strongest President Lebanon had had so far. He was the first Lebanese President to have sufficient military force and he is gaining support. He knows, Asad concluded, that the circumstances in Lebanon require this.

16. Minutes of a National Security Council Meeting¹

Washington, February 23, 1977, 9–9:35 a.m.

SUBJECT

Middle East

PARTICIPANTS

The President

The Vice President

State

Secretary Cyrus Vance

Alfred L. Atherton, Jr.

Defense

Secretary Harold Brown

Charles W. Duncan

Treasury

Secretary Michael Blumenthal

NSC

Dr. Zbigniew Brzezinski

David Aaron

William B. Quandt

U.S. Representative to the United Nations

Ambassador Andrew Young

OMB

Director Bert Lance

CIA

Acting Director Enno Knoche

JCS

General George S. Brown

Assistant to the President for Domestic Affairs and Policy

Stuart Eizenstat

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Council, Institutional Files, Box 55, NSC-003, 02/23/77, Middle East, Result of Sec. Vance Trip. Secret; Sensitive. The meeting took place in the White House Cabinet Room. All brackets are in the original. Brzezinski sent Carter an undated memorandum under cover of which was the Summary of Conclusions of the NSC meeting. Carter indicated his approval of the Summary of Conclusions on Brzezinski's memorandum. (Ibid.)

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

The Middle East Trip

Secretary Vance's trip to the Middle East succeeded in accomplishing three main objectives:

- to demonstrate the President's commitment to the achievement of peace in the Middle East.
- to establish personal rapport with the key leaders of the area.
- to learn the views of each party and to identify areas of agreement and disagreement.

Substantive Issues

Several areas of agreement were identified. All agree on the need for a peace settlement, in large measure because of the burden of defense expenditures. All parties concur that if procedural problems can be solved they will go to Geneva in late 1977, probably in September. At Geneva they will discuss an overall settlement, not just interim steps. They are prepared to discuss substance without preconditions. The US role is viewed as essential.

The elements of an agreement are viewed by all parties as the establishment of peace, withdrawal, and a resolution of the Palestinian question. Peace is viewed by the Israelis as entailing diplomatic relations and trade, whereas the Arab concept is essentially to end the state of war. Disagreement over the issue of withdrawal is very deep, with Israel holding to the notion of secure recognized borders and the Arabs calling for full withdrawal to the 1967 lines. On the Palestinian question, there is little consensus even among the Arabs.

Procedural Issues

On the procedural side, the key problems are Palestinian representation at Geneva and the question of whether the Arabs will come as a single delegation, including perhaps the PLO, or as separate national delegations.

Resolution of procedural differences may take time, perhaps until August, because of Israeli domestic political uncertainties. This will have to be discussed with the Israelis beginning with Prime Minister Rabin's visit to Washington.

The US Role

The United States must help move the parties toward consideration of substantive positions. General principles governing a settlement must be defined if the Conference is to move forward. An agreed concept of peace is required; the issues of security and sovereignty should be separated; a clearer definition of the Palestinian possibilities is needed; and the differences on territory must be narrowed. These

should be studied within the Administration before Prime Minister Rabin's visit. An analytical paper will be ready by the end of this week. Alternative ways of resolving differences should be presented. The most difficult problems will be territorial withdrawals and Jerusalem.

It would be helpful to have a list of the concrete steps that each Arab country surrounding Israel might be asked to take in order to move toward a normalization of relations. These could then be discussed with each Arab leader.

The Arab Boycott

The boycott problem was raised in Saudi Arabia.² The Saudis do not oppose legislation directed at the activities of American companies, but they strongly oppose any legislation which tries to tell them how to conduct their own affairs. US public statements should try to take this into account. Guidance for how the Administration's position should be presented should be prepared. The Saudis should be complimented for their helpful attitude. This will help in producing good legislation that will be acceptable to the Saudis.

Follow-on Actions

1. State will prepare a substantive issues paper by February 28, setting out alternative ways of resolving the major issues in dispute.

2. State will request our Ambassadors in Egypt, Syria, Jordan and Saudi Arabia to submit ideas on how these countries might begin to move toward normal relations with Israel over time. These ideas should be available prior to the visits by the leaders of these countries in the spring.

3. State should prepare guidance by February 28 on how Administration officials should refer publicly to the boycott issue so as to assuage Saudi concerns. This should be coordinated with Treasury, Commerce and NSC.

Secretary Vance: I began my trip with several limited objectives. First, I wanted to emphasize how important the Middle East is to the United States, the depth of Presidential commitment to finding a peaceful solution, and the importance of our role in resolving the conflict. All of the leaders I spoke with appreciated our key role, and were pleased that my first mission abroad was to the Middle East.

Second, the trip gave me the opportunity to meet with all of the leaders and their advisors, and to establish a personal relationship with them. I believe this was important as a way of building trust and confidence for the period of negotiations that lies ahead.

² See footnote 14, Document 14.

Third, I had the chance to hear the views of leaders in the area, and to determine where there were areas of agreement and where there was disagreement. This will help us to establish a basis for our own analysis of our course of action. We face a long and difficult road ahead with no assurance of success. But I believe that it may be possible to achieve an overall agreement.

I was encouraged to find several areas of agreement. First, there is a shared commitment by all of the leaders that they must find a way to peace in the Middle East. They feel they can no longer bear the expenditures on arms. This is taking away from their own social and economic programs. They feel that if this continues they may be out of office. All of them have pressing social and economic problems, especially President Sadat. The Israelis feel the same way, and refer to their heavy tax burden. Both President Asad and King Hussein said essentially the same thing.

Second, all the parties agreed that, if procedural issues could be resolved, they are prepared to go to Geneva in late 1977. Probably in September.

Third, at Geneva they are prepared to discuss an overall settlement—not just interim steps.

Fourth, at a conference, they would be prepared to talk about substantive issues without preconditions. Everything could be placed on the table.

Fifth, they all agree that the United States must play a key role in reaching a solution. The Israelis see us primarily as helping them, whereas the Arabs view our role as that of pressing Israel for concessions. But at least they both agree that the United States has a major role to play.

Sixth, they all agree on the core elements of a solution: peace, withdrawal, and the Palestinian question. They define peace, however, quite differently. The Israelis speak of the normalization of relations, whereas the Arabs refer only to ending the state of war. The Arabs feel that diplomatic relations, trade, and so forth, will have to follow in time.

Some Arab countries could go ahead of the others. One might, for example, trade with Israel (as Jordan is now doing) before the others.

On withdrawal, the parties are deeply divided. The Arabs call for total Israeli withdrawal to the 1967 boundaries. They also demand the return of Arab Jerusalem. The Israelis, by contrast, speak of secure borders. I tried to probe with them what they meant. This will require more talk. They seem to think of some boundary changes combined with other security measures such as demilitarized zones, UN peace-keeping forces, guarantees, and early warning stations.

On the Palestinian question, the parties are divided, including among the Arabs themselves. The Arabs still have to get their own house in order. I talked to Asad in private about this³ and told him that the Arabs would have to come to agreement on the Palestinian issue. He agreed and said that the Arabs had lots of work still to do.

On procedural matters, the key problem is PLO participation in the discussions. The Arabs are divided on this. The Syrians have cool relations with the PLO. Egypt, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia, however, believe the PLO under Arafat is the best that we can hope to deal with. They think that other leaders would be worse. I noted today in the intelligence reporting that Arafat sees his trump card as changing the Palestinian Covenant. He is not prepared to do this at an early date. We may have to face this issue soon. The Palestine National Council will meet in Cairo on March 12th. We should watch this meeting very carefully to see what happens.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Rabin will be here on March 7th. Then the other leaders will come during April, and you will meet with President Asad in Europe in May at a mutually convenient time.

The other major procedural question is whether the Arabs will come as a unified delegation or as separate national delegations. President Asad very strongly feels that there must be a single delegation as he told me in private. President Sadat prefers that negotiations be done on a bilateral basis. Asad may not even go to Geneva if this cannot be resolved. I feel that they will be able to find a solution to this question, as well as the PLO participation issue. I believe that procedural problems can be overcome.

The President: Can we expect the Arabs to agree to having Jordan take the PLO to Geneva in their delegation?

Secretary Vance: This might be possible.

The President: Would any of them object? Sadat seems to agree to the idea of a confederation.

Secretary Vance: Asad has problems with this idea, but he would not necessarily veto it. He feels that Sadat is fuzzy on this issue.

The President: Is it reasonable to expect as a precondition to going to Geneva that the PLO accept Resolutions 242 and 338? All of the others accept them.

Secretary Vance: Resolution 242 does not deal with the Palestinians directly.

The President: So they would refuse?

³ No memorandum of conversation of a private meeting has been found.

Secretary Vance: Yes, because it makes no reference to the Palestinians. They are concerned with the question of recognition. It would be hard for them to accept Resolution 242 unless they are accorded recognition.

The President: What deadline date do you see for resolving the procedural questions?

Secretary Vance: The Israelis face elections in mid-May and it is my judgment that it will take four to six weeks for them to get in shape after the elections and to form their coalition. Realistically speaking, it may be August before we reach agreement on procedural matters. But we can work on substantive issues in the interim.

My trip stirred up a great deal of interest among the Arabs and they are now beginning to deal with the issues. They are engaged in a series of meetings. A PLO delegation is in Jordan now, and Presidents Asad and Sadat will soon be meeting. Over the next two months, there will be a number of such talks, plus the meetings with you. I will probably go back to the area in June to push for resolution of these issues.

The President: August is late for resolving the procedural issues. That leaves only one month before Geneva.

Secretary Vance: We could try to move things up, but it will be hard to get Israel to change its position on the PLO before that. Israel still denies recognition to the PLO.

The President: That will determine whether we have Geneva or not.

Secretary Vance: It is hard for Israeli leaders to take a stand.

Secretary Brown: Even if you could move the agreement on procedures up to June, things could still fall apart before Geneva.

Secretary Vance: The other problem besides the PLO is the question of a single Arab delegation or separate national delegations.

The President: We do not have any preference on that. It is up to the Arabs. How do the Saudis feel?

Mr. Atherton: The Saudis will go along with the other Arab leaders on this, but Israel opposes a combined Arab delegation and prefers bilateral negotiations.

The President: The major problem is with Israel?

Secretary Vance: Yes sir.

The President: Maybe it is a mistake for Rabin to be the first one to come over here.

Secretary Vance: He will be tough on several issues: the PLO, boundaries, and the idea of an independent state on the West Bank. He will only want to see the West Bank within a Jordanian-dominated federation, not as an independent state. He will also be tough on Jerusalem.

The President: Only the first of these needs to be solved right away.

Dr. Brzezinski: I agree with Secretary Vance that we need to work on substantive issues before Geneva. If we only resolve the procedural questions first, Geneva will break down and the Soviets will try to exploit the situation. We should use our bilateral contacts and maybe informal meetings of the parties so that we can get agreement on underlying principles. We need to think about what our role should be in leading the parties in a subtle way to define the principles for a settlement. Then a conference at Geneva can start. For example, the discussion of sovereignty and security must be separated. A sharper definition of the Palestinian issue is required. We need a clearer concept of peace and we need to narrow the gap on territory. Recognized frontiers need not be the same as defense lines.

Secretary Vance: I agree fully. These are the key issues we face.

The President: We need to analyze them before Rabin arrives.

Secretary Vance: We will have a paper on this by the end of the week.⁴

The President: We should work out alternative ways of resolving these issues in our own mind. We need to know which alternatives are most promising. This would be a great help. We should also think of alternative time schedules, such as implementation of an agreement in phases over a period of ten or twenty years.

Dr. Brzezinski: Secretary Kissinger tried to take small steps toward an indefinite future in the Middle East. We should try to define the future first, and then move by small steps in implementing an agreement. This is a key difference.

The President: Yes. [to Secretary Vance] Which of the leaders are able to speak for their countries?

Secretary Vance: Asad, Fahd, and Sadat, at least for now. Also Hussein. But Rabin cannot. Elections could bring change there.

The President: Will Rabin survive the party convention today?

Secretary Vance: Golda Meir's endorsement of him should help. I would bet that he will win today. But it will be close.

The Vice President: What authority will he have if he wins?

Secretary Vance: No matter who wins, all of the main leaders will be included in the cabinet. Even Yadin and the National Religious Party will be included.

Secretary Brown: They won't be able to make concessions easily.

⁴ Not found.

Mr. Atherton: The Labor Party will lose some ground. The question is how much. They will have a fragmented coalition. They will not be able to make decisions without some nudging.

The President: Is there any difference between Labor and Yadin on foreign policy? I know the domestic differences, but are there any foreign policy differences?

Mr. Atherton: Yadin is more dovish, but his movement is monolithic.

The President: If I were in Israel, I would have joined his party. [Laughter]. When I was in Israel I was struck by the lack of a democratic means of voting for leaders. They don't seem to trust the voters. Yadin has filled a vacuum. This will probably change.

Secretary Vance: Allon said that the electoral system would change, that Yadin was right. Allon will be a member of any future coalition government. There is no question that it will require nudging from us for a solution to be reached. The Israelis will not make decisions otherwise.

The President: We will have to judge what the Israelis can really accept. For example, recognition of the PLO, not necessarily officially, but at least recognizing their existence. This might be a useful step. We will have to resolve this amongst ourselves.

Secretary Vance: We will probably be getting more visa applications from PLO spokesmen to come to conferences in the United States. I will be inclined to grant a visa the next time. This could be a limited signal that we are prepared to move off dead center. We should talk more about this.

The President: There is an ancillary question relating to this whole subject. Are we in conformity with the Helsinki Agreement?⁵ Can we keep people like this out of our country? This is not so much a question just of the PLO, but we have to be clean on the human rights issue.

Secretary Vance: On the definition of peace, I think we can bridge the gap. Ultimately, we can get them together on the Palestinian question as well. The biggest obstacle will be territory and Jerusalem. Some of these, of course, are interrelated. If we can get agreement on territory, it will affect the Palestinian question.

The President: How do you assess the possibilities for individual Arab nations loosening their relations with Israel? Could Saudi Arabia consider agreement on demilitarization of the Gulf of Aqaba?

⁵ The Helsinki Agreement of 1975, reached at the conclusion of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, established several principles for the conduct of states, including topics such as frontiers, territorial integrity, internal disputes, and human rights.

Secretary Vance: Yes, possibly. Peres suggested this. I decided not to raise this with the Saudis now, but to leave it for later. Ambassador Porter thinks that they would agree. Steps like this might be taken in each area, except Syria. Jordan is very flexible on open bridges and trade. Syria is very tough.

The President: We should get from our ambassadors in all of the key Arab countries a list of possible steps that might be taken with Israel. We should ask them what might be considered. For example, tourism, demilitarization of the Gulf of Aqaba, and so forth. If we had a list of all such steps, then when Fahd, for example, comes we could discuss some of these. This would be strictly bilateral.

Secretary Blumenthal: Did you discuss the boycott?

Secretary Vance: Yes. With Fahd and Foreign Minister Saud. I spent several hours one night with Saud. On the secondary and tertiary boycott, the only problem he sees is whether we are trying to tell him what Saudi Arabia can do in its own country. He feels that it is all right for us to tell our own companies what to do, but not to interfere in their internal affairs. They could accept positive certificates of origin instead of negative certificates. This is now done already in all contracts, but not on all letters of credit. I have a draft paper from our working group on proposals that we could support.⁶

Secretary Blumenthal: It seems that we have a basis for agreement.

The President: We should carefully devise our own public statements to assuage Saudi sensitivities. Secretary Vance, Dr. Brzezinski and I should work out a common approach. We should reassure them that we do not intend to interfere in their internal affairs and we should compliment them on their good attitude. We should try to be gracious in public. This way we can come out with the same legislation, but it may be acceptable to the Arabs. We need some guidance for our public position.

⁶ The draft paper has not been found.

17. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) to President Carter¹

Washington, February 23, 1977

SUBJECT

Follow-up on NSC Meeting on the Middle East

I enclose the minutes of the NSC for your approval.²

I believe this was a very useful meeting. We are all on the same wave-length in terms of our approach—head toward Geneva and use the interim period to develop the substantive framework for what will happen there.

There are some additional points that came out of the meeting which you may wish to keep in mind:

1. *Going to Geneva is a concession to the USSR.* The Soviets, in return, should make the concession of being constructive. Until now, they have always adopted the position of the most radical Arabs. They have not used their influence for peace. *Until we have an understanding with the Soviets that they will, in fact, play a constructive role, we should avoid getting publicly committed to holding the Geneva conference.* In other words, we should hold out the promise of a Geneva conference this fall and work towards it but stop short of being committed to holding it.³

2. *Permitting the PLO to come to the United States will be a major concession to them.* Again, we should get some concession from the PLO. Equally important, we must be careful that this step which will add to the PLO's prestige is carefully timed to support our other efforts in the Middle East. The moderate Arabs are making an effort to get the PLO under control and, in effect, to diminish their stature somewhat. This is in our interest, and we should not undercut them by suddenly giving the PLO a big public shot in the arm. Above all, we should not simply agree to let them in merely because it is a good idea.⁴

If you agree, I will discuss this with Cy Vance with a view to insuring that any flexibility we demonstrate on the PLO is matched by some concession on their part and is carefully coordinated with the other moderate Arabs.

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Subject File, Box 66, Middle East: Peace Negotiations 1977 Vol. I [IV]. Secret.

² The minutes are not attached; printed as Document 16.

³ A handwritten note in the margin by Carter reads, "ok—put in next Brezhnev letter."

⁴ A handwritten note in the margin by Carter reads, "I agree."

3. *We should not take a hands-off attitude toward the role of the PLO in Middle East negotiations and in the ultimate settlement.* If the Arabs are left to themselves to settle their differences over the role of the PLO, we will get the lowest common denominator and the most radical solution. It is only the prospect that *we* are going to use our influence for peace in the Middle East which has enabled Asad and Sadat to make the efforts they have already made to get the PLO under control. We will need to continue to play a discreet role in encouraging the moderate Arabs along the path they are now pursuing.

4. *The Israelis must be made to understand that Geneva is not a substitute for a stalemate.* They might well prefer to go to Geneva without too much substantive prior agreement—and then have the conference stumble. That is why your talks with Rabin should be used to get them to move forward on the key substantive issues—with us not shy in encouraging this movement with substantive thought of our own.⁵

⁵ Carter underlined the phrase “not shy” and wrote in the margin, “We should play a *strong* & discreet role, but first we must decide what we want—ultimately & step-by-step.”

18. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, March 7, 1977, 11 a.m.–12:30 p.m.

SUBJECT

President's Meeting with Prime Minister Rabin

PARTICIPATION

The President

The Vice President

The Secretary of State

Dr. Zbigniew Brzezinski, National Security Adviser

Mr. Alfred L. Atherton, Assistant Secretary of State

Dr. William Quandt, NSC Staff

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Subject File, Box 66, Middle East: Peace Negotiations 1977 Vol. I [I]. Top Secret. The meeting took place in the White House Cabinet Room. Brackets are in the original. Rabin paid an official working visit to the United States from March 6 to 9.

Prime Minister Rabin

Ambassador Simcha Dinitz

Mr. Amos Eiran, Director General, Prime Minister's Office

Mr. Chanan Bar-On, Minister, Embassy of Israel

Mr. Eliahu Mizrahi, Personal Secretary to the Prime Minister

Gen. Ephraim Poran, Military Secretary to the Prime Minister

President: I want to welcome you, Mr. Prime Minister. It is an honor to have a visit from an old friend. I am pleased also to see Ambassador Dinitz. We will have time today and tonight, as well as tomorrow, to talk about substantive matters. Secretary Vance has briefed me carefully on his trip, on the conversation that he had with you, and on his talks with your neighbors. We want to start to move toward specifics, in full partnership with you, in the search for progress for peace. I want to reemphasize that we see our relationship with you as a partnership, as a firm and stable friendship, and I am deeply committed to that relationship. This is a commitment of the Executive branch, the Legislative branch, and of the American people, based on long-standing policy.

As you know, I have also invited the Arab leaders to visit Washington, and I will see President Asad in Europe in May. I realize that no outside imposition of a settlement is advisable or feasible, but the United States does offer its good services to you for the purpose of trying to reach mutual understanding with your neighbors.

We want to understand your views, and then to explore with Arab leaders the prospects for a peace agreement. I hope that 1977 will be a year of re-dedication to a Middle East settlement, beginning with a delimitation of ultimate objectives and some first steps in that direction. It is important for the United States to reassert our commitment to Israel's existence and security as a preeminent matter. There may be times when we will see good intentions on the Arab side when you do not, and I will be guided to a major extent by your views. I hope that we can help to assuage some fears, and to help toward a solution.

My first concern is whether this is a good year for a major effort, and if so, is Geneva the best forum. Also I would like your views on what dates we might aim for, and how we might resolve the question of participation at the conference, especially Palestinian representation. After this, we might move to other matters that will be dealt with in the negotiations. We will have plenty of time to talk about bilateral matters. I know, Mr. Prime Minister, that you do not want to spend time in small talk, and that we will have a candid exchange of views. Could you cover those items that I mentioned? Then we can also talk at dinner, and we will meet tomorrow to clarify some points that are not resolved here. We will have enough time to cover all issues. And Secretary Vance can give you his impressions from his talks with Arab leaders.

Prime Minister Rabin: Thank you, Mr. President, for inviting me to the United States. This is a chance for me to discuss the problems that we face in the area. I am glad that now, unlike the visits of most Israeli Prime Ministers, we are not under the pressure of events for immediate decisions. At present, policies that have been carried out in coordination between the United States and Israel have produced a situation which allows us time to analyze options. We do not need to decide under the pressure of events.

This is also the first visit of an Israeli Prime Minister without a shopping list. I am glad that this is the case. You are a big country, and we are a small one; but, once we begin an undertaking on basic issues, we know there will be areas where we agree and where we disagree, and we will work closely to overcome our differences. I know that we will work closely together to overcome any differences, and to strengthen areas of common agreement. This has been the procedure that has brought the best results in the past.

Now I'll talk about Israel's position, our view, and what we hope to achieve. I don't pretend to be objective. I am an Israeli, and I have an Israeli point of view. But to be frank, all countries' positions are based on interests, and there is no possibility of complete objectivity. We must start with interests, and then look for areas of compromise.

We in Israel carry a history of trauma with us. We have a long memory. Every Prime Minister has to remember that a mistake in the area of security could end the existence of the state. After 2,000 years of exile, the Israeli people cannot imagine this happening. I am not a poet, but I can say that all Israeli leaders have to think of the margin of safety in everything that they do. We are dealing with a unique phenomena. A people that had been exiled, kept its faith, its traditions, its heritage, and believed and achieved their dream after the worst persecution in history. This is more than reality. We may argue on numbers of planes or about boundaries, but we are not narrow minded. We do, however, have an historic responsibility bestowed on us by the fate of our people.

The 29th Anniversary of Israel is approaching, and it will soon be the tenth anniversary of the Six-Day War. But I don't want to look to the past. The realities of the present are that we must try to advance the cause of peace, to prevent war, and to maintain tranquility. What we have done since the last war, in cooperation with the United States, has created new hopes, a better atmosphere to start meaningful negotiations between the parties. President Johnson said it well on June 19th, 1967, when he stated that the parties to the conflict must be the parties to the peace.² This is the basic principle for whatever must be done in

² Johnson made this statement in his address at the State Department's Foreign Policy Conference for Educators. (*Public Papers: Johnson, 1967*, Book I, pp. 630–634)

the area. The United States can play a major role in creating an understanding of this point.

After the October War, we had to decide which course of action to take in the diplomatic arena. There were two choices: one, a sharp transition from war to peace, in which we would try to solve all problems, ending the state of war and establishing peace; second, to advance by steps—the famous theory of step-by-step diplomacy—to reach limited agreements. This would not solve the conflict as a whole, but it would end the fighting and encourage the movement in the right direction.

In fact, in the last 29 years, we have had only interim agreements, or rather interim situations. We have reached only two agreements with our Arab neighbors: one in 1949, when we negotiated and signed armistice agreements; and then nothing again until 1974 and 1975, with the disengagement agreements. Then it was decided, with the United States helping, that Egypt and Israel would take a step toward disengagement because we needed a period of tranquility. But it was not believed that a sharp transition to peace was possible, not because we did not want it, but because it was not attainable.

As a result of what has happened, we have to try now to negotiate an overall settlement. We have to try first to see to what extent it is possible to start meaningful negotiations on an overall settlement. If one talks of an overall settlement, one must speak of peace. There are three fundamental issues which must be resolved if there is to be peace: One is the nature of peace. What kind of relationship will we have with our neighbors? What does peace mean? Unless we define that goal, we cannot go forward with details of an agreement. The second issue is the boundaries of peace. And the third issue is the solution of the Palestinian issue. There can be no overall settlement without solving all three issues, in this same order of importance.

When I was Ambassador in Washington,³ it was a time of great upheaval in the United States. During that time I learned how vague the word peace could be. Now I always ask people to be specific when they talk about peace. It must be related to problems under consideration. The word itself can be misused. When we speak of peace, it means two things: One is the end to the state of war, with all its practical and legal consequences. But that is not peace in and of itself. Peace must be built on positive elements as well. Second is what I call the structure of peace, the nature of the relationship in peace with our neighbors. The essence is open borders, the flow of information, of people, of goods. Especially in this complex conflict, where so many emotional and reli-

³ Rabin served as Israel's Ambassador to the United States from 1968 to 1973.

gious factors are involved, we must be very specific about the meaning of peace. Arab societies are in convulsion. The Arabs were oppressed for many years by colonialism. And now they are beginning to discover their wealth, they are confronting the modern world, and this process is taking place not only in the Middle East but also in areas such as Africa. One of the remarkable features of societies in this phase is their instability. A piece of paper does not count for anything. We must insist on a change of realities, a change of attitudes on the part of the man in the street. If peace is not translated into such individual realities, it is not peace. Peace must include both elements, then, an end to the state of war, and building a positive concept of peace at the same time.

President: If I ask President Sadat, and he says that he will agree to open borders—tourism, visitors, trade—would you agree to let Arabs in without any constraints, on a reciprocal basis?

Prime Minister Rabin: That would be the happiest day of my life.

President: That answers it. Thank you.

Prime Minister Rabin: Jordan has just allowed a group of Israeli Arabs to go to Jordan. This is the first time in 29 years that this has occurred. We have no problem with open borders. We have an open bridges policy now, and since 1967 four million Arabs have crossed into Israel, one million in the last year and a half alone. They come from all Arab countries. Thus, when we talk of an overall settlement, this for us is the essence of what peace must include.

President: I understand.

Prime Minister Rabin: But no Arab leader seems to agree with this definition. That could change; it would be a hopeful sign if it did. The second issue is the boundaries of peace.

President: Secretary Vance might like to comment on this.

Secretary Vance: The Arabs see this as a question affecting sovereignty. They see diplomatic recognition, trade, and so forth as coming at a later stage. First, there must be an end to the state of war, then the rest could occur in time after the state of war ends. Do you believe that it is possible to get peace in stages, by steps?

Prime Minister Rabin: We agreed over one year ago, in February 1976, that we were ready to negotiate an end to the state of war.⁴

President: Do you have any preference as to which elements must come first, as to whether Egypt might begin to do some things first?

Prime Minister Rabin: No. It is most important to define the political goal at the outset. If we are talking of an overall settlement, then there are two elements.

⁴ On February 22, 1976, the Israeli Cabinet authorized the United States to approach Egypt, Syria, and Jordan about negotiating an end to the state of war. ("Israel Authorizes U.S. Move for Talks With Arabs," *New York Times*, February 23, 1976, p. 4)

President: Must they be done simultaneously?

Secretary Vance: If there were agreement in principle that both elements of peace must be carried out eventually, could agreement be reached upon implementing these principles in stages?

Prime Minister Rabin: Is there to be agreement reached in steps, or are you speaking of the execution of an agreement?

Secretary Vance: The execution.

Prime Minister Rabin: We can have a schedule for the execution of an agreement, but only once we agree on the overall aim. If we have a basic agreement, then we can divide it into phases of execution. But the Arab countries seem to say that we should agree to end the state of war, but that the building of positive relations would only come later, with no commitments made in the agreement.

Secretary Vance: They define it that way, but there is some flexibility. And there are some differences among the different Arab countries.

Prime Minister Rabin: That's my view also. I gave you my definition of peace. If you ask whether, once the agreement is reached, we can carry it out in phases, we are ready to do so. But we must define what we agree on first.

The second basic issue is the boundaries of peace. We have fought four major wars, and there has been no peace in between. Israel must base its policy, realistically and morally, on being able to defend itself. We have no formal alliances, no one is committed to come fight for us. We are proud of this. The Israeli people can defend themselves if given the means to do so. We have never asked for a US commitment to come to our defense. This puts the responsibility on the Israeli government to weigh very carefully the lines, even in the context of peace, to which we would withdraw. The area is very volatile. Most wars in history have begun between countries at peace with one another. The problem is that we want "defensible boundaries," based on geographical lines that we consider to be defensible. Legally, we base our demand on the fact that our neighbors have never recognized any boundaries for Israel.

Let me review this history of the post-1948 lines. The United Nations passed a resolution on partition in 1947, and Israel accepted. The Arabs rejected the resolution. They went to war, but they did not win. After a year of fighting, negotiations began and an armistice agreement was reached. Lines were agreed upon. I was a member of the Israeli delegation at Rhodes.⁵ We asked there for recognition of final bound-

⁵ A reference to the armistice negotiations held between Israel and its Arab neighbors on the island of Rhodes from January 12 to July 20, 1949. The Armistice Agreements between Israel and Egypt, Israel and Lebanon, Israel and Jordan, and Israel and Syria ended the first Arab-Israeli War.

aries. We would have been satisfied and we were ready to sign an agreement. Egypt and then the other Arabs insisted on Article 5 of the armistice agreements, stating that the lines were only to be demarcation lines for military purposes, and that they were not to be seen as prejudicing a final peace agreement in Palestine. Legally, there have been no borders, only cease fire lines. Now other lines exist under the recent agreements.⁶

We are ready however, for territorial compromise, but we do not accept the principle of total withdrawal to the pre-1967 lines. The location of the lines can be negotiated. The bulk of Sinai can be given back. As for Golan, even in a peace agreement, we do not want to come down from the Golan Heights. The West Bank is the most delicate issue. We just had a Labor Party convention in which there was a long argument over this issue. We concluded that for peace, we would make territorial compromises on all fronts. But it is not so easy. General Dayan put forward a reservation concerning the West Bank and a close vote was held. Out of 1,200 participants, a majority of only 51 came out for our position on territorial compromise. So it is not an easy problem. Our policy is that we will not draw lines. Once this is done, it becomes the basis for later bargaining. There have been no Cabinet decisions on final borders. But this will be an issue in the campaign. The tendency in Israeli public opinion is not to give too much, to put it mildly. But if the public could see a concrete offer, if negotiations were underway, and if we were on the verge of peace, then we would have some room for maneuver. But not for total withdrawal. Ninety percent of the Israeli public would reject that, and we are a democracy.

In Sinai, Sharm al-Shaikh is one point. We do not require sovereignty, but we require a presence and control. Two wars began over navigation there, 1956 and 1967. Our people would ask, if we returned Sharm al-Shaikh, whether there would be more wars there. So we need control, not sovereignty, and a land connection, as well as some changes in the old international boundary between Egypt and the Palestine Mandate. Those lines, after all, were changed in 1906. The British pushed the Ottoman Empire to give up part of Sinai to Egypt. Before 1906, the international boundary between the Ottoman Empire and Egypt was different.

President: You make a distinction between control and sovereignty. Could this be applied elsewhere? I'm not trying to pin you down, but it could be a crucial point.

Prime Minister Rabin: In 1973, Secretary Kissinger asked Prime Minister Meir to look at the issue in terms of security versus sover-

⁶ A reference to the 1974 and 1975 disengagement agreements between Israel and Egypt and Israel and Syria.

eignty. We said then, go ahead and explore this with the Egyptians. But we will reserve the last word until after we have heard Egypt's response. Egypt's response, I believe on May 25th, 1973, was that the United States was offering us sovereignty in the skies, but not on earth. We do not exclude, however, the possibility of exploring it. But I cannot commit myself.

I cannot say anything about the West Bank, but for peace, we would be prepared for a territorial compromise. But not for full withdrawal. There are sharp differences within Israel. The Labor Party platform will be a major issue in the election, and Likud will oppose the platform. It is a very sensitive issue, even inside the Labor Party. I fought for the principle of territorial compromise, and I believe in it.

President: How will Yadin address the issue?

Prime Minister Rabin: He takes the same position, but I'm not sure what his party's position will be. He won't get pinned down. I haven't followed the debate in his party.

Mr. Eiran: There are hawks and doves in his party. He has to be very careful.

Prime Minister Rabin: It's hard for him to satisfy his supporters, especially if he attacks our position.

Secretary Vance: Do you require sovereignty in the Golan Heights?

Prime Minister Rabin: We haven't discussed this.

Secretary Vance: But you won't come down. Do you need sovereignty, or control and security?

Prime Minister Rabin: I don't want to commit myself. We have settlements there. We have not annexed these territories. They are still under Syrian sovereignty. We control them as administered territories, but the laws in effect are Syrian on the Golan Heights and Jordanian in the West Bank, except for Jerusalem. Their legal status has not changed. We have just added some regulations. In the West Bank, the Arabs can use Jordanian currency, and they are Jordanian citizens. Under international law, these are administered territories under Israeli control, but they are not part of our sovereign territory. We believe that their future is still to be decided in negotiations.

President: I understand your position on a reunified Jerusalem. But are there any other areas where you claim sovereignty?

Prime Minister Rabin: We may claim it, but we have not annexed any other territory. We have left it open.

President: Does this include Sinai and Gaza?

Prime Minister Rabin: There was a government decision in 1968 that Gaza should be part of the State of Israel. But not Sharm al-Shaikh.

The third issue is the Palestinian question. This must be solved if an honorable, durable settlement is to be reached. We do not ignore the

issue any longer. It must be solved. But it is not the heart of the conflict. The heart of the conflict is the lack of the Arabs' reconciling themselves to the existence of Israel as a viable Jewish state. The essence of peace is reconciliation, not recognition. Simply recognizing Israel as a fact is not enough. Recognition by itself has no meaning.

President: But from their point of view recognition is already a major concession. There is a difference of perspective, since you start with your right to exist as a given.

Prime Minister Rabin: I know that this is a basic difference, and that we start from different points of view. The Arabs have not swallowed the fact that we are there to stay. This is why we stress the need for real peace and for defensible borders. We have to get the Arab leaders to tell their people that the time has come for real change.

Secretary Vance: Each Arab leader that I spoke to said that in negotiations they would recognize Israel's right to exist as a state. The Palestinians have not said this, but the others said they would.

Prime Minister Rabin: Recognition is a diplomatic act, but the essence of the question is reconciliation. They have to live with us, they have to work with us. This may not be at hand.

On the Palestinians, we believe that the solution of the Palestine issue should be based on two states in the former area of Palestine. This almost took place before 1967. East of the Jordan River, there are nearly 900,000 Palestinians from the 1948 period. They were integrated into Jordanian society, on the whole. Those now in the West Bank are Jordanians and they are not ready to give up their Jordanian citizenship. We believe in two states: Israel, as a Jewish state, although we have a non-Jewish minority of one half million which enjoys all rights. The Muslims in Israel do not have to serve in the army, but some do volunteer. East of Israel, there should be a Jordanian-Palestinian state. How the Palestinian identity is worked out within that state is not our business. It is up to them. But we want two states. It can consist of two entities, but there can only be one state.

President: Provided there is only one state, then it is up to them how it is organized?

Prime Minister Rabin: We are not asking for unacceptable things from the Arabs. Ambassador Jarring from 1967 to 1971, treated Jordan as the spokesman for the Palestinians. Jarring never went to Syria, because Syria did not accept Resolution 242, but he did talk to Egypt and to Jordan. Egypt did not question Jordan's right to speak for the West Bank.

President: To what degree would you accept the West Bank as part of a Jordanian-Palestinian state? As an independent entity or in confederation, perhaps even with some Syrian involvement?

Prime Minister Rabin: There is no room for a third state. It is bound to be extreme, small, and unstable. It would be the seed for destruction of any agreement reached. It cannot solve anything. It would foster aggression and hatred.

President: What if it were set up on the US model, two states within a federation, with Jordan controlling defense and foreign affairs, and with the West Bank state demilitarized. Would you have any problem with that as a concept?

Prime Minister Rabin: I am not talking now of boundaries, but I am ready for territorial compromise. But any agreement must be signed between governments. How they solve the problem of Palestinian self-expression is up to them, but there can be no third state.

President: You use the word state as meaning a nation with sovereignty?

Prime Minister Rabin: Yes. On the question of negotiations, these must be between governments. If Jordan wants to bring Palestinian leaders from the West Bank as part of their negotiating team, that is no problem, but any agreement must be negotiated and signed with Jordan.

President: I understand there is a difference of opinion with the Arabs on this point. Do you look with concern at the prospect of several Arab nations negotiating together? Must the negotiations be on a bilateral basis?

Prime Minister Rabin: We must have agreements between sovereign states.

President: Agreements, yes, but what about negotiations?

Prime Minister Rabin: We want to negotiate with each sovereign state. Multilateral negotiations do not work.

Secretary Vance: Would it be acceptable to have subcommittees at Geneva on a functional basis? For example, on the Palestinian question? Or would this have to be dealt with strictly in a Jordanian-Israeli context?

Prime Minister Rabin: In Jordanian-Israeli negotiations.

President: If Jordan says that they will not deal with the Palestinian issue alone, but that they would rather have Egypt and Syria there as well, would you accept if that were Jordan's preference?

Prime Minister Rabin: No. No. If there is to be a solution, it must be reached in negotiations with a state. If there is no agreement among the Arabs that can be expressed through Jordan, that is their problem. They can coordinate however they wish, and they don't have to ask me for permission to do that. But the best solution would be to negotiate the Palestinian problem with Jordan.

President: I would like you to keep an open mind in the negotiating phase on this problem, if you don't mind. I understand your position that final agreements must be bilateral in nature, but negotiations should not be allowed to break down if Jordan does not want to negotiate bilaterally. I hope you will keep an open mind on this.

Prime Minister Rabin: We can talk discreetly here. We have no problem with direct communications with Jordan, including at the highest level. There is no disagreement between us and them on the PLO. We have a perfect understanding with them. They are even more fearful of the PLO than we are. We know their real attitude and how much they appreciate our position on Jordan as the sole representative of the Palestinians. I have been called more Hashemite than King Hussein himself. In the Arab world there is now some recognition that Jordan must represent the Palestinians. It is not yet enough, but when they see that this must be the case, then they will adjust because they want to go to Geneva.

President: I would like the Secretary of State to comment on that.

Secretary Vance: If the Arabs say that they will go to Geneva, but only as a single delegation, would you go?

Prime Minister Rabin: I would recommend not to do it. A multilateral negotiation is a recipe for failure. I remember earlier experiences. We should learn from the past. In 1949, I was hopeful about peace. I sat with the Egyptians at Rhodes. The Egyptian representative was Mahmoud Riad. We talked and Egypt decided to break with the others and to start negotiations on an armistice. Then four agreements were signed, which are still the best that we have ever signed in the history of the conflict. Then we went to Lausanne, where the Arabs were represented by a multilateral delegation.⁷ We failed there to reach the historic achievement of ending the conflict. If there is a big public conference, it turns into a shouting match. Each Arab party lines up with the most extreme.

In December 1973, Geneva was all right because we had agreed with Egypt in advance that after the conference we would reach a disengagement agreement. Otherwise, it would have simply been a performance. Without prior agreement on how to proceed, there will be failure.

Secretary Vance: What if you assume that the only way to get the Arab parties to Geneva is in a unified delegation, but that once they get there they will talk on a bilateral basis?

⁷ From April 27 to September 12, 1949, representatives from Israel, Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, and Jordan met in Lausanne, Switzerland, under the auspices of the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine to resolve outstanding disputes from the first Arab-Israeli War.

Prime Minister Rabin: This has never been done. It has never led anywhere. And I personally am not in favor of it.

President: If we added the phrase that any ultimate agreement would be on a bilateral basis, would this alleviate your concern?

Prime Minister: *How would we then proceed at Geneva?*

President: I was going to ask you that next.

Prime Minister Rabin: When we talk of an overall settlement, we will have to solve the question of the nature of peace, of boundaries, and of the Palestinians. I never said that the other side has to take our positions as a precondition. They can come with any position they want.

President: [to Secretary Vance] Is Syria the main party that wants a single delegation?

Secretary Vance: Yes. That is their main concern. Egypt prefers bilateral negotiations. The Syrians made it clear that if this were not agreed in advance, they might not go to Geneva.

Prime Minister Rabin: Did they explain why?

President: I'm not sure I understand why.

Secretary Vance: They gave two reasons. First, they do not want to fragment the Arab position; second, they believe this is the best way to deal with the Palestinian issue.

Prime Minister Rabin: The Syrians are the most extreme.

Secretary Vance: Yes.

Prime Minister Rabin: The Syrians took this position because of the Lebanon conflict. This is not a year when they can go to war. What they agreed to at Riyadh and Cairo⁸ was that Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Syria would make a deal. Syria would accept Egypt's diplomatic strategy for 1977 and 1978. Egypt would then give Syria a free hand in Lebanon. And Saudi Arabia would finance both of them. It was a practical arrangement. Syria ended its criticism of Sadat. Syria is now in no position to risk war. They have three divisions in Lebanon, including one armored division. They are vulnerable militarily. They need to gain one and one-half to two years, but they do not want to let Egypt have full freedom of action. This is why they favor one delegation.

President: Saudi Arabia is more inclined to play an active role in negotiations. Do you look on this with favor? Should we encourage this trend?

Prime Minister Rabin: Saudi Arabia's role stems from the fact that the Arab countries need Saudi money. Without financial aid for Egypt, there would be a real catastrophe. Egypt's problems stem from its large

⁸ See footnote 5, Document 7.

defense budget and from its internal economic problems. We in Israel cut subsidies without causing riots, and we made our decisions stick. Saudi Arabia can play a major role in helping bring about Arab moderation. To the extent that Saudi Arabia wants to be involved in the negotiations, we would have problems. There are others as well such as Iraq, Algeria, and Libya. They do not want agreements with us. So we would only negotiate with the confrontation states.

President: I'm not sure I agree with you on Saudi Arabia's attitude. It is not the same as Iraq's or Algeria's.

Prime Minister Rabin: No, I agree. They are much more moderate.

President: The Saudis really do want an agreement. Is it in your interest that we encourage them?

Prime Minister Rabin: Saudi Arabia can be used to moderate Egyptian and Syrian positions, but they should not be directly involved in the process of negotiations. They should simply induce Egypt and Syria to show moderation.

President: [to Secretary Vance] Do the Saudis want to be at Geneva?

Secretary Vance: It is not clear. But they want to be a force for moderation. This stems from their self interest. They need to be moderate to survive. They see danger from the radicals.

Prime Minister Rabin: And rightly so. Syria did not come to Geneva in the first round. They would not accept Resolution 242. In fact, I am not aware that they have accepted it even today.

Ambassador Dinitz: A unified Arab delegation also gets Syria off the hook of having to accept Resolution 242.

President: We will have more time tonight and tomorrow.

Prime Minister Rabin: We still have bilateral issues to discuss.

President: We will have plenty of time. Tonight, could you try to outline for me an optimum sequence of events for this year?

Prime Minister Rabin: We have an Israeli saying that, even though the Middle East is known for its prophets, no one should try to be a prophet about the future of the Middle East today.

President: But you can tell me what you want to have happen so that we can espouse your position. I have enjoyed our talks, it was very enlightening, and I have learned a lot.

Prime Minister Rabin: Thank you for your time. We will meet tomorrow?

President: Yes. I look forward to it.

Secretary Vance: We can continue at lunch also. I have some follow-up questions to discuss with you.

Dr. Brzezinski: Would you insist on achieving greater clarity in the concept of peace in the context of the Geneva negotiations or prior to the negotiations?

Prime Minister Rabin: We can go to Geneva without knowing all the details of how it will work. But the whole situation in the Middle East is not only moved by rational factors. Irrationality is even a greater force. We run the risk of building up expectations that something will be solved, and then if it fails it will create disappointments and disillusionment. Where would this lead? We must prepare for Geneva carefully. We want to know what is expected there, and what will be the alternatives if it does not work. Otherwise it would be very risky to go.

Dr. Brzezinski: But can we be more precise on peace before Geneva?

Prime Minister Rabin: We can do useful background work before Geneva, defining what is attainable. We are not there yet. The second best alternative would be to work for more limited agreements, ending the state of war. That would be better than nothing.

Dr. Brzezinski: If we can agree on peace before Geneva, then there would also have to be some agreement on boundaries.

Prime Minister Rabin: Maybe. At least on the parameters. No doubt. It is legitimate to ask that of us. I put forward the question of peace. But the Arabs can put forward the question of the parameters of boundaries. But we cannot be totally precise.

Dr. Brzezinski: But you agree that it would be useful to reduce areas of ambiguity?

Prime Minister Rabin: Yes, to reduce them, but only within limits.

President: You have to leave some ambiguity so that Geneva will still be necessary. Thank you very much.

19. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) to President Carter¹

Washington, March 7, 1977

SUBJECT

What Should Rabin Go Back With?

Rabin during his presentation this morning² addressed himself to three issues:

1. the definition of peace;
2. the question of boundaries;
3. the future of the Palestinians.

It was noteworthy that he was most precise on the first; he also indicated to us what it is that he does not wish with regard to the third (i.e., a separate Palestinian state); and he was notably vague on the second, i.e. the question of frontiers.

I think it is essential that we should not go into Geneva sometime this fall without some preliminary agreement with regard to substance. If we go into Geneva on the basis of a *procedural* agreement, it is likely that the substantive differences will quickly surface, that the Russians will exploit them, and the whole enterprise may then break down. The Israelis will then be able to blame the Arabs for their intransigence; the Arabs will blame both the Israelis and us for our failure to move toward a settlement, and the only beneficiaries will be the radicals and the Soviets.

That is why it is important that Rabin return to Israel with a much clearer understanding of *your determination* to move forward on all of the three issues mentioned above:

On peace, you should stress to Rabin that we will press for a much more precise and substantive definition of peace by the Arabs, and that we will try to define more precisely the stages of implementing the various elements inherent in a peace settlement: mutual recognition, the development of trade, free movement of people, etc.—in other words, the different elements of “reconciliation” of which Rabin spoke;

On boundaries, it is important to emphasize to them that we take seriously the distinction between sovereignty and security. Israel is entitled to recognized frontiers and to secure defense lines, but it simply is illusory to expect the Arabs to recognize frontiers that entail a signifi-

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Trips/Visits File, Box 103, 3/7–8/77 Visit of Prime Minister Rabin of Israel: 3/3/77–4/77. No classification marking. Brzezinski did not initial the memorandum.

² See Document 18.

cant territorial change beyond the lines of 1967. You will have noticed that Rabin was remarkably vague on this subject, and it may be appropriate to tell him that the United States is prepared to support a peace settlement that provides for security arrangements *beyond* mutually agreed and recognized frontiers, but that the United States will not support major territorial acquisitions because that would be tantamount to precluding a peace settlement. You might tell Rabin that we will support the Israelis with regard to leases, temporary security lines, patrol quotas, and the like—all of which could be gradually terminated as the scope of peace expands, as per the paragraph above;

On Palestine, you might mention to Rabin that it is important that consultations begin to include the Palestinians to the maximum extent possible, and that their exclusion has had the effect of radicalizing them. At this stage, the question of the Palestinian future probably has to be left open, but it would be a mistake to freeze oneself prior to Geneva to any particular solution and to any particular formula for negotiating.

To conclude: I think it is important that you make clear to Rabin that we want greater specificity on the above points, that we are prepared to support Israel in a genuine search for peace, but that he should have no illusion about the United States indefinitely supporting a stalemate.³

³ Carter held a working dinner with Rabin the evening of March 7 and met privately with him after the dinner. (Carter Library, Presidential Materials, President's Daily Diary) No record of the discussion was found. In his memoirs, Carter wrote: "When he went upstairs with me, just the two of us, I asked him to tell me what Israel wanted me to do when I met with the Arab leaders and if there were something specific that I could get [Egyptian president Anwar] Sadat to do. He didn't unbend at all, nor did he respond. It seems to me the Israelis, at least Rabin, don't trust our government or any of their neighbors. I guess there's some justification for this distrust." (*White House Diary*, p. 31; brackets in the original)

20. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, March 8, 1977, 10:35–11:30 a.m.

SUBJECT

Meeting between President Carter and Prime Minister Rabin

PARTICIPANTS

The President
The Vice President
The Secretary of State
Dr. Zbigniew Brzezinski, National Security Adviser
Mr. Alfred L. Atherton, Assistant Secretary of State
Dr. William Quandt, NSC Staff

Prime Minister Rabin
Ambassador Simcha Dinitz
Mr. Amos Eiran, Director General, Prime Minister's Office
Mr. Chanan Bar-On, Minister, Embassy of Israel
Mr. Eliahu Mizrahi, Personal Secretary to the Prime Minister
Gen. Ephraim Poran, Military Secretary to the Prime Minister

President: I'd like to outline for you in frank terms our attitude toward Israel and toward the possibility of reconvening the Geneva peace conference this year. I've had a chance to talk to a number of Congressional leaders, including Senators Ribicoff and Stone, and I have been impressed with how much the essence of our relationship with your country is based on the admiration and support of our people for Israel since its creation. The courage that your country has shown is a source of admiration and a guarantee of our continuing support.

We have always assumed that if and when a chance for permanent peace arrived, you would be willing to move aggressively toward that goal. We have assumed that you would be ready to forget about the past and about history, and to adopt a fresh perspective. But these must be your decisions and we know, of course, that there are risks involved.

The American people and I will look closely at the attitude of Israel, and I will be prepared to put in a substantial amount of my personal time to work for a permanent solution to the Middle East problem, this year if possible. We will be investing lots of our own resources in this process, and I will soon be meeting with some of your adversaries.

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Subject File, Box 66, Middle East: Peace Negotiations 1977 Volume I [I]. Top Secret; Sensitive. The meeting took place in the White House Cabinet Room.

I want to discuss some crucial elements that will have to be addressed in those talks. I do not believe that the Arabs, as a precondition for peace, will be prepared to open their borders with you. I would be happy if they would, but it seems unlikely. With Jordan it may be easier, and Syria will be the hardest. Egypt may be in between. But we'll pursue that topic.

On territory, we have felt that your settlements in the occupied territories are illegal. Ambassador Scranton has reaffirmed this publicly and we have often said it privately. I know that you have been concerned with that statement of our position, but it is nonetheless our position. I understand that you see the settlements as outposts for your security, not necessarily as permanent settlements. I can understand the strategic reasons; I have looked at the maps.

Your control over territory in the occupied regions will have to be modified substantially in my view. The amount of territory to be kept ultimately by you will only, in my judgment, involve minor modifications in the 1967 borders. I attach significance to a dual approach—agreeing on secure lines of defense in areas such as the West Bank and Gaza, including perhaps some international forces, while emphasizing that ultimately you will have to withdraw from substantial parts of the occupied territories as part of a settlement.

On the PLO issue, Congressman O'Neill last night reflected a deep concern of the American people. We, of course, deplore terrorism, but even we sometimes have had to swallow our pride. We talked to the North Koreans, and the French talked to the FLN. We see a possibility that Palestinian leaders can be absorbed in an Arab delegation. And we don't know of any Palestinian leaders other than the PLO. We hope that you could accept this arrangement. It would be a blow to US support for Israel if you refused to participate in the Geneva talks over the technicality of the PLO being in the negotiations. I know this may not be a technicality for you. But I have to have some way to deal with the Arab leaders when they come here to see me.

Your position is now more inflexible than when Secretary Vance talked to you. I understand your political needs, especially in a democracy, but if you look at our people's views, they expect that this year will be crucial for peace. In every possible way, I hope that you will be flexible, especially after your election. I need to have hope that we can get to Geneva. I won't quote you to the Arabs, but I need to have a way to work with them for some common understanding.

Prime Minister Rabin: We are hopeful that peace will be achieved. If peace is possible, we will entertain it. But we want real peace, not a substitute. Also, we want the capability to defend ourselves. This involves our military strength, to which you contribute by selling us equipment and by helping us to finance it, and it includes defensible

boundaries. I also believe that when the United States and Israel work together, we get results. If the United States takes a clear position on the details of negotiations, such as boundaries or the nature of peace or the Palestinian issue, then the United States will be in a situation like that of 1969 when you could not be a go-between. Later, in the disengagement negotiations, you were able to help narrow the gap between the sides. I hope that you, Mr. President, will not take clear substantive positions before negotiations.

President: You have noticed, and I will continue to adhere to this position, that I will not say different things in public than I say in private. In public I will not take such specific stands. But I will tell you in private what my concerns are, and those of the American people. I agree with your point about taking public stances before negotiations. We still need to develop the terms of the meeting itself, before any agreement can be reached. We need to talk about how to get to Geneva, who will participate, and we need to address these issues soon. Then an ultimate agreement will still have to be reached in negotiations. And I accept your caution about the negotiations.

Prime Minister Rabin: On the PLO, our position is as I expressed it yesterday. I've seen some changes in the Arab world, but a change now in the US position will hurt these trends in the Arab world. We lately have seen Egypt and Syria place more responsibility on Jordan for negotiations. This is moving in the right direction. Why? Because we and the United States took a firm position. The Arabs concluded that the only way to get to Geneva would be to adjust to the US and Israeli position.

President: Our position has not changed.

Prime Minister Rabin: I thought the position explained to us by Secretary Vance, and your traditional position, has been that as long as the PLO does not recognize Israel's right to exist and UN Resolutions 242 and 338, then the United States will not deal with them.

President: Yes.

Secretary Vance: But even if they were to do those things, you are not prepared to deal with them.

Prime Minister Rabin: You have your position and we have ours.

Vice President: When I went to Europe² we put lots of pressure on the Europeans concerning the Palestinian issue.

President: This was difficult to do. Some of our close allies pressed us. They wanted to recognize the PLO, but we opposed that. Our position has not changed. You don't agree with our position, but the alternative to having no talks at Geneva may be to accept the PLO on our

² Mondale visited Western Europe and Japan from January 23 to February 1.

terms—their recognition of your right to exist plus Resolutions 242 and 338. Then if you refuse, there would be an adverse reaction to Israel. I'm not warning you, but I'm stating a fact. A number of Congressmen have stated their view that Israel's position should not become the obstacle to progress towards peace. I don't know what the Arab leaders will say. I have never met an Arab leader in my life. I will be strong in my support of Israel. But as much as you can, I want you not to place any obstacle in the way of Geneva.

Prime Minister Rabin: We are prepared to go to Geneva for peace and security. We pose no obstacles. We know there are differences between our countries. But we don't want to argue about hypothetical questions. Why argue before you get a positive answer from the PLO?

President: But take as a hypothetical proposition that Sadat says he will open his borders to visits and trade if the PLO can go to Geneva with Jordan. I have to consider what to say. Your position is an obstacle to that kind of discussion. You want permanent peace with Egypt, and that is more important than whether the PLO is at Geneva or not. But you seem to put them on an equal basis. It seems to me that an ultimate peace agreement is much more important than who goes to Geneva.

Prime Minister Rabin: There are many options, and many hypotheses. We can't run through them all. That is the purpose of negotiations. We can put forward our position, we can hear yours. There are some differences. It is normal that there will be differences. But negotiations have not even started; we do not even have a framework. You will meet with the Arab leaders in April and May. After that I hope we will be informed, that you will get their positions, and then there will be room and time to decide where we stand, and what are the gaps. But we don't want to start now with hypothetical questions. We know that if there is even the slightest difference between the United States and Israel that it will be blown up out of proportion and that no one will gain.

President: I agree.

Prime Minister Rabin: So why commit yourself to positions now before you have even met with the Arab leaders?

President: I believe it is accurate to say that the positions that I outlined are the historical and traditional positions of the United States Government. Some have been stated in public, and some in private. But I don't want you to misunderstand me. We want to keep open any opportunities to go to Geneva and we do not want to get bogged down on procedure. We cannot maintain the commitment of a large portion of our resources and capabilities to work for peace in the Middle East if we lose this year's chance. I will devote lots of my energy if there is a chance of success. But if we lose 1977 as an opportunity for peace, it will be hard to marshal such efforts again. We need to start getting specific. But you avoid being specific about boundaries and about the Pales-

tinian issue, for your own reasons. You also avoid being specific about Palestinian representation at Geneva. Well, I think we understand each other. We can move on.

Prime Minister Rabin: Our position on the Palestinians is distinct from our position on the PLO. I don't want to leave any area of misunderstanding. The Palestinian issue needs to be settled, but it is different from the question of PLO representation. We can discuss this in June.

President: It may or may not be possible to separate the two issues.

Secretary Vance: When you get into the Palestinian question and try to find other leaders than those in the PLO, you always have to come back to the PLO. They are intertwined.

Prime Minister Rabin: I would like to raise some bilateral issues. I have talked to Secretaries Vance and Brown and I have tried to explain why we in Israel have made a big effort to increase our capability to produce part of our own defense needs. We also need to use our resources to advance our technology. The price of development of new technology is high. Only if we can export can we reduce the unit costs of such items. We first have to think about meeting our own needs. Our exports are designed to keep our own capabilities going. We have tried to reach agreements with you and in some cases we need your permission to sell our equipment. We will keep any agreement that we sign. When the Secretary of State was in Israel, the Ecuador issue arose,³ but that decision has been made. Maybe there was a problem of time or maybe the decision fell between two Administrations. But we face problems on more than just this one item. Your policy affects us and we want to understand your view.

President: It would be helpful if your Ambassador would go over a list of possible customers with our Secretary of State and Secretary of Defense. Our position is fairly clear. If we prohibit ourselves from exporting to a country, this prohibition also will apply to you for any arms that contain our components. For example, in South America I understand that Peru has bought large numbers of weapons from the Soviet Union, and that Brazil and others have bought weapons from France. But our position is to reduce the proliferation of arms in Latin America. We cannot depart from that for you. The sale to Honduras, of course, was a mistake.⁴ We also have embargoes on arms sales against

³ See footnote 10, Document 3.

⁴ In 1975, Israel sold six overage French Super Mystère fighter-bombers equipped with American engines to Honduras. Some American officials expressed concern that the sale violated U.S. law, which required that Israel receive permission from the U.S. Government to make such a sale since the Mystère engines included American military technology. Israeli officials admitted they failed to get permission, but asserted that it was an oversight rather than an intentional act. U.S. officials dismissed the incident by February 1977. (Graham Hovey, "U.S. Blocks Sale of Israeli Planes to Ecuadoreans," *New York Times*, February 8, 1977, p. 1)

some countries, and we cannot allow you to send any equipment that contains American made components to such a country. But apart from those restrictions, there must be a long list of countries, maybe 100 or 120, where we would have no problem. But if there is any doubt, check with us first; and if there is no problem, you can go ahead.

There is also a problem with security involving some of our advanced technology. We cannot make an exception for you in cases where we will not even give our advanced technology to other NATO countries. But within those limits, you have unlimited advance approval to use and to sell equipment containing our component parts.

Some items may be much more expensive for you to produce than for you to buy from us. If we do finance your purchases, that could also be a factor in our decision. But that we can negotiate. These are the only caveats. This leaves a large area for flexibility. There is a problem when there is no clear policy formulated ahead of time or when there has been no inquiry about doubtful cases. I do not want this ever to be a problem between our countries again. We should go over a list together. We probably have never had a Secretary of Defense with as much knowledge of specific defense items and components as we now have, and he can answer your questions. Secretaries Brown and Vance will give you any necessary details. Is that an answer for you?

Prime Minister Rabin: Yes, for the future.

President: I am eager to do this. I want no disruption of our relationship.

Prime Minister Rabin: It was awkward for us to break our word to Ecuador. This is the first time we have not been able to keep our word and it was embarrassing.

President: I asked Secretary Vance just this morning to reconfirm my understanding of whether we have ever sold advanced military equipment to Latin America. And he confirmed that we have not. This has been a constant policy and was not something new directed against you.

Prime Minister Rabin: The second issue in our bilateral discussion is the F-16. Our request has been under study for several months. We want to purchase 50, then some additional ones. We need to know to what extent we can agree on the purchase of the 50, and they, of course, will not be delivered before 1980–1981. Then we want to get agreement in principle on co-production of some components, some parts.

President: I can't answer that now. Have you discussed it with the Secretary of Defense?

Secretary Vance: Yes. We need to discuss the question of co-production with our NATO allies.

President: How long will that take?

Secretary Vance: I don't know for sure.

President: I'm not that familiar with the F-16. I have not talked to the Secretary of Defense. But we can give you an answer without delay. I understand that you wanted 125 F-16's for your own air force, and that you intended to replace some of your present aircraft. I have these figures in mind.

Secretary Vance: We have already agreed in principle on the sale of the F-16, but not on numbers or on the price.⁵

Prime Minister Rabin: That is correct. We have agreement in principle, but no figures.

President: The Secretary of State and the Secretary of Defense will give you an answer.

Prime Minister Rabin: We have asked for 250 planes for a ten-year period, and 125 for a five-year period.

Ambassador Dinitz: Our total request amounts to 250 over a ten-year period, beginning in 1980–1981. These would be replacements for old planes. An answer on the Letter of Offer has been delayed. We want to purchase 50, and to have some co-production on the remainder. We have not worked out the details of how much can be co-produced. All that is still open. But we want agreement on the principle of some co-production. We have to maintain our ability to have an indigenous defense production capability. This is a problem with the Defense Department that is now under review. We understand it is part of a wider review inside the United States Government.

President: You have not decided on force levels in different years and which components you wish to produce.

Prime Minister Rabin: We have made one specific proposal.

Ambassador Dinitz: We have been specific on numbers, but not on the components for co-production.

President: I am not familiar with the issue.

Secretary Vance: I talked to the Secretary of Defense and he said that we need to talk with our NATO allies on this and the process has now begun.

President: I am not trying to delay an answer. We will get an answer to you quickly.

Prime Minister Rabin: Thank you for your aid, for the increase in fiscal year 1978.

⁵ The Ford administration approved the placement of orders for the military equipment on Israel's list of items, but gave no commitment on the quantity or delivery time. Documentation on Israeli requests for military equipment after the signing of the disengagement agreements is in *Foreign Relations, 1969–1976*, vol. XXVI, Arab-Israeli Dispute, 1974–1976.

President: Was it too much?

Prime Minister Rabin: When we talk to the Pentagon, they say that one half of the money that we will get must be used simply for maintenance of old equipment. That leaves little for new equipment which has already been approved. So we have to list our priorities among items that have already been approved.

Ambassador Dinitz: So you can see it was not too much.

Prime Minister Rabin: I have talked to Secretary Vance, but I will also mention it to you. The Secretary will go to the Soviet Union and we would like him to help bring about freer immigration for Jews. We appreciate his willingness to raise this. Also, there is the question of some activists who are being harassed by the Soviets. We have some names.

President: Give the list to the Secretary of State. But let's keep this out of the news media. We are already pressing the Soviets hard on this. They may want a quiet way to show their good faith.

Prime Minister Rabin: But if asked, I will say that I raised it. But I will not mention any list.

Mr. Mizrahi: There are nine on one list, and 12 on the other, for a total of 21.

President: We've handled lists like this before.⁶ I would like to see it done.

Prime Minister Rabin: I want to thank you for your help in Syria on the question of Jews there.⁷ It is the only Jewish community in the Arab world except for Morocco. All the other countries let them leave. But there are terrible problems with Syria. They live under permanent threat in a ghetto, and they want to leave. We will be glad to give them homes.

Secretary Vance: I discussed this with President Asad. For the unmarried girls, some arrangements are already underway. But if there is publicity, then President Asad said that he would be unable to go forward with this.

President: Then there is some hope.

Prime Minister Rabin: I believe that is all. Let me return to an earlier point. If the Arabs hear that your position is different from our own on peace—

⁶ An unknown hand inserted this sentence.

⁷ A reference to the Carter administration's efforts to gain exit visas for Syrian Jews. By August 12, the Syrian Government would allow 12 Syrian Jewish women to emigrate to the United States on condition that they had husbands waiting for them there. Accordingly, 12 Syrian Jewish women were married by proxy to men living in New York and then the Syrian Government allowed the women to emigrate to the United States. ("Proxy" Syrian Brides Meet Their Grooms in New York," *New York Times*, August 12, 1977, p. B14)

President: Your standards for peace are exactly compatible with our own.

Prime Minister Rabin: But if on withdrawal and on the PLO our differences of views are known, then there will be real problems in the area.

President: My only goal is to help bring about a permanent peace in the Middle East. I want your country to be at the center of that peace, with open trade, with good relations with its neighbors, with assured access to energy sources, with aid from us to help with your development, and with an undeviating acknowledgement by the international community that we are the closest of friends and allies. These commitments will not change. Our attitude has been stated, but we will be just as insistent in dealing with the Arabs. We will insist that they recognize you, that they open their borders, and that they end belligerency. But I do not intend to tell them where the borders should be. This has been a helpful discussion. You will be told after each of the visits of the Arab leaders what we learned. I enjoyed seeing you.

Prime Minister Rabin: I want to thank you for your time and for your hospitality.

President: I think you know our country, and I know your Ambassador does. Many Americans who share my religious background feel in a very personal way that the establishment of Israel is the fulfillment of religious prophecy. This is quite aside from politics. It provides a stable and unchanging basis for our commitment to you, apart from the commitment of our Jewish citizens, and it offers a permanence in our relationship that will guarantee the future against change. I said this often during my campaign and it was never disputed. I hope that this might alleviate some of your concern about our constancy. We want a partnership with you in peace, and I understand how difficult it will be for you to accept the proposition that the Arabs really do now want peace. Thank you.

21. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, March 9, 1977, 6:45 p.m.

SUBJECT

U.S. Policy in the Middle East

PARTICIPANTS

Conference of Presidents

Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler, President, Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations

Mr. Elmer Winter, President, American Jewish Committee

Mrs. Charlotte Jacobson, Chairman, American Section, World Zionist Organization

Mr. Yehuda Hellman, Executive Director, Conference of Presidents

Mr. Harold Jacobs, President of the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America

Rabbi Stanley Rabinowitz, President of the Rabbinical Council

Department of State

The Secretary

Mr. Philip C. Habib, Under Secretary

Mr. Nicholas A. Veliotis, Deputy Assistant Secretary, NEA

Miss Xenia G. Vunovic, NEA/IAI (Notetaker)

Summary. At their request, Rabbi Schindler, Chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, and five representatives of member organizations of the Conference met with the Secretary to discuss his recent trip to the Middle East and the current visit of Prime Minister Rabin to Washington. The group expressed particular concern over the President's remarks at his March 9 press conference.² The Secretary assured them that U.S. policy in the Middle East has not changed and that the special relationship between the U.S. and Israel, and our commitment to Israel's security, are as strong as ever. He emphasized the following statement from the President's press conference as an expression of the central thrust of U.S. policy concerning the Middle East: "Obviously, any agreement has to be between the parties concerned. We will act as an intermediary when our good offices will serve well. But I am not trying to predispose our own

¹ Source: Department of State, Office of the Secretariat Staff, Records of Cyrus Vance, Secretary of State, 1977–1980, Lot 84D241, Box 10, Vance Exdis Memcons, 1977. Confidential; Exdis. The meeting took place in the Secretary of State's office. Drafted by Xenia Vunovic on March 14, and approved in S on March 25.

² A reference to Carter's remarks regarding his view on a final, overall settlement to the Arab-Israeli dispute. He mentioned positions that both the Israelis and Arabs had previously opposed. (*Public Papers: Carter, 1977, Book I, pp. 340–348*)

nation's attitude toward what might be the ultimate details of the agreement that can mean so much to world peace." The American Jewish group stated that they were reassured about U.S. policy and promised to so inform their organizations and the press. *End summary.*

At their request, Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler, Chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, and five representatives of member organizations of the Conference met with the Secretary to discuss the Middle East situation. Following an exchange of pleasantries Rabbi Schindler noted that although it was fortunate that the group would have the opportunity to discuss the Rabin visit, the Conference of Presidents had requested this meeting with the Secretary before it was aware of Rabin's trip. He noted that the American Jewish community is uneasy about U.S. policy towards Israel during any change of Administrations and added that the other participants represent every major segment of the American Jewish community.

Schindler requested the Secretary's views in light of his recent trip to the Middle East and his impressions of the Rabin visit. The Secretary responded that his trip had been a fact-finding mission, the purpose of which was to ascertain the basic positions of the parties, to look for common ground among them, and to find a basis for moving forward in the negotiating process. He considered that his trip accomplished those limited objectives. The Secretary cited the following positive factors which emerged from his trip.

—Every leader he consulted said that he could no longer afford the arms costs of preparing for a potential Middle East conflict without severely undermining the vital social and economic needs of his people.

—If the important procedural questions could be cleared away—and they are difficult—each country was willing to go to a Geneva conference during the second half of 1977, following the Israeli elections.

—All the parties consulted were willing to discuss an overall peace settlement.

—The parties agreed that there should be no limit to the types of issues which could be discussed at Geneva.

The Secretary noted that there are three outstanding major issues over which Israel and the Arabs are divided; the nature of peace, boundaries, and the Palestinian question. The Secretary considers the nature of peace as most vital to Israel while the Arabs defined the Palestinian question as the most important issue. During his trip, the Secretary found that the Arabs defined the nature of peace as an end of the state of war while Israel defined it as complete normalization of relations. On boundaries, the Arabs want a return to the pre-June, 1967 War boundaries, while Israel expressed the need for defensible borders. On the Palestinian question, the Secretary found a surprisingly wide diver-

gence of views among the Arabs ranging from the advocacy of a separate Palestinian entity, to a Palestinian confederation with Jordan, to a confederation with both Jordan and Syria. Some kind of confederation was the objective of most of the Arabs with whom he held discussions. The Secretary informed the group that he had told the Arabs that they needed to reconcile their own views on the Palestinian question before progress could be made on this issue.

The Secretary emphasized that differences on matters of procedure reflect substantive differences, particularly among the Arabs. For example, Syria supports the concept of having only one Arab delegation in Geneva while Egypt advocates separate national delegations. This reflects Syria's concern that unilateral agreements, such as Sinai II, not be concluded between Israel and a single Arab country. The Secretary also found sharp differences among Arab nations concerning the question of Palestinian representation at Geneva. Some Arab officials said that there may be changes in the Palestinian Covenant in the near future, but the Secretary doubted that this would happen at the March 12 meeting of the Palestinian National Council in Cairo or in the very near future.

Regarding U.S. intentions, the Secretary stated that the U.S. has resolved to meet in depth with the leaders of all the states concerned, beginning with Prime Minister Rabin, in order to discuss both procedure and substance.

Schindler asked whether this meeting would follow the ground rules of past meetings with Secretaries of State which were confidential with details of the meeting to be reported only to the Conference of the Presidents but not to the press. The Secretary agreed.

Schindler then inquired whether the President and the Secretary had explored the issues in greater depth with Rabin than the Secretary had during his trip to Israel. The Secretary replied that both the President and he had gone into some procedural and substantive issues in depth and, as a result of their meetings with Rabin,³ have a much better understanding of Israel's point of view. Schindler noted that there was a thin line between having a definite U.S. policy concerning a peace settlement and acting as an intermediary. The Secretary replied that the U.S. has no position at this point; however, as negotiations proceed, the U.S. will have views on what it considers good compromise positions. He emphasized that it is up to the parties to reach an agreed settlement as no peace will last if it is imposed. Mr. Jacobs inquired about the Pres-

³ See Documents 18 and 20.

ident's statement defining "defensible borders."⁴ The Secretary responded that the President did not use "defensible borders" in a geographic sense but in a sense expressed in UNSC Resolution 242 which uses the term "secure and recognized boundaries." The Secretary added that it was important to move away from being hung up on "code words" and to start talking about practical, workable solutions.

Schindler asked if the President's March 9 press conference statement reflected a change in U.S. policy towards the Middle East. The Secretary reiterated that there is no change in the U.S. position. Schindler asserted that the President's definition in his March 9 press conference of "defensible borders" was read by the Jewish community as a "rebuff" of what the President said about "defensible borders" on March 7 when welcoming Rabin.⁵ Under Secretary Habib emphasized that the President is not proposing any plan or solution and that the U.S. will act as an intermediary in the Middle East without attempting to impose a solution. The Secretary informed the group that he learned personally from the President that the President considers the following remarks in his press conference to express the central thrust of U.S. policy towards the Middle East.

"Obviously, any agreement has to be between the parties concerned. We will act as an intermediary when our good offices will serve well. But I am not trying to predispose our own nation's attitude toward what might be the ultimate details of the agreement that can mean so much to world peace."

Mrs. Jacobson asked if the Secretary considered face-to-face negotiations between the Arabs and Israel important and whether the U.S. can play a role to convince the Arabs to negotiate directly with Israel. The Secretary replied affirmatively and noted that Geneva will automatically result in face-to-face negotiations. The Secretary promised to do his best to discourage the concept of indirect negotiations at the conference table. Mr. Veliotis cited the 1973 Sinai talks between Generals

⁴ During his March 9 press conference, Carter commented, "The defensible border phrase, the secure borders phrase, obviously, are just semantics," and continued: "The recognized borders have to be mutual. The Arab nations, the Israeli nation, has to agree on permanent and recognized borders, where sovereignty is legal as mutually agreed. Defense lines may or may not conform in the foreseeable future to those legal borders. There may be extensions of Israeli defense capability beyond the permanent and recognized borders."

⁵ At the March 7 welcoming ceremony, Carter stated that Vance's trip was the beginning of discussions with Middle East leaders to "explore some common ground for future permanent peace there, so that Israel might have defensible borders so that the peace commitments would never be violated, and that could be a sense of security about this young country in the future." Carter's welcoming remarks are in *Public Papers: Carter, 1977*, Book I, pp. 329–331.

Gamasy and Yaariv⁶ as a precedent for face-to-face official discussions between Israel and the Arabs and noted that the Joint Commission is part of Sinai II. Habib noted that face-to-face discussions are not a central issue for the Arabs. The real problem for the Arabs is how to organize the conference, whether in terms of one-to-one discussions with the Israelis or issue-by-issue discussions in which all delegations participate.

The Secretary explained that Syria prefers to hold one-to-one discussions in Geneva with a single Arab delegation representing all of the Arab parties concerned so that no Arab country could conclude a unilateral agreement with Israel.

Rabbi Rabinowitz noted that Geneva would be almost a summit conference and asked if there is a potential for conflict if the conference fails. The Secretary noted that this was a difficult question to answer but that both he and Rabin are concerned about such a possibility. He referred to Rabin's remarks about being mindful of second best options as well as the possibility of failure.⁷ Habib emphasized that the deterrent to another conflict lies in part in the military strength of Israel. He assured the group that Israel has a margin of military safety in the Middle East. The Secretary added that we were committed to ensuring that Israel had this margin.

Turning to the intentions of President Sadat, Mr. Winter noted that Sadat has been described as both a man of peace and a man bent on the destruction of Israel and asked which perception was correct. He cited Sadat's anti-Israel statements at the Afro-Arab summit in Cairo⁸ as a case in point. The Secretary emphasized that Sadat needs peace more than any other Middle East leader because of Egypt's severe economic problems. He added that he had talked with all parties during his trip about the importance of the rhetoric which they use to the success or failure of the negotiation process. We will continue to bring this to their attention as appropriate occasions arise.

Mr. Hellman claimed that a feeling of rebuff exists in the American Jewish community as a result of the tone and ambiguities of the President's March 9 press conference. Mrs. Jacobson added that members of the international press had told her that their newspapers' headlines of articles on this subject would read as follows: "Rabin receives rebuff

⁶ A reference to the Kilometer 101 talks led by Egyptian General Gamasy and Israeli General Yaariv. See footnote 5, Document 6.

⁷ Rabin held a press conference on March 8 after his meetings with Carter. (Bernard Gwertzman, "Rabin, After Carter Talks, Urges A Goal of 'Real Peace' in Mideast," *New York Times*, March 9, 1977, p. 2)

⁸ On March 7, Sadat hosted the first Afro-Arab Summit in Cairo, calling for "joint third-world action to eradicate all traces of enslavement and exploitation." ("Mini-Briefs," *Christian Science Monitor*, March 8, 1977, p. 2)

from the United States.” Stating the view that Israel’s election campaign will be thrown into turmoil, Schindler asked how Press Secretary Jody Powell will answer questions about the President’s press conference. Habib replied that Powell will emphasize the following two sentences: “Obviously, any agreement has to be between the parties concerned . . . But I am not trying to predispose our nation’s attitude toward what might be the ultimate details of the agreement that can mean so much to world peace.” The Secretary then described his discussions with the President earlier in the meeting and assured his visitors that the President’s remarks could not be interpreted as a U.S. “plan” and emphasized that details of a settlement can only come from negotiations between the parties concerned.

Hellman insisted that “defensible borders” are not a matter of semantics, as the President had said. The Secretary explained that the President’s statement, “the defensible border phrase, the secure border phrase obviously are just semantics” meant that the use of the terms “defensible” or “secure” in describing borders is a question of semantics. He again cited the need to avoid the traps of “code words”.

Speaking of code words Hellman noted that there are certain phrases such as “1967 boundaries” which signal to the American Jewish community that the U.S. is back to the Rogers plan.⁹ The Secretary emphasized that there is no “Rogers plan” in existence and that certainly the President’s remarks can not be interpreted as “a Rogers plan.” Habib told the group that it could help explain away these mistaken perceptions to the American Jewish community. Winter asked to what extent is U.S. policy in the Middle East “even-handed”. The Secretary again emphasized the special relationship between Israel and the United States.

Jacobson asked whether the Arab leaders visiting the U.S. in the near future will bring large shopping lists for arms, expressing the concern of the Jewish community about the possibility of a U.S. arms supply relationship with the Arabs. The Secretary replied that it was possible one or more Arab leaders might bring such a “list” but he did not think so. Jacobson added that if the Arabs get U.S. arms they would have arms from the U.S., the USSR, and France. Her impressions from her recent trip to Egypt was that Egypt must give first priority to improving its economy. The Secretary agreed with her about the Egyptian economy.

⁹ In December 1969, Secretary of State William Rogers proposed a Middle East settlement based on U.N. Resolution 242 that became known as the Rogers Plan. Documentation is scheduled for publication in *Foreign Relations*, 1969–1976, vol. XXIII, Arab-Israeli Dispute, 1969–1972.

The Secretary was told that British Prime Minister Callaghan had arrived and he adjourned the meeting in order to meet with Callaghan. The meeting lasted approximately one hour.

Following the meeting, Schindler and Habib worked out an agreed statement which the Conference of Presidents would use with the press. The statement is as follows:

“We had a very good meeting with the Secretary to go over the current state of efforts to reach a peaceful settlement. The Secretary informed us of his views in this regard.

With respect to questions the American Jewish delegation raised regarding the President’s answer to questions raised at his press conference earlier that day, the Secretary emphasized that the following excerpts from the press conference expressed the central thrust of U.S. policy:

Obviously, any agreement has to be between the parties concerned. We will act as an intermediary when our good offices will serve well.

But I am not trying to predispose our nation’s attitude toward what might be the ultimate details of the agreement that can mean so much to world peace.

These words and the meeting in its entirety were useful, frank and reassuring.”

22. Letter from President Carter to King Hussein of Jordan¹

Washington, March 10, 1977

Your Majesty:

I want you to know how much I have regretted the embarrassment that recent press reports² may have caused you and the people of Jordan. You understand, I am sure, that I have no authority to control the news media of this country and cannot prevent the publication of such misleading stories. I have, however, publicly stated that there was nothing illegal or improper in your relationship with us.

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Subject File, Box 55, Jordan: 1–4/77. No classification marking.

² See footnote 8, Document 12.

I am particularly sorry that you have been exposed to unfair allegations, since I consider you one of our very close friends, whose wisdom and guidance will be of utmost importance as we work toward our common goal of peace in the Middle East. I am looking forward to your visit in April.

With warm regards.

Sincerely,

Jimmy Carter

23. Editorial Note

On March 16, 1977, President Jimmy Carter held a town hall meeting in Clinton, Massachusetts. In response to a question regarding what he believed had to be done “to establish a meaningful and a lasting peace” in the Middle East, he responded that the first prerequisite for peace “is the recognition of Israel by her neighbors, Israel’s right to exist, Israel’s right to exist permanently, Israel’s right to exist in peace.” He defined this as “the borders between Israel and Syria, Israel and Lebanon, Israel and Jordan, Israel and Egypt must be opened up to travel, to tourism, to cultural exchange, to trade, so that no matter who the leaders might be in those countries, the people themselves will have formed a mutual understanding and comprehension and a sense of a common purpose to avoid the repetitious wars and death that have afflicted that region so long.”

President Carter identified the second prerequisite as “the establishment of permanent borders for Israel.” He commented that “borders are still a matter of great trouble and a matter of great difficulty, and there are strong differences of opinion now.” President Carter concluded by identifying the third prerequisite as “the Palestinian problem.”

In addressing this issue, he opened by stating, “The Palestinians claim up ‘til this moment that Israel has no right to be there, that the land belongs to the Palestinians, and they’ve never yet give up their publicly professed commitment to destroy Israel. This has to be overcome.” He continued, “There has to be a homeland provided for the Palestinian refugees who have suffered for many, many years. And the exact way to solve the Palestinian problem is one that first of all addresses itself right now to the Arab countries and then, second, to the

Arab countries negotiating with Israel.” (*Public Papers: Carter, 1977*, Book I, pages 386–387)

24. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Syria¹

Washington, March 29, 1977, 0145Z

69122. For Ambassador. Subject: Presidential Message to Asad.

Following is text of President’s message dated March 25 to President Asad (instructions for its delivery in septel):

Begin text: March 25, 1977

Dear Mr. President:

I have asked Ambassador Murphy to convey this personal note to you before he returns to Washington to be present for Foreign Minister Khaddam’s visit here. I want you to know how much I am looking forward to our meeting in Geneva in May. My only regret is that it has not been possible for us to get together earlier. We will have much to discuss as we review ways of advancing the cause of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

I am determined to do all I can to promote this cause, and I know your determination matches mine. As I have studied the situation in the Middle East in recent years, as I have heard from Secretary Vance about his talk with you in Damascus,² I have developed great respect for your dedication to the interests of your country and to the vision of peace and progress in your area.

I know of the constructive and statesmanlike role you played in bringing the Lebanese tragedy to an end. Our forthcoming meeting

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840076–0291. Confidential; Immediate; Nodis. Drafted in the White House, cleared by P. Sebastian (S/S) and E. Abington (NEA), and approved by Atherton. A March 23 memorandum from Brzezinski to Quandt stated that the Embassy in Tehran reported that Asad had asked the Shah of Iran to “help bring Syria and the U.S. closer together.” The Shah reportedly encouraged Asad to avoid intermediaries and speak directly with U.S. officials. Brzezinski wrote that Carter had noted Asad’s move and believed that “we should take the initiative in this matter.” (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Trips/Visits File, Box 104, 5/9/77 President Meeting with President Asad of Syria: 2–6/77)

² See Document 15.

will, I am certain, help assure that the search for peace in the Middle East will be fruitful.

With warmest regards, Sincerely, Jimmy Carter.

End text.

Christopher

25. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, April 4, 1977, 11:10 a.m.–12:30 p.m.

SUBJECT

President's Meeting with President Anwar Sadat of Egypt

PARTICIPANTS

The President
The Vice President
Secretary of State Vance
Dr. Zbigniew Brzezinski
Ambassador Hermann Eilts
Assistant Secretary Alfred L. Atherton
Mr. William B. Quandt, NSC Staff
Mr. Hamilton Jordan
Mr. Jody Powell

President Sadat
Foreign Minister Ismail Fahmi
Hassan Kamil, Chief, Office of the President
Minister of Economy Sayih
Ambassador Ashraf Ghorbal
Usama al-Baz, Chef de Cabinet, Foreign Ministry

The President: I want to emphasize my pleasure in meeting you. The American people feel a great friendship for the people of Egypt. It is hard to exaggerate our admiration for you and for your forceful moves toward peace. The exhibition of the Tutankhamen treasures² is a powerful demonstration of that friendship. I enjoyed my visit to them.

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Subject File, Box 66, Peace Negotiations 1977 Vol. I [I]. Top Secret; Sensitive. The meeting took place in the White House Cabinet Room. Sadat was in the United States on an official visit from April 3 to April 6.

² The treasures of 14th century B.C.E. Egyptian King Tutankhamen traveled to the United States from 1976 to 1977 in a major exhibition in Washington, New York, Chicago, New Orleans, and Seattle.

This is a year of possible major achievements in the Middle East. We must seek a maximum of harmony in order to get achievements. I want to share views with you and I will be meeting with you alone this evening.³ You are very welcome here. You have our friendship and I hope you enjoy your stay. I look forward to fruitful talks with you.

President Sadat: It is a pleasure and an honor to come here and to meet with you. After reading your book,⁴ I feel that we have a great deal in common. In Egypt, I speak of the principles of the village: the sense of limits, of family ties, of love of the land. I was happy to be invited to the United States by Secretary Vance. You are the man to help end the conflict in the Middle East. The United States is a super power and is the only one who can establish peace in the area. The Soviet Union is simply auctioneering, and has nothing to lose. But in Egypt we feel a deep love and respect for the United States. Millions of people turned out to see former President Nixon when he visited Egypt.⁵ It was a genuine feeling. The 18 years of confrontation between our two countries was contrary to the popular will.

You come from a village like I do. We share the same principles, and have the same type of religious background. I feel that we can do a lot together. We started the peace process right after the October War. It began immediately. We proved that we can achieve everything if we try. I am sure that we can do a great deal together this year. By nature I am optimistic, as villagers must be.

The President: You have to be optimistic if you are a farmer. You have to always believe that things will be better next year.

We will only have a few occasions to discuss these many important matters. I know your reputation for frankness. I will meet with other leaders later, but I wanted to see you first because of your natural leadership role in the area. You have been the most open in your call for peace. I hope that you will give me your frank analysis of how we might solve the difficult problems we face. We want to know how we can help. We are willing to play a strong part if asked. We need to discuss the definition of peace—open trade and so forth—and how to bring down the barriers between the countries of the Middle East. This is vital to Israel and to her neighbors. The withdrawal of Israeli forces is also crucial. It is also important to talk about the maintenance of secu-

³ Carter hosted a working dinner the evening of April 4 (see footnote 2, Document 27) and then had a private meeting with Sadat from 9:58 to 11:05 p.m. (Carter Library, Presidential Materials, President's Daily Diary) No record of their discussion has been found.

⁴ A reference to Carter's autobiography *Why Not the Best?: The First Fifty Years*.

⁵ Nixon visited in June 1974. See *Foreign Relations, 1969–1976*, vol. XXVI, Arab-Israeli Dispute, 1974–1976, Document 92.

rity in the period ahead, during the transitional period to peace. Then, as you said in your opening comments, we need to think of how we can change the Palestinians from refugees into a group with a home.⁶ I would like to ask you to outline the approaches that you think are most feasible. Israel feels the need for developing some common ground.

We will play an active role, but decisions must be made by those who live in the area. We will use our influence when it is asked for. Your ability to work with Syria, Jordan, and the Palestinians is a great asset. I think we share a common purpose, both as individuals and as representatives of our people. I would like your advice and counsel. After dinner, I would like some time to talk with you alone. Perhaps you could now outline how you see developments this year.

President Sadat: We started the peace process after the October War. We have had two disengagement agreements in Sinai, and one in Golan. Without American help, we would have had no achievements at all. As an example, let me give a short history of the first disengagement. Our forces faced each other, with Israeli troops on the West Bank of the Suez Canal. I was nervous, because this spoiled the whole thing for me, and I was preparing to get rid of it. I told Henry Kissinger that I was not prepared to allow this infiltration to remain. Henry Kissinger said that I should not attack since the United States would have to oppose me. I asked him what is the alternative. He said there could be a disengagement which would take Israeli troops to the East Bank of the Canal, while I kept my gains in Sinai. I agreed, and we negotiated, using shuttle diplomacy. At a certain moment we reached a deadlock. Our forces were still facing each other. I could not afford to move. Kissinger then asked me about how I would react to a U.S. proposal. I agreed. So the first agreement was based on a U.S. proposal. This was quite natural. After 29 years, four wars, mobilization against one another, and the long history of this problem, there is no mutual confidence. When the psychological moment came, the U.S. entered the scene. The United States had the confidence of both sides. We would not have reached anything at all except on the basis of the U.S. proposal. The first agreement was an American one and it set the example. The Soviets are furious when I say that 99 percent of the cards are in the U.S. hands, but it is true.

To begin, we need to develop mutual understanding and friendship between our two countries and at the level of the Presidents. We have a long way to go with the Arab-Israeli conflict. There are also lots of problems in Africa which worry me a great deal. King Hassan of Morocco contacted me yesterday about Africa. I also have messages from

⁶ Sadat made the comments during the welcoming ceremony at the White House; see *Public Papers: Carter, 1977*, Book I, pp. 561–564.

President Numayri of Sudan, and from President Giscard. We have lots to talk about. But with understanding, everything can be settled.

On borders, I do not think that you would agree that others should take land by force. There might be minor rectifications of borders on the West Bank, especially where some villages were separated from their land. This can be done. But the border problem can only really be solved when the U.S. is willing to apply peace based on justice. You will have no problem with us.

The question of the nature of peace is very crucial. They want open borders. But after 29 years of war and of hatred, no one can agree suddenly to open borders and to free exchanges. This is mostly a psychological problem. What I see is that I will sit at Geneva, and that we will sign a peace agreement that will end the state of belligerency, we will normalize the situation, and both we and the Israelis will fulfill our obligations under Resolution 242.

The Palestinian question is also crucial. There are lots of alternatives. Now it is necessary to give the Palestinians some entity, some homeland. Whatever guarantees are necessary, we are ready. The proper approach to the question of the nature of peace and to the Palestinian question is through guarantees. There can be a U.S.-Israeli defense pact. That is OK with me. But we will also ask for a guarantee.

I want to say that as long as we can keep talking there will be no insurmountable problems. I have said that a Palestinian state should have some link to Jordan.

The President: How do the Palestinians respond?

President Sadat: In principle, they agree. But there are differences. I say the link should be established before the peace conference, and they say it can only be established after the state is created. I think I can convince them.

The President: You mean there should be a relationship between a Palestinian state and Jordan?

President Sadat: There should be a declared relationship between Jordan and the Palestinians.

The President: What is the possibility of overcoming the refusal by the Palestinians to recognize Israel's right to exist and to accept Resolution 242? Israel insists that this be done before Geneva. This now seems irreconcilable. Do you see a solution?

President Sadat: It is easy. Before Geneva, a certain link should be declared between Jordan and the new Palestinian state. Israel need have no fear of a Communist state that would serve as springboard for aggression in the future. But concerning recognition, Israel is already recognized by both super powers, by the United Nations, and has its state and its land. The Palestinians have nothing. Even their human

rights are denied. I am urging the United States and the Palestinians to begin a dialogue. This will help them to save face in dealing with Israel. If the U.S. becomes involved in a dialogue, then it is very easy. Israel talks of the Palestinian Charter. But the Palestinians have already agreed to come to Geneva with Israel present, and they will sign a peace agreement at Geneva. It is a matter of saving face for both sides. As Minister Fahmi has pointed out to me, it has already been agreed to by Henry Kissinger and by President Nixon that you would enter into contact with the Palestinians, and I know that you have been in touch with Morocco and in Lebanon.⁷

The President: I understand. Do you see an agreement being reached first, and then being carried out in stages? Is there some alternative to this approach?

President Sadat: Israel is playing for time. We should not lose time. It is better to end the whole thing, and then to start the normalization process. I am sure that everything will eventually be normal. But if we wait a very long time, the situation will become dangerous. The situation could deteriorate easily. I have prepared the Arab world. The Syrians and the Palestinians were recently against me, with support from the Soviets. But now they are behind me. The Arab world is prepared. No one knows what will happen later. There are extremists on all sides. But now we are ready. Time should be used later for harmonizing and for normalizing our relations.

The President: I agree that we should move as rapidly as possible. In the area of security arrangements, how can we overcome fears that exist and how can we enhance security? When you have recognition of your final borders, could there be special security forces to add reassurances? Would you see the possibility of some Israelis being included in a multinational force for a limited period?

President Sadat: This has no significance for me. But I cannot do it. Let me give a small example. At Sharm al-Shaikh, at the entrance to the Gulf of Aqaba, the Israelis wanted to keep soldiers there along with UN forces. This was to secure their port of Eilat. But in the October War, I was able to close the area by attacking their ships north of Bab al-Mandab. They had to close Eilat harbor, and this was at a time when they had soldiers of their own at Sharm al-Shaikh. So their soldiers served no purpose. I cannot accept Israeli soldiers on my land.

With long-range arms, everything has changed. In my October 16th, 1973, speech, at the height of the war, I declared that my long-range missiles were aimed at Israeli cities. If they were to attack

⁷ For background on U.S. Government contact with the PLO, see footnote 4, Document 1.

my cities, I would attack theirs.⁸ Neither side took such action. So you see, long-range arms have changed everything. I can agree with you that Israel should have assurances, but I cannot agree to Israeli soldiers. I would be attacked for that. In the second disengagement agreement, I accepted U.S. technicians.⁹ The U.S. acted as a witness between Egypt and Israel. You can help remedy this problem. The U.S. is the main factor in establishing peace. We each have trust in you. I am not asking Israel to make any concessions of sovereignty or of land. And I agree that the United States should be present as a witness. For example, you man the early warning stations in Sinai. This could be done on the borders.

The President: I don't want to get too specific, but if there were peacekeeping forces that also included Arab forces for some short period of time, is that something that you could consider?

President Sadat: UN forces? You mean on their side?

The President: On both sides. I'm not trying to pin you down, just to discuss possibilities.

President Sadat: It won't work. It is the U.S. who can balance everything. That's what the Soviets do not like. Peace in the Middle East should be American. If from now to Geneva, the United States can produce some proposals, they will be accepted and we will go to Geneva simply to sign the agreements. Or we could go to negotiate with Israel at Geneva and it will take ten years and we will get nothing.

The President: So you suggest that we should play a role in offering proposals of our own? And you think that the parties would agree?

President Sadat: [Nods "yes"]¹⁰

The President: How would Syria and Jordan react?

President Sadat: Jordan would agree. Syrians—I have talked to President Asad. He is soon going to Moscow. I am flexible. If we can get the land occupied since 1967, I will do everything possible. I told this to Asad. He may raise some protests, but he will come around. Now we have a combined leadership.

The President: You advocate a quick implementation of the entire agreement. If this were possible in September or October, could you then immediately open your borders to Israel?

President Sadat: This is very difficult. It is a psychological problem for us. We have a very long history which makes this very difficult. But

⁸ Telegrams 3136 and 3137 from Cairo, October 16, 1973, summarized Sadat's speech of that day. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File [no film number])

⁹ A reference to the U.S. Sinai Support Mission. See footnote 6, Document 4.

¹⁰ Brackets in the original.

if we can reach this year an agreement, the second disengagement does not end until October 1978. So let the period of implementation take place in 1978.

The President: It is hard to get Israel to make all the concessions immediately and then to delay what is most important to them. I asked earlier about phases of implementation. We cannot get Israel to withdraw immediately and then only have full peace at a later date.

President Sadat: We can have the year of 1978 to implement Israeli withdrawal. It could be done, as in 1956–57, in only two months. But maybe it can take a whole year. The second agreement expires in October 1978. So during that year, the implementation of withdrawal could be phased. But opening borders is impossible for us, in all frankness.

The President: In fairness, that should be part of the whole process. We cannot ask Israel to withdraw without full peace and open borders.

President Sadat: There is a history to this open borders. Prime Minister Ben Gurion put forward that theory of Israeli security based on the idea that peace could be imposed on the Arabs. But it cannot be done. It can only be negotiated. Are there any precedents for a peace agreement including open borders and diplomatic relations? This is just part of Israel's security theory which was proved wrong in October 1973. It is part of their style of imposing conditions. Eisenhower got them out of Sinai in 1957 only to return to an armistice. But now we are prepared for a real peace agreement with an end to the state of belligerency.

The President: What time would be needed if all goes well for you to open your borders with Israel?

President Sadat: We need to forget the past and then to normalize relations. A Palestinian state will be created in the West Bank and in Gaza and there will be a corridor that passes through Israel. It will be natural that coexistence will develop between Israel and the Palestinian state, since it cannot be done otherwise.

I am the only leader in the Arab world who can take real steps toward peace. I first talked about a peace agreement with Israel in 1971. Secretary Rogers came to Egypt¹¹ and told me that Mrs. Meir had said that if any Arab leader had the courage to talk about a peace agreement, then Israel would put its cards on the table. Rogers had nothing to ask of me. Israel did not put her cards on the table. No other Arab leader, even in Jordan, will go as far as I will.

¹¹ Secretary of State Rogers visited Egypt from May 4 to May 6, 1971, during a trip to meet with Middle Eastern leaders. He was the first Secretary of State to visit Egypt since 1953. Documentation on his visit is scheduled for publication in *Foreign Relations*, 1969–1976, vol. XXIV, Arab-Israeli Dispute, 1969–1972.

The President: There is already fairly free movement of people in Jordan.

President Sadat: That is true. But I cannot do it.

The President: What can be done, for example with diplomatic relations, and the exchange of ambassadors?

President Sadat: It's the same problem. It's Israel's attempt to impose conditions. Peace cannot be imposed. This is a matter of sovereignty. You did not have diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union for 16 years. With Jordan, they have an open bridge. With the Palestinians, they can have de facto coexistence along their corridor. This will reduce the time necessary for normalization. But the main concern now is to end the state of belligerency, to normalize the area, and then to guarantee the settlement.

The President: Why is it an Israeli imposition of their will to ask for an exchange of ambassadors?

President Sadat: Because it is related to the old theory.

The President: But we should look to the future.

President Sadat: But in the three wars that they started, this was their main aim. In 1967, Dayan said he was waiting for the phone to ring. This was a very humiliating defeat for the Arabs, but they could not impose their will on us. I take these demands as an attempt at imposition, or I would give it to you.

The President: Well, this has not been very productive to this point. You don't see any time when it could be done.

President Sadat: I don't know if in a peace agreement we can add a clause on normalization in five years or so. Or perhaps you could guarantee the normalization. When peace is achieved, and there are guarantees, this issue should not be a problem. But you should be there as a witness. It is very difficult.

Secretary Vance: Has there been any change of views on the type of Arab delegation at Geneva?

President Sadat: I discussed this with President Asad. Ideally, there should be one Arab delegation across from one Israeli delegation. But I fear that Israel can use this to blow up the whole thing from inside. Asad insists on this to reduce my room for maneuver, so that he can veto my moves. This reduces my flexibility and it will create problems. He has done this before, like in Sinai II. I do not agree to it. Maybe at some time we could do it, if it offers real hope. But only if Israel does not fear peace. If you find the need for my making concessions, and if you convince me that Israel wants peace, then I will do it. But one delegation reduces my flexibility.

The President: Would President Asad agree to one delegation with subcommittees made up of separate national groups?

President Sadat: President Asad agrees to one delegation, but I do not agree.

The President: What then can be done?

President Sadat: We should go as separate delegations.

The President: Fine, but what about Asad?

President Sadat: Whenever we agree on Geneva, he will agree. This is his style. He will agree because there is no alternative to Geneva. We went to Geneva in 1973, but they refused.

Secretary Vance: On borders and security arrangements, what are your views of reciprocal demilitarized areas on each side of the border?

President Sadat: In this respect, I am quite ready to agree. I also say that since Egypt is very large and Israel is very small, the demilitarized areas can be proportional.

The President: That is fair.

President Sadat: Let us say our area could be double their area.

Secretary Vance: How should we handle Lebanese representation at Geneva?

President Sadat: They now have an armistice agreement with Israel and they should come to Geneva. As part of a permanent peace in the whole area, the same security arrangements can be made on the Lebanese border as elsewhere.

The President: Such as demilitarized zones?

President Sadat: Or UN forces.

Dr. Brzezinski: If there is a possibility in the peace agreement of saying that in five years there will be full normalization of relations, could we see a relationship between that and security arrangements?

President Sadat: How? I get you. They keep security borders apart from real borders.

Dr. Brzezinski: I am thinking of a link between full normalization and security. Security for Israel should not simply depend upon your good will. There should be some quid pro quo.

President Sadat: Israeli security does not depend on our good will. They can have a pact with the United States, guarantees, demilitarized zones, UN forces, and then, of course, they are very well armed. But why ask for more than that for Israel?

The President: We aren't asking for Israel. What about the idea of dual borders in some areas?

President Sadat: This will go back to the old theory. It is very sensitive.

The President: Both sides have sensitivities. We need to look for areas of accommodation.

President Sadat: As in the second disengagement, the U.S. could provide a guarantee for both sides. If we can work on this, I am quite ready.

The President: One final point. It is accurate to say that Israel does not trust us entirely.

President Sadat: Israel trusts no one entirely.

The President: I can understand why. She fears for her existence. It is not accurate to believe that a mutual defense pact with us or that UN troops would meet Israeli fears. Even those arrangements might only be temporary and the Israelis are looking far ahead into the future. They see normal diplomatic relations and trade as ways of establishing a permanent peace. We have to face that.

Minister Fahmi: I don't see how guarantees, demilitarized zones, an end to the state of belligerency, political guarantees and a final peace agreement can fail to provide Israel with security. Why would an Israeli ambassador in Cairo help?

The President: It is a symbolic thing.

President Sadat: I started the October 6th War and I had no intention of accepting a ceasefire until we reached the passes. After five days, the U.S. intervened. I declared that I can fight Israel, but not the U.S. I agreed to a ceasefire at once. This was despite the infiltration on the West Bank. It was only a matter of time. Israel had 400 tanks there to scare me, but they could not have reached Cairo. They had no room for maneuver. So I was not scared. But I agreed to a ceasefire because I would not fight the United States. I had 800 tanks around the Israelis, and many missiles, and I would have had a big victory. But Henry Kissinger said that the Pentagon would hit us. So with a pact, you can see that Israel would be secure.

The President: I see the problem. It is obvious. The Arab nations say to Israel "withdraw to the 1967 borders." Israel says that the Arabs will never recognize Israel. Israel wants full diplomatic relations and trade for economic development of the Middle East and to strengthen trust. The Arabs say they cannot give this full recognition. The difficulty of these adamant stances is that they narrow the options. I do not understand why, if Geneva is successful, the Arabs cannot say "Let's exchange ambassadors and trade." I honor your concern, but it is important to you and to Israel to keep trying to find a common ground. I hope we might forget as much as possible about the past and look to the future. Everyone must give a little. I am afraid that if we do not make major progress in 1977, it will become more difficult in 1978 and 1979. I cannot spend so much time later and you have other priorities too. If we make an all-out attempt this year, I hope that you will make an extra effort at accommodation. We won't betray your trust.

I can see the possibility that ten years from now our ties to you in the economic, military, and political spheres will be just as strong as the ties we now have with Israel. There is a natural affinity between our two countries. But permanent peace in the Middle East cannot be assured by a strong U.S.-Israeli relationship and a strong U.S.-Egyptian relationship alone. There also needs to be an Israeli-Egyptian relationship. This is very difficult, but we have to address it this year. Now let's move on.

On the African situation, could you outline your points on Africa, and we can continue with this tomorrow.

[Omitted here is discussion unrelated to the Middle East.]

26. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, April 4, 1977, 1–2:45 p.m.

SUBJECT

Secretary's Luncheon with President Sadat

PARTICIPANTS

Egypt

President Anwar al-Sadat

Ismail Fahmy, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs

Hassan Ahmed Kamel, Chief of the Presidential Cabinet

Hamid al-Sayeh, Minister of Economy and Economic Cooperation

Ashraf Ghorbal, Ambassador to the United States

Dr. Ahmed Esmat Abdel Meguid, Permanent Representative to the United Nations

Osama al-Baz, Chief of Cabinet to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs

Fawzi Abdel Hafez, Private Secretary to the President

Lieutenant General Mohammed Said al-Mahy, Aide de Camp to the President

Ahmed Fouad Teymour, Grand Chamberlain

United States

The Secretary

Warren M. Christopher, Deputy Secretary

Philip C. Habib, Under Secretary for Political Affairs

Hermann F. Eilts, American Ambassador to Egypt

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Trips/Visits File, Box 103, 4/4–5/77 Visit of President Sadat of Egypt: 3/30/77–4/5/77. Secret; Nodis. Drafted by Nicholas Veliotos on April 8 and approved in S on April 18. The meeting took place in the James Madison Room at the Department of State.

Alfred L. Atherton, Jr., Assistant Secretary, NEA
Harold H. Saunders, Director, INR
Arthur R. Day, Deputy Assistant Secretary, NEA
Nicholas A. Veliotis, Deputy Assistant Secretary, NEA (Notetaker)
Zbigniew Brzezinski, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs
William Quandt, Director, Middle Eastern Affairs, NSC

[Omitted here is discussion unrelated to the Middle East.]

The Secretary asked for the President's evaluation of the situation in Iraq. Sadat replied with the following anecdote: He sent Vice President Mubarek on a tour of Arab countries, including Iraq. He was met at the airport in Baghdad by his Iraqi counterpart (Saddam Hussein, who he described as the real power there). As the two got into the limousine for the ride into town, the Iraqi pulled a pistol out and put it on the seat between them. Sadat thought that story was the best commentary he could make on the internal situation in Iraq. Secretary Vance asked if the Iraqis will try to block a peace settlement. Sadat replied by noting that there were two "elements" in the Arab world which will never accept a settlement: Iraq and Libya. He said that they were not important. He differentiated between the two, noting that the Iraqis were much more rational and are willing to discuss their differences and at least, in effect, agree to disagree. Qadhafi is demented. He repeated that these two countries could not stop a settlement since they "cannot change the balance in the Arab world." Brzezinski asked for Sadat's analysis of trends in the PLO, and specifically if the PLO could accept 242 in the near future. Sadat replied that the PLO could attend Geneva with Israel, and make a deal to create a Palestinian state in Gaza and the West Bank. He noted that cooperation with Israel was required under these circumstances, since the two parts of this state would be split by Israel. He added that the PLO has accepted a link with Jordan, and noted that the only difference between Egypt and the PLO on this is his urging the PLO to explicitly accept a link of a Palestinian state with Jordan before negotiations commence at Geneva. (NOTE: There was some confusion as to exactly what Sadat said at this point, and this represents the best reconstruction of several of the U.S. participants.)

Mr. Habib asked if Sadat saw a Palestinian-Jordanian link in the context of single sovereignty. Sadat replied there was no problem there. In response to a question by Brzezinski, Sadat noted that Hussein's position would not be undermined in the context of a Palestinian-Jordanian entity. In response to a further question, Sadat repeated his previous reply, elaborating it to the extent of noting that the achievement of a Palestinian-Jordanian link in the context of a settlement would be viewed as a "success" for Hussein.

The Secretary asked Ambassador Eilts if he had any comments he wished to make on economic issues which could usefully be discussed.

Eilts replied that there is a need for both Egypt and the United States to accelerate the disbursement of U.S. economic assistance. He pointed out that delayed disbursements could risk giving the impression that we were programming more assistance than Egypt could absorb and this could threaten our future assistance levels. He also pointed out that it was politically important for the Egyptian public to be able to perceive as soon as possible significant tangible economic benefits from the close Egyptian alignment with the United States. The Ambassador also noted that President Sadat has recognized the need for more expeditious action on the part of his government and that we had to be equally aware of the need for quicker action on our part. Minister of Economy Sayeh noted that the GOE was establishing a purchasing mission in Washington, in the Embassy, with the aim of working closely with AID to eliminate procurement bottlenecks. Ambassador Eilts noted that there were bureaucratic problems on both sides and vexing, time-consuming problems at the technical levels. We also must be conscious of our problems in this respect. President Sadat stated that he had told the Prime Minister² to create an “authority” with full power to expedite things and cut red tape from the Egyptian side. Ambassador Ghorbal suggested a need for “one man” in the Prime Minister’s office who would be charged with the responsibility for this function. He also took the occasion to point out the desirability of earmarking local currency proceeds from the sale of CIP commodities to finance the domestic costs of both World Bank and AID projects. Sadat commented that the “authority” he had mandated was needed to avoid a repetition of bureaucratic hold-ups, citing the unfortunate bus case, which was pending from early 1976.³ There ensued a brief discussion of this problem, with an emphasis on the need to overcome technical delays in the future.

Secretary Vance asked Mr. Atherton to make sure that we expedited these matters from our side. Mr. Atherton replied that we are working closely with Bob Nooter, who as AID Deputy will be in a position to help in this respect. Mr. Atherton emphasized that we will do the necessary in order to follow closely and expedite matters, with a view to asking the Secretary’s personal intervention when this is necessary. The Secretary underscored that he wanted NEA to be on top of this, and that he wished to become personally involved when necessary to move things along.

In answer to the Secretary’s query about other economic issues, Ambassador Eilts noted that the Investment Board had taken some de-

² Mamdouh Salem, Egyptian Prime Minister from April 16, 1975, to October 2, 1978.

³ A reference to Egyptian complaints about buses that the Egyptian Government had purchased from General Motors in early 1976. (Telegram 4539 from Cairo, April 6, 1976; National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D760129–0643)

cisions concerning American firms wishing to invest in Egypt but that there were some problems associated with the boycott. Sadat commented that he was determined to move ahead on these investments, although he recognized that he “could have trouble with the Arabs”. The Ford project⁴ was identified as the one most potentially troublesome in this respect. President Sadat asked Foreign Minister Fahmy to comment. Fahmy pointed out that he saw no problems with approving and implementing the Goodyear and Xerox investment projects, noting that if these could be achieved it would be easier for the GOE to handle Ford. Minister of Economy Sayeh noted that Ford would not agree to invest until it was assured that it could export to the Arab world. Fahmy noted that he had told the Ford Board Chairman that export of Ford products produced in Egypt to the rest of the Arab world was really not the problem of the GOE. This was a commercial problem for Ford to work out with the other countries concerned. Fahmy also noted that Ford lacked adequate financing initially, and this contributed to the delay. According to Fahmy, his position on exports was accepted by Ford.

Ambassador Eilts stated that our concern has been to achieve one major U.S. private investment. With this precedent, others would follow more easily. Fahmy agreed, noting that Ford and Goodyear investments would be real breakthroughs.

At this point Secretary Vance delivered an informal toast to President Sadat. Sadat replied in the same cordial and warm manner.

Secretary Vance asked Sadat’s views on the situation in Yugoslavia after Tito. Sadat replied that it would be very difficult and reviewed the various centrifugal tendencies present in that country. He concluded that he was very worried about Yugoslavian national cohesion after Tito. Mr. Brzezinski suggested that Sadat would like to hear the Secretary’s views on the results of his recent visit to Moscow.⁵ Sadat said he would be very interested. The Secretary summarized our discussions with the Soviets on SALT and the Middle East, noting we had agreed to Gromyko’s proposal that he meet with him in Europe in mid-May to discuss these issues. Sadat agreed with our general policy of engaging the Soviets as co-chairman enough to save their face, while not putting them in the position to play too active or important a role in the real negotiating process. As concerns SALT, Sadat expressed the belief that

⁴ In February 1976, the Ford Motor Company proposed an approximately \$150 million joint venture with the Egyptian Government to build diesel engines and assemble trucks and tractors. (“Ford Motor Suggests \$150 Million Project to Be Built in Egypt,” *Wall Street Journal*, February 4, 1976, p. 7)

⁵ Vance visited Moscow from March 27 to March 30 to present an arms reduction proposal to Brezhnev and Gromyko. During the trip he also visited Brussels, Bonn, London, and Paris.

with time, the Soviets will be willing to negotiate if they know we mean business. In this respect, he recalled the Soviet reaction when he kicked them out of Egypt in mid-1972, and, subsequently, abrogated the treaty of friendship. While the Soviets were railing against Egypt in public, Gromyko told Fahmy in a completely private conversation that if, and when, Egypt was prepared to resurrect the treaty, the USSR was prepared to “give you anything you want in the military and economic field.”

27. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, April 5, 1977, 10:45–11:45 a.m.

SUBJECT

President's Meeting with President Anwar Sadat of Egypt

PARTICIPANTS

The President
The Vice President
Secretary of State Cyrus Vance
Dr. Zbigniew Brzezinski
Ambassador Hermann Eilts
Assistant Secretary Alfred L. Atherton
Mr. William B. Quandt, NSC Staff
Mr. Hamilton Jordan
Mr. Jody Powell

President Sadat
Foreign Minister Ismail Fahmi
Hassan Kamil, Chief, Office of the President
Minister of Economy Sayih
Ambassador Ashraf Ghorbal

President: I know that the Congressmen and Senators who came to dinner last night enjoyed their chance to talk with you.² It helped them to see the special circumstances that Egypt finds itself in. We tend to think of Egypt only in relationship to Israel, but you helped to explain

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Trips/Visits File, Box 109, 2/3–4/78 Visit of President Sadat of Egypt: Briefing Book [II], 2/78. Top Secret; Sensitive. The meeting took place in the White House Cabinet Room.

² According to the President's Daily Diary, Carter hosted a working dinner for Sadat on April 4 from 7:29 to 9:58 p.m. (Carter Library, Presidential Materials, President's Daily Diary) No memorandum of conversation has been found.

the problems that you also face in Africa and with countries like Ethiopia. I think it was helpful for the Congressmen to understand your position more completely.

One question that Congress has raised is the degree of use that you have made of the aid authorizations in the past. Thus far, only small amounts of aid have actually been used. We would like to help you with this problem.

Secretary Vance: We talked about this yesterday.³ President Sadat explained that he has established a special authority under the Prime Minister to deal with this, and we will follow it on our end as well through Roy Atherton.

President: I invited AID Director Gilligan to the dinner last night so that you might have a chance to meet with him. He is a good administrator and was Governor of Ohio and a Member of Congress. He is a good man and will be able to help you to work out any administrative problems that you are having with the aid program.

Minister Sayih: It is true that we have been lagging in our use of AID and World Bank funds. There are several reasons. Some have to do with bureaucratic procedures. I have seen Mr. Nooter of AID and he will help to identify bottlenecks. We will do this during the present month. We also have a scarcity of local currency. We have dealt with this in several ways, including commodity loans. We want to reduce inflationary pressures so we try to generate local currency from commodity sales. We are also in contact with Arab countries for balance of payments support. We have received about \$1.5 billion. I will try to stay on here for a few days to finish up my talks.

We also have a problem of inadequate construction capacity. This is a bottleneck for our economic development. We only have about 40 percent of what we need. I am including construction in the areas that are open for foreign investment. We are trying to attract construction industries to Egypt. We have had cases where hotels have remained unfinished for as long as seven years. But we are now trying to move in new directions. We will have an agency here in Washington to help work out the problems.

President: On another item, I would like to discuss ways of encouraging American business to invest in Egypt. Many of our corporation executives see Egypt as a good place to invest. If you could liberalize your boycott against Israel, it would help. Ford and Coca Cola have talked to me personally about investing in Egypt. I have no direct interest in the matter. But while I was Governor, I spent a great deal of time trying to get people to come to my State to invest. Maybe you

³ See Document 26.

could also make it easier for investors to come to Egypt. I know that Mr. Austin of Coca Cola would like to expand his operations in your country. Maybe there are some construction firms as well.

Minister Sayih: We are trying to encourage American firms to come to Egypt. We have established a business council here in New York. We are trying to direct investment to Egypt. Recently our investment authority approved several U.S. applications—Goodyear, Union Carbide and Xerox. We have also received some applications from companies on the boycott list. And they have been approved, conditional upon getting them removed from the boycott list. Coca Cola is in this category, but they may be easier to deal with than some.

Foreign Minister Fahmi: Coca Cola is the most difficult. Ford is easier. Xerox is no problem, since it is not on the list. I cannot get Coca Cola off the boycott list, but they can work in Egypt nonetheless.

President: Why not simply get rid of the list entirely?

Foreign Minister Fahmi: I can't. When the Arabs discuss the list, they engage in auctioneering. It would be a waste of my time to try to get the list dropped. Our policy is that we will allow any serious investment to come into Egypt. I don't worry about the list. I have permanent instructions from President Sadat on this.

President: It is not significant to us whether Ford or Coca Cola invests in Egypt. But I thought it might be of help to you. Last night, Secretary of Commerce Kreps came to the dinner. It might be good for Minister Sayih to talk with her.

Foreign Minister Fahmi: She could also come to Cairo.

President: Having a relationship with the Department of Commerce is a good idea. What has your experience been with the World Bank?

Minister Sayih: President Sadat has been firm on economic reforms. This means achieving both internal and external balances. Internally, we have tried to reduce our deficit. This helps to end inflationary pressures.

President: We have the same problem.

Minister Sayih: The problems we faced in January⁴ were caused by trying to reduce our deficit and reduce inflation. We went along with this policy to the maximum extent. The Egyptian budget has four components. To achieve balance, we could cut investment, which in a country growing at 2.6 percent per year is not feasible. Or we could cut on defense, but that involves our security and we can't take risks there. Or we could cut our foreign debt service payments, but then our cred-

⁴ See footnote 2, Document 9.

itors will lose confidence in us. Finally, we could cut expenditures and cut subsidies. Subsidies by their nature are inflationary. Egypt already has scarcity pricing in the country. We have nonetheless succeeded in reducing the deficit to 100 million pounds. That deals with our internal balance.

Our external balance is another problem. We need external balance of payments support. We have a large debt, \$2 to \$3 billion in obligations due. We either get cash or commodity credits to cover these payments. We are now working on this. We have received \$250 million from the Arabs already, and guarantees for \$250 million more. We will get \$2 billion in all. We also get commercial credits from you, from the Germans, from the French and others. We will need continued balance of payments support. The Arabs and the Israelis since 1948 have spent over \$150 billion on arms, all of us together. Egypt alone spent nearly \$40 billion on arms since 1967. This is our problem. Think of what could have been done for economic development in the area with this money.

We cannot have growth without a plan, so we have a \$20 billion economic development plan through 1980. \$7 billion will be required in foreign exchange costs. But since Egypt also has a low rate of savings and very high rate of consumption, we will need more than just the \$7 billion to cover the foreign exchange costs. World Bank and AID and other countries will have to help as well. The World Bank provides about \$250 million per year on the average.

I saw Secretary Blumenthal and he talked of the U.S. policy of shifting loans from the World Bank to IDA.⁵ We need that. We cannot pay high interest rates. Egypt also is in need of a “health certificate,” and therefore we entered an agreement with the IMF. This will help us to get the \$1.5 billion that we need, especially from the Arabs. Your investment aid has been very useful. American aid falls into three categories: commodity aid, technical aid, and investment aid. This has been very helpful to us and we are very grateful. Next to security, development is the most important problem we face. In May, a consultative group, a club of friends of Egypt, will meet and we want them to work with us to push for economic growth. They will meet on May 10, 11 and 12.⁶ The U.S. is a participant. The idea there is two-fold. One point is to assure us that the economic plan will be implemented. We don’t ask for a guarantee, but we want help to push the development plan. We are convinced that it is a good plan. The participants are the Gulf States, the U.S., Germany, France, and others. We hope the U.S. can help by saying that the plan is good and that we will be able to assure Egypt of the same level of aid through 1980 that we have been providing. If we

⁵ No memorandum of conversation has been found.

⁶ The group met in Paris May 11–12.

cannot be assured of the necessary financing, it will be hard to go through with the plan. We need assurances of balance of payments aid through the next few years.

President: Are there any points you wish to raise, President Sadat?

President Sadat: I had a good talk with the Secretary of Defense about arms.⁷ I gave him a list. As I said yesterday, this matter has political implications. The Soviet Union feels that it has put me in a tight position. I can get nothing from anywhere. The Soviets are trying to make an example of me to others. Those who do not go with the Soviet Union cannot get anything. I have just lately discovered that my policy of diversifying my sources of arms supply has very greatly angered the Soviets, more than the termination of the treaty and the expulsion of the Soviet advisors in 1972. This made them very furious. Arms supply is their lever over me. It was the same with President Asad last year. But it began with me since Henry Kissinger came in November 1973 to start the peace process. I am in a peculiar situation. Israel has replaced all the arms it lost in the war, and this was done even before the ceasefire of October 22nd. For three or four years after that, Israel has got more arms. The same is true for Syria through the Soviet Union. Even before the ceasefire they replaced their arms, and they are getting more, except for the pause during the crisis with the Soviets over Lebanon. But the Soviets have returned again, and Asad is going to Moscow. Asad got more than I did. Egypt is thus in a peculiar position. Peace and war are decided in Egypt, not in Syria or Jordan. I have not gotten anything at all. Brezhnev promised to come in January 1975, but then he cancelled, and after that they sent part of what was due in 1973 and 1974. This was to make up for Brezhnev's not coming. But there has been a complete ban on spare parts. I sent 175 MIG-21 engines to the Soviet Union, and recently they returned 50. But they were not the type that we need. This is the position I find myself in. I have tried my best to get Mirage aircraft from France. But even until now, I have not been able to replace all of my losses.

The other branches of my armed forces are better off than the air force. We didn't lose much in the October War. Syria lost 1,200 tanks in one day; but all of my losses were only 500 tanks in the October War. 3,000 tanks were lost on all fronts, so Israel and Syria together lost 2,500 tanks.

I have asked for the F-5E. It is time that my air force should turn completely western. By degrees, the other parts of my armed forces will

⁷ See Memorandum of Conversation, April 5; Washington National Records Center, OSD Files, FRC 330-80-0017, Egypt 1977.

also turn to the West. This has political significance, added to the fact that I need to have a ready defensive force for whatever happens. As I told the Secretary of Defense today, when talking about the F-5E, if it is compared to what Israel has—the F-4, the F-15, and others—it is just a tenth-rate plane. I need it only for its purely defensive capability. It is not only for Egypt, but also for Sudan. The Soviets are pouring arms into Ethiopia. I will not hesitate to face the problem on my borders. But I need the F-5E. Militarily speaking—and you are a military man—the bulk of my air force is the MIG-17. But they are almost all out of action. I sent their engines to the Soviet Union for overhaul. Foreign Minister Fahmi told them that they had confiscated our property, and we had a big quarrel. My difference with Brezhnev in 1972 was partly over his promises on military aid and on overhaul of our equipment. I told him that it cannot be done 5,000 miles away in the Soviet Union. The Soviets promised to help, but they have not fulfilled their promise. As I said last night, I do not want to raise side issues here. The main issue is peace, to try to concentrate on peace this year. That will solve my problems, because then it will be easier to get what I need. I told Secretary Brown that I will be disappointed if the peace talks and the F-5E are linked. But I know your Congress here, and maybe they are not ready. The Zionist lobby is very angry at me. They have ascribed more efficiency to the F-5E than it really has. It is used in Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Iran, and Morocco. As I told you, I do not want side issues and I do not want to leave the main issue of peace, but I do need this for my air force. If it could be arranged for the time being from Saudi Arabia or Iran, or both, that would be satisfactory. If they get the green light from you, they will give me the plane. Until we reach a phase where we can go to Congress, this may be the best way. I leave it to you.

President: I understand.

President Sadat: I shall always be preferring not to raise battles that we might lose in Congress while we are trying to concentrate on the main issue. All these efforts with Congress will try your patience. It is not easy for the Israelis to adhere to reason without imposing conditions.

President: You have analyzed our political situation well. I am very hopeful that we could go to Congress on military aid directly to Egypt to help you defend yourself, and to help in Zaire and in Sudan. The C-130s were controversial last year,⁸ but they would not be such a problem now. I understand that some of your MIGs are being overhauled by the British. GE also has a capability to do this.

⁸ The Ford administration's plan to sell six C-130 transport aircraft to Egypt was controversial in Congress until Kissinger testified in April 1976 that no further military sales would be made to Egypt that year. (Bernard Gwertzman, "C-130 Sale to Egypt Near Approval," *New York Times*, April 3, 1976, p. 2)

President Sadat: We need it.

President: That would not be difficult either. I am glad to see your relationship with France. I don't know whether the Mirage is the equivalent of the F-5E.

President Sadat: It is more advanced. It equals the F-4. But the F-5 is not an important plane. It won't change the balance of power. Israel has the F-4 and the F-15.

President: I assume the Secretary of Defense had a good talk with you. I don't know what the total amount of your needs is; but the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of State can work on this.

President Sadat: He promised some items, subject to your approval.

President: I know. I discussed it before you met with him. What is the status of your air force now? What is its readiness? Are your MIG-17s and 21s in good shape?

President Sadat: I have tried with Rolls Royce. They have worked for one year, but they are very slow. My people saw that GE has complete readiness to do anything. They were astounded. They reported to me before I left for Washington.

President: There is no problem.

President Sadat: Secretary Brown mentioned this. I said that I need it. My situation with my air force is critical. It is the only branch of my armed forces that needs so much help. The Soviets will not return the 120 engines that they have. But China has been helpful. They have sent 30 MIG-17 engines at no cost. That is their way. They have also sent spares.

Dr. Brzezinski: Are these Chinese-produced?

President Sadat: Yes. They make a MIG-17, but they give it a Chinese name. They also make a MIG-21 with a Chinese name, and tanks as well.

Dr. Brzezinski: Are they the same quality?

President Sadat: Yes, except for the MIG-19, which they have improved. It has a longer range than the Soviet version.

President: What do you need to help your African neighbors? C-130s?

President Sadat: C-130s are very urgent.

President: How many do you have now?

President Sadat: Six, or maybe seven. We need C-130s and C-141s, and military vehicles and armored cars. We also need TOWs, ground-to-ground missiles like the Katyusha,⁹ with a range of 10 kilometers,

⁹ Katyusha was a Soviet-made multiple rocket launcher.

and helicopters. Sudan is a subcontinent, with the western part much like Egypt, but the rest of the country is very different. They need a great deal of communications equipment. They need wireless sets and other communication items.

President: I don't believe we will have problems with C-130s like we did last year. That, plus communications equipment and helicopters could be sold on grounds that it will help you in Africa, and that it will not be a threat to Israel. Congress, of course, fears your using weapons to attack Israel. If there were a friendly regime in Libya, your situation would be easier.

President Sadat: Yes.

President: We have been very concerned with Libya. If it were not for Cuba and Libya, we would have a more peaceful world. We didn't have a chance to finish our discussion on Africa. Do you have something to add?

President Sadat: The Soviets now feel that they have a free hand in Africa. They are using Angola as a jumping off point.

President: Now what do we do?

President Sadat: I need arms, and I need advanced arms. When I hear that tanks are being used by the Katangese,¹⁰ T-54s and T-55s, I know the Soviets are involved.

President: We have no information on the use of tanks in Katanga.

President Sadat: But the French have their representatives in Zaire and they have told me this is a fact.

President: We had that report also, but we could not confirm it.

President Sadat: My military mission left yesterday. They will arrive in Zaire today and they can check.

President: Will you let us know? Will you share your information with us? We are trying to get more information now. If Zaire had some strong leadership, even just a few leaders, maybe that would help.

President Sadat: That is true. If they could inflict some heavy casualties on the other side, it would create a new spirit.

President: I hope you will stay in close contact with us and with France and with Morocco.

President Sadat: Yes, I will. Especially after I get the information from my mission, then we will know what we need to do. But I need C-130s.

¹⁰ In March 1977, Katangese forces invaded the Shaba Province of Zaire from neighboring Angola. Sadat offered military assistance to President Mobutu and in May sent Egyptian pilots and mechanics to Zaire.

President: Let us know what you have to send, and we will try to help you.

Minister Fahmi: [2½ lines not declassified]

Secretary Vance: We'll see.

Dr. Brzezinski: [less than 1 line not declassified]

Minister Fahmi: [less than 1 line not declassified]

Secretary Vance: Someone should talk to Mobutu and tell him to take some of his good troops out of Kinshasha.

President Sadat: We will talk to him on this. We now have a joint committee with France. My officers will arrive there today and they will also meet with officers from Zaire.

President: Would Morocco join?

President Sadat: President Giscard did not mention this. He mentioned only cooperation with us.

President: The Secretary of State stopped in Belgium on his way to Moscow and talked about Zaire.

Dr. Brzezinski: Excuse me. Is the joint committee with France public knowledge?

President Sadat: No. It is secret.

Secretary Vance: I stopped in Belgium on the way to Moscow and saw their foreign minister in Paris on my return. No one knows about the second meeting. The Belgians agree that they will supply ammunition, but they will not send any men. They are very concerned about sending mercenaries. They fear that it would threaten the 20,000 Belgian civilians now in Shaba. If the mercenaries are white, this would give an excuse for Cubans to fight on the other side. The Belgians are in touch with King Hassan. He has agreed to send volunteers, in addition to a three-man mission. The Belgians want to keep in touch with the rest of us who are concerned with the problem and we will try to concert our thinking.

President: We've already sent some aid. What is the fuel situation?

Secretary Vance: None has yet been sent, but it is not very urgent. It will get there next week.

President: We're concerned and we appreciate your help.

Secretary Vance: They need more rations, and we can do this.

Dr. Brzezinski: Will your men be in Kinshasha only?

President Sadat: Yes. But they will also see the situation on the spot.

President: [1½ lines not declassified] It is discouraging that Mobutu's men won't fight. They flee whenever they have the chance.

Minister Fahmi: He has changed his military commander.

President: I hope that it will help. I appreciate very much the talks that we have had, especially the very enlightening discussion I had

with you last night.¹¹ I would like to share it with the Secretary of State. We will devote our Government's full efforts to the Middle East problem. You know our special relationship to Israel, and there is a limit to what we can get them to accept. They look very far ahead and they fear that an agreement on peace now which would depend on others would not be adequate as a permanent basis for peace. What concerns them most, normalization, is also your greatest concern. A defense pact between Israel and the United States would give them security now, but in 20, or 30, or 50 years, they could not be sure. Your expressions to me on this have been encouraging. I will keep your comments to me confidential, especially when I meet with other Arab leaders. I will be very cautious.

After May, we would like to put together our analysis of options, and then discuss them frankly with you. Any moderation of statements, from Arafat and others, would be helpful. Concerning direct contact with Arafat, we will have to face this at some point. We have not yet. I made one comment on the Palestinians and I shook hands with a PLO representative at the United Nations.¹² But a meeting with Arafat would be difficult. But eventually we will have to decide yes or no. It is crucial to the whole issue. We will try to do our part. You've been very forthcoming in your eagerness to help.

President Sadat: There is a problem in South Lebanon that also needs your support. You should not let Israel exploit the situation there. A ceasefire has been agreed upon. If there is a need for a UN force, then there is an armistice agreement which would allow UN forces to go there. I would like you to give importance to this. We don't want a new issue to explode in the area. There was a big battle yesterday.

President: We've spent a lot of time with Israel and with Lebanon on this, especially concerning the placement of troops. We thought we had it worked out. Now there is a new eruption which I do not fully understand.

Secretary Vance: I have met with Presidents Sarkis and Asad and we are following the situation very carefully. We are in touch with the parties and earlier we helped to work out a Syrian withdrawal. But the situation is still very tense. The recent assassination complicated the sit-

¹¹ See footnote 3, Document 25.

¹² For the comment on the Palestinians, see Document 23. On March 17, Carter shook hands with PLO Deputy U.N. Observer Hasan Abdel Rahman on a receiving line at a reception held at the United Nations. It marked the first time a U.S. President had shaken hands with a PLO member. (Kathleen Teltsch, "P.L.O. Official Shakes Hands With President," *New York Times*, March 18, 1977, p. 11)

uation.¹³ We will keep working with the parties to make arrangements to keep them apart. The key is to get some of the Lebanese army to keep peace. I talked to President Sarkis and to his Foreign Minister about this, and they thought that it would take three or four months to create such a force. It is important to move rapidly, and we will give them help if they want it. It is my view that until their own forces are there, they cannot keep peace. The gendarmes are not up to the job. They need real soldiers.

President: Will Israel welcome this?

Secretary Vance: Yes and no, frankly. They don't want the Syrians there, but they would welcome a Lebanese force, yes.

President: On the borders, I understand there is a band under Christian control, and that recently the Syrians and the PLO attacked this. Israel would like this as a buffer area, as an alternative to Syria and the PLO. I think Israel would welcome a Lebanese force. Why does it take so long?

Secretary Vance: The Lebanese only have a limited number of troops, and there are political and military problems. I talked to Asad about this and he shares the view that it will take four to five months to get a force in place.

President: I want to thank you, President Sadat, for coming. You have caused me a problem, however. Now all of my family want to go to Egypt.

President Sadat: They are most welcome. I would be very happy to welcome you and to express our feelings to you.

President: Those feelings are mutual. If we can get your advice and support at the crucial moments, I think we might be able to go to Geneva only for the signing ceremony. This would be the best possible outcome. If we go to Geneva with lots of loose ends and with the Soviets present, there is little chance of reaching harmony there.

President Sadat: We could talk with procedures for years.

President: We will work together. Thank you.

¹³ A reference to the March 16 assassination of Kamal Jumblatt, a leader of the anti-government forces during the Lebanese civil war.

28. Minutes of a Policy Review Committee Meeting¹

Washington, April 19, 1977, 3:00–4:30 p.m.

SUBJECT

Middle East

PARTICIPANTS

State

Secretary Vance
Under Secretary Habib
Assistant Secretary Atherton

Defense

Secretary Brown
Deputy Secretary Duncan
Deputy Assistant Secretary Janka

CIA

Admiral Turner
David Blea

JCS

General Brown
General Smith

NSC

Zbigniew Brzezinski
William B. Quandt

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

1. *Geneva.* It was agreed that the reconvening of the Geneva Conference this year remains a high-priority goal. At a minimum, this is needed to prevent a political deterioration on the Arab side. We should plan to go to Geneva with as much prior agreement on general principles as possible. This should be the focus of our diplomatic effort between June and September. It is unclear whether we can reach agreement on principles primarily by talking to the parties, or whether we should go public at some point with our own views.

2. *Border and Palestinian Issues.* It was generally agreed that the most difficult substantive issues would be borders and the Palestinians. CIA, working with INR, will prepare a study on how to make politically acceptable borders—e.g., close to the 1967 lines—as militarily secure as possible. The NSC staff will prepare a paper on the utility of the idea of a referendum to help settle the Palestinian question.

It was agreed that during King Hussein's visit we should not specifically endorse a Jordanian formula for dealing with the Palestinian issue. Instead, we should keep our options open, including the possibility after June of direct contacts with the PLO. We still need to consider what we would say in such talks and what price we could extract in return.

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Subject File, Box 66, Peace Negotiations 1977 Vol. I [IV]. Top Secret; Sensitive. The meeting took place in the White House Situation Room. Brackets are in the original.

3. *Soviet Role.* The Soviet role was discussed at length. We should ask the Soviets for three things: to restore diplomatic relations with Israel; to moderate the rejectionist stance of Iraq and Libya; and to get the PLO to endorse UN Resolution 242, perhaps with a reservation on the Palestinian question. We would not, however, want the PLO to conclude that we saw the Soviets as our channel to them.

4. *Effect of Rabin Resignation.* The Rabin resignation² was not seen as significantly delaying the negotiations, but it was felt that the new Israeli Prime Minister should be invited to Washington as soon as possible after the formation of his government. This would presumably be mid or late June. Secretary Vance would plan to visit the area shortly thereafter.

5. *Arms Sales.* On arms sales, it was felt that we should not make any new major commitments for the moment and that the exaggerated Egyptian request for arms for its “Africa Corps” should be treated with great restraint.

PRC MEETING ON THE MIDDLE EAST

Secretary Vance: The first question is whether or not a Geneva Conference can be held this year. My own view is that we should push hard for this, if it is at all possible. It will help to keep the pressure on all of the parties. We’ve told everyone that we want such a conference and the only way now to get progress is to push the parties toward that conference. If we take that position, there is still the question of what kind of conference. Should the conference ratify an agreement or should the conference be the place to negotiate an agreement? Let’s start with that question.

Secretary Brown: I don’t believe that if a conference is held this year it can be used to ratify an agreement. I agree with the idea that something has to be done this year or we will be headed again toward a confrontation. The Arabs, especially Jordan, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Syria, cannot manage all of their internal problems, especially Sadat, if there is no Geneva. But we can’t expect much agreement on substance before Geneva, if it is to be held this year. We also don’t want a conference that will break up.

Secretary Vance: I agree. We’re thinking of a conference sometime this year, but not necessarily in the early fall.

Secretary Brown: But even if it is later in the year, it cannot simply ratify an agreement.

Secretary Vance: I agree. It would be disastrous to have the conference meet and then break up. I agree with you on that.

² On April 8, Rabin resigned as Prime Minister of Israel, effective April 22.

Secretary Brown: There are several kinds of questions that might be discussed at Geneva. If the first question were to be PLO representation, it might be played along for some time and would lead to others. We could get everyone talking at least. Alternatively, we might have to start with a plenary session, and then break up into working groups.

Secretary Vance: That's what the UN Secretary General favors.

Secretary Brown: But that way might not work.

Secretary Vance: On the other side, it might be better to delay until we can get a better sense of the whole shape of a final deal, and then the PLO issue might disappear.

Secretary Brown: What kind of Palestinian entity do you have in mind? It's not just a question of territory, but also a question of whether there would be a separate state or a federation. This may not be the hardest issue.

Secretary Vance: I don't think it is. I think the hardest issue is borders.

Secretary Brown: Golan will be more difficult than Sinai.

Secretary Vance: Yes, Sinai is easiest.

Under Secretary Habib: And Golan is easier than the West Bank–Palestinian State. That will be the toughest.

Secretary Vance: I disagree.

Under Secretary Habib: That will be the hardest for Israel.

Secretary Vance: Roy, what do you think?

Assistant Secretary Atherton: For Israel, the hardest questions involve the borders. Even in Sinai, it will be difficult for Israel to withdraw completely. Golan is almost impossible. On the West Bank, regardless of its status, Israel would like to keep as much as one-third of the territory. It would be easier if there were no Palestinian State, but not much easier.

[Dr. Brzezinski enters.]

Secretary Vance: [To Brzezinski.] Let me bring you up to date. We talked about the possibility of Geneva this year and if so what type of Geneva. This led to a discussion of issues. I said the hardest question was borders, and that the Palestinian issue would be easier.

Under Secretary Habib: Having just spent a week in North Africa, I have been talking a lot about the Palestinian issue. Sadat and the others all say that it is the primary question.

Secretary Vance: Saudi Arabia also says that, but that's because all of the Arabs start from the assumption that the 1967 borders will be restored, and then they go on to talk about the Palestinian issue.

Dr. Brzezinski: The border question does seem to be the gut issue, especially for Israel. On the Geneva Conference, if we do not go this year it will be a setback. We have to at least get it started. But we probably will not have much substantive agreement first. We should aim for agreement on basic principles, fleshing out the President's statements before the Conference begins. That should be our agenda for the June to September period. This could be done by Secretary Vance's next trip to the area, and by Peres coming here.

Secretary Brown: What will the effect of the change in Israel be?

Secretary Vance: Not much. We may have lost a little time. If Peres is the next Prime Minister, how long would it take him to form a government? It may slip a little bit, but much depends on how close the election will be. That could affect his ability to negotiate. The election is on May 17th.

[Dr. Brzezinski leaves.]

Assistant Secretary Atherton: Peres may have an easier time putting a government together, but he cannot do it until June. Once it is done, however, he may be in better shape to negotiate.

Secretary Vance: Will the NRP be in the coalition?

Assistant Secretary Atherton: Probably yes.

Secretary Vance: Does that make things more difficult?

Assistant Secretary Atherton: Yes, especially on the West Bank and on the Palestinians. Ideally, Peres would form a coalition with Yadin, without the NRP. But I think we have to assume that both Yadin and the NRP will be part of the coalition.

Secretary Vance: There seem to be some signs that Yadin is slipping.

Mr. Blee: We have some evidence of that.

Secretary Vance: That's too bad if it's true. That would leave Peres more dependent on the NRP.

Mr. Blee: We can't really judge the situation now.

Assistant Secretary Atherton: It seems as if Peres will lose fewer seats than Rabin would have.

Mr. Blee: Little has really changed because of Rabin's resignation.

[Dr. Brzezinski enters.]

Secretary Brown: But we still need to get Peres on board.

Secretary Vance: He's already involved.

Under Secretary Habib: But he opposes an overall settlement, and seems to prefer a step-by-step approach.

Secretary Vance: We'll have to consult with him, but we don't want the negotiations to slip.

Dr. Brzezinski: When should he come here?

Secretary Vance: As soon as possible. I would then go to the Middle East after his trip to Washington. This might be about mid-June.

Assistant Secretary Atherton: That would be good if it were possible.

Secretary Vance: Let's talk about the set of principles that could serve as a framework for negotiations. How realistic is this?

Assistant Secretary Atherton: The Rogers plan³ tried to establish such a framework, but it failed. Both Israel and the Arabs were opposed.

Secretary Vance: But without a framework, the whole process becomes impossible. There are just too many loose parts. We need some kind of framework to fit the pieces into. It has to be very basic. What are the views on this?

Dr. Brzezinski: I'm very much in favor of that approach. The parties will not reach agreement by themselves. We're the only ones who can do it. The question is how. What can we do beyond what the President has already said? He has probably already said enough about our position. Perhaps you [Secretary Vance] could give a speech, but that's not such a good idea if you're going to be in the role of broker.

Under Secretary Habib: It's too soon for that. Maybe after the Israeli elections.

Dr. Brzezinski: It will be useful to sit down with the Arabs and say, "Here are the basic ideas. Let's begin to flesh them out and try to get some detail." Their position will not go far enough, and we will have to press them. And we will do the same thing with Israel. We have to keep telling them that they haven't gone far enough. We should try to get them to commit themselves to new ideas, without being too precise in our own views. It's best if we can get them to do the job. We should say, for example, to Peres: "What do you think? What are your proposals?"

Secretary Vance: We should be very specific.

Secretary Brown: I assume that there will be no overlap in the positions of the parties, that there will still be a gap when this is done.

Dr. Brzezinski: That's right, especially on territory.

Secretary Brown: In the end, we will have to say what we think.

Dr. Brzezinski: But when we get their positions, we can start to push. For example, if they say in Israel that they have no intention to annex territory for its own sake, and that they are only interested in security, then we can begin to press on this latter point.

³ See footnote 9, Document 21.

Secretary Brown: We need to consider what leverage we have in the form of guarantees, and maybe eventually even stationing troops.

Dr. Brzezinski: That's right. We need to do that between now and late May.

Secretary Brown: We need to be sure of what we want and whether we can sell it to the parties.

Dr. Brzezinski: We also need to build U.S. public opinion support for what we do. We will have to have a continuing series of meetings with American public leaders.

Secretary Vance: I talked to Henry Kissinger about this recently and he is convinced that we will have to get the Jewish leaders in this country on board.

Secretary Brown: The question of U.S. guarantees and troops will be a difficult one.

Secretary Vance: I have some questions about American troops. We're not there yet, and I'm not sure it's in our interests. It's not the same as a guarantee.

Secretary Brown: In some ways I prefer troops to guarantees, and in other ways I prefer guarantees to troops. You can become a hostage to any guarantee that you give.

General Brown: We haven't gone beyond a vague commitment to Israel's security. We've shied away from defining what our commitment is. If we now want to move toward a sharper definition, we need to get people ready. What do we have in mind? We don't want to be hostage to their action. They are a sovereign nation, and they will have to act in their own national interest.

Secretary Vance: They're very clear on that.

Secretary Brown: And we have to know what we are guaranteeing.

Secretary Vance: Yes.

General Brown: We're far from talking about stationing troops. There are other ways of providing a guarantee.

Under Secretary Habib: We might even think of non-American troops.

Dr. Brzezinski: The UN is not a very happy tradition. There's the 1967 precedent.⁴

Secretary Vance: We might consider French or British forces. Let them get involved in some of this.

⁴ A reference to the May 1967 decision by the U.N. Secretary General to abide by Egyptian President Nasser's demand that the United Nations Emergency Force, which had acted as a buffer between Israel and Egypt since 1957, leave the Sinai. With the departure of the UNEF from the Sinai, Egyptian forces filled in their place, creating great tension between Israel and Egypt and playing a major role in the outbreak of the 1967 Arab-Israeli War.

Under Secretary Habib: We don't need to think of the 1967 arrangements. It could be set up so that neither party can ask the forces to leave.

Secretary Vance: Let's talk about borders. We need to talk about where the borders will be, and what defense arrangements can be established. This gets into DMZs, troop stationing, early warning stations, and a whole set of related issues. We need to look at this in detail.

Dr. Brzezinski: On one level we need to do our own homework in detail. But we also need to think about a political strategy for engaging the parties seriously.

Under Secretary Habib: Israel has more of a reason to stall on negotiations.

Dr. Brzezinski: Peres may want to delay.

Secretary Vance: What do we have already on the question of borders? What can we draw on?

Assistant Secretary Atherton: We have some studies on what would be militarily desirable in areas like Golan, but we have dealt with this primarily as a military problem. We have lots of that kind of work, including studies of the West Bank and Sinai.

Secretary Vance: Could we get a group of Defense, State, and NSC together? They should look at borders and related issues. We need to know what the options are in this area.

General Brown: Lots has already been done. But any work might become public knowledge.

Secretary Vance: We can't let that happen.

Admiral Turner: Hal Saunders has done some work with people from CIA. They have looked at various security arrangements. There is a small group working now.

General Brown: Can that be broadened to define the territorial aspects?

Admiral Turner: That's been done.

Under Secretary Habib: This sounds closer to the Israeli view of defining borders as a way of achieving security. But it disregards the political issue. This is not just a military problem. We have to first think of politically viable borders, and then look at what arrangements can make the borders secure. There is more in that approach in the long run.

Secretary Vance: I agree.

Dr. Brzezinski: So do I. You might have defensible borders, but they will not be politically viable, and you can have politically viable ones which by themselves won't be defensible. That's why we have to talk about borders and security arrangements separately.

Secretary Vance: Right.

Under Secretary Habib: The Israelis talk about the need to have borders that keep Arab weapons out of range of key targets. But everything is within range of some kind of weapon.

Assistant Secretary Atherton: We have to think of the 1967 lines in the main, but with some adjustments.

Dr. Brzezinski: The President has already committed us to that.

Under Secretary Habib: Sinai and Golan were internationally recognized borders, but not the West Bank.

Secretary Vance: Someone needs to look at the Jerusalem question again. It may be the hardest of all.

Dr. Brzezinski: And it won't be solved by drawing borders.

Assistant Secretary Atherton: We have lots of studies.

Dr. Brzezinski: It should probably be the last issue.

Secretary Vance: That's the conventional wisdom, but is it right?

Assistant Secretary Atherton: Probably so.

Dr. Brzezinski: We should think of two issues now: One, we should develop some idea of what security arrangements would look like along the 1967 lines. Two, we need to consider what political tactics Secretary Vance and the President can use between May and October to get us to a Geneva Conference.

Secretary Vance: On another issue, what are the options on the Palestinian question? What are the pros and cons of various approaches? I'm hearing more and more about the idea of a referendum. We should look at the pluses and minuses of that approach.

Under Secretary Habib: Self determination is an attractive principle, but it doesn't deal with the politics of the question. It doesn't address the type of Palestinian entity.

Secretary Vance: Wouldn't self determination help to settle the question of the Palestinian entity?

Under Secretary Habib: It doesn't settle the nature of the entity.

Secretary Vance: Won't the Arabs agree to that?

Under Secretary Habib: They could.

Secretary Vance: If it could solve the question, it's hard to argue against it. It might be harder to set up the practical arrangements.

Mr. Blee: A referendum is very hard to imagine.

Secretary Vance: We should look at it. It will be floated by King Hussein on Monday.⁵ I want to know more before Monday about our thinking on this. King Hussein may favor it. What answers do we have?

⁵ April 25.

Assistant Secretary Atherton: There's been little serious analysis.

Mr. Quandt: We could do a study of that. I've done some work on that in the past.

Secretary Brown: When we look at borders, we have to avoid thinking of the 1967 or 1973 type of war exclusively. We also have to think about how the borders and security arrangements would work against dissident guerilla groups. If a Palestinian entity is created on the West Bank, and even if the Arab states are no longer preparing for war against Israel, there may be some groups who will want to stage raids from that entity. We should look at that issue.

General Brown: That's a hard question since technology has changed so much in recent years.

Secretary Vance: We're talking about very sensitive issues. Let's not have any notes taken or circulated on this.

Dr. Brzezinski: This is very explosive.

Under Secretary Habib: If there is a Palestinian entity, we have to try to assure that it will be moderate. That's part of the overall structure. We need to try to freeze out the fringe groups.

Secretary Vance: That's what attracts me to a referendum. How do we know it wouldn't work?

Under Secretary Habib: Look at the possibilities. How are you going to include other Palestinians outside the West Bank and Gaza? They're all over. There are one million in the East Bank, and over a million in the West Bank and Gaza. Only a minority of Palestinians live in the West Bank itself. The alternative is to accept any organized structure that the other Arabs have blessed, assuming that it will cut out the radicals.

Secretary Vance: I want to look at the alternatives.

Under Secretary Habib: We should look at the question of the Palestinians, both in some kind of association with Jordan and as an independent state.

Mr. Blee: If there is a referendum in the next year, you would have the PLO.

Under Secretary Habib: What would a referendum be for? To set up a constituent assembly?

Secretary Vance: Yes, maybe.

Under Secretary Habib: Then you'll have all sorts of factions.

Secretary Vance: This would drive things toward the PLO.

Under Secretary Habib: The Arabs now seem to see the PLO plus Jordan. This is Sadat's answer. King Hussein even seems to agree.

Secretary Vance: But this is not the concept of the PLO or of Asad.

Under Secretary Habib: No, but it's closer to the Israeli answer.

Assistant Secretary Atherton: There are serious problems with the geography of any Palestinian entity.

Mr. Quandt: There are a number of problems with the idea of a referendum. It sounds attractive in principle as a way of adding legitimacy to whatever is done on the Palestinian question. But, in fact, it would probably not solve any questions which had not already been dealt with in previous negotiations. For example, what would happen if a referendum were to produce results which were unacceptable to the Israelis? They would simply reject them. Nor would a referendum held under Israeli, Jordanian, or possibly UN auspices have legitimacy among Palestinians if it did not produce results which were acceptable to the mainstream nationalist opinion. So, I would think more of the Algerian model where a referendum was used to ratify and legitimize an agreement that had already been reached in negotiations. In that sense, a referendum could play a very useful role, but I do not think we should look to a referendum to solve the questions of who represents the Palestinians, who their leaders will be, or whether there should be a fully independent state or some link to Jordan. I would be glad to do a paper on this for you.

Secretary Vance: That's a good idea. On the nature of peace, we also need to have a detailed paper.

Dr. Brzezinski: It should amplify the points that have already been made in our talks with the Arabs.

Assistant Secretary Atherton: We could lay out a series of steps that the Arabs might take over time. We need to introduce the time frame into this.

Under Secretary Habib: On the Palestinian question, we have to be careful not to sign on with King Hussein to any specific plan while he is here. We should draw him out on his thoughts, and tell him where we think he is being reasonable or unreasonable. We should be careful not to sign on to any Jordanian solution at this point.

Secretary Vance: We're not ready for that yet. It's too early.

Assistant Secretary Atherton: King Hussein himself will be reluctant to take on any major role unless we can assure him that he will get virtually all of the West Bank and East Jerusalem. And we can't say that at this point.

Dr. Brzezinski: Would Jordan accept any substantial border adjustments?

Secretary Vance: Very little. King Hussein told me that he would accept minor changes if they were reciprocal.

Under Secretary Habib: He stressed that they could only be very minor.

Mr. Quandt: This would be very hard for him.

Dr. Brzezinski: What about the settlements?

Secretary Vance: He could only accept them as part of a transitional arrangement.

Assistant Secretary Atherton: The King's general attitude is that if there must be any major concessions, he would like to have the PLO take the blame for them.

General Smith: That makes a great deal of sense.

Secretary Vance: What about the Soviets? They seem to be more aggressively staking out their positions. I'm going to see Gromyko in Geneva at the end of May. He will probably push me on a date for a Geneva Conference.

Under Secretary Habib: He will also want you to agree to PLO participation.

Secretary Vance: How should we play the Soviet angle?

Dr. Brzezinski: I would think that we would be in a good position to urge the Soviets to do two things. One, they should resume diplomatic relations with Israel. We should encourage this.

Secretary Vance: I did this in Moscow.

Dr. Brzezinski: This would help us to get some credit with the Israelis. We should push them on this now.

Under Secretary Habib: They say that restoration of diplomatic relations would result from the process of negotiations itself.

Dr. Brzezinski: The second point is that the Soviets can play a role in getting the PLO to change its positions.

Under Secretary Habib: We can use the Arabs for this more effectively.

Dr. Brzezinski: Why not use the Soviets also?

Under Secretary Habib: Saudi Arabia basically finances the PLO.

Dr. Brzezinski: But the Soviets should be asked to do certain things.

Secretary Vance: This was raised in Moscow. The Soviets took the line that if they were to produce Arafat, we should guarantee that Israel would recognize him. The two points are not unconnected. Arafat might actually make that concession.

Under Secretary Habib: Do we want the Soviets in on this? Why get them involved?

Dr. Brzezinski: It will keep them from making trouble. It gives them something at Geneva. They don't have any role otherwise.

Secretary Vance: If negotiations are ahead of us, we'll be better off to go this way.

Secretary Brown: But you won't get anything from the Soviets before the Conference begins. We could ask the Soviets to do something

for us because they do seem to want a Geneva Conference. We should review their positions with them and, if they can sell their ideas to some of the Arabs, and especially if they can bring the PLO along, that would be fine.

Under Secretary Habib: There's no problem with selling the Soviet ideas to the Arabs.

Secretary Brown: But the PLO is still a problem.

Dr. Brzezinski: The utility of getting the Soviets in on the PLO recognition of Israel is that it might help influence Arafat and company. It also gets the Soviets on record concerning the recognition of Israel's right to exist. They should try to get the PLO to take the same position.

Secretary Brown: That's right. I have one question. What is the Soviet motivation in the Middle East in both the short and long run? This is a question we have talked about in DOD. If the Soviets become importers of oil, will this change their role in the Middle East? In the past, we've assumed they had an interest in getting control of the oil valves of the Middle East. But they may now have a more direct interest in the oil itself.

Admiral Turner: I assume the Soviet motives are similar to ours. They want to preserve their positions in the Middle East. Recently they have become more supportive of the peace effort.

Mr. Blee: Their positions are weaker now, with the exception of Iraq, Libya, and South Yemen. But Syria and Egypt could easily change course.

Secretary Vance: And they have influence with the PLO.

Dr. Brzezinski: There are tactical reasons to try to commit the Soviets to a favorable outcome at Geneva. This is why we should press them to recognize Israel and to get the PLO to take the same step. We want to get the Soviets on record.

Mr. Blee: They've already done this in private.

Secretary Vance: We also want them to get the Iraqis and the Libyans to lay off.

Dr. Brzezinski: Yes, that's a third thing.

Assistant Secretary Atherton: The Soviets will find it easier to move the PLO than it will be for us to move the Israelis. The PLO is not too far now from the Soviet position. We will have the harder job.

General Brown: Then there is not much to be gained.

Under Secretary Habib: Let's do the three things mentioned by Dr. Brzezinski, but without getting them deeply involved. The Soviets can't solve this problem. They can't touch the root issues.

Dr. Brzezinski: But we should keep them engaged and get them to pay a little for their involvement. We can try to commit them. These three things would help.

Under Secretary Habib: Let's hold off on getting too close to them as a channel to the PLO.

Secretary Vance: But we can ask them to use their influence.

Under Secretary Habib: Implicitly so, yes.

Secretary Brown: We shouldn't push the Soviets to do anything that would lead the PLO to conclude that they should look to the Soviets instead of to us. We will have to press the Israelis, but we also want to be able to influence the PLO. We can offer them more than the Soviets can.

Secretary Vance: When should we consider talking to the PLO?

Under Secretary Habib: And how? Should we do it in secret or in the open?

Dr. Brzezinski: Can we do it in secret?

Under Secretary Habib: Yes.

Secretary Vance: There were a series of talks in the past, or at least a few talks, which were kept out of public.

Mr. Quandt: We did, however, inform the Israelis and the Jordanians.

Dr. Brzezinski: It might be useful to resume these.

Under Secretary Habib: There may be other ways too. We might not need to inform anyone this time. But what would we talk about? If we just want to explore their positions, there may be other ways.

Secretary Vance: By June we should have a position on this.

Dr. Brzezinski: Yes.

Assistant Secretary Atherton: All of the Arabs want us to.

Secretary Vance: Arafat does too. We're getting lots of signals.

Secretary Brown: Will we get some price for this from him?

Secretary Vance: It's not clear yet.

Under Secretary Habib: We ought to consider Palestinian representation at Geneva, including the idea of phased representation.

Admiral Turner: This is the price that the Soviets asked for. They pushed for conditional recognition of Israel.

Secretary Vance: The PLO could do that now.

Dr. Brzezinski: It's not enough for them to do it just in private. Israel is right on this point.

Assistant Secretary Atherton: They need to accept Resolution 242.

Secretary Vance: Resolution 242, plus something on the Palestinian question.

Dr. Brzezinski: Yes, they should endorse Resolution 242 publicly, and if they want to add a reservation they could do so. That's normal international practice. The Arabs and even the Soviets could say they

all accept Resolution 242, with a reservation on the Palestinian question. We would abstain, and Israel could oppose the reservation.

Under Secretary Habib: The real issue comes down to how we will deal with Israel. How far can they be pushed?

Dr. Brzezinski: That's an essential question.

Secretary Vance: We can't force them to face this question before May 17th.

Assistant Secretary Atherton: Or before they have formed a government.

Mr. Janka: Peres says it may take two months to form a government.

Under Secretary Habib: We ought to talk to Peres about this.

Dr. Brzezinski: Once the elections are held, and he becomes Prime Minister, what authority does he have before the completion of the coalition?

Under Secretary Habib: We could invite him before he has formed his government, but he won't have a coalition put together right away.

Dr. Brzezinski: But we don't want to lose two months waiting. What would happen if Peres tried to delay? He could use the argument that while he is forming his coalition we should not press him. What would he do if we were to invite him to come to Washington on June 1st to talk about broad principles of an agreement?

Under Secretary Habib: Secretary Vance will be seeing Allon in May in any case.

Dr. Brzezinski: But we need to get Peres engaged. Even if we can't push him hard at this point. Why not invite him for early June? We can stress again the points we made to Rabin.

Assistant Secretary Atherton: He wouldn't be able to come until he has his government formed.

Secretary Vance: Let's ask Dinitz about this.

Under Secretary Habib: We will be seeing Allon in May.

Dr. Brzezinski: Why not ask Allon if we think that we want to do this? Time is of the essence.

Under Secretary Habib: But he won't be able to speak with much authority.

Dr. Brzezinski: He can delay things though.

Assistant Secretary Atherton: We need more precision on this.

Dr. Brzezinski: Peres is very bright, and he has a sense for tactics. We should try to get to him soon.

Under Secretary Habib: When he becomes Prime Minister, we should lay our position on the line. We're beyond the point where we

need exploratory talks. But before he becomes Prime Minister, he won't be very precise.

Dr. Brzezinski: Maybe he would be better off if he didn't have his cabinet formed yet.

Under Secretary Habib: If we're going to push him hard, he needs to have his cabinet with him.

Secretary Brown: He has to be strong.

Dr. Brzezinski: That's his weakness.

Secretary Brown: No, then he can act. He has ideas.

Dr. Brzezinski: We need to convince him that we are serious and that stalling won't work.

Under Secretary Habib: We can get that message to him. We have lots of channels.

Dr. Brzezinski: We also want him to have personal contact with the President and an understanding of the President's deep commitment to Israel's security.

Under Secretary Habib: It would be better if he came after his government was formed.

Dr. Brzezinski: But I'm concerned about delays. He will plead for delays, arguing that he is too weak to make commitments.

Mr. Janka: If we invite him too soon, he could refuse to come on the grounds that his government is not yet formed.

Dr. Brzezinski: Why don't we find out from Allon how long this will take? I'm still afraid of slippage and what the consequences might be on the Arab side.

Secretary Vance: Roy and Phil can try to get a feel from Dinitz. I'll pick up on this with Allon.

Under Secretary Habib: I'll see Dinitz soon on my North Africa trip. I can let it slip out then.

Secretary Vance: CIA should get a group working on the borders question.

Admiral Turner: We can do that.

Secretary Vance: OK. You have that task. When could it be done?

Mr. Blee: Are we just talking about military borders?

Secretary Vance: Assume something like the 1967 lines, plus security arrangements. And let's talk about the end result of a final agreement, not all the stages in between.

Admiral Turner: We'll include guarantees and political acceptability, and military considerations. We'll need some inputs from State.

Secretary Vance: Keep the group small. Bill Quandt will work on a paper for us on the Palestinian question and the idea of a referendum.

We should have that before Hussein's visit. I want something on the nature of peace from Roy. Let's try to get that paper by May 5th. We also need some more thought on the Soviet question. We'd like a consideration of the pros and cons of the various ways of dealing with the Soviets. I'd also like that for May 5th.

Dr. Brzezinski: We also need a high-level strategy paper prepared for Secretary Vance and the President to work out the basic steps that we will have to take after this series of visits is completed.

Secretary Vance: Phil, Roy and Bill should work on that. We need to consider how to use leverage without provoking the Rogers plan type of reaction. I want to reemphasize that we have to be very careful about the minutes of this meeting. There should be no circulation.

General Brown: Someone needs to think through this question of points of leverage. We do have some. Israel comes to mind. We provide lots of military equipment. We also have some leverage with Egypt. Maybe everyone has already thought this through, but if not, they should.

Under Secretary Habib: We ought to include this in the overall strategic study. We also need to consider how to prepare American public opinion.

Admiral Turner: This will involve the question of arms sales and boycott legislation too.

Under Secretary Habib: That's part of it. The problem is how to apply the leverage that we theoretically have.

General Brown: We don't have to think entirely in terms of using the stick. There are also carrots. The F-16 is an example. We should think of how far we are ready to go with Israel on co-production of the F-16.

Under Secretary Habib: Maybe it would be best to hold back for now, and play this card later. We said to the Egyptians that if we were to give them arms, it would be primarily in the post-settlement period.

Dr. Brzezinski: Did you see his request for an African Corps?

Secretary Brown: There is an historical precedent that comes to mind. On the F-16 question and other military sales, we are getting pressed by Israel. Should we stall?

Secretary Vance: On what?

Secretary Brown: On the F-16, and on the co-production of tanks.

Secretary Vance: We should stall for a while.

Dr. Brzezinski: We have approved the Improved Hawk system⁶ for Israel, and also a small list of items for Egypt.

⁶ In 1970, the Improved Hawk (I-Hawk) system was created as an upgrade to the original Hawk system, a surface-to-air missile system first developed in the 1950s to provide defense from aerial attack.

Secretary Vance: We should sit on the rest for now.

Under Secretary Habib: And we should pour cold water on the Africa Corps idea.

Secretary Vance: I agree.

Dr. Brzezinski: I hope it doesn't surface in public now.

Assistant Secretary Atherton: On the question of Geneva, we have assumed that we need some agreement before going to a conference, and if we don't get it, the conference might fail. But I think we should consider going to Geneva even if we do not get advance agreement on principles. Israel opposes the whole process of trying to get advance agreement on principles. They believe that it prejudices the outcome of negotiations. They are wary of the entire idea. But once negotiations begin, then they are more likely to take flexible positions. Also, once Geneva begins, it will be hard for the parties to break it off. Even if there has been little agreement on principles in advance, at least we can get them engaged.

Under Secretary Habib: You're trying to make the best of a bad situation.

Secretary Vance: It could be a disaster.

Assistant Secretary Atherton: It would be worse not to do anything.

Mr. Janka: If a conference is delayed, what other steps might be taken to keep the process going?

Assistant Secretary Atherton: The worst that could happen is not to go to Geneva. Then the political deterioration would set in.

Dr. Brzezinski: What's the formal situation on Geneva?

Secretary Vance: All the parties agree on Geneva without preconditions.

Dr. Brzezinski: Is there any talk of setting up preparatory groups?

Under Secretary Habib: It's a euphemism to say that they all agree.

Dr. Brzezinski: But has there been any preparatory work? Have we and the Soviets talked about how the Conference would run?

Under Secretary Habib: After the second round of talks, then we ought to work on this.

Dr. Brzezinski: Is it too early now? We should at least think about it now.

Under Secretary Habib: We have to at least wait until the Israeli Government is formed.

Secretary Vance: We have all agreed to get the papers in by May 5th.

29. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, April 22, 1977, 11:35 a.m.–12:20 p.m.

SUBJECT

The President's Meeting with Foreign Minister Khaddam of Syria in the Cabinet Room

PARTICIPANTS

The President
Secretary of State Vance
Zbigniew Brzezinski
Ambassador Richard Murphy
Assistant Secretary Atherton
Hamilton Jordan
William B. Quandt, NSC Staff
Isa Sabbagh, Interpreter

Foreign Minister Abd al-Halim Khaddam
Ambassador Sabah Qabbani
Abdul Salam Aqil, Private Secretary
Samih abu Fares, Interpreter

President: It is a pleasure to meet you. This will help me to prepare for my meeting with President Asad in Geneva next month. It is beneficial to me to see how we can contribute to improvement of relations among the nations of the Middle East. I would like to discuss this morning the possibilities in the Middle East and to see what we can do to strengthen even more the good relations between the United States and Syria.

Foreign Minister Khaddam: Permit me, Mr. President, to express my great pleasure in meeting you. I consider this a historic meeting which will lead to good political work between us. The President of Syria and the Government of Syria are greatly confident that the Carter Administration will contribute deeply and positively to Middle East peace. President Asad is looking forward to the privilege and pleasure of meeting with you in Geneva and to other meetings later on which will contribute to peace in our area and in the world. I would like to express myself frankly and objectively, if I may. I would like to say that the most important thing drawing our attention to the new Administration was the evident genuine desire to deal with the problem of the Middle East with unprecedented depth and objectivity, without political con-

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Subject File, Box 66, Peace Negotiations 1977 Vol. I [I]. Secret; Sensitive. The meeting took place in the White House Cabinet Room. Brackets are in the original.

siderations being thrown in. That is why I would like to speak clearly and frankly, for when we speak frankly, that will help our friendship.

President: That's true.

Foreign Minister Khaddam: I was, of course, pleased to hear from Secretary Vance that the United States will come up with some of its own thoughts on the Middle East, and that these will not necessarily be tied to any of the parties concerned. This will contribute greatly to mutual confidence, but the question which is preoccupying us—and I think I know the answer in advance, but I will ask anyway—is the following: If Israel maintains its attitude of intransigence and refuses to follow the valid suggestions of your Administration, and if Israel keeps up its present position, will the United States be in a position to take a stand consonant with the achievement of a just and permanent peace in the area?

President: Secretary Vance spoke for me in saying that our position is to search for common ground for agreement. If we should ever assume a position of speaking for only one nation, that would destroy the trust of others in our fairness and objectivity. Obviously, the final agreement has to be approved by the parties involved. My own deep commitment, and that of the United States, is that 1977 is a crucial year. If we fail this year, it would be hard to marshal such efforts again. We have no US plan to impose on others. I will be listening to you and President Asad carefully. I have already met with Prime Minister Rabin and with President Sadat.² I will be meeting with King Hussein next week. I will meet Crown Prince Fahd later in the spring, to the extent that the Saudis are involved as observers. Following the meeting with President Asad, we will try to formulate our understanding of the differences and of the possible agreements among the nations involved and then we will consult very quietly with your government and other governments involved.

Foreign Minister Khaddam: Excellent.

President: It is important to us that the Arab nations not be divided one from another. It is also important that as much flexibility be retained as possible. After our consultations, we would ask you and others whether or not to prepare a common position prior to Geneva. I think it is accurate to say that some leaders in the Middle East feel that unless we go to Geneva with a fairly clear concept of the ultimate agreement, we will have little chance of success. Finally, let me say that it is obvious that there are three basic questions in a peace agreement. One is the Palestinians. Another is borders and security. The third is the guarantee of real peace and understanding among the nations in-

² See Documents 18, 20, 25, and 27.

volved. I would welcome your advice on whether my outline is the proper one. We need all the help from you that we can get.

Foreign Minister Khaddam: No doubt the situation in the area encompasses the clear items that you mentioned. Some are the cause of the conflict and some are the effect, but in their totality, these are the elements. Does the President wish me to address one or all?

President: Yes. We feel that Syria has a great and potentially beneficial influence on Palestinian leaders. I would like to understand your opinion on all of these matters.

Foreign Minister Khaddam: If I may, I would like to speak candidly. I would like to refer to some basic principles. First, Syria wishes genuinely, clearly, and deeply for peace [salaam] in the area, and I am not necessarily confining myself to just Syrian interests in peace. All of the countries in the area need peace. Number two, Syria will do its utmost to contribute to the process of achieving a just and permanent peace. This is why we appreciate doubly your attitude and your magnificent handling of the problem. You were kind enough to send Secretary Vance to the area, and then to engage in a series of talks with Middle East leaders. We are very impressed. As we know, any peace must have as a prerequisite the following elements: justice, permanence, and stability. So, in order to achieve a permanent peace, one has to treat the dimensions of the crisis that has afflicted the area for the past thirty years. And one, therefore, has to address not only the results of the crisis, but also the causes of those events.

If one were to treat the manifestations of the crisis without treating the deep causes, we would not have done much. We would still have the seeds of future conflict. Let me refer to the number one question of the Palestinians. This is the essence of the dispute in the Middle East. Before the Palestinian problem, there was no struggle in the Middle East. The land occupied in 1967 was the result of the struggle over Palestine, not the cause of the present conflict. That crisis with us has existed since the early 1940s and is still going on. Therefore, one has to solve this problem. To ignore it does not mean that it has gone away. Second, we would like to make an appeal that attention be given to dealing with Palestinian elements.

President: You mean between us and them?

Foreign Minister Khaddam: Yes, the Palestinians are there. There is no denying that, and the PLO is recognized by more nations than recognize Israel. The UN Security Council has invited the PLO to participate in its deliberations.³ I would say to you, Mr. President, that we and

³ The first instance of this invitation occurred on December 4, 1975, when the U.N. Security Council, at the request of Egypt, invited the PLO to participate in a debate on the December 2 Israeli air strikes against Palestinian refugee camps and guerrilla bases in Lebanon.

all of the Arabs continue to have good relations with the Palestinians and the PLO. We are all Arab brothers. But there is no single Arab ruler who can commit himself in the name of the Palestinians. Any such commitment would be null and void, and would not be effective. We are, speaking frankly and concisely, trying to put the emphasis on the weak spots in the controversy.

Of course, we know that Israel refuses to deal with the PLO because the PLO has not recognized Israel. Actually this is a pretext, so that you will not try to solve the Palestinian problem. Israel is willing to go to Geneva with Egypt, Syria, and Jordan, but we also have not recognized Israel, so why is Israel prepared to go with us but not with the PLO?

Additionally, the Palestinians in the last Cairo Conference⁴ came up with some flexible conclusions. We believe that treating the Palestinian issue is among—or rather is—the most important of the elements in the dispute. If this is not resolved, then it is hard to imagine any stability in the area. Any so-called solution without the Palestinians would be short-lived, maybe three or five years.

Secretary Vance asked me yesterday—referring to your letter to President Asad⁵—about our reading of Palestinian rights. I believe that this can be determined in two ways. The first path is to carry on a discussion with the Palestinians and to ask them what they mean in the frame of reference of all the UN Resolutions back to 1947. Such contacts are bound to be fruitful as long as no one muddies the water or tries to exploit them. The other element in finding a common denominator is to settle the fate of the occupied territories, those occupied in 1967 and the question of Jerusalem. This is a deeply felt issue with Palestinians and with all other Arabs. Another pernicious thing that should be cured has to do with the Palestinians who are living in squalor. This must also be dealt with. In my opinion, any path that is chosen to solve these problems will inevitably lead to the creation of a Palestinian state on Palestinian territory. Another question which was posed to me yesterday concerned the Syrian attitude on a Palestinian-Jordanian link. We would agree to anything that both sides would agree to, that is, that the Jordanians and Palestinians agree to. We would agree if they did. If they refuse a link, we would support their refusal. But this is not a very basic point. In our view, form should not take priority over substance. There is also the question on Palestinian representation at Geneva. In our opinion, the PLO should go to Geneva for the reasons given.

⁴ Apparently a reference to the October 25, 1976, Arab League Summit in Cairo, which focused on the situation in Lebanon.

⁵ See footnote 2, Document 15.

President: May I ask a question? If the Palestinians do not insist on going to Geneva, would you accept that they would not be there?

Foreign Minister Khaddam: No. If they refuse, there would be a new situation. I mean, our decision is based solely on the prevailing conditions at the time. We will not be dictated to by anyone—not by the Palestinians, not by anyone. It will be our decision. Just as we refuse to get in others' affairs, we would resist their getting into ours. I hope this is clear.

President: No, it is not.

Foreign Minister Khaddam: I mean, if the PLO refuses to go, this does not mean that we would not go to Geneva. The decision will stem from President Asad alone. I assume that if the PLO does not go, and if agreement were reached on the Palestinian issue, then we would see things result that would lead to the PLO trying to obfuscate the agreement. They have many cards to play. Therefore, they should go and should shoulder their own responsibility.

President: That's very clear. I would like to ask you some specific questions on other subjects. A crucial concern to Israel is the nature of peace—whether or not it would include a normalization of trade, the crossing of borders, and diplomatic recognition between Israel and its neighbors, including Syria. To the extent that this can be assured, I have no doubt that Israel will be more forthcoming on borders and on the Palestinian issue. My question is whether, if other matters are solved—the Palestinians, withdrawal—there would be any problem about assuring Israel on this issue of eventual peace between Syria and Israel.

Foreign Minister Khaddam: That is certainly a very challenging question. I will answer concisely. In my opinion, Israel poses these elements as seemingly innocent questions, but they appear to us as obstacles to real peace. Cuba is your neighbor, but you have no diplomatic relations.

President: But the opportunity is there.

Foreign Minister Khaddam: I am just giving examples. Now, for example, what comes first: There are some in Congress and in the United States who no doubt would like to drop atomic bombs on the Soviet Union, and there are some in the Soviet Union who might want to do the same thing to you. It took 23 years for the United States to recognize the Soviet Union diplomatically. We should also remember that diplomatic relations did not prevent two wars in Europe. What I mean is that the area for 50 years has gone through a difficult period, with much misery. So actually, we cannot erase the slate, we cannot change our psyches, that would not be practical. But one positive step would lead to others. Also negative steps would produce bad negative steps in return.

So, if we go back to the nature of peace, we should start with an end to belligerency, an end to the state of war. This would be a great turning point in the area. By ending the state of belligerency, and setting up guarantees against armed conflict, we could help the area go toward reconstruction. All these elements are bound to create vastly different circumstances. Israel since 1948 has tried to destroy the whole area, up until now. So it is very difficult for us to imagine that they really want things to be settled so quickly. In our opinion, the termination of the state of belligerency would be the starting point, plus guarantees for peace. This would be the launching pad for further steps. Of course, we Arabs, because of what we have suffered at the hands of Israel, have become suspicious. We do not trust the other side. If we were to look at two maps, Israel in 1948 and Israel today, we would see that Israel has expanded ten times beyond the original allotment of territory. Of course, all these thoughts create some psychological fears, some hesitations, and these are not easy to surmount.

We are hereby assuring you that if peace is achieved, we will not go in the direction of war and especially because of the guarantees to all parties. This should not just be a bilateral guarantee for Israel only. You do not expect us to agree to accept a bilateral US-Israel defense agreement alone.

I would like to conclude my response by reiterating that Syria is deeply concerned about having peace in the area. These feelings will be clear when you meet President Asad. We are speaking frankly. The shortest distance between two points is a straight line.

President: This has been helpful to me. I hope that all parties will keep an open mind. We will try to offer our good services in a completely honest way. I recognize the great sensitivity due to the past conflict and the damage that has been done to the region. When we do see what we consider to be the best approach to peace, we will move very strongly toward bringing the parties together.

Foreign Minister Khaddam: We have great confidence in President Carter.

President: I will always try to seek your advice and to honor the deep feeling that you and your people have. It is wise to remember the difficulties that still exist. I appreciate your frankness and your helpfulness to me and I look forward to meeting you in Geneva. I want to thank you for coming.

Foreign Minister Khaddam: I am grateful to you and I will convey to President Asad the friendly ambiance that I found here. We have great confidence in you, Mr. President. We will always seek to reinforce our relations with the United States and to be helpful. Thank you very much.

30. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, April 25, 1977, 11:05 a.m.–12:15 p.m.

SUBJECT

President's Meeting with King Hussein of Jordan, Cabinet Room

PARTICIPANTS

President
Vice President
Secretary of State Cyrus Vance
Dr. Zbigniew Brzezinski
Ambassador Thomas R. Pickering
Assistant Secretary Alfred L. Atherton, Jr.
William B. Quandt, NSC Staff
Hamilton Jordan

His Majesty King Hussein
Sharif Abdul Hamid Sharaf
General Bin Shaker

President: Let me begin by saying how grateful I am that you could come to the United States. I appreciate what you have done to build friendship between Jordan and the United States. The King told me that he plans to travel here after our talks and I said that we would be happy to give him any help that he required.

We will be prepared by the end of May to put together our understanding of the positions of different leaders in the Middle East. What I need is to understand your point of view and the major differences that exist among the countries of the area, and to hear your suggestions on what we might do. We've met with Prime Minister Rabin and President Sadat, and I'll be seeing President Asad in Geneva. We have made some progress, at least I have, in understanding the issues better. Secretary Vance's trip helped a great deal and he will probably be going again to the area after our meetings are over.

We are proud of the closeness of Jordanian-US relations. I hope that everything will be done to keep these ties of friendship as strong as possible. I hope to develop with you a personal, open relationship, so that I can benefit from your advice, your counsel and your criticism. It would be good for me if you could start with an assessment of the attitudes of the different Middle East countries and the prospects for this year. Perhaps you could outline the problems as you see them.

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Subject File, Box 66, Peace Negotiations 1977 Vol. I [I]. Top Secret; Sensitive. The meeting took place in the White House Cabinet Room. Hussein visited the United States April 24–27.

King Hussein: Thank you for the honor and privilege of visiting with you. I speak for many in my part of the world, especially in Jordan, when I say that all of us have great faith in you and the greatest hope that success will be yours in helping to find the solution to the problems of the Middle East, and also to the problems of the rest of the world. I feel more happy and at ease on this visit than on any previous one. I look forward to close contacts.

On relations with United States, I have been proud to have them grow strong in all areas. Our region, as you know, was originally under foreign domination; then we came to the period of building when we needed cooperation and normalization of relations among countries. It has been dear to our hearts to build on the best part of our past, and to keep our identity. Then there was a tide of extremism later in our region which threatened all of our accomplishments. We opposed it, and US-Jordanian relations grew strong. Even though we were isolated from our neighbors in this period, I was always proud of my relationship with the United States.

Now the whole scene has changed. Other leaders come here to Washington and this is to our mutual benefit. We share with you the same ideas and the same principles. The whole area is passing through a period of many experiences which will hopefully lead to greater maturity. What we need most now is stability, and we cannot achieve this without a solution to the Palestinian problem. US-Jordanian relations are very close. When UN Resolution 242 was agreed upon, I was in the United States and I tried at that time to get clearer language. But the US preferred to leave it as it was, with the hope that rapid progress could be made. We talked about a rapid implementation of the withdrawal of Israeli forces in exchange for peace. But time passed, and nothing happened. I was able to get President Nasser to accept Resolution 242 and now it is our point of reference in the search for peace.

Unfortunately, now everyone in the area hopes for rapid progress this year, but the reality on the ground is that Israel continues to occupy the territory and there is no evidence of the kind of concessions that are needed for peace. For us, withdrawal must be traded for peace. But on the question of Jerusalem and the occupied territories, Israel still appears to intend to stay. This is a great hardship on those who live in the occupied territories.

The area around Egypt since 1973 has taken a course toward peace. There are great problems in Egypt, and they are very intent to make progress. It is my fear that they are raising hopes for a solution this year, and my long experience makes me cautious. I am not pessimistic, but the realities are difficult. If nothing happens, this would undermine the Egyptian leadership and perhaps even elsewhere. It would be a

threat to progress and the pendulum might begin to swing the other way, leading back toward extremism and radicalism.

Syria is also interested in a solution. We have close relations. We are engaged in an experiment to prove that regimes of a different type can work together toward progress. We have a good political relationship at the highest level and this has helped us to look at problems honestly and realistically. President Asad is sometimes a little difficult on details, but he is a man who stands by his word once he gives it.

In Lebanon the problems are immense and they are connected to the Palestinian issue. We hope that Lebanon will be rebuilt and that they can find a common understanding to create a more solid country. There is now the danger of south Lebanon, close to Israel's borders where the tensions are growing like a time bomb that could go off at any time. We in Jordan tried for a long time to see what could be done. I am apprehensive, because after 1967—we saw the war coming, but could not avoid it, and it destroyed 15 years of work we had made to build our country—I personally thought I should go as far as possible to establish real peace in the next generation. I would not leave any barrier to direct contact, so we have had contacts with Mrs. Golda Meir, and with all of the others in positions of high responsibility, up until now. But unfortunately, we always find a wall which we cannot penetrate.

We know their ideas, but they suffer from a feeling that Israel was created through struggle. They now feel very strong, strong in an unprecedented manner, and they feel that they do not have to make decisions. They have a fortress mentality, and they think that time may bring changes in the area. I sometimes think that they would welcome a turbulent neighborhood, so this would bring the United States and Israel closer together. I fear that they lack the courage to gamble on peace. No one in Israel seems to be willing to withdraw in exchange for peace, to assume this historical responsibility. If they offer nothing, the result will be a disaster.

I am aware of talks about Geneva and about different ways of approaching negotiations. We have some ideas too. I am sure you would agree that we need to think about what will be achieved at the end. We should emphasize substance over the form of negotiations, and over questions of who should represent what faction, etc. We have told Israel that if they withdraw from the West Bank and if sovereignty is restored to us over the Arab part of Jerusalem—and this is very important—within that framework, which would guarantee the rights of both Christians and Moslems, and in which there could be an open city which would become a city of peace, without domination from either side, we would be prepared to play a role. If there is any internationalization of Jerusalem, it would have to be on both sides of the pre-1967

line, not just on what used to be the Arab part. Some minor rectifications of borders on the West Bank would be all right, since these are different from recognized international borders. There was only a cease-fire line before 1967, so we accept the possibility of some minor rectifications on a reciprocal basis. If Israelis would accept these principles, we would take the responsibility to deal with the problem.

We have a feeling that we could contribute to a better future, to building a more stable peace, but the Israelis are raising an argument about secure boundaries. As Secretary Vance was able to see when he visited me in Jordan,² from my own house you can see Jerusalem. Security is less a matter of geography and borders than a state of mind and a feeling of wanting to live in peace.

Before Rabat,³ we told the Israelis of the dangers that might happen, and we were proved right. At Rabat, the PLO was accepted. There was a feeling that the Palestinians should be involved. Some Arabs wanted to withdraw from their responsibilities and had the feeling that if any concessions were to be made, the Palestinians should deal with the problem of getting a lasting solution. In addition, Jordan had nothing to offer as an alternative.

The PLO combines all of the contradictions of the Arab world. Its leadership is hopefully learning from its mistakes, but there is still a question of Palestinian representation through the PLO. The people of Palestine have never had a chance of self-determination. No one knows whether they would vote for the PLO. There possibly could be new situations. We are always ready to move if there were something we could live with. Most Palestinians, of course, want peace and dignity and they have suffered greatly, but without knowing the end result, we cannot do anything. Maybe the most extreme of the Palestinians should represent them as long as the outcome is not clear. Then at least they are not on the outside attacking everyone else.

Concerning Geneva, I would like to think aloud. There is no agreement among the Arabs. There is a possibility that the Arab side will begin to address this and to remove obstacles and a more coherent view may emerge. There is the possibility of one Arab delegation, consisting of Egypt, Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, and the Palestinians. This might help to remove obstacles. Then it could break into functional committees to deal with each topic. Egypt is, of course, worried that this will tie them down because of the problems of the extremists. We have also thought that a group on the Arab side might supervise the work of the delegation, making decisions by majority rule. There could be a committee on

² See Document 12.

³ See footnote 8, Document 6.

withdrawal, a committee to deal with the Palestinians, and a committee to deal with the guarantees of peace, and any others that would be needed. The idea of one delegation appealed to us and to the Syrians. Initially, Egypt and the PLO were against it. Arafat may now have changed his attitude, according to some recent information I have.

Even on the problem of recognition, it may be possible to overcome obstacles. It might be reasonable for Israel and the Palestinians to simultaneously recognize each other, with Israel recognizing Palestinian rights and the Palestinians recognizing Israel's right to exist. We have many thoughts along these lines, but we don't know any ideal way of approach. I suppose it would be possible if the territories of 1967 are to be recovered to place them under international authority and then to carry out self-determination for the Palestinians. This could help overcome the problem of Palestinian representation. These are some of my thoughts.

President: That's very helpful and very clear. The hope we have is that world opinion might be aroused this year to induce all parties to be flexible, and then if a comprehensive proposal can be tabled, which is fair to all, anyone who rejected such a fair proposal would be subject to tremendous pressure to modify their position. I have seen the Israel-Jordan border, from the Israeli side, of course, and I know the sensitivities on territorial rights. What we have found is not too different from what you have said. I have been somewhat disappointed in other Arab leaders for their lack of a clear commitment to real peace even if Israel withdraws from the territories and there is some resolution of the Palestinian problem. I have found a deep reluctance to make a commitment to real peace.

Israel feels, rightly or wrongly, that leaders will come and go and that they need some genuine interchange with their neighbors to help uphold peace. If they were to adopt a more vulnerable posture, and if they do not receive some guarantees on real peace, they would have fears for their future. I am not sure this is an accurate view, but that is their position. But I found that Foreign Minister Khaddam and President Sadat could not say that they will promise open borders, etc.

You have outlined clearly the problems in the territories that are occupied—and I have publicly said that Israel should withdraw substantially to the 1967 borders, although I think there should be the option perhaps of minor modifications, but not substantial ones. I have spoken of guarantees of real peace, and also recently of a homeland for the Palestinians, but on the form that would take, in terms of territory and in terms of relations among Palestinians, Jordan, and Israel, I wouldn't want to talk about that. That depends on you, Israel, and the Palestinians. I have no further thoughts on that. These are the three thoughts that we will explore—withdrawal, peace, and the Palestinian

question. I have in mind to complete these useful meetings, and to rely on your analysis and that of others, to try to understand the possibilities for agreement. Then perhaps Secretary Vance will come talk again with you, and see if our thoughts are moving in the right direction. If there is no possibility of common agreement, it might be an error to meet in Geneva. But if there is a chance of progress, we will consider taking a strong position of advocating a comprehensive settlement, or, we might judge that it would be better to refrain from doing so. But we will have to make that choice.

This relationship between a Palestinian entity, or whatever it is called, and Jordan is something I don't fully understand. What options do you see, and which do you prefer? I have read your earlier statements and I know President Sadat's position and the Israeli position. Perhaps you could help me understand this question.

King Hussein: You know the history of the area. The borders came into existence in this century. Basically, we are one people with very close ties. Between us and the Palestinians, the ties are very close. Very many people from 1948 and 1967 have come to Jordan. We are the only Arab country that gave the Palestinians the right to carry a Jordanian passport. Up until Rabat, we had equal representation for the Palestinians in our Parliament. Since 1967, we have remained close to the West Bank and we continue to help as if we were still involved there. We provide as much as we can to meet their needs and we help in every possible way. We pay government employees, teachers, and the municipalities get some help, as has always been the case. Open bridges allow people to move back and forth and to visit their relatives. It would be bad to close those bridges. The West Bank can export products to us and through us to the rest of the Arab world, so the ties are very strong, but somehow sensitivity has developed and Palestinians and Jordanians both want a special identity, within the framework of one family and one people. This led me to announce the United Arab Kingdom idea,⁴ which would consist of two states of Palestine and Jordan. It is our eventual aim to have very close ties.

In territorial terms, the territories occupied in 1967 would have to be evacuated with only minor rectifications, and Arab sovereignty would have to be restored in some part of Jerusalem, but the city could be open and could become a symbol of peace. There could also be a link to Gaza, and on the human level, Palestinians should have the right to choose compensation or return to their homes. But none will choose to go back in reality, although it is important to have the right to do so for psychological reasons.

⁴ Hussein proposed the United Arab Kingdom idea in 1972, but it never received significant support from any other countries.

Egypt wants us to agree with the PLO and to announce in advance of Geneva the nature of our link and to go as one delegation to Geneva. The PLO prefers its own state before discussing the future, and they realize the need for close links with us. The PLO is the creation of Arab summits, not the choice of the Palestinian people. We are always willing to take responsibilities for peace, but if there is to be a compromise on something that is Palestinian, then we cannot do it. Any such solution would fail.

President: Self-determination, then, is the key to it.

King Hussein: Yes, yes. Actually, few people have thought much about this. Realistically, if we talk of Jerusalem, it cannot work without contacts between the two sides, and there is also the possibility of regional economic development—the Dead Sea, water projects—so that the kind of relations that now seem difficult would have to come, but it is a question of time. I believe that if we find the right basis for a solution, all the rest will fall into place. It is not logical to think that after peace there would be no contact. A new era would begin.

President: What role should the US play, especially in preparation for the scheduled Geneva Conference? How forceful should we be? We don't want to upset the possibilities of agreement.

King Hussein: You should follow the present course, looking at the views of the parties and then come up with your own ideas, while remaining in close contact with all parties. To go to Geneva without a previously agreed plan would be a disaster. It would have serious implications for the future.

President: I agree with that.

Secretary Vance: Should a solution be worked out before Geneva, with Geneva primarily to ratify the agreement, or can substantial business be conducted there?

King Hussein: It can't be.

President: If it can be worked out before Geneva, it would simplify the problem of PLO representation. President Sadat and Foreign Minister Khaddam say that we need to communicate with the PLO. We will need to address that question later after the Israeli elections and after my talk with President Asad.

We are in the position of having made a major commitment to Israel and Israel's right to live in peace. I can't dispute about what you say about their intentions—I just don't know—but I will not enter talks as Israel's advocate. If I don't seem fair or if I don't have Jordan's interests at heart, there is no reason for you to trust me. I'll make an effort to honor the sensitivities of all involved. Even with the best possible progress, the moves necessary to carry out an agreement would have to be made over time as trust builds up.

Now, and in the future, could you try to evolve a sequence of events leading to a settlement and let us know your thinking? That would be very helpful. It is crucial that I try to understand your position, just as it is crucial for you to understand the special position of Israel, but there has to be mutual agreement. If we don't make progress this year, it will be hard to make a major effort next year. All of the Arab leaders seem to feel that the time is good for making progress, that there are reasonable leaders in power.

In Israel, if Shimon Peres becomes Prime Minister, as seems possible, he is likely to be a strong leader, and he may be willing to make bold decisions after the election and after the formation of his government. I hope this is true. The world feels that this is a difficult and uncertain problem, but it is important to do our best in 1977. It may be a long time before we can make a similar effort.

Vice President: Our President has been more forthcoming on the need for Israeli concessions for peace, but we need to get Israeli support, and a definition of peace and open borders is a crucial element in it. Under your leadership, there have been contacts across the border. You have been willing to take risks to keep the dialogue going. We hope that other Arab leaders may see the wisdom of this.

King Hussein: If we see some idea of what the end result will be, it is possible to see a change there.

President: It was reported in the papers that President Sadat spoke about five years for normalization to take place. We wish it could be sooner, but would Syria even accept that, if the territorial issue and the Palestinian problem were resolved?

King Hussein: I think so. That is a definite possibility.

President: Israel is concerned, and to some degree we share that concern, about the genuineness of Arab acceptance of a permanent peace with Israel. Some fear that the Arabs hope that after thirty or forty years Israel will disappear. This is what adds significance to the idea of open borders, etc. I had assumed that this would be easier for the Arabs to promise than it seems to be.

King Hussein: The Arabs fear that too many concessions made in advance will hurt them. They have not given much thought to it.

President: Would the people in the Arab world be more forthcoming than their leaders suggest?

King Hussein: If there is a framework, yes.

President: We think it would be fine if there could be mutual trade, and if the countries of the Middle East could spend less for weapons, and could concentrate more on economic growth, education, and health, such as you have done in your country. This is the kind of vision for the future that we would favor.

King Hussein: This is the only vision worth working for.

President: It is our inclination for the Soviets to play only a minimal role. So far their attitudes have been good.

Secretary Vance: So far they have been constructive, and they have not tried to block our mediating role. Eventually, they will want a more active role, at least in public. This may be possible, while we will continue to play the role that we should play.

King Hussein: We are more than willing to do anything for this objective. It is worthy of all our efforts. We feel that it is up to our friends, and our problem occurs when we come up against something that is unacceptable, and which is not meaningful. But we will try to help directly and with the others.

President: I have a specific question on whether you would accept the possibility of some dual territorial delineation, whereby sovereignty would be restored essentially to the 1967 lines, but there would be a phased withdrawal of the Israeli presence, within a carefully agreed upon framework.

King Hussein: If there is a reasonable time, not too long . . .

President: How long?

King Hussein: Just for a transition, a reasonable period, not too long.

President: What about a permanent peacekeeping force? Or at least one until trust has built up, which could help to stabilize the border areas?

King Hussein: We have no preference. International forces would be all right.

President: The outposts in Sinai have been working well, and we are not looking for a new role to play, but it might be useful to have electronic outposts and reconnaissance such as the Sinai Agreement. It has worked well.

Secretary Vance: It provides a degree of assurance to both Egypt and Israel.

President: We have detected some slight violations, and once we have the photographs and provide them to the parties, immediate corrective action has been taken. There has been good will in honoring these agreements.

King Hussein: On the Egyptian side, the large distance helps. It would be harder elsewhere.

Secretary Vance: Foreign Minister Khaddam made this distinction of geography also. He said he would have to look hard at any idea of using electronic equipment in the Golan Heights, but he would not rule it out, although it seems less readily applicable to him.

King Hussein: In time, anything that could be arranged that would be fair to both sides would be acceptable.

President: If all the leaders were like you, it would be possible to have a permanent peace. You are strong and gracious and have a constructive attitude toward peace. It is an inspiration to see you.

There are many Palestinians in Jordan, I understand. One million?

King Hussein: Somewhat less.

President: And they play a major role?

King Hussein: Yes.

President: If the Palestinian entity were created, would many Palestinians leave Jordan?

King Hussein: Not very many. There would be differences. Those who came after 1948 would stay. Others from the occupied territories who came in 1967 might go back to their homes on the West Bank. Now we can't even be sure who the Palestinians are in Jordan.

Mr. Sharaf: With your permission, I would like to explain that the consequences of the Rabat meeting in October, 1974, concerned us directly. The PLO was recognized as the representative of the Palestinian people. As a result, there were some difficulties in Jordan concerning the future of the Palestinians in our elections, for example. Most Palestinians in Jordan are Jordanian citizens, and as a result, it became difficult to know who should be able to vote. This was a temporary domestic problem.

King Hussein: This relates to the West Bank, and if we take a step to define who is a Palestinian, there are some ambiguities. There might be some complications in Israeli attitudes also.

Secretary Vance: On self-determination, are you talking of it as something that would happen after a negotiated arrangement, or before?

King Hussein: Either.

Dr. Brzezinski: Your Majesty, you emphasized the need for good preparations for Geneva, but maybe you also said that there should be a wide-ranging agreement before Geneva. Am I correct?

King Hussein: I think the President is right that developments this year are crucial, especially for Egypt and Syria. If we go to Geneva as we are now, there would be enormous difficulties. We need some agreed upon framework.

Dr. Brzezinski: Broad principles, but there still might be negotiations at Geneva?

King Hussein: Yes.

Dr. Brzezinski: How do we get this broad framework?

King Hussein: We look to our friends.

Dr. Brzezinski: Would it be through bilateral talks or a general meeting, or direct contacts?

King Hussein: Direct contacts, and an exchange of views.

Mr. Sharaf: With a US initiative.

King Hussein: Yes, a US initiative.

President: Could the Arabs get a unified position?

King Hussein: Yes, but you must take the initiative. We will work closely with you.

Mr. Sharaf: At the moment, the only framework is the 1967 UN Resolution 242. It defines the framework of withdrawal, peace, freedom of navigation, demilitarized zones, and a refugee settlement. What His Majesty has been trying to stress is the need to go a bit further. From our experience, there is a certain barrier of interpretation. The withdrawal to 1967 lines with only minor rectifications, and the Palestinian homeland and self-determination—your views, Mr. President, have helped, and His Majesty agreed that Jordan and a Palestinian entity could have close ties. But we want them to express their own rights and their own options and to participate in the peacemaking process. His Majesty wants the United States to help get an agreed framework. Israel is still equivocating on withdrawal and on the Palestinian identity. The Arab side agrees on peace in exchange for withdrawal and Palestinian rights.

President: I am not sure that is exactly right. Egypt and Syria are not so clear. They talk of non-belligerency, but when we speak of open borders, trade, and recognition, they won't say it.

Mr. Sharaf: They have a normal definition of peace as the absence of war. They see Arab-Israeli relations as like those existing elsewhere. They might be good or they might be bad. To define peace this way is maximalist. Jordan doesn't have any diplomatic relations, for example, with Mauritania, but we have friendly ties.

King Hussein: And with Libya, we have diplomatic relations, but . . .

Mr. Sharaf: We don't expect those furthest from Israel in the Arab world to have the same relationship with Israel as we might have. This can evolve in time.

President: But some expressed desire to move toward that objective is needed. Do you think the PLO leaders could accept UN Resolution 242, with the possibility of exclusion of the Palestinian portion?

King Hussein: Without that, I doubt it.

President: But with that exception, is it possible?

Dr. Brzezinski: With that one reservation.

President: Yes, could they make a reservation on that, but accept the rest of it, including Israel's right to exist?

King Hussein: If that was dealt with, it might be possible.

Mr. Sharaf: The PLO is moving that way, but the main problem is reducing Palestinians only to refugees.

President: I understand that.

Mr. Sharaf: They will be less forthcoming in the absence of any Israeli movement on Palestinian rights, whether the PLO is involved or not. This is a source of worry to His Majesty. It is shared by all of us. Israel is trying to avoid the Palestinian issue, to lump it into the Jordan question by saying that Jordan is Palestine, that both are the land of Israel. They push the Palestinian homeland onto Jordan in order to justify the absorption of all of the West Bank, and then the homeland could be created for Palestinians on the East Bank. His Majesty is ready and is enthusiastic for a role in a peace settlement, with the closest links to the Palestinians, yet if Israel permits this interpretation, we would have serious doubts. We would like to hear more from you on the question of a Palestinian homeland on the West Bank.

President: You know I am reluctant to define the territory.

Perhaps tomorrow we can talk more on Libya and on bilateral issues. I hope you have a good afternoon. This evening we will just have a small supper with some Congressional leaders.⁵ They may want to ask you a few questions. It would be good for them to hear your views. Thank you very much for coming.

⁵ According to the President's Daily Diary, Carter hosted a dinner party at the White House from 7:30 to 9:40 p.m., after which he and King Hussein met alone until 10:10 p.m. (Carter Library, Presidential Materials) No record of the discussion has been found.

31. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, April 26, 1977, 10:35–11:40 a.m.

SUBJECT

President's Meeting with King Hussein of Jordan, The Cabinet Room

PARTICIPANTS

The President
The Vice President
Secretary of State Cyrus Vance
Dr. Zbigniew Brzezinski
Assistant Secretary of State Alfred L. Atherton, Jr.
William B. Quandt, NSC Staff
Hamilton Jordan
Jody Powell

King Hussein
Sharif Abdul Hamid Sharaf
Lt. Gen. Sharif Zaid Bin Shakir

President: I thought the supper went well last night.² It's extremely important for the members of Congress to get to know you and to hear about the options for this year's negotiations. Senator Stone and Senator Javits, both of whom are important in the Jewish community, told me that they were pleased with what you said. They both seem to share a concern about the possibility of an independent, perhaps radical, Palestinian government that might be set up and which could have strong ties to Libya, or to the Soviet Union, and which would be a disruptive force. To some degree, we all share this concern. They were reassured by your opinion that if the Palestinians have the chance to express themselves, they will want tight ties to Jordan.

We talked a bit after dinner about relations with other nations that do not border on Israel, including the Saudis, Iran, Iraq, and Libya, and it would help me if you could outline your thoughts on those countries. We have difficult relations now with Libya, and they seem to be deteriorating. We have some tentative overtures from the Iraqis, and we have excellent and improving friendship with the Saudis. I can't yet comment on Iran, but we have historically been friends. I would value your advice on how we might approach them.

King Hussein: I can tell you how we see them. First, let me begin with our neighbors. As you know in Lebanon, there has been a tre-

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Subject File, Box 66, Peace Negotiations 1977 Vol. I [I]. Top Secret; Sensitive. The meeting took place in the White House Cabinet Room.

² See footnote 5, Document 30.

mendous loss of life and a great deal of damage. This was not only brought about by their internal problems, which required great leadership, and which would have had to be worked out. But there were also external pressures which were able to capitalize on the internal weaknesses. We have high hopes that the younger generation of Lebanese—and we have been in touch with most of them—will be able to find a formula that will be acceptable to all to help rebuild their country. The situation in the south remains very dangerous, and there is always the danger of an explosion which might involve the Syrians and maybe the whole area. We are very aware of the dangers there.

President: Are there any facets of the Lebanese situation that need to be dealt with in the peace settlement, or can we leave them alone?

King Hussein: The Lebanese should be involved, maybe at a later stage. They are important to the Palestinian issue.

President: The Lebanese borders should be intact, but that is a special subject.

King Hussein: There is the question of the border itself.

President: Is that in question?

King Hussein: It is internationally recognized.

Secretary Vance: The Lebanese-Israeli border is internationally recognized, but it should be reaffirmed in the peacemaking process and Lebanon's territorial integrity should be acknowledged.

King Hussein: The Lebanese are also concerned with the Palestinian problem. At this time the problem is a serious one. If the Palestinians were to become Lebanese citizens, this would upset the balance in Lebanon.

President: Are the Palestinians in Lebanon interested in seeing themselves as Lebanese or would they move to the West Bank if there were an entity there?

King Hussein: The same would apply to them as elsewhere. They should be given the choice of compensation or resettlement. Some Palestinians have been in Lebanon since 1948, and others have come more recently. Lebanon would want the latter to leave.

President: Arafat has his home there.

King Hussein: Yes. Some Palestinians, if they were to stay, would want to be recognized as Palestinians living in Lebanon. This would be important because of the precarious balance in the country.

Secretary Vance: President Sarkis felt that it would be important that the refugees in the camps be removed, that the burden of keeping them there is too great.

Dr. Brzezinski: Could they be resettled in the West Bank?

King Hussein: I doubt it; most of them don't come from there.

Mr. Sharaf: The absorptive capacity of the West Bank is limited, but if they can receive the nationality of the new Palestinian entity, this would change their status and it would help solve a major problem in Lebanon which results from the imbalance which they create.

President: So they would have the status of aliens, and no rights as citizens?

Mr. Sharaf: Yes, but they would also have the right of repatriation or compensation, and the right to move around, and they would not live in camps, and they could emigrate. The more qualified among them would probably join the new state.

Dr. Brzezinski: The camps would have to be liquidated and the refugees resettled, or the Palestinian problem would be kept alive, even if there were a homeland created.

King Hussein: We are trying our best to help in Lebanon. We have had many contacts with the Syrians from the beginning, and we have helped to formulate a joint opinion. There was a serious danger at one point that Syria might support one side against the other in Lebanon, and it would be more natural for Syria to support the radicals. We had many contacts with President Asad, and eventually Syria took a very balanced position.

President: We thought so. Do you consider Jordan to have about the right number, or too many, or not enough Palestinians?

King Hussein: We still have the capacity to absorb more, if we are provided the resources to do so.

President: Very good. That's very helpful.

King Hussein: With Syria, we have the possibilities of establishing the kind of relationship for others to look to. Our state will not disappear, but we are working to bring states closer together for cooperation and to bring about positive developments for our people. We are engaging in joint economic planning, we are working on common resources, and in Syrian schools in the early years they now use the Jordanian syllabus. We have made good progress, especially compared to the recent past. There is now an atmosphere of respect and confidence, based on non-interference in each other's affairs. On the political side, we also need to be able to see what is happening.

President: Do you look on the European model as some kind of pattern?

King Hussein: Yes.

President: But with continued autonomy and sovereignty for each state, within a framework of cooperation?

King Hussein: Yes, but Syria wants more. But we have seen too many examples in the past of experiments which have been set up on the basis of emotions, and we don't want setbacks. On the military side,

instead of moving right away to a joint military command, we might try to standardize training and organization. This would take years, but it is the best way.

President: When you learn how to standardize equipment, let us know so that we can apply it to NATO.

King Hussein: Regardless of the system of government, we hope to be able to cooperate with our neighbors.

President: Is it correct that Egypt has mentioned joining this group?

King Hussein: They are interested in political coordination, and joint political leadership.

President: Do you favor Egypt's joining?

King Hussein: Yes, it is very important in this phase to deal with our problems together.

President: Are any of the nations in your area reluctant to move toward more cooperation?

King Hussein: There is not much problem between Jordan and Syria. We also know that the Lebanese are looking at our experiment as well. I have told the Syrians that we should think in terms of broader cooperation than just our two countries, and that therefore we should not go too fast.

President: Are there any objections from Saudi Arabia or Iran?

King Hussein: Saudi Arabia is a little bit apprehensive, but I keep in constant touch with them.

Secretary Vance: What are their concerns?

King Hussein: They fear that we will become radicals.

Mr. Sharaf: The Syrian tradition has been that they are the center of Arab radicalism and of extreme Arab nationalism. They have melowed recently, and King Hussein has influenced President Asad to bring about a change in his attitude, both towards the United States and in the Lebanon situation. But the Saudis still have some fears that Syria will influence Jordan rather than Jordan influencing Syria. His Majesty has assured Saudi Arabia that we are talking about cooperation, not merger, and that we will help to moderate Syrian policy.

President: That helps me to understand.

King Hussein: Iran has excellent relations with us and with Syria, and we are very happy to see Iran and the Arab world on more friendly terms. The only problem is that Syria is over-stretched in Lebanon and this is causing serious economic problems. There are also pressures from others. They are not happy with the Lebanon situation and Syria needs to be able to concentrate again on development.

As for our Egyptian friends, their problems are well known. Our only worry is the fact that Egypt has never been very constant in its

policy. They go from the extreme right to the extreme left and we see no pattern of logic in what has happened. The January events³ were fortunately brought under control, but the situation there is serious. The Egyptian people have been promised a solution to their problems very quickly and obviously people's expectations have risen and now they are disappointed. Even with the greatest resources, Egypt will not be able to solve its problems quickly. The same difficulties could occur again if the Egyptians promise solutions to problems this year. It is very difficult for the leadership there, and it is a worry for us because any alternative government would be an extremist regime.

Behind us are Saudi Arabia, the Gulf, Iraq, and Libya, all of which have great resources. But we hope slowly that they will come to see ways of using their resources to contribute to building up their countries and to furthering cooperation. I think there has been some progress, but not enough. As a result, I have described the area around Israel as a poverty belt. We have the problem that all of our qualified people can be offered more money to work in the rich countries. In Jordan, many of them work to help their families and they come back, but this is not the case everywhere.

President: Do you see Saudi Arabia as being constructive in its approach to financial problems? Do Iranians have the same attitude?

King Hussein: Iran has been even more helpful than Saudi Arabia. Iran has been very quick to help us and to help Egypt, and now even Syria.

President: This is something that we might try to study more. How could the financial resources of Saudi Arabia and Iran, and to some degree our own resources, be channeled into the region so that they could serve as a substitute for constant military expenditures?

Does Qadhafi interfere in your country?

King Hussein: In the entire area, he does.

President: What should we do?

King Hussein: Once he declared a peaceful march on Cairo, and we suggested that the Egyptians stage a counter march and that we would join. Qadhafi tends to support all of the radical elements.

President: He does that all over, even here. Panamanian leader Torrijos was just there.

Secretary Vance: He took a big shopping list, but we are not sure that he got much.

President: He is also involved in the Philippines.

³ See footnote 17, Document 3.

King Hussein: Our situation on the economic front is that we have to still purchase a great deal abroad and commodity prices have been going up. There has been an increase in prices, especially of oil, and this is really affecting us. We are trying to control inflation, and to provide for people's needs. We have an easier time of it than Egypt and Syria, but we still have difficulties. Apart from that, there is the case of Saudi Arabia where we see the danger that even after five years or more of development, they will not have reduced their reliance on oil. And they are bringing as many as one million foreigners from all over into the country. One wonders, since we don't even know the size of their population, what proportion of the total that will be and what social problems it might cause. There is no challenge in Saudi Arabia for the young. There is the problem, and this is relative, that those who have three million dollars are envious of those who have five million dollars.

Further on in the Gulf, Kuwait seems a little bit more stable, but if Egypt and Libya were to collide, this might set a dangerous precedent in the Iraqi-Kuwaiti area. Iraq might then move on Kuwait.

President: I asked you last night, and it might be useful to go over this again for everyone else, whether any of the nations of the Middle East would be concerned if we were to renew our relationship with Iraq.

King Hussein: Maybe they would be to some degree, but a direct channel of communication would be more helpful than if you had no contact at all. Syria is most likely to wonder, but you could explain it to them.

President: We see Iraq as having great disruptive potential if they feel isolated, so we are considering some steps in their direction.

King Hussein: Their President is ailing, and their Vice President is ruthless, although he is very intelligent. Unfortunately, he doesn't use his intelligence constructively. They are undertaking a massive military buildup. During the Lebanon crisis, they were able to put six divisions of their army on the Syrian border. This has worried us a great deal. We had to mass some of our troops on their border in support of Syria. But they have a massive concentration of arms and it could become a threat. It worries us.

The Saudi buildup is also continuing, but we wonder about their capability and their training. It is not clear that the buildup will have any meaning.

President: No one fears the Saudis? Is the same true for Iran?

King Hussein: No, Iran is modernizing. We sometimes wonder because they have never had a test of strength, except in Oman, but there is a vast difference in the quality of the Iranian and the Saudi military capability.

Secretary Vance: I put the question to Foreign Minister Khaddam on how he would react to our talking with Iraq. He said it would be constructive.

King Hussein: The Iraqis have been in touch with us recently also, so they must have some internal problems and they want some contacts.

President: We would welcome it; if there is anything you can add, we would be appreciative.

King Hussein: In the rest of the Gulf, in Bahrain, Qatar, things are all right. In Qatar there is a little problem of succession within the family. The present ruler is very good and Qatar has made great progress. The UAE, however, is a mess. It is not at all united. We have a large presence there and a Jordanian officer heads their military establishment.

Oman is much better off than it was before. They have done good planning and they have more population than the others. They have potential. We are working very closely with them. They have asked us for some FMS-financed C-130s, and they say they cannot pay but would like to buy them on long-term credit. Otherwise, things are all right in Oman.

We are in constant touch also with North Yemen, and even now with South Yemen. We may soon have diplomatic relations there. We want to offer them some scholarships and get some of their young people to Jordan. We also have good relations with Sudan. The Sudanese are worried about developments in Zaire and Ethiopia and about the Libyan connection. I am sure that President Sadat spoke to you about this.

The relations between Morocco and Algeria are still not very happy. This is sad to see. But with Tunisia we have good relations and these will continue. President Bourguiba is an interesting man, and he represents the history of his country. He is still the symbol of his state. Tunisia is quite stable.

Most of these countries do not want to get directly involved in the Israeli problem and they prefer to stay behind in the peacemaking process. Some like Saudi Arabia will encourage progress, but they will not want to do so in public. Saudi Arabia also has the strange idea that Arafat and Fatah are their creation. But in the PLO it is almost like a stage play. Sometimes they act extreme, sometimes moderate, and they move in different ways depending on the audience.

President: Tell me again the Saudi view of the PLO.

King Hussein: They feel that they influence the PLO and that Fatah is the most moderate, the largest of the groups, and so they champion it, especially Arafat.

President: It is important for us to know whether you think it would help for us to share our thoughts and our plans with the Saudis.

King Hussein: I believe it would be helpful.

President: That is also my feeling. You don't have any reservations?

King Hussein: No, we try to keep in touch with the Saudis.

President: A long range vision of economic and social progress in the Middle East might help to settle differences. The very rich countries could help to guarantee that this would be possible. We have found that the Saudis are very helpful when we consult with them.

Secretary Vance: They have been very cooperative.

President: They are eager to see progress made this year.

King Hussein: I hope that Crown Prince Fahd will influence matters there. He is the most positive personality and the most able.

President: Do you think that his becoming the titular head of Saudi Arabia is imminent?

King Hussein: We have some reports that indicate that the King, because of his health, may hand over power to Fahd. There has been a tremendous gap and great uncertainty ever since Faisal's death.⁴ There are many forces working in the country, and these have some influence on Saudi Arabia's ability to play a more positive role.

President: Is Fahd secure in his leadership position?

King Hussein: He has the good will of most of the people. But we will have to watch carefully. Most of the other Arabs will encourage progress toward a peace settlement, but some will always be anti-everything. They don't believe that a solution is possible, and if one is not achieved, then they will claim that they were able to predict it.

President: I have one more question. How do the Arabs see Turkey—as a distant country, or as moving closer to them?

King Hussein: As a rather distant country now, although geographically and historically we have been very close to Turkey. But Turkey now seems to be looking inward.

President: We have had some information that Turkey has an inclination to look more toward your region than in the past. We have some mixed emotions, because Turkey is such a vital part of NATO and we want them to stay in NATO. But we have heard that they are moving more toward the Middle East than toward Europe.

King Hussein: Nothing yet has happened.

⁴ King Faisal was assassinated on March 25, 1975, by his half-brother's son Faisal bin Musa'id.

President: There may be some things that you would like to discuss. I am an eager student and I would welcome your ideas, your advice and your thoughts.

King Hussein: We have some of our own problems that I would like to mention. In our armed forces, we are trying to cut from five to four divisions and to provide them with modernized equipment. In February we completed our reorganization, and we are halfway through our program of providing modern equipment, especially armor with the help of Iran. We want to modify all of our M-48 tanks so that they will have a 105mm. gun, and we want to substitute diesel engines for the gasoline engines that they have now. They have very limited range with gas engines. We are also looking at our armed forces as a source of stability, not only for ourselves, but for the region. We would have no hesitation to send troops for example to Oman or Kuwait. It is easier for us as a member of the family to do this than for any outside element. We hope to complete our modernization of the army by 1980 and of the air force by 1983. We will need help from our friends. For our air force, we had originally planned to have 100 F-5Es by 1980, but when we take a closer look, we think perhaps we need 60 F-5Es and then the balance might be F-16s or some equivalent. We need to have the capability to intercept and to defend ourselves.

We hope both on the military side and on the economic development side to have a complete plan soon that we will be able to take to our friends, especially to Saudis. We don't want to have problems, and we want to be able to present a full view so that they can see what we plan to do and so that we can have a clearer picture of what they are prepared to do. This will be the same with all of our friends.

President: May I ask a question? We have found through Secretary Vance's discussions that all of the countries want to lower the levels of their arms purchases, but, of course, they don't want to do this unilaterally. Do you feel that it would be possible for the Arabs, and Iran as well, to set lower levels for their long range weapons purchases if assurances could be given that Israel would do the same?

We would like to be able to lower the levels of our arms sales. We feel that too much is being spent on weapons. We would like a worldwide lowering of arms sales and we could do some of this even unilaterally, but we do not want to hurt our friends. Our manufacturers, of course, want to sell as much as they can. But if you could consider this, I would be interested in your views. It might be helpful to try to start this process, since arms purchases rob countries of resources that can be used for economic progress.

Secretary Vance: I raised this with the Syrians. They said that if there were peace, then they would look with favor on a program of re-

duction of arms purchases, but that this would be conditioned upon achieving a settlement.

King Hussein: This would apply to all of us, except where the Soviets are pouring in weapons.

President: You mean Libya and Iraq?

King Hussein: Libya and Iraq. This creates imbalances.

President: We might be able to help there. We want to pursue this with the Soviets and Secretary Vance has already raised it.

Secretary Vance: The Soviet response has been that once you solve the political problem, then they would be prepared to reduce the flow of arms.

King Hussein: In the main, what we want is to update and modernize what we now have. There are not many changes. But we now have old tanks.

President: Have you ever flown the F-16?

King Hussein: No, but I saw it fly.

Mr. Sharaf: Our armed forces have been a source of stability in the area in recent decades. These forces have helped us to deter aggression and they have not been used only in our confrontations with Israel. We have also needed them to confront radical forces in the area. They help us a great deal in confronting Iraq, and even with Syria.

General Bin Shaker: A good comparison with our armed forces is Iraq. They have nine divisions, and we are now down to four.

King Hussein: They have just made three billion dollars' worth of arms purchases.

General Bin Shaker: They have made large purchases from the Soviets, from Europe, and they are not the most reliable of neighbors. When they had problems with Syria, they were able to put 6 divisions on the Syrian border within ten days—two armored, two mechanized, and one mountain.

President: I have noticed that there was a new oil discovery on the Kuwaiti-Iraqi border. I guess that is a rather doubtful border. In some areas there seem to be two lines showing an uncertain demarcation.

King Hussein: This oil discovery will increase the danger of a clash.

General Bin Shaker: We have been discussing the possibility of buying a Cobra helicopter.⁵ We can't imagine fighting tank to tank against our neighbors. We need something more effective.

King Hussein: We are relying mostly on the morale, the training, and the quality of our forces, not on quantity.

⁵ Cobras were military attack helicopters.

President: You have a well-deserved reputation for your armed forces. With Israel, your entry into war has been reluctant. Is that right?

King Hussein: We were totally surprised in 1973. In 1967, we foresaw the war, but we could do nothing to prevent it.

President: We hope we will all be able to prevent wars in the future.

Mr. Sharaf: In 1967 the King was warning about the possible dangers in the area and the increase in tensions. He even feared that Israel might use the tensions as a pretext. The King worked hard to try to awaken interest in the danger and to warn against confrontation. We saw it coming, but we could not prevent it.

King Hussein: Either we had to do nothing and then we would have faced an internal uprising, and the West Bank would have been taken anyway, or we had to try to prevent the war. But we failed.

President: Have you talked to Secretary Brown about the Cobras?

King Hussein: We touched on it yesterday.⁶

President: We would look with favor on that generally. I am not sure of the numbers.

Ambassador Pickering: I believe that nine were included in the request.

President: Is that too many?

General Bin Shaker: It is just a start.

President: I have flown in it. It is quite a vehicle. It flies at 200 miles an hour just at ground level and that seems just as fast as going 600 miles an hour.

King Hussein: Kuwait cannot be defended from Kuwait itself. But if we develop good relations with Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Syria, then we can hope to contain the dangers. But we need to develop this basic agreement.

Mr. Sharaf: Even for our relations with Syria, we need to be strong and to have a good military balance.

King Hussein: A relationship between equals is much more likely to succeed than a lopsided one.

Mr. Sharaf: May I bring to the President's attention another issue? There are some Lebanese Christian leaders who have seen His Majesty recently, and they have said that they envisage a tripartite relationship among Lebanon, Syria, and Jordan and that Jordan's participation would be a good guarantee to the Lebanese Christians and to the integ-

⁶ No memorandum of conversation has been found, but an April 22 information memorandum including talking points for Brown to use at the meeting is in the Washington National Records Center, OSD Files, FRC 330–80–0017, J–K 1977.

rity of their state. This relates also to Jordan's ability to provide strength where it is needed.

President: Do you have any formal commitment to help Kuwait if it is attacked?

King Hussein: We are always ready, but we are not at that point.

President: But the option is there and the Kuwaitis know.

How do you feel about the possible demilitarization of Indian Ocean? The Soviets have been building up their presence, especially in Somalia, which may not be a very good bet. The Indians are very eager, and the Australians want to be involved. How do you react?

King Hussein: It would be good to get the Soviets out.

President: That's what we have in mind. We have an airfield at Diego Garcia which is nearing completion, but it has little military value except for reconnaissance and refueling. We have also started on talks with the Soviet Union on this issue. India has favored the idea.

Mr. Sharaf: We would also like the President's support for our economic development plans. We have received sympathy from you for our military requirements. Our technical people are here with His Majesty and will be meeting with their counterparts. We have been receiving \$70 million a year from the United States in budget support and in technical assistance. Now you are planning to reduce the budget support and to put more into project loans. You have requested nearly \$93 million in the next year, subject to Congressional approval, and we hope that this could be increased some. We agree to put more emphasis on projects, and we would like support on two major projects: potash and the development of water and agricultural resources in the Jordan Valley. We hope to get the support of Arab funds, the World Bank, and international agencies. It will be very helpful if the United States supports this. These are important points in our five-year plan which we submitted last January. We hope that you will lend support so that we can develop our economy.

President: Do you see having excess potash for export? There seems to be no problem with the demand for fertilizer.

King Hussein: We have had some contacts with our neighbors about this.

Secretary Vance: We have provided some help on a feasibility study of the potash project.

Ambassador Pickering: We have also offered our good offices between Israel and Jordan to work out questions of water rights. This is going well and the parties see us as a catalyst for bringing in other donors. We are moving from being a catalyst in the political area to being one in the economic area as well.

President: I hope that Cy can reassess soon our broader concept in the Middle East settlement, including ideas of demilitarization and regional economic development. We want to be sure that we are doing enough in these areas. I would like to be involved in this.

I know that you have an appointment now with Walter Cronkite.⁷ This is very important because it allows the American people to see what Jordan stands for. I am very grateful to you for coming, and I hope you feel that there is a better chance for peace than there has been in a long time. I am determined that we will use our good offices to their fullest if we see the chance for a settlement. When you go back to your country, if you have some advice or counsel or suggestions for me, don't hesitate to let me know directly, and I'll do the same. This has been very beneficial to me. Next you will probably be seeing Secretary Vance in Jordan again after I have met with other leaders.

King Hussein: I am planning to send Abdul Hamid Sharaf to see President Asad before your meeting with him. Concerning our economic plans, our best asset is our human resources. We are doing all that we can and we are hopeful. I am also extremely grateful for your help and for the opportunity to meet you.

President: Your visit here has given me a chance to explain to the American people the friendship that we feel for Jordan.

⁷ Walter Cronkite was a CBS Evening News anchor from 1962.

32. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Geneva, May 9, 1977, 3:50–7 p.m.

PARTICIPANTS

President
 Secretary of State Cyrus Vance
 Dr. Zbigniew Brzezinski
 Assistant Secretary of State, Alfred L. Atherton, Jr.
 Ambassador Richard Murphy
 Mr. Hamilton Jordan
 Mr. William B. Quandt, NSC Staff
 Mr. Issa Sabbagh, Interpreter

 President Hafiz al-Asad of Syria
 Foreign Minister Abd al-Halim Khaddam
 Adib al-Daoudy, Political Adviser
 Abdallah al-Khani, Deputy Foreign Minister
 Ambassador Sabah Qabbani
 Assad Ilyas

President: May I outline some of my thoughts first, and then perhaps ask you some questions?

President Asad: Yes, please.

President: We are very eager this year to see progress made in the Middle East and I will be devoting a great deal of effort to learn what we might do. We don't want to interfere, but we will contribute our good offices if needed. Our constructive effort can only be significant to the extent that all nations involved trust us to be fair and to be truthful and to try to be sensitive to the deep feelings of the people in the region. I don't have any preconceived ideas, but I am eager to learn from you your own thoughts on the possibilities of agreement. I have met with Prime Minister Rabin, President Sadat, King Hussein, and after the Israeli elections, I will probably meet their new leader. Crown Prince Fahd will come to Washington later this month. We will try to search out common ground for an agreement, and then we will come back and talk in a quiet way to all of the parties, with Secretary Vance again visiting the Middle East countries. If there seems to be a prospect for progress at that time, we would take your advice on how to proceed. My thought is that unless substantive agreement seems possible, it might be better not to have a conference now. (President Asad nods

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Trips/Visits File, Box 104, 5/9/77 President Meeting with President Asad of Syria: 2–6/77. Top Secret; Sensitive. The meeting took place at the Intercontinental Hotel in Geneva. All brackets are in the original. Carter visited Geneva on May 9 to meet with Swiss President Kurt Furgler and President Asad.

agreement.) But if we do not make progress this year, a conference might be far off in the future. I will not be timid about my own leadership in bringing the countries together if you think our strength and influence will be beneficial. I know there are some issues on which countries cannot change their positions, but we hope that each country will be flexible where possible.

We need your advice on many questions—the participation of the PLO, the move toward recognized borders, the definition of what peace means, how rapidly the terms of agreement might be carried out, the degree of participation by the Soviet Union, and what guarantees by other nations of the peace agreement might be advisable if we reach agreement. I would like to have you discuss these matters this afternoon and if you permit, I would like to ask you questions about what you think.

President Asad: We are bound to have some questions. Once again I would like to express my thanks to President Carter for his efforts and for coming to this meeting. As you were talking, my mind was working on how I can best start. No doubt the problem is complicated. No matter how hard we try not to repeat things that have already been said, it is inevitable that we will repeat—I am not talking about you, but more generally—we will repeat things that have been said in my talks with Secretary Vance and others.

President: Maybe this will be the last year we will have to go over this ground. (Laughter.)

President Asad: But I hope this will not be our last meeting. In any case, if someone thinks we need problems in order to keep on meeting, we can always create some. (Laughter.) I want to be as brief as possible. I might say that the problem in our area began with the occupation of Palestine by the Jews. Don't worry, I am not going to go into the whole history, it is too long. I might even put it another way. Our area has been subdivided into many different countries. And I wish that President Carter could study in depth the history of the whole area, and not just of Palestine.

President: I did today.

President Asad: Our countries were subdivided into small states under colonialism. I don't want to deal with the whole Arab world and I will confine myself just to Syria. Up to a certain point, there were no separate states of Syria, Lebanon, Jordan. They were all one. We are talking of the era of colonialism, of French and British rule. Presently we have good relations with both countries, but this is something they did in the past when they were colonialists. The British took Palestine and Jordan . . .

President: And Iraq.

President Asad: And the French took Syria and Lebanon. This was done irrespective of what bound the people of the area together. Suppose the colonial powers wanted a connection between the Mediterranean and the Gulf. They would just draw a line, which might divide people, tribes, etc. Of course, present-day Syria was subdivided into five sections, but, at the first chance we had to regroup, we did so. We see that in the long run to subdivide countries does not serve the people or the countries themselves. This haphazard subdivision was the prelude to the creation of Palestine. This subdivision has led to problems that we recently saw in Lebanon, and I don't know what else might come in the future. This is not the crux of the matter now, but I meant this as a prelude, since this is our first meeting.

President: That's very helpful.

President Asad: I would like to refer to the historical background for another major reason. When in the 1940s the Jews occupied Palestine, you all know what happened—there was fighting, the UN was summoned, there were UN Resolutions—you know the whole story. As a result of these deliberations, Israel was accepted as a member of the UN, but the acceptance of Israel, in my opinion, was unique. No other state was accepted into the UN with the qualification that it accept two UN Resolutions—one of these dealt with the division of Palestine, and the other dealt with the right of return of refugees to Palestine. I believe 194 dealt with return, and 181 with partition.² The resolution by the General Assembly accepting Israel into the United Nations was based on the fact that Israel had already accepted Resolution 194 on the return of refugees. The representative of Israel at the time was Abba Eban, and in the light of the commitment that he gave, Israel was accepted into the United Nations.³ If we were being logical, if this were a legal deliberation, we would consider that Israel should not be in the United Nations, since it has not lived up to the condition of carrying out its commitments. Not only has Israel not carried out Resolutions 181 and 194, but also it has encroached on and occupied more and more territories than those allotted to it originally. In the 1948 Armistice Agreement,⁴ there were areas that were to be demilitarized zones—in Arabic, we call

² On November 29, 1947, the U.N. General Assembly adopted Resolution 181, which called for the creation of Jewish and Arab states in Palestine with the termination of the British Mandate on August 1, 1948. On December 11, 1948, the U.N. General Assembly adopted Resolution 194. Article 11 of that resolution stated that the refugees from the 1948 Arab-Israeli war should be permitted to return to their homes at the earliest practical date or be compensated for the loss or damage of property if they chose not to return.

³ U.N. General Assembly Resolution 273, adopted May 11, 1949, admitted Israel into the United Nations.

⁴ The Armistice Agreements were actually negotiated and signed in 1949. See footnote 5, Document 18.

these forbidden territories. There were other areas where the Arabs could have their own forces. These areas Israel nibbled away at, expelling the Arab inhabitants. This was not the result of war, but rather of daily clashes, to the point where Israel occupied all of these areas and expelled all of their inhabitants. All of this took place before 1967 and was the result of daily fights.

Behind these demilitarized zones on both sides—and before I left Damascus, I thought of bringing a bas-relief map, but I did not do so because of the time, but when you visit Syria, you can study the situation on the spot, and it will give a clearer picture. Behind these demilitarized zones, there were some lightly defended areas where there could be no tanks, etc., and no guns of a certain calibre. On the Syrian side, these were about six kilometers in depth, and on the Israeli side about twelve kilometers. To all of this, Israel turned a blind eye before 1967.

In 1967, Israel occupied vast territories and in 1967 Israel's expansionist intentions were seen with utmost clarity. As I recall, Defense Minister Dayan gave a speech to the Israeli armed forces—he was then known as a great military hero—and in his first speech he said that the previous generation had realized the 1948 borders, that he had brought about the Israel of 1967, and that now the next generation would bring about greater Israel. Even if we assume that he said this out of an intoxication brought about by victory, it is still of some significance. Of course, Israel is basing all of its actions on the premise that it will not leave the territories occupied in 1967. They are saying and emphasizing that the borders will be defined by where the Jews live.

Of course, when we say Jews, we don't mean those members of a religion that we respect. In our country, we cannot be religious bigots. This is well known and there are reasons for this. The first, divine religions were born in our backyard—Christianity and Islam. Jesus Christ Himself was a Syrian—before partition! Even today, in some tribes one finds both Christians and Muslims. Of course, I say this as historical background on why we cannot be bigots. Christians and Muslims are mingled and in my country you cannot tell any difference between a Christian and Muslim Syrian. And this is true of Syrian Jews, although our attitude to them has been colored since Israel's creation. But we have a Jewish Religious Council to adjudicate matters in Syria, which plays the same role as the Mufti. During my time in office in 1971, I met with the heads of the Syrian Jewish Community. I discussed their problems. At that time, representatives of the Jews discussed subjects involving Jews who had been convicted of smuggling money out of the country—this was also the case for some non-Jews—and after the discussion I immediately pardoned some of those convicted. I have done other similar things. During those discussions in 1971, I talked of the

spiritual values that bound us together, but I said that I could not agree to consider them as citizens of Israel. They are Syrians of Jewish faith, just like Syrian Christians and others. Of course, as events have proved, Syrian Jews have been very angry with Israel since Israel has brought them no good at all. I would like to repeat that we are not against Jews in any part of the world, but we want them to be citizens of their own country. Syrian Jews should be Syrian citizens, and US Jews should be US citizens, loyal to their own country.

We cannot understand how US Jews could permit themselves to take unfair advantage of their country's interests for the sake of Israel. We all have a general commitment to humanity at large, and I have talked of this with some American Jewish leaders. After 1967, Israel continued to design and to build its future on the basis of occupation of the territories. It kept on setting up settlements, villages, industrial complexes, agricultural projects, moving people to new settlements, tearing down old settlements, and putting up new ones. They indicated the permanency of their tenure there. That was already understood from their statements but it was confirmed by their tangible actions. There were efforts between 1967 and 1973 at the United Nations, by the four great powers and others to see what could be done. There were some African efforts. Once there was a committee of ten which chose four representatives to go to Israel. President Senghor, who is a good man, was part of this. He went to Israel at a time when they had good relations and they started with the impression that the Arabs were the aggressors and were the recalcitrant party, so they went to Israel. But they came back with different convictions. They had no idea that Israel would refuse to withdraw and they came back with the conclusion that Israel wants to stay in the territories.

There was an American project, the Rogers Plan,⁵ which Egypt agreed to [*sic*], but all of these efforts went by the wayside. There is no doubt that Israel caused all of these efforts to fail. Without a doubt, these were serious efforts. With good will, they would have had a chance of success. Perhaps if some were not serious, others were, up until 1973. The ceasefire was brought about in 1973 by UN Resolution 338. We in Syria delayed our acceptance of the ceasefire resolution. The resolution was voted on October 22, and we delayed until October 24. In the written acceptance that we gave, we accepted Resolution 338 on the basis that Israel would withdraw from the territories and would restore Palestinian rights. As is well known, before Resolution 338, we did not accept Resolution 242. Actually, we did not accept 242, but in the midst of all of the turmoil, and with Resolution 338, we gave our written acceptance, but it was conditional on withdrawal and the resto-

⁵ See footnote 9, Document 21.

ration of Palestinian rights. At that time, we wanted this to be clearly understood. We did not want anyone to come and say we had accepted Resolution 242 by implication. The same day, Israel said that Syria does not accept Resolution 338 because of the conditions attached. Because of military complications caused by the exiting of Egyptian forces from battle at that time, we had to accept. Israel got lots of support, so that they again felt that they could flex their military muscle. But I think that it would have been better if the war had gone on. This was my opinion at the time, but we are now talking of peace.

My remarks are not meant to belittle Israeli military prowess, but there were other factors that would have helped if the fighting had continued. President Carter earlier mentioned to me my talks with Henry Kissinger. In 1973 everyone believed that the war was over, that the Geneva Conference would begin and everything would be fine, and the maximum period needed to succeed was thought to be six months. President Sadat sent me a message on October 24, before the ceasefire. He sent it with Prime Minister Aziz Sidqi. He said that we may as well accept the ceasefire, since there will be a peace agreement in no time at all. The countries that were in contact with each other gave that impression. Now months, and even years later, this has not come about. What are the elements in the situation now?

Our understanding of the basic elements is the same as yours. There are three basic issues which I have reviewed with Secretary Vance and which President Carter's statements have covered also. The first is borders or the occupied territories. The second is Palestinian rights. The third are the prerequisites for peace. In general, our attitude is . . . Before I give our attitude on these three elements, I should say that in Syria, and in the Arab world, we have shown flexibility not dreamed of by others. Before 1971, we did not talk of peace. This is not because we are the enemies of peace—Syria and the Arabs cannot be—but because of our conviction that Israel would never want peace. Notwithstanding that popular sentiment, we started talking of peace. Israel said that the Arabs don't talk of peace, only of war. When the Arabs talked of peace, then Israel talked of negotiations. Then when the Arabs came around to talk of negotiations, Israel took another step. They are creating more obstacles to progress. As I told Secretary Vance in Damascus,⁶ if Israel keeps leap-frogging this way, Israel may soon insist on choosing who the Syrian Ambassador will be to Israel. I say this because Secretary Vance was asking us about the exchange of diplomatic relations. There has been flexibility, in other words, in our attitude, but Israel should not be given to understand that flexibility means giving up on crucial points. We will be flexible in our tactics, and on how

⁶ See Document 14.

things are done. Now, let me go back to our attitude on the land occupied in 1967.

I, as a Syrian citizen, cannot imagine that any leader in Syria or any other Arab country could agree to give up any territory. For two parties to fight and have one lose is one thing, but it is different to agree to have mutual goodwill and to look for peace as a mutual objective. Here we are talking of security in our area. We are not talking of a vanquished party and of a victor. But if people insist on these considerations as being inevitable, then we will consider ourselves the victor in the 1973 war. It is natural when we talk of our fate as Arabs, of the question of occupied lands, and of a people that has been dispersed, that we look at all eventualities. What would future animosity bring? I, as an Arab citizen, can only conclude that the future is on my side if the struggle continues, especially since the just cause is on my side and Israel is the aggressor. Nevertheless, after we had concluded that time is on our side, we are bound to reflect on why we should allow all of these years to pass and all of the blood to be shed. Why not talk of peace now? From this view, we want peace, but why should we end the animosity if I am going to have to lose something. This would be a brake on my enthusiasm for peace, even if I could give up anything. If I gave up territory, would I serve any principle? Would I serve the Syrian people or humanity, or the Syrian interests that I represent? Then why should I do it? What is in it for me? The answer may be to end fighting and military operations, but to this I say that if the aggressor finds that it is not futile to bear these costs, why should we not also put up with sacrifices?

Israel's pretext for keeping the 1967 occupied territories is that of secure boundaries. I recall in 1974 receiving a delegation of the International Socialists, including Chancellor Kriesky. I was visited by them, and we discussed the subject. I asked the British Labor representative to talk. He had been sitting there like a sphinx until then. I asked him to speak first because we all know of the British role in the problem. He was from a country which had suggested Resolution 242. I asked his view on secure borders. At the end of the discussion, the British representative said that Israel's view has nothing to do with Resolution 242. They just want to keep the territories, not for security reasons but because they are good territory. He told us this, although I do not know if he told it back home as well.

Secure boundaries are non-existent. We cannot talk of imponderables. I will give two specific examples. In 1967, Israel occupied the Sinai and Golan. In Sinai, there are those passes that are supposed to help whoever occupies them. Israel took them and there was no obstacle in the path of the Israeli forces. In the Syrian Golan, our forces were there and yet we could not prevent Israeli occupation of Golan. Holding the territory did not by itself present an obstacle to the in-

vader. In 1973, Suez was not a secure border for Israel. Egyptian forces crossed the Canal and took territory. The Israelis on their side made a counter-offensive. On the Golan, we got as far as the edge of the Heights, down to the river, and all of the hills and fortifications did not stop us. We went back for other reasons, but we reached the edge of the Heights. Golan did not provide Israel with secure borders. It goes without saying that even in the past there has been nothing that can be described truly as a secure border, especially in the era of modern weapons. This idea does not exist at all, when we have modern guns, rockets, airplanes and tanks. In the face of these weapons, there are no secure borders.

I have given examples from the October war and from the 1967 war. When Secretary Vance is in Syria next time, he may visit some places on the ground. He will see the observation position on Mt. Hermon. It was heavily fortified, but we liberated it in the first hours of the October war. It is man who moves forward or back. Nothing can be called a secure border. Why does Israel want secure borders in Golan, and not in Galilee? Golan, as you know, is a hill.

President: I have been there in 1973.

President Asad: Have you seen Galilee also? Do you have a clear picture?

President: Yes.

President Asad: There is a valley between Golan and Galilee.

President: I have been up on the Golan.

President Asad: As you stand on the Galilee mountains, you look down on the Golan Heights. Galilee is higher. It has more complicated terrain. It is more easily fortified and is suitable for defense lines and would not require the expelling of inhabitants from any territory. The areas that I spoke of before as demilitarized zones before 1967 are in the valley. These were taken by Israel before 1967.

If we agree to the theory of secure borders, which may be a just consideration by itself, it would have to be the right of all countries. If we agree in principle, then we would have to give each country the right to take territory from others. Israel would take some territory from Syria, Syria would take some from Turkey, Canada might take some from the United States, and so on. The whole world would become a jungle. It is strange to insist on secure borders on other people's territory. It would mean that they want more land, not just defense. There are other indications that they want more land, not security. They used to say that Syria attacked their settlements, but in 1967 when they took Golan, it did not prevent us from being able to shell their settlements, even though our troops were back further. The depth of the Golan Heights varies between 14 and 26 kilometers. The area is only

1,200 square kilometers. Long-range guns can go further than these distances. It is not essential to be able to see one's target to hit it. They say that they pushed us back for security purposes, but this is not true. Suppose that we did say all right, that this was done to secure their own settlements, but then why did they build new settlements, some of which are only 300 meters from our territory? Why did they push us back and then invite our artillery again by having settlements established within artillery range? Now to protect these new settlements, they will need to establish even more, and so on. But we don't have much more to give! We are bound to ask why should secure borders be 50 kilometers from Damascus, but 350 kilometers from Tel Aviv. I asked Henry Kissinger about this. He said that they could change their capital to Haifa, but I replied that in that case we would move ours to Quneitra. In essence, to talk of secure borders does not rest on anything real. Shall we go on to talk about the rights of the Palestinians, or do you have some questions?

President: I have lots of questions, but I don't have any answers yet. I think the question of secure borders is important, not just for you and for Israel, but for the rest of the world as well. If you and Israel desire, perhaps we can help, along with others, to guarantee those borders to prevent eventual bloodshed. This is what we want. The area that would be used to secure the borders would have to be determined—its depth, and perhaps some demilitarized zones, or peacekeeping forces from other countries. But these are decisions for you to make. Unless it can be done, the conflict will continue, and perhaps you will ultimately win, no one knows for sure. But we have no desire to impose our will on you or Israel. If the decision can be reached that the pre-1967 borders are the proper ones, then to guarantee those borders would be a great step forward. This may not be the desire of Israel either, but we would try to pursue your wishes with the Israeli leaders, if it seems fair and with prospects for a permanent arrangement.

President Asad: When Israel talks of secure borders, we understand that they want more territory, not just international forces, but territory. This is different from what you said, Mr. President. If they are after more territory, they will want to put the forces there.

President: We don't see it that way. Any forces placed there would be those that you wish. These could be from any nations, including ours.

President Asad: I understand that you want a reply on this.

President: I'll wait, I cannot speak for Israel, but this is my understanding.

President Asad: I am more concerned about your views. Israel wants Damascus! Concerning the 1967 boundary, we would agree to areas being demilitarized on both sides. Especially since you have seen

the terrain, you know that it does not permit in-depth areas of demilitarization. The territory is inhabited, there is arable land, and even the land that is not cultivated could be. If it would be helpful to have an international observer force, provided that it is not a huge army, we would agree.

President: May I ask a question? How do you feel about observer posts, if these were desirable?

President Asad: When we talk of Golan, it is possible to see everywhere with only a pair of binoculars. In fact, Minister Khaddam talked with Secretary Vance about this. If we are convinced of the efficacy of these arrangements, we would readily say all right. But the distances are short, and you can see quite easily. It is very different from Sinai where there are vast distances. It is only 50 kilometers to Damascus, so these ideas are not very practicable. In fact, the other things that you mentioned are more effective.

President: But is it a possibility?

President Asad: In addition, I have heard that the Sinai observer posts can even watch Golan. When Secretary Vance goes to the area, he will be able to see how easy it is to see everything with only binoculars.

President: But would observation posts be a possibility?

President Asad: I'm a pilot, now retired, and as far as I know, these posts, including radar and other things, are not necessary. They would not perform the functions required.

President: But I want to keep the option open, even though I am not asking for your commitment.

President Asad: If I am convinced that there is a necessity for these, then I would say OK. There is a reason for our stand. Damascus is very close to the front lines.

President: Would you object if other Arab countries took a different position on their borders from what you do on the Golan Heights?

President Asad: No. No.

President: What kind of guarantee of the borders and of the peace settlement would be most acceptable to you?

President Asad: Demilitarized zones, and if necessary, forces in those zones, and an ending of the state of belligerency. These are the maximum possible and the maximum necessary.

President: Concerning the forces in the demilitarized zones, do you have any preference on their nationality?

President Asad: We have no objection, as long as these are under the over-all umbrella of the United Nations. As for which countries, there might be some like South Africa or Rhodesia, or Israel, that would not be so good.

President: Israel is a member of the United Nations. I thought you might prefer them. (Laughter.)

Secretary Vance: Would it be useful to have a Security Council guarantee of the peace agreement?

President Asad: This would be good and useful. But I do not see it as a necessity, but only as a useful luxury.

President: Do you have any objection to American or Soviet forces?

President Asad: Where?

President: In the demilitarized zones.

President Asad: When the time comes, we'll see.

President: OK. Let's talk about the Palestinians.

Secretary Vance: All of these issues are interlinked.

President Asad: On the Palestinians, there is no way to solve the problem except to go back to the UN Resolutions and to restore Palestinian rights. There are two facets of the problem: First, the question of Palestinian territory occupied in 1967; second, the question of Palestinian refugees. Some have perhaps not made this distinction. Everyone is talking about a Palestinian state which would be on the West Bank and in Gaza. (President leaves briefly, and discussion begins on question of Syrian Jews.)

The condition of Jews in Syria has improved, and we have been able to sort out some problems. We have approached this from a humanitarian point of view. When Congressman Solarz visited, we had a good talk with him,⁷ but we told him that the basis for our discussion was a humanitarian concern and that we could not consider him a representative of Syrian Jews. It is our attitude that those Syrian Jews who have relatives in the United States can leave Syria to visit them. Their situation has improved. But because of the current situation where Syria and Israel are enemies, we cannot allow them to go to Israel. It is all right for them to emigrate to the United States and if you can assure us that they will not go to Israel, we would have no problem. As I say, we view this from a humanitarian standpoint. (The President returns during the latter part of this discussion.)

President: If we were to provide information on a couple that wanted to get married, would it be all right for the woman to come to the United States?

President Asad: Yes. We would deal with each of these cases on its own merits, since it is of interest to President Carter.

On the Palestinians, as I said, many people have talked of a West Bank and Gaza state, but I cannot see how it would accommodate all of

⁷ No record of this conversation has been found.

the Palestinians, even assuming that the Palestinians would agree to it. As part of the solution of the problem of Palestinian rights, I see that there are two issues—the Palestinian state and the problem of the refugees. If there is no solution to the refugee problem, it would remain complicated. A hostile attitude would still exist among the refugees, so these are the two elements of the question. The Resolutions of the United Nations are very clear on this subject. These are the same resolutions that I mentioned previously: the right of return or of compensation. As to the Palestinian territories occupied in 1967, that would be dealt with as part of the withdrawal question. The Palestinians are flexible and they are seeking a solution in earnest. They want a solution, corresponding with their aspirations. They emphasize the matter of refugees. Only the day before yesterday, I saw Arafat at his request and we had a discussion along these lines. So the problem of the refugees for the PLO is still a big problem. This is the essence of how I see the Palestinian problem. The territories occupied in 1967 and the refugee issue both have to be resolved and Israel opposes the solution of both of them. A suitable solution must be found.

President: Do you see the West Bank and Gaza as adequate for the refugees?

President Asad: No, this is what I said before. There are only 6,000 square kilometers, 5000 on the West Bank, and 1000 in Gaza. This is not enough. In spite of the fact that all Palestinians underscore the point of a Palestinian state and that they are clamoring for it, I am trying to see the whole picture. Any solution of the Palestinian problem, without settling the refugee part, would be incomplete.

President: To see the Palestinian question in specific terms, concerning the refugees, and recognizing the need for Israeli agreement, how do you see a practical solution? I don't believe that Israel can agree to take all of the Palestinians into their territory. What does Arafat have in mind that is practical?

President Asad: Of course, what would be practical and idealistic would be to go back to the UN Resolutions. But to say that the refugees would go back to a Palestinian state of only 6,000 square kilometers, I wonder if that is enough to absorb all of them. That is the question. But for the refugees to stay in other states, this is also an illogical solution. In Lebanon, for example, they would find it hard to keep the Palestinians there and it would be hard for Palestinians themselves to remain. So the problem is evidently not a simple one. Why would Israel not accept the return of the refugees?

President: How many?

President Asad: I am sure that not all would want to go back.

President: I don't have any idea of this.

President Asad: It is very difficult to give a figure, or to even know who is a refugee, since they are so dispersed. (President Asad and Foreign Minister Khaddam discuss among themselves how many Palestinians there are in various countries.) We have not discussed this in any detail before.

President: I am trying to seek a solution to this. This is the first time it's been raised.

President Asad: I know.

President: I don't think it is likely that Israel will let in hundreds of thousands of Palestinians into their small country. I hate to leave this unanswered. You are the one who can help me with it.

President Asad: I am anxious to provide you with a reply, but I don't want to mislead you. We estimate that there are about 2,000,000 Palestinians outside of Palestine now.

President: It will not be possible for anyone to get all that they want.

President Asad: I agree. But this is the first time we have gotten into this kind of detail.

President: Only Syria is likely to get all that it wants! (Laughter.)

President Asad: Concerning the principles of a settlement, we have to adhere to UN Resolutions on return or compensation. But when something is put on the table, then we will be better equipped to deal with it. We could discuss this in more detail and with more persuasion.

President: Can Arafat speak for the Palestinians?

President Asad: He needs some help from all of us. We all must help him.

President: I understand.

President Asad: There exists disagreement among the Palestinians, but we might help, and the Egyptians. But there will still be some problems. But in a case like this, they are not unsurmountable.

President: With peace and prosperity for everyone in the region, and with some compensation for the refugees, we and Saudi Arabia could help on economic problems, if those are a factor. I think we could be very forthcoming.

President Asad: This would be very important for the cause of peace.

President: How do you define the Palestinian homeland? Is it your preference that it be an independent entity?

President Asad: Of course, we have to be very careful of the interests of our other brethren, both the Jordanians and the Palestinians. Our relations with King Hussein are very good, yet we have not discussed this in enough depth. They themselves want an independent state. In truth, I don't know what the King's enthusiasm is toward these various

arrangements. His situation is complicated because there are a great number of Palestinians in Jordan. Is he enthusiastic about a union with the Palestinians? In some fashion, he did express this desire in the past, but is this a permanent position? I saw Abdul Hamid Sharaf yesterday, and he gave me some idea of the King's visit to Washington.⁸ They were very pleased with it and they are very optimistic now. He said some very fine things about you, but I won't embarrass you by repeating them.

President: Is it your inclination to go along with King Hussein's desires on this, since I know that he will be consulting with you on it?

President Asad: Of course, we would exchange views. Jordan and Egypt must also discuss the same subject. President Sadat told the Palestinians of the need for some relationship to Jordan. But the Palestinians did not agree. They say that they would envisage a relationship after their own state is set up, but actually this is not in their mind to have a federal relationship. They envisage only an open relationship between the two states with visits, exchanges, etc. I don't know the latest stand of President Sadat on this, or whether he has a final view of the question. There is also a question of whether King Hussein fully appreciates the situation that would develop if the two were to merge. I have never discussed this with him.

President: It's getting late in the year and I was hoping that the Arab leaders would work this out. Although they can speak for themselves, and they may change their views, it is my impression that they do not favor a fully independent Palestinian nation. It could become radicalized with a Qadhafi-like leader. The Soviets might gain influence there. This has been my impression. King Hussein believes that if there were a vote, the Palestinians would want to affiliate themselves with Jordan. There are large numbers of Palestinians already in Jordan, and in the Government. But, of course, this cannot be predicted now. This is one question on which we had hoped that Israel and the Arab leaders would all agree, even though Arafat might not agree.

President Asad: The actual substance of a solution as envisaged would have a great bearing on whether they would accept. What is in it for them? This is what they will ask. There is one school of thought that if Jordan has hegemony over the West Bank and Gaza, then it will not be Palestinian state in its entirety. As I said to Secretary Vance, there was a time when such a solution was suggested by Henry Kissinger to King Hussein. He would have gotten a little bit of territory back and this was officially presented to him. The other thing that has been discussed is that if King Hussein has hegemony in the area, the West Bank

⁸ See Documents 30 and 31.

could be demilitarized because it would be part of a Jordanian state. But, as a consequence, these propositions would divest the Palestinians of anything allowing themselves to demonstrate their own personality. So I go back to the question—what is in it for the Palestinians? At the Rabat Summit,⁹ there was talk about King Hussein taking part in the disengagement talks. The PLO had no role then. But King Hussein said that he had not received any serious disengagement proposals. He had only been asked to look at a final settlement on the basis of ten kilometers of withdrawal.

President: Is there some possibility of a larger confederation of Jordan and Syria, and could the West Bank be part of such a confederation?

President Asad: Jordan and Syria are moving in that direction.

President: Is this in the distant future?

President Asad: No, we are setting things up very quickly. This was our assessment some months back, but there has been some slowdown since. We have been progressing at the speed desired by our Jordanian friends. The King has showed some enthusiasm. There was a time when the King was more persistent in wanting to announce something. But what use is this if there is nothing tangible? In January 1977, we planned to announce the federation.

President: Have you ever considered that Lebanon might join?

President Asad: Some Lebanese have discussed this idea, but we have not reacted much to their advances, lest there be some connection made between our presence in Lebanon now¹⁰ and their approaches. We do not want this kind of link. Lebanon will be a burden on us in the future because of its built-in contradictions, its lack of authority, and its confusion. Even at the moment, if we withdraw, they will go back at each other's throats. We have not encouraged such a link now, although King Hussein has been careful to want some kind of a link which would include the Lebanese. Some Lebanese have visited him on this subject. This goes on all the time. Of course, in terms of historical origins, these peoples are all one, but there are other elements now, such as security and prosperity. There are those who cannot look at the future because of present circumstances.

President: As a contribution to peace, would the PLO recognize UN Resolution 242 except for the part on the Palestinians being dealt with only as refugees?

⁹ See footnote 8, Document 6.

¹⁰ Syrian troops remained in Lebanon to keep the peace after the cease-fire in 1976. See footnote 14, Document 7.

President Asad: Even in this case, it would all depend on what we tell them they can get. There has to be a give and take. In my opinion, it would be acceptable to remove that phrase, but it would settle only the form of the problem, and we would still have to go back to a give and take. The basic objection to 242 is the reference to the Palestinians only as refugees.

President: I am not asking this now as a first step. All of the other Arabs have accepted Resolution 242. It would be very helpful at this point if the PLO also accepted it, with this one reservation. This is a reason, or an excuse, for Israel not to move for a settlement. It would help to remove an obstacle and it would not hurt the PLO to say this. It would make it easier to get Israel to move.

President Asad: In my opinion, if we manage to solve the problem of the Palestinians, we could ask them to accept what the other Arab governments have accepted, the same as the Syrians and the Egyptians and Jordan.

President: Is it your view that they would not do this before Geneva?

President Asad: (After a discussion with Foreign Minister Khaddam) What is the importance of the Palestinians accepting Resolution 242 before Geneva?

President: The Israeli position, and that of many influential American Jews, is that the PLO is still committed to the destruction of Israel. If the PLO accepts Resolution 242, that would remove this argument. I need to have American Jewish leaders to trust me before we can make progress.

President Asad: I feel at ease about my belief that if you give the Palestinians their rights, their behavior will have to be similar to that of the Arab Governments. For them to accept in advance would be harmful to them while they are still only refugees. But having said this, I don't mean that they would not accept what the President is suggesting. This has not been discussed with the Palestinians.

President: It is my understanding that Henry Kissinger promised Israel that we would not recognize the PLO until it recognizes Israel's right to exist,¹¹ and we have to honor this promise.

¹¹ See, for example, the report of Kissinger's discussions with Israeli leaders in February 1975 in *Foreign Relations, 1969–1976*, vol. XXVI, Arab-Israeli Dispute, 1974–1976, Document 131. Kissinger reiterated in his memoirs that the United States would not negotiate with the PLO "so long as the PLO engaged in terrorism and maintained its charter calling for the destruction of Israel." (*Years of Renewal*, p. 356)

President Asad: I understand. My response is not opposed to your suggestion. May we set this aside for further discussion?

President: We consider it important, but it is all right to set it aside now.

President Asad: Frankly, I could feel out the Palestinians on this.

President: Please do.

President Asad: Irrespective of what Israel wishes, I would base my approach to them on what we have discussed. But it would have to be tied to the totality of the presentation on Palestinian rights, to the whole picture.

President: Let's leave this open. There is no commitment on our part, but it may be important to talk to Arafat directly, and this is an obstacle because of our promise to Israel.

President Asad: I understand. This is what we would say to the Palestinians—we have discussed this with you. But if we say it, they will ask what else we discussed on Palestinian rights. I have understood President Carter's suggestion on Resolution 242, but I do not understand your view on Palestinian rights.

President: I am not in a position to put forward solutions, but the Palestinians must have the right to a homeland, and my own preference would be that it be tied to Jordan or to a larger confederation. I don't yet know how to talk about the refugee problem, since I have not yet studied it, but I will learn more. Before we go on to the definition of peace, I have one more question. We are committed to the security of Israel, to its right to exist in peace, and we are obviously interested in the security and peace of others too. This is a question that should be addressed—how to guarantee this security. We have no desire to station troops around Israel, even as a part of a UN force. But we may make some contribution if we need to. Once an agreement is reached, we will perhaps have a strong public commitment to the preservation of the arrangement.

We would like to lower the level of armaments for the whole area for all of those who are there, so that our aid could go toward economic progress and not to war. I assume you have the same desire to lower the level of military commitments. This would have to be done very carefully and on a mutual basis, but I would like your comment.

President Asad: The area has quite a few states. This is not a question of Syria alone, but there is also Iraq, Jordan, Libya, Egypt, etc. How could Egypt reduce its military forces with Libya next door?

President: You can control Libya.

President Asad: It is too far away.

President: I am mentioning this only as a distant hope.

President Asad: There are many other factors that would enter the picture. For example, President Sadat is sending forces to Zaire.¹² If he had less equipment, he could not do this.

President: To what degree would you want the Soviets involved at Geneva, if we get there?

President Asad: During my last visit to Moscow, I discussed this. It is known that we have gone through a stage of difficulty with the Soviets. Therefore, we had to discuss these subjects again. When I spoke, I indicated participation of both the Soviet Union and the United States at Geneva. This was not the result of my talks with them, but merely a repetition of my previous position, which I underscored.

President: We have promised to keep the Soviets informed and we have.

President Asad: I did add in Moscow that Secretary Vance had mentioned Soviet participation in Geneva and I said that he had taken the initiative to raise this.

President: We have a desire to restore friendly relations with Iraq, so as not to let them disrupt the peace effort in the Middle East.

President Asad: That's a good idea.

President: This is my last question. The most important issue to Israel is the nature of peace. They see leaders come and go. They want to build the basis for a lasting agreement. How do you visualize an agreement with Israel, including issues like trade, open borders, and diplomatic relations? I will meet with Crown Prince Fahd later this month and I will want to talk to him about the economic development of the region. It would be helpful if we had some feel for ideas about the possibilities of freedom of movement and of mutual economic benefits. I am sure that other nations like Japan and Germany and France would participate in the economic development of the region as well. Mr. Khaddam has pointed out the difficulties among Arab citizens in facing the question of trade and so forth, but if things go well, what can be hoped for?

President Asad: Of course, the most important thing is to prevent a new round of war. At this juncture, I will not go into the legalistic side, or discuss whether these are prerequisites for peace or not, or whether these demands by Israel are legitimate. I will not go into this. I will talk about how things could go in the future. If we can end the state of belligerency, then this would lead automatically into a state of peace. There is no intermediate stage between war and peace. When we end the state of belligerency, we will begin the state of peace. This will solve a great part of the psychological problem. An agreement could be sup-

¹² See footnote 10, Document 27.

ported by security-linked measures such as demilitarized zones. Such measures would help buy us time. These measures should be accompanied by economic development and reconstruction because this would give people confidence that the new situation is good. These measures would create psychological composure. They would be a barrier to our thinking again about war. When non-belligerency is obtained, and if the agreement goes on and lasts and is accompanied by a program of economic development, all of these measures would help to create a new era in the area.

But to say in advance that these steps must be taken, the steps that Israel insists on, would be to talk a language outside the realm of possibility. Commerce needs two partners. I cannot see anyone in Syria doing this now. Therefore, if I went on talking about trade, it would not go anywhere. It is not an integral part of peace. There are nations at peace which have no trade. But I do not want to talk in legalistic terms, but rather of how things could shape up. We could go into a condition of peace (*salaam*) and we support this, with many faceted measures. And this cannot help but be good.

Before Israel was created, the Jews in Arab countries had influence. They were merchants and were in our parliaments. There were more Jews in other Arab countries than in Syria, and with peace they will come back to our countries.

President: If a development fund could be created by us and the Saudis and the Iranians and the Emirates and the French and others, and if it required the cooperation of Egypt, Israel, and the Arabs to decide on expenditures for dams, etc., do you see any obstacles to that kind of cooperation?

President Asad: What would the Israeli say be in such programs? Would Israel be able to say what projects should be undertaken in Syria?

President: We are talking about projects for the region and joint projects.

President Asad: At this stage, it is hard to see the smoothness of such an idea.

President: I want to pursue this with Saudi Arabia later this month.

President Asad: Even Saudi Arabia cannot appear to agree if Israeli agreement is required. Maybe there is no objection in theory. But it will be difficult for them to participate in something like this with Israel from the outset. It could hurt Saudi Arabia to appear to agree.

President: We haven't discussed Jerusalem. Maybe you have no interest in this.

President Asad: We are all the time talking about religion. If Jerusalem is taken from us, we would be soulless.

President: I would like to hear your thoughts on Jerusalem as our last question.

President Asad: In my opinion, the pre-1967 situation should obtain in terms of sovereignty. But there could be measures taken to guarantee access to the holy places, and other issues like this can be discussed. But that part of Jerusalem which was occupied in 1967 must go back to its owners. We could discuss the status of the religions and the movement of people. Perhaps Arab Jerusalem could be the capital of Palestine, and the other part could be the capital of Israel, but it is inconceivable that we should be clamoring for a return to the 1967 borders and exclude only Jerusalem from that.

President: Would it make it any easier if we made other exclusions as well? (Laughter.)

President Asad: If the Israelis insist on keeping Jerusalem, this shows that they do not want peace, because we are as attached to it as they are.

President: I understand and I am attached to Jerusalem also.

President Asad: This is a very sensitive issue.

33. Presidential Directive/NSC-13¹

Washington, May 13, 1977

TO

The Vice President
The Secretary of State
The Secretary of Defense

ALSO

The Secretary of the Treasury
The Director, Office of Management and Budget
The Chairman, Council of Economic Advisers
The Director, Arms Control and Disarmament Agency
The Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff
The Director of Central Intelligence

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Subject File, Box 3, Arms Transfers: 4-10/77. Secret; Sensitive. Carter signed at the top of the first page and initialed the second and third pages with "JC" in the bottom right corner.

SUBJECT

Conventional Arms Transfer Policy

After reviewing results of the Policy Review Committee meeting held on April 12, 1977,² to discuss US conventional arms transfer policy, I have concluded that we must restrain the transfer of conventional arms by recognizing that arms transfers are an exceptional foreign policy implement, to be used only in instances where it can be clearly demonstrated that the transfers contribute to our national security interests.

In establishing this policy of restraint, the United States will continue to utilize arms transfers to promote our security and the security of our allies and close friends. Recognizing that unilateral restraint can have only limited effectiveness without multilateral cooperation, the United States will continue its efforts to urge other suppliers to join us in pursuing policies of restraint. In addition, we believe that regional agreements among purchasers of arms can contribute significantly to curbing the proliferation of conventional weaponry, and we will assist in whatever way possible in the conclusion of such agreements.

The United States will give continued emphasis to formulating and conducting our security assistance programs in a manner which will promote and advance respect for human rights in recipient countries.

Further, an assessment will henceforth be made of the economic impact of proposed transfers of major defense equipment to those less developed countries which receive US economic assistance.

In recognition of our special treaty obligations with NATO countries, Japan, Australia, and New Zealand, these countries will be exempted as appropriate from the dollar volume restraints and other controls established below. The United States will remain faithful to its treaty obligations, and will also honor its historic responsibilities regarding Israel's security.

In furtherance of this policy of restraint, and except in extraordinary circumstances personally approved by me or where I determine that countries friendly to the United States must depend on advanced weaponry to offset quantitative and other disadvantages in order to maintain a regional balance, I direct that:

1. The dollar volume (in constant 1976 dollars) of new commitments under the Foreign Military Sales and Military Assistance Programs for weapons and weapons-related items in FY 1978 will be re-

² The minutes of this meeting are scheduled for publication in *Foreign Relations*, 1977–1980, vol. XXVI, Arms Control.

duced from the FY 1977 total. It will be our goal to continue to reduce total dollar volume in each subsequent year.

2. With regard to newly-developed advanced weapons systems:

a. The United States will not be the first supplier to introduce into a region an advanced weapons system which creates a new or significantly higher combat capability.

b. Commitment for sale or coproduction of newly-developed advanced weapons systems is prohibited until the systems are operationally deployed with US forces.

c. The Secretary of State will establish more extensive guidelines for assessing requests for newly-developed advanced weapons systems, including requirements 1) that supplying the system would uniquely strengthen the requestor's ability to perform military functions which serve US security interests, 2) that less-advanced, existing systems with roughly comparable capabilities are unavailable from the United States, and 3) that providing these systems will not require the presence in country of large numbers of Americans for long periods of time.

3. Unique advanced weapons systems developed or significantly modified solely for export will be transferred only within the treaty relationships referred to above.

4. Agreements for coproduction of significant weapons, equipment, or major components, beyond assembly of subcomponents and the fabrication of high-turnover spare parts are prohibited. Requests for any other items (e.g., major overhaul facilities) will be subject to guidelines applied globally, analyzing closely whether the proposed coproduction project would over time provide equipment in excess of local needs. In each approved agreement, terms under which third-country exports will be permitted, if at all, will be stipulated, emphasizing that coproduction is intended for the coproducer's requirements and not for export.

5. In addition to the requirements of law and existing policies concerning re-transfer assurances, the US, as a condition of sale for certain weapons, equipment, or major components, may stipulate that the US will not entertain any requests for re-transfers.

6. Policy level approval by the Department of State will be required before authorizing 1) licensing for sales promotion or technical data transmission by private firms, and 2) US military or civilian briefings, site surveys, transmissions of technical information, or any similar activity which might promote the sale of items of major defense equipment. Further, US embassies and military elements will not promote or assist in the promotion of arms sales without specific authorization. Finally, the Secretary of Defense will continue the review of government procedures which may promote the sale of arms, reporting the results of this review within 60 days.

34. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, May 16, 1977, 3:15–4:15 p.m.

Memorandum of Conversation Between Dr. Brzezinski and
Leaders of the American Jewish Community

PARTICIPANTS

Alexander Schindler
Melvin Dubinsky
Israel Miller
Jacob Sheinkman
Arthur Hertzberg
Herman Rosenbaum
Max Fisher
Richard Maass
Jerold Hoffberger
Arthur Levine
Yehuda Hellman
Ed Sanders
Mrs. Bernice S. Tannenbaum
Joe Sternstein
Harry Smith

Zbigniew Brzezinski
Robert Lipshutz
Stuart Eizenstat
Joyce Starr
William B. Quandt

Rabbi Schindler opened the discussion by noting that the crisis over arms supply had now abated,² but that apprehension continued in the American Jewish community concerning a possible peace plan that the Administration would present at some point, combined with pressure to implement it. This plan, he believes, would consist of calling for peace in return for substantially complete Israeli withdrawal and the establishment of an independent Palestinian state on the West Bank,

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Subject File, Box 2, Arab-Israeli Peace Settlement 1977: Volume II [I]. Confidential. The meeting took place in the White House Situation Room. Carter initialed at the top of the page.

² In early May, Israel and its supporters in Congress had expressed concerns that the United States planned to leave Israel off the list of countries that received preferential treatment in the supply of modern weaponry. Those countries included NATO members, Australia, New Zealand, and Japan. ("Carter Pledges 'Special Treatment' for Israel on Advanced Weapons," *New York Times*, May 13, 1977, p. 3) On May 12, however, Carter announced in a press conference after his return from Geneva that Israel would be accorded "special treatment" and receive advanced armaments.

which would be headed by the PLO. He asked for reassurances that this was not American governmental thinking.

Dr. Brzezinski replied that it was natural that some apprehensions exist at a time when we stand on the threshold of possibly important historical developments. In his view, the question of Israel's ability to survive as a strong and independent country, and the issue of whether the United States would support Israel, have been settled. The question is now whether Israel's permanence can be translated into a lasting peace. The kind of peace, and how it might be implemented, and the consequences that would follow from peace, must now be considered carefully. Peace, as difficult as it may be to achieve, will be much better than the continuing stalemate without peace. Israel's role, he noted, would be absolutely essential. In a peaceful Middle East, Israel could become the Switzerland of the Middle East. One needs to consider the trade-off between peace and stalemate. Stalemate runs the risk of war, continuing high military expenditures, and dependency on the United States. Movement toward peace can help to allay some of the concerns that now exist. The President feels that our relationship with Israel is a unique one and that it has spiritual and organic qualities.

On the question of whether the United States has a plan, if by that one means a blueprint that we are preparing to impose on the parties, the answer, Dr. Brzezinski stated, is an unequivocal "No." If by plan one means some concept of a peace settlement, the answer is "Yes." Our concept is based on a historical vision of how the conflict can be resolved and the President has spoken openly of this, as did Prime Minister Rabin when he was here.³ We have been thinking in terms of a meaningful peace, of establishing a framework for negotiations, and we have identified and repeated that negotiations will have to deal with the nature of peace, territory and security, and the Palestinian question. We have talked to Israeli and Arab leaders on these issues, pressing the Arabs to be more explicit on peace and the Israelis to be more explicit on territory and the Palestinians. That is where we are today. We hope that we can find some areas of complementarity and that we will then be able to prepare for a Geneva Conference. We cannot be certain of success, but it is an act of historical obligation to try to think constructively about a settlement. The parties themselves, however, will have to negotiate the final settlement, but we are trying to get them to think about the issues clearly.

Mr. Hertzberg noted that the American-Jewish leadership does not favor immobilism. All agree on the need for peace, and the President's statements that peace must be real have been viewed in a very positive

³ See Document 20.

way. The concern in the American Jewish community stems from the statement that the United States is asking Israel to be more explicit on the Palestinians and on territory. There is concern about the idea of a Palestinian entity which might be led by the PLO. The United States should not be the party to decide on such a state, but rather should try to end the conflict in a way that will be stable.

Dr. Brzezinski noted that one should not conclude that our preference is for a PLO-dominated state. Since we have no plan, we cannot define precisely how the Palestinian issue might be resolved, but we have some preferences that the West Bank and Jordan be linked. The question is how to get there. Should the United States push for this outcome, or should Israel dictate it, or should the Arabs themselves reach this conclusion? Clearly, the last is the best outcome. Arab views seem to be more realistic and Arab leaders recognize that a volatile situation in the West Bank is not in their interests. The facts of the situation are forcing the Arabs to think realistically. Dr. Brzezinski stated that his personal view is that a situation should not be imposed on the Palestinians, which they would reject and then turn to the Soviet Union. It would be better to have an Arab consensus on an outcome that Palestinian moderates could accept. The present Arab leadership is the most moderate that has existed since 1947.

In response to a question, Dr. Brzezinski noted that the American objective now is to establish a framework within which the parties will be able to deal with the issues. The President's statements have not resolved issues yet, but they have begun a probing of the issues. His use of words has been cautious and he has not prejudged outcomes, but he has tried to clarify underlying issues. Once the parties get to the negotiating table, we hope that the negotiations will not break down. There has to be an understood basis for negotiation, and this is the reason for developing the conceptual framework. He noted that the United States will not try to develop a blueprint, nor will it threaten Israel with the question of its survival, but we will talk frankly and honestly with Israel, and we will say the same thing to both Israel and the Arabs.

Responding to a comment on defensible borders, Dr. Brzezinski noted that he did not personally use that term. Israel has good defense lines today, but they are not borders. The borders of the final peace settlement, if they are recognized, will not be defensible in the same sense that they are today, but if Israel retains the current lines that she now occupies, these will never become recognized borders. So defensible borders in any simple sense do not make much sense. Instead, one must try to think about what borders might be recognized and what recognition would be worth, combined with other arrangements for security that might be made. In the age of nationalism, he noted, territory is integrally tied to the sense of nationhood. Only Germany has ac-

cepted major territorial losses, and that was in context of total defeat and a recognition of guilt that went with the defeat. This is not the case with the Arabs, and we cannot expect them to abandon their claims to substantial amounts of their territory. Instead of referring to defensible borders, we should talk of mutually accepted borders, legitimacy, and should try to develop arrangements to support the agreements which will provide for fool-proof security. The President has been hinting at this. Security arrangements for Israel might include a binding US commitment. Israel is not totally independent and if Israel must be dependent, it might be best to make the US tie to Israel a binding one. One way would be through treaties.

A question was then raised concerning American arms supply, and Dr. Brzezinski said that it was difficult to be specific. He argued against the notion that the Defense Department was deliberately obstructive, citing the recent case of the Chariot tank where allegations of obstruction had not been well founded.⁴ On the question of the co-production of the F-16, he declined to answer, stating that this would have to be dealt with in the broad framework that the President has tried to set out whereby our policy aims at gaining the confidence of Israelis and Arabs, while, at the same time, trying on a global basis for arms reductions.

Mr. Fisher remarked that he hoped the United States would ask for more than moderation in words from the Arabs and that we would also look for moderation in terms of their action toward Israel. Dr. Brzezinski responded by acknowledging that Arab culture seems to favor some verbal exaggeration, and that on occasion Arab leaders seem to tell different things to different audiences. We are trying, however, to move the Arabs to take binding public positions from which they find it difficult to retreat. Concerning Arab intentions, Dr. Brzezinski noted that some Arabs may still hope that Israel can ultimately be destroyed in a second phase to follow a peace agreement. We will therefore insist on more than verbal assurances of their intentions, and will demand that objective barriers be created to make the second phase, if that is their intention, an impossibility. We want to make phase two an impossibility and phase one so attractive that they will commit themselves to it.

Dr. Brzezinski agreed to a statement that Rabbi Schindler could use with the press to describe the Administration's attitude. The agreed statement is as follows:

⁴ Not further identified. The *New York Times* reported that Carter had recently approved an Israeli request to import U.S.-made parts for its new Chariot tank. ("Carter Pledges 'Special Treatment' for Israel on Advanced Weapons," *New York Times*, May 13, 1977, p. 3)

“We had a comprehensive discussion of the Middle East situation, including US-Israel relations, in the course of which Dr. Brzezinski reaffirmed the Administration’s underlying commitment to the security of Israel, and particularly to the special and organic relationship that binds the United States to Israel. He further noted that the Administration’s statements on the questions of territory, the Palestinians, and peace do not represent a blueprint to be imposed, but rather are a conceptual framework within which the parties can negotiate a peaceful settlement to the Middle East conflict.”

35. Telegram From the Department of State to Secretary of State Vance in Geneva¹

Washington, May 18, 1977, 0531Z

113933/Tosec 40315. Subject: Israeli Elections.

1. Embassy Tel Aviv believes that, with one-third of the Israeli vote in, Labor has sustained a stunning defeat while Likud is likely to emerge as Israel’s strongest party in the Knesset with 41 seats. In a conversation with the Operations Center at 0615 Paris time, Embassy Tel Aviv reported that the projected Israeli electoral results were:

Likud 41 seats
Labor 33
DMC 15
NRP 12
Rakah 5

Embassy Tel Aviv stressed the unprecedented nature of the electoral results, stating that neither Labor nor Likud seemed prepared for the upset.

2. Embassy Tel Aviv believes it likely that Likud will attempt to form a coalition government with the Democratic Movement for Change (DMC)² and National Religious Party (NRP) but cautions that such a coalition, if formed, would be politically unstable because the

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D770176–0415. Limited Official Use; Immediate. Drafted by D.P. Fotenhauer (S/S–O) and approved by Robert M. Perito (S/S–O) and Keith McCormick (S/S–O). Vance was in Geneva May 18–20 meeting with Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko. Most of their discussions were on arms control, but they discussed the Middle East on May 19. A memorandum of conversation is in the Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Europe, USSR, and East/West, Box 17, 3/25/77–4/2/77 Vance Trip to Moscow: 5/10–31/77.

² Formed in 1976, the Democratic Movement for Change, known more popularly by the acronym DASH, represented centrist elements within the Israeli polity.

DMC's position on issue such as electoral reform differs markedly from that of Likud and the NRP. Embassy Tel Aviv does not exclude the possibility that a grand coalition may be formed.

3. Embassy Tel Aviv believes that two issues are significant factors in terms of explaining Labor's poor showing at the polls:

- the uncertainty of current US/Israeli relations; and
- the recent flap over the arms transfer priority issue in the US Congress.³

Apparently, the Israeli electorate foresees hard times ahead and has prepared to batten down the hatches by taking a strong swing to the right.

Christopher

³ See footnote 2, Document 34.

36. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, May 24, 1977, 10:55 a.m.–12:30 p.m.

PARTICIPANTS

His Royal Highness Prince Fahd
 His Royal Highness Prince Saud
 Shaykh Ahmad Zaki Yamani
 Shaykh Muhammad Aba al-Khayl
 Dr. Ghazi al-Qusaibi
 Ambassador Ali Abdallah Alireza
 Shaykh Nassir Al-Rajhi
 Mr. Nizar O. Madani

 The President
 The Vice President
 Secretary of State Cyrus Vance
 Zbigniew Brzezinski
 Assistant Secretary of State Alfred L. Atherton, Jr.
 William B. Quandt, NSC Staff
 Hamilton Jordan
 Robert Lipshutz
 Jody Powell
 Ambassador-designate John C. West
 Isa Sabbagh, Interpreter

Crown Prince Fahd: I would like to begin with a few remarks. First I would like to express my thanks for the warm reception you have given me.

President: It was a great honor to have you here. The American people have a great interest in Saudi Arabia, and it is a pleasure for me to meet you. We will have a chance to talk of the opportunities and of the achievements that bind our two nations together. There is no other country with whom we have closer or more friendly relations than Saudi Arabia. We have observed with appreciation the many instances in recent months when you have demonstrated that friendship. This morning we can talk of several issues, and again this evening, and tomorrow we can have a follow-up session. Our leaders will be available to discuss specific issues on the Middle East, defense, trade, and energy with you. They can all speak for me. Then we will have a follow-up meeting tomorrow. I would like to start with the question of peace in the Middle East.

Crown Prince Fahd: With pleasure.

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Subject File, Box 66, Peace Negotiations 1977 Vol. I [I]. Top Secret. The meeting took place in the White House Cabinet Room. All brackets are in the original. Prince Fahd visited Washington on May 24 and 25.

President: Our country is completely dedicated to the search for a permanent and just peace in the Middle East. I have been very pleased at the constructive attitude of all the Arab leaders I have met this year. This year is one which we believe might be the best time in many decades for major progress toward peace. The recent elections in Israel² have caused us some concern because of comments made by Mr. Begin after the elections. I spelled out our own position in a speech at Notre Dame University on Sunday.³ I understand that you have read it and that you felt it expressed a good position. We must retain positions on both sides which will be acceptable to the Arab nations and to the Israeli people. The United States has an unshakable commitment to be sure that Israeli security is maintained. During this time of formation of a new government, we have to be very careful not to say anything or to take any action that will disturb the chances for progress. It would be helpful to have your thoughts on the progress that you envisage and to have your report on your recent meeting in Riyadh. I would also like to understand what role you would like to play as we work toward peace in the Middle East.

Crown Prince Fahd: In view of what you have just said about Israel, I can say that we agree that one should not prejudge events. We should wait until they form a government and then see its direction. At the same time, we are hopeful that any Israeli government will have an incentive to see that it is in their interests and in the interests of the area not to follow a course contrary to that which President Carter is seeking. We hope that what the press reports as being attributed to Mr. Begin would not represent his attitude once he assumes the responsibility of office.⁴ We feel, as do you, that this is an especially auspicious year to find a comprehensive and just solution to the Arab-Israeli problem, and as far as I know, all of the Arab leaders who have met you have expressed their genuine desire for peace. This is also our attitude. We say this because of a deep conviction that if anything bad happens in the Middle East, the amount of damage will be very great. It will be a disaster, not only to the Middle East but to the world. The only benefi-

² See Document 35.

³ On Sunday, May 22, Carter spoke at Notre Dame University's graduation exercises in South Bend, Indiana. He addressed numerous foreign policy issues and specifically cited the need for Israel to adhere to U.N. Resolutions 242 and 338. He noted that this was "the most propitious time for a genuine settlement since the beginning of the Arab-Israeli conflict" and that letting "this opportunity pass could mean disaster not only for the Middle East but, perhaps, for the international political and economic order as well." (*Public Papers: Carter, 1977*, Book I, pp. 954–962; quotations are on pp. 959–960)

⁴ In an interview on NBC's "Today" show after Likud's election victory, Begin stated that the occupied territories were "our land" and in another speech given after the interview, described the territories as "the land of liberated Israel." (Don Oberdorfer, "A Strain in Mideast Relations," *Washington Post*, May 20, 1977, p. A19)

ciary would be another party which is lurking on the side lines waiting to reap the harvest. I do believe that there are many Jews in the United States and Israel who see clearly that peace is in their interest and of their people. Of course, the painful era that the Middle East has gone through has not been the result of recent events. The conflict is decades old. This fact by itself makes it important to follow a careful path, to control our emotions, and to do things in a studied way. Then hopefully we can succeed. I would like to say for the first time I have a feeling that on the Arab side there is a deep desire for peace. We realize the difficulties that President Carter will face in the process of bringing together the divergent views of the parties in a compatible way. One thing that I would like to emphasize is that when the Arabs say that peace is more beneficial to them than war, this is not out of fear or of capitulation, but out of a conviction that the other party, the Soviets, can exploit the situation if there is no peace. We are fortunate that reasonable Palestinian leaders also see it this way. They see it as do the Arab leaders. Of course, we exclude the Palestinian extremist leaders, whose views are injurious to the Palestinians themselves. We also know what the Soviet Union is really after, although it claims to champion the Arabs and the Palestinians.

During the recent visit by Palestinian leaders to the Soviet Union, the Soviet Union ostensibly urged the Palestinians to follow the path of moderation, but this was only for international opinion, to create a moderate image. We know what their designs are. Of course, we cannot ignore the Soviet Union or its power. For the past fifteen years, the Soviets have found entrees into the Arab world. This happened as a direct result of opportunities left open, if I may say so, by the United States. We fully realize that the Soviets attempt through propaganda, and so forth, to concentrate their efforts especially on Saudi Arabia. But unfortunately, the Saudi people are imbued with an unshakable religious fervor that shields them from Soviet and Communist intrigues. Having said this, as a pragmatist, I must recognize that there are some exceptions even in my own country to this rule. We are fully aware, and we hope that the Soviets are also, that the Soviets have lost footholds in our area—for example, in Egypt, Sudan, and in Lebanon. I don't want to appear to congratulate myself, but the results that I have mentioned, in Egypt, Sudan, and Lebanon, were influenced by our contribution to mutual goals of peace in the area. In spite of this, the Soviets are trying again in Africa and near us. Of course, I do not blame them for their persistence. I am aware of the advantages they will have if they succeed. It may be thinking too far ahead, but we are aware of the fact that the Soviets will need oil in the future. That is why they concentrate on getting a strong foothold in the Middle East.

I would like to give you a synopsis of the talks held in Riyadh recently. King Khalid met Presidents Sadat and Asad. They reviewed

their deliberations with you, Mr. President, and discussed other issues. They also thought that their talks were very constructive. King Hussein also sent an emissary who participated in the meetings at Riyadh. These deliberations took place at the time of the Likud victory. This was also discussed. It was agreed that in view of the new developments, it was essential to control our nerves. I am sure that you agree.

The problem of the Middle East is very complicated, and it evolves against a complex background. Now we must keep in mind that if the problem is to be solved, there will be beneficial results and if it is not solved, we need to think of the alternatives. The alternative could be another clash between the Arabs and Israel. What could then be expected? Only the Soviets could benefit.

In the event of Israel becoming victorious—and we should remember that there are now 21 Arab states and all of them with one or two exceptions have policies that are flexible and are favorable to the United States—but should anything drastic happen, some Arab leaders might be overturned and worse alternatives might replace them. This is because any alternative leaders would be committed to the Soviet Union. Then we would have a real problem. That is why I say that in order to realize peace this year—to show progress toward peace will help moderate Arabs and will increase their conviction that they are following the proper path with the United States.

What does Israel want? It wants a state for itself and assurances of its existence and independence. As far as I know, they have this. As far as the Arabs and Palestinian people are concerned, this is all right. What do the Palestinians want? They want their own home and they have even delineated the West Bank and Gaza as their home. What then is required? Israel must withdraw to the borders of 1967. These are the principles that have been laid down and the understandings that have been clarified. The Arab and Palestinian leaders understand this. We are agreed that this is the year for steady steps toward that goal. Maybe Israel will find that it is too much to start by the step of creating a Palestinian state. In our view, it is inevitable that we take that first necessary step, since that would bring the other steps quickly into existence. Because it is a fact that once Israel and the Palestinian state with recognized borders exist, this would lead to other elements of neighborliness which would easily fall into place. But, in our opinion, if Israel insists on having everything at once, then there would be obstacles. Thank you, Mr. President, for listening to my long speech.

President: It was very interesting and very constructive. The proposals that might be forthcoming this year must be acceptable to the people of the Arab countries and to the people of Israel. In our case, it is very important to have the support of Congress and of the American Jewish Community. There is, or has been until the Israeli elections, a

sense of hope and progress that we might move forward. I am determined to sustain that hope and confidence, in spite of the recent elections. Mr. Begin's statements since his election have been disturbing. I have not had a chance to meet him or to talk to him. My comments about Israel will encompass what I believe is the position of the Labor Party and hopefully of many people in Israel. They have espoused the provisions of UN Resolution 242 which encompasses substantial withdrawal from the post-1967 lines. My own public and private comments have included provisions for minor modifications in those boundaries to allow for some flexibility in a final settlement. The Israelis have never agreed to this, except as part of the UN Resolution. American public opinion and world opinion does agree to this position. I have also professed support for a Palestinian homeland. The basic question is the degree of independence of this homeland and its relationship with its neighbors, Jordan and Syria, for example. There is a great deal of concern that a completely independent state would be a focal point for a struggle for influence. This might come from Libya or the Soviet Union or others. We share this concern to some degree. There have been proposals that within the framework of relations with Jordan this concern might be alleviated. We have no firm proposal or opinion on this matter. We consider the first step to be a position that might be shared among the Arab leaders. So far we have not detected any such agreement. We realize that the Palestinian leaders cannot be controlled by Arab countries, but, of course, they have great influence. We have an agreement made by Dr. Kissinger that we would not recognize or communicate with the Palestinian leaders until they recognize Israel's right to exist. So we share with you a recognition of the complexities of the Palestinian question. An additional problem is the rehabilitation or compensation of the refugees themselves.

The most important question for the Israelis is the definition of peace. They feel that an agreement on paper, even among well-meaning leaders, is not adequate, unless there is a demonstrated relationship and a better relationship among the peoples involved. We understand that this is the most difficult problem for the Arabs. The kind of things involved are open borders, free trade, tourism and diplomatic recognition. Of course, the boycott against Israel is an impediment and is a difficult problem for them. It has also been a problem for us and we appreciate your help in this matter. We hope we have made progress in this.

To close my comments, we obviously need some flexibility on both sides. It has to do with borders and the Palestinian issue on the Israeli side, and assurances of peace and good intentions on the part of the Arabs toward Israel. I would like to have your comments on these

matters. [A dispatch is handed to the President.] You might be interested to know that Mr. Podgorny has been relieved of his duties.⁵

Prince Saud: Not as the result of the elections in Israel!

Crown Prince Fahd: Is this maybe a drastic change?

President: Possibly.

Secretary Vance: I think the process is just beginning there.

Crown Prince Fahd: I would like to take up the status of the Palestinian state, the question of whether it should be independent or connected. I will try to represent both the Saudi view and the views that I have heard from the Egyptians, Jordanians and Syrians. We in Saudi Arabia are convinced and we think that it would be most effective for an independent Palestinian state to be established. This is not an idle view, but rather one that is based on careful study and looking toward the future. Every Palestinian, whether he is living in Jordan, Syria, Egypt, or Saudi Arabia, or anywhere else, will tell you that Palestinians have been looking for fifty years for a place of their own to live. Of course, King Hussein has in the past declared officially that a Jordanian and Palestinian government should be linked together. There is no doubt that at the time this was a serious attempt by King Hussein to solve the problem. But when King Hussein sensed that the Palestinians themselves wanted their own independent entity, this happened at Rabat where this was discussed,⁶ he agreed and said that he was only trying to find a solution, but that he was prepared to go along with the Arab consensus. The preference of the Palestinians is to have their own entity and King Hussein has said that he would go along with this. But if we look to the future, it is inevitable that some form of eventual unity will occur. They are, after all, brothers.

Now, Mr. President, I have told you the Saudi Arabian attitude, but it is my understanding from the views of other Arab leaders in Jordan, Syria, and Egypt, that they all agree that the first step, and to go along with Palestinian preferences, should be an independent Palestinian entity. Then they say that they envision a strong link between such an entity and Jordan. Now, I want to touch on an important point. You have mentioned the fears and forebodings of a Palestinian entity which will be vulnerable to external influences contrary to the interests of the surrounding countries. There is a complete conviction and assurance that such a Palestinian state will never get outside the fold of the policies of Egypt, Syria, Jordan and Saudi Arabia. The basis of survival for such a state will depend on these countries.

⁵ After a power struggle with Soviet Premier Leonid Brezhnev failed, Nikolai Viktorovich Podgorny was removed from his position of 22 years as Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR and forced to leave the Politburo.

⁶ See footnote 8, Document 6.

Such a state would have common borders with Jordan, Syria and Egypt. But, of course, it is always possible, but very difficult when they are dependent on their neighbors, that such a country might get out of control. They might try, but this is unlikely. As a responsible person, I would like to be precise and to assure the President of the United States that there is not one Arab state among us—Egypt, Syria, Jordan, Saudi Arabia—that would agree to an immediate link between a Palestinian state and Jordan. The attempt would be doomed to failure and would make the problem more difficult. I would like to invite the President to imagine what would happen to the Palestinians if they are left homeless. If we review the facts about the Palestinian people, we know that for 25 years they have had more ambitious goals. Now they have accepted a minimum objective and if they cannot even get that, then they will be vulnerable to external influences. Having said that, let me turn to the other side of the coin and invite you to think about what can be achieved if the Palestinians have their own homeland. They will breathe more easily, they will gain their self respect, and, in the main, they will be satisfied. That in itself will help to remove the complexes they have acquired in the past. They will be less vulnerable to outside influences. They will regain their pride and they will be at peace and be able to look for some kind of relationship with Jordan.

If I may refer to what the President mentioned, Dr. Kissinger's promises, perhaps we can discover that those promises were made but that circumstances have now changed. Dr. Kissinger made a major effort, but perhaps I could give you my views on the present situation. The Palestinian leaders are looking forward to the moment when the United States will talk to them, whether that be official or completely secret, as they have told me. They now have a feeling of estrangement from the United States and they would like to talk to the most important country involved in the Middle East conflict, the United States.

If I may be permitted as a sincere friend to advise you, I believe that it would be very useful to the United States to get in touch with the Palestinians. Of course, this is your decision, but as a friend, I advise that you have contact with them here, or in Europe, or in an Arab country. There are many ways to do it. This is my belief.

President: Let me respond to that, and then I want your views on the definition of peace. We must have some common starting point for productive discussions. This is true for the PLO, for Begin, for the Arab countries, and for the United States. The only basis we see that is recognized by the world community is UN Resolution 242. We have been hoping that the PLO would publicly espouse its support for that resolution, except that the resolution only deals with the Palestinians as refugees, and they could exclude that part. Contrary to your own assessment, there is a feeling in the United States that the PLO is a radical

group dedicated to the destruction of Israel. This is an obstacle which exists and that only the Palestinians themselves can remove. Perhaps you can comment on this point.

Crown Prince Fahd: I appreciate that this is the case in the United States, because of successive events and the way they have been portrayed in the press. I can see that this impression might be formed, but what we sense from the PLO leaders is totally different. Because as we know from them directly, they are willing to have their own state next to Israel with recognized borders. They have acknowledged their willingness to live side by side with Israel.

The Palestinians themselves say that when they have a state next to Israel with recognized borders, this will automatically mean that they recognize Israel. This is the opinion, as I have understood it, of Palestinian leaders. They add that if more is asked of them, this would indicate that someone wants them to get into an internal struggle among themselves. The Palestinian leaders maintain that if they have a state of their own, they can look the Palestinian people in the eye and tell them to keep quiet. If the reverse occurs, and they are asked to recognize Israel and to sign an agreement before getting anything, what can they then say to their own people, especially when there are those with bad intentions and who are susceptible to outside influences. As the President knows, if a Palestinian state next to Israel is created and if all we mentioned has been achieved, can we be sure that will prevent war? Of course not. My meaning is that we should try for the possible in a way which will create neighborly relations between the two sides. It is a fact that between nations with written agreements, wars can occur. This is my view.

President: I don't disagree with His Royal Highness' opinion, but it is a serious obstacle for us and Israel. It may prevent any PLO involvement in the discussions and, therefore, may prevent the discussions from ever occurring. It is that serious.

Crown Prince Fahd: Your purpose, as I understand it, is that the PLO should recognize Israel before anything happens. I appreciate this is an obstacle, but it would be a big problem for the Palestinians.

President: I know, but all the others accept the premises in the UN Resolutions. If the PLO persists in denouncing those resolutions, this gives Israel, and especially Begin, an excuse for rejecting those provisions of the resolutions that call for withdrawal from occupied territories.

Crown Prince Fahd: I would like to pose a question. If the PLO were to accept Resolution 242, with the exception that you mentioned, would Israel then be willing to recognize a Palestinian state and to recognize the PLO and to withdraw and to take the other steps? What is your belief?

President: I can't answer that. I am not authorized to speak for Israel. I guess that the answer is "No." But it would open the opportunity for us to include the PLO in the discussions and to marshal world opinion behind the possibility of a successful negotiation. We have a difficult time trying to find common ground for progress, and, although we have influence with Israel, we do not have control. Our influence is based on world opinion, on the opinion of the American people, and especially on the American Jewish community and members of Congress. I cannot act alone. I need some basis from which to point . . .

Crown Prince Fahd: We appreciate this.

President: I have to be able to point to good intentions by the Arabs and the Palestinians on a permanent basis. In the few minutes that we have left, I wish you would respond to the question on the kind of peace that Israel wants. I understand the difficulties, but if some steps to reduce the severity of the boycott could be taken, and if there could be more trade, and diplomatic recognition, and tourism, and open borders, this would be important for us to understand. This is the greatest and most important point for the Israelis.

Crown Prince Fahd: I did touch on this briefly, but let me add a few remarks. As is well known, the problem did not come about over night and this problem has been lived with for generations by Arabs and Jews. Therefore, to achieve our ultimate purpose, we must go in measured steps. As for diplomatic exchanges, many countries do not have these. For example, Saudi Arabia and the Soviet Union do not. Or even, if I may mention it, the United States and China have no diplomatic exchanges. We know that the United States and China are moving toward that, and perhaps the United States and North Vietnam, even. I still believe that to reach the results projected by President Carter, we must go step by step. Because once the foundations have been laid, then neighbors will find the need for diplomatic relations, social and economic relations, and so forth.

President: Under what circumstances and when could the boycott be eased in its severity?

Crown Prince Fahd: In my opinion, if these efforts produce good will and benefits, this subject will be reduced, if not removed. Once the state of belligerency is over and the state of peace is established, this would take care of this obstacle. These are exactly the type of steps that need to come one by one to reach the goal we seek. The whole area is fed up with the current situation. In the nature of things, these elements would fall into their proper place once the state of belligerency is terminated, the Palestinian state is created alongside Israel, and this would produce the situation that we seek.

President: Do you see improvement of trade relations being phased in step-by-step along with Israeli withdrawal in a step-by-step fashion?

Crown Prince Fahd: The way I see it, this is one of the steps that should come later. Because first we have to have both sides develop good will and confidence, and then that will lead to commerce, and so forth. Everyone's nerves are very tense and there is a readiness for war. We cannot ignore these feelings on either side. That is why our attempt should be to get rid of the psychological barriers, to let each side relax, and the last steps to be taken, such as the termination of belligerency, the signing of agreements, and this would give us peace and let us live side by side. In our opinion, this is not only useful, but it is in the interests of Israel to encourage this to happen. It would help to build mutual confidence and both sides would stop threatening one another. They would turn inward and start the process of reconstruction. As one example, if we look at the educational program in Israel, we see that psychological indoctrination has been preparing the Israelis to hate Arabs. To improve this atmosphere, this should be changed on their side. One of the sociologists in Israel asked seven-and-eight-year-old children what they would do if they came to an Arab village. Their reply was that they would want to destroy it. The same feelings exist on our side.

President: I understand. This discussion has been very helpful for me in understanding some of the problems and some of the possible solutions. We have to recess now, but I will see you tonight⁷ and tomorrow. We still have things to discuss. I want your views on OPEC's plans, IMF participation, the Law of the Sea Conference, the Red Sea, and on how we can work together there. This has been very helpful. Thank you.

Crown Prince Fahd: Thank you, Mr. President, especially for your forbearance and patience. I have learned a great deal.

[Omitted here is material unrelated to the Middle East.]

⁷ President Carter and Prince Fahd met privately from 10:05 to 10:30 p.m. after the White House dinner that evening. (Carter Library, Presidential Materials, President's Daily Diary) No memorandum of conversation has been found.

37. Notes of a Meeting¹

Washington, May 25, 1977

PRIVATE CONVERSATION BETWEEN PRESIDENT CARTER
AND HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS
PRINCE FAHD BIN 'ABD AL-AZIZ AL-SAUD,
MAY 25, 1977

a) He enthusiastically said that he would try to induce the PLO to endorse United Nations Resolution 242, which would be a prerequisite for our opening discussions with the PLO. He will contact the other Arab leaders and the PLO in pursuit of this goal.

He stated that the Palestinians have no where to go if they lose their hope for progress this year.

b) We discussed the concept of a so-called Marshall Plan for the Middle East.² He quickly disavowed any interest in public association with it at this time because it would involve joint Arab-Israeli developments.

I told him that we would go ahead with a private analysis of the opportunities to explore the idea. He expressed a willingness to help us and other nations with the financing if peace could be achieved and he's interested in receiving a copy of the report.

c) Fahd asked that we let him or his representatives know how they might help us with our position on the Law of the Sea Conference and also the International Labor Organization Conference. I promised to have the Secretary of State inform his representatives at those meetings.

d) I asked him about getting oil supplying nations to help us with the Southern African questions, particularly Rhodesia and Namibia. He said he knew very little about that subject, but that he would like to be briefed on it and would be eager to prevent any war in the Southern part of Africa which might spread to other aspects and other parts of that continent.

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Subject File, Box 66, Peace Negotiations 1977 Vol. I [I]. Top Secret. At the top right corner of the page, Carter wrote, "one copy—To Zbig→Cy" and initialed "J.C." According to the President's Daily Diary, the meeting took place from 10:05 to 11:14 a.m. (Carter Library, Presidential Materials, President's Daily Diary)

² Apparently a reference to a development fund Carter had discussed with President Asad on May 9 whereby the United States, Saudi Arabia, Iran, the United Arab Emirates, and European countries would finance projects in the Middle East such as dams. See Document 32.

e) He particularly wanted to describe to me the oil price circumstance. He went into some detail about past differences between himself and the Shah of Iran. The vituperative attacks by Iran on Saudi Arabia, the refusal of the Saudis to respond in like fashion, and for 15 or 20 minutes he described the incident when the South Yemenese shot down an Iranian plane and the Saudis helped to retrieve the airplane and its crew.

Subsequent to that he sent Iran a message asking them their future intentions. They later began friendly discussions. Perez from Venezuela has been over. The Saudis are quite proud of the fact that they held the price of oil down. They have tentatively agreed to raise their price up to the present level established by the other OPEC nations, with the reciprocal understanding that no further increase in prices would be effected during 1977.

The Shah and Perez have been reluctant to go into 1978 and Fahd asked me to use our strongest influence on those nations and others in order to induce them to extend their price freeze through 1978. He thought he might have some luck with Qatar, Kuwait, and perhaps some other of the OPEC nations if we would help with the ones that I mentioned.

f) Concerning Communist countries, the Saudi government does not and will not have diplomatic or other relationships with Communist nations.

g) In the recent conference in Riyadh among the Saudis, Syrians, Egyptians and the Jordanians, there was an agreement that they would remain cool in the aftermath of the Likud victory in Israel and present a responsible Arab image to the world and not inflame the Israelis. They hope that our efforts for peace this year will continue.

h) The Crown Prince repeated his commitment to a step-by-step solution of the Mid East question, provided an agreement was made on the ultimate agreement. He recognizes the present distrust on both sides.

i) They want to retain constant communication with us on major issues. The Crown Prince stated that quite often they did not even know when an international meeting was going to be held and were most often ignorant about our own views and goals before a meeting convened. He requested that they be informed on a routine basis whenever it was important to us.

38. Memorandum From the President's Assistant (Jordan) to President Carter¹

Washington, June 1977

I have attempted in this memorandum to measure the domestic political implications of your foreign policy and outline a comprehensive approach for winning public and Congressional support for specific foreign policy initiatives.

As this is highly sensitive subject matter, I typed this memorandum myself and the one other copy is in my office safe.

POLITICS AND FOREIGN POLICY

Review of Foreign Policy Initiatives

The Need for a Political Plan

A. Consultation with Congress on Foreign Policy Initiatives

B. The Role of the American Jewish Community in the Middle East

—Introduction

—Voting History

—Political Contributions

—The Jewish Lobby

—The Present Situation with the Jewish Community

—Taking the Initiative with the American Jewish Community

—Appendix

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Review of Foreign Policy Initiatives

Because you have chosen to be active in many areas of foreign policy during your first year in office, there will evolve in the near future a number of critical decisions that will have to be made. And each of these decisions will be difficult politically and will have domestic implications that will require the support and understanding of the American people and the Congress.

The most significant of these decisions relate to specific countries and/or areas of the world. As best I can determine, those decisions which will require action on our part and/or the political support of the people and Congress are:

—The Middle East

—SALT II

¹ Source: Carter Library, Office of the Chief of Staff Files, Hamilton Jordan's Confidential Files, Box 34, a Foreign Policy/Domestic Politics Memo, HJ Memo, 6/77. Confidential; Eyes Only. The date is handwritten.

- AFRICA
- Normalization of relations with Cuba and Vietnam
- Treaty with Panama
- Withdrawal of troops from Korea

It is my own contention that this confluence of foreign policy initiatives and decisions will require a comprehensive and well coordinated domestic political strategy if our policies are to gain the understanding and support of the American people and the Congress.

It is important that we understand the political dimensions of the challenges we face on these specific issues:

1. *There is a limited public understanding of most foreign policy issues.* This is certainly the case with SALT II and the Middle East. This is not altogether bad as it provides us an opportunity to present these issues to the public in a politically advantageous way. At the same time, most of these issues assume a simplistic political coloration. If you favor normalization of relations with Cuba or Vietnam, you are a “liberal”; if you oppose normalization with these same countries, you are “conservative”.

2. *To the extent that the issues we are dealing with have a “liberal” or “conservative” connotation, our position on these particular issues is consistently “liberal”.* We must do what we can to present these issues to the public in a non-ideological way and not allow them to undermine your own image as a moderate-conservative.²

3. *Congressional support in some form is needed to accomplish most of your foreign policy objectives.* A modest amount of time invested in consultation with key members of Congress will go a long way toward winning the support of Congress on many issues. Whereas members of Congress do not mind—and sometimes relish—a confrontation with the President on some local project or matter of obvious direct benefit to their district or state, very few wish to differ publicly with the President on a foreign policy matter.

4. *We have very little control over the schedule and time-frame in which most of these foreign policy issues will be resolved.* Consequently, a continuing problem and challenge will be to attempt to separate out the key foreign policy issues from domestic programs so the two will not become politically entwined in the Congress. This dictates a continuing focus on the historical bipartisan nature of U.S. foreign policy so the Republican members of Congress will be less tempted to demagogue these issues during the 1978 elections.

5. *Conservatives are much better organized than liberals and will generally oppose our foreign policy initiatives.* To effectively counter conserva-

² Carter wrote underneath the paragraph, “To Challenge Soviets for influence is ‘conservative.’”

tive opposition, we will have to take the initiative in providing coordination of our resources and political leadership. Our resources at present are considerable, but they are scattered among a variety of groups and institutions. To the extent our policy goals are being pursued, they are being pursued unilaterally by groups and people and without coordination.

The Need for a Political Plan

The very fact that your administration is active simultaneously in many areas of foreign policy dictates a comprehensive, long-range political strategy for winning the support of the American people and the Congress. To accomplish this goal, I would recommend a three step process:

I. *CONSULTATION*. Early consultation with Congress and interested/affected constituent groups is critical to the political success of these policies. In almost every instance, Senate ratification of a treaty and/or military and economic support which requires the support of Congress will be required to accomplish these foreign policy objectives. Consequently, it is important that we invest a small amount of time on a continuing basis in consultation with members of Congress and groups/organizations.³

II. *PUBLIC EDUCATION*. Public understanding of most of these issues is very limited. To the extent these issues are understood and/or perceived by the general public, they are viewed in very simplistic terms. This is a mixed blessing. On one hand, it becomes necessary to explain complex issues to the American people. On the other hand, because these issues are not well understood, a tremendous opportunity exists to educate the public to a certain point of view. In the final analysis, I suspect that we could demonstrate a direct correlation between the trust the American people have for their President and the degree to which they are willing to trust that President's judgement on complex issues of foreign policy.

In terms of public education, we have a tremendous number of resources. They include:

- Fireside chats
- Town meetings
- Speaking opportunities for President, Vice-President, First Family, Cabinet, etc.
- Public service media opportunities
- Groups outside government who support particular policies
- Democratic National Committee

³ Carter wrote underneath the paragraph, "Meeting this week."

- Mailing lists
- Etc.

III. *POLITICAL PLANNING AND COORDINATION*. Once foreign policy goals are established, it is critical that political strategies in support of those goals be developed and implemented. And it is important that the resources available to the Administration—both inside and outside of government—be coordinated and used in a way that is supportive of these objectives.

I have attempted in this memorandum to outline the first step in this process—consultation—as relates to foreign policy generally and the Middle East specifically. Steps II and III—public education and political planning and coordination—are the subject of a separate memorandum.

Consultation With Congress on Foreign Policy Initiatives

With many complex foreign policy issues surfacing in the near future and the need for some form of Congressional support for these policies, I believe that it is important that we take the *initiative* in consulting with Congress.

The consultation that has taken place to date has been extremely beneficial, but one of the inherent problems is that the same people (bipartisan leadership, Foreign Relations Committee, etc.) are briefed time and again; and little is done to increase the general understanding of our policies among the general membership of the House and Senate.

I would recommend that we begin a comprehensive consultation program with members of the Senate which will allow you and several other key members of the Administration to meet with individual members of the Senate and review with them our progress and problems on each of the following subjects:

- Middle East
- Africa
- Panama
- Cuba
- SALT II
- Vietnam

This will not only result in an increased understanding of and support for our policies, but it will allow us to identify Congressional support and opposition. With a Panama Canal Treaty imminent, SALT II negotiations ongoing and the Mideast situation fluid as a result of the recent Israeli elections,⁴ I believe that it is important that we begin this process at the earliest possible date.

⁴ See Document 35.

I have attempted to outline in the following pages the manner in which this consultation could take place. There are five persons in the Administration who are well enough informed and sufficiently involved in these issues that they could contribute to this process. They are:

President
 Vice-President
 Secretary of State
 Secretary of Defense
 National Security Adviser

As demonstrated in the following chart, if each of these persons would contribute an hour each week to a luncheon meeting or briefing with two senators, we could complete the entire process in ten weeks.

	President	Vice President	Secretary of State	Secretary of Defense	NSC Adviser
Week 1	Nunn	Moynihan	Bentsen Ford	Glenn Chafee	Abourezk Bumpers
Week 2	Stennis Talmadge	Hart Culver	Church Kennedy	Inouye Hollings	Griffin Domenici
Week 3	Sparkman Eastland	Leahy Matsunaga	Muskie	Eagleton Clark	Durkin Danforth
Week 4	Ribicoff Long	Sarbanes Nelson	Case Bayh	Zorinsky Hathaway	Gravel Schweicker
Week 5	McClellan Cannon	Percy Heinz	Burdick Hatfield	Stafford Lugar	Roth Young
Week 6	Morgan Sasser	Anderson Brooke	Mathias Stevenson	Magnuson Randolph	Goldwater Curtis
Week 7	Johnston Stone	Williams DeConcini	Biden McGovern	Packwood Pearson	Hayakawa Wallop
Week 8	Chiles Huddleston	Melcher Metcalf		Allen Byrd, H.	Schmitt Hansen
Week 9	McIntyre Haskell	Proxmire Weicker		Stevens Laxalt	
Week 10	Javits Metzenbaum	Reagle Pell		Tower Thurmond	

Rationale for Assignments

The assignments made were arbitrary on my part, but basically reflected the following thinking:

President—Assigned key committee chairmen, Southern senators and senators who are up for re-election in 1978 and will be politically concerned and/or affected by foreign policy decisions made in the next eighteen months.

Vice-President—Assigned generally liberal Democrats and Republicans on the assumption that most of these people will support our policies but cannot be taken for granted.

Secretary of State—Assigned key Democrats and Republicans who would be flattered to have the Secretary of State take the initiative to consult with them.

Secretary of Defense—Assigned conservative Democrats and Republicans who are likely to be concerned with the military dimensions of the foreign policy decisions we will make in the next couple of years.

National Security Adviser—Assigned a mix of the above.

There is certainly nothing sacred in these assignments, and I would expect Frank Moore to have ultimate responsibility for matching senators with the appropriate briefers.

Introduction

As we go into the Summer with the prospect of a visit from the new Israeli head of state and the possibility of a new Vance mission to the Middle East, I think that it is important that we appreciate and understand the special and potentially constructive role that the American Jewish community can play in this process.

I would compare our present understanding of the American Jewish lobby (vis-a-vis Israel) to our understanding of the American labor movement four years ago. We are aware of its strength and influence, but don't understand the basis for that strength nor the way that it is used politically. It is something that was not a part of our Georgia and Southern political experience and consequently not well understood.

I have attempted in the following pages to do several things:

- 1) Outline the reasons and the basis for the influence of the American Jewish community in the political life of our country;
- 2) Define and describe the mechanism through which this influence is used;
- 3) Describe—as I understand it—the present mood and situation in the American Jewish community as relates to you and your policies; and
- 4) Define a comprehensive plan for consultation with the American Jewish community with the ultimate goal of gaining their understanding and/or support for our efforts to bring peace to the Middle East.

Voting History

To appreciate the direct influence of American Jews on the political processes of our country, it is useful and instructive to review their extraordinary voting habits.

1. *Of all measurable subgroups in the voting population, Jews vote in greater proportion to their actual numbers than any other group.* In the recent Presidential election,⁵ for example, American Jews—who comprise less than 3% of the population—cast almost 5% of the total vote.

2. *Of all subgroups in the voting population, Jews register and vote in larger numbers than any other group.* Voter turnout among Jewish voters measures close to 90% in most elections.

3. *Jewish voters are predominantly Democratic.* Heavy support for the Democratic Party and its candidates was founded in the immigrant tradition of the second and third generation of American Jews and reinforced by the policies and programs of Wilson and Roosevelt. Harry Truman's role in the establishment of Israel cemented this party identification. And despite an occasional deviation, Jewish identification with the Democratic Party has remained intact and generally stable despite economic and educational pressures which have traditionally undermined party identification.

In recent national elections, Jewish voters have given the Democratic candidates the bulk of their vote, ranging from the low received by McGovern (65%) to the high received by Humphrey (90%). You received approximately 75% of the Jewish vote nationwide.

4. *As Jewish voters are predominantly Democratic and turn out in large numbers, their influence in primaries is often decisive.* In New York State, Jews comprise 12% of the population but traditionally cast about 28% of the votes in Democratic statewide primaries. In New York City, the Jewish population is 20% but Jews cast about 55% of the votes in the citywide Democratic primaries.⁶

5. *The variance in turnout between Jewish voters and other important subgroups in the voting population is staggering and serves to inflate the importance of the Jewish voter.* Again, New York State is the best case in point. In New York, Jews and blacks comprise about the same percentage of the state's population. Whereas the turnout in the black community was 35% in the recent Presidential election, the turnout in the Jewish community was over 85%. This means that about 500,000 blacks voted in this election and about 1,200,000 Jews voted. You received 94% of the black vote and 75% of the Jewish vote. This means that for every black vote you received in the election, you received almost two Jewish votes.

Political Contributions

Nowhere in American politics is Jewish participation more obvious and disproportionate than in the area of financial support for po-

⁵ A reference to the November 2, 1976, Presidential election.

⁶ Carter wrote "?" next to the last line of the paragraph.

litical candidates and political parties. But it is a mistake to take note of Jewish contributions to political campaigns without seeing this in the larger context of the Jewish tradition of using one's material wealth for the benefit of others.

The amount of money the American Jewish community contributes to political campaigns is slight when compared to the monies contributed to favorite charities. In 1976, the American Red Cross raised approximately \$200 million. In that same year, Jewish charities raised \$3.6 billion. In the two week period following the Yom Kippur War in 1973, the American Jewish community raised over one billion dollars.

Whereas disproportionate Jewish voting is only politically significant in areas where Jewish voters are concentrated, Jewish contributions to political campaigns are disproportionate nationally and in almost every area of the country.

Some facts that confirm this premise:

—Out of 125 members of the Democratic National Finance Council, over 70 are Jewish;

—In 1976, over 60% of the large donors to the Democratic Party were Jewish;

—Over 60% of the monies raised by Nixon in 1972 was from Jewish contributors;

—Over 75% of the monies raised in Humphrey's 1968 campaign was from Jewish contributors;

—Over 90% of the monies raised by Scoop Jackson in the Democratic primaries was from Jewish contributors;

—In spite of the fact that you were a long shot and came from an area of the country where there is a smaller Jewish community, approximately 35% of our primary funds were from Jewish supporters.

Wherever there is major political fundraising in this country, you will find American Jews playing a significant role. As a result, Bob Dole is particularly sensitive to the tiny Jewish community in Kansas because it is not so small in terms of his campaign contributions.

The Jewish Lobby

Having previously discussed and established the great influence that American Jews have on the political processes of our country, it is equally important to understand the mechanism through which much of this influence is wielded.

When people talk about the "Jewish lobby" as relates to Israel, they are referring to American-Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC). AIPAC is an aggregate of leaders from 32 separate organizations which

was formed in 1956 in response to John Foster Dulles' complaint that he did not know which of the many Jewish groups to deal with.

The leaders from member organizations of AIPAC, although active on behalf of their own organizations on domestic issues, have ceded to AIPAC overall responsibility for representing their collective interests on foreign policy (Israel) to the Congress.

It is important to understand that AIPAC has one continuing priority—the welfare of the state of Israel as perceived by the American Jewish community. AIPAC has wisely resisted efforts to broaden their scope and has continually concentrated on the issues that relate to Israel.

Leadership/Organization

AIPAC is headed by Executive Director Morris Amitay and Legislative Director Ken Wollack. As an umbrella organization, AIPAC is composed of leaders from major Jewish groups in the United States, including:

- American Jewish Congress
- American Mizrahi Women
- American Zionist Federation
- Anti Defamation League
- B'nai B'rith
- B'nai B'rith Women
- B'nai Zion
- Central Conference of American Rabbis
- Hadassah
- Jewish Labor Committee
- Jewish Reconstructionist Foundation
- Jewish War Veterans
- Labor Zionist Alliance
- National Committee for Labor-Israel
- National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods
- National Jewish Community Relations Council
- National Jewish Welfare Board
- North American Jewish Youth Council
- Pioneer Women
- Rabbinical Council of America
- Rabbinical Assembly
- Union of American Hebrew Congregations
- Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations
- United Synagogue of America
- Womens' League for Conservative Judaism
- World Zionist Organization
- Zionist Organization of America
- Council of Jewish Federation and Welfare Funds

Although the combined membership of these organizations is only several million, *their collective mobilizing ability is unsurpassed in terms of the quality and quantity of political communications that can be triggered on*

specific issues perceived to be critical to Israel. When AIPAC feels that the interests of Israel might be affected by a legislative or executive action, their target lists are mailgrammed.

Several thousand mailgrams to the leadership of the member organizations can be counted on to generate thousands of telegrams, letters and telephone calls to pivotal Congressmen and/or Senators. As vote counts are developed, targeted efforts by AIPAC are accelerated. Key Jewish leaders and/or financial contributors are encouraged to visit personally the wavering legislator.

Qualitatively, the principal contacts are articulate, bright and well informed on issues related to Israel. They do not have to be briefed, and many have visited Israel and speak with first-hand knowledge of the issues they are lobbying on. The organizations and people represented by the AIPAC umbrella are the most motivated and skilled primary contact group in the country. They have good relations with other important political constituencies (labor groups, civil rights organizations, etc.) and will not hesitate to use the pulpit to generate support for those issues perceived as being critical to Israel.

The cumulative impact of the Jewish lobby is even greater when one considers the fact that their political objectives are pursued in a vacuum. There does not exist in this country a political counterforce that opposes the specific goals of the Jewish lobby. Some would argue that even the potential for such a counterforce does not exist. It is even questionable whether a major shift in American public opinion on the issue of Israel would be sufficient to effectively counter the political clout of AIPAC.

Support for Israel in the Senate

The following is a brief analysis of the support for Israel in the United States Senate. On a given issue where the interests of Israel are clear and directly involved, AIPAC can usually count on 65–75 votes. Their breakdown of support in the Senate follows:

Hard Support/Will Take Initiative

Anderson
Bayh
Brooke
Bentsen
Case*
Church*
Cranston
Danforth
DeConcini
Dole
Eagleton
Glenn*
Heinz
Humphrey*

Inouye
Jackson
Javits*
McIntyre
Matsunaga
Metzenbaum
Moynihan
Morgan
Packwood
Ribicoff
Riegle
Sarbanes*
Schweiker
Stone*
Zorinsky
Williams

*Member of Senate Foreign Relations Committee

Sympathetic/Can Be Counted On In Showdown

Allen
Baker
Bumpers
Byrd, H.
Byrd, R.
Cannon
Chiles
Curtis
Biden
Chafee
Clark
Culver
Domenici
Durkin
Ford
Gravel
Hart
Haskell
Hathaway
Hayakawa
Huddleston
Johnston
Kennedy
Laxalt
Leahy
Lugar
Magnuson
Mathias
Muskie
Nelson
Nunn
Pearson
Pell

Percy
Proxmire
Randolph
Roth
Sasser
Stafford
Stevens
Talmadge
Tower
Weicker

Questionable/Depends on Issue

Bartlett
Bellmon
Burdick
Eastland
Garn
Goldwater
Griffin
Hansen
Hatch
Helms
Hollings
Long
McClellan
McGovern
Melcher
Metcalf
Schmidt
Scott
Stennis
Sparkman
Thurmond
Wallop
Young

Generally Negative

Abourezk
McClure
Hatfield

Summary

31	Hard Votes
43	Sympathetic/Count On In Showdown
23	Depends on Issue
<u>3</u>	Generally Negative
100	

To gain a majority on any issue before the Senate, the Jewish lobby has only to get its “hard” votes and half of the votes of those that are “sympathetic”. This would concede all of the votes of those in third category.

The Present Situation With the American Jewish Community

For many years, the American Jewish community has basically reflected the attitudes and goals of the government of Israel. The American Jewish community has seldom questioned—or had reason to question—the wisdom of the policies advocated by the Israeli government. The tremendous financial and political support provided to Israel by the American Jewish community has been given with “no strings attached.”

One of the potential benefits of the recent Israeli elections is that it has caused many leaders in the American Jewish community to ponder the course the Israeli people have taken and question the wisdom of that policy. As a result, I think there is a good chance that the American Jewish community will be less passive and more inclined to provide the new government advice as well as support.

This new situation provides us with the potential for additional influence with the Israeli government through the American Jewish community, but at present we are in a poor position to take advantage of it.

The American Jewish community is very nervous now for a combination of internal and external reasons. It is important that we understand the reasons for their apprehension.

1. *The election of a new President whose policies have been developed and presented in a manner different from previous Administrations.* It is not so much what you have said as the fact that the things you have said (“defensible borders”, “homeland for the Palestinians”, etc.) have been publicly discussed. The leadership of the American Jewish community has heard these things before, but they were always said privately with ample reassurances provided.

2. *You are not known personally to most of the national Jewish leaders.* And even those that know you have not worked with you over a long period of time at the national level on matters of direct interest to Israel. Whereas they know and instinctively trust a Humphrey or a Jackson, you are less well known and more unpredictable.

3. *The cumulative effect of your statements on the Middle East and the various bilateral meetings with the heads of state has been generally pleasing to the Arabs and displeasing to the Israelis and the American Jewish community.* You have discussed publicly things that have only been said before privately to the Israelis with reassurances. Press reports of your meetings with the Arabs were always very positive while your meeting with Rabin was described as being “very cool”. The simple fact that there were four Arab heads of state to meet with—and each meeting was perceived accurately as being positive and constructive—and only one meeting with the Israeli head of state—which was widely reported as being unsuccessful—added to this perception problem.

4) *The election of Begin has resulted in widespread uncertainty among the Jewish community in this country.* The leadership of the American Jewish community has had close personal relationships with the leadership of the Labor Party since the creation of the state of Israel. They do not have the same close relationship with the leaders of the Likud Party and are suddenly dealing with new and unpredictable leadership in both countries.

5) *With the election of Begin, the American Jewish community sees for the first time the possibility of losing American public support for Israel if the new government and its leaders prove to be unreasonable in its positions and attitudes.* This would put the American Jewish community in the terrible position of seeing its emotional and political investment in Israel over the past 30 years rapidly eroded.

Taking the Initiative With the American Jewish Community

I think it is accurate to say that the American Jewish community is extremely nervous at present. And although their fears and concerns about you and your attitude toward Israel might be unjustified, they do exist. In the absence of immediate action on our part, I fear that these tentative feelings in the Jewish community about you (as relates to Israel) might solidify, leaving us in an adversary posture with the American Jewish community.

If the American Jewish community openly opposed your approach and policy toward a Middle East settlement, you would lack the flexibility and credibility you will need to play a constructive role in bringing the Israelis and the Arabs together. I am sure you are familiar with Kissinger's experience in the Spring of 1975, when the Jewish lobby circulated a letter which had the names of senators which reaffirmed U.S. support for Israel in a way that completely undermined the Ford-Kissinger hope for a new and comprehensive U.S. peace initiative.⁷

It would be a great mistake to spend most of our time and energies persuading the Israelis to accept a certain plan for peace and neglect a similar effort with the American Jewish community since lack of support for such a plan from the American Jewish community could

⁷ The *Washington Post* said, "The Senatorial Letter makes Kissinger nothing more than an errand boy and assures the Arab states that he is powerless to arrange a deal . . . Kissinger might as well stay home . . . Under the terms the Senate has laid down, it could send one of its pages to handle the negotiations." From Sheehan in *The Arabs, Israelis, and Kissinger*, "Obviously, the (Senate) letter was a stunning triumph for the (Jewish) lobby, a capital rebuke for Kissinger in Congress. Whatever resentment many congressmen may inwardly entertain about the unrelenting pressures of the lobby, the American system predestines them to yield. Israel possesses a powerful American constituency; the Arabs do not . . ." [Footnote in the original. See Document 175, *Foreign Relations*, 1969–1976, vol. XXVI, Arab-Israeli Dispute, 1974–1976.]

undermine our efforts with the Israelis. Our efforts to consult and communicate must be directed *in tandem* at the Israeli government and the American Jewish community.

I would advocate that we begin immediately with an extensive consultation program with the American Jewish community. This program would focus on:

The Process—Review of what has taken place to date (bilateral with heads of state) and what is planned for the future (probable Begin visit, possible Vance mission, etc.). Also, a definition of the U.S. role. We should stress that we are not trying to “impose a U.S. settlement” nor attempting any “quick fix solution”. We are being widely criticized in the Jewish press for these things.

The Principles—Review of the key items which are being discussed as the basis for a settlement: 1) the nature of peace; 2) the question of borders and security for Israel; and 3) the Palestinian question.

The Prospects—A vision of what Israel could be if peace were permanent and political stability came to the Middle East. Outline of the U.S. belief that Israel would serve as the model of democratic government in the Middle East and become the center of regional trade and finance.

In addition to reviewing these topics, I believe that the American Jewish community should be encouraged—for the first time—to take an active role in analyzing the obstacles to peace and advising the Israeli government on these matters. Any thoughtful analysis of the situation would lead to the conclusion that concessions *on both sides* are necessary for peace.

To develop a comprehensive plan for consultation with the American Jewish community, it is first necessary to develop a list of individuals, groups and institutions who should be reached.

They include:

Key members of the U.S. Senate—Senators like Humphrey, Jackson, Ribicoff and Church who have been close to Israel and supported it in the Congress.

Key members of the U.S. House—A comparable group in the House who have been close to Israel.

Jewish members of the House—There are 22 members of the House who are Jewish (See attached listing).⁸

Senate Foreign Relations Committee—It is important to keep them informed and involved.

⁸ The list is not attached.

House International Affairs Committee—It is important to keep them informed and involved.

The American Jewish Press—The American Jewish Press is a powerful instrument for pro-Israeli statements, news and solicitations. These papers—collectively—provide the main analysis of American policy vis-a-vis Israel to the American Jewish Community.

Leaders of National Jewish Organizations—The lay, political and religious leadership of the Jewish community.

Local Leaders from Key Communities—About 80% of the American Jews are situated in ten cities and/or areas (See attached listing).⁹

Persons with Close Relationships with Israeli Government Officials—There are a number of persons who have unofficially represented Israeli interests in our country and have close ties to the leadership of the Israeli government. With the Labor Party out of power, this will change; but it is inevitable that the new government will develop close ties with some of the leadership of the American Jewish community. We should develop relationships with these people.

In the following pages, I have outlined a program that will allow us to take the initiative in dealing with the American Jewish community in a positive manner. Using very little of any one person's time, we could begin and complete this consultation process in the next eight weeks. This plan is targeted at the groups and individuals previously mentioned.

At the end of the process, I believe that we would have the good faith and trust of the American Jewish community going into the next stage of talks. It is difficult for me to envision a meaningful peace settlement without the support of the American Jewish community.

Summary Recommendations

If you agree with the premises stated in this memorandum and the recommendations presented, I would recommend the following actions:

1. A meeting with you, the Vice-President, Zbig and Frank Moore to discuss the overall consultation process with the Congress.

I agree.¹⁰

Let's talk first.

⁹ The list is not attached.

¹⁰ Carter indicated that he agreed and wrote, "Include Cy."

2. A meeting with you, the Vice-President, Zbig, Frank Moore, Bob Lipshutz and Stu to discuss the overall consultation process with the American Jewish community.

I agree.¹¹

Let's talk first.

3. That I undertake a planning process that attempts to: 1) inventory our political resources; 2) develop a specific workplan for each foreign policy initiative that focuses on public education; and 3) develop an informal mechanism for the overall¹²

¹¹ Carter indicated that he agreed and drew an arrow from his previous note to include Vance.

¹² The original is incomplete. The remaining pages have not been found.

39. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) to President Carter¹

Washington, June 3, 1977

SUBJECT

UN Resolutions on the Middle East

In view of the controversy surrounding some of our recent statements on the Middle East, I thought it would be worth emphasizing the following two points:

—*UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 provide the only agreed upon framework for negotiations, but the resolutions were deliberately vague on the nature of peace, the extent of withdrawal, and the Palestinian question. As we have tried to urge the parties toward a settlement, our own statements have gone beyond the UN resolutions in their concreteness. We have no reason to back away from the positions we have taken, but we should be careful not to imply that the UN resolutions are identical to the views we have expressed.*

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Subject File, Box 2, Arab-Israeli Peace Settlement 1977: Volume II [I]. Secret. Sent for information. In the top right corner of the first page, Carter wrote, "Show to VP. C."

—*There is no UN Resolution that we have ever supported that specifically calls for a “Palestinian homeland.” If we try to anchor the concept in the November 1947 UN partition resolution, we will be opening up an entirely new set of issues with potentially serious consequences. By contrast, we are on perfectly sound footing in reaffirming the policy of every previous Administration in supporting the idea of compensation for refugees. The most recent official endorsement of UN General Assembly Resolution 194, which calls for repatriation or compensation for refugees, came in a resolution introduced by us in the General Assembly on November 23, 1976. The vote for the resolution was 115 in favor, none opposed, with Israel abstaining.² Thus, it is fair to say that we have consistently upheld the principle of compensation, but we cannot maintain that this is part of the agreed framework of negotiations, since Israel has reserved its position on this point.*

Over the next several weeks, I believe we should continue to emphasize that UN Resolutions 242 and 338 provide the general framework for a peace settlement. In addition, in an effort to move the parties toward greater concreteness, we should continue to stress that we favor a comprehensive approach to peace based on full normalization of relations, withdrawal and security arrangements, and a homeland for the Palestinians.

One possibly helpful consequence of the misunderstandings of the past week is that the Israelis are now embracing UN Resolutions 242 and 338 more ardently than ever. Our policy is consistent with the framework provided by those UN Resolutions, but where those resolutions are imprecise on peace, withdrawal and the Palestinians, we have tried to be more specific. Although the UN Resolutions say nothing about open borders, trade, and diplomatic recognition, I believe that we have added a useful dimension to the diplomatic process by identifying these as necessary elements of peace. In the same fashion, by referring to a Palestinian homeland and compensation, we have elaborated upon Resolution 242 which merely calls for a “just settlement of the refugee problem.” But we should be careful not to imply that those countries that have supported Resolutions 242 and 338 have also endorsed the more specific ideas that we have been exploring in the past several months.

² A reference to General Assembly Resolution 31/15A–D.

40. Minutes of a Policy Review Committee Meeting¹

Washington, June 10, 1977, 10–11:30 a.m.

SUBJECT

Middle East

PARTICIPANTS

The Vice President
A. Denis Clift

State
Secretary Cyrus Vance
Arthur Day

Defense
Secretary Harold Brown
David McGiffert
Leslie A. Janka

CIA
Admiral Stansfield Turner
Robert Bowie

JCS
Lt. Gen. William Smith

NSC
Dr. Zbigniew Brzezinski
David Aaron
William B. Quandt

Secretary Vance: Let's begin by discussing how we can make best use of the Begin visit. It seems to me that we have to make clear to him the importance of a conference and the achieving of a peace settlement. We should spell out our views on issues and sound him out on his flexibility.

Secretary Brown: We should also consider providing Israel with some of the non-controversial military equipment before Begin forms his government.

Secretary Vance: This is a subject that we will have to come to grips with.

Secretary Brown: This is a difficult point because we don't want to give off a false signal. If we announce agreements immediately after the government is formed, it could give the wrong impression.

Dr. Brzezinski: We will be leaning on him when he is here, and he will lean on us. We may want to be able to give him something then. Are there any other items that will still have to be decided?

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Brzezinski Office File, Country Chron File, Box 31, Middle East: 5–6/77. Top Secret; Sensitive. The meeting took place in the White House Situation Room. Attached but not printed is the Summary of Conclusions of the PRC meeting. Brzezinski sent the Summary of Conclusions to Carter under cover of a June 14 memorandum on which Carter approved distribution of the Summary to PRC principals. (Ibid.)

Secretary Vance: Yes, the most important ones.

Dr. Brzezinski: We should look at the total picture. There may be some good will items that we should do now and there may also be some things that we should hold back on, and others we might want to give to him in exchange for his commitment to Resolution 242 or something like that.

Secretary Vance: The big ticket items are co-production and F-16s.

Dr. Brzezinski: These big items are ones that should be associated with movement toward a settlement. My point is that we should distinguish between things to do now, things that we should hold off until later, and things that we should give him as part of the bargaining process.

Secretary Vance: What is now in the pipeline?

Dr. Brzezinski: We shouldn't exhaust everything now. We need to build up some goodwill in the American Jewish community.

Secretary Brown: There is no chance of exhausting everything now.

Vice President: Maybe I could mention agreement on some items in my speech.²

Secretary Vance: When is that?

Dr. Brzezinski: A week from today. A government could be formed by then.

Vice President: It would help me. But it should be before he forms a government.

Dr. Brzezinski: Why?

Secretary Brown: We don't want to show strong approval for him before he leaves for Washington. Someone will interpret this as our approval of his policies.

Dr. Brzezinski: I'm not so sure. It might be a good thing to put into the speech.

Secretary Vance: We could look at the items that might be mentioned in a speech.

Secretary Brown: Maybe we should try to tie this to some kind of public statement. We should urge him to recognize that genuine security will only come from a peace agreement.

Dr. Brzezinski: You might also want to mention in your speech that there is a danger of major provocations on both sides in the months ahead. Begin might see some advantage in driving the Arabs toward the Soviets, and there are dangers of provocation on the Arab side too.

² On June 17 in San Francisco, Mondale addressed the World Affairs Council of Northern California on the framework for a Middle East peace. For the text of his speech, see the Department of State *Bulletin*, July 11, 1977, pp. 41–46.

We need to warn the parties against this. Perhaps we could put it in the speech.

Admiral Turner: The Egyptians are fooling around with the Sinai agreement right now.³ They seem to be putting themselves into a no-lose situation. If they put forces over there, Israel might strike back and would take the onus for breaking the ceasefire, and if Israel doesn't react, Egypt will get away with it.

Vice President: It seems to be a clear violation of the agreement.

Secretary Vance: The SA-7s clearly are. We haven't seen the excess number of people yet. I had a DIA briefing on it. They aren't too worried, but the SA-7 is a clear violation. They also may have enough people over there for an extra battalion. They may be also pre-stocking some equipment.

Secretary Vance: Let's talk about what we want out of the Begin visit.

Secretary Brown: We need to try to get across to him that security cannot only be achieved through arms.

Secretary Vance: We also have to be very frank.

Dr. Brzezinski: It's necessary to isolate those issues which are of particular danger, such as settlements in the occupied areas, so this would force us to take stands against him.

Secretary Vance: Our position on that is very clear. We could repeat it.

Dr. Brzezinski: We need to go further.

Secretary Vance: This could be very bad if a settlements policy is coupled to intransigence on the West Bank.

Secretary Brown: Will Begin come here first, or might it be better for Dayan to come before him?

Secretary Vance: Begin ought to come first, so that we can talk at the top level.

Dr. Brzezinski: We should talk to the guy who is in charge, and we should do it soon.

Vice President: When will he be ready to come?

Secretary Vance: As soon as they form the government: by late June or early July.

Mr. Day: He seems to be moving faster than we thought in forming his coalition.

³ A reference to the second disengagement agreement between Egypt and Israel signed on September 1, 1975. On June 3, Israel accused Egypt of violating the agreement by deploying missiles near the Suez Canal. ("Egypt Accused by Israel of Violating Suez Accord," *New York Times*, June 4, 1977, p. 6)

Vice President: Is he anxious to have a meeting?

Secretary Vance: Yes, Ambassador Dinitz says he is. He seems to be concerned about the continuing doubts that are expressed here about his policies.

Secretary Vance: Let's talk about the question of arms and coproduction.

Secretary Brown: I want to make one point. It's not only a question of what we do with Israel, but we also have cases pending with all of the Arab countries as well, for example, the F-15s to Saudi Arabia.⁴ We can't act on these in a piecemeal way. It will be important how we treat all of them.

Secretary Vance: On the Saudi case, I talked to Senator Humphrey about two weeks ago,⁵ and he said that he is ready to support the F-15 or F-16 and will help us to get it through Congress. He asked that we wait until about now before we go back to him, and urged that I ought to talk to Javits. I am going to see Senator Humphrey again on Saturday or on Monday.⁶ I want to talk with him on how to proceed and how this issue will fit together with other items of concern. We apparently have to be sensitive to the reactions of the Jewish community in the United States. In addition to the Saudi case, we also have items for Egypt. We have to think of how to handle the whole package.

Vice President: I am not current on the feelings in Congress. The Jewish community is getting restive about our policies. We seem to be thinking about how to put the pieces together in the Middle East, but it may be more important what American Jewish leaders think than what Begin ultimately does. We should keep in mind the Jewish community here and the need to keep it with us. I don't know what it would take to set them off.

Secretary Vance: On the Egyptian question, what should we suggest to Senator Humphrey as a possibility? We have outstanding requests for TOWs, APCs, and up to the F-5s. If we start with the F-5s, and then add the F-15 for Saudi Arabia, this will be more than can be carried. The Egyptian case would even be more sensitive.

Dr. Brzezinski: Fahmi is meeting with Gromyko now.

Vice President: Didn't we have a hard case with the C-130s last time?

Dr. Brzezinski: Maybe Dave McGiffert, Bill Quandt, and Roy Atherton could do a paper on this.

⁴ In early 1977, Saudi Arabia requested F-15 fighter jets from the United States.

⁵ No memorandum of conversation has been found.

⁶ Saturday was June 11 and Monday was June 13.

Secretary Vance: We need to get political judgment on the sensitivity of the alternatives.

Mr. McGiffert: There is also the case of the Sudan.

Secretary Vance: That's different.

Secretary Brown: It could have an effect on Egypt, however, if we gave F-5s to Sudan and withheld them from Egypt.

Secretary Vance: They might understand. They have stressed the importance to us of the Sudan.

Secretary Brown: But it could have an effect on the Egyptian military.

Dr. Brzezinski: A lot will depend on whether we can maintain the momentum toward a political settlement.

Secretary Brown: That's just the point. Now we seem to be moving in the wrong direction.

Dr. Brzezinski: Much will depend on the Begin visit and Secretary Vance's trip.

Secretary Brown: Even if Sadat understands, he has political problems with his military.

Dr. Brzezinski: It will make a difference if we are moving with determination or whether there is a stalemate. If the latter, his situation could become desperate.

Secretary Brown: I am judging how far we will be able to push Begin this summer.

Secretary Vance: What is our position on the repair work?

Dr. Brzezinski: Dave McGiffert and Bill Quandt need to talk about this.

Secretary Brown: If it is feasible, it is less of a problem than F-5s, but it is risky. It can't be done covertly. It would be a significantly smaller problem than the F-5s.

Dr. Brzezinski: Bill Quandt and Roy Atherton should look at some of the alternatives.

Vice President: I suggest that we think about the best course to take on this and then talk to Senator Humphrey, because he is current on thinking in Congress.

Admiral Turner: I would like to raise a second-order issue. [8 lines not declassified] I'm a bit ahead of myself on this, but I wanted to bring it up.

Secretary Brown: It might help, but it would have to be kept secret, so politically, it would not help as much as other things, but it might be useful.

Secretary Vance: Let me suggest that Roy and Bill come up with a short memo which would look at our choices for Egypt in terms of the

political risks. We know what we need to say on Saudi Arabia, but Egypt is the tough case. When we have that, we can make our own conclusions, and then I will talk to Senator Humphrey.

Dr. Brzezinski: We also need a paper immediately on the items for Israel, both the short-run decisions and the longer-term.

Secretary Brown: We should include consideration of the C-130s for Egypt.

Dr. Brzezinski: We need to look at the large items in terms of which ones we want to hold out on, which ones we want to offer, and which ones we can act on now. Maybe the Vice President can mention some of the decisions.

Secretary Brown: After we look at all of these, the Israeli and Egyptian cases will be the key. We can get the papers to you quickly on the Egyptian and Israeli cases.

Secretary Vance: Let's get these by the middle of next week. Let's talk about the post-Begin visit. I assume that I will go to the Middle East. What will the strategy be for that trip?

Dr. Brzezinski: The central objective should be to set up a process for indirect talks between the Arabs and the Israelis. The Begin visit will be the last of those on which we just sound out the parties. Now we should think of how to set in motion pre-Geneva informal consultations.

Secretary Brown: With the United States as intermediary?

Dr. Brzezinski: At first, but then maybe we would meet with the Egyptians, Jordanians, Syrians, and Israelis in Washington, perhaps in their embassies, with someone going back and forth. Later they might meet directly.

Secretary Vance: This is well worth considering.

Dr. Brzezinski: Israel wants face-to-face negotiations. The Arabs need progress toward Geneva. Maybe this is something that each side could do, and we wouldn't yet have to touch the PLO issue.

Secretary Vance: Should we on this trip make suggestions of our own on principles and offer more details on what we think would be a fair and equitable settlement?

Dr. Brzezinski: We could start by asking each side to draw up statements of principle on each of the three issues. We should press the Arabs on peace and the Israelis on security and territory. They should spell out their positions in more detail. This worked rather well in the talks with Asad. It was a good experience. Now we need to start putting things down on paper. Then, everyone could meet in Washington.

Secretary Vance: But you think we should not give any more on our views?

Dr. Brzezinski: Not yet, maybe more once they get here.

Mr. Aaron: Maybe on the Vance trip we should just write down the positions of each of the parties and then convey them to the others, and then present a synthesis to them when they come here.

Dr. Brzezinski: We might never get them here if we spell things out in advance, but once they are here, we might be able to get them to agree.

Vice President: What would the purpose of the Vance trip then be?

Dr. Brzezinski: We've already covered that.

Vice President: But it can't be announced as just a fact-finding trip. We need some public purpose and we have to be sure we can deliver on it.

Dr. Brzezinski: Maybe we should state that the public purpose is somewhat different than what we have been discussing.

Vice President: Maybe we should try to get agreement before the trip.

Mr. Aaron: We could focus the trip on Geneva and the principles that would need to be agreed upon before meeting.

Dr. Brzezinski: I agree.

Mr. Aaron: Then you define your other goals as you go along.

Mr. Day: But can you get agreement on principles, if Begin gets too far out?

Dr. Brzezinski: That may be an issue to settle when he comes here. What we say will matter.

Mr. Day: He won't give up on the West Bank, and if he doesn't there can be no agreed principles.

Secretary Vance: We need to stress real peace, the need for movement, and normalization of relations. We continue to believe that 242 means 1967 borders with only minor changes, but these borders have to be secure, and there have to be physical means and guarantees. Then there is the Palestinian question as well. We need to state these principles.

Vice President: That's what the President has already done. What more do we do on your visit?

Dr. Brzezinski: We need to establish a process to bring together the parties in order to probe more thoroughly their thinking. David's idea is good. We could compare the record that we put together.

Secretary Vance: We should tell them that we expect concrete views in the upcoming talks.

Dr. Brzezinski: We could go back and forth and try to compare the views we hear.

Mr. Aaron: Do we see the Palestinian homeland and secure borders as being linked? Israel says there is no security that can be obtained on the 1967 lines and with a Palestinian homeland. We need to talk of the linkages.

Secretary Brown: We have. We have emphasized that peace and withdrawal would be related.

Dr. Brzezinski: This raises the question of security lines and borders. I am prepared to agree that Israel's security borders should be on the Jordan River, but this cannot be their permanent political border. They might have a security arrangement there for five, ten, or twenty years.

Mr. Aaron: That has implications for the kind of government that could exist in those territories.

Dr. Brzezinski: Jordan could buy that.

Secretary Vance: What would the validity be to have a UN trusteeship for some period of time and then to have a referendum?

Dr. Brzezinski: To whom would the trusteeship be given? Maybe Israel should be made a trustee by the UN?

Secretary Brown: You would never get a vote in the UN for that. You couldn't do it in the Security Council or the General Assembly.

Dr. Brzezinski: Why not have Israel just as a trustee for two or three years?

Secretary Vance: It might put off the crunch.

Dr. Brzezinski: It would be a way out for Begin. Israel would no longer be alone.

Secretary Vance: But they can't do it alone.

Dr. Brzezinski: They could if the Arabs and Israelis agreed on it. If this were a transition to a referendum leading to a homeland . . .

Secretary Vance: That would be hard to oppose.

Dr. Brzezinski: We should take a look at it.

Secretary Vance: Yes, let's take a look.

Mr. Aaron: Maybe we should look at the idea of a referendum earlier in the process as a way of developing a negotiating partner on the Palestinian side.

Secretary Vance: It's difficult to set up the right kind of referendum at an early date, but Jordan does think that they could get the community and towns of the West Bank to support them. This would give them time to establish an administrative structure.

Mr. Aaron: How do we get some leverage on the PLO to be constructive?

Dr. Brzezinski: They won't unless they think they might win. We should look at the trusteeship idea. Pete Day and Bill Quandt should work on it.

Mr. Day: We might think of West Bank self-administration with a UN oversight. It's an easy area to administer.

Dr. Brzezinski: Dayan might agree to the idea of a Jordanian-Israeli trusteeship. It has interesting angles as an intermediate solution. It might make it easier to move later.

Secretary Vance: How does one keep the PLO from moving toward extremism?

Mr. Quandt: We could talk to them.

Dr. Brzezinski: Maybe the same process as we anticipate in Begin's case would work for the PLO in getting them to be more moderate as they assume some responsibility.

Secretary Vance: If out of this comes the Palestinian-West Bank State linked with Jordan, this might be an easier way to do it than otherwise.

Vice President: The President seemed to think that all of the Arab leaders preferred a connection of the Palestinian homeland with Jordan, except for Fahd.

Secretary Vance: Fahd felt it had to be independent first.

Vice President: He said there had to be a Palestinian state first.

Dr. Brzezinski: I think we have stumbled on a good idea. On our attitude toward the Geneva Conference, we should still talk of having one this year.

Secretary Vance: This should be our strong and clear objective.

Dr. Brzezinski: We should keep up the pressure for Geneva. Israel probably doesn't want a Geneva Conference, but if we press for Geneva, they will have to take it seriously.

Secretary Vance: We need to do adequate groundwork first.

Dr. Brzezinski: We should say the same things to both sides, but there should be nuances. To the Arabs, we could say that if the preparations have not been adequate, we would postpone the conference; to the Israelis, we could emphasize that we may have to go to Geneva in any case. Israel wants to slow down the process and we want to get them to take it seriously.

Vice President: But Begin may not want to come soon.

Secretary Vance: Begin has to come here to defend his case.

Mr. Day: During your trip, do you think you would try to resolve the Palestinian representation question?

Secretary Vance: If there is enough development on this, we might discuss it with the parties.

Dr. Brzezinski: We can have the preliminary talks here and they could begin without the PLO.

Mr. Aaron: If the group meets here, what would Israel's role be?

Dr. Brzezinski: Israel would be here too. Maybe one of the Arab representatives could even be from the PLO.

Admiral Turner: What would the Soviet reaction be?

Dr. Brzezinski: We should keep them informed but not involved.

Mr. Aaron: We should leave open the question of the Palestinians. If they are prepared to come, maybe we could let in a PLO representative.

Dr. Brzezinski: It might be better if they did. Otherwise, they might get radicalized.

Mr. Quandt: There are practical problems in holding talks in Washington. Most of the Arab parties would be unable to send a credible negotiator, in part because they don't have many people with authority, and the Egyptians may worry about the security of their communications.

Mr. Aaron: Couldn't they get people who could represent them? They could have different kinds of people for each delegation. It might be better in any case to keep it informal so that it does not look like a Geneva Conference.

Dr. Brzezinski: Maybe they could find some political figure to send.

Mr. Day: If agreement could be reached at the level of Sadat, then representatives might be able to work on details.

Dr. Brzezinski: If Cy's visit fleshes out some of the basic points, they could be used for more detailed discussions here.

Secretary Vance: Let's try to think this through. If we want to think of how to conduct talks here, who would be involved? The other alternatives of holding talks elsewhere are less desirable.

Secretary Vance: Let me summarize what we have agreed upon. First, by the middle of next week there will be a paper on the Egyptian and Israeli military items. Second, we need a paper for the Begin visit and we need to prepare a good study on that in terms of what to expect and how to develop the issues. Third, we need to develop further the trusteeship idea, the pros and the cons. Fourth, there is the question of the follow-on to my trip. Fifth, we need something on my trip, its purpose and its conduct.

(Dr. Brzezinski leaves.)

Mr. Bowie: We ought to try to get a broader sense of the strategy for negotiations. It is not going to be helpful to bring the parties here. Israel will not be forthcoming and the Arabs will use that as an excuse not to say more on peace. Israel will only budge when they face the real choice of either going forward or having total stalemate. In my view, we first have to get on the table a forthcoming Arab position. This could create the environment for the United States to use its influence with Israel.

Secretary Vance: I hope we can get this.

Mr. Aaron: The concept of getting them to Washington doesn't necessarily mean that Israel will have to be here too. It could just be a gathering of all the Arab representatives in order to get them to develop their position.

Mr. Day: It won't work short of the Foreign Ministers' level.

Mr. Bowie: Maybe we could put off these talks until the Foreign Ministers all come to the UN in the fall. We should stress the need for a more concrete Arab position on peace.

Secretary Vance: That's too late. If we were to indicate that these were the guidelines we favored, we could get it. We have to say it directly to them. We'll work on the Arabs first.

Mr. Quandt: Maybe one way to do this would be to have someone other than the Secretary of State shuttle between the Arab capitals after the Secretary's trip. That would at least keep the top decision makers involved on the Arab side.

Mr. Aaron: We should think of the domestic impact here if we just shuttle back and forth between the Arab countries.

Mr. Bowie: They can't complain if we are pressing the peace line with the Arabs. If that is what we are trying to get pinned down, Israel cannot object.

Mr. Day: But they would see this as getting ready to mount maximum pressure on them.

Mr. Aaron: It would be a real problem.

Secretary Brown: We will have that in any case.

Mr. Day: We can't ignore the domestic side and Israel's reaction.

Mr. Aaron: We need to have this in mind for after the Begin visit. It won't be of much use simply to get him to subscribe again to Resolution 242.

General Smith: We also need to think of how to get through the rest of the year.

Secretary Vance: Let's get the pieces pulled together. If we have these, it will be possible to make progress. The President has some general ideas also. Let's put them together and let me remind you of the sensitivity of these papers.

Mr. Aaron: I need a list of items for the Vice President's speech. These should be pipeline items that we can make decisions on quickly. Once we see the list, we can decide whether it appears to be sufficiently forthcoming and meaningful.

Secretary Vance: We should talk about our on-going commitment and we should reaffirm our responsibility for the security of Israel. We

need to say it again and we should mention that we will make advanced technology available if necessary.

Mr. Janka: Those are not the kinds of things that are in the pipeline, though.

Secretary Vance: But he can say it in the speech anyway.

Mr. Clift: We have some language already and we can draw on the arms transfer statement.⁷

Secretary Vance: OK. Let's schedule another PRC meeting for June 24, if possible.

⁷ On May 19, the White House issued a statement by Carter on conventional arms transfer policy. (*Public Papers: Carter, 1977*, Book I, pp. 931–932) See also Document 33.

41. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, June 10, 1977, 4–5 p.m.

PARTICIPANTS

Shmuel Katz
Ambassador Simcha Dinitz
Dr. Zbigniew Brzezinski
Robert Lipshutz
David Aaron
William B. Quandt

Mr. Katz: I spoke to Mr. Begin last night and he sends you his best greetings and hopes to see you soon. He is not sure when a government will finally be formed, because this depends on the outcome of negotiations with the Democratic Movement for Change. Mr. Begin does now have a majority, but he prefers to broaden his base. He hopes that within one week or ten days this can be settled.

I have come here because there has been a great deal of distorted and inaccurate publicity about Mr. Begin. I would like to be able to describe the pillars of his policy, but obviously not the details. First, the government that he heads will respect the international obligations undertaken by previous Israeli governments, specifically UN Resolutions

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Subject File, Box 2, Arab-Israeli Peace Settlement 1977: Volume II [I]. Secret. The meeting took place in Dr. Brzezinski's office.

242 and 338. He will abide by the interpretation of Resolution 242 that has been given by previous Israeli governments. We believe that the first step toward peace should be negotiations, direct negotiations between Israel and the Arab states, leading to a peace treaty. Our later actions will flow from that peace treaty. We are not prepared to negotiate with the *New York Times* or *Time Magazine*, in the sense of publicly saying how much we will give in advance of negotiations. We will negotiate with the parties concerned. Mr. Begin does not believe, however, that the Arabs will accept the invitation that he has extended to meet directly with them. He feels, therefore, that the United States has a role to play in bringing about negotiations. This is necessary to say, because of some of the preliminary criticism that has been raised in the press.

He is concerned about the recent statements coming from the White House, about the 1967 borders and the Palestinian homeland and compensation. The question of a Palestinian homeland and compensation are not included in Resolution 242. If Israel abides by 242, it must be binding on all parties, and there can be no additions or changes before negotiations have started.

Dr. Brzezinski: Please give Mr. Begin my warm personal greetings. My visits with him have been most interesting and I have found him a very engaging and attractive person. The President very much looks forward to meeting with him. I am pleased to hear your position on Resolutions 242 and 338, which, among others, set the framework for an understanding. They spell out the key issues, but that does not mean that other issues must be excluded. At some point, this has to be understood. I would like to ask you about your policy on settlements. There has been some controversy on that. That seems to affect these resolutions.

Mr. Katz: There has been a difference of opinion between Likud and the Democratic Movement for Change on this. I am not sure how it will be resolved. Mr. Begin's attitude is closely tied to the attitude of the Likud concerning the basic right of the Jewish people to Western Palestine as a whole. This view is founded on international law, ever since the mandate was promulgated. The rejection of the 1947 partition by the Arabs—and the Jewish Agency then accepted those lines—but the Arab rejection in the war that followed restored the full legal basis for our claims to all of Western Palestine. From 1948 to 1967, we consider that there was an illegal occupation of the West Bank by Jordan. This is one of the reasons that Mr. Begin objects to the term "annexation" as applied to the territories. The question of settlements in our view does not affect Resolution 242. We are still prepared to negotiate without preliminary preconditions.

Dr. Brzezinski: Could that include the PLO?

Mr. Katz: No, only the Arab states. In such negotiations, if we reach agreement on withdrawal, including part of the West Bank, and this is possible even for us, although we would not do it happily, but in a peace agreement it is possible. Why should Jewish settlements, even if Jewish sovereignty is not there, constitute a problem? Why can 500,000 Arabs live with us with no difficulty in the 1967 boundaries, if the idea of Jews living elsewhere in Palestine is unacceptable? In peace, real peace, this should not be a problem. We do not see any contradiction. Refraining from settlement would preempt the outcome of negotiations, which we want to avoid.

Dr. Brzezinski: Would you encourage settlements in areas populated by the Arabs, as compared to the policy of the previous government?

Mr. Katz: Yes, this is a subject of controversy. These have not just been security settlements in the past. Gush Etzion and Hebron are not security settlements.² That is not their purpose. We have a deep attachment to the land. We hope in these negotiations that we can persuade the Arabs that their best bet is not to have us withdraw. If I can give you the vision that I have, after forty years of contacts with the Arabs, I would try to convince the Arabs in Western Palestine that their greatest chance for security and prosperity, without loss of their cultural identity and with local autonomy, lies in a unitary state under an Israeli government, with the right to citizenship for those who want it, or they can remain Jordanian citizens.

If an Arab entity of any kind is formed west of the Jordan River, it would be a threat to Israel. We would have a second Lebanon in Western Palestine, with the hazard of Soviet intervention. Syria sees Palestine as southern Syria. They would not allow the peaceful evolution of the Palestinian state. Nor would the West Bankers or the PLO accept it. I don't know if they would agree. Why should I preempt, however, the solution that I prefer? Their population can live as a minority in a Jewish state. We don't have to preclude that. Mr. Begin might propose this to the Arabs, and in a different atmosphere of peace, it might be possible. It sounds like a dream, but the whole idea of peace is nebulous. When I think of Judea and Samaria, this is my concept.

Dr. Brzezinski: The net result would be an incorporation of the former British mandate as the state of Israel. This would leave you with about a two-to-one population ratio of Jews to Arabs?

Mr. Katz: That's right, but we would hope for immigration. There is a great need for the in-gathering of Jews. Mr. Begin intends to make a

² Soon after Israel gained control of the West Bank following the June 1967 Arab-Israeli War, Jewish settlers moved into both areas.

drive for more immigration, so that we could at least keep the ratio in our favor.

Dr. Brzezinski: Why would you expect one-third of your population of Arabs to accept cohabitation in that context, given the desire for national identity? Are there any signs they would accept this?

Mr. Katz: No, but they have had no encouragement to do so. After 1967, there were many indications of that kind when it seemed that Israel would extend its law to the territories, but the West Bankers have a memory of what happened to Gaza in 1957. Then the local leaders had collaborated with Israel, thinking that we would stay. When we withdrew, some were forced to flee and others were executed or jailed. This was an unfortunate example for the Arabs in the West Bank. The situation, of course, has deteriorated since this, but the holding of negotiations will be predicated on a change of attitudes.

Dr. Brzezinski: What would it take for the Arabs on the West Bank, Syria, Jordan, and maybe Egypt, to accept your idea?

Mr. Katz: It is hard to say. First, they must know that they cannot eliminate Israel. Then they would have to begin to think of the best framework for cooperation. This would provide a context for real peace.

Dr. Brzezinski: In negotiations, you see the Arabs trading peace for their acceptance of your continued occupation of the territories and their incorporation into Israel. Why would this be a realistic possibility unless the Arabs were so fully defeated that they would have no second chance? Short of that, can the Arabs accept a permanent peace and the incorporation of the occupied territories, both?

Mr. Katz: If Israel did withdraw to the 1967 lines, this would not convince the Arabs to make peace, unless other conditions had already been accepted.

Dr. Brzezinski: Such as?

Mr. Katz: I can't conceive of them. There are no other conditions combined with the 1967 lines that would work. But we do want diplomatic relations and trade, and so forth. We believe that the 1967 borders constitute a death trap. From the Arab point of view, if they do agree to peace, this would include an atmosphere in which they would not think of destruction of Israel. It is then only asking them to cede a small part of the Arab nation—they are all one people after all—to remain under Israeli control. If they accept Israeli sovereignty, but they cannot get peace on the 1967 lines, they will be open to other suggestions. We could offer economic guidance to them.

Dr. Brzezinski: I am confused. Are you saying that the 1967 frontiers are as unacceptable to you as the other alternative is to the Arabs?

Mr. Katz: No, I didn't mean to say that. Maybe that is true now, but in peace they can be moved to our position. It does not sound very practicable, because there is the problem of an Arab population in the heart of our country. Mr. Allon tried to solve this by finding a line in between the 1967 line and the present,³ but there is no easy line that can be drawn.

Dr. Brzezinski: Do you believe the Soviet re-entry into the Middle East is likely or not?

Mr. Katz: Do you mean they are not there now?

Dr. Brzezinski: They are not as prominent now.

Mr. Katz: The most likely way of bringing them back in would be by weakening Israel territorially, or because of conflicts among the Arab states over the territory of Palestine. I can see Soviet influence increasing in that context. The relations between the Soviets and the PLO are very close. Arafat often goes to Moscow. You saw what the Soviet attitude in Lebanon was. My guess is that a Palestinian entity of any kind would either invite Syrian intervention or Soviet intervention.

Mr. Aaron: I am interested in the question of how you would achieve what you want.

Mr. Katz: Off the top of my head, I have told you how I think. This may not be Mr. Begin's policy, but it is the best solution from our point of view. On the question of how to get there—we could start with an agreement on peace, the ending of mutual hostilities, and then I see no problem.

Ambassador Dinitz: I think he asked how to get there, not what the outcome would be.

Mr. Aaron: The solution seems difficult to reconcile with the peace that you want. There is something of a circular argument. If peace is a pre-condition, I don't see how there can be real negotiations.

Mr. Katz: We differ on the basis of the problem. What is the conflict all about? Some say the heart of the problem is the Palestinians, but this is not true historically. We were not in occupation of the West Bank before 1967, but the Arabs were hostile to us. This was also true before 1948. The conflict stems from the Arab refusal to recognize our existence in any area. I don't put much store by Arab recognition. The basic problem—if you look at the map of the Middle East, the Arabs have a region stretching from the Atlantic to the Persian Gulf. Israel is a small white triangle in a red sea of Arab states. In the Arab states, children are taught that Zionism is evil, that Israel is occupied territory, that it is intrusive and divisive and must be eliminated. They go

³ A reference to the Allon Plan. See footnote 2, Document 2.

through a long list of our vices, which adds a moral imperative to the desire to destroy Israel.

I understand the Arabs perfectly. They quite simply believe that Israel must be eliminated. Partial withdrawal would only be in their interest as a way of making Israel more vulnerable. They use the Palestinian problem as a cover, as an esthetic presentation to the world of the dimensions of the problem. It is better to describe Israel as a state which has robbed the Palestinians of their home than to express their real desire to destroy Israel. This is an essential difference in perception. It leads to a difference of opinion on policy. When we think of withdrawal to vulnerable frontiers, frontiers that Mr. Eban himself has called a death trap, we know that the Arab world would see us within those frontiers as a sitting duck. We believe that the situation can only change when the Arabs see that it is an impossible task to destroy Israel. If Sadat and Asad do not understand this, it may take the next generation.

Mr. Aaron: You see this peace being achieved over a generation?

Mr. Katz: Sadat does not see peace in this generation. I don't know, but it is not brought closer by encouragement given to the Arabs that suggests that Israel could be reduced to the 1967 lines with support from both great powers. Their willingness to negotiate is weakened by the belief that negotiations will take us back to indefensible frontiers.

Mr. Aaron: What signs would you have to see to believe that the Arabs are prepared to accept peace? What would you accept as evidence?

Mr. Katz: We'll have to take some risks. Given the history of Arab intransigence and their refusal to negotiate with us, simply sitting with us at the table might be viewed as a sign that they are serious about peace. If they talk to us directly, it would be reassuring and we would be prepared to take a reasonable risk. There are no other conditions that would help us to accept this psychologically. A minimal acceptable condition is direct negotiations. We would be prepared to see this as a sign of Arab willingness for peace. We know that the United States has other interests in the Middle East and we do want peace.

Mr. Lipshutz: You mentioned the possibility of a unitary state in which one-third of the population would be Arab and would enjoy the right of citizenship. You are talking about a pluralistic society. But is this realistic for Israel to accept, given the population growth on the Arab side? And the Arabs would have to have the right to immigration also. In one or two generations, you might have an Arab majority. Is this a realistic alternative? If you give them real equality, the Arabs will have a majority.

Mr. Katz: I don't accept that. When the UN resolved to divide Palestine into two states, the small Jewish area contained 55% Jews and

45% Arabs, but we were not afraid and we accepted, because we believed in large-scale Jewish immigration. If there were no such immigration, then our situation in an event will be difficult, and maybe dangerous. Before 1967, in a period of economic recession, there was an outflow of immigrants. So we conceive of a development in an era of peace in which there would be large-scale immigration. The Zionist state was predicated on this, and without it we will have a questionable future.

Mr. Lipshutz: But there are only two large Jewish populations in the world, Russia and the United States, and it is not very likely here, barring a catastrophe, that large numbers of American Jews will go to Israel. So how realistic is your view?

Mr. Katz: We expect an increase in the birth rate among Jews. This is realistic. Likud will initiate a policy of subsidizing rental housing. This will have implications for labor and for the birth rate. It is now a burden on young families to buy apartments, and this keeps the size of the families down, so we hope for immigration and to inspire Jews to want to live in a free country with a sense of the Zionist venture. It happened before and we hope to achieve this. At least, we hope to keep the ratio the same. The birthrate among Arabs in Judea and Samaria is lower than that among Arabs in Israel.

Dr. Brzezinski: When you refer to Judea and Samaria, does that mean that you do not consider them occupied territories?

Mr. Katz: They were occupied in a recent war, but they are part of western Palestine. Judea and Samaria are old names. The West Bank is a recent Jordanian name.

Dr. Brzezinski: You began by saying that the new government will keep its commitment to Resolution 242.

Mr. Katz: It refers to territories occupied in the recent war and it was a hard decision, but Mr. Begin was a member of the government in 1968 which accepted Resolution 242.

Dr. Brzezinski: Do you view Resolution 242 as applying to all of the territories?

Mr. Katz: Yes, they can all be placed on the table and we will fight very hard for our view. We do not want to preempt anything.

Dr. Brzezinski: Does Resolution 242 deal with all of the territories occupied in the 1967 war?

Mr. Katz: Resolution 242 refers to it. We may say what we want about keeping the territory, but we will not preempt the issue.

Mr. Lipshutz: Were you implying that the situation in which some Jews might live in the Arab part of Palestine just as Arabs lived in Israel could be a step which would help keep the desire for peace intact?

Mr. Katz: I didn't imply that, but you could draw that conclusion.

Mr. Lipshutz: That would mean an Israel with a Jewish and Arab population and a Jordan-Palestine with a small Jewish population. That would be a new factor, but it might be a positive factor.

Mr. Katz: It's a simple element that cannot be frozen. If there is peace, there is no reason it could not work. I have a feeling from my own contacts with Arabs in Palestine that co-existence with them is possible, provided that other pressures do not intrude. And, of course, provided that the government is in the hands of Israel. There is no doubt that the Arab minority in Israel will have a good time and that it will have fewer hardships, less income tax, and no army service. They have a wonderful time. We are the ones who pay the taxes. I hope that we will not be that liberal toward them in the future!

Dr. Brzezinski: (jokingly) That could be dangerous. They will want to come in from outside if you make it too attractive.

Mr. Katz: You know, 100 years ago Palestine was almost empty. Most of the Arabs came after the Zionists already made the area livable. There was no such thing as an Arab-Palestine that existed for 1300 years before we came. The total population of Palestine in the mid-19th century was only a quarter of a million. There was more increase in the Arab population of Palestine between the two World Wars than there was an increase in Jewish population.

Mr. Aaron: Do you consider Geneva to be face-to-face negotiations?

Mr. Katz: (hesitation). Mr. Begin has said that he will lead a delegation to Geneva. He regards it as consistent with his demand for face-to-face negotiations. Personally, I prefer negotiations only with the United States present, not with the Soviet Union there.

Dr. Brzezinski: The two are not incompatible. They might be done sequentially.

Mr. Katz: Maybe.

Dr. Brzezinski: I am sorry, but I have another appointment. I am pleased to have had the chance to talk with you.

Mr. Katz: I had planned to visit the United States even before the election, and I would have hoped to see you even then.

Dr. Brzezinski: Please give my warm regards to Mr. Begin.

42. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Israel¹

Washington, June 18, 1977, 1654Z

142358. For Ambassador. Subject: Presidential Congratulatory Message and Invitation to Prime Minister Begin.

1. Please pass the following message from the President to Prime Minister as soon as practicable after the government is approved by Knesset and duly invested. White House does not plan release but has no objection if GOI wishes to do so.

2. Presidential Message—Begin text:

Dear Mr. Prime Minister:

Please accept my warmest congratulations on your accession as Prime Minister, and the best wishes of the American people for the success of your government. The process of democratic choice which has brought you to this office and this responsibility demonstrates the attachment of Israel to the principles of democracy and individual liberty which we share and which is the hallmark of all free societies. We are linked as well with your great nation in our commitment to the moral precepts of democracy: its humanitarian values of peace, justice, and individual dignity. These common and fundamental democratic precepts, shared between us, are the foundation of our special relationship and the commitment to Israel's security which the United States has historically maintained.

As you know, I am deeply committed to helping Israel and its neighbors seek a lasting peaceful resolution to the conflict between them. I am sure that this is an objective I share with you, and I would welcome your ideas on how progress towards peace can best be achieved. Given the depth and range of our mutual interests, I believe it important that we meet at an early date to establish a personal relationship and exchange views on the negotiations of a peace settlement and on other matters of mutual concern.

I would like, therefore, to invite you to visit the United States during the week of July 18 and to join with you in a partnership of principle leading to a just and peaceful settlement of the dispute between Israel and its neighbors. We both are blessed with the historic opportunity to give substance to the religious meaning of our societies.

With best wishes.

Sincerely, Jimmy Carter

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Subject File, Box 48, Israel: 6/77. Confidential; Niact Immediate.

End text.

3. On delivering Presidential letter, you should add orally that the President hopes that Begin could be in Washington on July 19 and 20. We would appreciate Begin's confirming as soon as possible that these dates would be acceptable.

Vance

43. Summary of Conclusions of a Policy Review Committee Meeting¹

Washington, June 25, 1977, 9:30–11:15 a.m.

SUBJECT

Middle East

PARTICIPANTS

The Vice President
A. Denis Clift

State
Secretary Cyrus Vance
Philip Habib
Alfred Atherton

Defense
Charles W. Duncan
David A. McGiffert

CIA
Admiral Stansfield Turner
Robert Bowie

JCS
General George Brown
Lt. General William Smith
NSC
Dr. Zbigniew Brzezinski
David Aaron
William B. Quandt

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

Israeli Arms Requests

The President's decision to provide Israel with 200 TOW launchers, 700 M-113 Armored Personnel Carriers and 15 M-728

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Brzezinski Office File, Country Chron File, Box 31, Middle East: 5-6/77. Top Secret; Sensitive; Eyes Only for Principals. The meeting took place in the White House Situation Room. An attached June 27 covering memorandum from Brzezinski to the President requests approval of the Summary of Conclusions. Carter indicated his approval.

Combat Engineering Vehicles was announced.² No other items will be approved before Prime Minister Begin's visit on July 19–20, but a package for possible approval during or after that visit will be prepared. It was agreed that the following items might be included in such a package: fifty F-16s, 18 AH-1S Attack Helicopters, and two Hydrofoil boats. There was also general agreement to consider 3000 CBU-71s, although attention should be given to the symbolism of such a sale. The 300 remaining APCs from the Israeli request might also be approved after the visit.

It was agreed that we should turn down the Israeli request for three KC-135 tankers and the request for 1350 Sidewinder AIM-9Ls. On the latter item, we might consider offering the less sensitive AIM-JI model as an alternative.

Of the coproduction request, the Hydrofoil project is the most easily granted. On F-16s, we should only consider some limited co-assembly options. Defense should prepare the rationale for this position.

Egyptian Arms Requests

It was agreed that we should send to Congress the non-lethal items already approved by the President—14 C-130s, 12 RPVs for reconnaissance, six LOROP Pods. In addition, we could explore further the Egyptian interest in target drones and passive night vision devices. The possibility of 100 APCs will be discussed with Senator Humphrey.

The MIG maintenance project was judged as more important than the APCs. Discussion of whether and how to move the MIG project in parallel with the Israeli F-16 request ensued. Senator Humphrey's advice will be sought. Defense will look into the third-country option with Britain and Italy. Defense will also prepare a paper on the MK-44 anti-submarine torpedo that the Egyptians have shown interest in.

Saudi Arms Requests

The question of when to forward the Saudi request for 60 F-15s to Congress was discussed, with a general consensus that we should wait until after Prime Minister Begin's visit and our decision on the F-16 for Israel. This will be discussed further with Senator Humphrey.

² A June 22 discussion paper for the PRC meeting sent to Mondale, Vance, Harold Brown, Turner, and General Brown included groupings of these weapons as "non-controversial items," "somewhat controversial items," and "most controversial" items. It also addressed Egyptian and Saudi arms requests and provided an overview of the administration's diplomatic strategy for the remainder of 1977. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Middle East Files, Chron File, Box 132, Quandt: 6/15–20/77)

Begin Visit

Before Begin arrives, we should find ways through press briefings and backgrounders to keep the focus of attention on the key elements of a comprehensive settlement and the need for genuine flexibility on all issues. Our minimal objective for the Begin visit was defined as an Israeli interpretation of UN Resolution 242 in terms compatible with an overall settlement; a willingness to show restraint on establishing new settlements; and acceptance of a pre-Geneva process aimed at establishing some agreed framework for negotiations.

Several alternatives were explored in the event of an impasse in the discussions with Begin and it was agreed that further analysis was needed. The question was also raised of whether we could get President Sadat to make a public statement in support of a comprehensive peace with Israel and full normalization of relations. The meeting ended with the suggestion that our approach might make Begin appear intransigent; that an image of intransigence might help him to build domestic support; and that then “we would have him just where he wants us!”

Follow-on Actions

State will develop press guidance during the pre-Begin visit period to help develop realistic expectations of what is required of Israel.

Defense will prepare the rationale for only granting limited co-assembly options on the F-16.

Defense will explore the third-country option on the MIG project with the British and Italians.

Defense will prepare a paper on the MK-44 anti-submarine torpedo for possible sale to Egypt.

A PRC meeting will be scheduled for the week of June 27 to discuss the Begin visit. State and NSC will prepare a short discussion paper.

44. Draft Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Egypt¹

Washington, undated

For Ambassador From the Secretary. Subject: Oral Message From President Carter for President Sadat.

1. As you know, we are currently preparing for Begin visit. In our deliberations to date, we have been considering ways and means of increasing chances for outcome positive enough to maintain momentum in peace process.

2. You will have noted that tone of recent public pronouncements of Begin and his closest collaborators—particularly Dayan—have, for most part, been carefully worded to emphasize acceptance of 242 and willingness to go to Geneva without preconditions. We are unable, at this time, to determine how much of this is cosmetics (e.g., other statements have suggested withdrawal from West Bank is excluded) and will not be able to answer this question at least until visit takes place.

3. In devising best strategy to achieve positive outcome of Begin visit, we believe it would be most helpful if Sadat (or key Arab leaders jointly if there were to be mini-summit of moderate Arabs before visit) could make public statement in period prior to visit scheduled for July 19–20 which emphasizes commitment to “comprehensive, permanent, normal peace” with Israel as objective of settlement to be negotiated on basis SC Resolution 242. Word “normal” is most important to help US counter expected Begin position that Arabs not really interested in peace, but only territorial advances for tactical purposes. Such a statement would go step beyond helpful posture of wait-and-see which Sadat has adopted since elections, and help set stage for Begin visit here. We also want to encourage Egyptians to lay off public attacks on Israel for period ahead, which obviously undercut our efforts make convincing case that Egypt really wants peace.

4. With foregoing objective in mind, please convey following oral message to Sadat from the President.

5. Begin message:

—As President Sadat knows, Prime Minister Begin will be meeting with President Carter in Washington July 19–20. This initial contact with new Israeli leadership will be of great importance for future course of our peacemaking efforts, and President Carter feels he will

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Subject File, Box 10, Egypt: 4–6/77. Secret; Immediate; Nodis. Drafted by Atherton and Veliotis on June 27. Cleared by Habib and Brzezinski and approved by Vance.

benefit from an exchange of views with President Sadat as he prepares for the Begin visit.

—The President has noted that President Sadat has wisely avoided being drawn into a public debate in response to statements by new Israeli leadership which suggest they may hold more adamant positions than the previous government on some of the key issues of a settlement, particularly the question of withdrawal from West Bank territory. As Vice President Mondale made clear in his June 17 speech,² and as repeated at President's direction by the State Department spokesman on June 27,³ we intend to adhere to the views we have expressed on what would constitute an equitable framework for negotiations with respect to all the core issues, including the need for withdrawal on all fronts in the context of peace.

—The President also intends to continue to make clear in discussions with Israelis our conviction that President Sadat is genuinely committed to a permanent peace in which Israel as well as the other countries of the area can enjoy a secure, sovereign existence and move toward normal relations with each other. From reports we have received, the new leadership, which has not of course had the experience of the negotiations its predecessor conducted over the past several years, has serious doubts that President Sadat and other moderate Arab leaders today are really prepared for genuine peace with Israel if just solutions can be found to the territorial and Palestinian issues, and no longer adhere to the position of earlier regimes that a settlement on the basis of Resolution 242 is only a tactical step toward the ultimate elimination of Israel as a sovereign state.

—President Carter recognizes that President Sadat has stated his position on a number of occasions. It would be extremely helpful to him, in his talks with Prime Minister Begin, however, if President Sadat (or several Arab leaders jointly) could find an occasion before the Begin visit to reaffirm publicly his commitment to a comprehensive, permanent and normal peace with Israel. The more specific the President felt he could be in such a statement, of course, the better. It would also be helpful if there could be a moratorium on statements or actions during this delicate period in our relations with new Israeli Government—for example, in international organizations—which strengthen the hand of those who argue that the Arabs remain unalterably militant toward Israel. Maintenance of a calm and non-polemical public and international

² See footnote 2, Document 40.

³ State Department Spokesman Hodding Carter III read a statement during his regular news conference on June 27 setting forth the administration's Middle East policy. ("U.S. Statement on the Middle East," *New York Times*, June 28, 1977, p. 6)

atmosphere will be essential as our efforts go forward over the weeks ahead.

—Shortly after the Begin visit, President Carter will send Secretary Vance to the Middle East to brief our Arab friends on that visit and to begin the process of seeking an agreed basis for reconvening the Geneva Conference. Meanwhile, the President would welcome any thoughts and advice President Sadat may wish to convey to him through Ambassador Eilts. The President avails himself of this opportunity to convey his warm personal greetings to President Sadat.

45. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Egypt¹

Washington, June 30, 1977, 1352Z

152347. For Ambassador. Subject: Fahmy's Talks in Moscow. Ref: Cairo 10380.²

1. Please pass to Sadat as soon as possible following oral message from President Carter in response to Sadat's request for his views reported in reftel.

2. Begin text: President very much appreciates Sadat's frankness in sharing such detailed account of Fahmy's discussions in Moscow. In general, President believes Sadat's analysis concerning Soviet motivations and intentions is accurate. In this respect, the Soviets clearly want to find ways to reestablish their position in the Mideast, which they lost in large measure through President Sadat's farsighted and statesman-like actions, and are obviously very nervous about their prospects for success in the Horn of Africa.

—President believes heavy-handed Soviet tactics indicate that they clearly continue to underestimate President Sadat's determination

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P850052–2006. Secret; Niact Immediate; Nodis. Drafted by Veliotes; cleared by Quandt, Robert Vine (EUR), Atherton, Larry MacFarlane (S/S), Talcott Seelye (AF), and Habib; and approved by Secretary Vance.

² In telegram 10380 from Cairo, June 21, the Embassy reported Sadat's detailed summary of Foreign Minister Fahmy's talks with Soviet Premier Brezhnev and Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P850052–2101)

and commitment to pursuit of an independent national policy for Egypt. President also concludes that current Soviet efforts are obvious attempt to drive wedge between U.S. and Egypt with respect both to Middle East and Africa. We believe that this can only be interpreted as Soviet reaction to success of Sadat's policies in the area which have the support of other important African and Middle East countries as well as U.S. This strongly suggests that the Soviets are worried that their strategies may not succeed.

—President Carter knows that Sadat requires no advice on how to deal with such Soviet maneuvers and pressure tactics. He would, however, wish to reaffirm his own deep respect for President Sadat's judgment in these matters.

3. As concerns Brezhnev's comments on the Middle East, we cannot exclude the possibility that the Soviets are trying to exploit the uncertainties which some parties in the area, that are hostile to both the U.S. and Egypt, are trying to foment with respect to the U.S. commitment to the peace process in the aftermath of the Begin victory.

—The Brezhnev statements on U.S. policy are, to say the least, contradictory and, in any event, not to be taken seriously. We hesitate to dignify them by attempting to address them in any detail. It should suffice to note that U.S. interests (clearly more so than Soviet interests) require a peace settlement and our mutual goal is a comprehensive settlement. Neither the President nor Sadat has ever underestimated the difficulties involved.

—In this respect, President Sadat knows he can count on President Carter's commitment to the peace process which he conveyed during Sadat's visit to Washington. President Carter is very grateful for Sadat's confirmation of their agreements in their private talks during his visit to Washington.

—We are now preparing for very frank talks with Begin to impress on his government the need for early progress towards Geneva. We will of course keep in close touch and President Carter expects Secretary Vance to be back in the area in late July–early August.

—President Carter wants to reassure Sadat that we are being as responsive as possible concerning the military requirements of our friends. In this respect, the President has again reviewed the situation concerning military equipment for Egypt on the basis of initial soundings with the Congress. As a result, the President has decided to move ahead with efforts to obtain early Congressional approval for the items Ambassador Eilts discussed with Sadat, despite the difficulties we anticipate.

—Although this is not fully responsive to Egypt's needs, if Congress approves we hope it will have a political and psychological significance beyond the actual items involved. The President wishes

Sadat to know that he is keeping this general subject under continuing review.

[Omitted here is material unrelated to the Middle East dispute.]

Vance

46. Letter from Secretary of State Vance to Congressman Lee H. Hamilton¹

Washington, July 5, 1977

Dear Mr. Chairman:

The President has asked me to reply to the questions you have raised about commitments made by the previous Administration to Israel concerning United States' dealings with the Palestine Liberation Organization.² I should like to explain how this Administration regards the commitment in question.

As the President indicated in his remarks of May 20 to the out-of-town editors and news directors, we continue to honor the promise made on this score to the Israelis by the previous Administration.³ Its terms were that the United States will continue to adhere to its present policy with respect to the Palestine Liberation Organization, whereby we will not recognize or negotiate with it so long as it does not recognize Israel's right to exist and does not accept Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338. This was a statement of the diplomatic intent of the United States, on which Israel should be able to rely.

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Subject File, Box 74, Palestinians: 7/77. No classification marking. Hamilton was the Chairman of the Subcommittee on Europe and the Middle East of the House Committee on International Relations.

² In a May 23 letter to Vance, Hamilton referred to recent statements by Carter in regard to upholding the promise made by the Ford administration as part of the Sinai II agreement to not recognize or negotiate with the PLO as long as it did not recognize Israel's right to exist and failed to accept U.N. Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338. Additionally, Hamilton cited then Under Secretary of State Joseph Sisco's 1975 testimony before the House Committee on International Relations during which Sisco noted that "we retain the freedom of action and the option to do what is necessary in the pursuance of our national interest." Hamilton suggested that Sisco's testimony raised "the possibility that we do not have as clear and firm a commitment as seemed to be implied in [Sisco's] statements." (Ibid.)

³ See *Public Papers: Carter, 1977*, Book I, pp. 945–954.

We have not considered it inconsistent with the foregoing position to deal with the PLO at the working level on administrative or security matters where we felt this was in the national interest or required by international agreement. Specifically, during the civil war in Lebanon, when the PLO was in control of much of Beirut, we dealt with the PLO in order to ensure the security of our personnel there. We have also dealt with the PLO Observer Mission in New York on administrative, security and similar matters in accordance with our responsibilities under our host-country agreement with the United Nations.

In our policy toward the Middle East, we have foremost in mind our goal of helping achieve a comprehensive settlement and, to that end, reconvening the Geneva Conference as early as possible. In addition to the principle involved in honoring promises made by the United States Government, the credibility of our commitments to Middle East countries and the constancy of our basic policies are essential assets in the role we are seeking to play in the search for a settlement.

Sincerely,

Cyrus Vance

47. Summary of a Policy Review Committee Meeting¹

Washington, July 5, 1977, 3:30–5:15 p.m.

PARTICIPANTS

State

Secretary Cyrus Vance
(Chairman)
Under Secretary Philip Habib
Assistant Secretary Alfred L.
Atherton, Jr.

Defense

Secretary Harold Brown
Assistant Secretary David E.
McGiffert

JCS

Lt. Gen. William Y. Smith

CIA

Admiral Stansfield Turner
Robert Bowie

NSC

Zbigniew Brzezinski
David Aaron
William Quandt

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Brzezinski Office File, Country Chron File, Box 31, Middle East: 7–8/77. Top Secret; Sensitive. Outside the System. An attached July 7 covering memorandum from Brzezinski to the President requests approval of the summary. Carter indicated his approval and in a handwritten note on the middle of the page wrote, "On Item 5., my preference is for Palestine-Jordan affiliation—J."

1. *Begin Visit*. Two key issues for discussion during Prime Minister Begin's visit will be a framework of agreed principles prior to Geneva and the question of Palestinian representation in the negotiations. Most of the PRC meeting concentrated on these two issues.

2. *Draft Principles*. The PRC considered several draft principles on which agreement would be sought prior to Geneva. The most controversial were those dealing with the location of recognized borders and the nature of the Palestinian entity. It was agreed that further work should be done on these principles. They will be discussed further at the next PRC meeting, along with a strategy for seeking Prime Minister Begin's concurrence. The revised draft principles are attached.²

3. *Palestinian Participation*. Four alternatives were considered: Seek PLO acceptance of Resolution 242, with a reservation on the Palestinian issue; a single Arab delegation at Geneva, including PLO representatives; Palestinians as part of a national Arab delegation; agreement by Israel and the Arab states to begin negotiations at Geneva without the PLO, but to invite the PLO later when the Palestinian issue is dealt with. There was some feeling that a single Arab delegation offered the best prospects and would not necessarily result in a more rigid Arab position than the other alternatives. It was agreed that this required further analysis.

4. *Geneva*. The possibility of an Israeli rejection of our draft principles was considered. Begin may take the line that he wants to go to Geneva without preconditions and that we are trying to predetermine the outcome of negotiations. If he does reject the principles, in whole or in part, we need to assess the prospects for Geneva and for the Secretary's trip to the Middle East. This will be considered at the next PRC meeting.

5. *Arms for Israel*. There was general agreement that an arms package valued at over \$1 billion, consisting of 50 F-16s and several other items, should be considered after the Begin visit. A larger package including 125 F-16s was thought to be excessive. The special case of FMS financing for the Chariot tank was also raised and will be analyzed by State prior to the next PRC meeting. Defense has already recommended against FMS financing for this project.

6. *Follow-on Actions*.

—The PRC will meet again on July 12, 1977.

—State will prepare a paper on FMS financing for the Chariot tank.

—State will redraft the principles and provide a suggested strategy for presenting them to Israel.

—The next PRC will consider the possibility of no agreement on principles and the consequences for Secretary Vance's trip and Geneva.

² The draft principles are not attached.

48. **Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) to President Carter**¹

Washington, undated

SUBJECT

Visitors to Israel

During the past week, Senator Javits had extensive discussions with Prime Minister Begin and Foreign Minister Dayan. Ambassador Lewis also met with Begin, as did Arthur Hertzberg. The following are highlights of the reporting we have received.

Javits-Begin (July 4)

—Javits warned Begin of an erosion in support for Israel among the U.S. people and Congress. He noted that he had mustered 76 Senators to sign the letter of support for Israel in 1974.² Today that number would be nearer 66.

—On Lebanon, Begin emphasized that Israel had absolutely no territorial objectives in south Lebanon, but Israel regards the Christians in the south as a beleaguered minority and will not permit them to be destroyed.

—Begin stressed the desirability of a *peace treaty*, with articles which deal with each of the outstanding issues. He also reiterated his preference for “face-to-face direct negotiations.”

—On Geneva, Begin indicated that he will go with Dayan. Begin would make the opening statement and Dayan will remain to negotiate.

Javits-Dayan (July 3)

—Dayan stressed four points: (1) Israel is committed to all agreements of previous governments, including 242; (2) Israel wants to go to Geneva as soon as possible and is not trying to delay; (3) Israel wants a comprehensive peace but is willing to consider interim or separate agreements if necessary; and (4) There is no area which is non-negotiable.

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Chron File, Box 132, Quandt: 7/1–13/77. Secret. Sent for information. Brzezinski did not initial the memorandum. An attached covering memorandum from Quandt to Brzezinski is dated July 6. In the memorandum, Quandt noted Brzezinski's request for a “summary of recent reporting” and requested that he sign the attached memorandum to Carter.

² See footnote 7, Document 38.

—Dayan offered his view that in 30 years there has never been a better time to achieve a negotiated settlement.

Lewis-Dayan (June 30)

—They discussed the recent flap on the State Department announcement.³

—Dayan observed that a very well-known U.S. personality (presumably Hertzberg) had told him that the Mondale speech⁴ and State Department statement, if implemented, would spell “the end of Israel.” He referred specifically to the vagueness of pronouncements on peace and security guarantees for Israel.

—Dayan questioned the advisability of Secretary Vance coming to the Middle East so soon after the Begin visit and wondered if the next stage of negotiations might not better be held in the “more relaxed atmosphere in Washington.”

—Dayan indicated that the present government could not do less on settlements than the previous Labor Government. Lewis argued for a moratorium on settlements. Dayan said it could not be “put on ice.”

Hertzberg-Begin (July 1)

—“Begin will not be carrying a piece of the West Bank with him when he comes to the U.S.” (Presumably meaning he will not be prepared to make commitments on withdrawal.)

—Begin will be going to Washington “not just to negotiate, but also to educate.”

—Begin will probably press to return to the concept of 242, and ask the U.S. to drop the emphasis on “homeland” which 242 does not contain.

—Hertzberg is convinced that Yadin will join the cabinet.

In a separate interview in Israel, Hertzberg took vigorous exception to the Brookings Report and the Rogers Plan.⁵ (“U.S. Jewry will fight with all their strength, with all their heart and soul . . . to convince [them] that this is a bad plan.”)⁶ He also warned that if U.S.-Israel relations developed into a full confrontation, this would “push this region into another war.”

³ See footnote 3, Document 44. The Israeli Government issued a statement on June 28, in response to the State Department announcement, denying that Israel was unwilling to discuss the occupied territories in peace negotiations. (“Israelis Are Irked by U.S. Statement,” *New York Times*, June 29, 1977, p. 1)

⁴ See footnote 2, Document 40.

⁵ For the Rogers Plan, see footnote 9, Document 21. The Brookings Report refers to a 1975 report written by a study group at the Brookings Institute. The report examined the requirements for achieving an Arab-Israeli peace settlement.

⁶ Brackets in the original.

49. Memorandum for the Files of a Meeting With President Carter¹

Washington, July 7, 1977

RE

Meeting with Jewish Leadership—July 6, 1977

The Vice President—opened the meeting making the point that he had participated in all Presidential discussions with Arab leaders and that the President had left no doubt in these meetings of his own commitment to Israel—its survival and security. The Vice President affirmed the President's view that peace would have to be an indispensable prerequisite for a settlement with Israel's neighbors.

Secretary of State Cyrus Vance—Stated that Israel and the U.S. shared the same objective. He said that there were three core substantive issues and one procedural issue at the core of U.S. Policy. These are: 1. the nature of peace, 2. territories and borders, 3. the Palestinian question. On the Palestinian question he said the Arabs themselves are split on the nature of this entity. On the procedural question—he said the U.S. would neither negotiate with nor recognize the PLO until they have recognized Israel and "242." Vance said he would return for another round of discussions with Arab and Israeli leaders after Begin's visit. He still hopes for a Geneva conference in the Fall. He also said the parties would have to negotiate between themselves the terms of a peace settlement.

Vance further mentioned that there are three billion dollars worth of arms under consideration for Israel; that one hundred fifteen million has just been approved and that the monthly purchase is approximately One hundred forty million.

Dr. Brzezinski—made three basic points:

1. We will not deceive Israel nor the Jewish Community;
 2. We will not betray the fundamental moral problem Israel faces;
- and
3. We will not compel or threaten Israel's security.

¹ Source: Carter Library, Staff Office Files, Records of the White House Office of Counsel to the President—Robert Lipshutz, Box 35, Middle East: Miscellaneous Information, 7/77–9/79 [CF, O/A 712]. No classification marking. Prepared by Joyce R. Starr. According to the President's Daily Diary, the meeting took place from 1:24 to 2:40 p.m. (Carter Library, Presidential Materials, President's Daily Diary) In his diary, Carter estimated that the meeting included "about fifty leaders in the American Jewish community, the presidents of organizations." (*White House Diary*, p. 67)

He said we are in an unusually favorable position; that the Soviet Union is out of the Middle East in a strategic sense because Israel has demonstrated that Soviet aid to the Arab countries does not pay off. Dr. Brzezinski emphasized that none of the Arab countries are inclined to play the Soviet card at this time; also, that at this period in history there is a moderate Arab leadership in power. He went on to say that if the stalemate continues there will be a decline in the hopes for peace settlement. The Arab world is in the process of militarization (he gave the example of Algeria's sustained conflict against France, suggesting that Israel faces a parallel situation). Dr. Brzezinski said he would like to see a process set in motion such that negotiations between the Arabs and Israelis would create the pre-conditions for Israel to play a leading role in that region. He underscored that Israel and the United States are fundamentally congruent, morally and strategically.

Rabbi Schindler—spoke about the apprehensions of the Jewish community. He made the point that much of what has been said by the Administration has been equated by the Jewish community with an erosion of America's commitment to Israel; that mere verbal promises and words from the Arab world are not reassuring to Israel or the American Jewish community. He was emphatic on the point that the Administration's pronouncements have aroused apprehensions in Israel and raised expectations in the Arab world.

Gordon Zachs—United Jewish Appeal—He said the concern of the American Jewish community is one of perception. The perception is that there has been an important erosion in the definition of peace as articulated by The President. Since Rabin's visit, the Government has articulated more of what it expects from the Israelis than of what it expects from the Arabs. Zachs went on to pose two questions: 1. What is the readiness of the Arab leaders to enter into a real peace settlement. 2. Has the Administration altered its definition of peace. Vance responded no to the second question and to the first, said that the reaction of the Arabs has been varied. One Arab leader, for example, has indicated that he understands the need for trade and open borders between the Israelis and Arabs. Another says that these are inevitable and a third is more intransigent.

Bernice Tannenbaum, Hadassah—Said that not one of the Arab leaders has enunciated a definition of peace even close to that of the Administration. The Administration has been silent on that issue.

The Vice President responded by again reaffirming the Administration's commitment to peace and the security of Israel.

Dr. Brzezinski also made a comment that the Arabs may in fact anticipate a "second stage," but if we can forge an enduring peace with self enforcing security arrangements we may be able to preclude this second stage.

Richard Maass, AJC—Concerned that the Administration has prejudged the matter of borders. He referred to Dr. Brzezinski's earlier statements on defensible lines. (previous meeting).²

The President then spoke—he said we do not intend to impose a settlement—it must be done mutually by the nations that have to live there—Israelis must feel that their sense of security will not deteriorate and this can be done through demilitarized zones, etc. Some of the Arab leaders are very eager for a settlement privately—The President said he also intends to demonstrate his confidence in Prime Minister Begin when he comes to the United States and hopes they will form a close personal friendship. He has no intention of being overly strong toward Begin.

Rabbi Schindler—complimented the President on the healing he has brought to this nation and told him he was the vessel through which 2,000 years of Jewish history was acting itself out. He said that the Jewish leaders did not come to this meeting with a spirit of difference, but that they were concerned that the President's words would be perceived as American policy to be imposed on the Israelis. Schindler read statements from the Arab leaders re-enforcing his point that they were not prepared for peace.

Frank Wattenberg, UJA—disturbed that the American Jewish community will be used to pressure Israel into a peace settlement. The President of the Detroit Federation said we should not give the appearance of having drawn back on our promises to Israel. The Palestinian homeland concept seems to have translated into "a State" and this fills the American Jewish community with fear.

Naomi Levine, President, American Jewish Congress—Again emphasized the fear that the Administration will support a separate state and the Jewish community finds this most terrifying.

Eugene Gold, National Conference on Soviet Jewry—Raised the Scharansky issue³—Said that the Jewish community finds it absolutely pivotal. Asked for personal intervention by the President on behalf of Scharansky, and suggested that there should be direct linkage between the Scharansky case and our trade relations with the Soviet Union.

Arthur Goldberg—Two optimistic notes; 1. that the U.S. would be in a position now to use its good offices towards negotiation of a peace settlement, and 2. that all parties concerned had accepted "242."

The President spoke—Made the point that the Arabs gain world opinion when they emphasize Administration positions that support

² See Document 34.

³ A reference to Anatoly Sharansky, a Soviet Jewish dissident who worked for human rights. Soviet authorities arrested him in March 1977 on charges of spying for the United States, and he was convicted in July 1978 to 13 years of forced labor.

their own cause—that the same kind of support is rarely forthcoming from Israel or the Jewish community. This makes Israel appear more recalcitrant—He said he would like to see the American Jewish community and Israel grab the positive aspects of peace and put the Arabs on the defensive for a change. He mentioned France as a nation that condemned Israel.

On the question of borders the President said these might well be different from defense position—The American Jewish community in Israel ought to be so insistent on positive aspects of American policy that even if the Arabs plan a war in ten years world opinion would go against them making this impossible. Continuing on the question of Arab perceptions, the President said he challenges anyone to find an Arab leader that would doubt the United States commitment to Israel. He said that we will never repeat what Secretary Kissinger and President Ford did by withholding support for Israel.⁴ On the Palestinian question he said that we see it as tied in to Jordan and as an independent State would be a direct threat to Israel and could be captured by any of the Arab nations. He said that Syria, Egypt and Jordan were in agreement with this position even if they were not willing to state it publicly, they had done so privately.

The President emphasized that it is important for him to maintain a position of trust with the Arabs—although politically it would be much easier for him to be forcefully pro-Israel. He asked for a public expression of consensus for those aspects of his policy the American Jewish community felt it could support. He stressed the need to place the onus for disharmony on the Arabs' side for a change which they have so shrewdly done to the Israelis.

He stated that he has no specific solution for a peace settlement in his mind.

Secretary Vance interjected the point again that there are three billion in arms in the pipeline for Israel.

F-16—in principle, there is agreement. The questioning is how many and when.

Chariot—more difficult, a legal question.

Hydrofoil—A question of further study.

⁴ In the spring of 1975, Ford called for a reassessment of U.S. relations with Israel after negotiations between Egypt and Israel over a second disengagement agreement broke down. Ford and Kissinger argued that Israel had created the obstacles that broke down the negotiations in March 1975. See *Foreign Relations, 1969–1976*, vol. XXVI, Arab-Israeli Dispute, 1974–1976, Document 166.

50. Summary of a Policy Review Committee Meeting¹

Washington, July 12, 1977, 4–5:30 p.m.

PARTICIPANTS

<i>State:</i>	<i>CIA</i>
Secretary Cyrus Vance	Admiral Stansfield Turner
(Chairman)	Robert Bowie
Alfred L. Atherton, Jr.	<i>NSC</i>
<i>Defense</i>	Zbigniew Brzezinski
Secretary Harold Brown	David Aaron
David E. McGiffert	William Quandt
<i>JCS</i>	
General George S. Brown	
Lt. General William Y. Smith	

1. *Chariot Tank.* The group agreed that we should allow Israel to use \$107 million in FMS credits to expand the production line on the Chariot tank, but this decision should be included in a post-Begin visit arms package. Secretary Vance will meet with the Humphrey subcommittee² this week on the non-lethal items for Egypt and on F-15s for Iran. If asked about Chariots, he will say that he is inclined to recommend in favor of the request, provided that the question of future Israeli exports can be resolved.

2. *Begin Visit.* It was the PRC's consensus that the President should open the meeting with Prime Minister Begin with a broad overview of our strategic assessment and of the basic elements of our policy. It should be made clear that we are not trying to impose these views, but that they represent our best judgment on the likely outcome of comprehensive peace negotiations, and are also in our judgment fair to all parties. If Israel can do better in negotiations, we will not be an obstacle. The President should anticipate that Begin may argue against any preconditions for Geneva and may propose an alternative approach of limited agreements in Sinai and Golan, plus a refugee settlement. Concerning the idea of a US-Israel security treaty, the group generally felt

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Brzezinski Office File, Country Chron File, Box 31, Middle East: 7–8/77. Top Secret; Sensitive. The meeting took place in the White House Situation Room. An attached undated covering memorandum from Brzezinski to the President requested approval of the summary of the meeting, of whether the five principles were satisfactory, and of the general approach recommended by the PRC for handling the Chariot tank request. Carter indicated his approval of all three and in a handwritten note next to the Chariot tank request approval wrote, "I'll make final decision after Tuesday." Carter was presumably referring to Tuesday, July 19, after his meeting with Begin.

² Senator Hubert Humphrey's Subcommittee on Foreign Assistance of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations.

that it was premature to raise this with Begin, but that it might be desirable at a later stage.

3. *Principles.* The PRC agreed that Secretary Vance should discuss the attached list of draft principles with Begin.³ On each point, he would be prepared to expand orally upon our views, but the object of the written list as it stands would be to try to get Israeli and Arab acceptance of these principles as a common framework for negotiations. We should tell Begin that we will be discussing the same list with the Arab leaders during Secretary Vance's upcoming trip. The principles do not mention the 1967 lines or a link of a Palestinian entity to Jordan, but Vance would discuss our position on these issues with each of the leaders. If Begin accepts the points, or agrees to consider them, then we will work on gaining Arab acceptance. If he completely refuses the idea of agreed principles, we will nonetheless take them to the Arab leaders, as we promised we would do. This could, however, become politically controversial if it results in the appearance of the US and the Arabs lining up against Israel before Geneva.

4. *Palestinian Representation.* While none of the options in the attached paper is fully satisfactory, it was felt that we should discuss them with Begin and get his views. We would hope to resolve this in pre-Geneva procedural talks.

5. *Pre-Geneva Process.* Regardless of how the discussion of draft principles goes, we should raise with Begin, and later with the Arab leaders, the idea of some form of pre-Geneva talks, ostensibly to discuss procedures, but also to develop common ground on substance. One possibility would be for the Foreign Ministers to come to Washington in September before the UN General Assembly session.

6. *AWACS for Iran.* In view of Congressional criticism of the sale of 7 AWACS to Iran,⁴ a working group should develop guidance for use by Administration officials in testimony or in answering questions. In brief, the AWACS will contribute to Iran's defensive capability; Iran is in a sensitive area of the world; and the alternative of a ground-based radar system would be both more expensive and require more US technicians. The sale will be treated as an exception to PD-13.⁵

7. *Follow-on actions.*

(1) State will prepare the basic briefing paper for the Begin visit in line with today's discussion.

³ The draft principles are in a July 11 paper that is not attached. A copy is in the Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Materials, Middle East File, Subject File, Box 66, Peace Negotiations 1977 Vol. I [IV]. See the Attachment to Document 54.

⁴ In June, the Carter administration announced plans to sell seven AWACS aircraft to Iran, which led to significant criticism from Congress and the media.

⁵ Document 33.

(2) State in coordination with the NSC staff, will prepare a paper on how to amplify orally each of the draft principles.

(3) State, in coordination with the NSC Staff, will prepare a paper on pre-Geneva procedural talks.

(4) A working group from State, Defense and NSC will develop guidance on the reasons for the sale of 7 AWACS to Iran.

51. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) to President Carter¹

Washington, undated

SUBJECT

Message from Arafat

Yasir Arafat, [*less than 1 line not declassified*] has asked that the following message be relayed to the U.S. He is willing to make a public statement clearly implying the PLO's willingness to live in peace with Israel, with Israel and Palestine enjoying mutually acceptable and secure borders. He stressed that his proposed message would be unambiguous ("no possibility of two meanings"). He also indicated that he was prepared to make an "even more blunt statement in secret" to you. His condition for such a statement would be a U.S. commitment to the establishment of an independent Palestinian "state unit entity."² The PLO contact said there was "no objection to this with Jordan," but that would have to be worked out with the Arab states. He rejected Hussein's idea of a United Arab Kingdom.³ The PLO contact, apparently on his own, expanded on the Palestinians' willingness to live at peace with Israel within demilitarized states, which might take 20 years to build.

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Subject File, Box 3, Arab-Israeli Peace Settlement 1977: Volume II [II]. Secret. Outside the System. Sent for information. An attached July 19 covering memorandum from Quandt to Brzezinski has a handwritten note on the bottom of the page that reads, "hand carried to Pres, 7/19/77."

² In telegram 167355 to the White House, July 18, which repeated the text of telegram 3440 from Beirut, Vance alerted Brzezinski to the message from Arafat. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Cables File, Middle East, Box 40, 7/77)

³ See footnote 4, Document 30.

Open borders, diplomatic relations, etc. would occur in the “natural current of events.”⁴

⁴ In a handwritten note at the bottom of the page, Carter wrote, “Zbig—If PLO publicly and privately meets minimum requirement of Kissinger-Israel commitment, we will begin discussions with them. Get message to them. J.” Kissinger’s minimum requirement is found in footnote 11, Document 32. No follow-up message to the PLO has been found.

52. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, July 19, 1977, 11:15 a.m.–1:10 p.m.

PRESIDENT’S MEETING WITH PRIME MINISTER BEGIN OF ISRAEL

PARTICIPANTS

The President
The Vice President
Secretary of State Cyrus Vance
Dr. Zbigniew Brzezinski
Assistant Secretary of State Alfred L. Atherton, Jr.
Ambassador Samuel Lewis
Mr. David Aaron
Mr. William B. Quandt
Mr. Hamilton Jordan
Mr. Stuart Eizenstat
Mr. Robert Lipshutz
Mr. Jody Powell
Mr. Jerry Schecter

Prime Minister Menahem Begin
Ambassador Simcha Dinitz
Mr. Shmuel Katz
Mr. Hanan Bar-On
Mr. Yehiel Kadishai
Mr. Eliahu Mizrahi
General Ephraim Poran
Mr. Yehuda Avner

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Subject File, Box 66, Middle East: Peace Negotiations 1977 Volume I [II]. Top Secret; Sensitive. The meeting took place in the White House Cabinet Room. Begin visited the United States for his first international visit since taking office in June. After 2 days of talks in Washington, Begin visited New York for a day.

President: I am very grateful and honored that you are able to be here today. There is a great deal of interest in our country concerning these talks and there is a sense of anticipation. We have already been able to develop a good personal friendship and I think that this will help to minimize any differences we might have in the future and to maximize the areas of agreement. We have a chance to discuss any matters that you wish this morning, and this evening there will be a supper with about 45 other participants, the largest of these dinners we have had, and after dinner I would like to meet privately with the Prime Minister. Then again tomorrow we will talk. So we don't need to rush and we can discuss issues in detail. My Cabinet is also at your disposal and we are eager to make your stay here profitable.

We would like to discuss with you how we can work together with you and with your Arab neighbors in the search for peace in the Middle East. We have assumed a position of responsibility as one of the co-chairmen of the Geneva Conference, and, before you became Prime Minister, we met with all of the other Middle East leaders. To begin, let me describe some of the principles that we have evolved, not as a blueprint, but rather to give you an idea of what we have discussed. Secretary Vance will go to the Middle East soon, but will leave Israel for his last stop so that he will arrive as late as possible. You can work this out with him.

Our only goal is a comprehensive peace settlement. We have no plan and we have no preconditions for negotiations. We recognize that no outsider can impose a settlement and that this would not be desirable in any case. We want to be an intermediary who is trusted by both sides. It has been my practice to tell Prime Minister Rabin, President Assad, President Sadat, and King Hussein the same thing. We recognize that our success can only be based on eventual agreement among the parties, and not their agreement with us, so we have no conceived plan. We are there to help as an intermediary and as a chairman of the Geneva Conference, if it takes place.

The basis for our hopes rests on two documents that have been accepted by both parties: Resolutions 242 and 338. Although the parties interpret these differently, the resolutions do give us a good foundation and represent a major step. We have tried to understand the nuances of wording and the interpretation of the words by each side.

I have tried to expand on Resolution 242 in one major area—to define what is meant by a comprehensive peace. 242 only talks about the end of the state of belligerency. But I believe that peace must also include open borders, trade, friendship, student exchanges, transportation across borders, and diplomatic recognition. In short, peace should involve normalization of relations in their entirety. We have defined this in the same way with all of the leaders. This is a difficult concept

for the Arab leaders. King Hussein is most amenable. President Sadat sees some possibility of this, as he told me privately, and he thinks that it could be achieved within a few years. He has mentioned five years publicly. President Assad pointed out that 18 months ago he would not have been able to make the kind of public commitment that he has made to negotiations and to peace with Israel, but now he is also able to say that. So none of the leaders have disavowed the concept, but they have stressed how difficult it will be to bring about such changes.

The territorial issue is also difficult. We do not have any maps or borders in mind. The borders will have to be mutually agreed, and they should be defensible and security should be assured. The borders should also be recognized, and this is something that you will have to settle in negotiations with your neighbors.

The last question involves the refugees. This is mentioned in the UN Resolutions. Whether the Palestinians should have an area that they can control locally or whether they should have a separate nation, as the Arabs propose, is a matter for negotiations. We have not thought a separate Palestinian state would be advisable, and we prefer that a homeland be tied to Jordan, but we have no plan to put forward. We have discussed this in the same way with all of the leaders. Another difficult question for the Arabs to solve is how to bring the Palestinians into the discussions. If there is a meeting in Geneva, we understand the Israeli position, and as you know, there are some differences among the Arabs themselves. President Sadat, and King Hussein to a lesser extent, favor Palestinian representation as part of a Jordanian delegation. President Assad prefers a single Arab delegation and thinks that it should negotiate as a single body. Others feel that each state should have its own delegation and should deal directly with you. We have not violated any confidences and we will not reveal any positions that would embarrass any of the leaders.

After our discussions and after Secretary Vance's trip to the area, it might be a good idea for him to visit Israel last in order to report to you on the Arab attitudes. We want to accommodate your desires on this. I am eager to hear your views on how to proceed and on our role. I would also like to hear your thoughts on how the Arabs should perform to show their good faith. You might also want to discuss how Israel can take steps to help convince the Arabs to negotiate. Neither side now trusts the other and neither side fully trusts us. We want to win that trust. I would like to hear your views and I would be glad to answer any questions that you have. We will try to present your views to the Arabs as clearly as possible. We are also eager to see you and your neighbors negotiate directly. We have no desire to be an intermediary, and as soon as they show a willingness to negotiate directly, that will be fine. Let me repeat that you are very welcome here.

Prime Minister Begin: Mr. President, may I start with a word of praise for Ambassador Lewis. He is the most popular diplomat in Israel. My Foreign Minister and I have full confidence in him. That confidence has been already of great importance as was proved the night before I left Israel. We had information on movements of Egyptian forces and we have to be very careful. We made a mistake in October 1973. We had all the necessary information, but the intelligence was evaluated poorly. We suffered a great deal in that war and we can't let that happen again. We did not mobilize this time, but we did strengthen our position in the south. I called the US Ambassador and I asked him to find out about Egyptian intentions. These were clarified to our satisfaction and it proves that confidence can lead to good results. On Lebanon we have also talked with Ambassador Lewis. I told him that we do not want any Lebanese territory; that we do not want war; and that we will not let down our Christian allies. We have been a minority in the past, but we are not one now. Please show the President the map.² (General Poran produces map of South Lebanon, with Muslim, Christian, and Druze villages indicated.) As you can see, the Christians are outnumbered. There are five thousand members of the PLO who live in their midst and who shell their villages every night. We come to their rescue and we aim our artillery at the sources of fire that threaten the Christian villages. Otherwise, they would be wiped out. The fourth point I made to Ambassador Lewis about South Lebanon is that we will not take you by surprise. We will consult you if any contingencies arise. It is fair to say that we will not let the Christian minority be destroyed. That is our main concern.

President: Do you feel that the central government is the best protector of the Christians in the long run?

Prime Minister Begin: Yes, President Sarkis himself is a Christian, but he is helpless. The PLO almost destroyed Lebanon.

President: Our inclination is to give him some military assistance.

Prime Minister Begin: That's a good idea, but then a complete solution to the PLO in the south will still be required. For now, the PLO only attacks the Christians, but later they might aim at us. We want real quiet. We basically agree to the idea of your helping the Lebanese army.

President: That would be preferable to a UN force.

Prime Minister Begin: Early this morning I received an appeal from the ruler of Ethiopia.³ He wants direct help against the Muslim Arab groups that are invading Eritrea and which threaten to dismember

² The map is not attached and has not been found.

³ Mengistu Haile Mariam, President of Ethiopia from February 1977.

Ethiopia. This makes a great impression on us. Ethiopia has been hostile to the United States, but now he wants to improve relations. We received this message from the head of Ethiopian Intelligence. I promised that I would consult with my Foreign Minister and my Defense Minister to see what we could do. We need to try to save Ethiopia from being taken by the Soviets. This may be the propitious time. Ethiopia has proclaimed itself to be a Marxist-Leninist state, but now we have new developments. They have been disappointed by Soviet aid. This may be the time to turn the tables.

President: We had an aid program to Ethiopia when we were asked to leave. Mengistu turned his back on us and we have been quite concerned about developments there. I am interested in the message that you received.

Prime Minister Begin: We are still there.

Dr. Brzezinski: Does Mengistu know of this message?

Prime Minister Begin: Of course, It is from Mengistu to me through Intelligence channels. He thinks it is a propitious time for change. If things can be changed in Ethiopia, this would be very good. The Ambassador can translate the message and give it to the Secretary of State.

Now, to our problem, Mr. President. We cannot allow our people to be destroyed. In my book,⁴ I used the word “tertiated” instead of “decimated” to describe what happened to our people. One in three were killed. This is what happened to us in Europe. No one came to our rescue. We could not do anything. Our country was under British rule and in 1939 the British issued a White Paper calling for the creation of a Palestinian state which would have an Arab majority of two-thirds. They were prepared to carry this out with all the physical pressure available to them. When the boats came to Israel filled with people trying to save themselves from hell, the British turned them away and told them that they would never see Palestine. So we began to fight to save our people. If we had not, we would have gone under. Until then, with the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate established at San Remo in 1922,⁵ we had begun the great return to our home.

⁴ Apparently a reference to Begin’s 1951 book entitled *The Revolt: The Story of the Irgun*.

⁵ Regarding the Balfour Declaration, see footnote 2, Document 14. Held from April 19 to 26, 1920, in San Remo, Italy, the San Remo Conference, attended by the United Kingdom, France, Italy, and Japan, determined Class “A” mandates in the Middle East carved from the former Ottoman Empire. The United Kingdom received the mandate for Palestine and Iraq. On April 25, the San Remo Resolution incorporated the Balfour Declaration into Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations, which had established the mandate system.

Already in 1920, the Arabs began to attack the Jews. There were terrible atrocities. Jabotinsky,⁶ who was my master and teacher, led the fight of self defense. In 1921, the Arabs again attacked in Jaffa. And this time civilians were killed. In 1929, once again all over the country there were hundreds who were killed by the Arabs. Then from 1936 to 1939, for three years there was permanent bloodshed. The only real peace that we had was during the four and one-half years when we were fighting against the British. None of the Arabs helped us against the British. There was real peace then, but on November 30, 1947, just twenty-four hours after the UN resolution on partition, the Arabs attacked again. That war only ended in January 1948. Then a civil war broke out up until May 1948. Their aim was to destroy us. On May 15 and 16, 1948, just after Israel's independence, the military invasion began. We were invaded by the Jordanian Arab Legion, the Egyptians and the Syrians. We had to fight. There were only 650,000 Jews in those days, and we had to fight three armies, plus the Iraqis. All in all, seven Arab countries went to war against us. I am not exaggerating when I say that sometimes we had to fight with our bare hands and sometimes with homemade arms that didn't always work. We lost one percent of our population in that war, 6000 people. That would now mean 30,000, and you can imagine how many it would mean to the United States to lose one percent of its population.

But we survived and we achieved our independence, and we began to bring in our people, especially from the Arab countries. 800,000 came from the Arab countries, and 400,000 Arabs left. We did not want them to leave. I myself wrote a pamphlet which was translated into Arabic urging them not to leave. But their leaders asked them to leave so that they could march on Tel Aviv unimpeded. We faced the possibility of destruction in our own land, and the bloodshed was permanent. Within the Armistice Demarcation Lines⁷ for 19 years we never had one day of peace. The conflict now is not about territory. We did not occupy Sinai and Golan and Judea and Samaria for nineteen years, and yet we had permanent bloodshed. The PLO was organized in 1964, and it adopted in its charter a statement saying that the foundation of Israel is null and void. The bloodshed has gone on permanently. My grandchild was bombed in Jerusalem. They were able to reach the outskirts of Tel Aviv. There were attacks on Shafir and students were killed. We lost 1500 people in these skirmishes, up until the Sinai campaign of 1956. In the Sinai war, the British and the French knew in ad-

⁶ Ze'ev Jabotinsky played a major role in the establishment of Revisionist Zionism, a right-of-center political movement within Zionism. He also helped found and lead the Irgun, a militant underground Zionist organization.

⁷ A reference to the lines negotiated between Israel and its Arab neighbors at Rhodes in 1949. See footnote 5, Document 18.

vance, but we were fighting for our national self-defense. Most of the attacks against us were coming from the Gaza Strip. We occupied Sinai and then we were forced to retreat by both the Soviet Union and the United States working through the UN. I visited the United States in those days and I met Mr. McCormack and Mr. Knowland, leaders in the Congress, and they told me that President Eisenhower and Secretary of State Dulles were considering going to the Security Council for sanctions against Israel. But the leaders of both of these parties said that there would be no sanctions against Israel, because Israel had fought for its life. But Israel did submit anyway. Golda Meir has told me that she was promised by Secretary Dulles that no Egyptian forces would enter Gaza, but, within twenty-four hours after Israeli forces left, the Egyptians came in and carried out terrible atrocities against those who had welcomed us. Ben Gurion got very angry. He felt that the pledge he had been given was not being carried out. He sent Golda Meir to see Secretary Dulles, and she was received and asked about the promise. His answer was "What can be done? Are you going to start another war over this?" When the Six-Day war came, we had very violent fighting in the Gaza area against both Egyptian and Palestinian forces. We lost hundreds of men there.

In May of 1967, I remember being at the Independence Day parade when we got news of Egypt's mobilization in Sinai. For two weeks we were surrounded by a ring of steel. There were more tanks facing us than those that Germany had sent against the Soviet Union in 1941. All of the Arab capitals were calling for our death, and wanting to throw us into the sea. There were demonstrations in Cairo, in Baghdad, and elsewhere. They were using real Nazi-like language. We were still within the "green line" in those days, just eight miles between our border and the sea. The Egyptians were in Gaza also, and we were threatened in the north from the Golan Heights. They also threatened us from the east, where the Arab Legion confronted us with tanks, even though they had promised not to send tanks to that area. We formed a Government of National Unity. People were afraid for their lives. Mrs. Dayan said that she had knives ready to fight. We were outnumbered and outgunned. On Sunday we had an all-day meeting in the Cabinet and we decided to take the initiative. The Six-Day war was an act of legitimate self-defense to save ourselves from total destruction.

President Kennedy during the second Cuban confrontation said that the hour of maximum national peril does not arise with the start of shooting, but rather before. Our hour of maximum peril was before the war began. We acted in a spirit of legitimate self-defense. Your predecessors gave us the same assessment. President Johnson talked of this as a war that was thrust upon us. We defended ourselves, had victory, and salvation. We saved our children. This was ten years ago.

Now you can see that national security is not an excuse for expansion. We have always believed in our right to Eretz Israel,⁸ but we will not make war to achieve that right. We will do it by peaceful means. National security is meant to protect the lives of our civilians. Let me show you a second map.⁹ (The map shows Israel, with its concentrations of population, and with the borders desired by the Arab countries.) Sadat wants our complete withdrawal and the creation of a Palestinian state in Judea and Samaria, plus a corridor to Gaza. This corridor would cut across our country. What would the result be? Here is a point just nine miles from our shore near Netanya. Here the country can be cut in two in a few minutes. The Arab countries have over ten thousand tanks, and we have 3000 or more. Fortunately, we also have good tankers, but it is only nine miles to the sea. Here you see the bulk of our civilian population. Modern Soviet artillery has a range of 43 kilometers, 800 meters. It can reach our population centers.

Demilitarization may work in the desert, but it cannot work in a populated area. Jerusalem was proclaimed a demilitarized area, but it never was on either side before 1967. We had to militarize our side and the other side did as well. We cannot play with the lives of our children. Two million Israelis live in this area around Tel Aviv. Any home can be hit. Men would not be able to defend their women and children. (The Prime Minister pauses.) There was a time in our history when men could not defend their women and children and we will never let this happen again. And that would be the situation if we went back to the 1967 lines. The maximum width of our country would only be twenty miles. We would lose the chance for peace because the Arabs would look at the map and would conclude that they could push us to the sea. Please excuse my emotions.

Our concept of national security is not based on aggrandizement or expansion. But our fathers and mothers got killed only because they were Jews and we do not want this for our children. Let me talk now about negotiations. I submit that for too long Israel has been an exception to normal rules. Rules have not applied to Jews. But now we have our own country, liberated by our own efforts. Rules should apply to us as they do to anyone else. We ask for direct, face-to-face negotiations. I have paid great attention to what I heard yesterday¹⁰ and there are many areas of agreement between the United States and Israel. We are for direct negotiations, with no preconditions, and with no prior

⁸ Eretz Israel refers to the Hebrew term “Eretz Yisrael,” which means the Land of Israel.

⁹ The map is not attached and has not been found.

¹⁰ Possibly a reference to comments made when Secretary Vance and other U.S. officials met Begin when he arrived at Andrews Air Force Base on July 18. (“Begin, in Washington, Voices Hope for a ‘Real Peace’,” *New York Times*, July 19, 1977, p. 3)

commitments. If President Sadat makes a proposal, he can do so. We will discuss his ideas and we will react. He is entitled to do so. But we will not agree in advance to that map before negotiations even begin. Negotiations must be free of prior conditions.

We all stand in Israel for a united Jerusalem as our capital. Only the Communists disagree and they only have five seats out of 120 in the Knesset. All of the Knesset is united on this point and we shall express our opinion, but the Arabs do not have to agree to this in advance before negotiations. That would be a precondition. We do not ask or give prior commitments. As is usual after a war, there should be peace treaties.

President: Do you consider Resolutions 242 and 338 as preconditions?

Prime Minister Begin: We accept them.

President: As the basis for negotiations?

Prime Minister Begin: Yes, but we should be free of demands for prior conditions.

President: When you say that, is that contrary to the idea that 242 and 338 are the basis for negotiations? It would help if you could say that they are the basis for negotiations.

Prime Minister Begin: I'll say it publicly. Yes, sir. Now let me turn to the framework of peace. I have a proposal which has been adopted by the Cabinet. I had a hard time keeping it secret. Everyone wanted to know about it, but I felt that you should be the first one to hear about it, so I have brought it to you. Let me cover the main elements and I will leave a copy with you.

Point One. Israel favors a reconvening of the Geneva Peace Conference by the two co-chairmen. According to Article III of Resolution 338, there should be negotiations between the parties concerned under appropriate auspices. We acknowledge that Resolution 338 includes 242. There is no doubt about our attitude on these two documents or about Geneva.

Point Two. Who shall participate?

President: This is your chance to make real news. (Laughter.)

Prime Minister Begin: I will be telling the press about our proposal. The participants should be the accredited delegations of the sovereign states of Israel, Egypt, Syria and Jordan. Syria did not attend before, but probably this time it will. We can talk later about what we will do if they refuse to come on this basis and insist on the PLO.

Point Three. The states should go to Geneva with no prior conditions and no demands for prior commitments. Geneva should begin with public sessions, and then three mixed commissions should be formed: Egypt-Israel, Syria-Israel, Jordan-Israel. These should be

mixed commissions such as existed at Rhodes. This is not new for the Arabs. They sat with us before. We want to negotiate peace treaties, so we suggest three mixed commissions. Their goal would be negotiation of peace treaties.

Point Four. I was pleased to see recently that the State Department recently said that peace treaties were an important objective.¹¹ If we can get agreement on that, it would be very important. In the past, we have talked about the essence of peace—diplomatic relations, trade, and so forth. We don't need that. In international law, when one says peace treaty, that includes the termination of the state of war, and then a chapter on territories, which will spell out the permanent boundaries, and then a chapter on diplomatic relations and economic clauses. There were peace treaties signed after both World Wars I and II. The U.S. also signed a treaty with Japan along these lines. But first the state of war must end, and then good relations must be defined. So let us try to negotiate peace treaties, article by article. The chairmanship of the mixed commissions would rotate, and the negotiations would be face-to-face. We will work on three separate peace treaties. This may take some time, but when it is done, we will reconvene the Geneva Conference to sign. This is our proposal.

Going back to the question of participation, in case Egypt says they will not go to Geneva unless the PLO attends, then they will make the Geneva Conference impossible. The PLO was not there four years ago. If they insist, then they are responsible for Geneva not convening. Any change in the participants must be accepted by all. We cannot accept the PLO being there. My friend, Shmuel Katz, will describe how we see the PLO later. They have a charter which declares our state null and void. They want to destroy us. Therefore, we have no reason to negotiate with them. Our alternatives are:

1. Through the good offices of the United States, we would set up mixed commissions somewhere without Geneva. This could be done through normal diplomatic channels with U.S. good offices. We could start negotiations for a peace treaty in this way. In the Rhodes agreements of 1949, three mixed commissions met under Mr. Ralph Bunche, who represented the UN, but who really used his good offices on behalf of the United States. This led to the negotiation of armistice agreements which were accepted and signed and were meant to be a step toward peace. Twenty-nine years later and four wars later, we want that peace. We have an obligation to work for it.

2. The second alternative would be to adopt the idea suggested in 1972 of proximity talks¹² that might take place in New York. We accept

¹¹ See footnote 3, Document 44.

¹² Proximity talks would place Israelis and Egyptians in the same location, such as a hotel, and American officials would act as intermediaries passing proposals and information back and forth.

this method as well. The US can set up mixed commissions and negotiate through proximity talks.

That is the end of my remarks. I wanted to tell you about my people, our land, our suffering, and our care for the future as well. We do have to look to the future. I have made a serious proposal and I have an open mind to hear your ideas. We want to keep the momentum and to maintain direct contact. With God's help, we may eventually negotiate peace treaties.

President: Let me respond briefly. I think your major points are very clear. In some ways, they are very encouraging. I am sure your desire to go to the peace conference is genuine and I am grateful for that attitude. There are some obstacles that we see based on our long discussions with Arab leaders. First, let me say that we have no preference on the details of an ultimate agreement, nor on procedures, nor on any arrangements concerning the PLO. On the basis of President Sadat's public comments on July 16, which he made at my request,¹³ he seems to accept Resolutions 242 and 338, as does King Hussein. I think President Assad also does. Assad was very insistent that the Arabs negotiate as a unified body, not as individual nations. Sadat does not agree. Hussein also prefers individual delegations. My guess is that if Sadat and Hussein show strong leadership, Assad will agree to go to Geneva and to divide into national negotiating groups. This is my impression. There will be a need for us to meet them again and for them to coordinate their position on this.

A second problem we see has to do with territory. If Israel reserves the question of borders until Geneva, that would be adequate. You don't need to make any promises on final borders. You can just adopt the language of the UN Resolutions on withdrawal. Then the depth and the other arrangements can be discussed at Geneva. That would be an adequate degree of flexibility. But I want to speak frankly. On the question of the West Bank, of Judea and Samaria, it is very important for the Arabs. This has to be a subject of negotiations. For their people and for your people, the question of the West Bank will be important to keep open for discussions and not to be closed as a subject before negotiations begin. The attitude of your government to encourage new settlements could prevent a peace conference itself and I recognize how important this is to you. One of the concerns that was very acute here is the attitude of you and your government on settlements on the West Bank. It almost seems to close off any chance for negotiations.

¹³ See Document 44. On July 16, Sadat addressed a meeting of the Arab Socialist Union and stated Egypt's readiness to "end the state of war politically and legally with Israel and noted that for "the first time in its history, Israel's legal existence within its borders will be recognized." (Don Oberdorfer, "Sadat Bares New Saudi Arms Aid," *Washington Post*, July 17, 1977, p. 1)

The third question has to do with the PLO. Your predecessors' view, as I understood it, is that the PLO might attend Geneva as part of an Arab delegation or as part of the Jordanian delegation—at least as Palestinians, if not as the PLO. We also agreed in Sinai II that if the PLO were to recognize Israel's right to exist, then it might be possible for us to negotiate with them. We know that there is a question of whether you would then participate or not. We have refrained from contacts with representatives of the Palestinian organizations and we respect the agreement that we made with you. However, we have told the PLO through others that if they would endorse 242 publicly and if they were to acknowledge the right of Israel to exist in peace, then we would talk to them and listen to their position. This is difficult for us. My understanding, and perhaps I am wrong, is that Israel would meet with the PLO if the PLO or Palestinian leaders would acknowledge Israel's right to exist permanently as a free nation. So these are the three different questions that Arab leaders have raised with us: the framework of negotiations at Geneva, and for after the conference begins; the settlements on the West Bank of the Jordan which prejudice the outcome of negotiations; and some way for the PLO or Palestinians to be represented at Geneva. These are the most difficult and they might prevent further progress. Secretary Vance has met with the Arab leaders more than I have and he may want to add something or to correct me.

Secretary Vance: You have given an accurate summary of the Arab views. The issues as indicated are the question of borders, of the Palestinian entity, and the procedural question of Palestinian representation at Geneva. These are the critical issues, along with the definition of the nature of peace.

President: One possibility has been that the Palestinians might not be included at Geneva at the beginning, but when the question of the refugees is put on the agenda, they might come in then.

Prime Minister Begin: Arab refugees and Jewish refugees.

President: We have no objection to that. We have no preference on this. My motive is to keep the discussions open and flexible. There are some things on which each side feels very deeply, but we have no preconceived ideas.

Prime Minister Begin: Prime Minister Rabin did not agree to the PLO participating in a Jordanian delegation. His view was that Palestinian Arabs could be accepted within a Jordanian delegation. We too are Palestinians. Mr. Katz will describe our views on this later. To convene the Geneva Conference, we are agreeable to Palestinian Arabs being in the Jordanian delegation and we will not look at their credentials, but they cannot be PLO.

Dr. Brzezinski: I have a question. When you speak of three commissions, are these three bilateral commissions? Or are they mixed?

Prime Minister Begin: Mixed.

Dr. Brzezinski: Does that mean Israel plus three others, or Israel-Egypt, Israel-Jordan, Israel-Syria?

Prime Minister Begin: The latter. We see three simultaneous, separate procedures. They can talk day and night to reach agreement.

President: If before Geneva, or during Geneva, it is advisable for Lebanon to participate, would this be all right?

Prime Minister Begin: We would agree. I left them out because of the precedent. We don't want to change the composition of Geneva, but it would be all right.

President: I understand.

Prime Minister Begin: So we might have four mixed commissions.

President: There is no way to avoid the larger question of the refugees, both Palestinians and the Jews from Arab countries. On that issue, the two nations negotiating together might not be enough. Refugees have come from many countries, and on that subject, perhaps all four nations would have to meet?

Prime Minister Begin: I want to understand your question. Do you mean one Arab delegation?

President: I don't know. But on borders, it is obvious that Israel and Syria would have to agree, and Israel and Egypt, and so forth, but on the question of refugees, and the Palestinian question, Syria, Jordan, Egypt, and maybe Lebanon, might also participate. This could not be settled in separate bilateral negotiations.

Prime Minister Begin: We have no objection. That would be my first reaction.

Shmuel Katz: Let me show you another map.¹⁴ The Prime Minister referred to the Yom Kippur War. There were errors made then. We were fearful for our existence. When we speak of the PLO, we have in the back of our mind, whenever we consider the Palestinian problem, the threat posed by the entire Arab world. This map shows the problem as we see it. (Large map showing all Arab countries in red, with Israel in blue.) As of now, in all of the Arab states children in schools are taught that this is a single Arab world which must be unified and this unity must be restored by closing this little gap of Israel. There are 21 sovereign Arab countries. They occupy 12 million square kilometers. All of us understand why an Arab who grows up with that kind of indoctrination believes that it is his patriotic duty and his moral imperative to destroy Israel. The purposes of the Arab nation are those referred to in the PLO charter. They want to expel Israel from the great

¹⁴ The map is not attached and has not been found.

Arab homeland and then to purge Zionism from Palestine. It is important to the Arab nation as a whole. The fact that this is their purpose is expressed in various ways. I can quote from an Arab journal, *al-Mussawwar*, of December 1968. "The expulsion of our Palestinian brethren from their homes is no cause for anxiety, because they are now in Arab countries, but for the world to accept our struggle against Israel, it must be portrayed as the uprooted Palestinians against Israel." This shows that the Palestinian state is a recent idea to replace the idea of homeless refugees. This puts Israel in a position of a predator which has driven refugees out. Their scenario, based on a mythological history which has little relationship to fact, is reflected in Arafat's statement at the UN¹⁵ when he said that the Arab people have been engaged in cultivating Palestine for thousands of years and they have been the guardians of the holy places. This is in total contrast to the facts. In the American context, I would suggest that one read Mark Twain, in his book, *Innocents Abroad*, where he describes a trip to Palestine one hundred and ten years ago. He describes it as a desert country of weeds, mournful expanse, and desolation. Only the Jewish people ever claimed Palestine as a homeland or ever tried to build it up. They have been the only ones to develop it. Those who are described as Palestinian Arabs are in fact new immigrants. Some came in during the nineteenth century, but the largest Arab immigration to Palestine came after the Zionist revival of the country. We believe that those Arabs who did not flee in 1948 were probably the only ones who had deep roots in the country. Peasants after all do not flee, even in the midst of war. The Palestinian Arabs were told by their leaders to leave, but it was not natural that they would do so. Those who stayed are probably the only real local Arabs.

The term Palestinian until recently was applied to us. There were many organizations in the United States that included the name Palestine. For example, there was the League for Labor Palestine.¹⁶ (Mr. Katz proceeds to read a long list of such names.) All of these referred to the Zionist effort. Palestine was thought of as a Jewish country and was not claimed as an Arab center until modern times.

Prime Minister Begin: I would like to remind you that when the British Mandate was set up in 1922, in the preamble it stated that the League of Nations recognized the historical connection between the Jewish people and Palestine. Educated men knew that Palestine meant the land of Israel. The name Palestine originated after the Bar Kochba revolt in Roman times, when the area was renamed Syrie et Palestina.

¹⁵ See footnote 15, Document 10.

¹⁶ The League for Labor Palestine was a support group for the Labor Zionist movement.

This goes back 18 centuries. Since then, the word Palestine has existed. There has always been a historical connection between the Jews and Palestine.

Mr. Katz: In 1919, Faisal agreed with President Weizmann in a document that was signed between the Arab state and the “representative of Palestine,” which meant “of the Jews.” After the Mandate, the Arabs objected to the word Palestine, preferring the word South Syria. President Assad referred to Palestine just recently as southern Syria, and I can leave to your imagination the political implications of that usage. The Arabs did, after all, get three-quarters of the country, since both sides of the Jordan River are considered Palestine. By 1922, the British created Trans-Jordan and removed it from the Balfour Declaration’s terms. The Arabs built their state on the other side of the Jordan. The British were able to do this because the French gave up some of their claims to the West of Jordan. In 1919, the French took the position that a Jewish state should be established on both sides of the Jordan, since the western sector alone did not provide for adequate defense. The PLO claims both sides of the Jordan, and the Palestinians therefore already have a homeland on the east bank of Jordan.

On another point, although the PLO is organized and armed and trained by the Arab states, today it is also getting Soviet support. Arms reach the PLO through Iraq and Syria. There are some 30 to 36 training courses in the Soviet Union for the PLO.

Prime Minister Begin: I want to discuss the question you raised about settlements. This is a very serious matter for us. I want to speak with candor. No settlements will be allowed to become obstacles to negotiations. Jews and Arabs live together in Jaffa, in Haifa. There are many towns named Hebron in the United States, and many named Bethel and Shiloh.

President: Just 20 miles from my home town there is a Bethel and a Shiloh, each of which has a Baptist Church!

Prime Minister Begin: Imagine the Governor of a state declaring that all American citizens except Jews could go to live in those towns. Can we be expected, as the government of Israel, to prevent a Jew from establishing his home in the original Bethel? In the original Shiloh? These will not be an obstacle to negotiation. The word “non-negotiable” is not in our vocabulary. But this is a great moral issue. We cannot tell Jews in their own land that they cannot settle in Shiloh. We cannot do that. This is a serious issue to us. One day I hope you will come to visit Shiloh.

President: I have already been to Bethel.

Prime Minister Begin: You will find it interesting to see Shiloh. There are many Biblical stories about it.

President: I can tell you that this might prevent a Geneva Conference from even being convened. Even though you see this as no

problem for negotiations, my impression of the attitudes of the other leaders is that they would view this as a sign of bad faith on Israel's part. The previous government discouraged settlements, and I have no reason to draw conclusions, but I would not be responsible if I did not point this out to you. If you could say that there would be no new settlements until after you had met with the Arab leaders in Geneva, that would be a very constructive step.

Prime Minister Begin: Thank you, Mr. President.

President: We should adjourn now and our discussions can continue later. We can also talk tonight. I have one other question. We have frequent requests from Saudi Arabia concerning Israeli overflights. We have found Saudi Arabia helpful to us in bringing about a better attitude in Egypt, Jordan and Syria. They want peace because they sit on great wealth and they do not want war. I don't know how important these overflights are to you, but it would help if you could refrain from invading their air space. We have asked this before. If there is information that you need, we might be able to provide it for you in some form. It would help if you could refrain from these flights. This is a problem for us. If Israel wants peace, they wonder why you have to overfly their territory. It creates a feeling among the Arabs that Israel is not sincere about wanting to reduce tensions. I wanted you to know about this problem.

Prime Minister Begin: Yes, Mr. President. I am hearing about this for the first time. General Poran tells me that the Saudis have a base at Tabuk, which is a huge base aimed at us. So we need to overfly their territory. But I will consider your request when I get back home. If there is no risk to us, I will do what is possible. We want an atmosphere of goodwill. General Siilavasuo helped recently with the Egyptians and we exchanged some compliments with General Gamasy. So we want goodwill.

President: Gestures can help. If there is information that you need about Tabuk, we could ask the Saudis for a description of their plans and give you a reply. It would help if you could refrain from the flights.

Prime Minister Begin: The week after I return I will tell you. We will do our best.

President: I asked President Sadat recently to decrease his propaganda against Israel and to withdraw the excess troops in Sinai. He is also returning 19 bodies of Israeli war dead.

Prime Minister Begin: We appreciate that.

President: He also said in the last week that he supports the UN Resolutions and he did all of these things as a gesture of good faith. In the few weeks ahead, let's all try to lessen tensions. I have learned a lot from our talks and I appreciate your sharing with me your views. You

can continue your talks this afternoon with members of my Cabinet, and then we will review prospects tomorrow and summarize our positions.

Prime Minister Begin: With Secretary Brown, I would like to bring up the question of our defense requirements.

President: He is prepared to hear you on this.

Attachment

Paper Prepared by the Israeli Government¹⁷

July 7, 1977

THE FRAMEWORK FOR THE PEACE-MAKING PROCESS BETWEEN ISRAEL AND ITS NEIGHBORS

1. The Government of Israel will be prepared to participate, beginning October 10, 1977, in a new additional session of the Geneva Peace Conference to be convened by the two co-chairmen on the basis of Paragraph 3 of Security Council Resolution 338 of 21 October 1973 which states: (The Security Council) “decides that, immediately and concurrently with the cease-fire, negotiations start between parties concerned under appropriate auspices aimed at establishing a just and durable peace in the Middle East.”

2. Resolution 338 includes and makes reference to Security Council Resolution 242 of November 22, 1967.

3. Accredited delegations of sovereign states will participate in the reconvened session of the Geneva Peace Conference, namely: the representatives of Israel, Egypt, Syria and Jordan.

4. The participating states in the Geneva Peace Conference will present no prior conditions for their taking part in the Conference.

5. At the public session of the reconvened Geneva Peace Conference the representatives of the parties will make opening statements.

6. At the conclusion of the public session three mixed commissions will be established, namely: Egyptian-Israeli; Syrian-Israeli; Jordanian-Israeli.

7. In the framework of these mixed commissions, peace treaties between the parties concerned will be negotiated and concluded.

¹⁷ No classification marking. A handwritten note at the top of the page reads, “Begin Plan—Presented to USG July 19, 1977.”

8. The chairmanship of each mixed commission will be fixed by the rule of rotation between an Israeli representative and a representative of the neighboring state.

9. Having reached agreement on the substance of the peace treaties—i.e. the termination of the state of war; the determination of permanent boundaries; diplomatic relations; the economic clauses, etc.—a public session of the Conference will again be convened for the purpose of signing the peace treaties.

THE ALTERNATIVE

(Two Possibilities)

In the event that the states bordering on Israel refuse to participate in the Geneva Peace Conference in accordance with the established framework determined by the precedent of the first session of the Conference on grounds of insistence that the organization called PLO be added to the sovereign state delegations, it is proposed:

To establish through the good offices of the United States the aforementioned three mixed commissions in keeping with the method used during the Rhodes negotiations of 1949.

Or: In accordance with the principle of “proximity talks,” with a view to conducting in the framework of such mixed commissions the negotiations on the conclusion of peace treaties.

53. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, July 19, 1977

SUBJECT

Africa; Southern Lebanon; Syrian Jews; Middle East

PARTICIPANTS

Israel

His Excellency Menahem Begin, Prime Minister of Israel

His Excellency Simcha Dinitz, Ambassador of Israel

Dr. Eliahu Ben Elissar, Director General of the Prime Minister's Office

Mr. Shmuel Katz, Adviser to the Prime Minister

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Trips/Visits File, Box 105, 7/19–20/77 Visit of Prime Minister Begin of Israel: 7/17/77–8/77. Secret; Nodis. Drafted by Smith (NEA/IAI) and approved in S.

The Honorable Hanan Bar-On, Minister, Embassy of Israel
Mr. Yechiel Kadishai, Director, Prime Minister's Bureau
Mr. Eli Mizrachi, Political Adviser to the Prime Minister
Brigadier General Ephraim Poran, Military Secretary to the Prime Minister
Mr. Yehuda Avner, Adviser to the Prime Minister
Mr. David Tourgeman, Counselor, Embassy of Israel

U.S.

The Secretary of State
Warren W. Christopher, Deputy Secretary of State
Philip C. Habib, Under Secretary for Political Affairs
Samuel W. Lewis, American Ambassador to Israel
Alfred L. Atherton, Jr., Assistant Secretary for Near Eastern and South Asian
Affairs
Mr. Harold H. Saunders, Director, Bureau of Intelligence and Research
Mr. W. Anthony Lake, Director, Policy Planning Staff
Mr. Arthur R. Day, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Near Eastern and South Asian
Affairs
Mr. Walter B. Smith II, Director, Israel and Arab-Israel Affairs, Bureau of Near
Eastern and South Asian Affairs
Mr. William B. Quandt, Area Director, Middle East and North African Affairs

Africa

Begin expressed concern that things might soon fall apart in Ethiopia.² Habib remarked that large amounts of Soviet arms were being delivered to Somalia and the Eritreans. Begin explained that Israelis felt very attached to the ancient Jewish tribe of Felashas³ in Ethiopia. The Secretary said we would have to study the Ethiopian situation carefully. Habib noted the Soviets had been evacuating facilities in Somalia the existence of which Somalia had denied. Begin speculated that the Soviets were bringing Somalis back to the USSR for training. The Secretary explained that the U.S. had kept its mission intact in Ethiopia as a symbol despite provocations. Habib added we had also kept our aid mission in Ethiopia so as not to jeopardize possibilities for improved relations. He noted that human rights violations in Ethiopia were going to be damaging to U.S.-Ethiopian relations. Congress had included Ethiopia in the list of countries to which U.S. assistance was prohibited.

U.S.-Israeli Relations

Begin underlined that Israel was fashioning a bipartisan policy of friendship with the U.S., which was as important to Likud as it had been to Labor. Similarly, Israel had cultivated over the years close relations with both American political parties. Begin stressed that Israel was not going to interfere in U.S. internal affairs.

² Begin also expressed his concerns in his meeting with Carter. See Document 52.

³ Felashas are Ethiopian Jews who live primarily in the northwestern area of Ethiopia.

Southern Lebanon

The Secretary raised this subject, pointing out that even if the U.S. could provide arms to the Sarkis government, it would be close to one year before Lebanon could develop an adequate force. Dayan had recently raised with Ambassador Lewis⁴ the question of whether, to stabilize southern Lebanon in the meantime, a temporary UN force would be desirable. Begin said he was unfamiliar with Dayan's views. Lewis said Dayan had suggested a large buffer zone that might be manned by a UN force. Syrian political support would be necessary to make the arrangement work, and the fedayeen⁵ would have to withdraw north. Dayan explained that if such an arrangement were achieved, situations could be avoided in which Israel otherwise might have to act. Lewis noted that Rabin when Prime Minister had been opposed to such an idea. Lewis had replied to Dayan that the U.S. would look into it.

Begin said his initial reaction was that this was a good idea, provided Israel knew in advance which countries would provide the troops for the UN force. They should be from countries having diplomatic relations with Israel. Lewis noted that Sarkis had first made this proposal in early 1977. Begin underlined that the 5,000 fedayeen in southern Lebanon would have to be removed. Lewis suggested the institution of such an arrangement would create an excuse for having them removed. Katz pointed out that the time period achieved by installing the UN force should be used for creating a Lebanese force. The Secretary said he fully agreed. He felt the idea of the UN force was good because it was taking so much time for a Lebanese force to be created. Sarkis had predicted optimistically in March that he could create a force in only four or five months. Dinitz asked the Secretary whether there was a danger that the establishment of a UN force would reduce the incentive for Lebanon to create its own force. The Secretary doubted this. The Lebanese authorities realized that in order to govern the country as a whole, they needed such a force.

Begin asked if the U.S. could put this idea through the UN Security Council. The Secretary said he did not know. Lewis suggested it would depend on whether Syria seriously supported it. If Syria did, then the Soviets would support it as well. Begin wondered whether, if the idea failed in the Security Council, it should be tried out in the General Assembly using the uniting-for-peace provision. Lewis expressed the view that this provision should be avoided at all costs. It might be dangerous for Israel these days even to mention it. The Secretary asked that the Israeli and U.S. Governments concert views on this subject. Habib

⁴ No memorandum of conversation has been found.

⁵ Fedayeen were Palestinian guerrillas or commandos.

suggested it would be important to try out the idea in Damascus at an early point.

Syrian Jewry

Begin said that the 800 Jewish families still in Syria represented a special problem for Israel. Israel wanted to take in these 4,000 individuals. A number of countries were prepared to provide them temporary asylum, and so it would not be necessary for them to come directly from Syria to Israel. Begin asked the Secretary if the American Ambassador in Damascus could be instructed to have a special talk with Assad on this matter. He observed that Iraq had given the harshest treatment of all the Arab countries to its Jews, often executing them, but in the end had permitted its Jewish community to emigrate. Begin asked why Syria could not do likewise. He noted that Egypt in recent weeks had made conciliatory gestures which Israel had appreciated. He suggested it was now time for Syria to make one.

The Secretary suggested that the best approach would be for him to raise the matter privately with Assad during his forthcoming Middle East trip. He noted that he had personally raised with Assad the problem of the unmarried Jewish women in Syria.⁶ Stressing the importance of keeping the information confidential, the Secretary said that Syria was now permitting a number of the unmarried women to come to the U.S. Begin thanked the Secretary for U.S. efforts on behalf of the unmarried women and agreed with the Secretary that the best way to handle the larger question of the Syrian Jewish community as a whole would be a private approach by the Secretary.

Atherton said it might be of interest to the Prime Minister to know about all the U.S. efforts to help Syrian Jewry. Ever since late 1973, when the U.S. was able to establish a mission in Syria for the first time since 1967, the U.S. had used every high-level meeting to approach Assad about the problem of the Syrian Jewish community. The Syrian Government over the past three and half years had taken a number of steps to alleviate the situation. Begin said he was very interested to hear this and very grateful.

Middle East Peace Efforts

The Secretary observed that over the past two weeks Sadat had taken a number of conciliatory steps at the request of President Carter. We believed Sadat was educating public opinion within Egypt that there should be progress toward a peace settlement. Begin commented that Sadat's conditions were not conducive to peace. He was demanding total Israeli withdrawal on all fronts and a corridor between

⁶ See footnote 7, Document 20.

Gaza and the West Bank. If his conditions were realized, it would be the beginning of the end of the Jewish state. Sadat knew that.

Begin continued that the Israeli intelligence service had made two mistakes. First, at the time of Nasser's death it had described Sadat as a fool. Secondly, it had not foreseen the 1973 war. Sadat was not a fool, and he wanted Israel's destruction. From time to time Sadat said that he accepted Israel as a fact, although he did not accept Israel under international law. Israel did appreciate that Sadat's attitude toward Israel was less negative than that of the PLO.

Lewis suggested that Sadat's position was considerably different and that Sadat had said he was prepared for a peace treaty with Israel at the press conference he held with Congressman Hamilton.⁷ Begin said that if Sadat had expressed willingness to conclude a treaty, as opposed to an agreement with Israel, this was important, and Begin would like to note it at his press conference scheduled for July 20. A discussion ensued, in which it proved doubtful that Sadat had actually used the word treaty in his English language press conference remarks or that the Egyptian media had used the word treaty in their Arabic translation of his remarks. Habib observed that if the word treaty was so important to Israel, perhaps the U.S. should see if the Arabs could be persuaded to use it. Saunders commented that at one time we were trying to get the Arabs to use the word "peace" and now that they do that we seemed to be concerned about the word "treaty."

The Secretary said he was now considering the idea of putting his visit to Israel at the end of his Middle East trip instead of at the beginning. He asked if the dates of August 7 and 8 for the visit to Israel would be acceptable, and Begin said yes.

China

The Secretary mentioned his trip to Mainland China in late August. Begin said Israel would like to establish relations with Mainland China. Habib asked what representation Israel had in Taiwan. Dinitz explained that Israel had only economic relations with Taiwan and no diplomatic representation. Israel's trade with Taiwan was important. Bar-on recalled that Israel had recognized Communist China in December 1949. In 1954 Israel and Mainland China had exchanged trade delegations but since then had had no official contact. Begin described Israel's unsuccessful efforts in the early 1950s to induce Peking to recognize Israel.

⁷ Not further identified. Hamilton led a delegation of Congressmen to Israel, Syria, Jordan, and Egypt in July.

54. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) to President Carter¹

Washington, July 19, 1977

SUBJECT

Secretary Vance's Talk with Prime Minister Begin, July 19, 1977

Secretary Vance's discussion with Prime Minister Begin this afternoon revealed several additional points that merit your attention:

—Begin will consider, although he does not favor, the possibility that Geneva would be reconvened with a single Arab delegation, but negotiations should then break up with bilateral "mixed commissions."

—The mixed commissions could form subcommittees that might include representatives of several countries to deal with "functional" issues.

—Palestinians may be present in a Jordanian delegation, but not if they are identified as representatives of the PLO.

—Pre-Geneva talks can take place in New York in September at the Foreign Minister level.

—An American observer could be present at the mixed commission meetings.

On the five principles (see attached) that were discussed with Begin, some slight modifications were suggested in the first three; Begin insisted that he would tell you tonight about the withdrawal component of his plan.² He therefore would not discuss point four, except to reject flatly the idea of "external guarantees." (A US-Israel treaty was not discussed.) He will tell you his plan for final borders, but does not want it revealed to the Arabs. His reaction to point five on the Palestinian entity was total rejection, based on the argument that this would inevitably lead to a PLO-dominated, Soviet armed state. ("Jerusalem will be under crossfire from three directions.")

He also does not accept Sadat's idea of normalization over a five-year period. Once a peace treaty is signed, normalization should occur

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Subject File, Box 66, Middle East: Peace Negotiations 1977 Volume I [II]. Secret. Outside the System. Sent for information. A handwritten note by Carter on the top right corner of the first page reads, "cc: Vance. C."

² According to the President's Daily Diary, Carter hosted a working dinner for Begin from 7:31 to 10:05 p.m., after which they met privately until 11:11 p.m. (Carter Library, Presidential Materials, President's Daily Diary) No memoranda of conversation have been found, but see footnote 3 below.

immediately. You might want to press him further on this, noting that withdrawal and normalization can go hand in hand.³

Attachment

Paper Prepared in the National Security Council⁴

Washington, undated

DRAFT PRINCIPLES FOR AGREEMENT PRIOR TO GENEVA

[Bracketed alternative language suggested by Israelis]

1. The goal of negotiations is a comprehensive peace settlement [embodied in peace treaties.]
2. The basis of negotiations is Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338.
3. It is understood that the peace called for in Resolution 242 will consist of an end to belligerency [end state of war] and the establishment between Israel and its Arab neighbors of the relations of peace.
4. It is understood that the withdrawal called for in Resolution 242 will be to mutually agreed [secure] and recognized borders on all fronts. The withdrawal and the establishment of peaceful relations can be phased over a period of years in parallel and synchronized stages. The security of the stages and of the final settlement will be enhanced by mutually agreed security arrangements on the ground and by external guarantees. (Note: Israel will not accept the language on external guarantees.)
5. A settlement must include provision for a Palestinian entity and for means of assuring Palestinian adherence to the terms of the peace agreement. The Palestinian entity will not be militarized, and there will be provision for an open economic and social relationship with Israel.

³ Carter wrote at the bottom of the page: "On point 4, he thinks UN 242/338 adherence is adequate prior to Geneva—Asks that we not use phrase 'minor adjustments' without prior notice to him—I agreed. He will try to accommodate us on settlements—Wants to carry out Mapai plan at least. Will give us prior notice. I suggested that they wait until after Geneva talks and restrict new settlers to existing settlements. This is difficult for him—Will stay on Golan. I told him Syria won't agree. W Bank, Gaza, Jerusalem. 'no foreign sovereignty'—Sinai—'Substantial withdrawals.'" Apparently Carter made these notes after his private meeting with Begin on the evening of July 19. The Mapai Party was the predecessor of the Labor Party; the Mapai Plan was not further identified. Carter also recounted the meeting to Brzezinski the next morning; see Brzezinski, *Power and Principle*, p. 100.

⁴ Secret; Nodis. Brackets are in the original. The draft principles were approved by the Policy Review Committee; see Document 50.

Means should be sought to permit self-determination by the Palestinians in deciding on their future status. (Note: Israel rejects this point in its entirety.)

55. Memorandum From Director of Central Intelligence Turner to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski)

Washington, undated

[Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Subject File, Box 66, Peace Negotiations 1977 Volume I [II]. Secret; Noform. 2 pages not declassified]

56. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassies in Jordan, Egypt, Syria, and Saudi Arabia¹

Washington, July 19, 1977, 2321Z

168595. For Ambassadors From the Secretary, White House For Brzezinski. Subject: Prime Minister Begin's "Peace Proposal."

1. You should pass following urgently from me, either directly or through Foreign Minister, to Hussein, Sadat, Assad and Fahd:

—Host government will have seen press reports that Prime Minister Begin was planning to convey an Israeli peace proposal to President Carter.

—During his meeting with the President today,² Begin outlined an essentially procedural proposal for getting negotiations started and on how negotiations might be organized in Geneva, together with alternative proposals for negotiations outside Geneva if efforts to reconvene Geneva fail because of PLO participation issue.

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Subject File, Box 76, Peace Negotiations: 7–8/77. Secret; Immediate; Nodis. Sent priority for information to Beirut, Tel Aviv, and the White House.

² See Document 52.

—Begin may reveal his proposal at his press conference Wednesday³ and, in any event, elements of it have already begun to leak out in the Israeli press.

—I want your host government to know that we have made no commitment with respect to Begin's proposal, with which we see problems, but hope to avoid public debate on it pending my trip to the area in early August. At that time, I will want to hear your host governments' reactions, comments and ideas before we come to any conclusions of our own.

—I would hope that your governments could similarly avoid taking public positions on or reacting to Begin's views until we have had an opportunity for a full discussion of these and all possible alternatives during my visit. I will, of course, convey Arab reactions and any counter suggestions privately to the Israelis at that time.

—Depending on results of our exchanges during my trip, we remain prepared as we have previously said to offer our own suggestions about how to bridge any gaps that may stand in the way of getting the negotiating process launched.

—We will send a fuller report to your host governments on our talks with Begin following the visit, but I wanted to convey these initial points immediately.

Vance

³ July 20. Begin held his press conference hours after Carter made a statement at the conclusion of their meeting. (Bernard Gwertzman, "Carter Is Optimistic on Geneva Meeting After Hearing Begin," *New York Times*, July 21, 1977, p. 1) An excerpt from Begin's statement is *ibid.*, p. A14. For Carter's statement, see *Public Papers, Carter, 1977*, Book II, pp. 1295–1296.

57. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, July 20, 1977, 10:05–10:40 a.m.

PRESIDENT'S MEETING WITH
PRIME MINISTER BEGIN OF ISRAEL

PARTICIPANTS

The President
The Vice President
Secretary of State Cyrus Vance
Dr. Zbigniew Brzezinski
Mr. Alfred L. Atherton, Jr.
Ambassador Samuel Lewis
Mr. David Aaron
Mr. William B. Quandt
Mr. Hamilton Jordan
Mr. Stuart Eizenstat
Mr. Jerry Schecter
Prime Minister Menahem Begin
Ambassador Simcha Dinitz
Mr. Shmuel Katz
Mr. Hanan Bar-On
Mr. Yehiel Kadishai
Mr. Eliahu Mizrahi
General Ephraim Poran
Mr. Yehuda Avner
Mr. Eliyahu Ben-Elissar
Mr. Dan Pattir

President: I am glad to know that you got a good rest last night. Yesterday must have been a strenuous day, but I appreciate the effort that you have made to come here and talk with us. I also appreciate the books that you gave me last night² and the dedication that you wrote in them. I have also written a book which I would like to give to you, along with another book that contains photographs that have been taken from satellites of different parts of the world.

Prime Minister Begin: Thank you very much for the gracious dedication in your book, Mr. President. It is very moving. I will read the book again.

President: I don't want to impose that burden on you!

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, VIP Visit File, Box 7, Israel: Prime Minister Begin, 3/21–22/78: Briefing Book [III]. Top Secret; Sensitive. The meeting took place in the Cabinet Room of the White House.

² See footnotes 2 and 3, Document 54.

I would like to take the opportunity to summarize the talks and to explore some remaining points. Last night we agreed that the attitude that we would show to the rest of the world would emphasize that the talks had been very fruitful and constructive and we want to be sure that these positive aspects are emphasized. We have no reason to stress any differences that may exist. We obviously have some differences, but we are primarily trying to develop a position for ourselves of significance in the Middle East discussions. Our own security is deeply involved in what happens in the Middle East. Our ties to Israel are very strong. We see the possibility for world-wide disruption if war were to break out in the Middle East and this is a concern that we share with you and with our allies.

We will be quite active this year in working with you and others to get to Geneva. All of the opinions that you have expressed are conducive to going to Geneva. When Secretary Vance goes to meet the Arab leaders, we will have a foundation for discussions leading to peace treaties. One difficult potential problem on the Arab side is the question of a single delegation. I think Sadat and Hussein prefer separate delegations. Perhaps the co-chairmen could call a plenary session and then things could break up into study groups where the substantive negotiations would take place. This seems like an acceptable approach. Your suggestions on this are very good.

If we go to Geneva this October, there are many details that will have to be worked out. Perhaps this could be done in New York at the time of the General Assembly meeting when the Foreign Ministers might meet with us or even together to work out the last differences, so that the parties can go to a conference. We can go to the Arabs in a strong position to urge this procedure. I believe that they will accept.

Secretary Vance: I think that they probably would.

President: I think that our potential to get to Geneva has been enhanced. The remaining problem is Palestinian representation. There are several options to pursue. Some have been discussed here and some we discussed last night. We have mentioned the possibility of Palestinian representatives in a Jordanian delegation, or the possibility that Palestinians might come when the question of refugees is discussed. We won't try to determine that now. There have been some modifications of the principles that we discussed, and Prime Minister Begin finds the first four acceptable, but the fifth is not.³ We have a difference of opinion on that. We want to keep flexible and we hope we can resolve this in the future.

³ See the Attachment to Document 54.

There are some other items on which agreement is still difficult. There are some Arab attitudes that are unacceptable to Israel and some Israeli positions on withdrawal and on Palestinians and on Jerusalem, as well as Gaza, the West Bank, Golan, and Sinai, that are not acceptable to the Arabs. These are matters that you will need to resolve with your neighbors. We will add our good offices. Perhaps as you get to know each other, maybe there can be some reconciliation. We will try to help, but we will not impose our will.

Let me repeat what I have said before. All of the nations and leaders participating in the Geneva Conference have made strong statements in the past. That includes you and me and others. But I hope and expect that before Geneva we might all be very restrained in our statements, not saying what we can or cannot accept, and that all should go with an open mind. The Prime Minister has asked that we not talk about the 1967 lines with minor adjustments. I told him I would not repeat that phrase. If we need to spell out that principle again, it will only be after I check with him. The Prime Minister understands this. We have asked Assad, Hussein, and Sadat to also restrain themselves. They have generally responded well and have told us of their actions in reply to our requests. I don't want to imply that they have given up their basic positions, as this will only be possible at Geneva.

I think one last point I should mention is that I have agreed to contact General Secretary Brezhnev with your requests concerning the Jewish prisoners in the Soviet Union.⁴

Prime Minister Begin: May I give you a list?⁵

President: We have done this in the past and we will do it again. We will raise these specific names with him in a quiet way. We want to do it on a confidential basis so that if he agrees to let them go, he can handle it however he thinks best.

I think that you enjoy, and that I also enjoy, substantial confidence among our own peoples. This gives us a degree of flexibility because of the attitudes of our people and your people. I think we can lead Americans and Israelis toward the acceptance of agreed principles that in the past would have been difficult. You have shown great leadership in helping to establish Israel. Now, you, and to a lesser extent myself, have a chance to insure Israel's right to live in peace for the next thousand years. The people of Israel are willing to accept the idea of accommodation with the Arabs and I am eager to help. If you want to call me, or write to me, or send a message, I would consider it an honor and I

⁴ A reference to the Israeli Government's continual requests that the U.S. Government insist that the Soviet Union allow the emigration of Soviet Jews.

⁵ The list is not attached and has not been found.

would like to do the same with you. If I say something that bothers you, you can let me know, and I will do the same. This won't be in the spirit of criticism, but rather to avoid misunderstandings. We cannot espouse the Israeli position as our own. We can only help to bring you and the Arabs together if we have the trust of all parties. We won't reveal your confidences to them, or their confidences to you, without permission. This is my interpretation of the present circumstances. If you have a different view, I hope that you will point it out. I would welcome your comments.

Prime Minister Begin: Thank you, Mr. President. I think now we have a greater measure of understanding and agreement. It is important to know that we have made progress. First, we agree that there should be an added session of the Geneva Conference, preferably in October. Second, we agree that after the opening of the Conference, we need to have some instrument for quiet negotiations in which all of the issues involved in peace treaties can be clarified. This may mean the establishment of mixed commissions, or committees, with rotating chairmanships. Third, we agree that the goal is the conclusion of peace treaties. If we add Lebanon, there would be four peace treaties signed which would end the state of war and start the era of peace. Fourth, if there is difficulty in reconvening the Geneva Conference under UN Resolution 338, which refers to Resolution 242, we should look for alternative ways to keep momentum. I have made two suggestions: one involves US good offices to set up mixed commissions; the other is proximity talks. These are not just procedural proposals since they also bear on substance. Form can create substance, just as quantity can change to quality. In this case, form is substance, so we have reached a large measure of agreement, thanks to the President's attitude.

The Foreign Minister of Israel will come to the United States for the UN General Assembly in September and he can come to Washington and the President has agreed to see Mr. Dayan. He is a very able Foreign Minister and you will hear his outlook. Until then, Secretary Vance will visit the Middle East and he has agreed to go to the Arab countries first and then to come to Israel on August 7th or 8th. This will give us time to prepare documents on topics like security and so forth. So in the next weeks and months, we will try to keep momentum. We hope for a response on the other side. We do not see any reason that they should not respond positively. We are offering free negotiations in which nothing will be precluded. We will be careful not to make any slips of the tongue. All of the questions that are put to me on the territorial issue will be covered by a response that says that this is something which will be dealt with in the final peace treaties that are to be negotiated and that no details will be revealed until that time. We are aiming for open negotiations and we will bring proposals, just as the other side

can bring proposals. There will be no prior conditions demanded or given. I will be able to withstand pressure to go into any further detail. We will keep our position until Geneva. This may lead to the kind of political truce that I have suggested to our neighbors. We will go to Geneva with an open mind. Before then, some of the instruments should be elaborated, especially dealing with the nature of the open session and the committees. This is the essence of my proposal.

I will also take up your concern about overflights of Saudi Arabia when I get home. I have to check with the Defense Minister. I assure you that we will do all that we can.

President: [To Secretary Vance]⁶ Are you going to Saudi Arabia on your trip?

Secretary Vance: Yes.

President: Good. Could we get your reply before the Secretary goes?

Prime Minister Begin: I'll try. By next Tuesday,⁷ I can talk to my Defense Minister and I'll try to have a reply for you by next Thursday. I will send it to you personally and I hope we can respond. I hope that you have read the document I left with you last night.⁸ It is an amazing document. We will go on trying to contribute to your national security.

I talked to the Secretary of Defense and I raised some of our urgent requirements. He promised that before I left he might be able to give me some answers. This would be part of our ongoing relationship. Mr. President, you want to see a strong Israel. I remember your view on reassessment. We are grateful for your words. If you can take decisions now, we would be very grateful. I would be able to bring good tidings to my people who expect it. They would have a feeling that we could work together. As I told the Secretary of Defense, the Arabs have more than 10,000 tanks.

President: I will try to get my decision to you this afternoon on some of these items, probably not on all.⁹

Prime Minister Begin: I will say at the press conference that we have had talks in the best possible atmosphere, that there was no confrontation, and that there were only differences of opinion that are normal between free men. If there are disagreements, I will say so, but I will also say that I see you as a great friend of Israel.

⁶ Brackets in the original.

⁷ July 26.

⁸ Neither of these Israeli papers has been found.

⁹ On July 22, the Carter administration announced agreement on the Israeli use of \$107 million of U.S. military assistance to coproduce the Chariot tank, part of a military aid package of \$250 million. (Bernard Gwertzman, "Israelis Allowed To Use U.S. Aid To Develop Tank," *New York Times*, July 23, 1977, p. 1)

President: I hope that whenever you can mention UN Resolutions 242 and 338, you will do so. As far as our agreement that I will not mention minor modifications in the 1967 lines, I hope you will not say that you have my commitment not to talk about that. I will go over your military requests. Secretary Brown has been with Congress this morning on Korean issues and I haven't had a chance to see him.

Ambassador Dinitz: I would like to raise one additional point concerning the financing of our military requests. One billion dollars in FMS credits is no longer enough to cover our needs. We had assumed that we would have one and one-half billion dollars for the next three to five years. In fiscal years 1977 and 1978, one billion dollars was appropriated or is now pending. At the request of our Prime Minister, I would like to raise the question of increasing the FMS credits from one billion to one and one-half billion dollars, which we think is the minimum necessary.

President: I'll consider that.

Ambassador Lewis: I think this has been a splendid meeting.

Prime Minister Begin: We will work with Ambassador Lewis in full confidence. Have you seen anything on Ethiopia in the last few hours?

Secretary Vance: We have nothing new, but we will be looking at this very carefully, and then we will talk to Prime Minister Begin.

President: Ethiopia has just received an enormous shipment of Soviet arms.

Secretary Vance: We are putting together all of our information on this.

Prime Minister Begin: I hope we can keep in touch on Ethiopia.

President: We have also observed a buildup on the Egyptian-Libyan front, and there have been some border clashes. We are monitoring this. Let me ask you if you have found our presence in Sinai and our reconnaissance role satisfactory?¹⁰

Prime Minister Begin: It is very useful, and they are doing very well. I saw the commanding officer there, and he is of Polish background. He is a very good man.

President: The Poles are taking over. (Laughter). I want to express again my personal warm feelings for you. I think we have developed a relationship on which we can build and I am very proud of it.

Prime Minister Begin: I am also proud and it has been a very good day.

¹⁰ A reference to the U.S. Sinai Field Mission. See footnote 6, Document 4.

58. Letter from President Carter to Syrian President Asad¹

Washington, July 21, 1977

Dear Mr. President:

Ambassador Murphy has advised me of your recent decision to allow some of Syria's Jewish citizens to come to the United States to join their husbands and for purposes of education.² I am pleased that this can be done in full accord with Syrian law and Syrian traditions. Above all, I warmly appreciate your deep humanitarian interest in this issue which, as you are aware, has been a personal concern of mine as well.

The procedure of submitting notarized marriage proposals, and using representatives of the Jewish community in Syria as intermediaries, was developed as an initiative from the Jewish community of Syrian origin in the New York City area. The members of this community remain attached to the cultural traditions of their ancestral homeland. They use Arabic and their way of life parallels in many respects that of Syria's Jewish community. Members of this community have made clear to us their great appreciation for the steps you have taken to assure the well-being and equal treatment of their co-religionists in Syria.

I am confident that, as further marriage or education proposals are developed in the future, you and your government will give them the same humanitarian consideration as you have in this latest instance.

Your decision, Mr. President, cannot help but strengthen the existing friendly relations between the Syrian and American Governments and people.

With warm good wishes,

Sincerely,

Jimmy Carter³

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Subject File, Box 88, Syria: 6–8/77. No classification marking.

² See footnote 7, Document 20.

³ Under his signature, Carter wrote, "p.s. I will be writing you soon, prior to the visit of Sec. Vance, to outline peace negotiation prospects. J.C."

59. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Israel¹

Washington, July 25, 1977, 2330Z

173913. Subject: Israeli Settlements. Ref: Tel Aviv 5442.²

1. FYI: While I can appreciate that Begin will be under great pressure to go forward with a settlement program on the West Bank, I believe that the consequences for the negotiations of any settlement construction will be so negative that we must plainly and strongly oppose settlements of any number or type. While 6 settlements within existing military installations may evoke somewhat less reaction than twice that number outside of such establishments, the difference in effect will not be nearly so significant as the negative consequences either would have.

The Arabs are aware that Kiryat Arba started with settlers being accommodated in a military installation, and the controversial settlement at Qaddum also involved this device.³ End FYI.

2. You should therefore convey the following points from me to Dayan:

—We fully understand that Begin can anticipate pressure to proceed with settlements, and we appreciate that Dayan has endeavored to find some way of mitigating the effects of such a program on the peace process. We have very carefully considered the idea that Dayan has proposed.

—I would be less than candid, however, if I did not say frankly to Dayan that in our view any settlement development would have a seriously negative effect on the peace negotiating process. Particularly coming at this time, any new settlements, wherever located, would tend to confirm the fears of the Arabs that the new Israeli Government intends to pursue an essentially annexationist policy with regard to the West Bank. Our task of maintaining Arab confidence in the negotiating

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840083–0131. Secret; Immediate; Nodis; Cherokee. Drafted by Arthur Day (NEA); cleared by Atherton, Habib, and Robert M. Perito (S/S); and approved by Secretary Vance. Repeated on July 26 to the White House.

² Telegram 5442 from Tel Aviv, July 25, reported on a meeting between Foreign Minister Dayan and Ambassador Lewis during which Dayan requested the U.S. reaction to a proposal he wished to make to the Israeli Cabinet limiting any new settlements to six military settlements placed within “existing Israeli military cantonments.” Dayan suggested to Ambassador Lewis that Begin could not politically afford to suspend all settlement activity before the Geneva Conference. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840083–0135)

³ Kiryat Arba and Qaddum are both in the West Bank.

process will be difficult enough as it is, and a new Israeli settlement program of any kind could make it impossible by prompting the Arabs to insist on advance commitments with respect to Israeli territorial positions which Israel does not want to discuss prior to Geneva.

—We believe that nothing should be done on the settlement program which will have an adverse effect on the peace negotiations. We would be unable to avoid saying so publicly as well as privately. While I much appreciate Dayan's coming to us in confidence on the subject, therefore, I can only respond that we believe there should now be a moratorium on any Israeli settlements in the occupied territories, as the President told the Prime Minister.⁴ I very much hope that the Israeli Government will find the strength to resist these pressures that work at cross-purposes with our common search for a peace settlement.⁵

Vance

⁴ See Document 52.

⁵ In telegram 5570 from Tel Aviv, July 25, Ambassador Lewis reported that he believed Begin was "shocked" and "affronted" by Secretary Vance's public reaction to the possibility of Israeli plans to build new settlements. Begin stressed "that he had violated no commitments." Lewis noted that Begin agreed that there would be no decisions on settlements before Secretary Vance's August trip to Jerusalem. Then, Begin would "explain precisely what the new settlement decisions are likely in subsequent weeks—and why he must take them." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Subject File, Box 48, Israel: 7/77) On July 26, Begin recognized three settlements on the West Bank that had previously been declared illegal. Vance "immediately condemned" the action. ("Israel Legalizes 3 Settlements On West Bank," *New York Times*, July 27, 1977, p. A1) In telegram 5857 from Tel Aviv, July 27, Lewis reported that most Israelis were surprised by Begin's decision. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D770284–1080) Carter also criticized making the settlements permanent or establishing new settlements in his July 28 news conference. See *Public Papers: Carter*, 1977, Book II, p. 1366–1374.

60. Editorial Note

In preparation for Secretary of State Vance's trip to the Middle East in August, President Jimmy Carter sent messages to the five principal Arab leaders in the Arab-Israeli dispute: President Anwar al-Sadat in telegram 177886 to Cairo, July 29 (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840084–1030), President Hafez al-Asad in telegram 177887 to Damascus, July 29 (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840076–0255), President Elias Sarkis in telegram 177888 to Beirut, July 29 (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840086–2462), King Hussein in telegram 177889 to Amman

(National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840084–1868), and King Khalid in telegram 177890 to Morocco (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840084–1030). In each message, Carter shared some of his “thoughts regarding peace negotiation prospects.” He noted that he had spoken with all of the “leaders directly concerned with the Arab-Israeli conflict,” and expressed his hope that negotiations toward a comprehensive settlement would be possible during the fall. He promised all of them that the United States would “be prepared to play an active role in this process, which we see as being conducted by various means, including to a considerable degree through our continuing mediation efforts both within the framework of the [Geneva] conference and bilaterally.” Carter concluded by stating that “Secretary Vance will be speaking with my full authority, and I will be in daily touch with him as he undertakes his important mission.”

61. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Lebanon¹

Washington, July 30, 1977, 0500Z

179374. Subject: Arafat Message.

1. [3 lines not declassified] to reaffirm the essence of the observation made on an earlier occasion by the U.S., that in circumstances of movement by the PLO toward recognizing the right of Israel to exist, and toward accepting the concept of terminating the state of war with Israel, possibilities for a more formal dialogue with the U.S. could develop without prejudice to any other issue. [1 line not declassified] Washington has had full reports from prominent private Americans and members of Congress on their recent meetings with senior PLO officials.² Washington has found these reports, as well as the message conveyed directly, helpful in understanding the views of the PLO and will

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840072–0366. Secret; Niact Immediate; Nodis; Cherokee. Drafted by Atherton and Day, cleared by Habib and by James Thyden (S/S–O), and approved by Secretary Vance. Repeated on July 30 to the White House.

² Congressman Hamilton met with Arafat during his tour of the Middle East in early July. (Don Oberdorfer, “Begin Arrives Carrying Secret Peace Proposals,” *Washington Post*, July 19, 1977, p. A1) and on July 19, the Carter administration confirmed contacts between William Scranton, former Ambassador to the United Nations, and a PLO member. (“U.S.–PLO Discussions Reported,” *New York Times*, July 20, 1977, p. 8)

take them into account in discussions it will be having over the next few weeks looking toward reconvening the Geneva Conference.

Vance

62. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Israel¹

Washington, July 31, 1977, 2224Z

179491. For Ambassador only. Subject: Exchange of Messages Between Begin and Carter.

1. Following, which is strictly for your information, is exchange of letters between the President and Prime Minister Begin. Begin's message was delivered by Dinitz to Habib July 30. President Carter's response delivered to Dinitz July 31 by the Secretary.

2. Begin text:

"Dear Mr. President:

I was asked by the Prime Minister to urgently transmit to you the following message, to which he would very much appreciate an early response from you:

'Dear Mr. President,

In the course of our conversations you were good enough to assure me, both at the meeting in the Cabinet Room and privately,² that you will refrain until you consult with me from the use in public of the term "Israeli withdrawal to the lines of June 4, 1967, with minor modifications."

This important pledge was given by you, Mr. President, in response to my argumentation, which I venture briefly to recapitulate, as follows: If the President of the United States or his authorized representative declares in public that Israel should withdraw to the pre-"Six Day War" lines, with minor modifications, such a declaration will of course be duly noted by the Arab rulers. What in these circumstances would then be left to negotiate about? Let me add in parentheses, that

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840083–0084. Secret; Immediate; Nodis; Cherokee. Drafted by Atherton, cleared by Thomas Martin (S/S-O), and approved by Atherton. Repeated on August 1 to the White House.

² For this Cabinet Room meeting, see Document 57. For the private conversation, see footnotes 2 and 3, Document 57.

on Israel's side that was a war of most legitimate self-defense. But to continue: if this public declaration is then followed up by an American statement that the ultimate boundaries should be determined by the negotiating parties themselves, the contradiction implicit in these two declarations is obvious and inescapable.

Yesterday I instructed our Ambassador in Washington to clarify with the Secretary of State, before the Secretary sets out on his visit to our region, whether your undertaking would be treated as binding in his talks in the Arab capitals.³ The reply was that Secretary Vance and his advisors will not initiate such a statement in the course of their talks in Cairo, Damascus, etc., but if asked they will answer that American policy, the nature of which is known, has not been changed. It may, I think, be assumed that they will be asked.

It follows, therefore, that while the concept of "minor modifications" as an element in American policy will not be publicly announced it will on the eve of the Geneva Conference be conveyed to the Arabs privately. This in essence reflects an unequivocal contradiction.

I am further informed that the Secretary will in his talks with the Arab leaders bring up points IV and V of the proposal presented to us in Washington, as well as several procedural suggestions which we indicated to be unacceptable to us.⁴ In the result, when we come to the Geneva meeting, for the success of which we all devoutly hope, the following scenario may be anticipated: three or four Arab states will in unison demand a total withdrawal of Israel to the lines of June 4, 1967, coupled with the creation of the so-called Palestinian state in Judea, Samaria and the Gaza Strip; a Soviet co-chairman will unreservedly identify himself with the Arab position; and last, but not least, there will be an American co-chairman who, on the territorial issue, basically supports that position.

We promised one another, Mr. President, to conduct our dialogue with complete candor. It is therefore my duty to say that whatever the odds, the Israel delegation will unflinchingly stand by the principles which I had the honor to outline in the course of our unforgettable nocturnal conversation upstairs in the White House.⁵ For us it is not a matter of policy but of life. It is much more than a rhetorical question if I add further: is it fair to the little embattled country which bears the second name of the struggling Jacob? The ideas which we brought to Washington are fair to all concerned. Let there be negotiations for the conclusion of peace treaties between Israel and her neighbors; and let

³ July 29. No memorandum of conversation of a meeting between Vance and Dinitz was found.

⁴ See the Attachment to Document 52.

⁵ See footnote 2 above.

those negotiations be free—free from preconditions, free from prior commitments, and also free from an “externally devised formula for a settlement.”

Mr. President, you were gracious enough to tell me that I might write to you at any time I might deem it necessary. I now avail myself of that privilege. You will, I am sure, appreciate the importance and urgency which I attach to this message, coming as it does as Secretary Vance is about to embark on his important visits to the Arab countries and to Israel.

Allow me, Mr. President, to pay my respects to your wife and to your mother.

Very sincerely and respectfully yours,

Menachem Begin

Prime Minister'

Respectfully yours,

Simcha Dinitz

Ambassador"

End text.

3. Begin text:

"Dear Mr. Prime Minister:

I have received your letter of July 30 concerning certain issues which came up during the course of our recent conversations. It is important that we understand each other and I am responding with the same complete candor which you so rightly cited as an essential element of our dialogue.

As I said to you I hope we might all be very restrained in our public statements and actions. I reaffirm that I will not speak publicly of Israeli withdrawal to 1967 lines, with minor modifications, without prior consultation with you. That pledge holds for me and members of my administration, and will be honored by Secretary Vance during his forthcoming trip to the Middle East. You agreed not to make a public issue of our reticence on this issue. However, we cannot but respond affirmatively if we are asked privately by the responsible Arab leaders if we still adhere to our historic position in this regard. To do otherwise would and could be taken as a retreat from a long-standing American position and an act of bad faith on my part. As you know from our conversation, our position has not changed.

You also raise some questions regarding points 4 and 5 of the principles Secretary Vance and I presented to you for comment. As I indicated, our purpose in discussing these principles was directly related to our efforts to bring the parties closer on matters of great significance to the search for a just and lasting peace. It is only proper that we put

them forward to the Arab leaders in the same words and in the same spirit, to secure their views as Secretary Vance indicated to you we would do, and to understand their disagreements and objections. The same applies to any of the various suggestions we offered as a means of overcoming procedural obstacles.

I do assure you, Mr. Prime Minister, that when we discuss the five principles and the several procedural suggestions, we shall do so in a positive manner designed to bring the parties together while still remaining aware of the differing views that are held strongly on both sides.

If we are to be useful to all parties, before and during Geneva, we must be in a position to review matters of substance in a realistic manner with all those responsible. We shall do so in a manner which respects the views of all and keeps option open, but allows for bridging gaps and overcoming obstacles on the way to a peaceful settlement.

One of the most positive results of our talks, as I reflect on them, is that we agreed it is possible for Israel and the United States to have differences of opinion without in any way weakening the ties between our two countries.

Thank you for writing, Mr. Prime Minister. I value and rely on our exchanges to help me understand where to go and what to look for in the exercise of the responsibilities that fall upon the United States. You can be sure we shall not exercise those responsibilities lightly or without due regard to the sensitivities and concerns of others.

With warmest best wishes to you and Mrs. Begin from Rosalyn and myself. My mother also appreciates your kind thought.

Sincerely,
Jimmy Carter”
End text.

Vance

63. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Alexandria, August 1, 1977, 7:45 p.m.

PARTICIPANTS

Egyptians

President Anwar al-Sadat

Vice President Husni Mubarak

Ismail Fahmy, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister

Hasan Kamil, Chief, Office of the President

Ahmad Osman, Under Secretary of State, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Americans

Cyrus Vance, Secretary of State

Philip Habib, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs

Alfred L. Atherton, Jr., Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs

Ambassador Hermann Fr. Eilts

William B. Quandt, NSC Staff

SUBJECT

Secretary Vance's Meeting with President Sadat

President Sadat warmly welcomed Secretary Vance and expressed his special pleasure that Egypt was the first stop. He referred to the need for mutual cooperation to give momentum to the peace process begun in October 1973 by the US and Egypt. Sadat spoke of his admiration, trust and friendship for President Carter, and recalled his promise never to let him down. Working together, the US and Egypt can achieve permanent peace in the area.

Secretary Vance replied by expressing his appreciation for the confidence, warmth and friendship extended by President Sadat. President Carter's warmest good wishes were extended. The Secretary then noted that our views on substance remain unchanged. The US will remain active in working for a Geneva Conference in which we will be able to develop and sign a just and durable peace document. He then outlined two sets of issues: the convening of the conference and the question of Palestinian representation at the conference. On the latter point, he reviewed two alternatives: the possibility of including Palestinians in a Jordanian delegation and the inclusion of Palestinians in an all-Arab delegation. Lebanon might also be added in the latter case. The

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Trips/Visits File, Box 109, 2/3–4/78 Visit to President Sadat of Egypt: Briefing Book [II], 2/78. Secret; Nodis. The meeting took place at the Maamura Rest House in Alexandria, Egypt. Vance visited Alexandria from August 1 to August 3 and returned to Egypt on August 11.

Secretary stated that he saw no chance for a separate PLO delegation and urged that all the parties be realistic.

The Secretary then restated that our position on substance had not changed. *Five principles* have been developed as a framework for the conference that deal with substantive issues.² We hope for common agreement on some of the principles, and others might be put forward by the two co-chairmen. Secretary General Waldheim agrees that this could be done. Ultimately, however, the questions will have to be negotiated by the parties, with the US working as an intermediary.

Turning to the results of the visit of Prime Minister Begin, the Secretary reviewed the procedural proposals put forward by Israel. The Secretary expressed appreciation for Sadat's restraint in not commenting on the proposals and referred to his other speeches and gestures as conducive to peace. The Secretary provided President Sadat with a copy of the proposals, and discussed them briefly, noting that Lebanon could be included at Geneva. On the question of the role of the co-chairmen, the Secretary stated that Begin prefers that they not be present in the mixed commissions.

President Sadat reacted to the use of the term peace treaties by saying that he preferred to speak of peace agreements. He was concerned about the apparent absence of a US role in the negotiations in the Israeli concept. *Secretary Vance* replied that the Israelis do accept Resolutions 242 and 338 as the basis for the Geneva Conference and do accept a US mediation role. The Israelis also say that they prefer bilateral committees; that they will not return to the 1967 lines; that they will not accept a Palestinian state; and that borders should be negotiated without prior commitments. On Palestinian representation, Israel will not accept a separate PLO delegation, but they will not inspect the credentials of Palestinians in the Jordanian delegation, provided that they are not known members of the PLO. We indicated that our views differ, but that we would convey Israel's views. On the nature of peace, Begin's position is that full peace should include normalization of relations, the details of which would be negotiated in Geneva.

Foreign Minister Fahmy reacted to Begin's proposal by calling it a "non-starter." *President Sadat* referred to Begin's ideas as "very extreme." He agreed, however, that Resolutions 242 and 338 were the basis for negotiations. Begin's refusal to withdraw to the 1967 borders, however, was an indication of his expansionist designs. He then asked the Secretary a "very important" question—"I wonder what your idea is on the borders problem." *Secretary Vance* replied that our view on

² See the Attachment to Document 54.

borders is the same as it was when Sadat visited Washington:³ the borders should be negotiated by the parties and should approximate the 1967 lines with only minor modifications. Sadat replied: "Marvellous, very good." Summarizing Begin's views on 242-338, the US view on borders, Sadat said he thought we were not so far from agreement. He termed PLO participation a psychological problem more than a substantive one. The alternative of Palestinians being included in a Jordanian delegation will not be accepted by the Arab world or by the Palestinians. "We have given full power to the PLO after Rabat."⁴ But let us be flexible in this matter." Sadat then proposed that the Assistant Secretary General of the Arab League, Lt. General Muhammad Ali Fahmi, who is also Egyptian Chief of Staff, could head a delegation for Palestine. Sadat felt that he could convince the Palestinians to accept this arrangement and that this would get us out of the impasse. *Secretary Vance* stated that if the Arabs would agree to this idea, it would be all right with the US. But he asked if Assad would agree. *Sadat* replied that Assad would be "very furious," but if the Palestinians are convinced, Assad can't oppose them. Sadat emphasized that this would be a separate delegation to represent Palestine, not the same as the Egyptian delegation. He views this as a concession to Israel by not insisting on known PLO leaders. Some Palestinian leaders, however, might be associated with the delegation.

In reply to the Secretary's question, *Sadat* said that he did not agree to a unified Arab delegation at Geneva. As he had told President Carter in April, this sounds ideal, but in fact it would make it easy for Israel to maneuver and the Arab side would explode from within. The delegation would have to be led by an Egyptian, since Egypt represents one-third of the Arab world. Egypt is able to answer any question Israel may raise, and Sadat is ready to take the lead among the Arabs. This will mean that the US can achieve peace in the most dangerous area of the world. If there were one Arab delegation, then each country would have a veto over the others and this would impede progress. "I do not want to be retarded by anyone." Sinai II caused an uproar in the Arab world, but eventually it was accepted.

Sadat then turned to the phrase "minor modifications." This should be understood to apply only to the West Bank, where some villages were divided. Mutual adjustments will be necessary. But on Sinai and Golan, "there can be no minor rectifications at all." On the Golan Heights, there can be UN observers and small demilitarized zones. Assad will agree. In Sinai, there is an international border, recognized

³ See Documents 25 and 27.

⁴ See footnote 8, Document 6.

in the Rogers Plan of December 1969.⁵ No minor rectifications are called for there. Sadat next referred to the unique historic opportunity that the US under President Carter faced. The US is trusted by Egypt, the main force in the Arab world, with over one-third of the population, and a greater share of the influence. At the same time, the US has a special relationship with Israel. The Soviets need not be excluded, but they have nothing to do with the problem. Everyone should feel the problem is solved by the US. The disengagement agreements have reduced tensions and defused the bomb. In the next phase of peace making, if the US leaves the Arabs and Israelis alone together, there will be no trust. This is quite natural after 29 years, four wars, and so much violence. Sadat referred to his conversation with President Carter in which he said that a peace agreement should be carefully prepared beforehand under a working group headed by Secretary Vance. This should be done discreetly, so the Soviets will not explode. Geneva should not become like the disarmament conferences. The model should be the first disengagement agreement which grew out of an American proposal. Unless the US does this again, the Soviets, Syrians, and maybe even Jordan will try to work against me. The Palestinians are not a problem. But King Hussein still wants the West Bank. He should not have resubmitted the United Arab Kingdom idea, since this was dropped at Rabat. In the end, there will be something like the UAK, but it should not be talked about. The West Bank will have to have a link to Jordan. President Sadat again reviewed Begin's positions and his own, emphasizing that Begin's rejection of a Palestinian homeland was untenable, since Palestine was the core of the whole problem. How, he asked, can there be permanent peace in the area without solving the Palestinian problem? The Palestinians are not asking to throw Israel into the sea and the last PLO Council meeting in Cairo passed very moderate resolutions.⁶

Hypothesizing about Geneva without an active US role, or separate delegations on the Rhodes model⁷ with a US role, Sadat said he thought he would prefer the latter. He referred again to the unique American role and his trust in President Carter. *Foreign Minister Fahmy* added that Geneva already has an Egyptian-Israeli committee which has a UN chairman.⁸ Therefore, Begin's alternatives add nothing to what exists. *Secretary Vance* asked about Sadat's views on the nature of

⁵ See footnote 9, Document 21.

⁶ The Palestinian National Council met in Cairo March 12–22, 1977.

⁷ See footnote 5, Document 18.

⁸ Presumably a reference to the post-disengagement talks held in Geneva by an Egyptian-Israeli military working group under the chairmanship of General Siilasvuo. The group met six times in January 1974. See *Foreign Relations, 1969–1976*, vol. XXV, Arab-Israeli Crisis and War, 1973, Document 425.

peace. *Sadat's* reply was that an article could be written into the peace agreement saying that after the end of belligerency, and after the complete withdrawal of Israeli forces, then within five years Egypt and Israel will sit together to discuss normalization. The state of belligerency could not end, however, while any Israeli soldiers remained on Egyptian land. Normalization cannot begin until all Israeli troops have withdrawn. Otherwise Israel would have a gun at his chest and would be forcing him to make concessions. Normalization should come after withdrawal, gradually, not artificially. If Egypt cannot do it, no one else can.

Secretary Vance reiterated the importance the US attaches to normalization and stated that he thought normalization could be staged over a number of years. *Sadat* responded by saying that he would not allow his land to be held as a pledge (hostage) for this. *Fahmy* interjected to note that perhaps Israel would want assurances that once a peace agreement is reached, Egypt will agree to the phasing of normalization. *Sadat* said that after the signing of an agreement should come withdrawal; then normalization. *Fahmy* asserted that Israel should be content that normalization would take place within a certain period of time. *Secretary Vance* asked why these steps could not be taken over five years. *Sadat* responded that after withdrawal is complete, then it would be possible; but withdrawal could not take five years. He repeated that he would not end the state of belligerency until the last Israeli soldier leaves Egypt.

Secretary Vance then reviewed the draft principle on the Palestinian entity and self-determination.⁹ *Sadat* said that he was prepared to try to convince the Palestinians to accept a UN force in the West Bank and Gaza as an interim measure. This would give Israel some security and at the same time a plebiscite could take place to determine a link to Jordan. *Secretary Vance* raised the possibility of a trusteeship, possibly with Israel and Jordan as joint trustees. *Sadat* replied that this would be completely refused. Israel should be excluded, but Jordan, the Palestinians and other Arabs could act as trustees. If Israel were a trustee that would give her the West Bank. *Secretary Vance* urged *Sadat* to keep an open mind on this issue. Israel would not accept having the UN take over the West Bank. The Secretary went on to note that ultimately the parties would have to negotiate the details of any agreement. The formal talks ended at 9:30 p.m. and the Secretary proceeded to discuss issues with President *Sadat* privately for another hour and forty minutes.

⁹ A reference to the fifth draft principle. See footnote 2 above.

64. Telegram From Secretary of State Vance to the White House and the Department of State¹

Alexandria, August 2, 1977, 0940Z

Secto 8013. White House: Eyes Only for the President and Dr. Brzezinski From the Secretary. Department: Eyes Only for Warren Christopher and Peter Tarnoff. Subject: Meeting with President Sadat.

1. In a long *tete a tete* with President Sadat, he presented his suggestions on how to proceed. He suggested that we should ask each of the parties to put down on paper a draft of final peace treaty which would be sent to us. After our return to Washington, we should then convene a working group consisting of the Foreign Ministers with whom the US would seek to work out in advance of Geneva the various treaties. To this end, he gave me a draft of Egyptian-Israeli treaty. We then went through it paragraph by paragraph and he gave me a series of fall-back positions which he said we could use at our discretion. He said if any further changes were necessary he would try to make them as he felt the time was ripe and we must achieve peace very soon. Time is running out, he said. He then said I should tell Dayan that he (Sadat) is ready to conclude peace with him. He commented that he is pleased Dayan is Foreign Minister, as he believes he is flexible and wants to make peace.

2. I pointed out that even assuming we could help in working out a treaty between Egypt and Israel, we have not resolved the problems of the West Bank, a Palestinian entity, and Golan. He replied that he was confident that Assad would negotiate a treaty if Egypt took the lead. In so far as the West Bank and the Palestinian issue is concerned, the Israelis must give up the West Bank, except for minor border rectifications. This, he said, should be done by a UN trusteeship to be followed by plebiscite. He said that whatever was necessary from the Palestinians, he could produce. He said he had just met with Arafat and that he was confident that they would do what he (Sadat) asked.

3. I said that he was ignoring the Israelis and that, in my judgement they would not agree to move out and turn the West Bank over to the UN. I said he must be realistic. He replied that I should come back and see him at the end of my trip and that whatever I felt was needed on the Palestinian question he would try to produce. I asked him what he believed the relationship should be between a Palestinian entity and

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Trip File, Box 42, Vance, Middle East, 7/31/77–8/12/77: Cables. Top Secret; Immediate; Nodis; Cherokee.

Jordan. He said it must be one of confederation or part of a united Arab state. He said it should not be federation with Jordan.

4. I then asked what he envisioned if the other parties, Syria, Jordan, et al., could not reach agreement. Was he prepared to make a separate peace with Israel. He replied emphatically, yes. He said he was prepared to meet separately with Begin and you and sign a peace “treaty”. I persuaded him he must accept that term.

5. He said it was vital that we begin to talk to Arafat. I said as he knew we could not do so until the PLO accepted 248 with a reservation and agreed to accept the right of Israel to exist. He replied that he could produce whatever we needed on this. He went on to say Arafat was coming to see him after we go to Damascus, and he will get what we have asked when Arafat comes to Alexandria.

6. There are many gaps in and problems with the suggestions he has made, but they are interesting and well worth pursuing. I am considering how to pursue discussions in the other capitals in light of his proposal and his request that I not tell other leaders that he has given me a specific document. I am not cabling text of peace treaty which has Sadat’s hand-written comments in margin, but will bring it back with me.²

Vance

² The draft treaty with Sadat’s comments has not been found.

65. Telegram From Secretary of State Vance to the White House and the Department of State¹

Alexandria, August 2, 1977, 1655Z

Secto 8019. White House: Eyes Only for the President and Dr. Brzezinski From the Secretary. Department: Eyes Only for Warren Christopher and Peter Tarnoff. Subject: Meeting with Sadat.

1. After reflecting on President Sadat’s suggestions of last night,² I propose to modify slightly our plans for the balance of the trip. In addi-

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Trip File, Box 42, Vance, Middle East, 7/31/77–8/12/77: Cables. Top Secret; Immediate; Nodis; Cherokee.

² See Documents 63 and 64.

tion to covering the issues we had previously planned to discuss in the remaining discussions, I will ask each of the parties (Syria, Jordan, Israel and Lebanon) to prepare a draft of a proposed peace treaty to be transmitted to us. This will allow us to explore Sadat's proposal and give us a way of getting the confrontation states to set down their basic requirements on the core issues.

2. After receiving the draft treaties, we will review them and then convene a working group in Washington or New York in mid-September. We would propose to act as the intermediary seeking ways of narrowing the remaining differences between the parties. We could refer to this as a pre-Geneva meeting to further preparations for a peaceful solution to the Middle East problem.

3. We would seek to develop at least a basic draft of each of the necessary treaties. Of course, we do not know at this point whether all the parties will wish to prepare drafts and attend such a meeting. The Egyptians believe that all the Arabs would be willing to participate in such a process. I think the Israelis might also participate in a working group, as Begin has already indicated Dayan would do so. Furthermore, such talks would approximate the "proximity talks" idea, which was one of the alternatives put forward by Begin in his peace proposal.³ We cannot count, however, on the Israelis being willing to prepare each of the necessary draft treaties at this stage. We will know better after I have met with Begin and Dayan.

4. The main problem that I foresee with the draft treaties is that only the Jordanian draft could conceivably deal with the Palestinian problem. Sadat accepts the concept of trusteeship on the West Bank with an undefined transition period with ultimate self-determination. At this point, however, he rejects the idea of including Israel as a trustee. We have told him he is being unrealistic in assuming that the Israelis would simply move out of the West Bank at the outset of a UN trusteeship. I underscored this fact again this morning with Fahmy.⁴

5. There is no reason to speculate as to what uncertainties may exist with Syria and Jordan about these proposals. We will soon find out their reactions. We think it is also important to discuss these ideas with the Saudis and to get their general backing.

6. As to the PLO, in response to Sadat's offer of last night, we have provided him with a suggested statement,⁵ which he will take up with Arafat within the next few days. He has already sent a message to Arafat asking him to come to Egypt as soon as we leave tomorrow.

³ See the Attachment to Document 52.

⁴ No record of this conversation has been found.

⁵ Not found, but see Document 67.

7. Sadat believes it would be desirable for me to return to Egypt for a brief talk (1–2 hours) after I have been to Tel Aviv.⁶ If I do so, I will also spend an hour or two in Amman and Damascus on my last day in the Middle East.

Vance

⁶ Vance returned to Egypt on August 11. See Document 87.

66. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Damascus, August 4, 1977, 9:40 a.m.

PARTICIPANTS

Syrians

Foreign Minister Abd al-Halim Khaddam

Abd al-Karim Adi, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs

Abd al-Ghani ar-Rafi, Assistant Foreign Minister

Hammud Shawfi, Director of American Desk, Foreign Ministry

Americans

Cyrus Vance, Secretary of State

Philip Habib, Under Secretary for Political Affairs

Alfred L. Atherton, Jr., Assistant Secretary for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs

Ambassador Richard Murphy

Harold Saunders, Director, INR

William B. Quandt, NSC Staff

SUBJECT

Secretary Vance's Meeting with Foreign Minister Khaddam

Foreign Minister Khaddam opened the discussion by saying that he would like to hear the Secretary's views. He suggested that the Secretary might review Prime Minister Begin's visit to the United States, then mention any US thoughts on a peace settlement, and then summarize his talks in Egypt. The Foreign Minister said he would not ask about Lebanon since the Lebanese leaders were not deeply involved.

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 50, Middle East: 7–9/77. Secret; Nodis. The meeting took place in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Vance visited Damascus from August 3 to August 5 and returned on August 11.

The Secretary agreed to proceed along those lines, and then to present some alternatives on both procedural and substantive issues and some suggestions on how to deal with these topics. The Secretary gave the Foreign Minister a copy of Prime Minister Begin's procedural proposals² and read through the nine points in the document. He also described Begin's two alternative approaches. He then reviewed the Israeli position on Palestinian representation, noting that the US had suggested several alternatives of its own. First, the Palestinians might be represented in a national Arab delegation such as Jordan. Second, Palestinians might be included in a unified Arab delegation. Third, prior Arab-Israeli agreement might be reached that the Palestinian issue would be on the agenda and that Palestinians would be present when the negotiations begin on that question. Fourth, prior Arab-Israeli agreement might be reached that the Palestinian issue would be on the agenda and that the modalities for Palestinian negotiation would be negotiated at the conference. The Secretary stated that we found the first two alternatives to be the most realistic and believed that one of them should be chosen. Israel's position, as the Secretary described it, was that Palestinians would not be acceptable as part of a unified Arab delegation, but they might be part of a Jordanian delegation, and that Israel would not inspect their credentials. No known PLO members, however, could be part of such a delegation. The Secretary noted that in further discussions the Israelis were somewhat positive on the possibility of Palestinians in a unified Arab delegation, but that in a later press conference Mr. Begin had specifically rejected any known PLO members at Geneva.³ The Secretary went on to note that Mr. Begin accepts UN Resolutions 242 and 338 as the basis for negotiations at Geneva. He does not accept a return to the 1967 borders, and he does not accept the concept of a Palestinian state. He believes that the question of secure and recognized borders should be negotiated without preconditions. On the Golan and Sinai fronts, he will negotiate without any prior conditions. And, finally, on the West Bank question, which is intertwined with the Palestinian issue, he is prepared to negotiate, but he opposes a Palestinian state. That, in brief, is the substance of his position on these issues. *The Foreign Minister* said that this was very clear.

Secretary Vance stated that we had agreed to disagree on many of these issues and Mr. Begin understands the American position.

The Secretary went on to review the issues as the American side sees them. He emphasized the need to make progress in resolving differences and preparing the ground for Geneva. On the question of Palestinian representation, he stated that Palestinians in a Jordanian or in a

² See the Attachment to Document 52.

³ See footnote 3, Document 56.

united Arab delegation would be the most realistic alternative. In discussions with President Sadat, he suggested a third approach. He recommended that a delegation for Palestine be led by the Assistant Secretary General of the Arab League, who is the Chief of Staff of the Egyptian Army. Other members of the delegation might come from various Arab countries, and Palestinians would also be included. For example, some West Bank mayors might be part of the delegation, and there would be no question of Israel inspecting their credentials. *Foreign Minister Khaddam* asked a question of clarification on whether this represented President Sadat's view. *Secretary Vance* said that it did, and that this is the alternative that he prefers. President Sadat opposes a unified Arab delegation, and although he could conceive of Palestinians in a Jordanian delegation, he does not think the PLO would accept this. Therefore, he has proposed this third alternative. The Secretary stated that in his own view the first two alternatives are the most realistic. On the question of US contacts with the PLO, the United States is bound by the terms of the Sinai II Agreement not to talk to the PLO unless they accept Resolution 242, possibly with a reservation. The Secretary then read the proposed language which spelled out the terms in which the PLO would have to accept Resolution 242, with only a reservation on that part which makes reference to the refugee question instead of to a homeland.⁴ He emphasized that it would have to be understood that the right of all states to live in peace includes Israel's right. If the PLO would be willing to issue such a statement, then the United States could talk to them. By agreeing to talk, the United States would not be committing itself to PLO representation at Geneva. This would require further discussion. However, it would be a very important first step.

Foreign Minister Khaddam said that the difficulty stemmed from the fact that the Palestinians are being given nothing by Israel or the United States. The only thing left for them is to be skinned alive, having already lost their clothes. *The Secretary* said that he understood that the Palestinians did want to talk to the United States. We are looking for ways to make this possible. We think that this is a sound approach and a good-faith way of starting a dialogue.

The Secretary then reviewed the five general principles on the substance of negotiations.⁵ He explained that we were trying to move toward increasingly concrete discussions in order to prepare the way for Geneva. He handed the Foreign Minister a copy of the five draft principles and read each of them, with some elaboration on numbers 3, 4, and 5. On the third principle, he stressed that the United States fa-

⁴ See Document 67.

⁵ See the Attachment to Document 54.

vored an eventual relationship which would include trade, free movement of peoples, and diplomatic relations. The United States would envisage the establishment of normal relations as something to be accomplished in phases over a period of years, along with other elements of a settlement. On the fourth point, the United States position is unchanged with respect to the question of Israeli withdrawal to the 1967 borders with only minor modifications. President Carter has stated our position on this. On the fifth principle, the United States preference is for a Palestinian entity linked to Jordan. We can see advantages to such a solution. We feel that it is important that self-determination be permitted for the Palestinians, and therefore some form of transitional administration will be required for that to come about. To that end, we have given thought to an international trusteeship under the UN leading to a plebiscite at the end of a transitional period. At the end of the trusteeship, the Palestinians would exercise their right of self-determination. With respect to the question of trusteeship during the transitional period, the United States believes that it should be established under the United Nations, as is customary. As to the trustees who would be acting under the UN and would be responsible to it, there are several possibilities. One variation would involve a third party not from the area. From the Israeli standpoint there is little chance of that being accepted. Therefore, it might be possible to consider Israel as one of the trustees responsible to the United Nations during a period of transition. This is a subject requiring more discussion. But we do believe in the principle of self-determination and believe that it will be hard for people to argue against that principle. *The Foreign Minister* replied that it would seem that the Palestinians' fate has already been determined. What would be left for self-determination?

The Secretary said that they would still have the choice on how they would be governed and what their relations would be with the neighboring states. The vote of self-determination may take the form of the election of a constituent assembly which would take steps to establish a government and to develop relations with its neighbors. The Secretary noted that all of the principles had been discussed with the Israelis and that Israel had rejected principles 4 and 5. *Foreign Minister Khaddam* said somewhat lightly, that if Israel rejected numbers 4 and 5, perhaps Syria would reject all of the principles.

The Secretary emphasized that it is important to try to find a set of principles to establish a general framework for discussions, it is increasingly important to state positions concretely, and with this objective in mind, the Secretary said that it would be useful to have from each of the parties a draft of a peace treaty as they would like to see it. He said that such a draft should be sent only to him. After reviewing it, the US would put together a series of draft treaties that would be fair

and equitable and could serve as the basis for discussions in the future. The Secretary said that if something like this were not done, the parties would continue to talk in generalities and little progress would be made. Time would be wasted, and the parties would not get down to the nuts and bolts of an agreement. As a neutral intermediary, the United States could play a useful role. If this were done, as he had indicated, he would like to ask the foreign ministers to continue discussions with him in New York or Washington, where he would be able to move among the parties to help them come to grips with the issues that need to be resolved before going to Geneva. By all convening in one city, the process of communication would be facilitated. *Khaddam* asked whether the Secretary envisaged all of the foreign ministers getting together, or whether he foresaw bilateral talks between himself and each of the foreign ministers. *The Secretary* said that he expected bilateral discussions, unless the parties themselves wanted to get together. *The Foreign Minister* asked what President Sadat had been talking about when he mentioned working groups. *The Secretary* said that this was a similar notion to his own, and that for some time he had been thinking of the need for talks with the foreign ministers in New York. If they want to get together as a group, he would of course have no objection. *The Foreign Minister* said that the news accounts were talking of a working group meeting under Secretary Vance to prepare for the Geneva Conference. *The Secretary* acknowledged that such a suggestion had been made and would include all the parties to the Middle East conflict. *Khaddam* asked if the PLO would be included, and the Secretary said that it would not.

The Secretary repeated the importance of progress being made in the near future. Nothing would be lost if all of the parties were to submit draft treaties, and the Secretary would prepare alternative drafts as a means for furthering the discussions. President Sadat would be prepared to take this under consideration. The Secretary does not know what the reactions of other parties would be.

Foreign Minister Khaddam responded by commenting first on Prime Minister Begin's ideas. He termed them "not worthy of discussion, because they show the depth of the Zionist policy of continuing aggression." "There seems to be a Zionist decision to close all avenues to peace. We feel these suggestions are new obstacles in the path of peace." *Khaddam* termed the Israeli proposals an obvious maneuver to cover the fact that Israel does not want to withdraw to the 1967 lines. But they say they will negotiate without prior conditions. They talk of peace, but they refuse to recognize the Palestinians. It does not take much intelligence to understand their thinking. *Khaddam* stated that Mr. Begin had gone to the United States with very specific objectives in mind and that he had succeeded in reaching those. This was not very

encouraging. The United States limits itself to making a few suggestions to the Israelis, and then does not follow them up; but with the Arabs, the United States continues to ask for more and more concessions. When one reads the thoughts of Mr. Begin, one can conclude that the road to peace is very long.

Khaddam stated that peace must have three major elements: Israel must withdraw to the 1967 borders. There can be no discussion on this no matter what. In the Syrian view, the preparations for peace should have as their primary concern arrangements for withdrawal, not the discussion of the question of withdrawal. The second issue is the question of the Palestinians. The Palestinian problem in the area does exist. The wars of 1967 and of 1973 are the results of the problem of the Palestinians. Without this problem, there would have been no wars in the area. So how can negotiations proceed without tackling the core of the problem? This question has to be posed. Is the objective to create new areas of conflict, or is it peace?

Khaddam argued that a policy of ignoring the Palestinians could result in the alliance of Palestinians with others who would not be party to a peace agreement, and that could be dangerous. Several other Arab states might accuse Syria, Egypt, and Jordan of having abandoned Palestinian interests. There would also be international quarters who would try to take advantage of the situation. Any agreement that ignored the core issue would fall flat. The same fate befell other agreements and treaties which did the same. Therefore, since Syria wants peace, Syria wants serious discussions and preparations. Syrian leaders have to ask whether public opinion would accept any alternative to dealing with the Palestinian question. Even if policemen could be put on every street corner, the Syrians would not accept such an approach, and it would be contrary to our own interests. Syria has Palestinian refugees in its country. Where are their rights, and where is their future?

If we are seeking a just and durable peace, all of this has to be on the table. Syria cannot understand the US commitment under the Sinai II not to talk to the Palestinians. The United States had a commitment to South Vietnam, and it was dragged into war, but eventually the US commitment to South Vietnam was ended. Which is more important, Khaddam asked, a commitment to a policy that is worn out, a commitment that gives Israel too much, or a policy of undoing that commitment in order to reach real peace? *Secretary Vance* replied that it was unfair to compare the South Vietnamese situation to the Sinai II commitment. Khaddam had not accurately stated all of the facts concerning Vietnam and the comparison was not a good one. The United States does have a commitment under Sinai II, and it has tried to find a constructive way to relieve the constraint of that commitment and to open the way to talks with the PLO. He hoped that Syria would help.

Khaddam said that he did not believe the situation was more complex, and he jokingly suggested that he could arrange a meeting with Arafat. *The Secretary* said that if the PLO made the appropriate statement, then we would talk. *Khaddam* said that we should talk to them first.

Turning to the question of representation at the Geneva Conference, *Khaddam* referred to the position stated by President Assad of preferring the unified Arab delegation which would include all of the Arab parties and the PLO. The only alternative to that would be PLO participation at Geneva on its own. Syria does not want to adhere to just one view, and it does want movement. But the proper circumstances must be created to get movement. If the PLO can be considered terrorists, then Israel under Begin should also be viewed as terrorists. On the question of recognition of Israel, Syria does not recognize Israel, but it is prepared to go to Geneva with Israel, and Israel accepts that. We must go back to the question of whether there is a Palestinian problem or not. Are the Palestinians in a social and political position to express their own view of the future or not? Is there an international legitimacy to the PLO or not? If you want to solve the problem, it is inescapable that all parties to the dispute must be represented. King Hussein cannot represent the Palestinians. Syria cannot represent them. Egypt cannot. We want representation in the framework of responsibility. If the Palestinians were left out, they would go on a rampage. The French negotiated with the FLN. The US negotiated with the National Liberation Front. The US could have refused to do so, but the war would have gone on. That would have been contrary to the American policy of ending the war. If the objective is peace, then all must sit at the table. If the objective is not peace, then each party is on its own. We in Syria need peace and want peace and are ready to move in a way that will achieve this goal. But to ignore the Palestinians will not secure the achievement of peace, and will create new struggles. *Khaddam* said that he did not think the United States wanted to see this. Syria hoped for pressure on Israel to submit to international legality. *Khaddam* would not comment on Begin's views, because he felt that Mr. Vance did not take them all that seriously.

Secretary Vance responded by saying that the United States had discussed with Begin the importance of resolving the Palestinian question. We have said that there can be no solution to the Middle East problem without a resolution of the Palestinian issue. We have discussed the question of Palestinian representation and of the PLO. We cannot force Begin to do something he is not prepared to do at this point. We can only express our views. The Secretary repeated that we had made constructive suggestions in Geneva and if the PLO were to recognize Resolution 242 with a reservation, then we could talk to them. The Secretary said that he did not understand why it takes so long to get anything done on this.

Khaddam said that he would discuss this with the Palestinians, but that if there were no progress Syria would not be responsible. Begin was the one that was presenting obstacles. He had once said in a speech that if the Egyptians wanted to go to Geneva and called for full withdrawal, then it would be better for them to stay in Cairo. Who then is responsible for freezing of the situation? Who is building settlements? How can Syria be convinced that Israel intends to withdraw when new settlements are being established? Syria has rallied its public opinion in the direction of peace. By contrast, Israel is working up its public opinion against peace. The fact of new settlements is by itself an indication that they are telling their people that there will be no peace. *Khaddam* argued that all of the declarations by Arab leaders have been in the direction of peace, but that the Israeli statements call for holding on to the occupied territories. He said that there is a freezing of the situation, but that it is not Syria's fault.

The Foreign Minister asked about President Sadat's suggestion for sending a delegation to Geneva. He asked whether it would be composed of both political and military representatives, and the *Secretary* said that he believed that both would be included. *Khaddam* said that the proposed head is the Chief of Staff of the Egyptian military. This led to the impression that it was a military delegation. Syria cannot react to this proposal now, since it is the first time it has been discussed. Perhaps President Assad would be able to comment.

Khaddam asked about the Egyptian attitude toward a unified Arab delegation. He stated that he did not understand the reason for Egypt's opposition. Syria believes that a unified Arab delegation would facilitate negotiations. In any case, agreement among the Arabs has been reached on meeting together after Secretary Vance's tour in order to coordinate positions. Turning to procedural issues, Syria does not now agree to regional subdivisions in the negotiations. Syria would like to see committees formed to discuss specific topics, but not along regional lines. There should be a committee on withdrawal, on guarantees for peace, and on the Palestinian question. But to have an Egyptian-Israeli group, and a Syrian-Israeli group, and a Jordanian-Israeli group—if that were the situation, Syria would see no reason to join such a discussion.

On the question of the PLO, *Khaddam* stated that Syria has asked the United States to begin a dialogue with the PLO as a contribution to peace. He said that there is a Security Council resolution in existence which refers to the Palestinians and some reference to it might help. He quoted from Resolution 381, of November 30, 1975. That Resolution called for a reconvening of the Security Council on the 12th of January, 1976, to continue the discussion of the Middle East problem, including the Palestinian question, taking into consideration all of the relevant

UN Resolutions in this context. The President of the Council said, and it was understood by the majority of the Security Council members, that the PLO would be included in the deliberations. On January 12th, 1976, the Security Council did reconvene, and the PLO did attend. The Geneva Conference stems from the Security Council. If the Security Council has agreed to deliberate on the question, it follows that to refuse the PLO participation when the Conference derives from the Security Council does not make sense. The PLO should participate when the Security Council considers the Middle East.

Khaddam then referred to Resolutions of the UN General Assembly, and noted that the PLO is an observer member of the General Assembly. He does not see how there can be objections or procedural reasons to prevent the PLO from participation. If the PLO were to say that it agreed to a solution based on all the pertinent UN Resolutions, some of which include good points for the Palestinians and some include good points for the other side, that should be sufficient. Syria has not discussed this possibility with the Palestinians, but if the US were to accept the idea, Syria would discuss it. This would be easier for them to accept. Khaddam stated that he must underscore that he is not insisting on the PLO because he particularly likes Arafat, but rather because he feels it is a helpful suggestion. This is why Syria hopes that the American side, in the interests of peace and in light of what is known of the Palestinian desire for peace, will consider what could be done to bring in the PLO in the context of preparing the work for peace.

Turning to the principles by Secretary Vance, *Khaddam* said that he hoped the Secretary would not be shocked by his views. He said that Syria had accepted Resolution 338 with two reservations spelling out Syria's demand for complete withdrawal from all occupied territories, and a guarantee of the national rights of the Palestinian people in light of UN Resolutions. Syria cannot argue with the objective of reaching a just peace, but on Resolution 242 it should be noted that the Resolution dealt with a specific situation of war between Egypt, Syria, Jordan, and Israel. It did not treat the core of the problem—the Palestinian question. This is why negotiations now should have as their basis all of the UN Resolutions. For example, Resolution 181⁶ dealt with the situation in the Middle East in a more complete way than Security Council Resolution 242. The guide for peace can be found in the UN Charter and in the resolutions on the Middle East. Israel was created by a UN Resolution and therefore the Israeli problem must be solved within the UN context. The struggle in the Middle East is not just a regional one. It has assumed international dimensions, and it is connected with the international situation and with economic issues. Just as peace is relevant to

⁶ See footnote 2, Document 32.

the peoples of the area, so it is now to all of the world's peoples. Therefore the discussion of the problem should not be isolated from world opinion, which is represented by the UN and its Resolutions. Finally, peace will require guarantees, and these must come from the UN. This does not negate the role of any particular nation that can help to mediate. The United States in particular has a dual capacity as a great power and as a UN Security Council permanent member. This gives it special responsibility. Syria does not equate the United States with Britain or France. On the third principle, the United States has its concept of peace. This was a subject discussed in Washington and in Geneva. If one takes Resolution 242, one finds that it calls for an end to the state of war, not for the resumption of normal conditions. These are part of the sovereign action of any state. Even in the case of a surrender agreement, such conditions cannot be imposed. And Syria has not yet been vanquished. But even if Syria were beaten one hundred times, politics and history are still on Syria's side. Khaddam rhetorically asked who could force the United States to engage in normal and friendly relations with Cuba? These might occur, and Syria would not deny the possibility, and Syria might even help in cases like American relations with North Vietnam. But even among Arab states there are some which do not recognize one another. For example, Oman does not recognize South Yemen, and Jordan does not recognize Mauritania. They have no diplomatic representatives in one another's capitals. What is important is that steps be taken to prevent the occurrence of war in the area. Anything else belongs to future generations. In the case of East and West Germany, where they are one people, it was a long time before they had contacts. In Syria's opinion, it would be a mistake to stipulate that these things must happen within a specific period of time. Some may take a thousand years, some may take a hundred years, some fifty, some ten, but it will all depend on circumstances at the specific time. What is important is that the state of war be ended and that the possibility of conflict disappear. Syria is ready with an open mind to take all steps to prevent the occurrence of war in the area. The United States has expressed its view on point 4 very clearly.

On the fifth principle Khaddam stated that the commitment of the Palestinian entity to peace would be resolved by PLO participation in the peace conference and this would solve the Palestinian problem. It will be natural for a Palestinian state to show the same responsibility as the other Arab states. But if the PLO does not participate, then the whole picture will be different. This is precisely why Syria insists that the PLO participate. Syria wants them to involve themselves in taking responsibility. As to the suggestion that the Palestinian entity not be militarized, the same should also then apply to Israel. Both parties are existing on the territory of Palestine. If there is real peace, neither side should have arms. This would save the United States lots of money.

The United States could even take back the arms that it has already given! It does not stand to reason, in Khaddam's view, that Israel should be an arsenal while the other would only have a few policemen with rusty bullets. Concerning self-determination, this has a basis in UN Resolutions. There are basic principles defining how people should achieve self-determination. Therefore, the question of self-determination should be governed by appropriate UN Resolutions. *The Secretary* said that he knew of General Assembly Resolutions to that effect, but not of any from the Security Council. Minister Khaddam said that he was speaking about the principle of self-determination, not specifically relating it to the Middle East or to the Palestinians. The concept of self-determination, in his view, should be linked to United Nations Resolutions. *The Secretary* asked for clarification. He said that the fifth principle did refer to self-determination and that he did not see this as a deviation from any UN Resolution. *Khaddam* said that he would prefer that the concept of self-determination be tied specifically to UN Resolutions on this subject. *The Secretary* reiterated the importance we attach to the concept of self-determination. Khaddam agreed that it could be referred to, but again expressed that it should be related to UN Resolutions, but he did not elaborate further.

Turning to the question of trusteeship, *Khaddam* said that the Palestinians do not need it. The Palestinians have the potential to run 20 states. The Palestinians are quite capable and therefore trusteeship as a principle is not acceptable. Since it is not acceptable in principle, anything derived from it is also not acceptable, such as an Israeli role. Since the Secretary will be meeting with President Assad shortly, Khaddam said that he would not go into further detail.

On the question of draft peace treaties, Khaddam said it would need to be discussed further. The working group idea suggested by President Sadat, in which the Foreign Ministers would meet under Secretary Vance, does not seem to be a practical proposal. If the intention is to meet as a preparatory committee, why not do it in Geneva? Such a meeting would not produce much. All parties agree on the need for good preparation. The working group idea would simply be another version of Geneva. If it met and agreement was not reached, it would have the same effect as a meeting in Geneva.

Khaddam said that he went along with the idea of staying in constant touch with Secretary Vance and of continuing the talks. Syria is committed to not giving up on the talks. There is a great objective of reaching peace in the area. Much blood had been spilled and great efforts would be required. Syria finds it useful to stay in touch. Syria wants to take one point and bring it to agreement, then set it aside, and then move on to the next point. This would be a useful way to proceed.

The parties should not lose hope in peace. They should continue, but it will not be reached within a year or two.

After a short break, the discussions resumed, while waiting for the talks with President Assad to begin. *Secretary Vance* noted that President Sadat had had the same problem with the third principle that Khaddam had mentioned. Sadat had had little problem with the fourth principle. On the fifth principle, he was concerned that Israel might have some responsibility under a transitional authority. Otherwise he found that the principles were sound. He particularly agreed to the principle of a transitional period and of self-determination. In reply to Khaddam's question, Secretary Vance said the Israeli reaction to this idea was negative. Begin does not agree to the fifth principle. This is not a reason for it to be excluded, and the US sees it as a sound way to solve the problem. Begin has been told the US view and the principle will be placed on the table.

Khaddam referred to the attitude of President Sadat on Palestinian representation. *The Secretary* said that Sadat did not believe that the PLO would accept participation in a Jordanian delegation, so he proposed his own alternative. *Khaddam* asked what the difference would be between a unified Arab delegation and an Arab League delegation. *The Secretary* clarified that Sadat had in mind a delegation for Palestine, not representing the Arab League. *Khaddam* asked if this was to be in addition to the national delegations, and the *Secretary* said that it would be. *Khaddam* said that this would mean a Syrian delegation, a Jordanian delegation, an Egyptian delegation, and a delegation for Palestine headed by the Arab League. *Khaddam* had thought that the Arab League delegation was to replace all of the others. *The Secretary* said that this was not Sadat's idea. *Khaddam* said that in this case the question would not be resolved. If there were to be a single delegation representing the Arab League as a whole, Syria would consider it. *The Secretary* reminded *Khaddam* that Sadat opposes a single delegation, and *Khaddam* asked again about the rationale. The *Secretary* replied that he preferred national delegations, and *Khaddam* said this was a problem.

The Secretary repeated that the United States saw that the two preferred solutions were either a unified delegation or Palestinian participation with the Jordanians. *Khaddam* said that this would have been possible if the Palestinians were to replace King Hussein. But the question involves the Palestinians west of the Jordan River, not the Palestinians east of the Jordan River. *Khaddam* then asked whether there had been any discussion of step-by-step approaches as opposed to an overall settlement. *The Secretary* said that the United States favored a comprehensive approach, and that all of the other parties agreed. *Khaddam* said that it was no doubt the better approach. Any new step

would produce a negative reaction, so a comprehensive approach was best.

The Secretary said that one should try to define the goals of a peace agreement, and then work on how to achieve those goals. It is therefore best to deal with all of the issues, and that is why the United States favors a comprehensive approach. *Khaddam* returned to the question of what Sadat had in mind concerning the working group. *The Secretary* said that it would help to prepare for Geneva, and that Sadat was worried, as he was, that unless things were worked out in advance, negotiations would drift. *Khaddam* asked whether Sadat really believed that when Dayan and Fahmy sat down together that Dayan would be so ashamed that he would be prepared to make concessions. *The Secretary* said that one should not think of the working group in a formal sense. All of the ministers would be in the same place and this would facilitate communications. *Khaddam* said that it had always been a problem of getting Arabs and Israelis together at the same place. *The Secretary* said it simply required being in the same city, not necessarily in the same room. In order to narrow the differences, the Secretary would like to be able to move easily among the parties. If they are all in New York for the General Assembly, then the opportunity should be taken for such talks. *Khaddam* said that he had the impression that the working group idea was meant to be a formal group. *Secretary Vance* said that he did not see it that way. All of the parties should simply come to New York prepared to work on the same problems. It should not be a question of how to label such talks, but it was important that communications be facilitated. *Khaddam* said that he had no objection to the United States playing a role among the parties. He then asked about indirect contacts with the Palestinians and how far these had gone. *Secretary Vance* said that we would be prepared to talk directly if they would accept Resolution 242. *Khaddam* said he had in mind indirect contacts and had heard of Palestinian contacts with elements in the White House. *Secretary Vance* said that some people who had been in government had reported to us on their talks, but they are not now in government and they were not asked to do so by the government. He referred to Governor Scranton who had met with a PLO representative in London and who had later reported to Secretary Vance. But this had not been done at the Secretary's request. There had also been Members of Congress who met with PLO representatives, such as Lee Hamilton who had met with Arafat and later reported to the government.⁷ *Khaddam* said that he had heard of a professor at AUB, Khalidi, who had some contacts.⁸ The discussions ended at 12:40 p.m.

⁷ See footnote 2, Document 61. No reports by Scranton or Hamilton have been found.

⁸ A reference to Professor Rashid Khalidi, a professor at the American University of Beirut.

67. Telegram From the Department of State to the White House¹

Washington, August 4, 1977, 2033Z

183188. Eyes Only for Dr. Brzezinski. Following repeat USDel Secretary in Damascus Secto 08040 sent action Jidda info SecState 04 Aug 77.

Quote. Secto 08040. For Ambassador From the Secretary. Subj: Formula for PLO Acceptance With Reservations of SC Resolution 242.

1. Please get in touch with Foreign Minister Prince Saud and convey following to him from me.

2. As His Highness will recall, you told him on my behalf that I would want to discuss further with him on my trip the question of PLO acceptance of Resolution 242 with reservations about its treatment of Palestinians only as refugees. His Highness had kindly offered to be helpful in this regard.

3. Following is a suggested formula which I look forward to discussing with Prince Saud when we meet. Quote The PLO accepts UNSC Resolution 242, with the reservation that it considers that the resolution does not make adequate reference to the question of the Palestinians. It is recognized that the language of Resolution 242 relates to the right of all states in the Middle East to live in peace. Unquote. While text does not mention Israel by name, it would be understood by PLO that phrase “all states in the Middle East” includes Israel.

4. You should also tell Saud that we found interest in this subject in Cairo and Damascus and discussed above formula with President Sadat and Assad,² who may be taking it up themselves with PLO. We would have no objection if His Highness wished to do the same.

Vance

Unquote

Christopher

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, N770004–0591. Secret; Immediate; Nodis; Cherokee. Drafted and approved by Peter Tarnoff.

² See Documents 65 and 68.

68. Telegram From Secretary of State Vance to the White House and the Department of State¹

Damascus, August 4, 1977, 2347Z

Secto 8045. White House: Eyes Only for the President and Dr. Brzezinski From the Secretary. Department: Eyes Only for Warren Christopher and Peter Tarnoff. Subject: Meeting With Syrian and Lebanese Leadership.

1. I will wrap up in this one report my account of four hours in Lebanon Wednesday, and my long talks here in Damascus today. Let me begin with the talks here in Syria because they are so much more directly related to the peace process.

2. I spent almost six hours today in back-to-back meetings first with Foreign Minister Khaddam and then in a longer session with President Assad.² I was warmly received. President Assad told me how much he had enjoyed his meeting with you in Geneva³ and asked me to send you his greetings. I had a full opportunity to discuss with both where matters now stand and how we would propose to proceed if we find general agreement on our suggestions. The discussions were thoughtful, and my colleagues tell me this is one of the few times they have seen Foreign Minister Khaddam almost completely avoid polemical positions and dig into substance.

3. In short, the Syrians were frank in stating their positions but are reserving final judgment on most points until they have had a chance to consult with the other key Arab governments, as they now plan to do after my visits here have ended. There is certainly no lessening of their interest in working closely with us, but they quite honestly say that they are pessimistic about the prospects for peace. Unlike Sadat, there is considerable caution and unwillingness to stick necks out very far; but Assad seems more realistic than Sadat in assessing the difficulties ahead, his commitment to the PLO remains strong, partly out of personal conviction, and possibly—although there was no hint of this here—because the Syrians have made a deal with the Palestinians in Lebanon.

4. Below are the main points I covered in my presentation to each along with what I perceive from our long conversations to be their action:

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840072–2620. Secret; Immediate; Nodis; Cherokee.

² No memorandum of conversation has been found of Vance's meeting with Asad. For Vance's meeting with Khaddam, see Document 66.

³ See Document 32.

A. Begin proposals.⁴ I gave them a copy of the Begin proposals and told them of Begin's willingness to negotiate on all issues but with the clear statement of opposition to withdrawal to 1967 lines, creation of a Palestinian state, or attendance of known PLO members at Geneva. Like Sadat, neither Khaddam nor Assad saw much in the Begin proposals to discuss. They talked about them mainly as further evidence that the Israelis, particularly the new Begin government, are not serious about peace negotiations. I made clear that Begin left Washington quite aware that we disagree with some of his positions.

B. Palestinian representation. I explained that we had come to the area believing that there are two realistic possibilities for Palestinian representation at Geneva—including the Palestinians in a unified Arab delegation or including them in a Jordanian national delegation. I told Assad that Sadat is firmly opposed to a unified Arab delegation and believes the PLO is likely to reject the idea of joining a Jordanian delegation. Sadat, therefore, has proposed that in addition to other national delegations, an Arab League delegation be formed to represent Palestine. Assad saw this idea as worth considering "because it is new," but it became apparent during the conversation that it would probably be acceptable to him only if the Arab League delegation were transformed into the delegation representing all of the Arabs rather than complementing national delegations. He continues to prefer a unified Arab delegation.

C. The five principles.⁵ I reviewed the five principles which we have drawn up as a starting point for discussions in a peace conference. Like Sadat, Assad prefers a comprehensive peace treaty rather than further partial steps, and at least in this first reaction he had posed no objection to the term "peace treaties." Also like Sadat, he is willing to state that the negotiations should be based on UN Resolutions 242 and 338, although he suggested that we might want to include reference to "all pertinent UN Resolutions" since others more completely describe the whole Palestinian problem. Again like Sadat, he is quite willing to accept language that describes one objective of the negotiations as the termination of belligerency and the coming of a state of peace, but he spoke at considerable length in describing why it is unreasonable in a peace treaty to try to impose on the signing parties a full normalization of relations. He accepts the fact that such normalization may well come with time but he regards it as an infringement on sovereignty that the details of this relationship would be spelled out in a treaty. I believe in time there is possibility of some give on this issue on the part of the Syrians. On the principle concerning boundaries, he would prefer a di-

⁴ See the Attachment to Document 52.

⁵ See the Attachment to Document 54.

rect endorsement of Israeli withdrawal to the pre-1967 boundaries, and he stated in much the same way as Sadat had that “minor adjustments” in the boundaries would only apply to the West Bank—not to the Golan or Sinai. Finally, he is pleased to see US talking about the establishment of a Palestinian entity, but probed for greater detail on how it would be established. One point he dwelt on was that it would be “unnatural” for the entity to be completely demilitarized, although he thought it would be reasonable to have demilitarized areas along the borders.

D. Trusteeship. I said in my conversation with Khaddam that we had given considerable thought to the need for some sort of “trusteeship” over the West Bank for some period of time leading up to an act of self-determination. Khaddam’s reaction revealed that there is a strong negative feeling about the word “trusteeship” because it connotes an inability on the part of the Palestinians to manage their own affairs. Therefore, in my presentation to Assad, I spoke instead of the need for “transitional administrative arrangements” which would lead toward an election of a constituent assembly which would present proposals for how the West Bank would be governed and what its relationship with its neighbors would be. Assad did not react negatively, but I think this is an idea which they will need more time to absorb. Part of the reason is that they have read in the Israeli press about the idea of an Israeli trusteeship over the West Bank, and both the Egyptians and the Syrians currently flatly reject the idea of any Israeli participation because they see that as perpetuating and legalizing Israeli occupation. I pointed out that any transition on the West Bank would be extremely complex and that they must not close their minds to the idea to some kind of Israeli involvement under general UN auspices. They also are in favor of self-determination for the Palestinians, which I stressed as key to our fifth principle.

E. U.S. contact with the PLO. I presented to both Khaddam and Assad, as I had to Sadat, our proposal on a statement which the PLO might make accepting Resolution 242 with the understanding that the right of all states in the area to exist applies to Israel.⁶ The Syrians had several counter suggestions, and I asked them to give me their thoughts in writing in order to avoid misunderstanding. I explained why this is so important to us since we agreed with Israel not to negotiate with the PLO as long as it does not accept Resolution 242. One of the main Syrian concerns is that the Palestinians will be giving up something without getting anything in return. I pointed out in both conversations that they had pressed us hard to talk with the PLO so that we had thought removing a barrier to such talks would be important to them. I would venture to guess that they will be happy to see the Egyptians

⁶ See Document 67.

and Saudis take the lead on this rather than get out in front themselves. I believe that we will see action in this area. We will know better when I see Sadat on August 11th.

E. Working group in New York. As you recall, Sadat in our press conference in Alexandria said he had proposed that we set up a working group in New York or in Washington in early September to work on the preparations for the peace conference.⁷ I found on arrival here that the Syrians again are angered with the Egyptians for having publicized such a proposal without discussing it with Syria, even though Khaddam had been in Alexandria just a few days before we arrived. That irritation accounts for some of the negative Syrian feelings about establishing such a working group. But Assad probably also sees in it an effort to evade a formal reconvening of the Geneva Conference, thus excluding PLO participation. So far, I can report only a very negative Syrian position on any such formal group, although Assad made clear that he wanted to remain in a very close working relationship with us and wanted to intensify the bilateral contacts with us. I urged on him several times the importance of not letting our preparations for Geneva drift along on generalities. I stressed the fact repeatedly that the opportunity for progress was at hand, and if we let it slip away through inaction the movement might be lost for a long time.

F. Draft treaties. In connection with avoiding stagnation, I said I would ask each party to give me drafts of their views of a peace treaty, which I would not show to anyone else. I explained that we would use these drafts to develop our own draft text as a basis for discussion. I stressed that I felt some step like this would be essential to giving substance to our preparations for Geneva.

5. At the end of my conversation I mentioned to Assad the possibility of my stopping again in Damascus on my last day in the Middle East in order to share my views on how matters stand based on my talks in Israel, if he so desired. I did not tell him that Sadat is interested in such a conversation. Assad welcomed the idea, and we confirmed that we would schedule a brief stop.

6. During my meeting with President Sarkis in Beirut Wednesday,⁸ I went over the main issues in less detail. Sarkis simply reported the PLO position as it had been told to him, insisting on their own presence at the peace conference. He thought the PLO might become more flex-

⁷ Sadat and Vance held a joint press conference in Alexandria on August 2. Telegram Secto 8026 from the Secretary, August 2, noted that in the press conference Sadat referred to his suggestion, originally made in February, that a working group be established to address preparations for a Geneva Conference. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D770277–0319) For the transcript of the press conference, see the Department of State *Bulletin*, September 12, 1977, pp. 329–335.

⁸ August 3. No memorandum of conversation has been found.

ible if they had in advance some assurances from the US on what they might get out of a conference. I explained why we could not talk with the PLO as long as they did not accept Resolution 242 and gave him a copy of our five principles and the proposed statement for the PLO to issue concerning Resolution 242. I also asked him to give me a suggested peace treaty text incorporating Lebanon's views; he said he had no objection, but his Foreign Minister later was not so ready to commit himself. Both Sarkis and the Foreign Minister indicated they would be happy to meet with me in the US but wanted to reserve on a "working group" until they heard the views of Assad.

7. I discussed Southern Lebanon both in Beirut and Damascus. The Lebanese were cautious in talking about the possibility of a UN force until they heard specifically what Begin had in mind—a border force or a force stationed in the heart of the south between the contending Lebanese factions. In Damascus today, Assad deferred to the Lebanese but made it clear that if any UN force were to be stationed in South Lebanon, it should be for the purpose of blocking Israeli incursions, not for intra-Lebanese use.

8. Finally, I informed both the Lebanese and the Syrians of our military assistance plans for Lebanon and both seemed pleased.

Vance

69. Telegram From the Department of State to the White House¹

Washington, August 5, 1977, 1220Z

183903. For Dr. Brzezinski only. Following repeat Secto 8051 action Cairo Alexandria info SecState from Secretary aircraft Aug 3.

Quote. Secto 8051. Subject: Report for Sadat Damascus Conversations. Eyes Only for Christopher and Tarnoff. Cairo for Ambassador From Secretary.

1. There are three points from our conversations in Damascus² which I believe you should convey to Sadat and Fahmy as quickly as

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Trips/Visits File, Box 106, 7/31/77–8/12/77 Vance Trip to the Middle East: [Progress Reports—Aaron Copy], 8/77. Secret; Immediate; Nodis.

² See Documents 66 and 68.

possible because they will have read reports of Assad's press conference last evening:³

A. The Syrians have reacted quite negatively to the idea of a formal working group in New York. At the same time, Assad has said that Khaddam would attend the UNGA and would want to continue in close contact with US. Therefore, we still intend to follow the course that Sadat and I discussed with regard to contacts conducted by me in New York, although we will have to find a different way of describing them. You might want to explain that the negative Syrian reaction results partly, according to the Syrians, from the fact that the Egyptians did not consult the Syrians before announcing their proposals and partly, I suspect, from Syrians' suspicions that this is a US-Israeli-Egyptian idea for evading a formal reconvening of the Geneva Conference, thus leaving the PLO out of the negotiations.

B. In general, the Syrians' reaction to the five principles was much the same as Sadat's. However, on all issues I sensed that the Syrians are reserving their positions until they have had a chance to meet with the other Arab leaders following my departure from the area.

C. On Palestinian representation, Assad continues to prefer a unified Arab delegation. He showed some interest in Sadat's idea of an Arab League delegation, but I suspect that in his mind he may have been thinking of this in terms of a delegation for all Arabs and not just for the Palestinians.

2. For your own guidance, you should be aware that I have decided to try to move away from the term 'trusteeship.' Khaddam reacted quite negatively, largely because of the connotations of colonialism and Palestinian inability to manage their own affairs. When I met with Assad I used the term 'transitional administrative arrangements' and the reaction seemed much more reasonable. In my six hours of talks here Khaddam and Assad were thoughtful, cautious about the prospects of success, willing to continue working closely with us. They were firm in their desire to coordinate with other Arabs but critical of Egyptian failure to coordinate with them.

Vance

Unquote

Christopher

³ Assad stated in his August 4 press conference that he favored discussions focused on the reconvening of the Geneva Conference rather than Sadat's proposal for a Middle East working group of Arab and Israeli Foreign Ministers meeting in the United States. (Bernard Gwertzman, "Syria Rejects Idea of Interim Session on the Middle East," *New York Times*, August 5, 1977, p. 1)

70. Telegram From Secretary of State Vance to the Embassy in Saudi Arabia¹

Amman, August 5, 1977, 1742Z

Secto 8060. For the Ambassador From the Secretary. Subject: PLO Acceptance of Resolution 242. Ref: a) Jidda 5458, b) Jidda 5453, c) Jidda 5451, d) Jidda 5413, e) Damascus 3385 (Secto 8040).²

You should proceed to convey to Prince Saud the message contained in Ref e. In doing so, you should explain that that message was sent to you before we had received report of Saud's proposed scenario (Ref d). As His Highness will note, the formulation we have suggested is less specific than that suggested by Saud but should, in our view, be sufficient. You may also tell Saud that, if the PLO makes the kind of statement we have suggested, we will be prepared at once to establish direct contact with the PLO. So far as inviting the PLO to the Geneva Conference is concerned, we continue to hold to the position that a way must be found for Palestinian views to be expressed in the negotiations, and a solution must therefore be found to the Palestinian representation question which will make this possible. This solution must be one agreed to by all the parties and this is in fact one of the principal issues which we are discussing on my present trip in an effort to find an agreed solution. I will be prepared to describe to Prince Saud several alternative solutions which we have been considering. Since the question of additional participants in the Geneva Conference over and above

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840072–2630. Secret; Nodis; Cherokee; Niact Immediate. Sent immediate for information to the Department of State. Vance visited Amman from August 5 to August 7 and returned on August 11.

² Telegram 5413 from Jidda, August 3, reported that Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Saud had stressed the importance of the Palestinian issue to Ambassador West with an emphasis on PLO representation at the Middle East Peace Conference. Saud believed that if the U.S. Government engaged the PLO directly and invited its leaders to Geneva, the PLO would "significantly alter its position on UN Resolutions 242 and 338." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P85061–1535) In telegram 5451 from Jidda, August 4, West reported that Foreign Minister Saud informed him that he had discussed with Arafat whether the PLO would change its position on U.N. Resolutions 242 and 338 if the United States engaged the PLO directly and invited the PLO to Geneva. Saud reported that Arafat responded positively, but that he wanted a preamble added for which he would provide Saud the text on Friday, August 5. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P85061–1526) In telegram 5453 from Jidda, August 5, Ambassador West asked Secretary Vance if he had received telegrams 5451 and 5413 before sending Secto 8040. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D770281–0034) In telegram 5458 from Jidda, Ambassador West contacted the Embassy in Amman to find out why telegrams 5451 and 5413 had not reached the Secretary's delegation in Amman as the Ambassador believed those messages to be "of urgent importance and relevance." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D770281–0246) Telegram Secto 8040 is repeated in Document 67.

those initially invited in December 1973 is one that must be agreed to by all the parties, we cannot, of course, make any commitment about inviting the PLO to the conference.

Vance

71. Telegram From Secretary of State Vance to the White House¹

Amman, August 5, 1977, 1814Z

Secto 8061. White House for the President and Dr. Brzezinski Only from the Secretary. State for Warren Christopher and Peter Tarnoff Only From the Secretary. Subj: Meeting With King Hussein.

1. I had an initial meeting of a little over one hour this afternoon with King Hussein and his close advisers.² The King in his opening remarks expressed his respect for your “courageous stand” and said that Jordan is prepared to do its part to contribute to the success of your efforts.

2. As he did during his Washington visit, the King again expressed his concern that expectations for progress are too high in the Arab world and his fear that if early progress is not made, there will be a political reaction which will favor the forces of extremism in the area. In view of the Begin victory in Israel, he is pessimistic about the prospects for any real progress. He also said that, despite his efforts, the Arab governments have not succeeded in arriving at a coordinated position with respect to the Palestinian representation questions and a definition of the nature of peace. He himself continues to favor a unified Arab delegation at Geneva and a Palestinian settlement which would provide for a transitional period of international administration followed by self-determination. Finally, given the many uncertainties which he sees, the King put particular stress on the importance of knowing what our positions are with respect to a settlement.

3. I made the same presentation to the King that I made to both President Sadat and President Asad.³ I described Begin’s procedural proposal for starting negotiations, making clear we have differences

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840072–2635. Secret; Nodis; Cherokee. Sent immediate to the Department of State.

² No memorandum of conversation has been found.

³ See Documents 63 and 68.

with Begin on several points. I described the alternatives we see for Palestinian representation and gave him the Israeli, Egyptian and Syrian reactions to these, including Sadat's proposal for an Arab League delegation to represent Palestine. In describing in general terms Begin's position on the territorial and Palestinian questions, I affirmed to the King that our own position on these issues has not changed. I explained to the King our draft five proposals⁴ and gave him the Israeli, Egyptian and Syrian reaction to each. I also proposed to the King, as I did in Egypt and Syria, that Jordan give us a draft of the kind of peace treaty they would like for our own information in preparing a series of draft documents which could serve as a basis for further discussion among the parties. I said it would be useful to have drafts from all the parties prior to my meetings with the Foreign Ministers in New York at the beginning of the General Assembly in September. Finally, I explained to Hussein the formula we have discussed with the Egyptians and Syrians for PLO acceptance of Resolution 242, saying that such acceptance would provide a basis for us to begin talking to the PLO.

4. The King said that we had provided him some important matters to think about and that he would need to reflect on these with his advisers before giving us his reactions. We will therefore be having a further meeting Saturday morning, and I will report fully to you on the Jordanian position at that time.

Vance

⁴ See the Attachment to Document 54.

72. Telegram From Secretary of State Vance to the White House and the Department of State¹

Amman, August 6, 1977, 1524Z

Secto 8069. White House for the President and Dr. Brzezinski Only From the Secretary. State for Warren Christopher and Peter Tarnoff Only From the Secretary. Subj: Meeting With King Hussein.

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Trips/Visits File, Box 106, 7/31/77–8/12/77 Vance Trip to the Middle East: [Progress Reports II], 8/77. Secret; Immediate; Nodis; Cherokee.

1. I met again this morning for about an hour and a half with King Hussein and his close advisers.² The King said he had been reassured and heartened by our meeting of yesterday. He provided me with comments on our five principles and agreed to put on paper his ideas for elements of a peace treaty. The Jordanian response to our efforts was warm and cooperative, and showed the King's continued interest in playing a role in the Palestinian problem. His Majesty asked me to send you his very best wishes.

2. Hussein described our draft principles as a tremendous step forward. He gave me in writing six observations on principles four and five³ (the implication was that he agreed with the first three). The Jordanians would want the following included in the principles:

—Explicit provision for withdrawal from all the territories occupied in 1967 to the 1967 lines with minor, reciprocal modifications.

—A comprehensive settlement would be agreed in totality and a state of peace would come with the final withdrawal phase. Phasing would not extend over years.

—During negotiation and implementation, no physical, cultural or demographic changes would be made in the occupied areas.

—Eastern Jerusalem must be returned to Arab sovereignty, with a unified city and guaranteed access to the holy places.

—Refugees have a right to repatriation and compensation as UN resolutions have provided. Implementation would be negotiated.

—Regarding self-determination, Jordan favors votes on leadership and political future held under a transitional international regime.

3. In ensuing discussion Hussein said he feared that if we went to Geneva without knowing what we mean by borders, the Israelis would start from present lines and the Arabs, in response, would go back to the 1947 partition lines as a basis.

4. On phasing, we explained in more detail our concept of a package deal in which everything would be agreed but with implementation to proceed over time—noting that it might take some time. The Jordanians appeared to agree generally with this concept, and noted that the exercise of self-determination might indeed require time. They wanted to ensure the process could not be stalled, however.

5. For the first time in my discussions with Arab leaders, we discussed Jerusalem at some length, Hussein having brought into this meeting for this purpose his UN Ambassador who came from a prominent Jerusalem family. They seemed flexible on forms of administra-

² No memorandum of conversation has been found.

³ No paper with King Hussein's observations has been found.

tion but firm on return of the Arab section to Arab sovereignty. The King gave me a lengthy paper detailing Israeli treatment of occupied Jerusalem.⁴ Similarly, we talked in some detail about the problems of refugee compensation and repatriation, the Jordanians observing that a solution of the territorial problems alone could still leave the bulk of the refugees as a continuing source of unrest.

6. In discussing the preparation of a draft settlement outline, Hussein noted the ambiguity of his position—should he deal with the West Bank as well as direct Jordan-Israel issues? He said he would do so, though not in actual treaty language. I urged he be as detailed and explicit as possible.

7. He briefly discussed the situation in the Middle East generally and Lebanon in particular. Hussein again expressed his concern that Israel might move militarily and I assured him our judgment was that it would not. He said he was worried about Assad, over-extended as he was in Lebanon and with economic problems at home. There was always the danger of a change that could put Syria on the same track as Iraq. As for Lebanon, the King said he supported Sarkis and was providing help in forming a Lebanese force. He was concerned, however, that Sarkis would lose his chance to bring a solution if he did not act more decisively. He mentioned some recent implications of Iraqi interest in better relations, and he encouraged us to seek closer ties.

8. On bilateral issues, we agreed the state of affairs between us was better even than usual. He briefly discussed some economic and military aid questions, but there were no problems of any consequence.

9. Finally, he agreed to meet with me again early on August 11.

Vance

⁴ No paper on Israeli treatment of occupied Jerusalem has been found.

73. Telegram From Secretary of State Vance to the Consulate General in Alexandria¹

Amman, August 7, 1977, 1056Z

Secto 8075. For Ambassador From Secretary. Subject: Fahmy on PLO Statement. Ref: Alexandria 805 (repeated Tosec 8067, State 185980).²

1. Please tell Fahmy I appreciate very much his efforts to get PLO to accept SC Resolution 242. Unfortunately, as you pointed out to him, the formula in reftel says in effect that PLO has not repeat not accepted Resolution 242. If we agreed to open contacts with PLO on basis of such a formula, we would be vulnerable to charges of bad faith which would undercut our efforts to mobilize support at home for what will in best of circumstances be a controversial move on our part. We do not insist that PLO reservations be worded precisely along lines Fahmy and I agreed, but they should certainly not be so worded as to negate the PLO's acceptance of Resolution 242.

2. Please tell Fahmy also that we have now sent to Saudis the formula he and I agreed upon.³ We did this to get matters back on the tracks after Saudis had given Arafat a formula of their own which was at variance with the one we worked out in Alexandria.

3. Finally, you may tell Fahmy we would have no objection if he wanted to suggest the following reformulation of the language we agreed to in an effort to meet basic point of PLO formula reported in reftel: Quote: The PLO accepts UNSC Resolution 242, with the reservation that it considers that the resolution does not make adequate reference to the question of the Palestinians since it fails to make any reference to a homeland for the Palestinian people. It is recognized that the language of Resolution 242 relates to the right of all states in the Middle East to live in peace. Unquote.

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840072–2533. Secret; Nodis; Niact Immediate. Sent immediate for information to the Department of State.

² In telegram 805 from Alexandria, August 6, Ambassador Eilts reported on a conversation with Foreign Minister Fahmy about a proposed statement he had received from Arafat on UN Resolution 242 that read, "Had Resolution 242 dealt with the Palestinian question as a cause of a people that has its national rights and aspirations to establish its state in its homeland and not as a problem of refugees, the PLO would have accepted it." Fahmy requested that this draft statement be sent to Secretary of State Vance for review. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840084–1001)

³ See Document 67.

4. Tell Fahmy we are also giving above reformulation to Saudis, Syrians and Jordanians so that all of us will be working from same text.⁴

Vance

⁴ The text was sent in Secto 8074, August 7. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840072–2531)

74. Telegram From Secretary of State Vance to the White House and the Department of State¹

Taif, August 8, 1977, 1801Z

Secto 8093. White House for the President and Dr. Brzezinski Only From the Secretary. State for Warren Christopher and Peter Tarnoff Only From the Secretary.

1. I am reporting to you separately on my talks with the Saudis about our Middle East peace effort.² The following other items were also covered in my lengthy talks with Saudi leaders.³

2. Lebanon

As I had told the Lebanese I would do, I raised with Saud the possibility of Saudi financial assistance for Lebanon. He expressed willingness to help with efforts to form a Lebanese army. With respect to economic aid, however, he said Saudi Arabia would prefer it to be in a broader context, such as a consortium effort, and would like to exchange views with us as to the amount, requirements and modalities as to how this might be done.

3. Portugal

I raised the report we had had that Saudi Arabia was planning to take the lead in organizing an embargo of Portugal because of the latter's establishment of relations with Israel.⁴ I stressed the point that it would be tragic to pull the rug out from under a state that had been a

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Trips/Visits File, Box 106, 7/31/77–8/12/77 Vance Trip to the Middle East: [Progress Reports—Aaron Copy], 8/77. Secret; Immediate; Nodis; Cherokee. Vance visited Taif from August 7 to August 9.

² See Documents 75 and 77.

³ No memoranda of conversation have been found.

⁴ Portugal established relations with Israel in July 1977.

bulwark against Communist inroads. Saud said there was no question of an embargo, which would be unwarranted with a country that was moving away from Communism.

4. ILO

The Saudis said they would be glad to see what they could do with the other Arabs, but hoped we would remain in the organization until the next meeting six months away.⁵

5. Oil Prices

Saud told me the Saudis intend (want?) to hold off oil price increases through 1978 and are encouraged by recent talks with Iran to believe they could do so.

6. F-15s

I explained to Fahd and Sultan our view that submission of the F-15 sale⁶ had to be held until the Egyptian non-lethal package was through the Congress. They were disappointed but are prepared to accept the delay.

7. Other issues

—I discussed Somalia and the Horn of Africa thoroughly.

—On the question of South Yemen, Fahd urged the importance of a US presence there and said that his recent talk with South Yemeni leaders indicated they wanted to renew relations with US.

—The Saudis said they regretted they could not receive Mike Blumenthal and Jim Schlesinger until after Ramadan but looked forward to seeing them soon thereafter.

Vance

⁵ After filing a notice of intent to withdraw from the International Labour Organization in November 1975, the United States ended its membership in November 1977.

⁶ See footnote 4, Document 40.

75. Telegram From the White House to President Carter¹

Washington, August 8, 1977, 2149Z

ToPlains 16/WH70436. Subject: Secretary Vance's Reports for the President From Saudi Arabia.

1. After about seven hours of meetings with the key Saudi leaders,² I am more convinced than ever that their role on the Arab side will be a major factor in support of our peace efforts. They are in frequent touch with both Arafat and the Egyptian, Syrian and Jordanian leaders, urging the PLO to move to acceptance of Resolution 242 and all the Arabs to develop a unified and moderate position. At the end of my final meeting today with Prince Fahd, after lunch and detailed explanations of the approach we are pursuing including our five draft principles, Fahd said that he considers the steps we are taking to be serious and reflective of earnest efforts on our part in the search for peace. The Saudis are clearly impressed with the concreteness and determination we are showing in this present round and will, I think, now be encouraged to intensify their own efforts even more.

2. I began my talks here with a two-hour private meeting with Foreign Minister Prince Saud after dinner Sunday³ night. I went over with him the same ground I have covered in the other Arab capitals, including the draft statement of principles and our suggested formula for PLO acceptance of Resolution 242 with reservations.⁴ He showed me the latest formula received from Arafat,⁵ which shows some evolution in PLO thinking although it is still far short of what we need. I urged him to continue to work on Arafat to agree to the kind of formula we have suggested.

3. My audience this morning with King Khalid originally scheduled as a fairly brief courtesy call went on for 1¼ hours. The King showed considerable interest in the specifics of our efforts and particularly in the Palestinian aspects. Both he, and Prince Fahd later, asked whether if the PLO accepts Resolution 242 and recognizes Israel's right to exist, the United States would invite the PLO to Geneva and guar-

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Trips/Visits File, Box 106, 7/31/77–8/12/77 Vance Trip to the Middle East: [Progress Reports—Aaron Copy], 8/77. Secret; Eyes Only; Immediate; Nodis; Cherokee. According to the President's Daily Diary, Carter was in Plains, Georgia from August 5 to August 10. (Carter Library, Presidential Materials, President's Daily Diary)

² See also Document 77. No memoranda of conversation have been found of these talks between Vance and Saudi leaders.

³ August 7.

⁴ See Document 73.

⁵ See footnote 2, Document 73.

antee that the Palestinians would have their own homeland. I said that if the PLO took this step, we would enter into official contacts with it and that we supported the concept of a Palestinian entity and of Palestinian self-determination. I made clear, however, that we could not guarantee the outcome of negotiations with respect to the nature of a Palestinian homeland and that the form of Palestinian representation at Geneva was not just up to us; it had to be agreed by all parties, including Israel. The King closed our audience with strong words of support for your efforts for peace and with special emphasis on the importance for U.S. interests of maintaining our friendship with the Arab world. Saudi Arabia, for its part, he said, would continue to encourage the Arabs to cement their ties with us. Throughout my talk with the King, as with the other Saudi leaders, there ran the familiar theme of their concern that without progress toward peace radical forces and Soviet influence will gain in the Arab world.

4. My subsequent meeting with Prince Fahd lasted about 3½ hours, including a real working lunch and discussions both before and after lunch. Fahd began with a long presentation which focused heavily on the Palestinians—the need for them to be represented at Geneva, to have their own state which Saudi Arabia could guarantee to be moderate, and the importance of a U.S.-Palestinian dialogue. He said the time had now come for the PLO to accept Resolutions 242 and 338 and for the U.S. to recognize and deal with the PLO. He also stressed the importance of reaching agreement on the principal substantive issues before Geneva and for the U.S. to announce its own position publicly on these issues. On this issue I said we would make our views known initially only to the parties but that at the appropriate time we would be prepared to make our views public. In my talk with Fahd, at which both Prince Saud and Defense Minister Prince Sultan were present, I affirmed our determination to continue on the course we have set. He said this could only succeed, however, with cooperation and moderation on the Arab side. I confirmed that our position with respect to the 1967 borders with minor modifications has not changed. At the same time, I stressed the need for the Arabs to go further than they have so far in defining the nature of peace. On the Palestinian representation question, I said that at an appropriate time, we would support the idea of a unified Arab delegation including Palestinians. Fahd said Saudis were prepared to support either unified delegation or separate delegations but made clear for first time that they envisaged unified delegation as alternative to their former insistence that PLO had to be represented separately.

5. After lunch, I went over in detail with Prince Fahd and Prince Sultan our draft statement of principles, reviewing for them the position of Israel and of each of the Arab confrontation states on each prin-

ciple. Fahd did not indicate any problems with the first two principles which have also been accepted by all the parties. With respect to the third principle on normal peaceful relations, Fahd thought this would be easier for the Arabs if it referred to the “development,” rather than the establishment of normal peaceful relations “over a period of time” or “in due course.” With respect to the fourth principle on withdrawal, Fahd echoed the basic Arab position that this must be understood to mean return to the 1967 lines with minor modifications limited to the West Bank. On the fifth principle relating to a Palestinian entity, Fahd thought that the provision for non-militarization would be difficult for the Palestinians to accept. He raised no questions about the concept of a transitional period under international administration. I took exception to this but said we would reflect on his suggestions. Fahd showed particular interest in the idea of self-determination as an alternative to guaranteeing in advance to the Palestinians that they would have a totally independent state which has been his position in past discussions with him. In general, Fahd explained that he saw the Saudi role as different from that of the confrontation states. Rather than adopting a Saudi position on each of the principles, he described Saudi Arabia’s role as explaining to us the position of the Arabs and encouraging the confrontation states and the Palestinians to accept reasonable solutions.

The one issue on which he said Saudi Arabia has a position of its own is Jerusalem. Here he said it would perhaps be acceptable for Israel to keep the part of the city it held before 1967 and for East Jerusalem to be returned to Arab sovereignty with free access to the holy places. This position is similar to Hussein’s and more flexible than former King Faisal’s who used to say there was no place for Israel in any part of Jerusalem.

6. At the end of our meeting, Fahd said the Saudis would keep our discussions in total confidence and only discuss with others what we agreed they could.

In particular, he wanted to know how he should handle our statement of principles with the PLO. In the end, we agreed he would not tell the PLO the position of the confrontation states on the various principles and would not show the principles to them but would discuss with them the list of the principles as part of the Saudi effort to press the PLO to be more flexible.

7. Fahd said it was good that I would be returning briefly to the confrontation states to report on my talks in Israel. Since my schedule does not allow sufficient time for me also to return to Saudi Arabia, I offered to send Roy Atherton back to Taif after our talks in Israel to report to Prince Saud and Fahd welcomed this.

[Omitted here is material unrelated to the Middle East.]

76. Telegram From the Embassy in Israel to Secretary of State Vance in Taif¹

Tel Aviv, August 9, 1977, 0825Z

5875. For the Secretary From Lewis. Subject: Major Military Incursion by Israel Threatens in South Lebanon.

1. Dayan asked me to see him this morning at his home in Tel Aviv. The message was simple and blunt. The Israelis will no longer tolerate what they view as increasing Palestinian pressure on the Christian forces, and are on the point of launching a major incursion into South Lebanon to “clean out things” at least for the time being. Begin plans to discuss this in detail with you, but Dayan had persuaded him that he should give me an advance indication of their intentions.

2. Dayan insisted that they had no plan to occupy territory permanently, but he gave me the impression that this enterprise would result in more than just a few hours stay across the border. At my insistence, he assured me that nothing would happen before your meeting here with Begin, but every indication was that time fuse is short. I argued vigorously against any such enterprise, mustering all available arguments drawn from Begin’s recent reporting about the prospect of Lebanese forces moving south in the very near future, but I obviously did not persuade him that further delay for UN or Lebanese forces to be inserted would produce the desired result.

3. You should be prepared for a detailed discussion on this topic, and I suggest that the Department provide immediately for you all available intelligence support on what is actually happening, particularly with regard to implementation of the new agreement.² Dayan and I discussed whether the Lebanese situation should be taken up at the first meeting this afternoon or tomorrow’s meeting. It might be best to go first into the Middle East negotiations issue, taking up Lebanon after this general framework is established, in order to underscore the impact any military action would have on the peace process.

4. I have been trying to divine since leaving Dayan’s house what the Israelis are up to. One unhappy hypothesis would be that they are now indeed worried that the PLO is on the point of accepting Resolu-

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P850106–1903. Secret; Flash; Nodis. Also sent Flash to the Department of State.

² Meeting in Shtaura, Lebanon, Lebanese, Syrian, and PLO military leaders concluded an agreement on July 25. Known as the Shtaura Agreement or Accord, it reduced armaments at 14 Palestinian camps, imposed a freeze on cross-border raids by the Palestinians, whose forces were to remain 15 miles north of the Lebanese-Israeli border, and called for Lebanese troops to patrol that area.

tion 242, which could produce a major split between us and the Israelis. One way to make sure that does not happen might be to do something militarily against the PLO which would preclude any change in their position toward Israel. There are other possible explanations; all I can say at this point is I am afraid the Israelis are quite serious.

Lewis

77. Telegram From Secretary of State Vance to the Embassies in Jordan and Egypt¹

Taif, August 9, 1977, 0830Z

Secto 8102. For Ambassadors From Secretary. Subj: Talks in Saudi Arabia.

1. Action addressees should pass to respective governments at appropriate levels the following account of my talks in Taif.

2. In my first meeting with Foreign Minister Prince Saud Sunday night,² I went over with him the same ground I have covered in the other Arab capitals, including the draft statement of principles and our suggested formula for PLO acceptance of Resolution 242 with reservations.

3. Both King Khalid, in my meeting the following morning, and Prince Fahd later, asked whether if the PLO accepts Resolution 242 and recognizes Israel's right to exist, the United States would invite the PLO to Geneva and guarantee that the Palestinians would have their own homeland. I said that if the PLO took this step, we would enter into official contacts with it and that we supported the concept of a Palestinian entity and of Palestinian self-determination. I made clear, however, that we could not guarantee the outcome of negotiations with respect to the nature of a Palestinian homeland and that the form of Palestinian representation at Geneva was not just up to us; it had to be agreed by all the parties, including Israel.

4. Prince Fahd began with a long presentation which focused heavily on the Palestinians—the need for them to be represented at Ge-

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840072–2539. Secret; Immediate; Nodis. Sent to Damascus. Sent immediate for information to Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, and the Department of State.

² August 7.

neva, to have their own state which Saudi Arabia could guarantee to be moderate, and the importance of a US-Palestinian dialogue. He said the time had now come for the PLO to accept Resolutions 242 and 338 and for the US to recognize and deal with the PLO. He also stressed the importance of reaching agreement on the principal substantive issues before Geneva and for the US to announce its own position publicly on these issues. On this issue I said we would make our views known initially only to the parties but that at the appropriate time we would be prepared to make our views public. In my talk with Fahd, at which both Prince Saud and Defense Minister Prince Sultan were present, I affirmed our determination to continue on the course we have set. I said this could only succeed, however, with cooperation and moderation on the Arab side. I confirmed that our position with respect to the 1967 borders with minor modifications has not changed. At the same time, I stressed the need for the Arabs to go further than they have so far in defining the nature of peace. On the Palestinian representation question, I said that at an appropriate time, we would support the idea of a unified Arab delegation including Palestinians. Fahd said Saudis were prepared to support either unified delegation or separate delegations but made clear for first time that they envisaged unified delegation as alternative to their former insistence that PLO had to be represented separately.

5. I went over in detail with Prince Fahd and Prince Sultan our draft statement of principles reviewing for them the position of Israel and of each of the Arab confrontation states on each principle. Fahd did not indicate any problems with the first two principles which have also been accepted by all the parties. With respect to the third principle on normal peaceful relations, Fahd thought this would be easier for the Arabs if it referred to the "development," rather than the establishment of normal peaceful relations "over a period of time" or "in due course." With respect to the fourth principle on withdrawal, Fahd echoed the basic Arab position that this must be understood to mean return to the 1967 lines with minor modifications limited to the West Bank. On the fifth principle relating to a Palestinian entity, Fahd thought that the provision for non-militarization would be difficult for the Palestinians to accept. I took exception to this but said we would reflect on this suggestion. He raised no questions about the concept of a transitional period under international administration. Fahd showed particular interest in the idea of self-determination as an alternative to guaranteeing in advance to the Palestinians that they would have a totally independent state. With respect to Jerusalem, Fahd said it would perhaps be acceptable for Israel to keep the part of the city it held before 1967 and for East Jerusalem to be returned to Arab sovereignty with free access to the holy places.

6. At the end of my final meeting with Prince Fahd, after detailed explanations of the approach we are pursuing including our five draft principles, Fahd said that he considers the steps we are taking to be serious and reflective of earnest efforts on our part in the search for peace. The Saudis will, I think, now be encouraged to intensify their own efforts even more.

Vance

78. Telegram From the Department of State to the White House¹

Washington, August 9, 1977, 1205Z

187206/Tosec 80220. White House for Dr. Brzezinski Only. Following repeat Tel Aviv 5881 action State Aug 8.

5881. Quote. Subject: Israeli Intentions in Lebanon. Ref: Tel Aviv 5875.²

1. At his request, I called on Foreign Minister Dayan at his home in Tel Aviv this morning. He began by saying that he wanted to tell me about Lebanon, a subject that they would discuss with the Secretary during his visit. At his suggestion, Prime Minister Begin had agreed that I should be informed first.

2. Dayan said that the Israelis were “unhappy” with the situation in Southern Lebanon. Although there had been agreements which seemed to be having some effect in other areas of the country, nothing was taking place in the Southern area. The PLO was definitely there, some villages are deserted, others are partly destroyed. The Christians in the south have no contact with the Christians in the north. The civilians have no way to live or work or buy commodities, and they cannot get any support from their co-religionists in the north.

3. The Foreign Minister then reached the point: Israel wanted to help the Christians in Southern Lebanon in a military way. They did not wish to occupy territory and/or to stay for a lengthy period, but they did want to wipe out some of the Palestinians who were there. As he described it, they wanted to “help the situation in a military way.”

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, N770004–0696. Secret; Nodis; Immediate; Flash. Also sent immediate Flash to the Secretary of State’s Delegation. Drafted and approved by Allan Otto (S/S–O). Vance was either in Taif or en route to Jerusalem.

² See Document 76.

4. My first comment was that I hoped the GOI decision was not irrevocable. I pointed out that the Secretary had recently been in Lebanon and that we have information that within two weeks it may be possible to deploy Lebanese forces to the south. Therefore, irrevocable steps now such as Dayan was outlining would blow sky high any chance for a settlement. Military action by Israel would be a very grave step at this point with grave implications for everybody.

5. What has changed in the last month to make them consider such a possibility? Dayan responded that the situation had been getting progressively worse. Villages were being destroyed and the terrorists were moving into them. The next thing will be that Israel will be confronted with a Palestinian military presence along its northern border. I answered by saying that I thought the key was to get the Palestinians away from the border, but military action would make any diplomatic action impossible.

6. Dayan said they were willing to discuss the matter with the Secretary but that they would not rely on any Lebanese promises about deploying troops to the south. Even if such troops could be deployed, would they be able to drive out the Palestinians? He said that he had favored the idea of getting a UN force into the area. I picked this up to say that I recalled that the whole question of the UN force had recently been discussed with President Sarkis. I agreed that we should pursue that approach vigorously as it was much preferable to military action. We had continually assured the Lebanese that the Israelis had no designs on their territory, even though they may be hearing otherwise from the Syrians and others. If the Israelis were to move militarily into Lebanon, I could visualize a real firestorm which would destroy any chance of a Geneva conference at this time.

7. As to the timing of any Israeli move, Dayan said they would do nothing until discussing the subject with the Secretary.

8. I asked what the Israelis did intend to do militarily in Southern Lebanon if they did not occupy territory. Dayan said they would drive away the Palestinians and hand the villages back to the Christians. He said he would admit that Israeli action might not be necessary if some Lebanese Christian troops could be sent to the south and if the Palestinians would leave the area. He was skeptical, however, about the prospect of having effective Lebanese forces in the south within two weeks. He thought the Palestinians would not be able to do anything the Syrians opposed, and he thought the Syrians would not care if the Palestinians would be in force along the Israeli border.

9. I said it was my impression that the Syrians at this stage were very wary of triggering a fight with Israel. It could be that the rejectionists were preventing the carrying out of agreements in Southern

Lebanon.³ In any case, action such as the Israelis were contemplating seemed premature to me. I promised to alert the Secretary (which I have done by Flash message),⁴ and we agreed that the substantive discussion on this issue would take place tomorrow morning, unless the Secretary wished to initiate it this afternoon.

10. Comment: I can see few things more dangerous at this time than an Israeli military move into Lebanon. Although the Israeli motives are obviously suspect, several recent [*less than 1 line not declassified*] reports do provide quite a bit of support for Dayan's contention that whatever may be the outcome of Shtawra elsewhere in Lebanon,⁵ its impact in the south is hardly reassuring to Israel. I hope the Department by return message will provide our latest intelligence for the Secretary on these matters to the extent it is not already available to his party. As the Department is aware, both Begin and Weizman have visited the northern border recently and issued strong statements, Begin even admitting publicly for the first time that Israel had been assisting the Christians in Southern Lebanon with artillery fire from within Israel.

11. Please send the response to the Secretary's party in Jerusalem as soon as possible.

Lewis

Unquote.

Christopher

³ The rejectionists included Libya, Iraq, South Yemen, and various PLO groups that rejected the ten-point program adopted by the PLO at its 12th Palestinian National Council meeting in June 1974. The ten-point program called for Palestinian authority over any piece of "liberated" Palestinian land as well as an active effort to establish a secular, binational state where all would enjoy equal rights and status. Some PLO groups viewed this as an attempt at a two-state solution and a betrayal of the Palestinian cause.

⁴ See Document 76.

⁵ See footnote 2, Document 76.

79. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Jerusalem, August 9, 1977, 4:30 p.m.

PARTICIPANTS

Israelis

Foreign Minister Moshe Dayan

Ambassador Simcha Dinitz

Ephraim Evron, Director General, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Naftali Lavi, Spokesman for Foreign Minister

Eli Rubinstein, Chef de Cabinet, Foreign Ministry

Americans

Cyrus Vance, Secretary of State

Philip Habib, Under Secretary for Political Affairs

Alfred L. Atherton, Jr., Assistant Secretary for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs

Ambassador Samuel Lewis

William B. Quandt, NSC Staff

SUBJECT

Secretary Vance's Meeting with Moshe Dayan

Foreign Minister Dayan began by reviewing the agenda for Secretary Vance's talks. He suggested that the Secretary review the results of his talks in the Arab capitals with the Prime Minister, and particularly the question of PLO acceptance of Resolution 242. The next day might be devoted to discussions of Lebanon and Israel's role there. In addition, there were some questions about arms. Israel is concerned about the Egyptian air force being rebuilt and about F-15s for Saudi Arabia. The Israelis would also like to review some of their arms requests. The Prime Minister will also be anxious to hear the Secretary's views on how to proceed from here. General Dayan suggested that the Secretary concentrate in this talk on the PLO question and on next steps. *Secretary Vance* stated that since he had arrived in the Middle East, all of the heads of government and their foreign ministers had raised the question of the PLO and whether the United States was prepared to talk with it. They were told that under the commitment made in Sinai II, the United States will not talk to the PLO unless the PLO accepts Resolution 242. In Egypt, Sadat said that the PLO may be prepared to accept the Resolution. This was discussed and the US side suggested the type of language in which PLO acceptance of 242 would have to be phrased. When the Secretary was in Egypt, some language was suggested, but it

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 50, Middle East: 7-9/77. Secret; Nodis. The meeting took place at the Israeli Foreign Ministry. Vance visited Jerusalem from August 9 to August 11.

was not satisfactory and the Secretary told the Egyptians that. In Damascus, the same discussion took place, although the Syrians had no specific language to propose. President Assad thought that it was possible that we would get some suggested language from one of the other Arab parties. This discussion was repeated again in Amman, and the Secretary informed King Hussein of his talks in Damascus and Alexandria. The Jordanians felt that it was important to have the PLO accept Resolution 242, even with some sort of reservation stating that 242 did not adequately cover the Palestinian question because it only referred to Palestinians as refugees, and did not mention a homeland. We said that we would understand such an exception, if it were clear that all states in the area had a right to exist. That is the core of the problem. In Saudi Arabia, the question was raised again and the Saudis said they were in touch with the PLO and with the other heads of government. Prince Saud showed the Secretary two pieces of paper with suggested language for the PLO to use, but neither was satisfactory as an acceptance of Resolution 242. The PLO is apparently still deliberating on whether or not they will be able to issue such a statement. The President has said if they do accept Resolution 242, with a possible reservation on the Palestinian question, this would satisfy the condition written into the Sinai II Agreement. They recognize that the right of all states in the Middle East to exist includes the right of Israel. This is where the situation now stands. The Arab leaders will talk to the PLO and we will see what they come up with. *General Dayan* posed a question. He stated that there are three problems concerning the PLO: First is the US–PLO relationship. There seems to be some change in what the United States is asking of the PLO. Does the United States still insist that the PLO change its Covenant which calls for the destruction of Israel? Second, there is the question of PLO participation at Geneva. If the PLO accepts Resolution 242, does that mean that the US will recognize their right to participate at Geneva? Israel would object in any event. Third, is there some consideration of changing Resolution 242? *Secretary Vance* replied that he had addressed that question in Taif earlier in the day.² If the PLO accepts 242, and the right of all states in the area to live in peace, that would be viewed as superseding the Covenant and its call for the destruction of Israel. Concerning participation at Geneva, the Secretary made it clear that a PLO acceptance of Resolution 242 would allow the US to talk to the PLO, but would not necessarily open the door to participation at Geneva, since that is for the parties themselves to determine. This has been made clear and is a different matter from talking with the United States. *General Dayan* asked a clarifying question of whether the United States would recommend the participa-

² See Document 77.

tion of the PLO at Geneva before discussing the question with Israel. *Secretary Vance* said that we would not. *General Dayan* asked that Israel be allowed to hear of any such plans first, and if Israel did not hear anything, they would assume that the United States had made no agreement on PLO participation at Geneva.

Secretary Vance discussed the alternatives for Palestinian participation at Geneva, noting that he had reviewed the four alternatives that had been covered with Prime Minister Begin, using the phrase Palestinians, with no reference to individuals from the PLO. The Secretary noted there are some rumors the French may be considering an amendment to Resolution 242, but that we think that is a very bad idea and we have tried to discourage any idea of amending Resolution 242. *Under Secretary Habib* noted that the Arab parties have not been urging an amendment of 242. *Ambassador Dinitz* asked whether a PLO statement saying that it accepted Resolution 242, with the exception of the clause dealing with the Palestinians only as refugees, would be acceptable to the United States. *Secretary Vance* answered that it would. *Ambassador Dinitz* asked whether that meant there had been a change in the American view, and the *Secretary* said that there had been no change. *General Dayan* thanked the Secretary for his clarification and asked about next steps.

Secretary Vance emphasized the importance of moving toward greater concreteness on both procedural and substantive issues. Otherwise, the situation would begin to stagnate and there would be a loss of momentum. In his view, the situation cannot stand still, and there is risk of sliding backward. In order to move forward, more concrete steps are required. Therefore, the Secretary has asked each of the parties to send him a draft of a peace treaty as they would like to see it between themselves and Israel. Even if they cannot provide great detail, they should send as much as possible. Only if they do that, can the parties move away from generalities. If draft treaties are provided, then the US will try to narrow the differences. The parties have given initial reactions, but have not given their final ones. If draft treaties are provided, the United States will show them to no one, but will review them and on that basis would be prepared to offer a draft document as a starting point for discussions. At the next session of the UN General Assembly, the United States would then be prepared to move between the parties on a bilateral basis to try to narrow differences. The emphasis would be on treaties between Egypt and Israel, Jordan and Israel, and Syria and Israel. Lebanon has also been asked to submit its positions. The United States understands that Israel agrees to Lebanon's participation in the negotiations. The Lebanese were pleased to hear this. All of the parties have agreed in some form to put ideas on paper. The Secretary has also asked each head of government to send their foreign

ministers to New York or Washington before the UN General Assembly for talks with the United States on a bilateral basis. All except for Lebanon have agreed. The Secretary expects to see all of the foreign ministers in the third week of September. They will be prepared to discuss with the United States all matters involved in a settlement. This is how the Secretary sees the next phase unfolding. He also reviewed with the leaders the set of principles that the Israelis have seen and he will report later in detail on those discussions. As a result of the talks, he has a better feel for the substantive views of the parties that could be translated into peace treaties. *Under Secretary Habib* added that there is a possibility of some joint meetings of the foreign ministers.

General Dayan asked if any date had been mentioned for the Geneva Conference, such as October. *Secretary Vance* replied that no one had made such specific reference, and they felt it would be an error to go to Geneva before adequate preparations had been made. *Dayan* said that Geneva might have to be later if meetings were not held with the Secretary until late September. *The Secretary* voiced his opinion that November or December was more likely as a date for the Geneva Conference. He does not exclude Geneva by the end of the year.

Dayan raised the question of refugees. *Secretary Vance* responded that in the discussion on the five points, one of the parties did raise the question of refugees, stressing the necessity for reaffirming the right of the refugees to repatriation or compensation in accordance with UN Resolutions. *Dayan* noted that this was a subject in which he had a special interest. He wondered if the delegations might be prepared to enter parallel talks on this issue prior to Geneva. *The Secretary* replied that he felt that such talks would be difficult, although the topic might be raised in proximity talks before Geneva. *Dayan* said that he did not care whether the parties talked with one another or through the United States. He did think that the parties should go to Geneva with proposals on the refugee problem. He then asked if in the draft peace agreements the parties would include anything on the Palestinians or on East Jerusalem. Or would the draft treaties just deal with bilateral relations with Israel? *Secretary Vance* said they would be bilateral, but each party might send some language on the Palestinian issue as well. *Dayan* asked if Egypt would be submitting language dealing with Golan and Syria commenting on Sharm al-Sheikh. *The Secretary* said that Egypt will write a treaty dealing just with Egyptian-Israeli issues, but they might submit a separate paper dealing with their views on the Palestinians. *Dayan* asked if the Palestinian issue might be covered in the paper submitted by the Jordanians, and the *Secretary* responded "yes." *Dayan* asked if the Egyptians would include something on the future of Gaza in their draft. *The Secretary* replied that Gaza is within the 1967 borders issue as seen from Egypt. Israel might have to deal

with Egypt on Gaza, but it would be spun off as part of the discussion of the Palestinian entity. *Dayan* wondered if the area could be returned to Egypt, but not annexed.

Dayan asked that the Secretary review the five points with the Prime Minister, but he would be interested in hearing any Arab reaction to the idea of an Israeli trusteeship over the West Bank. *Secretary Vance* said that the Arabs did not accept the idea of an Israeli trusteeship, but they would talk about an international administrative mechanism for a transitional period. They see some sort of international administration under the UN to run the West Bank for a transitional period, at the end of which there would be a plebiscite on self-determination. *Dayan* noted that once Sadat had said that Sharm al-Sheikh could be placed under UN administration to insure that Egyptian forces would not be the only ones there to guarantee free navigation. *Dayan* said he was surprised that Sadat talked about Gaza. *The Secretary* noted that Sadat still holds the same view on Sharm al-Sheikh. The Secretary also emphasized that the Egyptians feel very strongly about the 1967 borders. Whether Egypt cares strongly about Gaza or not can only be clarified in more specific discussions later. *Dayan* said that it would be one thing for Israel to evacuate Gaza and another for Egypt to return there. *The Secretary* said there was no detailed discussion of this, and he could not speculate on Egypt's attitude. Fahmy had said that Egypt does not claim Gaza. *Dayan* asked if the Egyptians had raised the question of a Palestinian government in exile, and the *Secretary* replied in the negative.

Dayan noted that the inhabitants of Gaza now have no citizenship. The Israelis tried to convince King Hussein to give the Gazans Jordanian citizenship, but he did not. Only a few hundred took temporary Jordanian citizenship. *Dayan* wondered in a final settlement whether Jordan would grant the Gazans citizenship. *The Secretary* said he did not know.

Ambassador Dinitz asked about the working group idea. *The Secretary* said that Sadat had made the suggestion in the press conference, and the Secretary had said it was a good idea.³ It had not been discussed before in detail. The Secretary thought it was similar to his idea of meeting with the foreign ministers at the UN. The Syrians, however, reacted negatively. The Secretary now feels that he should move between the parties in New York, and if they want to meet together, that would be fine. But if it becomes a formal mechanism, that would give the Syrians difficulties because it would exclude the PLO. The Secretary had said the talks would only be with the front line states, not the PLO.

³ See footnote 7, Document 68.

Ambassador Dinitz asked if the five points still remained secret, and the *Secretary* said they did. *Dinitz* noted there had been some leak on the concept of trusteeship in Washington. The meeting ended at 5:30 p.m.

80. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Jerusalem, August 9, 1977, 5:40 p.m.

PARTICIPANTS

Israelis

Prime Minister Menahem Begin
Foreign Minister Moshe Dayan
Finance Minister Simcha Ehrlich
Interior Minister Yosef Burg
Defense Minister Ezer Weizman
Agriculture Minister Ariel Sharon
Ambassador Simcha Dinitz
Ephraim Evron, Director General, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Shmuel Katz, Advisor to the Prime Minister
General Ephraim Poran, Military Secretary to the Prime Minister
Attorney General Barak

Americans

Cyrus Vance, Secretary of State
Philip Habib, Under Secretary for Political Affairs
Alfred L. Atherton, Jr., Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs
Ambassador Samuel Lewis
Harold Saunders, Director INR
William B. Quandt, NSC Staff
Arthur Day, Deputy Assistant Secretary
John Crump, Political Counselor, US Embassy
Hodding Carter, Assistant Secretary of State (PA)

Prime Minister Begin welcomed Secretary Vance to Israel for continuation of talks between the two countries. He asked the Secretary to begin with a report on the results of his trip. *Secretary Vance* expressed his appreciation for the opportunity to meet with the Prime Minister and to report on his visit in the Arab countries. He stated that he would cover the responses of the Arab leaders to the Israeli peace proposals, which he raised as the first item of business in each country. Then he

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 50, Middle East: 7–9/77. Secret; Nodis. The meeting took place at the Prime Ministry. All brackets are in the original.

would cover procedural issues, and finally substantive points, with reference to the five principles previously discussed with the Prime Minister. He would then suggest some possibilities for proceeding in the future.

Concerning Prime Minister Begin's proposal,² the Arabs had no objections to the first and second parts. On the third part, all of the leaders objected because the PLO was not included. On the fourth point, they argued that Israel is setting conditions on borders, the Palestinian question, and Jerusalem, and this is inconsistent with the statement concerning negotiations without preconditions. They have no objection to the fifth point, but on the proposal for mixed commissions they have a variety of objections. One said that there should be no national mixed commissions, but rather there should be functional groups dealing with questions such as the Palestinians, guarantees, and military withdrawal. Another said that the Palestinian question must be resolved first and that the question of mixed commissions is premature. These were the two principal areas of disagreement. On the seventh point concerning peace treaties, all accepted the word "peace treaties" instead of "peace agreements." The *Prime Minister* said that he was pleased to hear this. He asked if Syria had also accepted this. The *Secretary* said they had. They had, however, objected to the mixed commission idea contained in that paragraph. On the eighth point, involving chairmanship by rotation, there were a variety of objections. The Arab leaders felt that the UN or one of the co-chairmen of the conference should chair the committees. Another leader objected to the principle of rotation entirely, but accepted the UN or the co-chairmen. On paragraph nine, the Arabs only objected to the reference to diplomatic relations. On the alternatives suggested by Israel, on the first alternative relying on Rhodes procedures for talks, the Arabs would not exclude this as a possibility if the Palestinians were included, but if the Palestinians are excluded, then they would object. Concerning proximity talks, the problem was again the noninclusion of Palestinians in the framework. They did not, however, exclude bilateral conversations through an intermediary; but they do not accept mixed commissions which exclude the Palestinians. That in brief is the response of the Arabs to the Israeli proposals.

On the question of procedures, the *Secretary* raised the issue of how to proceed to Geneva. The first question was how to deal with the structure of delegations. We went through the four alternatives that we discussed in Washington:³ the inclusion of Palestinians in a national Arab delegation such as Jordan; inclusion of Palestinians in a unified

² See the Attachment to Document 52.

³ See Documents 52 and 57.

Arab delegation; agreement in advance that the Palestinian issue would be on the agenda and that Palestinians would participate when the issue came to the fore; agreement in advance that the Palestinian issue would be on the agenda and that modalities for Palestinian participation would be discussed at the conference. Each of the Arab leaders indicated that the latter two alternatives were not acceptable. The discussion therefore focused on the first two alternatives—the inclusion of Palestinians in a Jordanian delegation and in a united Arab delegation. The Secretary reported the Prime Minister's ideas on the Jordanian delegation—Israel would consider accepting Palestinians in a Jordanian delegation, and their credentials would not be examined, but no known PLO member could participate. Each Arab leader said this was unacceptable. The PLO would not agree and they could not agree either. The inclusion of the Palestinians in an Arab delegation was accepted by all but one of the leaders as the best solution. One leader believed that there should be national delegations at Geneva, plus one other delegation for Palestine headed by the Assistant Secretary General of the Arab League, who happens to be the Chief of Staff of the Egyptian Army. In that delegation there would be other individuals from Arab countries and Palestinians, including some Palestinian mayors from the West Bank, for example. When this was discussed with other Arab leaders, it was viewed as interesting, but not realistic. In brief, four Arab leaders favor a unified Arab delegation including Palestinians, and one has a reservation about that alternative. Foreign Minister *Dayan* asked whether the Secretary could inform the Israeli side if the objections on some points came from the front-line countries or only from Saudi Arabia. The *Secretary* replied that the one country opposed to a unified Arab delegation was one of the confrontation states. He also expressed his view that if the other Arab countries favor a unified Arab delegation, all of the parties on the Arab side would agree. This is a prediction, since one party still has not formally accepted the idea of a unified delegation.

On the Palestinian question, the *Secretary* stated that the PLO has asked to establish contact with the United States and that the US has refused because of its commitment under Sinai II. When we arrived in Egypt, the question was raised of whether we were prepared to talk with the PLO and the Secretary gave the Egyptians the answer that the PLO must accept 242 first. We would, however, understand the PLO stating a reservation to the effect that Resolution 242 does not adequately deal with the Palestinian question, because it refers only to refugees and not to a homeland. If 242 is otherwise clearly accepted, this would satisfy us. Some language was shown to us in Egypt, but it did not meet these requirements. The same question was raised in Damascus, although no language was proposed. But the Syrians did urge that we make contact with the PLO. In Amman, the same discussion

took place. In Taif, the question was raised again, and two variations of language that the PLO might be ready to issue were presented. Again, neither was acceptable to meet our needs on this issue. The Secretary stressed that the key point was Israel's right to exist as a state. Until this was acknowledged, we could not talk to the PLO. Whether the PLO would be forthcoming, the Secretary could not say. There were indications in each capital that a satisfactory formulation would emerge, but none as yet has been received. *Prime Minister Begin* asked whether we had amended any of the drafts we saw. The *Secretary* said that we presented our view that the PLO would have to accept Resolution 242, although we would understand their reserving their position on the refugee clause. That would meet our criteria. It is clear that Resolution 242 means that each state has a right to exist and live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries. In Taif, we were asked if talking to the PLO would mean that they could go to Geneva. The Secretary replied that the question of who participates at Geneva has to be settled by the parties. He would not be able to answer that question. That is where the situation stands. *Prime Minister Begin* thanked the Secretary for his review of the issues.

Secretary Vance continued with a review of the reactions to the five principles that were discussed in each stop. [The Secretary read the full text of each of the principles before describing the reactions of the various parties.] On principle one, there was no disagreement. On principle two, there were also no objections. On principle three, no one objected to the first clause on the termination of the state of war. Objections were raised by two of the parties on the phrase "normal peaceful relations." One of the parties would accept the language as written. One would accept it if the language expressed the development of peaceful relations over time. One objected to the language without suggesting any alternative. One wanted to modify the language somewhat. The *Prime Minister* asked if we could give details on the positions of each country. *Secretary Vance* replied that he thought it would not be inconsistent with what he had said to the parties to reveal their positions, provided that such information not leave this room. Jordan, he said, accepts the principle as it is now written. Saudi Arabia would suggest minor modifications. Egypt believes that it should be changed, but offered no suggestions. The same was true for Syria. The *Prime Minister* asked if the normalization of relations over time had come from the Egyptians. The *Secretary* said they had not suggested that wording, but had merely stated that they could not accept the point as it was written. The Secretary did say, however, that he thought they could accept the phrase "over time." Nor would he rule out Syrian acceptance of that language. There is a beginning of movement on this issue, and we are seeing the effects of the American insistence on real peace.

On point four, Israel had objected to the phrase “on all fronts.” We presented the point as our view, noting that Israel did not accept the principle. On point four, Sadat called for withdrawal to the 1967 lines in Sinai and Golan, and would only accept minor modifications on the West Bank. Assad’s view was the same. King Hussein called for full withdrawal to the 1967 lines, with minor reciprocal modifications on the West Bank. He also raised the question of Jerusalem. Fahd supported return to the 1967 lines, with minor modifications on the West Bank. He also raised the question of Jerusalem. He and Hussein took the position that east Jerusalem should return to Arab sovereignty, there should be a unified city, with Arab sovereignty in the east and Israeli sovereignty in the west. They support open access to the holy places. On the phrasing in point four of implementation of withdrawal over a period of years, some felt that the timing should be shorter. On the final sentence, there was no objection. The *Prime Minister* asked if there was any question of external guarantees. The *Secretary* said that it was not raised in this context, but that it had been mentioned elsewhere. *Dayan* asked if when the Arabs spoke of east Jerusalem under Arab sovereignty, whether they meant the 1967 lines. The *Secretary* confirmed that they did, including all of the old city.

The *Secretary* then read the fifth principle. All of the Arab parties agree with the first sentence concerning the need for a Palestinian entity. They all accept the need for self-determination. Assad objected to the sentence of no militarization of the entity. He thought that such a provision would be unacceptable and that it should not be included. The *Secretary* argued this with President Assad, telling him that his position did not make sense, that it would have to be demilitarized, and that it was not feasible or realistic for the entity to have its own arms. Sadat emphasized that he favors a link to Jordan, and that this should be announced before Geneva. *Minister Burg* asked whether the question of a corridor had been raised. The *Secretary* said that this was not Sadat’s idea, but that he was talking rather about a political link to Jordan. Sadat agreed to the need for a Palestinian entity, but wanted a political link to Jordan before Geneva. The others all felt that such a link should not be determined before Geneva, but should result from the negotiations at Geneva. The *Secretary* noted that he had made it clear that Israel objected to the fifth principle in its entirety.

The *Secretary* added that he believed it was possible to make progress toward Geneva despite the differences. He and the President both believe that if momentum is not continued, an opportunity may be lost and a period of stagnation may begin. Then we might slip back from the present positions. The *Secretary* said that he believed that efforts should be intensified to narrow differences on procedure and substance and this should be done soon. He noted that he had asked each

of the leaders to prepare, if they were willing, a draft of a peace treaty. This would be transmitted to him. He would not give it to anyone else. He asked for concrete language describing their positions on each of the issues. *The Prime Minister* asked if he had suggested that the drafts be provided only to him. *The Secretary* said that he had. Egypt would send a draft of an Egyptian-Israeli treaty to the United States; Syria and Jordan would be asked to do the same. The question was also raised in Lebanon. The Lebanese want to go to Geneva, and the Secretary told them that the Israelis do not object, and he therefore asked them also for a draft. They did not commit themselves to deliver a draft, but they took a positive attitude toward the idea. The Secretary told them that they might send in their ideas in any form, but that it was important to provide detail on the central issues. The Secretary suggested that at the time of the UN General Assembly that all of the foreign ministers should be in New York so that the Secretary could move between the parties to narrow differences. In general, there was a positive reaction to the suggestion. These would be bilateral talks with each foreign minister, although the Secretary said that he would not exclude that there might be opportunities for them to talk with one another.

Dayan asked if the idea of trusteeship had been raised. *The Secretary* said the idea arose in the context of self-determination. The Arabs, he said, think in terms of an international administrative regime for a transitional period. At the end, they would consider a plebiscite under international supervision. There were some suggestions on what a plebiscite would cover. One idea was that a plebiscite would select a constituent assembly to determine the future structure of the entity and its relations with its neighbors.

Prime Minister Begin expressed his gratitude to the Secretary for bringing Israel's ideas to the attention of the Arab rulers. He noted that he was very glad that there had been one major achievement in gaining Arab acceptance of a comprehensive peace settlement embodied in peace treaties. This was "an important achievement." Peace treaties, in his view, are very clear in international law. He expressed his pleasure that the conflict should be resolved in the ordinary way through peace treaties. Diplomatic relations are inseparable from peace treaties. A treaty should have a special chapter on diplomatic relations. The Prime Minister said that he felt Israel was on solid ground to think that diplomatic relations should be mentioned explicitly. He hoped that the Arabs will agree that diplomatic relations are part of peace treaties. A peace treaty would not be a treaty without diplomatic relations. Even in the Soviet-Japanese peace agreement, diplomatic relations were enumerated. On the problem of the PLO, Prime Minister Begin said that this has become an issue of international interest. According to the State Department spokesman, if the PLO accepts Resolutions 242 and 338,

with their own interpretation, and if the Palestinian Charter continues in effect, this will be all right with the United States.⁴ This is what has been published. It is a very serious problem. To understand the Israeli position, Prime Minister Begin quoted from the Palestinian National Covenant. He emphasized those articles which negated Israel's right to exist and which called for the expulsion of Israelis who arrived after 1917. Prime Minister Begin, after reading several articles from the Covenant, expressed his amazement that this could continue to be in force, while the PLO would merely accept Resolution 242 with its own interpretation of the Resolution. Israel could not accept such a procedure, and it was "one of the most regrettable developments from the moral point of view" that Israel's great friend was ready to accept such an approach. The United States would be recognizing an organization that has carried out 90 attacks in 1977, killing two people and maiming 120. The victims have not been military personnel, but rather civilians. Only today, a grenade was found in a supermarket. The Prime Minister unhesitatingly called the PLO a genocidal organization which wants to destroy Israel, its people, and to destroy its civilization. If the Americans allow the Covenant to stay in force, while only asking them to accept Resolution 242 with their own interpretation, that would be "a sorrowful day" for Israel and for all free men.

The Prime Minister referred to two agreements between the United States and Israel: the Memorandum of Understanding of December 1973,⁵ and the Sinai II Agreement. In the 1973 agreement, paragraph seven stated that subsequent participation in the Geneva Conference would require the agreement of all the initial participants. In Begin's view, this article could not be interpreted in more than one way. Israel would agree that Lebanon might participate, but the organization referred to as the so-called PLO will not be accepted. By mutual agreement, only all of the initial participants can change the composition of the Geneva Conference. As Prime Minister Begin had told the President, Israel can under no circumstances agree to an organization such as the PLO participating. Only Palestinian Arabs in a Jordanian delegation would be accepted. And Israel will not search their pockets for credentials. But at his press conference the Prime Minister had added that if known PLO members tried to participate, Israel's answer would be unequivocally negative.⁶ This is not because Israel is intransigent, but stems from simple logic. Israel has its attitude on the PLO and

⁴ See footnote 3, Document 44.

⁵ The U.S.-Israeli memorandum of understanding of December 20, 1973, provided that the original participants in the December 1973 Geneva Conference had to agree on any invitations to future participants to the conference. See *Foreign Relations*, 1969–1976, vol. XXV, Arab-Israeli Crisis and War, 1973, Document 410.

⁶ See footnote 3, Document 56.

cannot mislead its people. The PLO is excluded forever. Israel will not discuss its self destruction. The Israeli people would not understand, it would be a complete contradiction for Israel to talk to the PLO. This must be clarified and there can be no doubt about Israel's position. In view of the US-Israeli mutual agreement, it does not even occur to Israel that the United States will not honor this agreement, since the United States has always honored its commitments. Only with Israel's agreement can a change in the composition of the Geneva Conference take place. Let it be clear: "We will not, we cannot, give our acceptance. We can't and we shan't." In September 1975, the Prime Minister noted, the language of the 1973 agreement was repeated with only a slight change. Thus the United States has twice given Israel a clear commitment. Israel has been very disturbed by the State Department's statement. Israel is concerned on moral grounds, and in light of the possible effect on the Arabs. If the Arabs insist upon the PLO at Geneva and if the US accepts the PLO as a partner to talks, this would imply a consensus in favor of the PLO at Geneva, which would be contrary to the agreement between the US and Israel.

The Prime Minister pointed to another article in the September 1975 agreement, article four. This states that the US will oppose any change in the UN Resolutions. Any attempt to add reference to a Palestinian entity in Resolution 242 should be vetoed by the US. Resolution 242 refers simply to a just settlement of the refugee problem. Israel cannot be asked to accept Resolution 242 and then allow the PLO to amend it. Israel accepts the letter of Resolution 242. There are various interpretations, but there is only one text, and it makes no reference to the Palestinian question, a Palestinian entity, or anything else. If post facto, Israel is asked to accept Resolution 242 with changes as proposed by the PLO, this would be completely impossible and Israel would not agree. The Prime Minister asked that the Secretary bring to the knowledge of the President these two documents so that he would know the wording of the specific commitments. *Secretary Vance* asked to reply. He stated that the President is familiar with the commitments. The Prime Minister's reference to Resolution 242 with the PLO's interpretation was not an accurate statement. What the United States has talked about is Resolution 242, with a reservation by the PLO to the effect that Resolution 242 does not adequately cover the Palestinian question. A distinction must be made among three points: the US–PLO contact; the PLO at Geneva; and any change in 242. On the third point, we should be clear that the United States does not support any change in Resolution 242. The French may be considering this, but we are opposed to any amendment. *The Prime Minister* said he was glad to hear that. On participation at Geneva, the *Secretary* said, participation requires the agreement of all the initial parties. The United States cannot determine who will participate at Geneva. That is up to the parties. Concerning a US dialogue

with the PLO, the United States has stated its policy of no talks unless the PLO accepts Resolution 242. That Resolution calls for the sovereignty, territorial integrity, and political independence of every state in the area and their right to live in peace within secure and recognized borders. If the PLO were to accept this, it would negate, in the Secretary's view, their Covenant. That would meet our requirement for talking to the PLO. *The Prime Minister* referred to the last point. If the PLO accepts Resolution 242, that would not necessarily negate their Covenant. The State Department's spokesman has said that the US will not ask for a change in the Covenant. This means that the Covenant can remain in force. He stated that if the PLO were to accept 242, they would not have to change the Covenant. The *press spokesman* noted that this was not an accurate statement. *Mr. Begin* said he would be glad to learn that such a statement had not been made. But the US would accept PLO recognition of 242 with a reservation or an interpretation. *Secretary Vance* said there was an important difference between the two. *The Prime Minister* said that the US spokesman had gone on to say that the PLO would not be asked to change any articles of the Covenant, and therefore one has to assume that the Covenant would remain in force and would not be negated. In March, some expected the PLO to change its Covenant, but nothing happened.⁷ Israel does not accept the idea that the Covenant would be negated by the PLO's acceptance of Resolution 242. *Secretary Vance* stated that when he was in Taif he was asked about Resolution 242 and the Palestinian Covenant.⁸ He said that the United States would not insist on a change in the Covenant, because if Resolution 242 were accepted, that would constitute a change in the Covenant itself because of the reference to all states having the right to exist in peace. *The Prime Minister* stated that this was a very important interpretation by the representative of the United States, but it did not reflect the PLO's position. From their point of view, accepting Resolution 242 would not negate the Palestinian Covenant. PLO acceptance of 242 would not negate that genocidal document. *Mr. Katz* said that the PLO's reservations might in effect nullify their acceptance of Resolution 242 in any case. *The Secretary* said that if the statement of the PLO was not acceptable, the United States would not talk to them.

Prime Minister Begin said that he would like to comment on the idea of a unified Arab delegation. This had been discussed in Washington and the Israeli position was explained. Israel wants peace treaties with states, not with the Arab League or with a unified delegation. Negotiations must be state to state. Israel does not accept at all the idea of a unified Arab delegation. If peace treaties are the goal, negotia-

⁷ A reference to the March 1977 Palestinian National Council meeting in Cairo.

⁸ See Document 75.

tions must take place between states. Otherwise, how in a general Arab delegation, with the Secretary General of the Arab League, could negotiations take place. Now there are 21 or 22 Arab states. Israel is not going to sign peace treaties with all of them. Israel's position, he stated, is reasonable and logical. In concluding, the Prime Minister said that these first talks had been very fruitful and had clarified a number of issues. The United States had rendered a service to the cause of peace by getting Arab agreement to peace treaties. There are still obstacles, but efforts should still be made. Foreign Minister Dayan will go to the United States in September, and Israel is pleased that the President has agreed to see him. All options can be discussed. The meeting ended at 7:00 p.m.

81. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Jerusalem, August 10, 1977, 9:45 a.m.–12:10 p.m.

PARTICIPANTS

Israelis

Prime Minister Menahem Begin
 Foreign Minister Moshe Dayan
 Finance Minister Simcha Ehrlich
 Interior Minister Yosef Burg
 Defense Minister Ezer Weizman
 Agriculture Minister Ariel Sharon
 Ambassador Simcha Dinitz
 Ephraim Evron, Director General, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
 Shmuel Katz, Advisor to the Prime Minister
 General Ephraim Poran, Military Secretary to the Prime Minister
 Attorney General Bara
 Dan Pattir, Press Advisor
 General Mordechai Gur, Chief of Staff
 General Rafael Eytan, Commander, Northern Front

Americans

Cyrus Vance, Secretary of State
 Philip Habib, Under Secretary for Political Affairs
 Alfred L. Atherton, Jr., Assistant Secretary for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs
 Ambassador Samuel Lewis

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 50, Middle East: 7–9/77. Secret; Nodis. The meeting took place in the Prime Ministry.

Harold Saunders, Director, INR
William B. Quandt, NSC Staff
John Crump, Political Counselor, US Embassy
Colonel Schuyler Bissell, Defense Attache
Colonel Bruce Williams, Army Attache

Prime Minister Begin suggested that the discussion today begin with Lebanon. General Gur and General Eytan were present. The Prime Minister repeated the point that he had made to President Carter that Israel has no territorial claims against Lebanon; Israel does not want a war to start in Lebanon. Israel will not let the Christian minority down; and Israel will not take the President by surprise on anything it may contemplate doing.² The Prime Minister referred to his having met with two Lebanese delegations in the last two days. He visited the Northern Front and saw the terrain. He referred to the situation in south Lebanon for the Christians and some of the Muslims as “almost desperate.” Their call for help is “a human call which cannot be ignored.” The world should not acquiesce in their destruction. The Christian minority in Lebanon consists of one million people, 600,000 of whom are Maronites. Since 1840, there have been ten massacres of Christians at the hands of the Muslims. In south Lebanon, there are three to five thousand PLO members who are armed and who are bent on the destruction of the Christian minority, which consists of 20–30 thousand people. Villages are shelled every night. After September, winter will begin and it will be very harsh for the Christians. Their houses have been damaged. They need shelters, their children cannot go to schools, and water pipelines have been cut. This is a great human problem. Israel will help them, within limits of their means. The Prime Minister asked General Weizman to describe the situation more fully.

General Weizman stated that there had been three kinds of battles Israel had fought in the last 30 years: major battles, wars of attrition, and infiltration. Since 1948 and 49, there had been no major battles with Lebanon. Nor had there been wars of attrition. But there had been some terrorist activity, especially until two years ago. Now the Syrian army is inside Lebanon. There are two divisions, 40,000 men. The PLO forces are down in the south and number three to four thousand. The Christian minority in Lebanon is located in both the north and the south. It is quiet in the north, but not in the south. The Christians approached us 18 months ago for help, which we gave. We provide them with economic assistance, arms, weapons, and sometimes active support, especially artillery fire from our side. Israel’s main aim is to keep the PLO away from the Israeli border, so that the situation will not return to what it was two years ago. Israel will do all it can to fight the PLO. The

² See Document 53.

minority in the south is mostly Christian; however, there are also some Muslims, and they are in a much worse situation today than they were a few weeks ago. There are direct contacts between this Arab population and Israeli government. This is a new situation. We provide them with medical aid, and we cooperate along the good fence.³ This must continue. They must know that Israel is there to stay as a friendly neighbor. The north is also in touch with the south, and we are in touch with the north. The policy of the north is that the population of the south not be exterminated. They look with favor on our assistance to the south. But if we don't do more in the next few weeks, one friendly population which is anti-Syrian and anti-PLO, could disappear. General Weizman then asked the Chief of Staff to give details on the Syrian and PLO positions in the south, and to describe the Christian enclaves there.

Referring to a map,⁴ *General Gur* pointed out the locations of the 40,000 Syrian forces. He described their locations along the coast and in the Beqaa Valley. Their forces consist of armor, communications, and mechanized infantry. They are spread over the entire area, especially in the cities. There are three Syrian brigades in Beirut, a brigade at Tripoli, and another in the Beqaa. They have three to four hundred tanks, plus artillery. They have a headquarters unit in Lebanon. The Syrian forces remain in the same positions as last year. There has been no recent move south. The General then indicated the main PLO forces in the south. They consist of three to five thousand men under arms. Some are near the Israeli border, and some are further away. They can move quickly from one place to another. The *Secretary* asked about their equipment, and *General Gur* stated that they have light mortars, heavy mortars, some artillery, light arms, 105 and 155-mm artillery, some guns of 122 mm, and that most of the shelling comes from the latter artillery pieces. General Weizman referred to Lebanese Commander Haddad and his concern that the population in the south would suffer this winter because their homes had been shattered by the shelling.

General Gur then indicated the locations of the Christian enclaves. He pointed to one near Metulla, one in the central southern sector, and one further west. In the southern area, there are seven hundred to one thousand Lebanese fighters with some light equipment. Israel has contacts with these Christian enclaves, and to some Shii elements as well. Their relationship with the Shii is not as close as with the Christians, but Israel visits them and has provided them with some arms. They are all served by the good fence policy.

³ See footnote 9, Document 7.

⁴ No map is attached or has been found.

All of the different factions of the PLO are found in the south, along with some remnants of the Lebanese army. Military activity primarily consists of the shelling of villages. Many houses have been shattered, especially in the central and eastern enclaves. In some places, villagers are under attack from light machine gun fire as well. From time to time, workers are ambushed on their way to fields. The water supply in some places has been cut, as has the electricity. The Christians have suffered 150 to 200 casualties, men, women, and children. This does not include the two big massacres in which 500 to 600 people were murdered. The enclaves are cut off from the north. There is no work because of the fighting. Some work is provided in Israel, but it is not enough. For two years, children have not gone to school. They don't have electricity or water. They live under permanent fear of massacres such as those that took place in Khiam and Aisha.⁵ They are in for tough times. Morale is dropping. Israel lets the Christians work in Israel, provides medical care, and lets them come to Israel for rest, and this provides some help. Israel's policy is to help them to fight by supplying ammunition, and to help them maintain their equipment. They do the main fighting, and they fire from their villages when they are under heavy attack by heavy shelling. We use our artillery to stop artillery fire against them. Sometimes at night we send in our forces. We talk and offer moral support and medical help. We encourage them to believe that they are not alone. Last night, a small column was sent in to help one village. In addition to cooperation with the Christians, General Gur stated that there is a separate war under way with the PLO. It is difficult to divide these two aspects of the fighting, but Israel has to take operations against the Fedayeen in their camps. Sometimes Israel has to attack them in their villages, because they cannot be allowed to plan operations. So Israeli policy runs along two parallel lines: help for the Christians and the fight against the PLO.

There is no sign, according to General Gur, of the Shtoura Agreement⁶ in the south. In the last few days, the shelling has increased. The PLO has not begun to evacuate the south. The Syrians appear to have agreed not to implement the Shtoura accord in the south. The fighting goes on and there is a deterioration of morale which may lead to a reinforcement of Israel's activity in the south. Connections between Israel and the north are mainly on the political side, since there is no fighting now taking place. The amount of money that has been provided in military aid has been close to [*dollar amount not declassified*]. From January

⁵ Khiam and al-Aisha are two Lebanese villages where Arab Muslim militants killed Arab Christian villagers in 1977.

⁶ See footnote 2, Document 76.

1st, 1976, to August 1st of 1977, Israel has supplied [*dollar amount not declassified*] in aid, two-thirds of it to the north, and one-third to the south.

General Eytan continued the briefing, concentrating on the role of the Syrians in the south. He stated that Syrian officers are included along with Palestinians in positions near the Christian enclaves. They provide intelligence officers and gunnery officers. They have brought in 240 mm rockets. These are obtained from Syrian forces. Saiqa units are south of the Litani and Israel knows the numbers of the companies and the names of the officers. Israel has contacts with Shii villages, and many of the Muslim villages along the border are in contact with Israel. Israel provides equipment, communications, arms, and the villagers are allowed to take advantage of the good fence. Israel has had contact with Muslim leaders like Kamal Asad and Imam Sadr, and has had contact with a Druze leader in Hasbaya at his initiative. The pressure on the enclaves is very heavy, especially the shelling. The people there face the problem of survival. If they lose militarily, they face the alternative of fleeing to Israel or of annihilation. They have seen what happened at Khiam. There were 10,000 inhabitants of that Muslim town at the beginning of the war. Then the Palestinians occupied Khiam, and in one day four or five hundred civilians were killed. Now only 200 people live there, mostly old. The Palestinians are inside the town. The Palestinians have thrown the population of the villages out. General Eytan read a list of names of Muslim villages from which the population had been expelled. He stated that if there was resistance, the population was killed. The Shtoura Agreement seems to have given the Palestinians a free rein in the south. The Syrians and the Palestinians have reached an agreement and fighting has increased. *Secretary Vance* asked a question to clarify what had actually occurred in the last month or three weeks. *General Eytan* said that there had been no big change, but there had been a cumulative influence on the Christians. They are tired, their commanders have been killed, and their morale is low. General *Weizman* noted that the main problem was the morale of the population. They wonder if they can keep on going. They asked whether they will continue to be associated with Israel. They cannot see what the future will be and they want to be associated with Israel. *Ambassador Lewis* asked what form that association would take, and *General Weizman* said that they want a peace treaty with Israel. This is their real wish and they fear what will happen to them. They want to remain in Lebanon.

Prime Minister Begin said that the southerners have not asked Israel to invade south Lebanon or to stay, and Israel does not intend to do so. But they do want economic help, they want a link between north and south, since they feel isolated. Begin had spoken to Haddad, who has asked about the future. There has been real deterioration in the last few

weeks, and the shelling has become more and more serious. The Christians return fighting and they are very valiant, but they are outnumbered. They want Israel's help and they want to see some way out of the fighting. The PLO can get reinforcements from the north with Syria's toleration. The Christians cannot. Israel would like to help, but the Israeli army will not stay in south Lebanon.

Secretary Vance asked for Israeli views on a UN force in the border area. *General Weizman* said that this was not a military question solely. He doubted that a UN force would be able to prevent PLO activity. UN forces might be helpful to divide the two sides. But for the problems of the PLO in southern Lebanon, it would not be of much help. *The Secretary* asked whether a peace-keeping force, rather than just observers, would make a difference. *General Weizman* said that Israel should look after the northern border and should keep it quiet by itself. *The Prime Minister* referred back to discussions in Washington on this topic, and stated that Israel had no objection since a Lebanese army will take up to one year to create. In the interval, a UN force might be useful. But the three to five thousand PLO men in the south should move north of the Israeli border so that they cannot shell Israel's towns. Israel must take care of this problem. Israel wants a quiet border. Could a UN force move the PLO out of the border area? *General Sharon* repeated that on the northern border, Israel has two problems. The moral problem of support for the Christians, and the problem of preventing terror activities against Israel. He could not see that UN forces would prevent terrorist activities and it might make it harder for Israel to take the necessary steps. He saw no advantage to UN troops.

General Dayan said that his view was perhaps that of a minority, but that he would agree that a UN force might help the civilian Arab population in the south. It would not make it easier for Israel to prevent terrorism and infiltration, and it would make it more difficult to retaliate. But if the Syrians, who hold the key, would agree to drive away the PLO and to clear out the area and hand it to the UN, and if there were a real buffer zone from the Israeli border to the Litani, along with local Lebanese police, this might be a relief to the Lebanese population there. The key is to get rid of the Palestinians in that area, and to keep the good fence open to provide medical care and work. Israel would still have the problem of Palestinian terrorists moving through the UN forces, but these would be small groups and would not hurt the local Arab population. Now whole villages are being occupied. Dayan said that he was worried that all villages would be evacuated and once they were deserted, the Palestinians would take over and it would be hard to get them to leave. The whole area could become deserted by civilians and occupied by Palestinians. Then some type of war would be inevitable.

General Weizman said that the association with the Lebanese is deeper than the defense problem. It is not just a matter of infiltration. In the case of Lebanon, Israel has a unique relationship, somewhat akin to the open bridges with Jordan.⁷ The open fence with Lebanon provides direct contact with an Arab population which wants a relationship with Israel and it would be unfortunate if this were terminated. The population wants to talk about a settlement with Israel directly.

Secretary Vance asked General Dayan how the PLO could be persuaded to withdraw north of the Litani if the Syrian forces could not move into the south. *General Dayan* said that it would only require the Syrians telling the PLO to move. The PLO cannot resist a clear Syrian order. The PLO headquarters are in Beirut and are under Syrian control. If the Syrians press the PLO, it will have to respond. This is the key.

Ambassador Lewis asked if the Litani is an essential line in Israel's view. He noted that this would be a large area for the UN to control. *General Dayan* replied that there was need for some physical obstacle, and that the Litani forms such a line. There must be a defense line which will define the area beyond which Palestinians cannot move. *Minister Burg* noted that the Litani had already been accepted as having some status as a demarcation line in the Arab world.

Prime Minister Begin, in conclusion, stated that the delegation of northern Lebanese had raised the problem of Syria's desire to take away their heavy weapons. They had stated that if Syria tried to do this, there would be resistance. They cannot give up their heavy arms. If they are deprived of their arms, their lives would be in danger. The Prime Minister asked Secretary Vance, on their behalf, to use US influence in Damascus to advise the Syrians not to take the heavy weapons from the Christians. If they were to do that, there could be new hostilities. The Prime Minister said that he would be very grateful to the Secretary if he would raise this with President Assad. *The Secretary* said that he would raise this, that he had already talked to Assad about this, and about UN forces in Lebanon. Assad's view was that if the Lebanese want UN forces, Syria would support them. Assad's view is that heavy weapons should be removed from both sides, but Secretary Vance said that he would raise the issue again. [At this point, General Eytan leaves.]

Prime Minister Begin then asked General Weizman to outline some of Israel's urgent defense requirements. He recalled that he had spoken to Secretary Brown and to the President and that he was grateful for the decisions that had already been made. But Israel is worried about arms being supplied to the Arabs in growing numbers and in amounts total-

⁷ See footnote 8, Document 7.

ling billions of dollars. *General Weizman* stated that Israel was grateful for the aid it had received in the past three years. His own impression after returning to the Defense Ministry after seven years of being outside, was that he was very surprised to see how much stronger Israeli forces have become in the last three years. But Israel must also consider its needs for the future, and Israel is surrounded by strong armies. Israel's adversaries have between four and ten thousand tanks, depending on who is included. It is important for Israel to build its military industry and be as independent as possible. The United States has an interest in Israeli success and in Israel's ability to defend itself. Israel is grateful for the help being given on the Chariot tank, and for the help on the Kfir.⁸ At present, Israel has a substantial military industry, but has problems of exporting arms because of the possible US veto. The Israeli aircraft industry will face a crisis if this situation continues. For example, if Ecuador cannot buy Kfirs, would it be possible for Israel to build its own aircraft with no US components in order to keep its industry going? This would not be the F-16, but it might be in the American interest for Israel to build its own aircraft. This would require access to export markets.

Secretary Vance asked what it was that Israel wanted the United States to consider. Was this a question of supporting the aircraft industry to meet internal Israeli needs, or to meet export needs? *General Weizman* said that the answer was both. For example, he asked, to what degree could Israel develop a relationship with Iran? The requirements of the Israeli air force are not enough. What is the future of the weapons industry in Israel? Iran, he said, very much wants a deeper relationship with Israel. *The Secretary* said that he would be very glad to discuss this. Iran was a different case from that of Ecuador. Therefore, US policy is also different. In Latin America, we would not agree to sell advanced weaponry, but that is not the case in Iran. *Prime Minister Begin* asked whether the supply of Soviet MIGs to Peru made a difference, and the *Secretary* said that it did not, since we would not agree to sell advanced aircraft to Peru either. *General Weizman* said that he would like to clarify this when he visited Washington so that Israel could cooperate with the United States. *Ambassador Lewis* clarified the discussion by saying that Israel wanted help to export arms, as well as subsidies on some items like Chariot tanks which were uneconomical otherwise. *General Weizman* said that this was a subject for discussion so that a future problem could be avoided. Some of the problem is due to American re-

⁸ For the Chariot tank decision, see footnote 10, Document 57. On July 6, the Carter administration announced, after a review of its original decision to block Israel from selling 24 Kfir fighters to Ecuador, that it continued to oppose the sale. (Bernard Weintraub, "U.S. Again Blocks Israeli Sale of Jets to Ecuador," *New York Times*, July 7, 1977, p. 4)

strictions, which Israel accepts. *The Prime Minister* noted that 15,000 workers in Israel work in the aircraft industry. If markets can be found, they can continue in their jobs. *Secretary Vance* reminded the Prime Minister that Ecuador had tried to buy F-5's, and that the US had refused to provide them. They may acquire aircraft from the French, but this will be their choice.

General Weizman then turned to immediate problems. He said that Israel appreciated the help on Chariot tanks, and the promises of helicopters and more ammunition. Israel has to consider a future fighter plane for its air force. Presently, Israel is focusing on the F-16. Israel would like to discuss how the United States sees the future of the Israeli air force. The F-4 is on the way out, and the F-15 is expensive. Israel wants to do some of its own work in order to keep its air force as strong as it is today. The problem for the future on the F-16 involves the numbers and whether or not there can be co-production. Israel would like a decision in the relatively near future.

Chief of Staff Gur said that Israel's primary defense requirements now necessitate \$1.5 billion per year in FMS financing. Israel also requests approval of the remaining items on the consolidated list; a decision on the F-16; a decision on Spring Flower;⁹ assistance in research and development in order to upgrade Israeli technology.

If orders are now placed for F-16s, *General Gur* stated, the first ones would not arrive until 1980. If there is a delay in the decision, they will arrive later and there could be troubles. Regarding Spring Flower, Israel has received no positive answer, despite the fact that there is no new technology involved. Israel is not asking for new technology, and would be thankful for an answer to this two-year old request. It is an expensive item but is important for Israel. Assistance in research and development is also important. The consolidated list, which was earlier accepted by the United States,¹⁰ has been referred to as a problem as to time table. Israel follows closely what the Arabs are receiving and feels that it cannot afford to fall behind. *General Weizman* concluded by reminding the Secretary that the 1974 agreement stated that financial assistance up to the level of \$1.5 billion would be provided,¹¹ and that now this has declined to \$1 billion. He stated that the United States now has a bit of a problem since we have to figure out how to finance the things that have already been decided upon. *The Secretary* replied that the figures as he knew them were that the United States would provide

⁹ Not further identified.

¹⁰ See *Foreign Relations*, 1969–1976, vol. XXVI, Arab-Israeli Dispute, 1974–1976, Document 254.

¹¹ Of the \$2.2 billion in emergency military aid to Israel that Congress approved in November 1973, \$1.5 billion could be an outright grant.

\$1 billion in FMS, and \$785 million in supporting assistance for this year. *The Prime Minister* said he had asked Ambassador Dinitz to raise this question. *The Secretary* asked if this was a new question, rather than an old commitment. *Begin* said he had raised it with the President, and the *Secretary* replied that this was not a past commitment. *The Prime Minister* said that this was true. *Ambassador Dinitz* reviewed the issue by stating that he had raised the question of \$1.5 billion in FMS for the next fiscal year. He would not define this as a new request. When the discussion of Israel's annual requirements had arisen after Sinai II, the estimate of both governments was that Israel would need \$1.5 billion annually. Israel has not received this amount, and the issue has been discussed in the past. *The Prime Minister* said that Israel is now formally requesting that amount.

General Weizman then indicated a chart¹² of American aid to Arab countries. *General Gur* reviewed the table which showed a total of \$14 billion in arms transfers to Arab countries from the United States between October 1973 and 1977. He emphasized the Saudi increase in forces and the building of three new airfields in the north which are aimed at Israel. The base at Tabuk was termed a real threat. Israel views infrastructure as equally menacing as the equipment that the US provides. He reviewed the dollar transfers to each of the Arab countries and expressed special concern with the buildup of the Saudi naval force in the Red Sea. He was particularly concerned with the Egyptian acquisition of American arms, because Egypt already has the infrastructure to make use of the arms. A very large force can now be concentrated in Egypt. He described Jordan's army as one of the most modern in the Middle East, consisting of a four-division structure, two mechanized and two armored. The first Hawk missiles¹³ have also arrived in Jordan and will be deployed in a few months. This constitutes a considerable threat to Israel. The *Secretary* stated that he did not want to comment on the details of the presentation, and the *Prime Minister* summarized by saying that Israel needs more equipment.

General Weizman referred to the base at Tabuk in Saudi Arabia. He said it is becoming important for Israel to watch developments there.

Prime Minister Begin then referred to the question of settlements in the territories and asked the Attorney General to read a memo¹⁴ on their legality. He said that Israel does not want to be accused of violating international legality, which Israel holds to scrupulously. *The Attorney General* reviewed the legal situation concerning the settlements

¹² The chart is not attached and has not been found.

¹³ A surface-to-air missile system first developed in the 1950s to provide defense from aerial attack.

¹⁴ The memorandum is not attached and has not been found.

as he saw it. It is contended, he stated, that Israeli settlements in the territories are in violation of international law. There is nothing in customary law to that effect and nothing, including the 1907 Hague convention¹⁵ on that topic. However, the claim is made that Article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention¹⁶ is relevant. Israel's position is that the Fourth Convention has no applicability to the administered territories. The establishment of new settlements is not forbidden. The Article does forbid deportation of the civilian population from occupied territories, and the occupying power should not transfer into the territories its own population. From a reading of the Convention, it is evident that it is meant to prevent deportation or displacement. Movement of people into the territories is prohibited to the extent that it displaces the local population. Reading from Lauterpact,¹⁷ the Attorney General stated that it is clear that the prohibition is on displacement of the local population and this is rooted in the World War II experience. Since no Arab inhabitants have been displaced, Israeli settlements are not illegal. *The Secretary* stated that we have taken a different position on this issue and our legal advisers have reached different conclusions.

After a short break, *Prime Minister Begin* resumed the discussion by concentrating on the PLO. He stated that any form of acceptance of 242 will not negate the Palestinian Covenant. Israel's position is that it would be a sad day to see a representative of the United States talking to the PLO. The President had told Prime Minister Begin that he would take the sincerity of all sides into account. The participation of the PLO in negotiations is out of the question. The possibility of an American representative seeing the PLO as part of bilateral talks is a grave matter and Prime Minister Begin asked the Secretary to reconsider the US policy on this. An announcement by the PLO would not change anything. The PLO, he said, is an implacable enemy of the Israeli people. The PLO almost destroyed Lebanon. The real question is how Jews and Arabs can live together. There is a human problem of refugees. This wound which was opened in 1948, not because of Israel's fault but rather because their leaders asked them to flee, should now be resolved. Israel will contribute as much as possible to a humane solution.

¹⁵ The 1907 Hague Convention was the second Hague Convention, the first being signed in 1899, which sought to establish the laws of war and war crimes in international law. Adopted on October 18, 1907, the second convention expands on the 1899 convention with a special emphasis on naval warfare.

¹⁶ Adopted on August 12, 1949, the Fourth Geneva Convention focuses on the protection of civilians during wartime and under military occupation by a foreign government. Article 49 refers to displaced persons during wartime having to be transferred back to their homes once hostilities have ceased. This became known as the "right of return."

¹⁷ Sir Hersch Lauterpact served as a judge on the International Court of Justice from 1955 to 1960.

There are some 450 thousand refugees under our jurisdiction. *General Dayan* corrected the Prime Minister to say that there were 190 thousand only. *The Prime Minister* said that much had been done in Gaza and that thousands of homes had been built there. *General Weizman* said that by building homes, Israel was trying to persuade the refugees to move out of camps. *Prime Minister Begin* said that the Arab countries should take care of their refugees, and that this was a problem that should be solved so the Jews and Arabs could live easily together.

General Dayan expanded on the refugee question, saying that unless it were solved, no real settlement of the conflict was possible. One could see in Lebanon and in Jordan, and to some degree in Kuwait, the nature of the problem. The question is where the refugees will settle permanently. There is no other solution than for them to settle in their respective countries. Some may claim compensation. Even a Palestinian state in the West Bank cannot absorb the one half million refugees now in Jordan. None of the refugees come from Nablus, and they are not wanted there. Dayan once tried to convince the Gazans to move to the West Bank, and offered to build them accommodations, but they would not move and they would not have been welcomed. Israel wants to solve the problem and to provide the refugees with a normal status. They should move out of the camps, should get work, and should obtain citizenship. Israel can deal with the 190 thousand refugees in Gaza. Israel can give them accommodations, and can end the camps. Whoever wants to claim Israeli citizenship can do so. They will not be pressured and citizenship will not be imposed on them, but this is Israel's obligation to give them the option. Now there is a problem of Palestinians in Lebanon. Should they stay or should they move? In Jordan, there are about one half million Palestinians. Jordan wants them to stay. They have citizenship and they are working. It is mainly a problem of getting them out of camps. General Dayan asked if the Secretary thought that discussions on the refugee question could take place before Geneva. Israel feels that this is a main problem and is ready to do its share along with the others to solve the problem.

Secretary Vance said that he thought it could be discussed, but if this were done in a structured way, in a formal group, then the chances of agreement would be less than if it were discussed quietly through proximity talks. He could not guarantee that the talks would take place, but this and many other topics could be discussed before Geneva. General Dayan wanted all parties to know that this is a top priority problem from Israel's point of view. The conflict will go on if it is not solved. The Palestinians will continue to claim their rights. Israel is ready to do its share and will grant citizenship to those who want it in Gaza. Jordan will not be able to solve the problem without American economic help.

General Dayan then turned to two additional issues. First was the question of Arab views on external guarantees in the event of a settle-

ment. He asked what the United States had in mind for its own role and what the Arab reaction had been. *Secretary Vance* said that this had been suggested by some Arab leaders but had been excluded from the draft principles at the Prime Minister's request. Most of the Arab leaders feel that some sort of external guarantees are desirable or necessary once a final peace treaty is reached. If there is a peace treaty, then such a treaty might be reinforced if guarantees are written into it. There are several alternatives. The Security Council could issue a guarantee, or third parties could do so. The Secretary said he had not pressed the issue, but it should be raised at Geneva. *General Dayan* asked whether there was any clear American thinking on the US role. Does the US want to be a party to this? *The Secretary* said that frankly, if it is necessary to get a final signature on a peace treaty that is otherwise acceptable, the United States would be prepared to help give such a guarantee. There is a question of Congressional approval. The Secretary's feeling is that if there were a peace treaty, and the parties were to agree, Congress would endorse guarantees. President Assad, when he talks of the future, generally mentions that he sees external guarantees of a final peace treaty. His view is the clearest on this. *General Dayan* stated that this was a complicated issue. When demilitarized zones are mentioned, there must be some way to check them and to supervise them. Israel had a bad experience from 1957 to 1967 over Sharm al-Sheikh and UNEF.¹⁸ *The Secretary* reminded him that that was a General Assembly, not a Security Council action. *Mr. Evron* noted that when the Indians and Yugoslavs decided to quit UNEF, it was not a legal question. *General Dayan* asked about what the American position would be. This was not a legal question as much as a political problem. Nasser had not asked the UN to leave Sharm al-Sheikh, and in fact had wanted them to stay there. *Secretary Vance* said that if the Security Council had provided a guarantee, UNEF forces could not have been removed without Security Council action. *General Dayan* said that Ralph Bunche could have asked for a Security Council resolution, but he did not, and the forces then left. Bunche had said that all of the forces should leave or none should. Then Nasser faced the UN with a *fait accompli*. *Prime Minister* noted that guarantees had not worked in the past and that the UN had not been able to guarantee freedom of passage. President Eisenhower had made a commitment on this, and President Johnson had explored the possibility of an international force, but it had never been formed. Israel was left with the closure of the Strait of Tiran. Then the Six Day War occurred. Guarantees had not worked.

¹⁸ The United Nations deployed the UNEF to act as buffer between Israel and Egypt after the 1956 Suez Canal crisis. In May 1967, Egyptian President Nasser expelled the UNEF from Egypt.

General Dayan repeated that Israel rejected any contact with the PLO, but stated that Israel does want to talk to the Palestinian Arabs in the administered territories about how to develop a modus vivendi. In Gaza, one half of the population consists of refugees. They work in Israel and he sees no solution other than their being combined with Israel. They should have work and they should have places to live. In Jerusalem and in the surrounding areas, the people are also tied to Israel. If the people in Bethlehem were asked to be cut off from Jerusalem or to be tied to Jerusalem and to Israel, they would choose the latter. Israel wants to be associated with these people. Israel wants to discuss with them not a Palestinian state and not territory, but how to live together as neighbors. Through open bridges and their contacts with Israel, they can have the autonomy that they want, their own culture, and their way of life. General Dayan said that he was pleased to have read in Dr. Brzezinski's meeting with former Minister Eban that Dr. Brzezinski viewed the Jordan River as Israel's military boundary.¹⁹ Israel wants to live together with the West Bank and Gaza. This is a very general idea and Dayan had no practical proposals to make. But he emphasized again that he wanted to discuss how Arabs and Israelis could live together.

Prime Minister Begin added to General Dayan's remarks by saying that he would propose that the Arabs in Judea, Samaria, and Gaza should have full cultural autonomy. Israel would not interfere in their lives. They would have schools based on their own heritage. They should have the free option of citizenship in Israel. Now in Judea and Samaria the Arabs are citizens of Jordan. Israel will not force its own citizenship on them, since that would be wrong. But Israel is prepared to give them options. If they ask for Israeli citizenship, Israel will grant it. They will be entitled to vote in Knesset and will have full equality. There are now in Israel 100,000 Jews [*Arabs?*], who are permanent residents, but who are not citizens. They enjoy all rights except voting. If they become citizens, then they vote; if they are resident non-citizens, they have all rights, but they do not vote. There should be complete equality of rights for Arab and Jewish residents, and Arab and Jewish citizens. Israel has proved that Arabs and Jews can live together. Israel will not interfere in their lives.

Turning to the topic of minor modifications in the 1967 lines, *Prime Minister Begin* repeated that in his private talk with the President and his talk in the Cabinet Room²⁰ he had asked that no statement be made

¹⁹ Not further identified. Brzezinski wrote in his memoirs that he met with Eban on a trip to Israel in the summer of 1976. (*Power and Principle*, pp. 83–84).

²⁰ There were discussions in the Cabinet Room on July 19 and 20; see Documents 52 and 57. Begin is likely referring to his private meeting with Carter the evening of July 19; see footnote 3, Document 54.

by the President or his representatives in public that the United States supported the idea of withdrawal to the 1967 lines with only minor modifications. When the Prime Minister reported this to his colleagues, one of them had raised the question if this was also binding in talks the Americans would have with the Arab leaders. Prime Minister Begin could not answer the question, but he felt that the President had not made a commitment to that effect, so he sought a clarification before Secretary Vance's trip. He asked Ambassador Dinitz who got a reply to the effect that the President and the Secretary of State would not raise this question at their initiative, but if they were asked, they would say that US policy had not changed. Prime Minister Begin said he did not know what had happened since then, but he would like to explain his concern. He asked that Secretary Vance raise this with the President as a most serious issue since it touched on peace negotiations. The Prime Minister said that his motivation stemmed from the concern that if the US said it supports only minor modifications in public, and the Arabs hear this, they will know the official policy of the United States. What would be left to negotiate? Maybe then the Arabs would hold out for only one half of minor modifications. Egypt does not even agree to minor modifications in its border, so there is little to negotiate. When the policy of the United States supports the 1967 lines, but then says the boundaries are to be determined in negotiations, the question arises of what is left to negotiate. The Prime Minister assumed the President's pledge was binding in talks with the Arab leaders. If the Arabs hear the US view in public, it leaves no room for negotiations. Because this is a serious issue he had decided to write a personal letter to the President and he received a quick gracious reply.²¹ Now the problem is that the President said that his commitment had not changed and that the United States would stand by its historic attitude in any official reply that it gave if asked about borders. The Prime Minister said that he would like the Secretary to tell the President again that on the eve of negotiations that the United States should not repeat its policy regarding only minor modifications in the 1967 borders or the negotiations might collapse in advance. On the eve of negotiations, the Prime Minister requests that the United States repeal that policy. This has been a difference since 1967. Maybe the United States cannot do it, but he asks that the United States stand for negotiations of peace treaties between the parties and that the United States refrain from declaring any point of view on the territorial issue, stating that this is solely a matter for the parties to negotiate. The United States should not prejudice the outcome of the negotiations and should open the way for proper, free negotiations without any "externally devised formula." The use of the

²¹ For both Begin's correspondence and Carter's reply, see Document 62.

word minor modifications in the 1967 borders is precisely such an externally devised formula.

The Prime Minister stated the Soviets identify with total Israeli withdrawal. Israel has showed the United States what the consequences of full withdrawal would be during the Prime Minister's visit to Washington. Israel cannot accept a return to the 1967 lines. If the Arabs receive Soviet support and the support of the United States, Israel's position will be awkward. The Prime Minister requested that during the coming talks in September and at Geneva, the United States should say that the negotiations should take place between the parties and it is up to them to decide where to fix their boundaries.

Secretary Vance said that before his departure, he had participated in the response to Prime Minister Begin's letter. A serious discussion had taken place and it was decided that, if asked, the Secretary would have to say that the United States had not changed its position on the question of borders. The United States could not equivocate nor could it avoid telling the truth. That would be immoral. The question did arise in each of the countries as to whether the United States had changed its position on borders. The Secretary had responded that the United States had not changed its position. He had no other alternative. He said that he would raise the question again with the President, and he would report fully on his discussions in Israel. The Prime Minister said that he would be grateful for that. *The Prime Minister* in closing said that he was impressed by the atmosphere of the talks and that Israel would make an effort in the weeks ahead. *The Secretary* thanked the Prime Minister and said that he appreciated the frankness and the friendliness of the discussions, and said he would report to the President in detail. The meeting adjourned at 12:10 p.m.

82. Telegram From the Embassy in Israel to the Department of State¹

Tel Aviv, August 17, 1977, 1949Z

6116. For Atherton From Lewis. Following sent action USDel Secretary aircraft August 11. Repeated for your action. Herewith follows portion of Tel Aviv 5958 dealing with Begin/Dayan conversation

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P850106–1900. Secret; Niact Immediate; Nodis.

with Secretary² as requested in McKune-Glaspie phone conversation Aug 17.³

Quote. For the Secretary from Lewis. Subject: Draft Message on Your Private Meeting With Begin and Dayan, August 10.

1. Following is a draft message from you to the Acting Secretary and the White House on the restricted Begin/Dayan meeting yesterday which you asked me to prepare. You said you would also add to it additional material from your private tete-a-tete with Begin last night and from your dinner discussion with Dayan.

2. Begin draft text:

3. In view of the large group participating in the meetings with the Israelis, Prime Minister Begin and I agreed to meet with only Foreign Minister Dayan and Ambassador Lewis to go further into questions of South Lebanon and future Israeli settlements policy. This meeting took place immediately following the final general session in late morning August 10.⁴

4. Settlements in the occupied territories: Begin began by reviewing the “misunderstanding” between us over the legalization of three existing settlements, stressing with all apparent sincerity that he honestly had no idea this kind of “routine action” would have been viewed so adversely by the U.S.⁵ He referred to his earlier proposal that “we have an agreement between us on any such cases to explore them initially through diplomatic channels, either Ambassador Lewis or Ambassador Dinitz, in order to avoid such misunderstandings.” I carefully recounted the circumstances in Washington surrounding this incident and made clear that we had indeed waited until Ambassador Dinitz had confirmed for us the facts before making any public statement. I went on to underscore our belief that the whole question of settlements is a terribly sensitive problem, especially at this point in our efforts to move toward Geneva. I said that we sincerely hoped he would not approve any new settlements for this reason.

5. Begin then asked Dayan to tell me what the Israeli Government policy toward new settlements would be. Dayan said “We cannot stop settlements altogether, or even suspend new settlements for any substantial period of time. Such an effort would not be sustainable, just as the British effort to limit or suspend immigration into Israel during the Mandate period never proved enforceable or sustainable. However,

² Telegram 5958 has not been found. For another account of this conversation, see Document 89.

³ Not further identified.

⁴ See Document 81.

⁵ See footnote 5, Document 59.

recognizing the sensitivity of the problem, what we have in mind is to limit new settlement activity during 'the next few months' to about six to eight locations, all on land encompassed in existing military base areas, on government-owned land currently under military control. Approximately 40–50 civilian families would be permitted to settle in such areas; no acquisition of new land would be involved, and certainly no Arabs would be in any way displaced. All these new settlements would be within 25 kilometers of the 'green lines.' Two would be in the area near Jerusalem." (This is obviously exactly the same formula which Dayan had earlier outlined on July 24—see Tel Aviv 5442.⁶) In response to a later query by Lewis, Dayan acknowledged that even under his criteria some of the settlements would be close to the center of the West Bank, but he insisted that none would be close to heavily populated areas.

6. I responded that we obviously had a continuing different interpretation of the international legal situation, as had been clearly spelled out in the larger meeting just preceding this one. I said that it is the moving of civilians into military camps which raises the international legal problem in our view, since under the Geneva Convention the stationing of military forces in an occupied territory is permissible. I pressed the question: "Why is it necessary?" In response, Begin essentially restated the historic arguments which he made in Washington to the President when this subject was raised, referred to the dedication and determination of the "wonderful young generation" of Israeli youth, especially religious youth, who are determined to till their historic lands; and also referred to the President's press conference statement that it would be easier for the U.S. if existing settlements were expanded rather than new ones being established. Begin went on to say that quite frankly he could have followed the practice of previous governments by winking at the illegal squatting by the settlers, since his government could not and would not ever forcibly remove illegal settlers. If they were to do so his government would not survive. But he said he did not want to follow such devious tactics; that he wanted to be perfectly straightforward and honest on all matters with us. Therefore he hoped that the President would understand the motives and necessity for his actions. He felt confident that he would understand, since President Carter had already acknowledged publicly Begin's electoral commitment on this settlement issue. There were only a few families who would be involved. "What we ask for is not your blessing but your understanding. Now you know what we intend to do. Please talk to President Carter and explain our position."

⁶ See footnote 2, Document 59.

7. I assured him I would talk to the President as soon as I return. But I said that the President already understands this problem but is deeply convinced that any new settlements will greatly complicate the peace-making process.

8. Dayan then interjected that he knew he was speaking for the Prime Minister in again saying that no Israeli settlement will be an obstacle to any peace agreement. If an agreement is negotiated which establishes withdrawal to a certain line which leaves outside that line a settlement, the Israeli Government will move such a settlement. He repeated this flat assurance. He then went on to say, however, that he, Dayan, would not have joined any government which prohibited settlement in the historical areas of Judea and Samaria. (Begin interjected to say “and I would not have formed such a government.”) Dayan then said that there had never been an Israeli Government which did not authorize new settlements, that the ongoing settlement process of the land is and will remain a fundamental principle for the Jewish state.

9. Dayan concluded this discussion by arguing that in his view the Arab reaction to the sort of carefully limited settlement plan they have in mind will not be anything like that which we have predicted. He insisted that the major issue for the Arabs is the taking of new lands from Arab hands, and that no such thing would be occurring. We left the issue at this point with my promising to take it up again with the President, but leaving no doubt that we would continue to be extremely concerned should new settlements occur. Unquote.

End this portion of text.

Note from Embassy Tel Aviv:

Remaining seven paragraphs of message pertain to conversation on South Lebanon and Ethiopia.

In the interest of expediency, we have chosen not to repeat the remaining portion of the message.

Lewis

83. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Jerusalem, August 10, 1977, 3:45–4:15 p.m.

PARTICIPANTS

Israeli

Shimon Peres, Member of Knesset and former Prime Minister

Americans

Cyrus Vance, Secretary of State

Philip Habib, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs

Ambassador Samuel Lewis

William B. Quandt, NSC Staff

Secretary Vance began by briefing Mr. Peres on the points that he had covered in his talks with various Middle East leaders during his trip. He began by emphasizing that two alternatives on Palestinian participation had received serious consideration. First is the possibility of Palestinians being represented in a Jordanian delegation. Second is the possibility of Palestinians being represented in a unified Arab delegation. The second alternative has most support among the Arabs, since the Jordanian alternative appears to be unacceptable to the PLO. Mr. Begin, however, would accept the Jordanian alternative provided that no known PLO members are included. The idea of a unified Arab delegation has been accepted by all of the Arab leaders with the exception of Egypt. President Sadat prefers a separate delegation for Palestine, headed by the Assistant Secretary General of the Arab League. That delegation would include representatives of several Arab countries, as well as Palestinians, and possibly some West Bank mayors. The other Arab leaders do not support the idea, and the Secretary offered his opinion that President Sadat would quite likely go along with the idea of a unified Arab delegation, provided that it would break up into bilateral negotiations at Geneva, possibly with the exception of the Palestinian issue where several Arab parties might be represented. Israel's position on this remains negative. The Secretary made it clear that the Arabs do not accept Mr. Begin's formula of Palestinians within the Jordanian delegation.

On the question of possible talks between the United States and the PLO, the Secretary said there had been much confusion and misinformation. The United States is not considering any amendment to Resolution 242. Nor is the question of Palestinian participation at Geneva a

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 50, Middle East: 7–9/77. Secret; Nodis. The meeting took place at the King David Hotel.

topic for the United States to decide unilaterally. This has been covered in the Sinai II commitment and in the commitment of December 1973.² The only issue at stake at present is whether the United States will talk to the PLO. The President said that the United States would talk to the PLO if the PLO would change its position on Israel's right to exist. *Mr. Peres* asked whether that involved recognition of Israel, or acceptance of Resolution 242. *The Secretary* replied that we would require a clear acceptance of Resolution 242, which would include recognition of Israel's right to exist. We would view that as superseding those provisions of the Palestinian Covenant which deny Israel's existence. This question was raised in each of the capitals visited by the Secretary, and some language that the PLO might use was produced during his trip. It was not, however, acceptable. The United States has been told that the PLO may issue some statement. The US position remains that the PLO must accept Resolution 242 first, and then we would be prepared to talk. Geneva is a separate issue.

On substance, the Secretary described several principles that had been discussed with Arab and Israeli leaders. He read each of the five principles to *Mr. Peres*, and noted that all of the parties agree on the first two. On the third principle, the clause on normalization of relations with Israel has given the Arabs some difficulty. Some object to the wording, some would like some mention of timing, but there has been some progress among the Arabs on this question. On the fourth principle concerning withdrawal, all of the Arabs say that withdrawal must be to the 1967 borders, with only minor modifications. This principle has not been acceptable to *Mr. Begin*. On the fifth principle, there has been the most controversy. All of the Arabs agree that there should be a Palestinian entity and self-determination for the Palestinians. They differ on their views of when such an entity should come into being and what its relation should be to its neighbors. All of them favor some form of transitional administration, under the UN or otherwise. There is some question of what the plebiscite should cover. Israel's position is a flat rejection. *Mr. Peres* asked whether the question of a trusteeship had arisen. *Secretary Vance* said that the question had been discussed in terms of an international transitional administration. He had tried to get ideas on this, while personally promoting the idea of some form of trusteeship. *Mr. Peres* asked about the possible link between a Palestinian entity and Jordan and the *Secretary* replied that President Sadat would like to see this happen before Geneva, while others believe it should happen afterward and that it is for the Palestinians themselves to decide. The United States favors a link to Jordan. Jordan itself supports the idea of some type of transitional period and a plebiscite.

² See footnote 5, Document 80.

Mr. Peres asked the Secretary how he now sees the situation. *The Secretary* said that there had been enough general discussion, and that everyone understood the general positions of the parties. It is important now to get increasingly concrete. Each party should begin to spell out what it wants in a peace treaty, what it is prepared to put into such a treaty, and then the United States could begin to act as an intermediary between the parties. This way some progress could be made. If we remain only at the level of generalities, we will get nowhere. *Mr. Peres* asked whether the Secretary believed that Geneva could still be convened. *The Secretary* answered that a Geneva conference by the end of the year was possible. Talks would begin in September at the General Assembly, with the Secretary moving among the parties. He would try to narrow the differences between the parties. *Mr. Peres* asked if the Arabs agreed to the idea of beginning with an attempt to clarify the meaning of peace, and then going to the question of borders. *The Secretary* said that he believed that was the case, although they would emphasize that all the elements of a peace treaty would have to be dealt with. The Secretary said that he hoped that this would also be Israel's attitude, and that he would be talking to the Prime Minister about this again in the evening.³ He would propose to move quietly and privately between the parties. He hopes thereby to keep momentum in the peace process.

Mr. Peres referred to the Palestinian question as the toughest issue, the stumbling block. He said that he was surprised by Jordan's attitude, since both Israel and Jordan are threatened by the Palestinian state. *The Secretary* said that the Jordanians feel that in any election they would have a good chance of winning and that a Palestinian entity would choose to affiliate itself with Jordan. *Mr. Peres* expressed his skepticism about that judgment, saying that the Palestinians in the administered areas were very emotional and if there were free choice, they would not vote for Jordan. He asked if the idea of a Jordanian-Israeli trusteeship had any merit. *The Secretary* said that it is not an impossibility, but that the Arab side has not yet endorsed the idea.

Mr. Peres stated that his party opposes the idea of a Palestinian state. It would be uncontrollable. The problem is not so much the PLO, but rather what they represent. Any step toward a Palestinian state would create an impasse. It should be avoided. *Mr. Peres* stated that he continued to believe that step-by-step diplomacy may offer an alternative to the overall solution. A comprehensive settlement is accepted 50 percent by each side. The Arabs accept the terms on territory, and Israel accepts the terms involving peace. But neither side accepts the other's view. These are not issues that can be resolved in the next few months.

³ No record of this evening conversation has been found.

The Arabs will not accept diplomatic relations with Israel, or if they do, they will ask too high a price. Israel will not be prepared to go back to the 1967 borders. It may be desirable to continue pursuing the idea of full peace, and if the Arabs do agree on it, it may make the situation easier. It may help to avoid the terrible alternative of military action, which would extract a heavy price and would lead nowhere. If the time has come for peace, this would be an important achievement. It would create a bridge, but there is not yet any road connecting to the bridge if the peace concept is accepted. Mr. Peres said that his own idea was that the comprehensive approach should not be seen as an all or nothing idea, since some compromise may be required later.

Concerning Jordan, Mr. Peres stated that it may be important to have a thorough discussion with King Hussein. The King's idea that Jordan could win a plebiscite is false. The King is being misled by his own advisers. Jordan could not accept a Palestinian state, and secretly may hope that Israel will prevent it from being created. It is worse for Jordan than it is for Israel.

Mr. Peres suggested that it would be best to continue working on the peace concept and to try to push it as far as possible. Then Israel should turn east for some form of joint venture with Jordan concerning the administered territories; then south for a partial agreement with Egypt; and then to the north, for some form of agreement with Syria. The Syrians are more patient today because they are involved in Lebanon. Egypt, however, may want Syria to go first. Above all, the situation should not evolve into an either/or choice. Some areas of basic disagreement cannot be overcome. Israelis are united on their opposition to a Palestinian state and on not returning to the 1967 frontiers. On the rest, the various parties have differences. If there is a change on the Arab side regarding peace, these differences would come to the fore. Sadat may be willing, but his hands are tied; Hussein may be willing, but his hands and his legs are tied; Syria does not seem impatient. Mr. Peres expressed his surprise at the strong Saudi support for the PLO.

The Secretary replied that the Saudis feel that the current PLO leadership is the most moderate possible. Alternative leaders would be more radical, and radicalization might endanger Saudi Arabia. *Mr. Peres* replied that King Hussein had been able to manage the Palestinians quite well. He stated that the West Bankers might oppose the King in a vote, but they realistically favor a link to Jordan. The younger generation is more pro-PLO than the older generation. The most responsible leaders want some link to the King. *Secretary Vance* asked how a free vote among West Bankers would go today, and *Mr. Peres* said they would vote for the PLO. Maybe this would not be the case in Bethlehem. There might be a split in Hebron. But the King's chances are not good. Mr. Peres said that if he were a Saudi, he would not worry so

much about Arafat, and would worry more about the effect of creating a Palestinian state. *Secretary Vance* summarized Mr. Peres' view by saying that he appeared to believe that we should try for a comprehensive settlement, but that we would fail, and then we should try to negotiate partial agreements with Egypt and Syria, while putting the West Bank question off. *Mr. Peres* replied that even the failure of the comprehensive approach contained the nucleus of an advantage. It might bring the Arabs closer to the concept of peace, which has never been done before. It might serve as a good starting point, since peace would no longer be a dirty word. But we should be careful not to inject the idea of a Palestinian state, since that would kill the comprehensive option as well as any partial settlement alternatives. It would create an irreparable situation. The United States should be very careful in dealing with the PLO. Israel can negotiate with Egypt, and can talk to Jordan. Negotiations with Egypt might even help the dialogue with Jordan. This is the most that the Begin government can do. *Mr. Peres* said that he would have done it differently, but that he agrees with the present government in their stands on borders and in opposition to a Palestinian state.

Secretary Vance asked him how he saw the border in Sinai, and *Mr. Peres* said that it was useful to make a distinction between sovereignty and military presence. There may be a possibility of returning ownership to the Arabs, but letting Israel keep some positions. There has been some previous discussion of this point. Israel might keep the Strait of Tiran under its control, while allowing Egypt to keep Suez under Egyptian control. With Egypt, an understanding can be reached. Egypt does want peace. A mistake was made at Rabat,⁴ but now Egypt is prepared to accept the King as a brother and a partner. Saudi pressure could help to modify the Arab position on the PLO. *Mr. Peres* thought that Saudi Arabia's influence was very substantial, and that Egypt, Syria and Saudi Arabia together could influence the PLO. Saudi Arabia has better leaders today than in the past. *The Secretary* agreed that the present Saudi leadership was thoughtful. *Mr. Peres* said that they clearly want the Soviets out of the area, and they should realize that the PLO is an entry point for the Soviets. In concluding, the *Secretary* expressed his hope that negotiations would proceed, and that the parties would be prepared to submit concrete ideas to him in the weeks ahead. The meeting ended at 4:15 p.m.

⁴ See footnote 8, Document 6.

84. Telegram From the Embassy in Lebanon to Secretary of State Vance in Jerusalem¹

Beirut, August 10, 1977, 2013Z

3910. Subject: PLO Attitude Towards UN Resolution 242.

1. [1 line not declassified] prior to Secretary Vance's arrival in Saudi Arabia, Arafat passed to Saudis a message for Vance saying:

A) PLO was prepared to announce its acceptance of UN Security Council Resolution 242 with "reservations" that PLO would add an explanatory statement declaring that Palestinians do not consider themselves refugees but rather a people with national rights including right to an independent national state.

B) PLO accepted Sadat's "agenda" for a peace settlement.

2. They asked the Saudis to relay this info to Secretary Vance.

3. When they heard President Carter's August 8 news conference,² PLO leadership assumed message had been passed and President's remarks were USG response. However, on August 9, Saudis informed PLO that Secretary Vance had rejected their proposal and had insisted that PLO would have to make a specific reference to Israel's right to exist.

4. PLO leadership has been stunned by this report since in their view it requires them to go further in recognition of Israel than any Arab state and appears to contradict President Carter's statement in August 8 news conference. PLO leadership is very anxious to know whether report they have received from Saudis is accurate and/or if their position described above was accurately passed to the secretary by the Saudis.

5. PLO is anxious to have a response ASAP [1½ lines not declassified]

Parker

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840072–0389. Secret; Niact Immediate; Nodis; Cherokee. Sent for information to the Department of State.

² At an August 8 exchange with reporters in Plains, Georgia, Carter noted that the PLO had suggested that it "may adopt U.N. Resolution 242, which does recognize Israel's right to exist permanently and in peace with secure borders." Carter stated that such a move would "open up a new opportunity for us to start discussions with them and also open up an avenue that they might participate in the Geneva conference." (*Public Papers: Carter, 1977, Book II, pp. 1459–1460*)

85. Telegram From Secretary of State Vance to the Mission to the United Nations¹

August 11, 1977, 0900Z

Secto 8138. Subject: Comments at the United Nations on Modifying Resolution 242 Ref: USUN 2539.²

1. In response to suggestions that the U.S. might be considering modifying UNSC Resolution 242, you should leave no repeat no doubt that the U.S. is adamantly opposed to any effort to revise 242 in any way and would use its veto if necessary to prevent this. Secretary is committed to this position and nothing should be said that would suggest erosion of this position.

2. For your background, recent news reports have been dealing with a separate issue, namely whether the PLO if it accepts 242 and Israel's right to exist might state its view that 242 in referring simply to refugees does not make adequate reference to the question of Palestinians. We are prepared to study any such statement which they might make to see whether it provides a basis for USG talk with PLO. But we will oppose any effort actually to amend the Resolution.

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Trip File, Box 42, Vance, Middle East, 7/31/77–8/12/77: Cables. Confidential; Immediate. Sent immediate for information to the Department of State, Damascus, Jidda, and Beirut. Sent for information to Amman, Cairo, Tel Aviv, and Jerusalem. The telegram was sent from the Secretary's aircraft. In a handwritten note at the top of the page, William Hyland wrote, "Secretary Vance asked that this be called to your attention." Carter wrote under it, "ok. J."

² Telegram 2539 from USUN, August 9, reported that several "comments emanating from the UN Secretariat and delegations are now circulating on the possibility of modifying Resolution 242. These comments clearly seem to be inspired from the several press stories beginning over the weekend dealing with the PLO and Res 242." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D770287–0306)

86. Telegram From Secretary of State Vance to the Embassies in Lebanon and Syria¹

August 11, 1977, 0910Z

Secto 8139. Subject: Southern Lebanon. For Ambassador From Secretary.

1. There are aspects of my talks in Israel about Southern Lebanon which I believe should be passed on to Boutros and Sarkis. I will report to Khaddam and Assad in Damascus on Thursday.²

2. For Beirut: Ambassador Parker should pass following message from me to Boutros for Sarkis: "During my talks in Israel, I had a full discussion of the problem in Southern Lebanon. The Israeli presentation concentrated on two main points: first, from their contacts with leaders in that area across the border, they see a cumulative despair about the future of the people in Southern Lebanon because of persistent attacks by the Palestinian forces and because of their lack of a supply line and normal economic contact with the north. They increasingly speak of the problem of Southern Lebanon as a 'moral question' having to do with the future of these people. Second, they are concerned that the Palestinians are again consolidating a position in Southern Lebanon from which they can in the future resume cross-border infiltration into Israel. On the question of a UN force, the Israelis for the most part doubt the ability of such a force to curb Palestinian activity. The Israelis have no objection, however, to a UN force along the border. They see two steps as essential: first, the Palestinians must cease attacks and preferably pull back from the southern part.

Second, an acceptable peace keeping force must be introduced, preferably a Lebanese force but perhaps a UN force for a transitional period if there is no alternative in the area north of the border. I will be informing the Syrians of the above and will particularly tell them that the Israelis see them as the key to forcing the Palestinians to stop their shelling and to withdraw to positions less threatening to the Christian positions."

3. For background in Beirut and Damascus: In Damascus on Thursday, I will be making following points to Assad:

A. The Israelis are deeply concerned about the situation in Southern Lebanon. They believe that the Syrians bear a heavy responsi-

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840072–2544. Secret; Nodis. Sent immediate for information to the Department of State. Sent for information to Tel Aviv. The telegram was sent from the Secretary's aircraft.

² August 11.

bility for the continued instability there. First, they have reports of a secret understanding between the Syrians and Palestinians there which exempts the Palestinians from application of the Shtaura agreement there.³ Second, they cited the presence of Syrian officers with the Palestinian forces around the Christian enclaves and small Syrian units in Saiqa uniforms.

B. The Israeli Government is increasingly seeing itself as responsible for ending what it regards as the threat to the Christian enclaves in the south, and the danger of an Israeli move is once again increasing with the failure to enforce the ceasefire in the south.

C. The key question is how to pave the way for the prompt pacification of Southern Lebanon. We hope that Syria might insist on strict adherence to the ceasefire at a minimum. A next step should be the prompt introduction of a security force, preferably an effective Lebanese force. If it is necessary to move the Palestinians away from that southern area so the [garble—force?] can operate successfully, that should be considered.

D. The Israelis would not oppose introduction of a UN force to help keep peace throughout the southern area—not just on the border—but they doubt it could be effective and believe Syrian action would be quicker and more decisive.

E. It is important to leave the Christians with the means of defending themselves.

Vance

³ See footnote 2, Document 76.

87. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Jianiklis, August 11, 1977, 3:30–4:30 p.m.

PARTICIPANTS

The Egyptians

President Anwar al-Sadat

Vice President Husni Mubarak

Ismail Fahmy, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister

Hasan Kamil, Chief, Office of the President

Usama al-Baz, Chef de Cabinet, Foreign Ministry

The Americans

Cyrus Vance, Secretary of State

Philip Habib, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs

Hermann Fr. Eilts, U.S. Ambassador to Egypt

William B. Quandt, National Security Council

SUBJECT

Secretary Vance's Meeting with President Sadat

Secretary Vance began with a review of his talks in Israel. The visit was dominated by Israel's negative attitude on possible US–PLO talks. Prime Minister Begin and other members of his cabinet urged that we not talk to the PLO under any circumstances.² The US position was made clear: if the PLO accepts UN Resolution 242, with a reservation on the Palestinian issue, then we would be prepared to talk immediately. In talks, we would discuss any issue, but we would not guarantee the participation of the PLO at Geneva. That will be up to the parties, including Israel, to decide. The US will also oppose any attempt to amend 242. We prefer to proceed in a simple manner and will now await results.

The *Secretary* stressed that Israel continues to oppose a Palestinian entity or state. We restated our position that there should be an entity and the Palestinians should exercise their right of self-determination to settle their future. This was a major disagreement between the US and Israel. On both the PLO question and the Palestinian entity, Begin has strong support for his position in Israel. One Israeli opposition leader said this could change, but was not particularly optimistic.

The Israeli government, according to the *Secretary*, does not agree to return to the 1967 borders with only minor modifications on the

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 50, Middle East: 7–9/77. Secret; Nodis. Thirty minutes of private talks between Vance and Sadat followed the meeting.

² See Document 80.

West Bank. We expected this position at the outset of negotiations. Israel knows our position. In brief, we disagree on talking to the PLO; the Palestinian entity; and the 1967 borders with minor modifications. On the more positive side, the Israelis have agreed to provide us with texts of a draft peace treaty. Dayan will probably bring these with him to New York. Dayan is more flexible than the others and genuinely wants to negotiate. It is too early to see how flexible he will be, and he will have to work from government instructions. He wants a peace agreement. With Dayan and the others, the *Secretary* stressed the importance of the parties preparing texts for our use in preparing our own drafts. Jordan responded positively; Saudi Arabia supports the idea; Syria will give us something, although their attitude is less clear. If the others all are ready to give us ideas or fully outlined positions, then Syria is likely to do so as well. All of the Foreign Ministers will come to the UN in September and the *Secretary* will move between the two sides. *Fahmy* termed this proximity talks, but the *Secretary* said he preferred not to try to attach any label. All will be in New York; he will talk to them in order to accomplish what is necessary.

Turning to the PLO question, the *Secretary* answered questions that had been previously raised with Ambassador Eilts. The US can only guarantee that it will talk to the PLO if the PLO accepts 242, not that the PLO can go to Geneva. *Fahmy* asked if we could support their participation, to which the *Secretary* replied that we want to find a mechanism to include Palestinians at Geneva. Once they accept 242, we will talk as soon as possible. New York would probably be the best place. If talks can be held sooner, Phil Habib would represent the US side, or Roy Atherton in his absence.

Responding to a question from *Sadat*, the *Secretary* said Israel will accept Palestinians in a Jordanian delegation, but no known PLO members, and Israel opposes a unified Arab delegation. The *Secretary* expressed his understanding for the reasons behind *Sadat*'s opposition to a single delegation—his desire to remain flexible and to exercise leadership—but he pointed out that one delegation could split up after the plenary into Egyptian-Israeli, Syrian-Israeli, and Lebanese-Israeli groups. All the other Arab parties agree to this concept, but Israel is flatly opposed. No one felt that there was much chance of getting Palestinian support for a delegation for Palestine led by the Assistant Secretary General of the Arab League. Israel refused the idea on principle. The *Secretary* characterized the Israeli position as very firm on this point.

Sadat replied that this “puts you in a fix.” The US is not asking Israel to yield or submit, but Israel is “making your position very difficult.” The *Secretary* said that we would have to work with them to change their position if we are to get to Geneva. The easiest way will be

to have Palestinians in a unified delegation, along with the Lebanese. This could then break up into bilateral committees.

Sadat asked whether the hard Israeli line was tactical or strategic. In the *Secretary's* view, Israel's position on the PLO is tactical. On the Palestinian entity, it is both tactical and strategic, as is the position on the West Bank. Concerning Sinai and Golan, the Israelis have opened with a hard bargaining position. Israel sees that any concession in dealing with the PLO will lead to the question of the Palestinian entity and a resolution of the Palestinian problem. They want to put this off as long as possible. If this prevents the reconvening of Geneva, they will be isolated in world opinion. Begin's view of the West Bank is colored by his religious views. This is not true of all Israelis, but they are all concerned with the military aspects of the West Bank problem. On borders generally, Israel is not prepared to reveal its final position now. Israel is unhappy with the US position on borders.

Sadat asked about the position that the US planned to take in light of this trip. *Secretary Vance* stated that our position is unchanged: (1) We favor the negotiation of comprehensive peace treaties; (2) Resolutions 242 and 338 form the basis for negotiations; (3) the state of war should end and normal relations should develop over a period of time; (4) there should be withdrawal on all fronts to the 1967 lines with minor modifications on the West Bank, and the withdrawal could be in stages; (5) there should be a Palestinian entity and self-determination for the Palestinians after a transitional international administration. This last point requires more thought, but one possibility would be a plebiscite for a constituent assembly. We want the thoughts of the parties on this, especially from Jordan. Jordan also indicated that there should be a stated position on Jerusalem. *Sadat* agreed that this should be mentioned.

The *Secretary* reviewed King Hussein's ideas on Jerusalem.³ The old city should return to Arab sovereignty, and the other parts would remain under Israeli sovereignty. There should be a free access to all holy places, and there should be free movement within a unified city. (*Sadat* nods agreement.) A view expressed by the Israeli foreign ministry holds that the city should remain unified under Israeli sovereignty, but the eastern sector should be established as a separate borough with its own president who would be an Arab. A council of borough presidents would be formed, and the job of mayor would rotate among them. At some point, the Arab borough president would be mayor of Jerusalem. This is not yet a formal Israeli position, but is similar to ideas held by Teddy Kollek. The *Secretary* agreed that something

³ See Document 72.

should be included on Jerusalem in the statements of positions since it is one of the issues to be dealt with. President *Sadat* asked if the Secretary believed, after his talks in Jerusalem, that Israel really wants peace, or whether it is only a maneuver. *The Secretary* replied that Israel does want peace, but there is a wide gap between what they are prepared to give and what the Arabs are asking. But the Israeli leaders, like the Arab leaders, do want peace. There are large obstacles, but we must persevere. *Sadat* repeated that "They are making it difficult for you, really." *Fahmy* stated that he believed Israel was trying to buy time and to test American firmness. The *Secretary* replied that we are firm and we mean what we say. *Fahmy* termed the US position very clear and constructive; *Sadat* termed it "very constructive." *Fahmy* noted that the idea of draft treaties will help to cut the process short and will bring us to the point where an American proposal can be offered. The *Secretary* agreed. *Fahmy* said this would not mean a US-imposed plan since it would grow out of what the parties give us.

Sadat remarked that October has no special significance for the Geneva conference. What is needed is momentum in the peace process. Geneva might wait until November or December, whenever the parties are really ready. *Fahmy* described a conference which met for photographs and then collapsed as suicide.

The *Secretary* noted that only President Assad seemed hesitant about supplying a draft agreement. *Sadat* replied that Assad would hesitate until Egypt signed, then he would come along. *Fahmy* jokingly suggested that Egypt might make trouble for Syria in Lebanon.

Turning to Lebanon, the *Secretary* described the Israeli concern for the Christians in the south. The Israelis believe that the Syrians are not trying to carry out the Shtoura agreement⁴ in the south and they claim Syrian officers are with Palestinian forces. Begin feels a moral responsibility for the survival of the Christian population in the south. *Sadat* laughed, terming this "really sarcastic." The *Secretary* relayed Assad's view that the Shtoura agreement was being implemented in stages and that it would be implemented there. Palestinians would move to assigned areas and their heavy weapons would be collected. Assad agrees to a Lebanese force in the south, but realizes that it will take time. He would have no objection to a UN force along the border, provided the Lebanese wanted it. *Sadat* agreed. The *Secretary* advised Assad that some means must be found to stop the shelling and to end the bloodshed. Tensions must be reduced, otherwise the situation could get out of hand. *Fahmy* noted that many believe Israel might open hostilities on one front or another. The *Secretary* said he did not believe

⁴ See footnote 2, Document 76.

this would happen in Sinai, the West Bank or Golan. But he could not rule out some shooting into Lebanon.

(The meeting ended at 4:30, and was followed by 30 minutes of private talks between the Secretary and President Sadat.)⁵

⁵ No memorandum of conversation was found of this private talk.

88. Telegram From Secretary of State Vance to the Department of State and the White House¹

August 11, 1977, 1940Z

Secto 8152. White House for the President and Dr. Brzezinski Only From the Secretary. Department for Acting Secretary and Peter Tarnoff Only From the Secretary.

1. Today, my last day in the Middle East, I left Israel early and I made quick stops in Jordan, Syria and Egypt to review my talks in Israel and to confirm the course that we will follow between now and the end of September. Despite the widely reported hard Israeli line, each of my hosts said he was ready to stick with us in the process ahead.

2. Jordan. On my first stop, I talked with King Hussein and his close advisers for about an hour.² Reporting on my meetings in Taif,³ I said the Saudis were prepared to take part in talks in New York next month and would give us their views on what should be contained in a treaty. They were prepared to accept the idea of a single Arab delegation though in the past they had preferred national delegations. I noted that Syria, Jordan and Saudi Arabia now all agreed to this form of delegation. Hussein told me Fahd had come to Amman the previous [day?], having been to Egypt, and said the Egyptians promised to look again into a single delegation. He saw the beginnings of a change. Adham also said there had been some progress on acceptance of Resolution 242 by the PLO. The Egyptians were meeting with the PLO August 11.

3. I turned to my talks in Israel and told the King they had been dominated by the strong negative Israeli reaction to the idea of our

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840072–2559. Secret; Immediate; Nodis; Cherokee. The telegram was sent from the Secretary's aircraft.

² No memorandum of conversation has been found.

³ See Documents 75 and 77.

meeting with the PLO. Begin had argued against our doing this under any circumstances. I said I had restated our position, as you had stated it, and told Begin this is how we would proceed. The Israelis had been unhappy but had accepted that it was where we stood. They will oppose PLO participation at Geneva, and I could not say whether their position could be changed. In any event, Dayan would be coming to New York about September 15, ready to take part in talks, and Israel would give us a draft treaty text.

4. The King said he was encouraged. We were not just going around in circles. He hoped we could maintain progress and could see the PLO involved in the peace process. He was clearer on this point than he had been in our previous discussions. He hoped the PLO would accept Resolution 242 and had the impression the Saudis thought they would. He asked about the Israeli position on West Bank settlement, and I told him we had disagreed on this, each stating his views forcefully.

5. Finally, we discussed Southern Lebanon briefly and I described for the King how the Israelis saw it. He referred to Lebanese talk of sending Lebanese troops to the south. He did not know how long this would take, but noted that if the troops were not well prepared they would end up fighting on one side or the other.

6. Syria. In my two-hour meeting with President Assad and Foreign Minister Khaddam,⁴ I reviewed my talks in Israel both on the peace negotiations and on Southern Lebanon along the same lines as I had in Jordan.

7. On the peace negotiations, Assad asked enough questions to see that there had been no significant substantive change in the Israeli position, but seemed to accept that we must pursue the course we outlined during our last visit,⁵ despite the fact that he sees no serious Israeli interest in negotiations. He will send Khaddam to the U.S. in September and indicated that they would give me their ideas on what they want to see in a peace treaty. I do not expect an elaborate contribution, but I was glad that he seemed prepared to give us something because the Syrians are least inclined to a systematic exercise of this kind.

8. On Southern Lebanon, I told Assad that the Israelis are concerned about the cumulative deterioration of the Christians' position and believe that Syria is abetting the Palestinians there in continuing their war of attrition. Assad denied any Syrian military presence with the Palestinians in Southern Lebanon and claimed that the problem will be resolved as recent phased agreements go into effect. Assad was

⁴ No memorandum of conversation has been found.

⁵ See Documents 66 and 68.

outraged at Begin's statement of "moral responsibility" and charged in turn that it is the Israelis who are responsible for keeping the fighting going. I urged strongly that every effort be made to stop the firing. Despite his strong denunciation of Israeli policy, I had the impression that he understood the implications of Israeli concern—the possibility of Israeli military action—well enough to try to dampen the fighting.

9. Egypt. My last round of talks today was with President Sadat in his rest house at Jianikilis, near Alexandria.⁶ As I had done with the other leaders, I reviewed the results of my discussions in Israel. Sadat's reaction was that Israel had not given us much to work with.

10. On the PLO question, I repeated that we would talk to the PLO if they accepted 242, with an appropriate reservation, but that we could not guarantee their participation at Geneva. I cautioned Sadat against any attempt by PLO to move for formal amendment of 242 at the UN. This would be anathema to the Israelis, would unravel the agreed framework for negotiations, and we would be required to use the veto. (See Sinai II commitments, para. 4 of memo on Geneva Peace Conference.)⁷ We did, however, feel that Palestinians should be represented in the negotiations and for this reason we saw merit in a unified Arab delegation which would include Lebanese and Palestinians, in addition to the original parties. For the actual negotiations, we would envisage the unified delegation breaking up into bilateral groups, with the possible exception of the group dealing with the Palestinian issue. Unlike my previous talks on this issue, this time Sadat did not reject the idea of a unified Arab delegation, but did ask about Israel's attitude. I reported that Israel was opposed to a single Arab delegation.

11. Sadat asked if I thought the Israeli positions were essentially tactical or strategic. I indicated that there were elements of both, reviewing each to discuss the tactical and strategic concerns but that on the West Bank-Palestinian issue in particular, there seemed to be little room for bargaining.

12. Sadat then asked about the attitude that we intended to adopt in the face of what he termed Israeli stubbornness. I told him that our position would remain as we had previously described it, and I reviewed the five principles that had earlier been presented. I added that we should also include principles relating to Jerusalem and reviewed the current suggestion of the parties. I told him of our hope that international opinion could be mobilized behind these principles, and that Israel would then reconsider some of her current positions. I agreed

⁶ See Document 87.

⁷ See footnote 5, Document 80.

with Fahmy that the procedure of working from draft treaties would significantly speed the process of moving toward agreement.

13. We briefly discussed the situation in South Lebanon. Sadat, like Assad, was not impressed by the sincerity of Israel's moral commitment to the Christians there, but he did agree on the need for an end to the fighting in the south.

14. I will be reflecting with you in detail on Sunday⁸ where we stand as a result of the trip. In brief, however, although the parties may not be much closer on the key substantive issues, I think we have now launched a process which can evolve into serious negotiations.

Vance

⁸ August 14.

89. Telegram From the Department of State to the White House¹

Washington, August 12, 1977, 1310Z

191140. For the President and Dr. Brzezinski Only. Following repeat Secto 8155 action SecState Aug 12.

Quote. Secto 8155. Department pass White House for the President and Dr. Brzezinski only. Department for Dep. Sec'y and Tarnoff only.

1. To complement the fuller report I sent you on my talks in Israel,² I want to pass along several additional points from a private meeting I had with Begin and Dayan.³

2. We reviewed the "misunderstanding" between us over the legalization of three existing Israeli settlements on the West Bank.⁴ Begin stressed that he honestly had no idea that this kind of "routine action" would have been viewed so adversely by the US. We reaffirmed that in future cases we would try to consult through diplomatic channels, al-

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Trip File, Box 42, Vance, Middle East, 7/31/77–8/12/77: Cables. Secret; Immediate; Nodis.

² In Secto 8128 from Jerusalem, August 10, Vance summarized his August 9 meeting with Begin and his Cabinet. (Ibid.) The memorandum of conversation of this meeting is Document 81.

³ See Document 82.

⁴ See footnote 5, Document 59.

though I pointed out that we had in this case waited for Ambassador Dinitz to confirm the facts before making any public statement.

3. On the substance of the settlement issue, Begin said that what he has in mind is to limit settlement activities during the “next few months” to about 6 or 8 locations, all on land included within existing military base areas on government-owned land under military control. About 40–50 civilian families would be permitted to settle in such areas, no acquisition of new land would be involved, and no Arabs would be displaced. (Dayan later acknowledged that some of the settlements would be close to the center of the West Bank, but he insisted that none would be close to heavily populated areas.)

4. I repeated that we continued to hold a different view of international law on this action and pressed him again on why it is necessary to engage in an action that has serious ramifications for the peace process. Dayan answered that no Israeli settlement will be an obstacle to any peace agreement because the Israeli Government will move any settlement which is left outside a border established in a peace settlement. However, he then said that there had never been an Israeli Government which did not authorize new settlements and that the ongoing settlement of the land will remain a fundamental principle for the Jewish state. I pointed out that even though he was suggesting putting civilians into already existing military bases, this too would violate international legal principles. It is the fact of moving (begin underscore) civilians (end underscore) of one country into occupied territory that constitutes the legal violation.

5. In concluding this part of the discussion, Dayan seemed to misjudge Arab reaction. It is increasingly apparent that the Israelis are trying to convince themselves and to base their legal case on the proposition that the Arabs will not react to settlements which do not result in displacement of Arab population.

6. Turning to South Lebanon, I promised Begin that I would raise with Assad the importance of Syrian assistance in supporting PLO withdrawal from the southern border area. I then went on to say that any Israeli military incursion into South Lebanon would have repercussions on international public opinion that would be very severe and damaging. Begin said he wanted to avoid any surprises and repeated that “if we do anything military we won’t stay in Lebanon at all.”

7. In discussing the prospects for introduction of Lebanese forces into South Lebanon, Begin said that Israel would not object to a UN force provided the PLO is removed from the border area. Dayan offered the opinion that a buffer area would probably have to be created extending from the border to the Littani River, an area about 20 kilometers wide. Dayan subsequently confirmed that the Israelis would not do anything in this area until I had discussed this matter with you

and commented further to Begin. I will talk with you on Sunday⁵ about a message which we could send early next week.

9. The final subject discussed during this smaller meeting was Ethiopia. Begin said again that Israel would like to help Ethiopia in full consultation with the US. I explained to him again that we were not prepared to renew our arms supply relationship. I told him frankly how we viewed the actions of the Ethiopians in expelling our personnel on two days notice⁶ after we had made a major effort to continue good relations with the government. I left no doubt that we would not change our attitude on military supply question.

10. Later in the day, I drew Begin aside and got a specific commitment that he would take no action with respect to Lebanon until he heard from you. In the same conversation, I covered other matters I will discuss with you on Sunday.

Vance

⁵ August 14.

⁶ At 4 p.m. on April 23, the Ethiopian Government ordered the closure of five American offices and the removal of office staff within the next 4 days. A State Department spokesman released a statement at 9 p.m. on April 23 protesting the Ethiopian Government's "unwarranted" actions, "particularly the short deadline" for the removal of U.S. personnel from Ethiopia. ("U.S. Protests Over Order," *New York Times*, April 24, 1977, p. 5)

90. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Israel¹

Washington, August 14, 1977, 2309Z

192564. For the Ambassador From the Secretary. WH for Brzezinski Only. Subject: Message for Prime Minister Begin.

1. Please deliver to Prime Minister Begin the following message from the President following up my private conversation with Begin and Dayan during my visit.

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P850106–1501. Secret; Immediate; Nodis. Drafted and approved by the Secretary. Cleared by Tarnoff and Allan W. Otto (S/S-O). Sent immediate for information to Damascus, Beirut, and the White House. Vance returned to Washington on August 13 after 2 days in London.

2. Begin text:

Dear Mr. Prime Minister:

Secretary Vance has reported to me in detail on his meetings with you and your colleagues,² and I am personally grateful to you for the warmth of his reception and the candor with which you and he spoke.

As I reflected on his report about his talks in the Arab capitals and in Jerusalem, I am deeply conscious of the gaps that still exist between the positions of the parties. I am not discouraged about the prospects of ultimate agreement, because all of us realize that the alternative to peace is unacceptable. I do feel, however, that it is important now to move promptly to narrow the gaps if we are to convene a Geneva Conference that has a satisfactory chance of success.

I am gratified that all the governments concerned have undertaken to give us for our own use detailed written statements that will put in concrete language what each would like to see in final peace treaties. It is in moving away from generalities toward specifics, expressed in written form, that we have the best chance [omission in the original] complete frankness, convinced that you will understand the spirit which motivates my candor. Israel and the United States are too closely bound historically, morally, emotionally for us to conceal from each other our deepest concerns. I know that we share the determination to find a way to create lasting peace for Israel and for your neighbors in the region. I am confident that you will not take actions in this delicate moment which would endanger our chances of reaching that goal.

Sincerely,

Jimmy Carter

End text.

3. You will be receiving copies of related messages to Damascus and Beirut.

Vance

² Carter met with Vance and Brzezinski on August 14 from 1:57 until 4:38 p.m. (Carter Library, Presidential Materials, President's Daily Diary) A White House statement issued after the meeting noted that progress was made during Vance's visit but that major differences remained "on how Palestinians views can best be represented in negotiations, but also on the definition of secure and recognized borders and the nature of a Palestinian settlement." (Department of State *Bulletin*, September 12, 1977, p. 355) Carter wrote in his diary that Vance's report on his trip was "encouraging, with almost a consensus among Arab countries. The Israelis are going to be typically recalcitrant, but the more we go public with a reasonable proposition the more difficult it will be for them not to make an effort." (*White House Diary*, p. 83)

91. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Syria¹

Washington, August 14, 1977, 2312Z

192565. For the Ambassador from the Secretary; WH for Brzezinski only. Subject: Message to President Assad from President Carter.

1. Please seek appointment with Assad to deliver the following message from President Carter to President Assad following up on my last conversation.²

2. Begin text:

Dear Mr. President:

I deeply appreciate the two opportunities Secretary Vance had to meet with you and discuss at length with you both the urgent matter of how to proceed in making negotiations on an Arab-Israeli peace more concrete and the question of stabilizing the situation in Southern Lebanon. He has reported to me in detail on all of his talks in the Middle East. I believe that with your help we can make important progress in the next two months toward a negotiated settlement.

In order to take a significant step forward in September, I hope it will be possible for me to receive from your government your specific ideas of what you would like to see in a peace treaty. As Secretary Vance suggested in his last conversation with you, such a paper could take either one of two forms. It could provide actual treaty language, or it could provide a series of detailed points as you would like to see them dealt with in a treaty. In order for us to have time to prepare for Foreign Minister Khaddam's visit to the U.S., it is most important that we have your contribution as soon as possible so that we may have two or three weeks to develop our own document before he comes.

On the matter of Southern Lebanon, I want you to know that we are again strongly urging the Israelis to curb military activity in Southern Lebanon. As our conversations with them continue, I hope that we may speak knowing that you will be doing everything possible as we are, to persuade the various factions to enforce the ceasefire in that area and to move ahead with the implementation of the Shtaura Agreements. I believe we all agree that stability can only come when the ceasefire is assured and when a Lebanese force can operate effectively in that area.

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Subject File, Box 88, Syria: 6–8/77. Secret; Immediate; Nodis. Sent immediate for information to Tel Aviv, Beirut, and the White House.

² See Document 88.

Again, Mr. President, thank you for the frank expression of your views both during our meetings in Geneva³ and during Secretary Vance's trip. Secretary Vance and I look forward to the discussions with Foreign Minister Khaddam next month to continue the process that will ultimately lead to the peace treaties we all seek.

Sincerely,

Jimmy Carter.

End text.

3. Purpose of having you deliver this message is to try to assure that we will indeed get draft language we need and to get what more is possible on Syrian plans for Southern Lebanon. It seems obvious that Sarkis and Khoury believe they need effective Syrian action to stop Palestinian military activity and to move the Palestinians back before they can move their force into that area.

Vance

³ See Document 32.

92. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Egypt¹

Washington, August 15, 1977, 2217Z

193258. White House for Brzezinski only. Subject: Message From the President for Sadat.

1. Please deliver as soon as possible the following letter from President Carter to President Sadat:

2. Begin text: Dear Mr. President: Secretary Vance has reported to me in detail about his trip to the Middle East, including in particular his long discussions with you in Alexandria.² I appreciate very much the warm and cooperative reception that you gave to Secretary Vance and the candor with which you discussed with him these issues of such great mutual importance. It is clear that serious differences remain

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Subject File, Box 10, Egypt: 8–12/77. Secret; Immediate; Nodis. Sent immediate for information to the White House.

² See Documents 63, 64, and 87.

among the parties on the core issues of a settlement and that there are difficult obstacles to be overcome in convening a Geneva Conference. I believe it is also clear, however, that Secretary Vance's talks in the area have launched a new and more intensive phase of diplomacy, which has already made some progress, to overcome these obstacles. Agreement among the parties on talks to be held with us in September in Washington and New York at the Foreign Minister level has provided a means through which I hope we can make definitive arrangements for convening the Geneva Conference. The concept of detailed contributions from each party containing draft treaty language was an extremely useful one which should give much greater concreteness to these forthcoming talks. You may be sure that I shall do everything I can, in my own meetings with the Foreign Ministers, to press forward toward the early convening of a sufficiently prepared conference.

Secretary Vance also reported some movement in the question of Palestinian representation as well as in the matter of laying the groundwork for our being able to talk with the PLO. I very much hope that you will give the most serious thought to the idea of a unified Arab delegation as a means for dealing with the Palestinian representation problem. I am prepared to press Israel to accept such a solution but the first step must of course be agreement among the Arab governments. I recognize why you have had reservations about the unified delegation concept. I believe, however, that the actual work of the Conference can be structured in ways that will not materially restrict Egypt's freedom of action at Geneva in negotiating on matters of substantive importance to you.

With respect to possible U.S. contacts with the PLO, I appreciate very much the energetic and constructive efforts of yourself and Foreign Minister Fahmy, and we now await the results of the contacts that you and others have been having with the PLO. I cannot stress too strongly how important it is, in order for us to begin a dialogue with the Palestinians directly, that any PLO statement accepting Resolution 242 be clear and unambiguous, along the lines discussed with you by Secretary Vance. We consider this approach infinitely preferable to any attempt to amend or supersede Resolution 242 by formal action in the United Nations. Such action could threaten the only existing framework for negotiations, namely acceptance of Resolutions 242 and 338 by all the parties, and we would accordingly be obliged to oppose it.

I look forward to meeting with Foreign Minister Fahmy in September. Meanwhile, I send you my very best wishes, and Rosalyn joins me in greetings to Jihan. With best regards, Jimmy.

End text.

Vance

93. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Lebanon¹

Washington, August 17, 1977, 0153Z

194979. Subject: PLO and Resolution 242. Reference: Beirut 3996² (Notal—being repeated to other addressees).

1. In your next discussion with Walid Khalidi, you should seek to disabuse him of idea that PLO would have nothing to show for its acceptance of Resolution 242. Suggest you discuss this matter with him along following lines:

—Given the lack of consensus among Arab governments, to say nothing of sharp differences between Arabs and Israelis, on the nature of a final Palestinian settlement, it is not realistic to think that this question can be resolved other than in the context of the Geneva negotiations. For the U.S. to endorse any particular solution would prejudice those negotiations and undermine our ability to play the honest broker role which both sides have asked us to assume.

—At the same time, our support of the “Palestinian homeland” concept represented a significant move on our part and, judging from the strongly adverse Israeli reaction, has been recognized as such by them. In taking this position, we have in effect recognized that the Palestinian question is not just a refugee issue but one involving the political status of the Palestinians. We have, in other words, added this issue as one of the co-equal core issues of a settlement to the two issues of peace and withdrawal which constitute the basic elements of Resolution 242.

—Furthermore, we have endorsed the concept that a settlement should provide for self-determination by the Palestinians in deciding on their future status. It seems to us that this should be recognized as a major new element in our position.

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840086–2465. Secret; Immediate; Nodis. Drafted by Atherton, approved by Habib, and cleared by James Thyden (S/S–O). Sent priority for information to Amman, Cairo, Damascus, Jidda, and Tel Aviv.

² In telegram 3996 from Beirut, August 16, Ambassador Parker reported that Walid Khalidi, a professor of political studies at the American University of Beirut, informed him that he was working to “bring PLO leadership around to accept” the proposed U.S. statement regarding PLO acceptance of U.N. Resolution 242 with a reservation regarding a Palestinian homeland. Khalidi noted that the PLO might accept Resolution 242, but that PLO leadership would need assurances regarding U.S. “intentions toward the concept of Palestinian state.” He hoped that the United States would provide language in the same spirit as the Balfour Declaration or “consider some similar moral commitment to the idea of a Palestinian state.” (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840084–2159)

—Finally, we have said that if the PLO will issue an unambiguous statement accepting Resolution 242 and Israel's right to exist, with reservations because 242 does not sufficiently deal with the Palestinian question since it does not refer to the need for a homeland, we would immediately enter into official contacts with it. We have understood that this has long been a major PLO objective.

—If the PLO insists on more than all of the foregoing before it will accept 242, it will risk seriously overplaying its hand and may end up with nothing and find itself on the outside looking in while the negotiating process goes forward.

Vance

94. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Egypt¹

Washington, August 17, 1977, 0940Z

194978. For Ambassador from the Secretary. Subject: President Carter's Message to President Sadat. Ref: Cairo 13615.²

1. Please tell Fahmy that I welcome the opportunity to clarify the points he has raised with you in your conversation reported reftel. Your response to his description of the President's reference to a unified Arab obligation as an "ultimatum" was right on the mark. Our only motive in urging our Egyptian friends to give serious consideration to this idea is to try to find some practical way of resolving the Palestinian representation problem. The Israelis have said that they will not deal with PLO Palestinians in any form in Geneva. We do not agree with this since we believe some way must be found for Palestinian views to be expressed in the negotiations. We see no realistic possibility that the PLO could be present at Geneva as a separate delega-

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Subject File, Box 10, Egypt: 8–12/77. Secret; Immediate; Nodis. The original is the copy sent to the White House for Brzezinski on August 17.

² In telegram 13615 from Cairo, August 16, which was repeated to the White House in telegram 194172, Ambassador Eilts reported that Foreign Minister Fahmy would give Sadat Carter's letter, but that Fahmy "professed not to understand our position" with regard to a unified Arab delegation. Fahmy stated that Sadat would not agree to a unified delegation as it would be against Egypt's interests, and he termed the U.S. request to consider a unified delegation an "ultimatum." Fahmy also noted that Sadat would want clarification on the PLO and its possible attendance at the Geneva Conference. (Ibid.)

tion with the same status as sovereign state representatives. What we are seeking is some compromise arrangement on which all the Arabs could agree and which we could have a realistic chance of persuading the Israelis was a reasonable proposal. It would seem to us that the unified Arab delegation idea is the most feasible one so far proposed to accomplish this purpose.

2. With respect to Fahmy's request for clarification of our position if PLO accepts Resolution 242 along the lines of the formula I discussed with the Egyptians, you may tell Fahmy the following. We cannot, as I previously have said, unilaterally arrange for PLO representation at Geneva since this will require the agreement of all the original participants. If PLO accepts Resolution 242, however, so that we can enter into an official dialogue with it, we believe this would introduce greater flexibility into the representation question and would give us something to work with in our efforts to find a mutually agreed formula for Palestinian participation. In other words, while we cannot guarantee results in advance, we can assure Fahmy that once PLO has accepted Resolution 242 and we have established contacts with it, our efforts to find a solution to the Palestinian representation question will be enhanced.

Vance

95. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Israel¹

Washington, August 17, 1977, 2322Z

195927. Subject: Message to Begin. You should see Begin immediately and pass to him the following response from the President to Begin's letter² and the events of yesterday:³

1. The President is glad to receive assurances from the Prime Minister that Israel is not going to act in South Lebanon.

2. With respect to the settlements on the West Bank we are going to issue the following statement on August 18: Quote Our position on the issue of settlements is clear. We reaffirm what we have said many times before. These unilateral, illegal acts in territories presently under Israeli occupation create obstacles to constructive negotiations.⁴ Unquote.

3. You should tell Begin that our informing him of our statement is in accordance with our understanding that we will tell them in advance when we are going to make such announcements.

4. You should inform Prime Minister Begin that the repetition of these acts will make it difficult for the President not to reaffirm publicly the US position regarding 1967 borders with minor modifications.

Vance

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840083–0082. Secret; Immediate; Nodis; Cherokee. Drafted and approved by Habib. Cleared by Atherton and Tarnoff. Repeated August 17 to the White House.

² In an August 16 letter to Carter, Begin characterized the discussions between Vance and the Israelis regarding the PLO as tense. He argued that the PLO "cannot be compared to the Irish Underground or to the Algerian FLN in its day. The Irish want the British Army to leave Northern Ireland, they don't want London. The FLN wanted the Frenchmen to leave Algeria, they didn't want Paris. The so-called PLO want Jerusalem, our heart and our life." Begin continued that to achieve its ends, the PLO "employ the most barbaric genocidal means by turning the civilian population into the target of their attack. They never attack our soldiers or our military installations. Since January this year our population has suffered 130 casualties, all of them civilians, many of them maimed for life." He noted his "hope that there is complete agreement between us that we cannot have that organization as a partner to negotiations in a reconvened Geneva Conference." Begin concluded by acknowledging his intention to send Carter a draft treaty by the first week of September and his willingness to consult Carter regarding any action taken by Israel in Southern Lebanon. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Subject File, Box 48, Israel: 8/77)

³ The Israeli Government announced on August 15 that it would extend services to the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, raising fears that it was planning to annex the area, and on August 17 announced the construction of three new settlements on the West Bank. ("Israelis Authorize 3 New Settlements in Occupied Sector," *New York Times*, August 18, 1977, p. 1)

⁴ The Department of State issued the statement on August 18. (Bernard Gwertzman, "U.S. Assails Israelis on New Settlements in West Bank Region," *New York Times*, August 19, 1977, p. 43)

96. **Letter From the Ambassador to Lebanon (Parker) to the Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs (Atherton)**¹

Beirut, August 19, 1977

Dear Roy:

The following is a summary of some points in the notes Ed Sheehan² took of his four and a half hour conversation with Yassir Arafat on August 18. Sheehan asked that a copy be sent to you and to Bill Quandt by letter and not by telegram, because Arafat is worried about leaks. Arafat also made another point which Sheehan is to report personally.³ It concerns details of a deal the PLO is prepared to offer.

In general Sheehan found that Arafat was open to a deal but not on the basis of President Carter's most recent proposal.⁴ Arafat was also disappointed in the results of the Vance visit and found our proposals for an eight year condominium on the West Bank laughable. Nevertheless, he still wants a deal.

There was also, however, an undercurrent suggesting that the PLO would not be responsible any longer if things did not work out over the next few months. The following are taken from my rough notes and I dictate them as they are:

Arafat discussed the forces in the area. He said it was unfortunate we (PLO) know so much about the importance of oil, the strategic role of Syria, the Suez Canal, etc. It is enough, for instance, if there was a change in the Sudan. It would change the balance of power in the entire area.

In the past the Palestinians paid for the catastrophes in the area. Now they have nothing left to pay. This time the moderates will pay. Do you think Sadat will keep his balance if there is nothing for the Palestinians? There is a limit to my moderation. Please tell Atherton and Quandt I have a red line. Believe me, I am not trying to trick you. People call me a politician, but I am a revolutionary—a realist who believes in facts. Maybe Carter can solve the problem. The Arab states

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Subject File, Box 74, Palestinians: 8/77. Secret.

² Edward Sheehan was a freelance journalist and author who covered the Middle East, Africa, and Central America. In 1976, he published a book entitled *The Arabs, Israelis, and Kissinger*, which examined Kissinger's Middle East shuttle diplomacy missions in 1974 and 1975.

³ Not further identified.

⁴ In his August 15 message to Sadat, Carter insisted that the PLO needed to clearly state its acceptance of Resolution 242 in order for there to be any dialogue between the United States and the PLO. See Document 92.

may want to solve it because they have their own interests at stake. Maybe they will be obliged to settle, but settling the problem without the Palestinians is like cooking something without leaving it to stew. (I think there was a linguistic problem there.)

Arafat said he had full transcripts of Vance's conversations with the Saudis and the Syrians. He said Sadat was giving too much but that when he reaches a dead end, he will turn around. With regard to the eight year condominium proposal for the West Bank, if the Americans can do it let them try. There cannot be a settlement without the Palestinians.

The Palestinians were just trying to solve the whole problem. They are not crying for the moon. Arafat advanced as evidence of his moderation the fact that the Palestinians have already agreed to establish their national authority on a small piece of land—23 per cent of Palestine. "Congressman Hamilton had asked about guarantees that there would be no fighting if we got 23 per cent. I told him we could not commit future generations. The Israelis have the atom bomb. They have at least ten. We know this from our own sources. And yet they are asking us for guarantees not to continue fighting. I need the guarantees for at least ten to fifteen years to protect us. Israel is a huge power and might look for a pretext. All this noise about a covenant. What about the Zionist ones at Basle and the Biltmore?⁵ The charter or covenant is a PLO charter. When we become a state we will have a constitution. A revolutionary charter is not suitable for a state. Therefore, the guarantees we are requested to give is a big lie. The opposite is true. It is we who need guarantees."

Arafat then gave a long justification of PLO legitimacy, stating that 115 states had recognized it,⁶ it had observer status at the UN, Rabat Conference etc. He talked about Palestinian superiority in education as compared to the other Arabs.

Arafat said if a settlement is in your interest, it is also in our interest. We need a settlement. We are not communists. The map in the January *New York Times* article (by Sheehan)⁷ is just what we want. The road link from the West Bank to Gaza should be two to five kilometers

⁵ In 1897, the first Zionist Congress in Basel, Switzerland, founded the World Zionist Organization. From May 6 to 11, 1942, both Zionist and non-Zionist Jewish organizations met at the Biltmore Conference, held at the Biltmore Hotel in New York City. The conference urged unrestricted Jewish immigration to Palestine and the establishment of a Jewish commonwealth in Palestine. This became the platform for the World Zionist Organization.

⁶ An unknown hand changed the number from 105 to 115.

⁷ The map, which shows a 40-mile highway connecting Gaza to the West Bank, is featured in the *New York Times* article, "A Proposal for a Palestinian State." (January 30, 1977, p. SM5)

wide and controlled by the UN, maybe with a flying bridge like in the Johnson plan (*sic*).⁸

Are the Americans prepared to deal with the Palestinians not on the basis of human rights and sympathy but on the basis of reality and interest? If not, he could go to Peking and characterize what is going on as a betrayal and rouse the whole Arab world. Today we are trying to help in getting a settlement in the area while the Vance visit tends to demolish it.

The Saudis on the third of August told us to accept Resolution 242 with positive reservations, for which there would be U.S. recognition of the PLO as the sole representative of the Palestinians plus a dialogue with the USG and an invitation to Geneva as a separate delegation. Later Vance said no on the latter point.

What matters is not a separate delegation but a separate invitation. The delegation does not matter. A united Arab delegation may be in our interest. After Vance's visit to Taif August 8,⁹ however, the Saudis said no—the only advantage will be a dialogue with the USG.

Why take this risk for a dialogue which may not work out?

We have many mediators, from Gromyko to Sheehan. We even get messages from Israel. Forty-five per cent of our people are under Israeli rule. (The implication was that they provide the mechanism for communication.)

Sheehan asked about the formula for positive reservations on Resolution 242. Arafat said they could say that if Res. 242 dealt with the problem of the Palestinians as a people with national rights and aspirations and not as refugees, the PLO would accept the resolution.

Arafat alleged that Carter had promised one of the Arab leaders he hoped to change the resolution to cover Palestinian interests. Legally 242 was looked upon with suspicion. The UK had attempted to modify it, but the US had blocked it.

Arafat said he had a private message elaborating on his thesis and containing proposals for a deal. He said it covered everything. Sheehan could not pass it on except to ALA¹⁰ and Quandt. Arafat said he was not even telling the other Arabs. He was afraid of a leak. In any event he would not accept Res. 242 in exchange for a dialogue only. This is one of the most precious cards in his hand. Let the U.S. veto a new resolu-

⁸ Apparently a reference to Joseph Johnson, the Special Representative of the U.N. Conciliation Commission for Palestine, and his plan to solve the Palestinian refugee situation. From 1961 to 1962, Johnson pursued a plan by which Palestinians would be given a choice of remaining in exile and receiving financial compensation or returning to their homes in Israel.

⁹ See Document 75.

¹⁰ Atherton.

tion on 242. How many U.S. vetoes can Sadat and the Saudis accept? Why throw away his cards for nothing. Why burn himself personally? Why betray his people? "If I despair, I will step up the fighting and resort to my people."

Arafat then returned to the moderate action theme, saying the PLO had taken the following steps without response:

1. He had said he trusted Carter,
2. The resolution of the Palestinian National Conference regarding a state on any piece of territory,
3. PLO willingness to have a dialogue with liberal Israelis,
4. Willingness to participate in all conferences which will discuss Palestine on the basis of all resolutions and especially 3236 under which the Palestinians accept international legality and eventually Israel's legality if Palestinian rights are satisfied.¹¹

Basil Akl¹² who was also present said Arafat could mold Palestinian opinion in a pro-American way. What did this mean to the U.S.?

Arafat said Kissinger knew we protected him on his various trips to the Middle East against Palestinians and other Arab elements. We have protected Vance on both his trips. We have taken measures against Palestinian and Arab elements. (It is not clear from my notes whether he was advancing this as evidence of moderation or as a threat that if the PLO did not get satisfaction he would no longer perform this service.) END OF SUMMARY.

Sheehan wanted me to tell you he was not planning to publish any of this, although Arafat told him he could. I do not understand how that last statement can be reconciled with Arafat's fear of leaks, but there you are.

I am sorry that I am not able to give you a more refined transcript, but I have done this in a great hurry before running off to see Walid Khalidi for lunch and then to Damascus. I am trying to get it in the weekend pouch.

Sincerely,

Richard B. Parker¹³

¹¹ A reference to General Assembly Resolution 3236 adopted on November 22, 1974.

¹² Basil Akl was a PLO representative and head of the Palestinian delegation to the United Nations.

¹³ Printed from a copy that bears this typed signature.

97. Central Intelligence Agency Intelligence Information Cable¹

Washington, August 20, 1977

COUNTRY

[name not declassified]

DOI

19 August 1977

SUBJECT

- (1) Current PLO position on 242
- (2) Soviet and Arab advice to PLO on 242

ACQ

[date not declassified]

SOURCE

[4 lines not declassified]

Summary: The Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) has not finally rejected the idea of announcing acceptance of United Nations Security Council Resolution 242 which would open an official dialogue with the United States. The prevailing mood within the PLO leadership, however, is increasingly against such an announcement. The Saudis, Egyptians and the Soviets have urged the PLO leadership to make a reserved announcement of acceptance of Resolution 242. The Syrians have advised the PLO not to announce acceptance of the Resolution unless the United States offers a more tangible quid pro quo than just a PLO/US dialogue. The 18 August communique issued by the PLO Executive Committee was the result of Syrian pressure and made to please the Syrian regime.

1. As of late 19 August, the PLO leadership was still discussing a possible announcement of acceptance of Resolution 242. The mood of the PLO leadership, however, is increasingly against such a statement. Despite efforts by Fatah moderates to convince the rest of the leadership that a dialogue with the US entails sufficient long range benefits to justify making the required statement on 242, the PLO leadership remains largely convinced that it must demand more than just talks with the US before giving up what it considers to be its only major “card” in the negotiating process.

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Subject File, Box 74, Palestinians: 8/77. Secret; Priority; No Foreign Dissem/No Contractor Dissem/Controlled Dissem and Extraction.

2. On 17 August, officials of the Soviet Embassy in Beirut met with PLO officials. The Soviets told the PLO officials that they had received a message from Moscow, instructing them to meet with the PLO and to deliver the following message: "The Soviet leadership considers it important that the PLO accept UN Resolution 242, with the reservations proposed by the United States. Such an announcement of acceptance would deny the Israelis and the United States the justification that they have so far used to keep the Palestinians out of the negotiations toward a settlement of the Middle East question." The PLO officials noted the significant escalation of Soviet pressure from that of urging "flexibility" to that of specifically urging the PLO to accept the US position on 242.

3. The Syrians on the other hand have urged the PLO not to accept Resolution 242 unless more than a dialogue with the US would result. On 17 August, Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad met with Ahmad Dajjani, a member of the PLO Executive Committee, in Damascus. Asad reiterated his position that the PLO should hold out for more than just a dialogue with the US. Asad told Dajjani that, during US Secretary of State Vance's visit to Damascus, Asad had asked Vance specifically whether the Palestinians would obtain more than just a dialogue with the US in exchange for a statement of acceptance of 242. Asad said that Vance was emphatic in his statement that the US was not offering anything more than an agreement to talk with the PLO.

4. The announcement, on 18 August, that the PLO continued to oppose the acceptance of Resolution 242 was made to please the Syrians. The selection of Muhammad Abu Mayzar to make this announcement was made because Abu Mayzar has close ties with the Syrians.

5. The Saudis and Egyptians continue to urge PLO acceptance of Resolution 242. The PLO has attempted to handle its major moves regarding this resolution with the Saudis. On 3 August 1977 Yasir Arafat, the Chairman of the PLO Executive Committee, formally agreed with Saudi Crown Prince Fahd Ibn 'Abd al-Aziz and Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Saud Ibn Faysal that the PLO would agree to make the announcement proposed by the US, in exchange for US agreement to three conditions: (1) US recognition of the PLO as "the legal representative of the Palestinian people," (2) the official dialogue between the US and PLO, and (3) a US commitment to invite the PLO to the Geneva Middle East Peace Conference, on the basis of the PLO's reserved position on Resolution 242. On 9 August Prince Saud met with PLO Central Committee member Mahmud Abbas (Abu Mazin) and Muhammad Abu Mayzar. He told them that the US could not accept the PLO conditions and had added the following "clarifications" to the US position: (1) acceptance of the PLO as a partner in a dialogue would not mean US recognition of the PLO as the representative of the Palestinian people, (2) the US would continue to speak of the need for a "Pales-

tinian entity” and would not use language calling for an independent Palestinian state, and (3) the US could not invite the PLO to Geneva unless all original parties to the conference, including Israel, agreed. Prince Saud urged the PLO to accept the US position, even with these clarifications.

6. On 11 August Abu Mazin met with Syrian Foreign Minister ‘Abd al-Halim Khaddam and discussed the US and Saudi positions with him. Khaddam reacted negatively to the idea of acceptance of the US position. He asked the PLO official rhetorically whether the Palestinians would sell themselves so cheaply.

7. Israeli moves to extend social services to residents of the occupied territories and to establish new settlements in occupied territories greatly strengthened the hands of hard liners on the question of Resolution 242. Fatah moderates have tried to argue that the US condemnation of Israel for these actions is far stronger than usual US language on the subject of Israeli actions. The hard liners, however, argue that the US has not taken any action to prevent or reverse these actions and that the situation calls for actions rather than just statements.

8. Field dissem: [1½ lines not declassified]

98. Telegram From the Embassy in Lebanon to the Department of State¹

Beirut, August 23, 1977, 0930Z

4123. Subject: PLO & 242.

1. [1½ lines not declassified] Fatah moderates had prevailed upon Yasir Arafat to amend his stand on the question of whether the PLO should announce its acceptance of UNSC Resolution 242, or make some other statement of PLO acceptance of Israel’s right to exist, in order to meet President Carter’s requirement for the opening of a US/PLO dialogue.

2. The PLO had informed the Saudis earlier that it was prepared to make a statement on 242 which fit the US suggestion of “reserved acceptance,” if the US would agree to three conditions. They were:

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840086–2452. Secret; Immediate; Nodis.

A. The US would state that it recognized the PLO as the “legal representative” of the Palestinian people.

B. The US would “guarantee” PLO participation in the Geneva Conference.

C. The US would make some kind of statement, defining the Palestinian “homeland” or “entity” as an independent state. The Saudis informed the PLO circa August 9 of US rejection of the above conditions.

3. The new position, to which Arafat agreed prior to his departure for Libya and Egypt August 21, is that the PLO will make a statement which fits the US requirements if the US will agree “privately” that the US will state publicly that its dialogue with the Palestinians will be opened because the US “believes”:

A. The PLO represents the Palestinian people;

B. The Palestinian people should live independently in their homeland; and,

C. The PLO should participate in negotiations of a settlement which involves their national fate and interests.

4. The Fatah moderates had argued that the US could not meet the earlier conditions. The question of the “legality” of PLO representation was simply too complex to expect the US to make a statement on it. PLO participation could not be guaranteed by the US because of the Israeli right to veto any new participants in the Geneva Conference. Use of the specific term “independent state” was not a realistic possibility for the US at this time.

5. The new position has been carefully worked out to avoid making impossible demands on the US. The Fatah moderates argued that the PLO had to demonstrate its willingness to enter the peace process by setting up reasonable and attainable goals for US concessions, rather than by making conditions that made it impossible for the US to talk directly with the PLO.

6. [2½ lines not declassified] He said that the PLO expected that the official US response to this position would be passed through the Saudis. [2½ lines not declassified] He claims that Arafat and other PLO leaders are suspicious of the accuracy of Arab statements of the US position. Arafat describes the Saudis and Egyptians as “overzealous” and inclined to exaggerate the positive in their statements of US policy, while the Syrians seem to have sufficient interest in preventing further PLO movement toward the US to exaggerate negative elements in US statements. [6½ lines not declassified]

7. Ambassador’s comment: [4 lines not declassified]

8. Formulation proposed above is getting close to what Walid Khalidi apparently had in mind at our last conversation, i.e., private assurances as to our intentions. Formulation is considerably more re-

strained than I had anticipated. Assume point A (para 2) would be most difficult for US, but B and C are not much different from what we put to Khalidi. In fact, formulation is so moderate I wonder whether it will be acceptable to Palestinian rank and file and whether it will serve Arafat's purpose of justifying his decision. It furthermore is not clear what "statement which fits US requirements" means in practice. Nevertheless, as seen from here we are making progress.

Parker

99. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) to President Carter¹

Washington, August 30, 1977

SUBJECT

The Arab League as Spokesman for the Palestinians

Presidents Sadat and Assad have both mentioned the possibility that the Palestinians might be represented at Geneva by the Arab League. For Sadat, this is a device to get around Israel's adamant refusal to deal with the PLO, whereas Assad appears to be saying that representation does not matter as long as Palestinian rights are assured in advance of a conference. In either case, the idea merits consideration.

The Arab League and the PLO. Along with all the Arab states, the PLO is a full member of the Arab League. Created after World War II, the League has often been little more than a battleground for inter-Arab rivalries. Beginning in 1964, however, the League instituted a practice of calling for Arab Summit meetings. These have continued and have an influence on Arab politics, even though their resolutions have no binding authority.

The Arab League itself first called for the creation of the PLO in 1964. At the Arab Summit in Khartoum in August 1967 the decision was made not to recognize or negotiate with Israel, and not to abandon Palestinian rights. And at Rabat in October 1974, the Arab Summit unanimously endorsed the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Subject File, Box 74, Palestinians: 8/77. Secret. Sent for information. In a handwritten note at the top right-hand corner of the page, Carter wrote "Zbig. J."

the Palestinians. Given this history, it is not implausible that the Arab League might in some sense serve as a surrogate representative for the Palestinians.

US-Palestinian Dialogue. For the moment it does not appear that the PLO will accept UN Resolution 242 in such a way that we will be able to begin talking directly. The door has not been completely closed, but other means will be needed if any form of dialogue is to take place. The Arab League option does not help much in this regard. Either we would find ourselves talking to a PLO representative in his Arab League capacity, which would be hard to defend, or we would be talking to Arab officials who have little direct access to the PLO, and no influence over it. If we want the PLO to understand our views, we will do better to continue relying on the Saudis, Egyptians and private US emissaries.

Representation at Geneva. The Arab League option does seem attractive, if not ideal, as a means for representing the Palestinians at Geneva. If Egypt and Syria could agree, the Secretary General of the Arab League (Mahmud Riad, a former Egyptian Foreign Minister and a very able diplomat) might be asked by Secretary General Waldheim to form a delegation to Geneva on behalf of the Palestinians. Israel would object, especially if the delegation were to contain PLO members, but we might be able to build substantial support for this alternative. The Arab League representatives might be part of a unified Arab delegation, or could be in addition to the other national delegations. For the PLO, the advantage of this approach would be that it would insure some Palestinian voice at Geneva without requiring the PLO to accept Resolution 242. If the negotiations were to proceed constructively, the PLO could presumably join the Arab League delegation at a later date.²

Problems. At some point, of course, a successful negotiation will require that Palestinians assume responsibility for the terms of an agreement with Israel, and the Arab League as a whole could hardly be asked to sign a treaty on behalf of the Palestinians. Nor would we want to encourage all of the members of the Arab League to take an active part in the peacemaking effort. Iraq, Libya and South Yemen, for example, have nothing to offer except their neutrality. But for the moment, Saudi Arabia, Syria and particularly Egypt exercise predominant influence within the Arab League, and if they view this as a useful device to get around the current stalemate on Palestinian representation, we should look carefully at the implications of such a move.

Before your meeting with Foreign Minister Dayan in mid-September, we will explore this idea further. It could become an impor-

² In a handwritten note to the left side of the paragraph, Carter wrote, "a possibility."

tant means for resolving at least one of the obstacles in the path of the Geneva Conference.³

³ In a handwritten note to the left side of the paragraph, Carter wrote, “ok.”

100. Memorandum From the President’s Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) to President Carter¹

Washington, September 3, 1977

SUBJECT

Israel’s Version of a Draft Treaty with Egypt

We have received from Israel a detailed draft of a peace treaty with Egypt (Tab I).² Foreign Minister Dayan has also elaborated on the territorial issue in a separate communication (Tab II).³

The draft treaty is quite detailed and specific on the type of issues that we have termed “normalization of relations.” As such, it provides a useful checklist for talks with the Arabs, although it will not be accepted in its present form. For example, Israel calls for the exchange of Ambassadors one month after the treaty comes into force. But at least we have concrete formulations on trade, cultural relations, ending economic warfare, settlement of financial claims, free movement, access to holy places, aviation, navigation, cooperation for development, and free passage through waterways. The Israelis have even included clauses on human rights, freedom of the press and respect for graves and rights of reburial.

Not surprisingly, the Israelis are most specific in framing their requirements for peace, while Egypt has left this very vague. Where the Egyptians have been precise—borders and withdrawal—Israel is still

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Trips/Visits File, Box 106, 9/15/77 Strategy for the Next Round of Middle East Talks [I]: 9/77. Secret; Sensitive. Sent for information. Aaron initialed the memorandum on Brzezinski’s behalf.

² Tab I is not attached but a draft Israeli peace treaty is in telegram 6588 from Tel Aviv, September 2. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File P840081–2175)

³ Tab II is not attached but Dayan’s letter is in telegram 211381 to the White House. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Subject File, Box 67, Middle East: Peace Negotiations 1977 Vol. III [I])

somewhat vague. The draft treaty makes no mention of the location of the final border or the timetable for withdrawal. It does, however, go into some detail on security arrangements. In brief, all territory from which Israel withdraws should be demilitarized and the present force limitation arrangements affecting Egyptian troops east of the Suez Canal should remain in effect.

A useful component of the draft treaty is the establishment of a joint committee to supervise the implementation of a treaty and a commitment to resort to binding arbitration to solve disputes over interpretation of the terms of the agreement.

Dayan's letter restates Israel's territorial proposals along the lines of Prime Minister Begin's private talk with you.⁴ On the Egyptian front, he seems to envisage the final border as indicated on the map at Tab III.⁵ On the Syrian front, he states that a new border will be established that protects Israel's water sources and the security of its northern areas. On the West Bank, "no foreign rule or sovereignty" will be permitted, and Israel's security must be based on the Jordan River.

The Israeli draft is more detailed than we need at present, although on several specific points it is too imprecise. Dayan specifically says that Israel will respond to other proposals in a "completely unprejudiced and open-minded manner."

The Israel draft treaty represents a success of sorts for our approach. Begin is clearly prepared to continue working through us, even on substantive issues. But we still have a long way to go. The priority of Israel's policy now seems to be to make a fairly attractive offer to Egypt in order to tempt Sadat into a separate deal. This would allow Israel to put off movement on the Syrian front and to avoid the Palestinian-West Bank issues altogether.

The talks with Dayan later this month will be extremely important. Israel has taken an important and positive step in committing its positions to paper. But we still need to find a way to open up the West Bank-Palestinian issues for serious negotiation, and we have to break the deadlock on Palestinian representation at Geneva.

⁴ See footnote 3, Document 54.

⁵ Tab III is not attached and has not been found.

101. Letter From President Carter to Syrian President Asad¹

Washington, September 6, 1977

Dear Mr. President:

I have decided to write to you directly because I feel that we are approaching a critical period in the search for a peaceful resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Over the next several weeks, I will be devoting a great deal of my time, as will members of my Administration, to establishing the basis for reconvening the Geneva Conference later this year. I particularly look forward to meeting again with Foreign Minister Khaddam in Washington later this month.

While I would have hoped that more progress could have been made by this time in resolving differences among the parties, I am not discouraged. You can be assured that my own personal commitment to using the full resources of my office to promote a peaceful settlement in the Middle East has not wavered. The positions that I outlined to you during our meeting in Geneva remain the basis for our policy.²

In my view, the time has come to move from those generalities and broad principles toward greater concreteness. This will help to initiate a negotiating process and will create a context in which American influence can be used constructively. I hope that you will be able to help us move in this direction by providing a detailed statement of the provisions of a peace agreement as you see it.

In order to reconvene the Geneva Conference this year, a solution must soon be found to insure representation of the Palestinians in the peace negotiations. Secretary Vance has reviewed with you several possible alternatives. Let me emphasize that the United States does want the Palestinians to be involved in the search for peace. No settlement of the conflict can be achieved without their participation. We cannot, of course, guarantee precisely how Palestinian concerns will be met in the negotiations, but I can assure you that my government does believe that Palestinians should be represented at Geneva and should participate in shaping their own future in conformity with the principles of UN Resolution 242 and of self-determination.

As you know, the United States would be prepared to enter into official contacts with the Palestine Liberation Organization if the PLO were to accept UN Resolution 242, with an appropriate reservation as

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Trips/Visits File, Box 107, 9/15/77 Strategy for the Next Round of Middle East Talks [II]: 9/77. No classification marking.

² See Document 32.

Secretary Vance indicated to you and Foreign Minister Khaddam.³ You were the first Arab leader with whom I discussed this idea, and I continue to look to your leadership to help persuade the PLO to take this important step. All of the other participants in the Geneva Conference have subscribed to UN Resolution 242, and it is hard to see how Palestinians can be directly represented at Geneva unless the PLO also accepts the only agreed upon framework for negotiations.

I believe that the time has come for all parties, including the Palestinians, to commit themselves fully to the search for peace. The alternative of stalemate and continuing hostility offers little hope to the peoples of the Middle East. If the Palestinians do decide to associate themselves with the peacemaking process, they can be sure that their views will receive a full hearing at Geneva and in bilateral talks with my government. As I have made clear in my public statements, I am not unsympathetic to legitimate Palestinian aspirations, and I am deeply aware of the central concern of all Arab leaders that Palestinian rights be respected.⁴

Mr. President, I recall with pleasure our meeting in Geneva. In the spirit of friendship that links our two countries, I hope that we will continue to work closely together in pursuit of our common goal of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

Sincerely,

Jimmy Carter

³ See Documents 66, 68, and 88.

⁴ On September 18, as reported in telegram 5888 from Damascus, Syrian Foreign Minister Khaddam informed DCM Pelletreau that Syria had reached an agreement with the PLO on a formula regarding U.N. Resolution 242 and the PLO that reads, "The reservation of the PLO regarding Res 242 is that it does not establish a complete basis for the Palestinian issue and for the national rights of the Palestinians. It also fails to refer in any manner to a national homeland (watan qaumi) for the Palestinian people." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840070–0226)

102. Telegram From the Embassy in Syria to the Department of State¹

Damascus, September 12, 1977, 1145Z

5795. For Secretary from Murphy. Subject: Message to President Carter From President Assad. Ref: State 192565.²

1. I was summoned to FonMinistry September 11, the day before the beginning of the five-day Ramadan holiday, to receive Assad's answer to President Carter's letter of August 14 (reftel). The Ministry translation of Assad's reply is as follows:

Quote

Dear Mr. President:

I received your letter which Ambassador Murphy delivered on 16 August 1977, and I highly appreciate your pursuance of efforts to attain the establishment of peace in the Middle East region.

The visit of Secretary Vance to the region and his meeting twice with us during the visit³ was a useful opportunity to exchange information and present ideas. We consider that this visit constituted an important step during which we strove to give our points of view with respect to all the issues that were discussed.

To start with, I wish to point out clearly that the Israeli viewpoints relayed to us by Secretary Vance were in whole and in every part obstacles in the way of the efforts aimed at realizing peace. While Israel is talking about peace, she wants to retain and continue with all the aspects and facts of aggression. While Israel says that it is not placing preconditions, we see it clinging to everything that is bound to wreck the peace discussions by deforming (Arabic "tamyij") the issue and to gain time in order to implement its plans to perpetuate the current situation and take actions aimed at annexation and expansion.

Following are the specific views we see adequate as a basis towards a peaceful settlement for the Middle East issue.

A. Procedures:

Since the Palestinian issue is the core of the problem, we reiterate our view in respect to the necessity of the participation of the Palestinians in the peace talks at the Geneva Conference.

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Subject File, Box 76, Peace Negotiations: 9/77. Secret; Immediate; Nodis.

² See Document 91.

³ For records of the conversations during Vance's two visits to Syria, see Documents 66, 68, and 88.

In view of our commitment to the decisions of the April 7 Summit conference in Rabat, the PLO is the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.⁴ We foresee its participation according to one of the two following formulae:

Either (1) by forming a unified Arab delegation, representing Syria, Egypt, Jordan and the PLO

or (2) by forming individual Arab delegations representing Syria, Egypt, Jordan and the PLO.

B. With respect to the issue of peace:

The complete withdrawal from all the territories occupied in 1967 and the return to the lines of 4 June 1967;

Securing the national rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to self-determination and the establishment of their independent state. We envisage this state as comprising the West Bank and the Gaza Strip with a corridor between them;

Solving the problem of the Palestinian refugees in accordance with the UN Resolutions;

“Ending the state of war” means peace.

The agreement may include other complementary measures, details of which may be agreed upon such as delineating narrow buffer zones on both sides of the borders and stationing international observers in these zones as well as other measures that do not violate the principles stated in the previous paragraphs.

These are the ideas which we envisage to comprise the peace agreement. They are objectively based on the principles and bases of the UN Charter and the UN Resolutions including SC Reses 338 and 242.

With respect to the problem of South Lebanon, I wish to affirm that the most important problem in this issue is Israel’s constant intervention in this area. Such intervention represents the major obstacle blocking efforts exerted to implement the Shtaura Agreement⁵ and consequently to achieve stability and security throughout Lebanon. Nonetheless, this will not prevent us from continuing our concentrated efforts to implement the Shtaura Agreement and the cease-fire and to realize stability in that part of Lebanon. Mr. Khaddam during his coming visit to the U.S. in September would be ready to clarify the above points during his meetings with you and Mr. Vance.

⁴ The Rabat Conference declaration of October 1974 recognized the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. See footnote 8, Document 6.

⁵ See footnote 2, Document 76.

I seize this opportunity to reaffirm our keen desire to pursue the process so as to realize a just peace in the region. I reiterate my appreciation for your sincere efforts towards this end.

Sincerely yours, Hafez al-Assad

Unquote.

2. Comment:

Although this letter is basically a reiteration of Assad's previous verbal formulations, it is nonetheless encouraging that the President has been willing to take this first step in the exercise of drafting a peace agreement.

3. We now have all that I suspect that we are going to get prior to Khaddam's arrival in Washington in the way of Syrian draft language for a "peace agreement." The text contains no surprises but we had no reason to expect any. Its only loophole is in the statement that "The agreement may include other complementary measures, the details of which may be agreed upon . . . as well as other measures that do not violate the principles stated in the previous paragraphs."

4. The delay in Assad's answering Carter's August 14 message is largely attributable, I believe, to the fact the President was on vacation in the Lattakia district for the last 10 days of August and the first week of September. It is probably significant that its delivery followed the latest Arab Foreign Ministers conference in Cairo.⁶

5. Note on translation. In the Arabic text the sentence "Mr. Khaddam during his coming visit . . . with you and Mr. Vance," is included as the final sentence of the paragraph on South Lebanon. I agree with the Foreign Minister's interpreter that this sentence logically refers to the whole preceding message and not just to South Lebanon.

Murphy

⁶ The Arab League Foreign Ministers met in Cairo September 3–6.

103. Memorandum From William Quandt of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski)¹

Washington, September 19, 1977

SUBJECT

Full set of notes from Landrum Bolling

Attached you will find the typed versions of:

Tab A: Summary of Conversations with Arafat. (You and the President have seen.)

Tab B: Full Notes on Conversations with Arafat. (You have seen handwritten copy.)

Tab C: Reflections on the Current Status of the PLO. (This is a very good, insightful, and accurate analysis of the PLO today.)

Tab A

Summary of Conversations with Arafat²

September 17, 1977

Summary

Yasser Arafat's Main Points from Conversations
with Landrum Bolling
September 9–10, September 11–12, 1977—Beirut

Also Present: Abu Jihad (1 session), Farouk Kaddumi (1 session), Abu Hassan, Dr. Issam Sartawi and Sabry Jiryis (both sessions)

1. Arafat and P.L.O. did *not* reject UN 242 or close doors to talks with Americans at meeting of Central Council in Damascus (Aug. 25, 26). Strong pressure for that course in 14-hour meeting. Arafat resisted and won. Communiqué³ may have been overly harsh, but essentially left situation where it had been before. Hardliners misrepresented meeting to press—particularly two “spokesmen” dominated by Syria.

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Subject File, Box 3, Arab-Israeli Peace Settlement 1977: Volume II [II]. Secret. Outside the System. Sent for information.

² Secret.

³ The PLO issued a communiqué at the conclusion of the August 25–26 meeting summarizing the Central Council's conclusions. See footnote 8 below.

2. Most upsetting thing to him and Council was their perception of drastic shift in U.S. position from message they received on Aug. 3 to message of Aug. 9.⁴ Former, they understood, promised for P.L.O. acceptance of 242: recognition of P.L.O. and dialogue plus invitation to Geneva—all on basis of U.S. support for creation of a Palestinian state. Latter rescinded previous “offer,” promised only “dialogue” and that in relation to a U.S. peace plan that calls for a Trusteeship (Trustees to include probably Israel and Jordan) over a disarmed, vague Palestinian “entity.” This plan regarded as scheme to destroy rights of Palestinians.

3. Long, involved arguments to prove P.L.O. has, in effect, already accepted 242: 1) resolution of Palestine National Council in 1974 calling for creation of a Palestinian state on “any portion” of Palestine available to them (thus, tacit acceptance of two-state solution); 2) resolution of P.N.C. in 1977 meeting calling for P.L.O. participation in all international negotiations on Palestine problem on basis of “international legitimacy” (meaning U.N. resolutions); 3) Arafat’s public statement, made during Vance’s August trip, endorsing Egyptian paper handed to Vance—and that paper explicitly states acceptance of 242.⁵

4. Pressed as to why he couldn’t simply say (with reservation about inadequacy of 242 on dealing with Palestine) that P.L.O. accepts 242, he gave lengthy, tortured explanations but finally said he had to make a “painful admission”: he was suffering from “Arab blackmail.” Some Arab leaders were trying to “put all the dirt” on me; denounce him for making any concessions, while making their own concessions. They try to be “more Catholic than the Pope,” “more Palestinian than Arafat.” It was clear, though he did not say so directly, that the main pressures on these matters come from the Syrians. He admitted “Assad had tried to destroy” him—but didn’t succeed.

5. He said he and his leadership would be holding meetings in the next few days, to see if they could agree on a formulation of a statement to present to the Americans. He held up a paper, written in Arabic, at the close of our second meeting saying this was a rough, first draft of something they would be considering. He said the statement they would propose would be on a negotiating form—not a final declaration—and they would get it to me as soon as possible. He realized that time is important.

⁴ According to Quandt’s account of the Middle East peace process during the Carter administration, the message of August 3 was from the Egyptians while the message of August 9 was from the Saudis. (William B. Quandt, *Camp David: Peacemaking and Politics*, p. 101) See Documents 65 and 73.

⁵ Presumably the draft Egyptian treaty Sadat gave to Vance on August 2; see Document 64. On August 9, a PLO spokesman in Beirut affirmed that the PLO would regard acceptance of Resolution 242 as a basis for attending the Geneva Conference rather than as a recognition of Israel’s existence. (H.D.S. Greenway, “Shift on Israel Possible, PLO Confirms,” *Washington Post*, August 10, 1977, p. A15)

We tentatively agreed to have a third meeting on the 13th or 14th, if they had made sufficient progress in getting as many elements as possible behind a proposed statement. Since those internal discussions were still going on on the 13th, and a Central Council session was scheduled for the 17th, I left Beirut on the 14th. Meanwhile, I received several times a day fragmentary, generally optimistic “bulletins” from my “moderate wing” friends who sat in on some (but not all) of these discussions. One of these “progress reports” said that one of the men closest to Arafat said: “If only the Americans will promise they will give their support to our claim to a state, we will give them anything they want from us.”

Two questions loom large in recalling my talks in Beirut:

1. What is President Assad trying to do? And why is he doing it? a) Destroy Arafat and establish firm control of P.L.O.? b) Prevent the creation of a Palestinian State and keep the way open for his dream of Greater Syria? c) Restore his image with Leftist and hard-line elements in the Arab world? d) Curry favor with the Russians? e) Deflect internal discontent with his leadership, corruption? What is the answer? And how can he be neutralized or brought around?

2. How can the P.L.O. (or any party, for that matter) define the nature of the Palestinian state it seeks and the relation of that state to its neighbors?

Tab B

Full notes on Conversations with Arafat⁶

Beirut, September 9–12, 1977

CONVERSATIONS WITH YASSER ARAFAT—BEIRUT

(Nights of September 9–10, Sept. 11–12, 1977)

(Conversations took place in Beirut at the apartment of Arafat’s secretary, Um Nasser. Present, Sept. 9: Yasser Arafat, Landrum Bolling, Dr. Issam Sartawi, Abu Jihad, Abu Hassan, Sabry Jiryis; present, Sept. 11: Arafat, Bolling, Sartawi, Abu Hassan, Jiryis, and Farouk Kaddumi, Chief of Political Department—“Shadow Foreign Minister,” leader of hard-liners in the Executive Committee of the PLO and in the Central Committee of Fatah.)

(Questions raised by Landrum Bolling, answers by Yasser Arafat. The two sessions are reported topically, drawing from my notes from

⁶ Secret. All brackets are in the original.

each session, merging both discussions around the questions here recorded.)

After brief perfunctory greetings, I said that when we had last talked in Cairo on August 24⁷ he had asked me to come back for another discussion within a couple of weeks—and here I was. He expressed appreciation and said he welcomed a chance to discuss further the overall Middle East situation and the role of the PLO in securing a just peace settlement.

I reminded him, as in previous sessions, that I was only a private citizen and could in no way presume to speak for the United States. I did say that I have some personal direct knowledge of the attitudes and predisposition of U.S. policy makers, at the highest level, and could, therefore, give some insight into current concerns of the U.S. Government on Middle East problems.

I was sure that the U.S. Government stood firm on the general outline of the basis of a peace settlement, as had been expressed by President Carter, Secretary Vance, and others. Some U.S. press reports and some critical statements by certain hard-line Arabs to the effect that Israeli and American Jewish pressures on Carter had compelled him to abandon his previously expressed attitudes on the Middle East were not true. I was sure that he was still committed to the same kind of overall peace settlement he had sketched out in the past.

I said I was also sure the U.S. continued to believe that the solution to the problem of the Palestinians was central in the making of any Middle East peace and that participation of the Palestinians in the seeking of that solution was essential. I said I was sure that the U.S. Government would soon reemphasize that conviction. I said, further, that he was well aware of the U.S. Government's hope that the PLO could make a forthright statement accepting U.N. Security Council Resolution 242 as a basis of peace negotiations and as a preliminary requisite for direct U.S. contacts with the PLO. I said I realized that the PLO was troubled by the prior indications from the U.S. that such a commitment by the PLO would produce only a U.S. agreement to establish a direct "dialogue" with the PLO and I was aware of the fact that he was under strong pressure from certain elements in the PLO and from Syria to reject this arrangement as "too little."

By "dialogue" I said I was sure the U.S. Government meant the opening up of a whole range of negotiating issues and processes. I emphasized that the Carter Administration was determined "not to play games," that it would *not* make promises it could not deliver. The U.S.

⁷ A report on Bolling's August 24 interview with Arafat in Cairo is in the Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Chron File, Box 133, Quandt: 9/1-15/77.

would not play that game. I said that the U.S. would *not* make some secret promise that it would guarantee admission of the PLO to the Geneva Conference, nor would it promise the PLO the creation of a Palestinian state. I realized that these were the kind of promises he wanted from the U.S. and these were the promises he was being urged by hard-liner elements to demand. Such promises, if they were given, would be meaningless at this stage. What the U.S. was offering him was the “opening of the gate” to essential PLO participation in the negotiating process and that this could transform the whole situation. To be able to travel that road of discussion and negotiation was the important thing.

I urged upon him the importance of time in coming to a conclusion and the need for a clear-cut, unambiguous statement on 242, one that would not be undercut by some contrary statement from some other spokesman for the PLO.

Q: Why the harsh tone of the Damascus communique at the end of the meeting of the Central Council of the PLO on August 25, 26, with its childish Marxist rhetoric about “American and Zionist maneuvers” and denunciation of the Americans as “imperialists”? That statement, the *New York Times* and other publications around the world summarized with such headlines as “PLO Closes Door to Talks with Americans.”⁸ How can that kind of declaration be reconciled with your previous statements to me that you want to open up official contacts with the U.S. and work with U.S. to achieve a peaceful settlement?

A: That communique was terribly, maliciously misrepresented in the world press. We did not during our meeting or in the communique reject 242 nor did we reject talks with the Americans. Our meeting lasted for 14 hours and I talked for seven and a half hours of that time. Sure, there were some of our people who wanted us to reject 242 completely. Some who argued that we will never get anything of help from the Americans, therefore we should stop trying to have contact with them. Ours is a broad, democratic movement and we have all opinions; we allow all opinions to be expressed. But I fought with all my weight against a rejection of 242—and I won. Look at the text of the communique: it does not reject 242. [We looked together at a photo-copy of a clipping from the *New York Times*, with the text of the communique—which he said was accurate—and at the much longer, accompanying story by James Markham, which he said was a distortion, and at the headline over the whole report: “PLO Closes Door To Talks with

⁸ The *New York Times* headline for Markham’s August 27 report assessing the PLO Central Council’s meeting reads, “P.L.O. Leadership Rules out a Dialogue with the Carter Administration.” The text of the August 26 PLO statement was also included. (August 27, 1977, p. 3)

U.S.A.” which he said is absolutely false.] The communique does *not* call the Americans “imperialists,” that word is in Markham’s story and is based on a quotation from some minor figure in the PLO. [I admitted that I had mis-spoken in saying the communique called the Americans “imperialists.”]

Perhaps we were unwise to use the phrase “American and Zionist maneuvers.” I have been criticized by certain Arab leaders (apparently Saudi and Egyptian) for allowing that statement to go out. However, you have to understand how we had to view certain developments and certain messages we received in connection with the Vance trip to the Middle East.

On the 3rd of August we received a very hopeful message which said that if we would make a public declaration of acceptance of UN 242, then the Americans promise to do the following:

- 1.) Recognize the PLO;
- 2.) Undertake a dialogue with the PLO;
- 3.) Invite the PLO to the Geneva Conference—

and all of this on the supposition of U.S. support for the creation of a Palestinian state. That sounded very good to us. Then on the 9th of August we received another message in which all that was promised in the message of the 3rd of August was cancelled. Now we were asked to give everything and get nothing—only a promise of a dialogue and not even acceptance as the sole representatives of the Palestinians, which the Arab states and the United Nations have already accorded us. We are told that the U.S. now has a peace plan and that it contains these points:

1. The U.S. is working for a comprehensive peace.
2. The basis for the peace is contained in U.N. Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338.
3. There should be Israeli withdrawal from the territories occupied in June 1967, with minor border changes.
4. There would be an “entity” for the Palestinians, disarmed, and for a period of six to eight years under the trusteeship of the United Nations plus two other member states, with the provision that if those states are drawn from the area, Israel would be one of the trustees. (Presumably, Jordan would be the other.)
5. There would be a full and comprehensive peace treaty.
6. Jerusalem would remain an occupied area but with facilities for all religions to carry on their religious practices.

This formula would be a disaster for the Palestinians. Egypt, Syria, Jordan, Israel—they would all like such a deal. But not the Palestinians. Not any of us—hard-liners, moderates, pro-Soviet, pro-Western—none of us. That plan was what horrified our Council in Damascus. They saw

it as a plan for a new massacre of our rights. They said that if I make a declaration accepting 242 all I am getting is a chance to support a peace plan that in the end would destroy us. They said you are putting yourself in position to sign a Brest-Litovsk surrender treaty.⁹

Consider this one matter of the proposed trusteeship. If Israel and Jordan were the trustees, not only would the Israelis interfere constantly in our affairs, but King Hussein would have the time to create pressures, threaten people, bribe and corrupt those he could get to follow him so that, in the end, he would destroy our right to have an independent state. When this peace plan talks of an “entity” not a state, talks of disarming us, talks of a trusteeship with Israel and Jordan as trustees, that, as we see it, is a plan to liquidate us. That is why we spoke in the communique of “maneuvers.” I assure you that if I had not thrown my full weight into the debate, we would have got a much worse communique. I assure you it was the best statement that could be made under the circumstances. Let me point out that even the *London Economist* wrote that Vance had extinguished the last hope for the rights of the Palestinians through the plan he submitted to the Arab governments.

Q: The difference between your interpretation of the Damascus communique and the way it was presented in the world press points up one crucial fact: there are different voices speaking for the PLO. In the outer world we simply can’t tell who really speaks for your organization. You interpret the communique one way—not a rejection of 242—and yet the *New York Times* talked to some of your people and got not only this Marxist jargon about the Americans as “imperialists” but also the clear indication that you were rejecting 242 and slamming the door in the face of the Americans. How is the outside world to know where the PLO really stands on anything and who speaks for the PLO?

A: I assure you this leadership is in full control, but we operate in a democratic fashion. We are one of the only two democratic political forces in the Middle East. The Israeli Government is a “liberal democracy;” the PLO is a “true democracy.” We have a slogan in the PLO. It says: “We should have political commando military commandos.” That means that we give freedom for various individuals and various factions to undertake different initiatives, to say different things. Sartawi, for example, undertook his initiative to establish contacts with moderate Jews and with the Israeli doves. For this he was bitterly attacked from inside the PLO and by certain Arab states. He does not

⁹ The Brest-Litovsk Treaty was signed on March 3, 1918, between Germany and the Soviet Union. It led to the Soviet Union pulling out of World War I, but is remembered by the Soviets for what they viewed as the humiliating terms forced upon them by the Germans.

dare show his face, to this day, in Syria, Iraq, or Libya. Yet I stood by him and at the Palestine National Council we adopted, after a terrible debate, the resolution I wanted approving contact with democratic and progressive forces of the Jewish communities inside and outside Israel. That authorization still stands.

Certainly, we have our rejectionist elements in the PLO and they are free to express their views. I do not try to suppress them. But they do not control the PLO.

Q: But at times, as following that August Damascus meeting of the Central Council, the hard-liners appear to speak *for* the PLO and to speak differently from what you say is PLO policy. Doesn't that inevitably lead to confusion? Especially, as recently, when such spokesmen seem to be reflecting the hardening line of the Syrians? I don't want to be rude, but the question inevitably arises: "Does Yasser Arafat control the PLO or do the Syrians control the PLO?"

A: The Syrians control Saiqa, that is one small portion of the PLO. It is true they would like to control the entire PLO. It is true they tried to destroy me. But they did not succeed. When they organized their big move to oppose me, they got only two votes. They have to live with my leadership.

Let me make it clear that we have the full support of our people. We are fully in control. Today, for instance, some Fatah people came to me asking for more positions for Fatah in the various Palestinian union organizations. I said I would arrange it. And I will. This leadership is in full control. It is capable of taking any decision when the time is right. Yesterday in the Central Council we searched for a formula, but we could not find one. We are in a cul de sac. In the absence of an understanding of the reality of our situation there is a long hard road ahead. But, by secret communication, perhaps we can find a way. We want to find a way.

Back to the negative and false press interpretations of the Damascus Central Council meeting. These interpretations were based on taking too seriously the comments of two men, Abu Maizer and Khalid El Fahoum.¹⁰ Most of their comments were made before the meeting, their prediction that the Council *would* reject 242, which I have shown you it did not do. These two men are—"Agents of the Syrians" Sartawi interjected). ("Let us say, pro-Syrian," Kaddumi corrected.) (Laughter) They do not accurately reflect the leadership position of the PLO, but they are like U.S. Senators. Carter does not tell a U.S. Senator that he can't say anything. We, too, try to operate on a democratic basis.

¹⁰ Abu Maizer was a PLO spokesman and Khalid el-Fahoum was the Chairman of the PLO Central Council.

Q: Mr. Chairman, I hear what you are saying. But someone who is called the spokesman for the PLO is not in the same position in relation to you and your leadership as a dissident U.S. Senator is in relation to the President. Let me simply say that if you allow such glaring contradictions to be expressed with regard to crucial policy matters, you should not be *surprised* if you are misunderstood. Let us come back to something you mentioned a moment ago, you spoke of P.N.C. approval of the contacts with moderate Jewish groups and the Israeli Peace Council. Has not your organization now forbidden any further contacts?

A: Not forbidden, only frozen. Put off. We have decided to delay further contacts until we can assess the circumstances in the light of the strong opposition of certain Arab states—Iraq, Syria and Libya. We have P.N.C. approval for these contacts and we can resume them any time we think it is appropriate and desirable.

Q: Mr. Chairman, could we look again at the question of your position on the acceptance of UN Resolution 242?

A: It is essentially a question of getting from others a declaration of a positive position toward the Palestinians and their right to have a state of their own. *This* is the issue. Where does the United States stand on this question? (And, okay, I agree with you, where do the Arab governments stand?) What do these terms mean: “homeland,” “national rights,” “self-determination,” “entity?” The United States should make up its mind what *its* policy is on this question. We wish the United States would stop worrying about what the different Arab states feel on this issue. The Arab governments have different thoughts on the subject, depending on their self-interests. The United States should determine in the light of its self-interests what policy it will support. If the United States would simply follow its own self-interests, and disregard what either the Israelis or the Arab governments say, we believe the United States would join in support of a Palestinian state. Such a state, as I told you last December, must have its own flag and its own passport. Yes, I repeat what I said then, everything else is negotiable.

Q: But what about 242—?

A: Well, as the record of the negotiations following the June War of 1967 will show, Security Council Resolution 242 was not intended to deal with the whole Middle East peace problem for it did not deal with the Palestinian question. The Egyptian representative at that time, Mahmoud Riad, asked “Are we negotiating the full problem, or are we only negotiating the limited territorial questions?” It was the Israelis who insisted that only the territorial part of the problem was being dealt with, *not* the problem of the Palestinians. Remember that the UN declarations about the division of Palestine into two Jewish and Arab states are still on the record, have never been rescinded by the UN, and

the United States is a signatory to those official UN decisions. Indeed, the United States was named one of the three members of the Conciliation Commission, in accordance with General Assembly Resolution 194, to enforce those decisions.¹¹ Tell me: Why does the United States Government now feel so strongly that it is bound by a side agreement with the Israelis, a kind of almost secret footnote to the Sinai II Agreement concerning Egypt and Israel, which Henry Kissinger signed with Israel, promising not to have contacts with the legal representatives of the Palestinians until we meet certain conditions?¹² Why does the United States take so seriously that side agreement with Israel but not take seriously its previous public UN commitment to support an Arab state as well as a Jewish state in Palestine? Even the Israeli Foreign Minister Sharett once publicly stated that Israel would not oppose the creation of an Arab Palestinian state.

Why all this concern about procedures and prior conditions for starting talks between the PLO and the USA? We simply do not understand it.

Q: As a private citizen, I might be able to agree that there should be no prior conditions for talks between the USA and the PLO but the purpose of such talks would surely not be just to have a social dialogue. The purpose of talks, I must assume, is to get the Palestinians plugged into the negotiating process. All the other parties to the conflict have said they accept 242 and 338 as the basis for renewing the Geneva peace negotiations, and on that basis they have said they will go to Geneva, including the Arab confrontation states. So, why can't the PLO say exactly what your Arab brothers have already said? Why would you want to keep yourself out of the negotiating process?

A: Mr. Bolling, let me explain to you what has happened to us since the October War, let me tell you about the pressures that have been put upon us, and of the concessions we have made—and, how, in the end, we have got nothing.

Remember we are a very sensitive and suspicious people, we Palestinians. We have had 30 years of promises and 30 years of disappointments. We have had promises from the Arab states, from the USSR, from the Western states, from the United Nations. And we get nothing. I am glad to have Kaddumi here tonight for he was with me in my talks with Sadat and other Arab leaders from 1973 on. After the October War they told us there will be a peace conference. They told us the first task is to liquidate the consequences of the war—to get back territories for

¹¹ See footnote 2, Document 32.

¹² The agreement is in the form of a U.S.-Israeli memorandum of understanding signed on September 1, 1975. See *Foreign Relations, 1969–1976*, vol. XXVI, Arab-Israeli Dispute, 1974–1976, Document 227.

Syria and Egypt. They urged us to be a constructive force and not cause any problems for the solutions they were trying to work out. So, in the Algiers Summit meeting,¹³ in the secret sessions, we yielded to their pressures and put our own interests on the shelf and accepted their strategy. However, in those secret sessions the Arab governments promised to support us in whatever program the PLO should define as its objective. We didn't blow up the Summit Meeting.

In 1974 we called a meeting of the Palestine National Council. In preparation, it took us 500 hours of debate and lobbying to bring about agreement—and it was a genuine agreement—for the “establishment of a Palestinian state on a portion of Palestine.” That was the main point of our Ten Point program.¹⁴ That was our positive response to 242. Before the P.N.C. voted acceptance of this resolution, I took it to the heads of all the Arab governments from Morocco to Kuwait. Most of them said, “You will never get the P.N.C. to pass that Ten Point program.” Sadat, particularly, said: “If you can get those points accepted, you will get me out of a great trouble at Geneva.” Assad said the same. We did get the program passed, but nothing happened for our benefit and the Geneva Conference has still not accomplished anything.

Let me speak frankly to you about the Rabat Summit meeting. The principal issue was the Palestine problem. That conference could have blown up. But in the end everybody, including King Hussein, agreed to recognize the PLO as the legal and only representative of the Palestinians. I brought about a constructive solution to a very explosive issue by promising that when we got our state we would establish a special relationship with Jordan. Kissinger knows it very well. He told Tito he knew this.

They try to pressure me to commit to some undefined tie with Jordan, as some kind of vague “entity.” I long ago already said we would make a “special relationship” with Jordan. Here is another positive concession we have already made, and get no credit for making.

I went to the United Nations and made my speech.¹⁵ And I avoided demanding a unified, democratic secular state of Palestine in place of Israel, as had been our objective. I referred to that as a dream and said everybody had a right to dream about what the ideal would be. But I went on to plead: please accept our right to create a Palestinian state on a portion of our Palestinian patrimony. And what was the world's response? What did the press report about me? They ignored

¹³ From November 26 to 28, 1973, Arab leaders met in Algiers to discuss the cease-fire and aftermath of the October 1973 Arab-Israeli War.

¹⁴ See footnote 3, Document 78.

¹⁵ See footnote 15, Document 10.

all the positive things I said and accused me of preaching the destruction of Israel and the creation of the unified state.

Later on, hostile forces, inside and outside the Arab world, set me up for the massacre in Lebanon. But they did not destroy us. Morally and politically, the PLO is stronger than ever. Still we are pressured to make still more concessions when we have in various ways already demonstrated that we accept the basic formula of 242—with only the additional insistence there must be a Palestinian state. During the Vance visit I publicly stated that I accepted the Egyptian paper submitted to the Americans, and that paper accepts 242.

Q: Mr. Chairman, one simple question: If you have already, in effect, accepted 242, why can't you just come out openly and directly and say that, with the reservation about the lack of consideration to the Palestinian problem, you do accept 242?

A: Mr. Bolling, I will speak to you very frankly: What we are suffering from right now is Arab blackmail on this issue. It is painful to admit this to you. But it is the truth. Some of the Arab states are trying to make us make all the concessions—and blame us for the concessions—so that they can use us as a justification to their people for whatever they concede. They want to shame and humiliate us.

The toughest attacker against our having contacts with Jewish moderates, for example, is an Arab head of state who denounced me brutally as a traitor to the Arab cause for allowing such contacts. And yet, as I pointed out to him, he received Mrs. Jacobsen, the head of Hadassah in America, and a hard-liner opponent of Palestinian rights, whereas our contacts have been with Jews and Israeli peace groups who are sympathetic to the rights of Palestinians. This is typical of the unfair arguments used against us.

In a session of the Arab League, Kaddumi—our so-called hard-liner—said to the Foreign Ministers: "I want to have talks with the Americans. Can't any of you Foreign Ministers bring this about" [2½ lines not declassified]

After Dobrynin made a statement that the PLO was ready to recognize Israel, there was a great outcry throughout the Arab world.¹⁶ We were denounced as traitors to the Arab cause. Such are the things that are said and done against us that I call blackmail.

If I lose my ability and my credibility to maintain close links with my fighters, what future will there be for me and my movement? I will

¹⁶ Not further identified. Dobrynin reportedly informed Vance prior to Carter's May meeting with Asad in Geneva that Arafat was prepared to recognize Israel's right to exist if Israel endorsed a Palestinian homeland. (Flora Lewis, "Carter, at meeting With Syrian, Calls for Palestinian 'Homeland'," *New York Times*, May 10, 1977, p. 1)

not allow this leadership to be alienated from the Palestinian people. That is my problem.

What the Arab states—some of them—are trying to do is to put all the dirt on us, the Palestinians. They will bargain with the Israelis for their interests, but put the blame on us if we make the slightest concession. I really do not know where I am going to put 2,000,000 Palestinians in diaspora when we do get our state. And we do not get much help on the subject. “Where are you going to put us?” the people ask me. I tell them three things: (1) You will have a passport at last. (Mr. Bolling, you don’t realize how important that is.) (2) You will have a place where you can be buried. (3) In the last resort, if your life is made impossible everywhere else, you will have a place of refuge where at least you can come and live in a tent on a piece of your own soil.

But, of course, many of our people have found good lives in other countries and are now indispensable to the operation of those countries. The head of one of the Gulf states who is one of our strong backers said to me: “I can’t let you take back your people when you get your state. I couldn’t run my country without them.”

Q: Mr. Chairman, let me ask you another very frank question: Do you think any of the Arab states would make a separate deal with Israel, without you?

A: That is a question, naturally, we have asked ourselves. I have gone and talked to all the leaders just in this time since the Vance trip and the announcement of plans for the Foreign Ministers talks in New York.

I told Sadat: “You, the Arab states, have put me in a completely untenable position. This is an American plan. All Arabs know it. If you agree to it, you are selling us out. We are getting nothing as Palestinians.” I protested in writing to Fahmy and he passed it on to Sadat. Sadat wrote a note on the margin and sent it back; Fahmy gave me this photo-copy. I read it to you. Here it is in Sadat’s handwriting: “We must let Arafat and the Palestinians know that we are not betraying them.”

I had a “big story” with King Khalid on this subject, a “big story.” The Saudis are now trying in every way they can to prove to us and the other Arabs that they are not going to sell us out.

I asked Sadat if he could go it alone, without us, and he said “absolutely not.” I asked Assad if he could go his own way without us, and he said he would not. The Saudis, as I said, are in big public campaign to prove they will not abandon us. The truth is the Arab governments are stuck with us and they cannot leave us if they wanted to. That, of course, is the scheme the Israelis are counting on, but it won’t work.

The truth is that the Palestinians are today an important element, an essential element for the Arab world. There is not an Arab leader

who does not envy me my good relations with the Russians—not one of them. They are all glad I have these good relations. I played the crucial role for Assad in getting the Russians to resupply the Syrians with spare parts.

Sadat told me that if there is no real progress toward a peace by a certain date, he will pick up the phone and ask me to go to the Russians and tell them he is ready to make a deal. If the Israelis think they can stick to their plans, divide the Arabs, and threaten us with war, let them bring on a war. Nothing will so quickly unify the Arab world as another war. Within 48 hours Col. Qadhafi will send 2,000 tanks into Egypt and he will be fighting alongside Sadat. The Iraqi will watch the first day, the second day they will mobilize, the third day they will join the battle.

The Israelis think they now have such military superiority, thanks to all the sophisticated American weaponry they have received that the Arabs would not dare to risk a war. The Arabs also have a lot of sophisticated weaponry. The Libyans now have considerable quantities of missiles that can reach every target in Israel. The Iraqis are receiving MIG–23s.

But another war would be madness. We who have fought for 30 years, we know the horrors of war. We don't want the children now growing up to be subjected to new wars. We must continue to try to find the way to a peaceful solution—and we can find one if only our national rights as a people will be respected.

Each night I had to move to break up the meeting. Arafat has enormous energy and loves to talk on and on. As he talked I grew weary of the whole tortured discussion. It seemed to me he was so boxed in by his own PLO hardliners and by the Syrians that he could not move, despite his assurances of moderation and his conciliatory tone. At 2:00 a.m. in the early morning of September 12, he invited us to sit down at the dining room table for an end of Ramadan feast. At this point Sartawi asked him if it would be possible for him to give me a written draft of a possible new statement on 242. Thereupon Arafat produced a one-page typed statement in Arabic which he handed to Sartawi and murmured something about a first draft they were looking at. He said he would be holding a number of meetings to determine an appropriate formulation which he might be able to give me within a few days. We parted with the understanding we would probably meet again within a couple of days. I agreed to delay my departure for at least two days.

Subsequently, I received intermittent reports from my “moderate wing” contacts—Dr. Sartawi, Abu Hassan, and Sabry Jiryis—about numerous meetings that were going on among various elements of PLO leadership, about Arafat's trip to Damascus to see Assad, about Kad-

dumi's trip to Cairo, about plans for another PLO Central Council meeting in Damascus on Saturday, September 17. I was assured that the State Department's statement of Monday, September 12, on the Palestinians¹⁷ had been enthusiastically received by Arafat and most of the PLO leadership, that the moderates were lobbying vigorously for a forthright statement on 242, that Arafat wanted and intended to make such a statement but he was shrewdly maneuvering to get as broad a consensus as possible before making a public statement—and, of course, the statement would have to come from the Central Council. It became clear that I would have nothing definite in the way of a draft statement during the week, so, on Wednesday evening, September 14, I departed from Beirut for Israel via Cyprus. I was told that Arafat would send a messenger to deliver a draft statement to me during the week of September 18–24. I was told this would be a "negotiating draft," not necessarily a final declaration. We shall see!

Tab C

Paper Prepared by Landrum Bolling¹⁸

September 16, 1977

Some Reflections on the Current Status of the P.L.O. and of Various Palestinian Attitudes and Options

The Palestine Liberation Organization is once again (or still) in a state of crisis. It is wracked by internal conflicts and assailed by external pressures. It is still led by Yasser Arafat, its chairman, and the head of its major constituent organization, Fatah. It has experienced incredible vicissitudes and, somehow, has kept going. Its chairman has been denounced, intrigued against, and threatened, but, though beleaguered from within and without the P.L.O., he survives. A wily, populist politician, devout Muslim, single-minded nationalist, non-Marxist friend of both the communist Russians and the anti-communist Saudis, Arafat is a master at one art—survival. The only match for him is his hated rival, King Hussein. There is no evidence that Arafat is a great leader, a statesman of vision, or a superior administrator. At times he appears vacillating, weak, ineffective. He could be, and has been, accused of

¹⁷ On September 12, State Department Spokesman Hodding Carter III read to news correspondents a statement that endorsed the notion that "Palestinians must be involved in the peacemaking process. Their representatives will have to be at Geneva for the Palestinian question to be solved." (Department of State *Bulletin*, October 10, 1977, p. 463)

¹⁸ Secret.

leading his people through one disaster after another—most conspicuously, in the civil war in Jordan and, more recently, the civil war in Lebanon. King Hussein and President Assad have tried to kill him or at least destroy his leadership. Neither has, so far, succeeded; both have had to make public reconciliations with him.

Arafat may well be the Arab leader the Russians trust most (which is not saying a great deal), and he clearly has a “special relationship” with the conservative, pro-capitalist feudal rulers of Saudi Arabia. Without their generous petro-dollar support for him, and their confidence in him as a non-Marxist, Muslim true believer, he would probably have disappeared long ago. For their own good reasons, they are likely the best supporters of his independent national state idea.

Part of Arafat’s problem relates to the “strange and wonderful” nature of the P.L.O. itself. It is a holding company of divergent and irreconcilable revolutionary movements. Its dominant component is Fatah, the fighting force Arafat played a major role in creating, which he still controls and which, by far, outweighs all other factions. Fatah is the most non-ideological element in the P.L.O. and the most genuinely Palestinian. Other elements owe primary allegiance to an ideology (some brand of Marxism) or to one or another of the Arab governments. The Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, led by Hawatmeh, is a kind of new Left group, which at times has shown signs of incipient reasonableness about a peaceful settlement but then veers off into terrorism and ideological intransigence. The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine is led by George Habash, M.D., of Christian background, who is probably the most intransigent Marxist and anti-American ideologue. His movement has spawned a splinter group, the Popular Front/General Command, which has committed its share of terrorist acts and is, basically, pro-Syrian. Then there is Saiqa, the unabashed instrument of the Syrian government inside the P.L.O. There is also the Arab Liberation Front which is pro-Iraqi. In addition to these political factions, there are also the Palestinian professional and vocational unions which have representation, as such, within the P.L.O. though, in fact, many of their representatives are designated by Fatah. Added to all of these, among the 293 members of the Palestine National Council, the 55-member Central Council, and the 15-member Executive Committee (a kind of cabinet) are assorted “independents.” Inevitably, a great deal of Arafat’s time and energy goes into efforts to keep everybody on the reservation. And an outsider has to wonder: Why bother?

By the very structure of the P.L.O., the assorted extremist groups get representation in the various organs of the P.L.O. out of proportion to their numbers. By the free-wheeling “democratic” tradition of the P.L.O., each faction has extraordinary freedom to go its own way in set-

ting policy, committing acts of violence, and interpreting the P.L.O. to the world. It is a mad, mad situation.

Yet Arafat professes to be untroubled by all this chaos and insists that he and his inner kitchen cabinet, most of whom are members of the Central Committee of Fatah, have firm control of the P.L.O. Within that inner group, Arafat, Abu Jihad (Khalil al-Wazir)—one of the chief military figures, Abu Wazir (Mahmoud Abbas)—the chief financial officer, Abu Hassan—chief of intelligence and security, and Abu Said (Khalid al-Hassan) are considered unshakable pro-peace moderates. To these may be added the most exposed moderates, Dr. Issam Sartawi, who organized and led the initiatives to establish contacts with Israeli and American Jewish moderates and to open some kind of dialogue with U.S. officials, and his colleague, Sabry Jiryis. They came to the United States in October 1976 (on faulty passports) and after first being encouraged in their reconciliation/exploration efforts, were ordered out of the country by Henry Kissinger. They were simultaneously attacked by the Marxists and the hardliners inside the P.L.O. and by officials in Libya, Syria and Iraq, and they are still under serious threat. They cannot be considered part of the inner circle of power, but they have direct access to Arafat and, apparently, his personal confidence and support.

The hardliner element within Arafat's inner circle is led by Farouk Kaddumi, Secretary of the Fatah Central Committee and head of what is called the Political Department—in effect, the Foreign Minister. Kaddumi is an economist by training, graduate of the American University in Cairo, leftist in his leanings, but not an out-and-out Marxist, generally pro-Soviet, generally anti-American, very much bemused by the need to maintain solidarity with the Third World. He is not a constructive influence in the P.L.O. inner circle. His chief ally is Abu Iyad (Salah Khalaf), a military/security type who is said to be virtually psychopathic in his hard-lining mischief-making. He has a checkered history. Captured by King Hussein's forces during the civil war in Jordan—and most likely tortured—he went on Radio Amman and won his freedom by the most abject apology to and praise of the King. Released, he made his way to Beirut and the remnant of the P.L.O. and has been trying ever since, by hardline acts and words, to make up for his groveling performance on the King's radio.

Arafat, personally and several of those with greatest influence on him seem to be genuinely committed to a peaceful settlement, to a live-and-let live arrangement with Israel, to a "special relationship" with Jordan. They want to prove their acceptance of UN 242, their desire for good relations with the U.S., and their rejection of Marxism. But they suffer from all sorts of inhibitions and fears in fighting too vigorously, too openly for what they say are their real views.

One of the complicating factors among the Palestinians, as throughout the developing Third World, is the glamour, the mythology, the radical chic of Marxism. As one of the P.L.O. moderate leaders said to me: "It takes no guts to be a hard-liner, anti-American pro-Marxist. It takes real guts to be pro-peace, pro-American and anti-Marxist."

A bizarre aspect of the problem is the long-standing, practical though unspoken "alliance" between Israel's hard-liners and Palestinian hard-liners. Again and again, over many years, the Palestinian extremists have said and done, almost as if on cue, those wild and irresponsible things that have triggered hard, sharp over-kill reactions from the Israeli hard-liners. Israeli words and deeds have, in turn, provided "proof" for the extremist Palestinians that their attitudes, their propaganda, and their deeds were fully justified. Rightly or wrongly, there has now grown up among some moderate West Bankers the conviction that the Israelis are deliberately fostering the growth of pro-Communist, extremist elements under the Israeli occupation in order to support the Israeli thesis that an independent Palestinian movement would be inevitably pro-Soviet and anti-American and a threat to peace and stability in the area.

In support of this odd thesis, a West Bank Christian leader cited the strange case of the relatively new mayor of Ramallah, Karim Khalaf. Known as the Don Juan of Ramallah, Khalaf is a lawyer and wealthy land-owner, a handsome fellow with a taste for high living. In the beginning years of the Israeli occupation, he was widely distrusted by the Palestinians as a stooge for the Israelis. After he decided to campaign for Mayor, the Israelis put out the report that he was the candidate of the P.L.O., although there had never been previously any indication that he cared anything about the P.L.O., or they for him. Yet, with Israel's reports that he had the backing of the P.L.O., he won handily. Once in office, he began to show all kinds of support for communist projects, for anti-American policies, and for anti-peace moves. He encourages ineffectual, meaningless but well-publicized street demonstrations by youth groups. He blocks welfare and student scholarship projects sponsored by American private groups, and he has managed to make possible a communist information center in Ramallah, which could only function with Israeli acquiescence and then at a time when even the most moderate political activity by other groups is either strictly controlled or forbidden.

The Israelis may be absolutely not involved in any such Byzantine machinations but there are moderate, pro-peace, anti-Communist Arabs under Israel's occupation who think they are.

What moderate West Bankers think of Arafat and the P.L.O. is perhaps not crystal clear but there are some interesting indications. Here are random comments picked up on the West Bank:

Arafat is not a very strong or effective leader, but apparently he is the best available.

If the Israelis had ever allowed any political leadership to develop on the West Bank, there might be some alternative to the P.L.O., but they didn't and there isn't.

As between King Hussein and the P.L.O., there is no question but that West Bankers prefer Arafat and the P.L.O. to the King.

We of the West Bank passionately want to be rid of the Israeli occupation; supporting the P.L.O. seems the best way to express our desires.

Those who oppose the P.L.O. are either stooges for the Israelis or agents for the King.

Can alternatives to the P.L.O. yet emerge among the Palestinians?

Any occupying power can create and control collaborators from among a subject people. That is the clear lesson of history, abundantly proved by communist, fascist and Nazi dictatorships. A relatively benign occupation like that of the Israelis can certainly assure for itself a considerable measure of collaboration from among the occupied West Bankers. That is really not the question. The question is whether an effective, independent and responsible indigenous Arab leadership could come into being during, or after the end of Israeli occupation—and whether that leadership would or could be an alternative to the P.L.O.

There is no basis for a believable affirmative answer to that question. The Israelis, after almost ten years of occupation, have so limited political activity among the Palestinians as to make predictions on this point relatively meaningless.

There is, however, some evidence about the degree of support for those few political figures who have so far surfaced as possible West Bank alternatives to the P.L.O. It is not very great. Such people are mostly members of the old "notable families" who have long held wealth and a kind of tribal power and in the main, have served loyally the Hashemite royal family. These are the King's men and their day is surely over. The West Bankers will not willingly turn to a restoration of that kind of leadership. Here and there, no doubt, are others—younger and relatively unknown—who might conceivably come to the fore if they could escape the dangers of being labeled either Israeli puppets or Hussein agents. But that isn't easy. And then there is the special case of Aziz Shihadah, one of the few Palestinians Secretary Vance was able to talk with on his August trip to the Middle East.¹⁹ Having known Shihadah relatively well over a period of almost ten years, I set down a few observations about him:

1. He is an able, intelligent, articulate man with a practical, sensible approach to things.

¹⁹ No memorandum of conversation has been found.

2. He is of independent spirit and has had the courage to express his views openly and publicly.

3. The most prominent Arab lawyer on the West Bank under the Israeli occupation, his success has aroused inevitable suspicion that he is a clever tool of the Israelis. I personally do not believe that; I think he is an honest and honorable man, though ambitious and very self-assured.

4. He is not a supporter of King Hussein and has expressed the most bitter contempt for him, yet he has long favored special ties between the West Bank and Jordan.

5. About the P.L.O. he has blown hot and cold over the years. He has never been one of them, though at times he has looked upon them as the only hope for the Palestinians. P.L.O. leaders have expressed to me their disapproval of him as a collaborator with the Israelis.

6. Shihadah was one of the first Palestinians I encountered who clearly favored a West Bank state of some kind, but with ties with both Jordan and Israel.

7. Shihadah has no real political base. He speaks for himself and hardly anyone else—although many will agree with much of what he says.

8. He has the ability to be a leader in a Palestinian state, but he might well have considerable difficulty in establishing his acceptability, in the light of the suspicions that surround him.

In summary, I see no current alternative to the P.L.O. for providing leadership for the West Bank. The P.L.O. has not only the endorsement of the Arab states and the United Nations as the sole representative of the Palestinians, it has established among the Palestinians under Israeli occupation an unmistakable claim to that same recognition. At the same time, there are doubts and apprehensions; fear that Arafat and his team may not be quite up to the leadership role that would be required of them if independence should come; worry that extremists attached to the P.L.O. will do more foolish and terrible things that will produce harsh consequences for the Palestinians under Israeli occupation; doubt that the Israelis will ever willingly leave the West Bank on any terms whatever.

104. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) to President Carter¹

Washington, September 19, 1977

SUBJECT

Bolling-Arafat Talks and PLO Acceptance of 242

As the attached cable from Damascus indicates,² the PLO, with Syrian backing, is edging toward acceptance of Resolution 242 with a reservation. The revised formulation that we have communicated through the Syrians is also attached.³

The important point to note is that now the Syrians appear to be working with us, unlike a few weeks ago, and the PLO is showing more signs of confidence. This is almost certainly due to the combination of your letter to Assad,⁴ which was very well received, the statement from the State Department on Palestinian representation,⁵ and Landrum Bolling's two long talks with Arafat,⁶ which went quite well, although they ended inconclusively. (Landrum's summary report is also attached.)⁷ After seeing Arafat last Tuesday,⁸ Bolling concluded that the Syrians were still posing problems; the next day Arafat and Assad met in Damascus; and on Sunday we received an agreed Syrian-PLO version of a reservation to 242.⁹ All that now remains, and this will still be difficult, is to get a positive acceptance of 242 and the right of all states in the area to live in peace. The Palestine Central Council is scheduled to meet today.

Yasir Arafat's Main Points in Conversations with Landrum Bolling:

1. Arafat and PLO did *not* reject UN 242 or close doors to talks with Americans at meeting of Central Council in Damascus August 25–26.

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Subject File, Box 3, Arab-Israeli Peace Settlement 1977: Volume II [III]. Secret. Carter initialed the memorandum.

² The cable is not attached. Presumably it was telegram 5888 from Damascus, September 18; see footnote 4, Document 101.

³ The revised formulation is not attached. See footnote 3, Document 74.

⁴ See Document 101.

⁵ See footnote 17, Document 103.

⁶ A record of these talks is in Tab B, Document 103.

⁷ Not attached, but see Tab A, Document 103.

⁸ September 13.

⁹ See footnote 4, Document 101.

2. The most upsetting thing to Arafat and the Council was their perception of a drastic shift in the U.S. position from the message they received on August 3 to the message of August 9.¹⁰ The former, they understood, promised recognition of PLO and dialogue plus an invitation to Geneva, all on the basis of U.S. support for creation of a Palestinian state in return for PLO acceptance of 242. The latter rescinded the previous “offer”, and promised only dialogue, and that in relation to a U.S. peace plan that calls for a trusteeship (trustees including Israel and Jordan) over a disarmed, vague Palestinian entity. They regard this plan as a scheme to destroy rights of Palestinians.

3. Long involved arguments to prove PLO has, in effect, already accepted 242: 1) resolution of Palestine National Council in 1974 calling for creation of a Palestinian state on “any portion” of Palestine available to them (thus, tacit two-state solution); 2) resolution of National Council meeting calling for PLO participation in all international negotiations on Palestine problem on the basis of “international legitimacy” (meaning UN resolutions); 3) Arafat’s public statement, made during Vance’s August trip, endorsing Egyptian paper handed to Vance—and that paper explicitly states acceptance of 242.

4. Arafat, when pressed as to why he could not simply say (with reservation about inadequacy of 242 in dealing with Palestine) that PLO accepts 242, he gave lengthy, tortured explanations, but finally said he had to make a “painful admission”: he was suffering from “Arab blackmail”. Some Arab leaders were trying to “put all the dirt” on him denouncing him for making any concessions, while making their own concessions. They try to be “more Catholic than the Pope, more Palestinian than Arafat.” It is clear, though he did not say so directly, that the main pressures on these matters come from the Syrians. He admitted that Assad had tried to destroy him, but had not succeeded.

5. He said his Central Council would be holding meetings in the next few days to see if they could agree on a formulation of a statement to present to the Americans. He held up a paper, written in Arabic, at the close of the second meeting saying it was a rough, first draft of something they would be considering. He said the statement they would propose would be in a negotiating form—not a final declaration—and they would get it to Bolling as soon as possible. Arafat realized that time is important.

There was tentative agreement to have a third meeting on the 13th or 14th if they had made sufficient progress in getting as many elements as possible behind a proposal. Since these internal discussions

¹⁰ See footnote 4, Document 103.

were still going on through the 13th, and a Central Council meeting was scheduled for the 17th, I left Beirut on the 14th. Meanwhile, I received several times a day fragmentary, generally optimistic, bulletins from my “moderate wing” contacts who sat in on some, but not all, of these discussions. One of these “progress reports” said that one of the men closest to Arafat said: “If only the Americans will promise they will give their support to our claim to a state, we will give them anything they want from us.”

Two questions loom large in recalling Bolling’s talks in Beirut:

1. What is President Assad trying to do? And why is he doing it?
2. How can the PLO define the nature of the Palestinian state it seeks and the relation of that state to its neighbors?

105. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, September 19, 1977, noon–2:20 p.m.

SUBJECT

Memorandum of Conversation Between the Secretary and Foreign Minister Dayan

PARTICIPANTS

Israel

Moshe Dayan, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Israel
 Simon Dinitz, Ambassador of Israel to the United States
 Ephraim Evron, Director General, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
 Hanan Bar-on, Minister, Embassy of Israel
 Meir Rosenne, Legal Advisor to the Foreign Minister
 Naphtali Lavie, Foreign Ministry Spokesman
 Elyakim Rubinstein, Director, Foreign Minister’s Bureau

United States

The Secretary
 *Deputy Secretary Christopher
 Philip Habib, Under Secretary for Political Affairs
 Alfred Atherton, Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Trips/Visits File, Box 107, 9/19/77–10/25/77 Vance Meetings with Middle East Foreign Ministers: 9–10/77. Secret; Nodis. Drafted by Korn (S/P). The meeting took place in the Secretary’s office and the lunch took place in the Secretary’s Dining Room at the Department of State.

Ambassador Lewis

*Dr. Zbigniew Brzezinski, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs
William Quandt, National Security Council
David Korn, Policy Planning Staff

*Present only at the Lunch

The Secretary said he was very pleased to have the Foreign Minister and Mrs. Dayan with us. The Secretary said he would like to start this session by discussing the peace treaty draft that Dayan sent and then ask questions and clarify principles in the Israeli peace treaty and in Dayan's letter.² After the meeting with the President, he proposed that the two of them could sit down together alone.

Dayan said he agreed.³

The Secretary said it had been very helpful to have Israel's draft and Dayan's letter, particularly the letter, which gives us more detail. The Secretary said he would like to ask some questions regarding the concept of peaceful relations as Dayan saw it from the Israeli standpoint. What elements of peaceful relations did Dayan consider the most important? We thought up to now that Israel considered trade and cultural relations and other such things as having higher priority than diplomatic relations. But the draft treaty provides for the establishment of diplomatic relations one month after the entry into effect of the treaty. Does Israel think diplomatic relations could be established so quickly?

Dayan said he wished he knew. Then he motioned to Mr. Rosenne and asked him to comment. Rosenne said the first priority is to establish diplomatic relations. Once you have diplomatic relations then trade and cultural exchanges and other things can be settled on. For example, one year after the entry into effect of diplomatic relations we might sign trade and cultural relations agreements.

The Secretary asked if it were realistic to expect to be able to negotiate diplomatic relations one month after the treaty enters into effect. Dayan answered that he couldn't really say, but it might be. The information Israel has now is that most of the Arab countries do not consider diplomatic relations to be a subject they want to deal with any time, even after many years—they don't want to commit themselves. Dayan repeated that he really didn't know whether it is realistic.

The Secretary said that as far as the establishment of normal diplomatic relations is concerned we see no problem for Hussein. Sadat has told us that the matter is negotiable but the question is how soon. Sadat is more flexible than Assad, who is the most rigid, but each puts diplo-

² See Document 100.

³ No record of this private meeting has been found.

matic relations at the end of the list after trade, open borders and other things.

Dayan said that the Secretary and the President had asked Israel for a draft peace agreement which includes withdrawal on Israel's side. It should include everything on the Arab side. Diplomatic relations should have higher priority than culture and trade, because of their symbolic importance. Except for Jordan, *Dayan* said he felt that none of the Arabs is thinking in terms of diplomatic relations. Syria is not thinking in those terms and he questioned whether Sadat really is also. *Dayan* wondered whether Israel's concept of a peace treaty is the same as theirs. If you do not envisage early diplomatic relations, has your concept of a peace treaty not changed, *Dayan* asked.

The Secretary said it definitely has not changed. We continue to think it should be a comprehensive treaty and that the nature of peace should be clear. It should provide for trade, open borders and the establishment of diplomatic relations. But there must be a timetable for these things and that will have to be negotiated. We will do all in our power to get all those things in a treaty. The Secretary said he could assure *Dayan* that our position is unchanged on this matter. (Secretary underscores this last sentence by bringing his fist down on the table.) The Secretary said that his recollection of our earlier discussions was that we talked about diplomatic relations phased over a period of time. The Secretary turned to Mr. Atherton, who confirmed that this was correct.

Ambassador Dinitz said it was his recollection that diplomatic relations was to be included in a peace treaty. The Secretary said this was true, but the question of when was to be negotiated. *Dayan* said Israel's concern was that this question be dealt with in the peace treaty. If a peace treaty is signed and it is not, then the Arabs would later say "Never" to diplomatic relations. *Dayan* added that if there was anything on this in the minutes of earlier U.S.-Israeli talks he would like to know. The Secretary said we would check.

Mr. Habib said the Egyptian position has been shifting and we have been trying to get them to shorten the time before diplomatic relations. They wanted it longer—we were trying to get them to shorten it.

The Secretary asked if Israel considered diplomatic relations the highest priority. *Dayan* said yes, but again he would like to ask *Rosenne's* comment. *Rosenne* said he had looked into the precedents on diplomatic relations in peace treaties. In the Japanese peace treaty the establishment of diplomatic relations was immediate. On the question of trade there are two things, *Rosenne* said. There are negative practices, such as a boycott, which should be terminated immediately, and then there is the question of a trade agreement which could take a long time to negotiate.

The Secretary replied that clearly the boycott should be lifted immediately. He added that Sadat said he agreed to this. Ambassador Dinitz said that one of the things that created this misunderstanding is that Israel did not distinguish between trade practices and the problem of the long time it would take to negotiate a trade agreement. When we say a trade agreement would take time, we don't mean we are in favor of postponing it, just that the negotiation would be lengthy.

Ambassador Lewis asked whether the Israelis would be prepared to move toward diplomatic relations in stages. He noted that we know from our experience in recent years that there are various forms of diplomatic relations. Are diplomatic contacts the main thing or is it the exchange of ambassadors? Mr. Rosenne said it was an exchange of ambassadors that Israel wants. Mr. Evron explained that the problem is that when you start below the ambassadorial level it has a tendency to freeze. Take for example Israel's relations with Greece, Turkey and Iran. Israel wants diplomatic relations, "the real McCoy." Mr. Habib pointed out that there is a difference between doing this and having an understanding that it will be done. You can get an understanding on diplomatic relations, but do you think it is really realistic to have them in one month after the treaty enters into effect?

Dayan said the point is that when the Israelis were told they should make a maximum effort to draw up a comprehensive plan, including withdrawal and complete normalization, it was their impression that diplomatic relations and an exchange of ambassadors had to be a part of any such arrangement. This has to be the meaning of full normalization, particularly when Israel was given to understand that it would have to pay heavily in territory. Dayan said that as best he understood the Arab position at present, both Assad and Sadat exclude diplomatic relations. Assad particularly, but also Sadat. Assad's position is that there should be withdrawal but that no Arab country should be obliged to have diplomatic relations with any country which it doesn't want to. Let us suppose, Dayan said, that Israel were to wait two years and then discuss this matter. His impression was that the attitude of these two countries is that they don't want diplomatic relations at any time. But people in Israel think that what is being discussed by the President and the Secretary when you talk about normal relations is full diplomatic relations. Dayan asked if the Secretary could tell him what the President thinks on this?

The Secretary said the President will speak for himself this afternoon, but he was sure the President would like to see full diplomatic relations. The question is can this be negotiated right away. Dayan reiterated that Israel gives high priority to the establishment of diplomatic relations.

The Secretary said he recalled that Sadat did say he would rule out diplomatic relations as long as Israeli troops are in occupied territory in Sinai. This could mean either (a) there could be a provision for withdrawal over a period of time and no diplomatic relations until that was done; or (b) that Sadat would not discuss the question of diplomatic relations before full withdrawal. This is a point we will have to clarify.

The Secretary said he would also like to raise the question of security arrangements. In the Israeli draft treaty there are references to things such as buffer zones, but there are no references to other kinds of arrangements, such as black boxes, UN forces, or guarantees. The Secretary asked for Dayan's views on this. Dayan replied that first of all, it is not technical matters that dictate where the line should run, but Israel's security. The decision on where the line should run has to take into account Israel's security. Then technical arrangements come into consideration. Dayan said this was a question he had been dealing with for many years. When we talk about demilitarizing we have to ask ourselves what will happen if a country violates the demilitarization provision. Will a third party do something? Will there be people out there who will go and investigate and take action? It is because of this problem of security that Israel mentioned the possibility of arrangements for a reduction in forces after the peace is signed. When a war is over the parties should be ready to reduce their forces. Dayan said he had not been given authority to negotiate on the Israeli draft, but he could explain it. Speaking for himself, he would not exclude the possibility of UN forces in a buffer zone, but there must be some supervision, some provision so that there will be someone to check and prevent violations.

Dayan asked if the United States would be willing to be a party to guarantees and what these guarantees would be. Dayan observed that Israel hasn't suggested guarantees, but according to the U.S. some Arab countries brought this up and the U.S. said it would sign guarantees if all the parties wanted it. Dayan pointed out that Israel had "bad memories regarding UN forces in Sinai and certain kinds of promises made in 1967 by the United States Administration."

The Secretary said he would be happy to talk about this. We would be prepared to join in guarantees with others. As to what would be encompassed in these guarantees, we would want to discuss with Israel what would be appropriate. The Secretary said he would like to set aside some time for this. Guarantees are something we are prepared to do if we can get the necessary Congressional authority, which the Secretary said he thought we could.

Dayan said he would like to find out what the U.S. proposes. Let us go into this.

The Secretary said he would like to. He asked for Dayan's views. Dayan said that in Israel there are two schools of thought, and he belongs to both. (Laughter) These two schools represent the two sides of the question. One says that Israel would rather not have American boys killed for it. If there were that kind of guarantee it would harm relations between the United States and Israel. People in America would say, "Why should our boys be killed for Israel?" This school feels there should be American guarantees only in the event that there is Russian intervention. The other school says that if guarantees are really meaningful then they would be of benefit. For example, if in 1967 there had been direct U.S. involvement at Sharm el Sheikh, either with American soldiers or as a part of the UN contingent or otherwise, then Nasser would not have called for withdrawal of the UN force, or even if he had the UN Secretary General would not have done it. This school wants businesslike guarantees; guarantees that are specific and meaningful, not a guarantee that says "We would try" or "We would do our best." Dayan added (apparently contradicting his earlier statement that he "belonged to both schools") that he thought it would be bad for Israel to have American guarantees, except where Russia is concerned. But he would rather have the U.S. in UN forces, since that would make them more reliable.

The Secretary pointed out that if U.S. troops are included in a UN force the Soviets would probably insist on their forces being included too. He asked how Dayan would feel about that. Dayan said he is a minority in the Israeli Government. He wouldn't like to see Soviet forces in the Middle East but when you discuss UN forces it is obvious that there can't be a Security Council Resolution without the Russians, so they are involved. Therefore he would not object to Soviet troops in a UN force. In 1967 if there had been a UN force with Americans and Russians, the outcome would presumably have been very different. But Dayan cautioned that he was not at all sure that his position on this matter would be the Israeli Government position.

The Secretary said we should have further discussions on this. Dayan responded that one kind of guarantee he does not support is that which relies on early warning systems in Sinai with the Americans between Israel and the Egyptians. The Secretary asked why. Dayan said Israel must establish relations with the Arabs without intermediaries. He said he did not exclude having anybody on the ground between Israel and the Arabs. UN forces are symbolic and don't hurt relations. But Dayan thought it was undesirable and would undermine relations to see American soldiers, or rather, civilians, doing a job like the early warning system. It would work for a cease-fire, but not for a long period of time.

The Secretary said he had noticed either a contradiction or a confusion in the Israeli position. Paragraph 10 of the Israeli draft treaty says

that all areas evacuated are to be demilitarized. But in Dayan's letter he talked about buffer zones and demilitarized zones. In response, Dayan turned to Rosenne, who read Article 10 of the Israeli draft. Rosenne said demilitarized zones are a matter of principle, but they don't rule out other arrangements.

The Secretary asked if Dayan would envisage that Sinai would have a limited force zone and demilitarized and buffer zones as well? Dayan replied that these things could be combined with one another. Some part would be a limited force zone and some part a demilitarized zone, and in between there could be a buffer zone with UN forces. There could be two or three different kinds of arrangements. We didn't want to say anything specific on this.

The Secretary said there was another point he wanted to clarify. In Dayan's letter he referred to "territorial control." Are we correct in thinking that in using that term Israel is drawing a distinction between it and sovereignty? Dayan said the GOI was looking for a vague term and thus used "territorial control." Normally when we say "control" we mean Israeli sovereignty. But we realize that there can be control other than through sovereignty. We are leaving possibilities open. We are not saying "nevers" and "nos." The point for Israel is to provide security and we think the answer is Israeli control. But Dayan added that if there can be control without sovereignty, Israel is willing to discuss the matter. The Secretary asked if Dayan could give more detail on how he saw the situation being worked out in Sinai. The Secretary said he realized that whatever Dayan said would not be binding on him. Dayan said clearly he could not give us anything that would be binding. He then continued that the first thing is to find out whether Egypt agrees to Israel's plan that there should be an area in Sinai under Israeli control. If the Arabs agree to that, then we can deal with the question of how to accomplish it and how wide the zone would be. As Prime Minister Begin told the President, there would be substantial withdrawal in Sinai. There is no practical point in going now into more detail as to where the line would be drawn. Dayan said that whatever area Israel withdraws from would have to be demilitarized or controlled by UN forces, for Israel recognizes that there could be no complete demilitarization anywhere. There would have to be someone everywhere to guarantee security. Full demilitarization between the lines is simply not practical.

The Secretary asked if it is practical to ask Egypt to have a demilitarized area without Israel's having one. Dayan replied that it would not endanger Egypt if they don't have big forces in Sinai. They can control the desert through small forces. But Israel has only a small area on its side.

The Secretary said he did not understand what is meant when Israel talks about a “band of land south of Gaza.” Could Dayan explain more in detail? Dayan replied that Israel does have a problem in northern Sinai. It is not the same as in the south. In the north there are about 400,000 Arabs in Gaza. It is essential for Israel’s security that there be an Israeli inhabited zone to divide between Gaza and the Egyptian population in Sinai. That is the reason for Israeli settlements in that area. The Secretary asked if it was correct to say that Dayan believes there must be a band running from somewhere close to Al Arish on down the Sinai. Dayan went to the map, drew his hand down it from Eilat to Sharm el Sheikh, indicating that there must be a continuous land strip there under Israeli control. He then drew his hand from Eilat up to the Mediterranean. The Secretary asked where Israeli control would apply in this area, and Dayan responded by sweeping his hand down the map from the Mediterranean along the international border between Egypt and Israel, cutting a wide swath on the Egyptian side.

The Secretary asked why is it necessary to have Israeli control in the area that Dayan had just indicated, as opposed to a buffer zone with UN forces. Dayan replied that Israel’s proposal was not a full plan. There were security and military considerations. Military considerations explain the need for land control from north to south. Dayan said he should mention in this connection that Israel has “three or four” airfields along the western side of the old line to which he had just pointed on the map. The Secretary said he took it that Dayan was saying that at this point he didn’t want to be more precise. Dayan said that was correct; the time to be precise is really in negotiations. Israel hasn’t decided yet about exactly where the line of control would run. The Secretary said that if he understood correctly, the general concept is for control of a band of territory from somewhere near Al Arish to Aqaba and then to Sharm el Sheikh. Dayan replied that he hadn’t mentioned Al Arish or any other places in the north. In the south Israel can be more sure of where the line would run. It should run along the high ground (Dayan pointed to the map, to a narrow strip bordering the Gulf of Aqaba). But in the north Israel has not said Al Arish, or east or west of Al Arish. “We can’t say where the line would be precisely, but I can say that Israel would withdraw from the greater part of Sinai.” Habib remarked that the Israelis were talking about territorial control, not a buffer zone. Dayan replied that when he said Israeli control, he meant this was Israel’s proposal. Israel presents the problem on a theoretical level, since there is no one to talk to about it in practice at the moment. In the south, Israel wants to be sure of navigation rights. In the north, where there are Israeli settlements, it is a question of security of the population. Ambassador Lewis asked if the Israelis could live with the idea of Israeli settlements in Sinai but in a buffer zone. Dayan said that if the other side would propose that Israel would consider it. “We wouldn’t ex-

clude anything as long as security is assured. We would not, how do you say, reject any idea out of hand.”

Mr. Habib said that in other words, Israel wants to sanitize the 500,000 Arabs of Gaza from outside contact. Dayan said this is the real problem. There are also military considerations, but this is the main problem.

The Secretary proposed that the party adjourn for lunch. Dayan said he hoped he was clear in his answers to all of the questions. “I have come all this way here to talk with you, and I don’t want us to have misunderstandings.” (The Deputy Secretary and Mr. Brzezinski joined the party for lunch, and the conversation resumed at the luncheon table after drinks and pictures.)

The Secretary asked if we could discuss Golan now. He asked how Dayan saw Israel’s security needs there. Dayan said he did not see much room for changing the lines on Golan. Of course, he said, we were careful not to mention this or to rule out anything in his letter. But the area is so narrow, Dayan said, that he didn’t think the answer in Golan lies in a major change in lines. “But maybe there are other answers.” The Secretary asked Dayan to elaborate on the problems. Is it necessary for Israel to stay on the Heights? Is a buffer zone inappropriate or not useful in Golan?

Dayan said a buffer zone would not be very practicable in Golan. Israel had discussed the question of a buffer zone between its settlements and the Syrians and they weren’t interested in it. In any case, the strip would have been very narrow. The whole of Golan itself is only about 25 kms. wide and all that is slope. And this area is populated by Israeli settlements. Dayan remarked that he knew the U.S. was not a “great supporter” of Israeli settlements, but he said the current Israeli government was not responsible for any of the Golan settlements. But he did not think any Israeli government would consider removal of any of the Golan settlements.

Any of them, the Secretary asked?

Dayan paused briefly and said he wouldn’t ever say that Israel would not move one inch. But, he said, he had the feeling we are talking very theoretically. He did not think there is really much chance of peace. He did not see peaceful intentions on the part of the Arabs, particularly on the part of Assad.

Mr. Brzezinski asked if Dayan thought Assad would not sign a peace treaty with Israel.

Dayan said Assad is thinking of something like ending the state of war. He says Israel should give back all of the territories and that all of the Palestinians should be allowed to go back, but he doesn’t want to make any concessions on his side.

Mr. Brzezinski said suppose Assad were ready to sign a treaty and have diplomatic relations with Israel. Would that make a difference?

Dayan said it certainly would. Israel would have to reexamine its views altogether. But, he added, we are talking about now, not about theory.

Ambassador Lewis remarked that what *Dayan* had said about settlements didn't square with what he said before, that no settlement would be an obstacle to peace.

Dayan replied that he really did not think settlements make negotiations more difficult. Boundaries won't be decided by where the settlements are. If there is peace, some settlements would stay on the other side of the border or we would move them. We might come to an agreement with the other party to leave them where they are but in no case would a settlement be an obstacle to peace. *Dayan* said that in general Israel has established settlements where it thinks it should stay for good, not simply temporarily. This applies in Golan in particular. It has established settlements in the view that it should stay there, "but if in peace negotiations the boundary turns out to be different, we won't say we can't move from here because there is a settlement here."

The Secretary asked if it were correct that Israel's position is that military considerations are the reason for the position it takes regarding Golan.

Dayan said Israel takes into consideration both military considerations and the fact of settlements.

The Secretary asked whether if circumstances changed and peace could be obtained, settlements would affect Israel's position on withdrawal.

Dayan replied that if peace could be obtained, Israel would definitely have to review its position. He said he could assure that settlements will not decide the line. If there are settlements outside the line, either Israel will move them or come to an understanding with the other party. But, *Dayan* added, Golan is so narrow that he could not see much room for arrangements there.

The Secretary proposed discussing the West Bank. He said we get the impression from Israel's paper that Israel feels the border must be the Jordan River. How can there be a basis for a conference if Israel takes this position?

Mr. Rosenne said this is not correct. The paper says Israeli security must be based on the Jordan, not that the border must be in Jordan.

Dayan observed that there are no "musts" in Israel's paper. Israel has been exploring the West Bank question with the Arabs for ten years and has found that they reject all compromise. He said the fact is he could not see any line on the West Bank that would be acceptable to

both the Arabs and Israel. For example, Dayan said, there are 400,000 people in Gaza, half of them refugees. They work in Israel. He would not like to imagine what would happen if they had barbed wire between themselves and Israel and they could not work in Israel. Or suppose no one could go to work from the West Bank to Israel. The same applies to Jerusalem. There can't be artificial barriers. At this point Dayan spoke at length about how Israel had not been able to use the Hebrew University during the time of Jordanian rule of the West Bank because Jordan would not allow free passage there.

Mr. Brzezinski said no one wants to return to the situation of barbed wire, walls and all that. Dayan replied that part of the problem on the West Bank is security. Israel has its early warning system there. Part is political, in particular Jerusalem; and part is economic, which is largely the case of Gaza.

The Secretary asked how Dayan would envisage the administration of the West Bank. Dayan said Israel is clear about what its interests are but does not really know what the Arabs want. Israel has to keep a military position at the top of the hills and in the Jordan Valley. It would avoid discussing sovereignty. It would not establish settlements that displace Arab populations; it would put settlements only where there are security concerns. Dayan said this does not mean that he would exclude an Israeli from buying land on the West Bank if he wants to and if an Arab wants to sell, but as a general principle Israel would establish settlements only where security is concerned.

Dayan said the question was whether Israel would be dealing with the Jordanians or the local Arabs. For a long time the Israelis thought it would be Jordan that they would be dealing with. But now they realize they must find out what the West Bankers themselves want. Dayan added that he felt he should say that one day Jordan itself will be Palestinian. He thought it very clear that the Palestinians would not elect King Hussein if they have a choice. Eventually the Palestinians on both sides of the Jordan will be a majority and eventually they will rule, he said.

The Secretary remarked that Dayan had said that the other party would be local people. "We do have the mayors," Dayan said. If he had to discuss something he would approach the mayors, but he did not know if they would respond. Dayan termed the mayors all under the influence of the PLO. The Secretary asked if it would be possible that the mayors would be willing to act as an advisory group to a Jordanian delegation at Geneva. Dayan said he didn't know. It depends on the PLO. They wouldn't do it if the PLO didn't want them to. They are scared to death of the PLO.

The Secretary said he gathered from the Israeli letter that Israel feels there should be no foreign state with sovereignty over the West Bank.

Does that mean Israeli sovereignty or no sovereignty at all over the West Bank, merely administration? Dayan replied that Israel would consider both Jordan and a Palestinian state to be foreign sovereignty, but that “we would not consider ourselves foreign, Israeli sovereignty would not contradict our principle.” But he said Israel really didn’t specify Israeli sovereignty. Dayan said if the problem arises, Israel would be ready to consider something in between. “I myself think that whatever arrangement there is on the West Bank cannot be eternal.” Dayan added that the West Bank will not be the first element to be settled in a peace treaty, and that perhaps after the other problems have been settled something can be worked out for the West Bank too. Dayan suggested that we see how Israel and the Arabs live together before an answer be given on sovereignty. Sovereignty can be decided at the end. “Let’s start with questions like who will repair the roads.”

The Secretary asked if it might be possible to leave the question of sovereignty over the West Bank unresolved, without Israel claiming sovereignty, but that an administration could be set up. How much autonomy would such an administration have? Dayan replied, “Let them formulate it” (presumably meaning the West Bankers). Israel would have military posts, but these posts would not interfere in the daily life of the population of the West Bank. Settlements would also not interfere. Arabs could work in Israel or not, as they want, and Israelis could travel in the West Bank, as they want. Israel would not run the West Bank schools, providing the schools were not used for inciting terrorism. If the West Bank Arabs don’t want to use Israeli technicians and facilities, that is up to them. Israel won’t force them. Dayan said he would ask the West Bankers what kind of autonomy they themselves want. “A Palestinian state is out of the question,” he added, “but otherwise we would consider their desires.”

The Secretary asked if it was correct that for Israel the real problem is who is the other person to negotiate with. Dayan replied, “Definitely.” He remarked, with a touch of bitterness, that since the Americans tell them they are entitled to self-determination and a Palestinian homeland the West Bank Palestinians won’t sit down and negotiate with Israel. Dayan added that Israel is not going to discuss the West Bank with the PLO.

Ambassador Lewis said he would like to ask a hypothetical question. Let us assume Dayan’s arrangement regarding the West Bank were worked out and some mixture of Jordanians and locals were running affairs in the West Bank. One of Israel’s bases in the mountains was attacked by terrorists. Israeli intelligence says that this is a terrorist cell based in Nablus. What would Israel do? Dayan replied that Israel would go and search and get them. Lewis replied, “This means Israel is retaining security responsibilities?” Dayan said, “Theoretically, if the

local forces would do it we would leave it to them, but in practice they won't. It would be very farfetched to think that they would."

Mr. Habib asked Dayan if he would elaborate on the question of with whom arrangements would be made. Dayan replied that if it is agreed that the West Bank is not going to be a Palestinian state or be returned to Jordan, then Israel has to find a way to live with it. Dayan said he would approach the Jordanians and the mayors and form a delegation—not a delegation for Geneva—to discuss this matter with them. The Jordanians might say they want to stay out. That would be natural after what the Americans have said regarding the Palestinians; that they should have their own entity.

At this point the Secretary excused himself, saying that he had to go to the White House a few minutes before the Foreign Minister's meeting with the President. The Secretary said he would see the Foreign Minister at the White House. Discussion of the West Bank problem continued briefly, with Dayan reiterating that Israel would seek the views of the West Bankers themselves on what kind of regime they would like.

Dayan and members of his party departed at 2:20 p.m. for the White House.

106. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, September 19, 1977, 3:30–5 p.m.

SUBJECT

President's Meeting with Foreign Minister Moshe Dayan of Israel

PARTICIPANTS

The President
The Vice President
Secretary of State Cyrus Vance
Dr. Zbigniew Brzezinski
Ambassador Samuel Lewis
Mr. David Aaron
Mr. Alfred L. Atherton

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Trips/Visits File, Box 110, 3/21–22/78 Visit of Prime Minister Begin of Israel: Briefing Book [II], 3/78. Top Secret. The meeting took place in the White House Cabinet Room. Brackets are in the original.

Mr. William B. Quandt
 Mr. Hamilton Jordan
 Mr. Stuart Eizenstat
 Mr. Robert Lipshutz
 Mr. Jody Powell

His Excellency Moshe Dayan, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Israel
 His Excellency Simcha Dinitz, Ambassador of Israel to the United States
 The Honorable Ephraim Evron, Director General, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
 The Honorable Hanan Bar-on, Minister, Embassy of Israel
 Mr. Meir Rosenne, Legal Advisor to the Foreign Minister
 Mr. Naphtali Lavie, Foreign Ministry Spokesman, and Advisor to the Foreign Minister
 Mr. Elyakim Rubinstein, Director, Foreign Minister's Bureau, and Advisor to the Foreign Minister

The President: We have already had a good discussion which I enjoyed very much.² I appreciated the frankness with which we were able to discuss many important matters. I particularly want to welcome General Dayan here since he is a man whom I have admired for a long time and who is well known as a war hero. I have asked Foreign Minister Dayan if I could describe the discussions we have already had and if I could summarize some of the concerns that I raised with him. I'll also try to summarize what we decided and he can correct me if I am wrong.

I told him that in my opinion Israel had taken adamant stands on the key issues and that the Arabs had shown more flexibility lately. I said that I was afraid Israel may not really want to negotiate, but he assured me that I was wrong. We discussed the major issue of settlements, and I repeated our long-standing position that settlements in occupied territories are illegal. After Prime Minister Begin returned to Israel from Washington, there were statements by Minister Sharon, which have not been contravened, which left the impression that Israel had a massive program of settlement. It would be hard to see how we could get to Geneva and how we could settle the West Bank issue which is one of the issues mentioned in Resolution 242. The formulation of "no foreign sovereignty over the West Bank" contravenes Resolution 242. With Prime Minister Begin, I said it would be easier for us to accept expansion of some existing settlements instead of new ones.³ Foreign Minister Dayan has said that Israel could live with this arrangement with the understanding that new settlers would be restricted to settlements already in place. New settlers would be incorporated into military installations, so that existing settlements would be

² According to the President's Daily Diary, Carter and Mondale met that day with Dayan between 2:31 and 3:25 p.m. (Carter Library, Presidential Materials, President's Daily Diary) No memorandum of conversation has been found.

³ See footnote 3, Document 54.

expanded somewhat. He showed me a map⁴ indicating six locations where this would happen. I responded by saying that I could not acknowledge the legality of this approach, but it would be better than the Sharon plan.⁵

I also discussed at length the possibility of Palestinian representation at Geneva. Israel's position on this issue had been too intransigent and it has been hard to find common ground. Some of the Arabs insist on separate Palestinian representation. Some prefer a unified delegation and some prefer that Palestinians be represented as part of the Jordanian delegation. I understand that Israel favors this latter position. When Prime Minister Begin was here, he stated that he would accept Palestinian representation in the Jordanian delegation if it did not include well-known PLO figures, and that he would not examine the credentials of the Palestinian representatives. But later at a press conference, he said that he would not accept PLO members at all.

I hope that Israel will agree that for the first sessions of the Geneva Conference there might be a combined Arab delegation including Palestinians, provided that there are no well-known PLO members. Later the negotiations would break up into individual negotiating teams and treaties would be signed with Egypt, Syria, and Jordan separately. When the Palestinian question is discussed, without regard to boundaries, there could be a multinational dimension to this group, so that other Palestinians might join the discussions, including representatives of the refugees. The Foreign Minister said this would probably be acceptable, but he could not speak for Prime Minister Begin. My hope is that we can use this approach to get agreement with the Arabs.

I told Foreign Minister Dayan that our position on territory has not changed. Prime Minister Begin asked me not to use the phrase regarding the 1967 borders with only minor modifications, and I have not done that, and I have not drawn any maps. I think our discussion has clarified Israel's position in my mind. The other item we discussed was Israeli activities in Lebanon. The Prime Minister said that we had received some wrong information on their forces in South Lebanon. There were some Israeli forces helping the Christians hold one hill.

⁴ The map has not been found.

⁵ The Sharon Plan, first reported in the Israeli newspaper *Maariv* on September 1, called for "the establishment of large urban centers and a network of rural settlements to be located in sparsely populated areas, but so placed as to prevent the spread of existing concentrations of Arab population. The plan reportedly is aimed at finding an answer to security needs and revolves around three central problems: 1) increasing Jewish settlement in the Jerusalem corridor; 2) establishing a network of settlements covering the area west of the Jenín-Nablus-Ramallah line; and 3) planning for a longitudinal and latitudinal road network 'in the center of the state of Israel' between the sea in the west and the Jordan Valley in the east." (Telegram 6599 from Tel Aviv, September 2; National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D770319-0086)

That was the limit of their involvement and he said he thought the fighting was unlikely to escalate. I hope that I have described our discussion correctly.

Foreign Minister Dayan: I will recommend to Prime Minister Begin that we agree to form a committee on the Palestinian issue, provided that this is a separate item from the Geneva Conference; that it not be in the Geneva framework; that it be treated as an issue by itself. This would aim at solving the refugee problem only and not the status of the West Bank or other issues. That would justify other parties being there, since they also have refugees. They could be members of this committee, but they could not discuss the future of the West Bank territories. It would not be part of the conventional Geneva peace conference. I agree that the refugee problem needs to be dealt with. It should be considered in a committee separate from the framework of the Geneva Conference, and it should not deal with the territorial problem or the status of the West Bank.

President: Could you separate that into two parts? Could you let the territorial question be included at Geneva, but let the refugees be part of the negotiations with a multilateral group? Do you insist that Jordan is the only country with which you will discuss the status of the West Bank?

Dayan: Yes, that is our basic concept. Geneva should only be for the original states that participated. The West Bank was under Jordanian control or sovereignty before. Jordan will be at Geneva and no other Arab country should have any say in the West Bank issue.

President: You also told me that the West Bank territory could be subject to partition if Jordan preferred that and if it were acceptable to Israel.

Dayan: That is not our proposal. We prefer the *modus vivendi*, but we are open-minded and we will discuss other proposals. If Jordan submits an idea to partition the West Bank, we will discuss it. But this idea has been rejected for ten years. I personally cannot see any line dividing the West Bank into two parts. This is our view, but if they want to divide the area, they should suggest that, and then we will discuss it.

President: Let me ask a question. Can you see the possibility that if this West Bank area is not partitioned, but given local control, that there might be a referendum in the West Bank after two, three, or four years, which would let the inhabitants of the area decide their relationship to Israel or Jordan?

Dayan: I can tell you now what the outcome would be. They would say to us to get out, and that's all. There is no point in trying to gain time. We would get the same response in four years. Our idea of trying to live together may not be the last word. This is a complex question.

There must be some resettlement of the refugees, and a final decision can simply not be found today.

President: How do you see a final decision?

Dayan: I don't know, but I could recommend that after a certain number of years we should be ready to re-discuss the issue, but we cannot decide now what will happen later. Now we can talk about what is happening today and we can only agree to consider at a later date the final outcome.

President: If your approach is unacceptable, could you envision giving the people on the West Bank two choices: affiliation to Israel or affiliation to Jordan?

Dayan: They will prefer to join Jordan.

President: And you reject that?

Dayan: Yes. We oppose any annexation of the West Bank to Jordan and the creation of a Palestinian state, but if they think of partition as only annexing part of the territory, then we could deal with their proposal. But if all of the West Bank and Gaza are to be annexed to Jordan, this would lead to the future destruction of Israel. If the old green line were to become the border and the Arabs were to control the high ground, and if it were to return to Jordan through a referendum, we would have to remove our military installations and our settlements and I would have to consider the consequences for my country. To accept such a boundary for the future would be impossible and I could not recommend it.

Secretary Vance: It might be useful for me to talk about some of the fundamental principles of US policy.

President: Before that, is there anything more we should discuss on the Geneva Conference?

Secretary Vance: I am not sure I understood. As I heard him, his proposal would not apply to Geneva, but that the Palestinian issue would be apart from Geneva, with separate discussions on the refugee problem.

President: On matters of West Bank territory, Israel prefers to talk to Jordan, but there could be Palestinians with the Jordanians if they were not well-known PLO members. With respect to Palestinians elsewhere, the negotiations could take place in a multinational delegation dealing just with refugees.

Secretary Vance: But Israel will discuss at Geneva the West Bank problem with Jordan, if there are no well-known PLO members.

Dayan: We will not look at their credentials, provided the negotiations are with Jordan. The President suggested that the unified delegation would just be for the ceremonial opening.

President: I don't want to make it that restrictive. It would be for the convening of the conference, but when you divide up the negotiations would be directly with Syria and Egypt and with Jordan, including Palestinians.

Dayan: In the collective delegation, there would be Palestinians, but not known PLO members. They would belong only to the Jordanian delegation and would participate with the Jordanian delegation. The collective group will not negotiate peace treaties. For that we will talk to Syria, to the Egyptians about Sinai, and to Jordan about the West Bank. Eventually, we want peace with each of these countries.

President: I don't want to define this too narrowly, but there should be negotiations with each country.

Dayan: For peace negotiations to take place, Israel will have to talk to each Arab country separately, not with a collective group. The Palestinians should be part of the Jordanian delegation, at the opening and during the negotiations. One other item should be dealt with and that is the settlement of the refugee problem. I attach special importance to this. There are refugees in Lebanon, Syria, Kuwait and elsewhere. To deal with this question, there could be a different committee and the Arab countries and the Palestinians could take part. But this would not be part of the Geneva Conference and would not be on the agenda. The parties would agree to deal with the question, but it should not be included as part of the Geneva Conference, which is a conference to reach peace with Arab states.

Secretary Vance: I would like to react to two aspects of what you have said. Suppose we could not get agreement on Palestinians in a Jordanian delegation, Jordan might not accept. It would be a mistake to completely rule out the alternative of a unified Arab delegation. Your solution may be preferable, but if it is impossible, that would leave no choice for Palestinian representation.

President: Do we have any indication of how Jordan would respond to this?

Dayan: They say that whatever is acceptable to the other Arabs is all right with them. They would accept the PLO representing the Palestinians, they would accept a Palestinian state, and they would accept a Palestinian delegation made up of the PLO. They are not strong enough to take other positions, even if they do not like those positions. They will follow the others.

President: Will Sadat agree to this?

Secretary Vance: He will go along with the consensus of other countries on this. He has advocated that as a preferred solution.

President: So that only leaves Assad?

Secretary Vance: That's right. He prefers a unified Arab delegation.

President: Would Assad accept a combined group first, and then for discussions of the West Bank, could he leave that to Jordan? There is no reason for the Palestinians to be in on the discussions concerning the Golan Heights.

Secretary Vance: You could split up for Egyptian-Israeli talks on Sinai, Syrian-Israeli talks on Golan, but there is a question about the West Bank.

Dr. Brzezinski: Perhaps that could be done later. The negotiations could move in a synchronous manner, so that once negotiations had been started on one front, the West Bank issue could come up later. Then it might be easier to bring the Palestinians in, while on the surface at least they would not be present at the outset. The question of participation would not have to be addressed at the outset. You could start the process, then bring them in later.

Secretary Vance: That's a possibility.

Dr. Brzezinski: The other alternative is a non-starter from the beginning.

Dayan: There are three stages to the process of negotiations. There is the opening; the actual negotiations, which will be very long and will probably not take place in Geneva, since one needs to deal directly with the heads of State; and then the reconvening of the conference in Geneva to sign the peace treaties. If there is really a chance of a breakthrough, we should find a way for an opening session, and this should be agreed, but the Arabs should accept that the negotiations will go on in bilateral channels through the United States. They will not really sit in Geneva. That would be a hopeless task.

Secretary: I agree.

President: If, for example, the Arab countries say that they prefer to start as a unified delegation, would that be all right?

Dayan: It would be ok, if there is agreement, but the real negotiation would be separate, not as a collectivity. I hope that a peace agreement can be reached with Egypt, but Assad should not be involved with that. There is no legal reason to talk with Assad about Egypt.

President: We will pursue this with the Arab foreign ministers. We may be able to get Hussein and Sadat to agree. I don't know about Assad. Does he really want them all to negotiate as a group on territory?

Secretary Vance: He favors that, but Sadat will not agree. Sadat wants separate negotiations.

Dr. Brzezinski: Even that could be obscured if the parties wanted to. You can have a committee on Sinai with an Egyptian chairman.

Secretary Vance: That's too complicated.

Dr. Brzezinski: But it offers a formula.

President: We should be forceful on this, and we should not comply with Assad's view that the actual negotiations be held in a unified delegation.

Secretary Vance: I agree.

President: If it is necessary to agree to a multinational delegation for the Palestinian issue, would you object to postponing the talks on the refugee problem?

Dayan: No, not at all. We could deal with it as a separate problem if the timing can be agreed. No one of the Arab leaders knows the answer for the Palestinians. For example, they do not want them to stay in Lebanon, but there is no alternative. This is the problem in each one of the countries. Jordan wants to settle the refugees in Jordan and we want to settle those in Gaza. But the timing is up to them. This is the only issue on which a combined delegation would be justified.

President: We not only have to try to work out areas of agreement between the Arabs and Israel, we also have to do this among the Arabs.

Dayan: It is a tough problem.

Secretary Vance: If we were to go the Jordanian delegation route, and if someone were to ask a low-level Palestinian if he were a member of the PLO, does it all fall apart if he says that he is?

Dayan: If everything else is ok, that would not be a cause for failure. I was asked this morning if I thought the West Bankers support the PLO, and I said that all of the mayors are supporting the PLO as their leaders. We have not driven those people out, since they replaced the old mayors because they did support the PLO.

President: Does the PLO represent the Palestinians on the West Bank?

Dayan: We will negotiate with whoever is there on the West Bank if they are not actively engaged in military operations against us. They have been elected by their own people. We can't tell them who their leaders are. Our only condition is that they not be active in military operations against us.

President [to Secretary Vance]: Would you like to cover the fundamentals of our policy now?

Secretary Vance: The core issue in our policy involves maintenance of the security of Israel. This is based on a sense of justice and of moral commitment to Israel's security. Israel can also count on us for the military support to help it defend itself. We are prepared for a long-term military commitment as part of a peace settlement. This is fundamental and underlies everything else.

President: If in the final stages of a peace agreement, it becomes necessary for us and the Soviets to guarantee the peace, would that be significant, or would that concern you?

Dayan: There are two aspects. We would not like to be in a position where US troops had to fight for us. American soldiers should not be in the position of having to protect Israel. Israel has never asked for soldiers, only for arms. So some Israelis would object to an American guarantee. On the other hand, if the Soviets become involved with soldiers as they almost did in 1967 and 1973, we hope that you will take care of it. Then we had the bad experience of Sharm al-Shaikh. In 1957, this was handed over to the UN and we got a vague promise from Dulles that the Strait would not be closed. But the UN forces did not stand up to Nasser in May 1967, so war came. I think that if US soldiers, and maybe even some symbolic Soviet forces had been there, Nasser would never have dared do this, or they would not have left in any case. The issue would have immediately gone to the Security Council, so I would support that kind of involvement, not as a replacement for secure borders however. For example, if we were asked to remove our soldiers from the Golan Heights, and to replace them with Americans with early warning systems, then I would be reluctant to agree. That would be more than a symbolic force. They would be required to take care of us even in time of peace. But if you are talking about a buffer area, with UN forces, and with us living together with our neighbors, and with someone in between, that would be all right. But if a peace agreement requires a US shield, then I would say no. But I am very anxious to know how far the US is ready to go to assume responsibility in the peace agreement. Maybe you see the situation as in Europe and you would want some garrison in the Middle East. If you are interested, this could be discussed. We want to know how far you would go.

President: We have no position now. I cannot say anything at the present, but we do very much want a peace settlement and we will consider this question. For the moment, we do not have a position.

Dayan: Ben Gurion, who was our greatest leader, once wrote to President Kennedy and to General DeGaulle and asked them to assume responsibility for defending Israel's borders. He wanted this as a way of deterring war. Maybe it could be an approach to a solution.

President: That helps me to understand your position.

Secretary Vance: Our second principle has to do with the nature of peace. Peace should involve the end of belligerency and open borders, trade, cultural and diplomatic relations. We believe this could occur in synchronized phases tied to withdrawal. Our third point has to do with bilateral Arab and Israeli security arrangements.

President: Please excuse me for about fifteen minutes. I'll be right back. [The President leaves.]⁶

Secretary: Now we have already discussed the priorities that Israel has as part of the peace process, and it is clear that diplomatic relations are the highest priority. Israel's position is that one month after a treaty is signed, there should be an exchange of Ambassadors. We have discussed the feasibility of that timing. We agree on the elements of peace, but there are practical problems of timing.

Dayan: I told the Secretary that I have been trying hard for the past month to find out the positions of the Arab leaders on how far they are willing to go to get peace. Both Egypt and Syria are not ready for normal diplomatic relations. They all want full withdrawal, and in return will offer an end to the state of war. But they are not ready for normal diplomatic relations. They are not ready in one month or in one year. They say that in five years' time or so they will discuss the issue, but it cannot be part of the peace treaty. Only Jordan accepts diplomatic relations.

Secretary Vance: We will keep on trying to persuade them of the vital importance of this issue.

Vice President: The President has been firm and strong with each of the Arab leaders in discussing the need for real peace. He has emphasized that this must be more than non-belligerency, and has pressed them all very hard. When Prime Minister Begin talked about a treaty, he emphasized that it had certain distinctive components and we have pressed the Arabs on this question and they all accept the treaty concept. We are somewhat more optimistic than you are about their positions. Before Geneva we expect to hear maximum positions, but we can hope for more, and we are totally committed to real peace as one element in a settlement.

Secretary Vance: Assad told me that he understood the issue and that he will consider it, but he has taken a harder position since then, and we do not know if this is just for bargaining purposes.

With respect to the question of borders, our position is that the final borders should be the 1967 line, with minor modifications on the West Bank. We have a difference of view on this. Prime Minister Begin and the President discussed this, and we will not refer publicly to this position without prior notification to you. On the West Bank, the US considers that the West Bank and Gaza are occupied territories from which Israel should withdraw in accordance with Resolution 242, and

⁶ According to the President's Daily Diary, Carter attended a briefing on the Panama Canal treaties for state legislators from Southern states from 4:15 to 4:46 p.m. (Carter Library, Presidential Materials, President's Daily Diary)

after reaching agreement with whatever party negotiates that issue. We also favor self-determination for the inhabitants of those areas and provision for a Palestinian entity, preferably in relationship to Jordan. We have different views on this and we disagree on the ultimate solution, but there is some similarity on what could be done in a transitional period. On settlements, you have referred to your discussion with the President in private and you understand our position.

Dayan: Let me repeat our position here. Maybe the Vice President could correct me. I assured the President that we have no intention of putting any obstacles in the way of peace negotiations. We don't want any surprises for you and we don't want to mislead you. We are sorry for some announcements that were made, but these did not come from the Prime Minister or from me. That is our only justification. For the future, and in the near future, you should remember that every Israeli government since the Six-Day War has established Jewish settlements, and this is not new to this Government. No Israeli Government can stop this. Begin cannot do it any more than Golda Meir could. I suggested that we should only have settlements in military camps, and legally this does not contradict Geneva or any international convention. We will tell Israelis who want to settle that they should put on their uniforms and join the military camps that are already there. We might build some military quarters for them, and some of them have families. But one year from now, there will be no new civilian settlements. There will only be settlers in uniform in military camps. If the President can be helpful during the negotiations, we can take a year and do just this.

Vice President: You were talking of existing military outposts, not new ones. So there would be some new military personnel in existing facilities.

Dayan: I can show you on the map. If you accept this, there would be new settlers in six existing military camps. Arik Sharon has already put some people into two of the eight camps that I originally mentioned, but six remain. The civilians can go into these settlements if they agree to join the armed forces, and later they could bring their families, but there would be no new land acquired, although I cannot promise you that for military reasons there might not be a new military camp here or there, over a longer period.

Vice President: But these six are already in place? How many individuals would be in each one?

Dayan: There would be thirty to forty families in each one. We won't expropriate any land. The land already belongs to the military camp.

Vice President: Would their families go with them from the beginning?

Dayan: Some might go, but the families would not go right away. For those who want to have their families, it will take time to turn these into normal military bases with some family quarters. It would not happen right away. The number of families would be small, and initially they would go without their families and only later would they come. I asked the President if this could be helpful. He said that the US position would not change, but that it would be “very helpful,” and better than the other plan, so I will be prepared to recommend it to Prime Minister Begin.

Secretary Vance: Would these be highly publicized events?

Dayan: Personally I wish we had no publicity on any of these. But if some individuals go to these camps, and if they join the army, they may be very highly ideological, and it will not be a secret. But they will be involved in genuine military service. It will not just be a cover. They will form special military units. We call these *nahals*, and it involves military service and settling of the land. We won’t turn any *nahals* into civilian settlements for at least a year. These operate as organic parts of our armed forces. We cannot promise that there will never be a settlement, but settlements will not decide boundaries and if a settlement is beyond our final border, it will either be removed or we will get an agreement with our neighbors.

Vice President: For the first year, would they just be military, or would families come during that time?

Dayan: There might be some in the first year, but they would be farmer-soldiers. We have in mind just these six.

Dr. Brzezinski: What is the average acreage involved in these settlements?

Dayan: It differs. Some camps are large where the Jordanians had bombing ranges, for example, but mostly they are small and are surrounded by a fence.

Vice President: Would the settlers become members of existing units?

Dayan: They would be separate units but they would be under the authority of the base commander. If there were an armored unit at a camp, the new settlers would not necessarily be armor specialists. These would be *nahals*, and there would be thirty or forty families in each.

Ambassador Lewis: There is the problem of the visibility and the effect on peace of these settlements. There is no chance that they can remain secret, but is there a chance that you could avoid dramatic announcements of settlement plans coming from the settlement committee?

Dayan: I don't know. The Prime Minister will do his best, but it will not be a secret. When Arik Sharon speaks of plans for the next two hundred years, but when he only opens two new settlements on the ground, it sounds like more than it is. I cannot assure you that the Minister of Agriculture will not say something.

Vice President: But when you remain silent, his statements assume authority. If there is a statement by Sharon and it is not corrected by the Prime Minister or the Foreign Minister, that leaves it in a semi-approved status.

Dayan: You might suggest something like this to the Prime Minister. I am not in charge of settlements. You could ask the Prime Minister his views and he would make an official announcement.

Ambassador Lewis: The problem is the public vs. private reassurances. The Prime Minister gave us private assurances and these were accepted, but he did not say anything in public.

Dayan: If you asked him to make a public statement, he would do so. If the Ambassador had asked, he would have.

Secretary Vance: Let us reflect on the settlements, and we will be back in touch. Let me go on to the next point concerning Jerusalem. We believe that the status of the city is still to be determined in the context of peace. There should be no physical division of the city. Concerning Israel's economic viability, we support an economically strong Israel and we recognize the burden of Israel's military forces and we will assist in maintaining Israel's economic viability. [The President returns at 4:40 p.m.] On the US role, the US is determined to obtain a settlement that derives from justice and national interest. We are a directly affected party and we will actively promote a settlement. This is a brief summary of our views.

There is one question that I have. Where do we go on the participation question in the event that the preferred option of a Jordanian delegation with Palestinians does not work? There is a lack of clarity on this.

President: I want to try to understand your position. I can't speak for the Arabs or for you—I wish that I could! But if you have any other possibilities, I would like to hear them. We will see Foreign Minister Fahmy on Wednesday,⁷ and then the Jordanian and Syrian. If we can get them to accept your formulation, we can move ahead. If not, we will be back in touch with you. Foreign Minister Dayan has told me he will be in New York for three weeks. I don't know if there are any other options.

⁷ September 21.

Sec. Vance: The alternative is a unified Arab delegation with Palestinians included, but with negotiations on a bilateral basis, so that a Sinai agreement would be reached between Israel and Egypt, and a Golan agreement between Israel and Syria.

Dinitz: What would the unified delegation do?

Secretary Vance: It would go to the plenary, and we would hope to limit that and then break up into separate negotiations.

Dayan: I have already agreed to recommend this to the Prime Minister.

President: The unified delegation would not negotiate. I hope that they can accept this.

Dayan: Egypt wants peace and progress in negotiations. If they know that they have to take or leave this position because Israel is so inflexible, they will accept it. After the opening of the negotiations, there will be a long process and there will probably be disappointments in the negotiations. There are many obstacles to meet.

President: I agree that we ought to expect long negotiations, at least several months, but I hope we will not be disappointed and that we can get started on the basis of good faith. Once the negotiators get to know each other's problems, this might lead to more flexibility. I learned a lot from my talks this year and I can see some possibilities for a solution, if there is enough flexibility to help make progress. We are going to do our utmost with Fahmy and Khaddam and Sharaf to get them to accept, or we will develop a new alternative and talk to you about it.

Dayan: I am not sure Fahmy is the best person from the point of view of getting Sadat to do business. It might be better to deal directly with Sadat.

Secretary Vance: He is not hesitant to deal with President Sadat.

President: Sadat has been here, and Secretary Vance has been to see him twice. Sadat wants peace in Geneva. When issues go to Sadat, he tries to accommodate. The same is true with Hussein, although I am not so sure of Assad and I am not so sure of Begin.

Dayan: Begin wants peace. He is a Prime Minister who wants to make his mark on history as a man who got peace for Israel.

President: We have no preconceived demands. If the parties can agree, nothing would please us more. We should let all the parties reach an agreement, develop mutual trust, work out security arrangements, set up recognized borders, and work for friendship and trade and open borders and diplomatic relations with the exchange of Ambassadors. We would hope to see the development then of the Middle East region. We want some progress this year. It would have been impossible a year ago for some of the Arabs to recognize Israel's right to exist even five years in the future. Now all of them will. These discus-

sions have been fruitful, and we will continue them. You have a good attitude. I have no authority to speak for the Arabs. We can't be sure they will adopt your position, but we will do our best.

I want to repeat that I am quite concerned by the settlements. We consider them a violation of the Geneva Convention and of international law. This is occupied territory. To whatever degree Prime Minister Begin can forego settlements, that would help the peace prospects. His statement to me on the possibility of settlers going to existing settlements is not the best solution, but I appreciate it.

Dayan: We believe that if they are in military camps, none of the international conventions should apply.

Secretary Vance: This would help, but we have viewed civilians in military camps as civilians in the past and that would be a violation of law. If they were in military uniform and if this were genuine, it would help.

Vice President: The numbers and the timing and the announcements would all be part of the picture in terms of whether it helped or hurt the peace prospects. We would prefer no settlements, but if it does go forward, you should try to limit the visibility and the political ramifications.

Dayan: In the near future, there will only be settlers in the six existing military camps. They will be in uniform and they will not bring their families at first, but within a year or so there might be more.

President: You see our problem. We have a legal and historic position. We will maintain that attitude. How the settlement issue is handled in public causes me concern. If Hussein and Sadat want peace, and I assume that they do, it is hard for them to listen to your talk about thousands of new settlers, about no foreign sovereignty over the West Bank, and about the West Bank being part of Israel. This almost forecloses the chance of a Geneva Conference. I hope that the Prime Minister and the Government will try to minimize those types of statements. I was really angry watching Sharon on television saying that there would be hundreds of settlers, maybe in the millions.⁸ That is not what Prime Minister Begin had told me, or what you have said. Whatever you do, we don't want you to make it difficult for the Arabs. My doubts about Israel's real willingness for peace stemmed largely from that declaration, which I viewed as a deliberate attempt to aggravate the situation. It did concern us. Your responses have been good and have been helpful.

⁸ The *New York Times* reported that Sharon discussed his proposals for Israeli settlements (see footnote 5 above) on Israeli television on September 2. ("World News Briefs," *New York Times*, September 3, 1977, p. 2)

Dayan: I will pass on to Prime Minister Begin what you have said and we will try to avoid such statements from Arik Sharon in the future.

President: I have a strong friendship with Prime Minister Begin.

Dayan: One last point. When the idea of a unified delegation comes up, you should suggest it as your own idea, and do not say that we agree. You should say that we object, and then you can try to force it on us.

Meeting ended at 5:00 p.m.

107. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, September 21, 1977, 11:10 a.m.–12:10 p.m.

SUBJECT

President's Meeting with Egyptian Foreign Minister Ismail Fahmy

PARTICIPANTS

The President
The Vice President
Secretary of State Cyrus Vance
Dr. Zbigniew Brzezinski
Mr. Hamilton Jordan
Mr. Robert Lipshutz
Mr. David Aaron
Mr. Alfred L. Atherton, Jr.
Ambassador Hermann Eilts
Mr. William Quandt

Foreign Minister Ismail Fahmy
Ambassador Ashraf Ghorbal
Under Secretary Osama al-Baz, Minister of Foreign Affairs
First Secretary Dr. Mohammed Baradai Executive Secretary of Foreign Minister's
Cabinet
Minister Counselor Mohammed Shaker, Egyptian Embassy

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Trips/Visits File, Box 109, 2/3–4/78 Visit to President Sadat of Egypt: Briefing Book [II], 2/78. Top Secret. The meeting took place in the White House Cabinet Room.

President: I'd like to begin by outlining the discussion that I have just had with the Foreign Minister,² and the Foreign Minister may correct me if necessary. We have not reached any substantive agreements, but we have had a frank exchange of views. On the specific issue of the PLO, I have asked Foreign Minister Fahmy to encourage the PLO to accept U.N. Resolution 242 as the basis for negotiations, with a reservation on the Palestinian refugee clause if they choose. He has been given a text of a statement, and I believe that the PLO could accept that if they were encouraged to do so by Egypt and Syria. It would be a major step. We have an agreement with Israel from 1975 that we will not violate,³ but if the PLO could accept Resolution 242, then we would be ready to start direct talks with the PLO, including with Arafat. Israel will not like that, but they know that we will do it. We hope that Egypt can help. We have had no direct contact with the PLO, but Arafat has used Egyptian and Syrian and Saudi officials to relay information to us. But our position remains clear that we cannot violate our commitment to Israel.

I have been trying to find some way to get the negotiations started without eliminating any matter from the discussions. I want to reemphasize that I am in this to stay and that I will use the full resources of this Government as long as I am President, and will use all legitimate means of influence to work for a Middle East peace. I will try to draw on the friendship that we have with Egypt, Israel, Jordan, and Syria to help reach an agreement.

We have differences on one key issue. This is the question of how much agreement must be reached before we go to Geneva. The Egyptian position that I have heard from President Sadat and from Foreign Minister Fahmy is that there should be substantial agreement before Geneva. I am eager for that, but I do not believe that any further progress on key issues can be made until Geneva is reconvened, and then there may be a long, tedious discussion that may go on for weeks or months. Israel is very difficult in some of her positions and I can't tell the Israelis what to do. My influence is based on the support of the American people, the support of Congress, and the support of the Jewish community. Therefore, I must make proposals that are fair. Otherwise, I will have no influence.

The question of how the parties should be represented in a unified or in separate delegations is complicated by Israel's preference for strict bilateral talks. Our hope is that we can find a solution to accommodate

² According to the President's Daily Diary, Carter met with Fahmy from 10:30 to 11:09 a.m. (Carter Library, Presidential Materials, President's Daily Diary) No memorandum of conversation of this discussion has been found.

³ A reference to the U.S.-Israeli memorandum of agreement signed on September 1, 1975. See footnote 12, Document 103.

all parties. I have not yet talked to the Syrians or the Jordanians, but I hope that there could be a unified Arab delegation at Geneva, with Palestinian or PLO representatives in the delegation, only excluding visible PLO leaders like Arafat. Others would be ok. There would be opening sessions where we would commit ourselves, along with the Soviets, to stick with the negotiating process and to offer our mediating services. The other parties would make public statements. Then the negotiations would break up into separate groups, in accord with the desire of Egypt and Israel. There would be an Egyptian-Israeli negotiating team to reach a peace agreement or treaty, dealing with territory and the other issues. The same would be done between Syria and Israel on the Golan Heights. Then we would let the occupied territories of the West Bank be dealt with in a Jordanian-Israeli group, with Palestinians in the Jordanian delegation. This group would deal with the status of the West Bank territories, including the possible arrangements for autonomy, a Jordanian relationship, or some division of the area. If Syria and Egypt were to insist on the right of approving any agreement reached between Jordan and Israel, that would be up to you.

There would remain the problem of the Palestinian refugees. Our hope is that if Israel and you can agree to accept negotiations on that issue, there would be a multinational group, including Palestinians and the PLO from various Arab countries. They would negotiate as a team to represent the refugees, to deal with the questions of compensation and return. This would not be part of the peace treaty negotiations, but would be separate and simultaneous. We don't object to having this done in Geneva, or in Cairo for that matter, but it would be an additional problem.

The Soviets, of course, are co-chairmen at Geneva, and we will have to work out with them anything that we agree to with you. I cannot accommodate the wishes of all the parties and I cannot assure the success of these negotiations, but it is my belief that this is the best approach. Once Geneva is reconvened, we can use our full resources and offer our services as an intermediary. We want to insure the success of the negotiations and we don't want any issue left out. I hope that we could get your agreement, even if this arrangement is not your first preference. I also hope that Jordan might agree to this arrangement, and maybe Syria. Perhaps we might meet again to discuss this and I might talk again to Foreign Minister Dayan. If I could say that you were willing to accept this, it would help. If there is an alternative, I just don't know it. I would like your help on this.

Foreign Minister Fahmy: I concur with almost everything that you have said. You are familiar with the details. But the people in the Middle East are giving you trouble, but you have no choice but to deal with the problem. You have our full faith and you know the depth of

the US-Egyptian relationship. Egypt is ready to cooperate to the fullest extent possible. We still believe that you will continue to serve as a mediator and that you will be informed of the positions of the parties. We know that you can use your influence on Israel and on us to bridge gaps informally. Once we are close to a final settlement, then we can go to Geneva to deal with the final substantive questions, but not with just procedure.

Egypt went to Geneva even when Syria did not go in December 1973. We would go again if we were convinced that it would serve the cause of peace. But to have Geneva, you have to agree to prepare it carefully, and we are not in a hurry. It would be bad to go if careful preparations had not been made, since then there would be no substitute, except your influence, if Geneva were to fail. Political auctioneering might then take place at Geneva, and we would be stuck in a precarious situation of no peace and no war.

There is no problem in the way of reconvening Geneva, except for the question of the PLO. To make the PLO go, the PLO must accept Resolution 242. But you must also make Israel accept the PLO. It doesn't matter whether the PLO representatives are well-known or junior. No one should be inspecting credentials. If we start inspecting credentials, I would have some questions to ask Begin about his. But how can the PLO go? We have to press the PLO to accept 242 with a reservation, and you have to press Israel to accept the PLO. Otherwise, there will be no Geneva.

The only alternative is for you and the Soviets to address an invitation to the PLO, and if they decline to accept, then we will go without them. The PLO and the Soviets know our position on this. If the PLO refuses to go, the Soviets will go without them. This is the same as our position. It would be the responsibility of the PLO if they chose not to go. And then we would go even if they refused.

So there are many ways to solve the problem. I have spoken to the PLO and I have told them that they should not bother so much with any specific formula. Beginning the dialogue with the United States would be fifty percent of the solution of their problem. But they are a group with many tendencies and they are manipulated by some countries in the area and some outside. There are many ways to solve the problem, and it is up to you to make the decision. My advice would be for you to continue to contact them informally and to offer them some reassurances. There would not have to be any announcement. Both Presidents Nixon and Ford promised to do this. It would be best for you to be able to get first-hand information about the real situation in the PLO.

The other way would be through formal contacts with the PLO if the PLO has accepted 242. I have been exchanging with Cyrus Vance

many formulas and I have discussed these with the PLO, including Arafat. The most difficult part for the PLO to accept is the phrase concerning the right of all states in the area to live in peace. This will be seen as the PLO recognizing Israel before the PLO has been recognized itself. And then there is the idea of a co-trusteeship for the West Bank under Israel and Jordan. They need to have some sort of assurance of a homeland or an entity of their own and they need to know that you support that. For them to recognize Israel without any recognition in return, simply to get to Geneva, is a big gamble. No one knows what will happen in Geneva.

If they cannot have secret contacts with you, and if agreement cannot be reached on the formula, the only way to proceed is for us to do something in the UN Security Council on Resolution 242. We would not ask you or the PLO to do anything. We are ready to request a Security Council meeting, after talks with you, which would aim at one simple question, not at a full discussion of the Palestinian issue. The simple question would involve a short draft resolution which could get unanimous approval, perhaps with the United States position being a question. But you could at least abstain and not veto the resolution. We will not do anything unless you agreed and unless you had approved the text in advance. The resolution would be very simple. It would have a preamble which would reaffirm UN Resolutions 242 and 338 without any changes. In the operational part, we would use the kind of language that you have formulated on a Palestinian homeland, making clear that the issue is not just that of refugees. It would not be difficult to get Security Council approval of all this, with the exception of your position. If you would go along, then there would be no need for you to chase after the PLO and you would not have to make any concessions or change in your position. The majority of the Security Council would pass the resolution. There would be no change in UN Resolution 242, and you yourself have said that this is not just a refugee problem in that there is a political problem to be solved as well. This would identify the crux of the conflict, and without recognizing this, there can be no final settlement.

President: There would be no amendment?

Fahmy: On the contrary, we would reaffirm Resolutions 242 and 338, with one addition. We would use language that you would agree upon concerning a Palestinian homeland.

President: It would be my intention if Resolution 242 were amended to veto a new resolution, but if you and Cy Vance can work out language, and if there is no modification of 242, I would consider it, but I would have to see the language first.

I would like to say a few words. I have gone far beyond my predecessors and I have gone now as far as I want to go in laying down the terms of a settlement. The suggestions I have offered are:

1. Withdrawal of Israeli forces from occupied territories, with only minor modifications in the 1967 line;
2. The establishment of a Palestinian homeland, which is significant for the Palestinians and the Arabs, and which the Israelis have taken exception to;
3. A comprehensive peace, a real peace, which would not be just an end of belligerency;
4. An offer to meet with the PLO if they accept reasonable terms and accept Resolution 242.

I think that if you and Saudi Arabia and others, including the Syrians, can help, we could get the PLO to accept.

Foreign Minister Fahmy: If the Syrians could be sure of getting Golan back, then they would press the PLO.

President: I can't guarantee the outcome of Syrian-Israeli negotiations, and I cannot predicate our talks with the PLO on guaranteeing the location of the Syrian border. We have a difficult problem now concerning the status of the Geneva Conference, we have to keep looking for a solution. You say Geneva should be for ratifying an agreement. I think we need Geneva to get the process started. Geneva can do both. We can go to Geneva, get agreement on that, then organize groups, negotiate on a bilateral basis, and reconvene Geneva to ratify the agreement. That would be no problem, but we need to break the deadlock to get talks going. The talks may go on for months. I will commit myself and I will offer my services as a mediator, and I will actively participate as long as there is hope for an agreement, even if it takes years. We are prepared to stick with the negotiations. If there were a full commitment to Geneva, we would be able to rally world opinion behind the process and press hard for success. But it is not possible to marshal that support now. The Europeans, for example, are reluctant to speak out, but once we go to Geneva, then any country which appears to be an obstacle to peace will be condemned by world public opinion and by American public opinion.

I want to say a word about the question of the PLO and their refusal to accept 242. It would be best if we could have direct discussions with the PLO. I agree that it is not really important whether Arafat or his representative participates, but this is important to Israel. I wish this were not the case, but I think we have come up with a possible resolution of this difficult question by suggesting a multinational approach to the refugee problem, in contrast to the discussions over the West Bank and the Palestinian homeland. These two issues should not be combined. There is no way of getting the Palestinians in Kuwait and Lebanon, for example, into the peace negotiations without causing problem. If Assad says that there can be no peace between Syria and Israel, unless the West Bank problem is solved, so be it. But let the Jorda-

nian and Palestinian negotiators talk with Israel, and if Syria cannot accept the outcome, let Assad refuse.

Fahmy: Assad's position is tactical, not strategic.

President: I understand.

Fahmy: The problem is that the Palestinians will never accept being part of a Jordanian delegation, or that Jordan should speak on their behalf, whether this takes place in Geneva or elsewhere.

President: I am not asking that. I want you to agree that this would not be a problem for Egypt, and let me worry about King Hussein and President Assad.

Fahmy: President Sadat has talked about a link between Jordan and the Palestinians, but at Rabat King Hussein spoke for six hours. No one listened to him at all, even though he gave a wonderful speech. As soon as he was done, the decision was taken that Yassir Arafat and the PLO should be the sole representative of the Palestinians. King Hussein said that he would withdraw from the question of the Palestinians. If this question is not solved, there will be a new Arab summit and it will be even more rigid.

President: The problem now is not just with Israel, but it is a problem among the Arabs. I am trying to do four things:

First, I am trying to protect American national interests which require peace in the Middle East and avoidance of war. This is different from drawing lines on the map. Our interests are not those of a bystander or of a mediator only.

Second, I am trying to negotiate between Israel and the Arab parties, including the Saudis.

Third, I am trying to work out differences among the Arabs themselves. Each of the Arab countries has a different position.

Fourth, I am trying to negotiate with the Soviets so that they can be part of the format for Geneva, but without giving them a major say in the negotiations.

This is very complex. I want you to trust me enough and be flexible while I try to get the negotiations started. In return, I would give my word that the United States is in this to stay, that we will be fair, and that we will not tell you one thing and the Israelis something different.

When we gave five principles to the parties, we gave the same ones to everyone. We put our ideas in writing. We welcomed your reactions and your expressions of concern. We did the same with all of the others. We are trying to see if there can be an agreement and where the differences are, and we will keep coming back to you until we see a narrowing of the differences. We wouldn't be afraid at a later stage to say what we think is fair. This might be some months off. We would take a stronger role then to propose the terms of a settlement and I am willing to do that. But it is better for you to negotiate your differences than for

us to impose an agreement. It would be a mistake for the Arabs to believe that we can control Israel. I cannot control Begin or the Israeli people. I have influence that can be used, but I need the support of Congress, the American people and the American Jewish community. I have no embarrassment in saying that we are even-handed. I have made this clear. Some of my positions have been unpopular in Israel, but I am very eager for an agreement. You have offered to trust me to resolve the final differences, and now I am also asking you to trust me on this less significant problem of simply getting to Geneva.

We will try to open discussions with the PLO, and we will be talking with the Syrians and the Jordanians and perhaps again with Dayan. I want to ask you to be accommodating.

Fahmy: We have full confidence in you, but we cannot do the impossible. We can do a great deal. When we said that we should prepare for Geneva, it is not that we are afraid to negotiate with the Israelis. The first armistice agreement was negotiated between Egypt and Israel. Syria ran away from it and then followed only later. I hope that you understand that we do not want Geneva simply for the sake of Geneva. I have been to Geneva. I am not afraid of going. But from my experience, I do not want to go there just to sit and listen to a lecture by Dayan who is just speaking to his own people.

President: I imagine that Egypt did the same.

Fahmy: No, we thought Geneva was serious. I had to give a rebuttal to the Israeli speech at Geneva. We want to prepare the substance of an agreement. We have had negotiations at Kilometer 101. Now we need a framework and then we will need to work out the details over months and it will be very difficult.

President: Where do you see the negotiations actually taking place? We will be prepared to be a mediator and to take part constantly. There was the example of Rhodes. But it is not practical for the U.S. negotiator to be flying from one capital to another. It would be better if you were all in the same place. And if we could go from one to the other party.

Fahmy: When we reach that stage, we can agree to find a solution.

President: Would you agree to talk in Jerusalem?

Fahmy: That is not exactly neutral territory, but if Israel were to declare that it were neutral, I would go tomorrow!

President: So you would prefer a neutral place. Could this be in Geneva?

Fahmy: We would continue to have contact through diplomatic channels and I could come here.

President: But once Geneva begins, then what happens? Where would you meet?

Fahmy: I would stay in Geneva. If the negotiations are seriously under way, I will stay there and I will move my Foreign Office there. I am only Foreign Minister for this one problem.

President: But you will be tougher than President Sadat!

Fahmy: It may appear that way, but I carry out his instructions.

President: I had no doubt about that. Is there anything in what I have said that you cannot accept?

Fahmy: I can't speak for Jordan or Syria, and it does not much matter whether there is one Arab delegation or four. Assad favors a single delegation, not for the sake of the Palestinians, but for different reasons which I explained to you. In his interview with the *New York Times*,⁴ he spoke in favor of an Arab League delegation for the Palestinians, but when Secretary Vance conveyed this idea to him, he claimed that he had never heard it before, even though we mentioned it to him in 1974. Now he says he favors it. Secretary Vance had already heard this idea from Sadat before Assad said it, but I don't want to claim authorship of the idea, but I want to note that the Syrians are just using this tactically. You should also know that the Jordanians are not on such easy terms with the Syrians and that the Jordanians have their own independent position.

President: We want to remove unnecessary obstacles. When we talk to the Israelis, they say that they might accept certain things but that the Arabs won't. I just want to know what the Israelis will accept and then I will try to get what the Arabs will accept. But I want to know if I can get your commitment and then you should let me worry about the others.

Fahmy: We won't say that to you. When we want to go ahead with negotiations, we will do so, despite the risks. Let me focus on the PLO problem. If you want to solve the Middle East problem, focus on this. If you get the PLO out from under Syria and the Soviets, you should do so.

President: We are trying.

Fahmy: You need to free them from their prison and then they will be very forthcoming.

President: Suppose that the PLO does accept 242 and we meet with them and Arafat says to me, Mr. President, you can speak for us.

Fahmy: We would accept! In discussions in 1974, Arafat said that if I could get him five kilometers, he would put up his flag and then proceed peacefully after his other objectives. But Israel refused. Henry Kissinger knows all this. But how do you reach the PLO?

⁴ The interview took place in Latakia on August 26. See John B. Oakes, "Assad Favors Peace With Israel, But Rejects Any Closer Relations," *New York Times*, August 29, 1977, p. 1.

President: You can help us there. The PLO can accept 242 if they want to meet with us. This may only be 50% of the problem, as you said, but the second 50% cannot be solved if they remain isolated and if they are the only ones refusing 242.

Fahmy: The PLO is no longer calling for the destruction of Israel. I have gotten good language from them, but you insist that they explicitly accept Resolution 242 and recognize Israel.

Secretary Vance: The whole purpose of this is to take care of the problem of their statements on the destruction of Israel in their covenant. It is critical that we have this acceptance of the right of all states to exist in peace. Otherwise, we will remain bound by the Sinai II agreement. We cannot go back on that.

Dr. Brzezinski: They don't have to make any mention of Israel, simply the right of all states to exist in peace.

Fahmy: But that means Israel.

Dr. Brzezinski: But they could also read it to mean their own state if they wish.

Fahmy: If you can guarantee a Palestinian state, I'll get their signature tomorrow.

Dr. Brzezinski: We can't prejudge the outcome of the negotiations and we cannot ally ourselves with their position.

Fahmy: I am not their representative.

President: There are many ways to prevent progress if that is the objective.

Fahmy: But we are discussing very weak language. The PLO reservation about Resolution 242 is that 242 is not tied to the Palestinian question or the national rights of Palestinians and does not call for a homeland for the Palestinians. The language that I have gotten from them already shows that they accept Resolution 242, but you insist that they do it explicitly and that they recognize the right of all states to exist in peace, but what assurances do they get? The Syrians say that Secretary Vance was only prepared to propose a co-trusteeship of Israel and Jordan for the West Bank. This is what the Syrians had told them.

Secretary Vance: That is not true.

Fahmy: I know that, and I have told them that. But even if you cannot give them any direct assurances, President Carter could give President Sadat a message that he supports a Palestinian homeland in the West Bank and Gaza with just minor rectifications in the border.

President: I can't give that commitment.

Fahmy: Then the PLO has nothing in hand. I have told them that talking to the United States would help solve fifty percent of their problem.

Dr. Brzezinski: That's just the point.

Fahmy: We can talk to them on your behalf.

Secretary Vance: If we say that we are prepared to put the Palestinian question on the agenda for Geneva, and that it will have to be dealt with . . .

Fahmy: But Resolution 242 only deals with the refugee problem. If we could agree on a formula, and would not need to embarrass you . . .

Secretary Vance: Let us look at some language and we will see what can be done.

Fahmy: You can't prevent it in any case. All you can do is judge how you would vote on a resolution.

President: I am going to have to go soon, but I would like to ask a question. Is there anything you cannot accept if we do get Israel, Jordan and Syria to accept this proposal.

Fahmy: If the PLO accepts, then none of the other parties can object. The problem is the PLO, not Egypt or Syria. Syria only wants you to stop the Israelis in Lebanon. I have received a cable about this today, asking you to use your influence.

President: We should like to have more meetings, and I would like to try to understand further your position. I would like you to agree now on the arrangement that I have outlined. Once we have gotten agreement on Geneva this year, the US and the Soviet Union would call for a reconvening of Geneva, with a joint Arab delegation, with Palestinian PLO representatives, but not Arafat, and we would try to do as much as possible to outline the procedures before hand. Then, negotiations would split up with individual negotiating teams. There might be a multinational group on refugees. The Palestinians, including the PLO, should be part of the Jordanian delegation to negotiate the boundaries of the West Bank and the status of that entity. If you don't like the final agreement, you can withhold your agreement. But we need to start the process.

Fahmy: If the PLO gets an invitation, we are ready to go to Geneva.

President: But there can be no separate PLO delegation.

Fahmy: If a single Arab delegation helps to solve the PLO problem, I'll accept it.

President: Let me worry about them.

Fahmy: You should meet them.

President: If they accept 242, we will.

Fahmy: If the PLO accepts, there would be no problem. If they go to Geneva, it doesn't matter how many delegations there are, but there will be problems.

President: We have enough to worry about already.

Fahmy: If you solve the PLO problem, neither Syria nor Egypt can refuse. If you issue an invitation with the Soviets to the PLO, and if they decline, then we will still go to Geneva.

President: If we can talk to Arafat, he might even agree to decline in advance.

Fahmy: We need to all be very practical. I'll convey your determination to President Sadat.

Secretary Vance: I want to make one point clear. I think it is impossible to have a Palestinian element in a unified Arab delegation that includes well-known PLO members, whether it is Arafat or others. If they are not well-known, then it could be put together.

Fahmy: How would you classify well-known? Arafat won't go in any case, since he thinks he is the head of state.

President: We should put this all down in writing, and give you an outline of our views, and we would like to let Foreign Minister Fahmy have a copy. He can then go over it with President Sadat, and if there are changes, we will have to go back and talk about it again. I do want you to be able to trust me on this question.

Fahmy: We hope that you will come up with fair peace proposals.

President: Prior to Geneva, our positions will remain general, as they have been, but as negotiations go ahead, then we will press for more specific decisions. We will put our ideas together on both the major and minor points.

Fahmy: We are prepared for Geneva, and we don't insist that we have draft agreements in advance and there will be plenty of room for real negotiations.

Secretary Vance: We actually may be able to get some drafts.

President: I urge you again to stay flexible.

The meeting ends at 12:10 p.m.

108. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, September 21, 1977, 12:40–2:10 p.m.

SUBJECT

Meeting of Secretary Vance and Egyptian Foreign Minister Fahmy

PARTICIPANTS

Egyptian

Ismail Fahmy, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister

Usama al-Baz, Undersecretary

Ambassador Ashraf Ghorbal

Mohamed Shaker, Minister, Egyptian Embassy

Mohamad Baradie, Notetaker

United States

Secretary Vance

Philip Habib, Under Secretary for Political Affairs

Assistant Secretary Alfred L. Atherton, Jr.

Ambassador Hermann Eilts

William Quandt, National Security Council

David Korn, Policy Planning Staff

Fahmy said that Security Council Resolution 242 must not be touched. It must be reaffirmed in the strongest terms. If 242 is changed in any way the situation will be impossible, Fahmy said. The Secretary said that if we get to Geneva, Geneva must be the forum for negotiations. The work of peacemaking will have to be done at Geneva, not elsewhere. Fahmy agreed strongly with this. He said there should be no “annexes” for deciding the problems; Geneva should be the framework. Fahmy said the negotiations at Geneva would obviously take months to complete. He added that “The Israelis will raise Hell and we will raise Hell,” but the negotiations will have to keep going on.

The Secretary asked Fahmy what he thought about Assad’s paper.² Fahmy said he knew that Assad was hesitant to send the United States anything at first but he later agreed to give the United States the principles.

The Secretary and Fahmy then turned to discussion of Southern Lebanon. Fahmy said the Syrians will not do anything in Southern Lebanon that would bring their troops into contact with the Israelis. How-

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Trips/Visits File, Box 107, 9/19/77–10/25/77 Vance Meetings with Middle East Foreign Ministers: 9–10/77. Secret; Nodis. Drafted by Korn. The meeting took place in the Secretary’s office at the Department of State.

² Apparently a reference to Assad’s message to Carter outlining Syrian proposals for a peace treaty. See Document 102.

ever, the Israelis and the Christian Rightists are cooperating in an “unprecedented way.” Fahmy said the Israelis are using the Phalangists and have again expanded their intervention. Arafat has sent an urgent message to all Arab heads of state asking for their assistance. The Secretary said that in the last several days we have been doing everything we could to bring about a ceasefire in Southern Lebanon and to get the parties talking with each other in order to resolve the problem there. We have been acting as intermediary between Lebanon and Israel and have conveyed the positions of each side to the other. The Secretary said the big question now is whether we can get a ceasefire.

Fahmy asked who is doing the shooting. The Secretary replied that this time it is the Christians. However, the Israelis have been shelling in the area of the hill, and have also sent some armored personnel carriers over the border into Southern Lebanon. Fahmy asked why the Christians were doing this, especially after the Palestinians had adhered to the Shtaura Agreement. The Secretary said we don’t have a clear answer to that. The hill is important and is much fought over and has changed hands many times. The Secretary said we have not talked to the Christians about this. He added that the next phase, if the Shtaura Agreement is to be implemented, would be for all the Palestinian troops to go north of the Litani.

The Secretary explained that two battalions of Lebanese troops were to be moved into Southern Lebanon, but this was to be done only after the fighting stopped. Since the fighting had not yet stopped, the troops had not been moved in. The Secretary said we are doing everything possible to encourage the Lebanese to move their troops into the south. We are speeding up our deliveries of arms to the Lebanese, so that they will not have an excuse for staying out. Fahmy recalled that he had advised the stationing of a UN force in Southern Lebanon, but apparently the Syrians had said “No.”

The Secretary asked Mr. Habib if he had any comment on the situation in Southern Lebanon. Mr. Habib said the Christian troops that were doing the fighting are local militias, not Chamoun’s troops. Our latest reports indicate that Chamoun does not have control there. Fahmy asked who has control, and Mr. Habib responded that the Israelis did. Mr. Habib added, however, that the Christian troops were basically people from the local villages. They were concerned about the 850 Palestinian guerrillas in the area and they feel they are protecting their villages. Fahmy expressed confidence that the PLO could be counted on this time to honor its word. Fahmy said he had talked to Abu Iyad in Cairo, and Abu Iyad had told him that the PLO is ready to accept Shtaura. Abu Iyad is a serious man, Fahmy said, and when he tells you something you can rely on it.

Mr. Habib said that at first the Israelis were not even ready to have a cease-fire. Now they are willing to consider a cease-fire, so that is progress. We are working on the cease-fire now, with some hope of success. Mr. Habib said that General Khouri, the Commander of the Lebanese Army, had just been in Washington and we had urged him to take speedy action to send the Lebanese force into the south.³ Fahmy expressed the strongest hope that the Lebanese would move rapidly.

Fahmy asked if it were true that the Christians were no longer pushing for partition of Lebanon but now want to have full control of the country. Mr. Habib said he did not think this was true. The Christians have pretty much given up on partition, but they are maintaining their military positions. Mr. Atherton commented that the Christians are retaining their options. After a brief exchange in Arabic, Fahmy asked Mr. Al Baz to read from a telegram from the Egyptian Ambassador in Beirut. Al Baz translated the cable and Fahmy stressed that it was the Ambassador's opinion that continuation of the fighting in Southern Lebanon will destroy hope for political stabilization in Lebanon. The Ambassador's report said that the PLO would stop its military activity in the south by voluntary decision until further notice, if a ceasefire could be achieved. The report said the PLO would "not activate any front against Israel as long as other Arab fronts are quiet." Fahmy commented that the Palestinians do not want trouble between themselves and the Israelis because it would embarrass Syria and cause it difficulty with Israel.

The party then adjourned for lunch. During the luncheon conversation there was extensive discussion by the Egyptian side of the press handling in this country of reports of discrimination in Egypt against the Copts. Ambassador Ghorbal said that people in the press were spreading "wild rumors about the Coptic situation." Ghorbal said there were two or three Coptic journals in this country and Canada and their main purpose is to try to portray the Copts in Egypt as a downtrodden people. Fahmy also lamented the "unfair propaganda against Egypt" on the Coptic question.

There was a brief discussion of Ethiopia/Somalia. The Secretary said our information is that the Soviets have stopped supplying anything other than on-going parts for equipment already supplied to Somalia. Mr. Habib noted that we are not giving any military assistance to Ethiopia although they had asked us for assistance. Fahmy remarked that the American F-5's in Ethiopia's possession are "doing a good job." Fahmy observed wryly, "You don't want to give us any F-5's." Mr. Habib said that without spare parts and proper servicing the Ethio-

³ No memorandum of conversation has been found.

pian F-5's would not remain operational for long. Fahmy said Israeli technicians will probably maintain them. Egyptian intelligence is that there are some 180 Israeli technicians in Ethiopia. Fahmy added that Egypt has turned down a request from Ethiopia to appoint an ambassador in Cairo. He said that Egypt has agreed to train and equip the Djibouti Army.

Ambassador Ghorbal asked about the situation in Chad. Mr. Habib said it seemed to be slowly deteriorating. The Secretary said we are looking to see what sort of military equipment we can provide the Government of Chad that would be useful. They want us to give them airplanes, but we do not think that would be useful. However, we can give them things like communications equipment.

Fahmy asked if there was anything new in U.S.-Libyan relations. Mr. Habib said the Libyans keep telling us how much they like us and asking us to give them C-130's. Mr. Atherton added that they also want us to accept their ambassador. Ambassador Eilts asked if Libyan/Egyptian disengagement plans had gone into effect yet, to which Fahmy replied, "No."

There ensued a lengthy discussion of the prospects for ratification of the Panama Canal Treaty and the situation in that regard in the Senate.

The luncheon adjourned at 2:10 p.m.

109. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, September 22, 1977, noon–12:40 p.m.

SUBJECT

Dr. Brzezinski's Meeting with Foreign Minister Ismail Fahmy of Egypt

PARTICIPANTS

Dr. Zbigniew Brzezinski
Mr. William B. Quandt, NSC Staff
H. E. Ismail Fahmy, Foreign Minister of Egypt
Ambassador Ashraf Ghorbal

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Subject File, Box 67, Middle East: Peace Negotiations 1977 Vol. II. Secret. The meeting took place in the White House in Brzezinski's office.

Foreign Minister Fahmy asked for Dr. Brzezinski's assessment of the prospects for a peace settlement. Dr. Brzezinski replied that the important point now is to get the process going more formally. Once it is on the tracks, it will be more difficult to derail than it is now to obstruct. This means that a solution must be found to the difficult problem of Palestinian participation. *Fahmy* argued that Egypt needed to be reassured that Geneva would be a serious exercise, not like in 1973. He stressed the need for agreement on a framework. If he could be sure Israel's position of refusing full withdrawal were merely tactical, he would be prepared to negotiate.

Brzezinski said that these questions cannot be answered in the present situation, but that, once negotiations begin, pressures would build against the intransigent party.

Fahmy replied that Israel could put the Arabs on the spot by offering full withdrawal for full peace, and *Brzezinski* replied that the Arabs could do the same by offering full peace for full withdrawal. The point is that now neither party wants to take those steps. Not much progress can be expected without Geneva, and events could occur that might hurt the prospects for peace. *Fahmy* said Egypt would get its territory back, one way or the other, and *Brzezinski* noted that the US had spoken of the 1967 lines, with minor modifications on the West Bank, as the likely and correct outcome. If Israel is reluctant to go to Geneva, it should be in Egypt's interest to help remove remaining obstacles. In fact, both sides probably have reservations about negotiations, given the history of the conflict.

On the Palestinian issue, *Brzezinski* argued that the PLO should accept 242 without asking for too much in return. *Fahmy* said the Palestinians were being asked to recognize Israel, without knowing what they might get in return. Either the US should contact the PLO informally and secretly, or assurances could be given to President Sadat to convey to the PLO. *Brzezinski* noted that no official contacts can take place because of Sinai II, but that we hear through third parties the views of the PLO. The PLO, not the US, stands to gain from official contacts. *Fahmy* replied that an alternative would be for the UN Security Council to pass a new resolution, possibly at French initiative, which would endorse 242–338, but would also contain language on Palestinian rights. He thought mention could be made also of the right of all states in the area to live in peace. Then the PLO could accept this resolution and go to Geneva. *Brzezinski* noted that Israel would reject the new resolution, and might then also back away from 242–338. *Fahmy* said that if the PLO refused to accept an invitation, then Egypt would go to Geneva without the PLO. And if the Arabs at Geneva refuse to be logical, we'll face them in an Arab summit and will go alone to sign a peace treaty. *Brzezinski* said that we would have to think about the idea of a

new resolution. It is not as direct as the other approach we have suggested.

110. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Israel¹

Washington, September 24, 1977, 0211Z

230417. White House for Dr. Brzezinski only. Subject: South Lebanon: Presidential Message.

1. Please deliver to Begin as soon as possible the following message from President Carter:

2. Begin text:

Dear Mr. Prime Minister:

Since you raised the matter with me in July,² I have been deeply concerned about the dangerous situation in South Lebanon and the threat it poses to the authority of the government of President Sarkis, to the safety of the population in the south, to Israeli citizens in the border area, and ultimately to regional stability which is so important to the peace efforts you and I are committed to.

For these reasons, we have been trying throughout this period to encourage steps which would ease the tensions there, reduce the security threat to Israel, and permit President Sarkis to assert governmental authority throughout the area and restore law and order, thereby making it possible for thousands of refugees to return to their farms and villages. While we do not endorse in any way a continued Palestinian armed presence in areas close to Israel's borders, the Shtaura Agreement negotiated by the Lebanese and Syrians with the Palestinians was in our view a useful step since it would involve a ceasefire, a substantial reduction of Palestinian forces, and a pullback of those remaining to positions ten or more kilometers from Israel's borders.

We therefore urged Israel to acquiesce in the carrying out of the ceasefire and pullback, and to assure the cooperation of the Christian militias over which Israel has influence.

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Subject File, Box 48, Israel: 9/77. Secret; Flash; Nodis. Sent immediate for information to the White House.

² See Document 52.

When your government asked that a more extensive Palestinian withdrawal be sought, we passed Israel's proposals to the Lebanese in good faith. After talks with the Lebanese it became fully apparent to us that there was no realistic possibility at this time of achieving anything further along the lines desired by Israel and that the Shtaura Agreement itself was in immediate danger of falling apart.

The Israeli decision to support a Christian military initiative at this delicate stage seriously complicated the matter, since it occurred at a time when the Palestinians were prepared to withdraw from areas in South Lebanon, including the very hill the Christians recently occupied. While we have done our best to keep the matter from becoming a public issue between us, we could not in good conscience claim that the most recent Israeli military activities across the border in support of the Christian militias have been for self-defense.³ This is in contrast to incidents in the past when Israel undertook actions limited in time and scope and there was a plausible case to be made that such actions were in response to Palestinian threats to the Israeli border area.

I have been very disappointed that you have not heeded my request that Israeli military units be withdrawn immediately from Lebanese territory.

It is my strongest wish that our differences with regard to the handling of the South Lebanon situation not develop into a major problem in U.S.-Israeli relationships. Accordingly, I must point out that current Israeli military actions in Lebanon are a violation of our agreements covering the provision of American military equipment⁴ and that, as a consequence, if these actions are not immediately halted, Congress will have to be informed of this fact, and that further deliveries will have to be terminated.

I must therefore ask you again, Mr. Prime Minister, to withdraw Israeli military forces from Lebanon immediately. As communicated to Defense Minister Weizman by our Charge,⁵ we will continue to make forceful and intensive efforts with the Lebanese and the Syrians to assure that Palestinian forces in the South immediately agree to and cooperate with a ceasefire, not take military advantage of the Israeli withdrawal, and begin their agreed pullback. We have already been in

³ On September 20, Israeli forces crossed into Southern Lebanon to aid the Lebanese Christians fighting Palestinian forces in the area.

⁴ Beginning with the 1952 U.S.-Israeli Mutual Defense Assistance Agreement, Israeli use of American military equipment was limited to defensive purposes only. In addition, the Arms Export Control Act of 1976 states that nations can only use American arms for self-defense.

⁵ In telegram 7192 from Tel Aviv, September 23, Chargé Viets reported that he had carried out State Department instructions on September 23 in a meeting with Weizman. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P850106-2204)

touch with Lebanese leaders who are ready to do their best to assure Palestinian cooperation. They have begun consultations with Palestinian leaders. For Israel to delay longer the withdrawal and seek additional Lebanese commitments can only complicate matters further.

We will also continue to urge the Lebanese to enter into direct talks with Israeli representatives in military channels under UN auspices. In the period ahead, we will do our best to achieve arrangements in the south that would be more satisfactory to the Israelis than what had been negotiated under the Shtaura Agreement. We already have a commitment from President Sarkis that he will try to seek a more extensive Palestinian withdrawal at an early date, and this is an important concession.

I would not have pressed you to make decisions which are difficult to you, Mr. Prime Minister, if I were not convinced that the common interests of Israel and the U.S. dictate an immediate lessening of tensions in South Lebanon and avoidance of a serious and public difference between us over your use of American-supplied military equipment, on which our law is very explicit. I do not want any more missiles fired into Israeli territory killing or maiming Israeli citizens. I do not want to see this issue exposed to the world as a confrontation between you and me. I have confidence that you will accept my words in the spirit in which they have been delivered and will take the steps which will be recognized by all as prudent and statesmanlike. Sincerely, Jimmy Carter.

End text.

Vance

111. Telegram From the Embassy in Israel to the Department of State¹

Tel Aviv, September 24, 1977, 1138Z

7195. White House for Dr. Brzekinski only. Subj: South Lebanon: Presidential Message. Ref: State 230417.²

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Subject File, Box 48, Israel: 9/77. Secret; Niact Immediate; Exdis Treat as Nodis. Also sent niact immediate to Amman, Beirut, and Damascus.

² See Document 110.

Summary: I saw Begin at 1000 September 24 and delivered the President's letter. The Prime Minister read it carefully and, as I had anticipated, said he would have to consult his Cabinet colleagues before giving a definite response. He reviewed the importance of the ceasefire preceding or following closely the withdrawal of Israeli forces in order to minimize the risk to the Christians and the likelihood of further attacks on Israeli towns in the north. He argued that Israeli actions have been entirely defensive and therefore no grounds exist for finding Israel has violated the terms of any agreement regarding the use of U.S.-supplied weapons. I pushed him very hard on the need for urgent withdrawal of Israeli forces from Lebanon and he finally agreed to convoke a meeting tonight of the Ministerial Security Committee. He asked that the President be informed of his interim reply that Israel agrees to withdraw its forces, the timing to be decided at tonight's Cabinet meeting. End summary.

1. I met with Begin at the Prime Minister's residence in Jerusalem at 1000 hours on September 24. He was alone. I said the President understood the importance of the Sabbath to the Prime Minister and it was only because of the urgency of my message that I had been instructed to see him this morning. I then handed him the President's letter.

2. Begin read the letter carefully and said he wanted to thank the President for communicating with him directly on such an important subject. He said he would have to consult with his colleagues before giving a definite response and this would be delayed because of the Sabbath. He reminded me that some members of the Cabinet would not even talk on the telephone on the Sabbath. There will be a Cabinet meeting tomorrow at 1000 and he would perhaps convene a meeting of the Security Committee at 0900. He then reviewed familiar Israeli arguments about the commitment to the outnumbered and outgunned Christians and added that recent rocket attacks on Israeli towns confirm the correctness of the Israeli opposition to PLO forces on Israeli borders. Israel must, therefore, continue to stress the importance of the question of the timing between any Israeli withdrawal and the coming into force of a ceasefire. A withdrawal cannot be used by the PLO to attack Christian forces or to resume rocket attacks against Israel.

3. I replied that the rocket attacks could be seen as retaliation for what the Palestinians perceive to be the provocation of Israeli forces in Lebanon. In any case, the GOL maintains that Israeli forces must be withdrawn prior to any ceasefire; it cannot persuade the Palestinians to hold their fire while Israeli forces are in Lebanon. The central point

emerging from our discussions with the GOL is that the first step must be the prompt and complete withdrawal of Israeli forces.

4. Begin said he understood that from the President's message but he remained concerned about how to be responsive to the President because of the Sabbath and his inability to decide the issue without talking to his Cabinet colleagues. I said again that the USG believes that the sooner Israeli forces are withdrawn, the greater the chances are that the rocket attacks will cease and the better the chances are that the Lebanese can restrain the Palestinians. I repeated that he must understand there can be no ceasefire until Israeli forces are totally withdrawn and that the longer they remain in Lebanon, the greater the risk of escalation. I said I had clearly understood from Weizman last night that only the Prime Minister had the authority to modify the Security Committee's decision of yesterday morning and order an immediate withdrawal. The Palestinians would not agree to a ceasefire until the withdrawal took place.

5. Begin said he was not sure he had authority to override a decision by a Cabinet committee and that he must consult his colleagues, which he could not do until tomorrow. He then turned to the question I had raised of provocation and from that to the question of a possible violation by Israel of its agreement with us on U.S.-supplied arms. He said categorically that no Israeli soldiers participated in the recent Christian military action although those actions were supported by Israeli artillery. If Israeli forces leave, however, a PLO counterattack would probably be successful because PLO reinforcements have arrived in the area from the north. For this reason, Israel cannot leave without a ceasefire being in effect.

6. The Prime Minister said he was deeply disturbed by the reference in the President's letter to a possible violation by the recent action. If Israel had attacked its neighbors, such language would be justified. This was not the case; no Israeli forces had been involved in offensive activities and all Israeli moves had been in defense of the Christians. The Israeli view is that no attack had been carried out and thus no violation of our agreement has occurred.

7. I replied that the longer Israeli forces are in Lebanon, the more difficult it becomes for the President to handle this point, on which he is bound by very specific legislation. On the basis of substantial evidence it is our judgment that Israeli forces were a party to an attack outside Israeli borders. The Israeli force involved in Lebanon has been much larger and the support of the Christians has been substantially greater in recent days than in any past action. The degree of Israeli involvement in what unequivocally is an offensive action is so great that we can no longer look the other way. The implications of Israeli actions during the past week held grave consequences for our relations.

8. Summing up, I said several problems are interrelated: working out the timing of a ceasefire, assuring the cessation of rocket attacks and other Palestinian acts which might be carried out in retaliation, and the complications such actions by both sides would have for the implication of the Shtaura Accord. I said we were not asking the Israelis to agree to the Accord, but only to give the Lebanese a chance to implement it and thus provide some stability to the area through the withdrawal of the bulk of the Palestinian forces and their weapons. The Minister of Defense had forcefully explained to me the Israeli moral commitment to the Christians and to the thirty Christian militiamen holding the hill. But I said that in my judgment the Prime Minister as a statesman must balance that commitment along with all the other considerations I had cited and decide whether their presence on a single hilltop was worth risking the long range stability of Lebanon. I admired Israel's sense of moral commitment to these men. Since it was so great, and since he was so concerned about their safety after an Israeli withdrawal, then he must seriously consider ordering their withdrawal at the same time. In any case, I reminded him, Tel Sharifa and most of the rest of the territory involved in the past week's hostilities would revert to the Christians if the Shtaura Accord was implemented.

9. Begin got up and went over and poured us whiskey and, raising his glass, said he would do the following: he would convene the Security Committee at 1900 hours tonight. In the meantime, he asked me to send his interim response to the President: Israel agrees to withdraw its forces from Lebanon. The meeting tonight will consider the question of the timing of that withdrawal and Weizman will telephone me with the results of the Committee's meeting, probably about 2000 hours local. He said he would do his best to expedite the decision since he understood the urgency of the situation. I asked that he reconfirm to me that Israel will do all in its power to ensure that the Christian forces also observe the ceasefire. He gave his assurances. In turn he asked that I immediately convey to him or Weizman any information we may receive during the course of the day on the status of Lebanese and/or Syrian consultations with the Palestinians concerning the ceasefire. He said this would be helpful to him in persuading his Cabinet colleagues tonight of the need for an immediate Israeli withdrawal.

10. Comment: I sense that only about half way through our conversation did the full import of the President's letter begin to sink in. I left a very sober Prime Minister who is clearly disturbed over the implications for U.S.-Israeli relations of events of the past week. Consequently

I am optimistic that we are within hours of a GOI decision leading to a unilateral Israeli withdrawal.³

Viets

³ At 9:30 a.m. on September 26, Israel's Ministry of Defense announced a cease-fire in Southern Lebanon. The Ministry's announcement also stated that "to maintain the ceasefire in the South Lebanon region, the regular Lebanese Army will move into the region and maintain control over the area by means of patrols and outposts in order to ensure the calm and the safety of the inhabitants." (Telegram 7284 from Tel Aviv, September 26; National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D770349–1221)

112. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, September 24, 1977, 11:30 a.m.

SUBJECT

Middle East Talks—Meeting With The Jordanians

PARTICIPANTS

Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan

Abdul Hamid Sharaf, Minister to the Royal Jordanian Court

Hassan Al-Ibrahim, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs

Abdallah Salah, Jordanian Ambassador

United States

Secretary Vance

Warren Christopher, Deputy Secretary*

Philip C. Habib, Under Secretary for Political Affairs

Alfred L. Atherton, Assistant Secretary for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs

Ambassador Thomas Pickering

William Quandt, National Security Council

David A. Korn, Policy Planning Staff

*Attended the luncheon only.

The Secretary welcomed Ministers Sharaf and Ibrahim.

The Secretary proposed first a review of the situation in South Lebanon, which he noted has been a matter of great concern to the United States during the last several days. We have been troubled by the way

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Trips/Visits File, Box 107, 9/19/77–10/25/77 Vance Meetings with Middle East Foreign Ministers: 9–10/77. Secret; Nodis. Drafted by Korn on September 26. The meeting took place in the Secretary's Conference Room and lunch took place in the Madison Room.

the situation has developed and have been in constant touch with all the parties to solve it. As of this morning, the Secretary said, he was hopeful that there would be an early cease-fire, perhaps as early as tomorrow morning. It was essential to get a cease-fire and essential that Israeli forces in South Lebanon withdraw. The Secretary repeated that he was hopeful that there would be a cease-fire within 24 hours. He asked Mr. Habib to give further details.

Mr. Habib said that following the Shtaura Agreement the Israeli position was that the Palestinians should withdraw north of the Lithani, which was much further than the 10 kilometers specified in the agreement. The Lebanese could not negotiate that with the PLO; it was too much for them. At this point the Christian militia took advantage of a tactical situation and grabbed a hill overlooking the Palestinian positions. For this they had Israeli support. The Palestinians responded and reinforced their positions, but it was difficult for them to do so because of Israeli artillery fire. Fighting developed and there was a danger that the Shtaura Agreement would collapse. If it did the result would be that there would be no cease-fire and that Lebanese sovereignty in the South would not be restored. Mr. Habib said that at this point we began working to get Israeli withdrawal and agreement on a cease-fire that nobody would take advantage of. Mr. Habib said that in our conversations with the Lebanese we have urged them to put their force into the south as soon as possible. General Khoury, the Lebanese Army Commander, has been in Washington and we have been talking with him about this. He says he hopes to have his forces in the south within 10 days.

The Secretary asked how many men would be in the Lebanese brigade that is to be sent into the south. Mr. Habib said about 1,000. The Secretary noted that originally there had been talk of three battalions, i.e., about 1,500 men. Mr. Habib said General Khoury has more men planned but now the figure is about 1,000. The other problem, Mr. Habib said, is that there has to be restraint on the problem of retribution. The Lebanese Government really is not happy with the leaders of the militia in the south, but the Israelis feel an obligation to them. The Lebanese will have to be cautious in dealing with them.

Minister Sharaf expressed appreciation for the briefing on Lebanon and for the helpful actions that the United States has been taking in Lebanon. He noted that General Khoury has also been to Jordan to seek military assistance. Mr. Habib said General Khoury came to the United States to expedite the shipment of arms, and we have assured him we will do everything we can. The Defense Department will meet Lebanon's needs in the most rapid ways possible.

The Secretary suggested moving on now to review the talks with Dayan and Fahmy. Minister Sharaf said that before we turn to this he

would like to convey a brief message from His Majesty King Hussein. His Majesty very much appreciated the Secretary's invitation and sent the Secretary and the President his best regards and best wishes for success in their efforts in the foreign and domestic fields. His Majesty very much admires the way the President is handling these problems and is very pleased over the mutual confidence and sincerity that exists in relations between Jordan and the United States.

The Secretary expressed appreciation for the Minister's kind words and said we are very pleased to have the opportunity to sit down with the Minister and share our thoughts on how to solve these problems of mutual interest. The Secretary said he would convey to the President His Majesty's good words. The President was looking forward to meeting the Minister next week.

The Secretary said that the meetings so far have been a start. They have been useful. We still have a long way to go but at least the two meetings so far have been of a constructive nature and the parties have indicated some flexibility. The Secretary said that in the meeting with Dayan we went over the various aspects of the settlement issue, both substantive and procedural. Dayan stressed that everything was negotiable. We explored each issue in detail with them, but Dayan repeatedly assured that everything was negotiable. The Secretary said that Israel had prepared a draft of a peace treaty between Israel and Egypt.² He handed a copy to Sharaf, saying he felt that Jordan should have a copy of it. The Secretary said this is the only treaty the Israelis have prepared. The Minister would see that it goes into great detail and covers navigation, trade, and particularly the nature of peace. It is less precise, however, on the territorial issue. The Secretary said we had probed on this issue in our discussions with the Israelis. Their position basically is that territorial issues are for a negotiation at Geneva. At Geneva they will discuss each territorial issue with each of the parties. They foresee a series of bilateral treaties between themselves and each state, with Egypt on Sinai and with Syria on Golan. The West Bank is more complicated, the Secretary said, but primarily the Israelis expected to negotiate on it with Jordan. They propose to deal with the security issue through buffer zones, limited armament zones, and demilitarized zones.

The Secretary said the Israeli treaty does not cover guarantees. However, the question of guarantees did come up in the discussions with Dayan. The Secretary said that in his judgment the question of guarantees would be a very important aspect of the treaties. The current Israeli position is that they do not believe outside guarantees are

² See Document 100.

necessary; they say they can take care of themselves. However, the Secretary said he believed that in fact their position was different and that the question of U.S. guarantees of a peace treaty would be extremely important. The Secretary added that the Israelis said they would go along with the idea of UN forces in buffer zones, but the UN forces would be observers rather than peace keeping forces in large numbers.

The Secretary said that on the West Bank we made clear that our position is that it is occupied territory to which the withdrawal provisions of 242 apply. Dayan said the Israeli position is that there should be no foreign sovereignty over the West Bank. They do not suggest that they want to annex the West Bank, but they do not want anybody else to have sovereignty there. We probed him on the question of functional partition of the West Bank; how they see the administration working. The Israelis said there are two ways of dealing with the West Bank problem, either by negotiations with Jordan or by negotiations with the West Bank leaders, for example, the mayors. The Israelis have not gone into this problem in detail with us, but they assured us they would do so before Geneva. The Secretary said the Israelis seem to be saying that they believe that day-to-day administration of the West Bank could be turned over to someone other than Israel, for example services could be administered by West Bankers, or by Jordan. The Israelis do not have to play a major role. They could make available medical or other services if the West Bankers wanted, but the West Bankers could also set up their own services if they so desired. On the military question, the Secretary said, the Israelis foresee a limited need for outposts but they stress that these would not affect the daily life of the West Bankers. On the other hand, the Secretary continued, the Israelis say the eastern border should be the Jordan River, so there are some inconsistencies. We will explore this more in depth with the Israelis in the meeting next week in New York, the Secretary said.

The Secretary felt the Israelis do not rule out a solution where there is someone other than Israel sovereign in the West Bank, but they hope that it is far off. Eventually, this has to happen, but their position is let's not talk about when, but about how the area should be administered in the meantime. The Secretary turned to Mr. Habib and Mr. Atherton and asked for comments. Mr. Atherton pointed out that the Israelis had said that the Jordan should be their security border, not their international border. The Secretary agreed.

The Secretary said that Golan basically poses the same issues between Syria and Israel as Sinai does between Israel and Egypt. However, there is a difference in terrain and the size of the area, and the Israelis maintain that any withdrawal there would have to be small because of the nature of the terrain.

The Secretary said we came down very hard on the Israelis on the issue of settlements in the occupied territories. We restated our position regarding the illegality of settlements and stressed the importance of this issue and the fact that settlements create obstacles to peace. We told the Israelis that this question is of utmost concern to us and the Arab countries.

The Secretary said that on Palestinian representation the position stated by Dayan was that the issue should be dealt with through a Jordanian delegation containing Palestinians. We also discussed with Dayan the possibility of a unified Arab delegation comprising the confrontation states and Palestinians. As we expected, the Israelis were against this, but Dayan said he would raise the question with Prime Minister Begin. The Secretary said he did not know what decision the Israelis have reached on this. He thought we should keep in mind both possibilities, i.e., a unified Arab delegation or separate delegations. The Israelis believe there should be a plenary session in Geneva which should then break up into bilateral working groups. Negotiation of the West Bank issue would depend on how the Palestinian representation question is resolved in the calling of the conference, and whether West Bank mayors are included in the delegation.

The Secretary said he would mention only briefly the talks with Fahmy since Egyptian positions are well-known to the Jordanians. Egypt wants a return to the 1967 borders, a Palestinian entity, and some form of self-determination for the Palestinians. Regarding the nature of peace, their position continues to vary from time to time, but they still see normalization taking place over a long period. They feel very strongly that the peace treaty should take effect only when the last Israeli soldier has withdrawn from occupied territory. On Palestinian representation, the Egyptians would accept a PLO delegation if the problem could be resolved that way. They would still agree to an Arab League delegation to represent the Palestinians. They would also consider a united Arab delegation, but they don't think that is the best solution.

The Secretary said it is his judgment that if all of the Arab states decided in favor of a united Arab delegation, Egypt would accept that. Egypt would also accept Palestinians in a Jordanian delegation.

The Secretary said Fahmy felt it is important to convene Geneva before the end of the year and told us that Egypt would do all in its power to bring this about. The Secretary then asked Minister Sharaf if he had questions.

Minister Sharaf said that the Israelis speak of a security border on the Jordan. Did they also speak of a political or legal border. The Secretary replied that they had not, and he pointed out that Dayan had said that everything was subject to negotiation, including the West Bank.

Sharaf asked if it was correct that the Israelis planned to continue establishing settlements on the West Bank. The Secretary replied affirmatively. The Secretary said we told the Israelis they were wrong in doing this. They have taken note of our deep concern, but have refused to commit themselves to refrain from establishing additional settlements. Sharaf asked if he understood correctly that the Israelis are ready for more withdrawal from Sinai and from Golan and the West Bank. The Secretary said yes. The Secretary asked for Sharaf's thoughts on the Palestinian representation question. Sharaf said that Jordan's position all along was that the rights of the Palestinians are more important than the question of their representation at Geneva.

Sharaf said Jordan is for an Arab United Delegation and had been an early supporter of this idea. The Jordanians had tried to convince their Arab partners that this was the best way. The Syrians support the idea of a united Arab delegation but the Egyptians are hesitant, although Sadat seems more flexible on it than Fahmy. Sharaf said that Jordan sees two ways of solving the Palestinian representation problem: either the PLO is invited, or there is a united Arab delegation including the PLO. Sharaf was doubtful that the PLO would accept 242 or the limited role we envisage for it at Geneva unless the Arabs, including the Saudis, make a major effort with it on the basis of a strong U.S. commitment to work at Geneva for Palestinian self-determination and the right to a homeland.

Sharaf said that while in the past the Jordanians had proposed the presence at Geneva of the PLO in any way agreed, he wanted to make a "radical suggestion" for a breakthrough on this issue. This was that the U.S. make a strenuous effort and take a strong stand on Palestinian determination, declaring publicly the right of all Palestinians to self-determination. Sharaf said that if the U.S. were to do this, the question of PLO representation would be of diminished importance and there might be less requirement for Palestinian representation at Geneva.

Sharaf said Jordan is open-minded about the ways of handling the Palestinian representation problem: it would accept a united Arab delegation, an Arab League Delegation, or a Palestinian delegation. But, he emphasized, Jordan cannot agree to the PLO being represented in a Jordanian delegation. The reason, he said, is that legally Jordan does not represent Gaza or all the Palestinians. In an ultimate settlement, Jordan cannot determine the fate of the Palestinians. Sharaf said also that having the PLO in a Jordanian delegation would in fact legalize the PLO presence in Jordan. Mr. Quandt asked if there were a united Arab delegation with some Palestinians in it, would Jordan object to the Jordanian and Palestinian delegations negotiating on the future of the West Bank. The Palestinians would not be members of the Jordanian

delegation but they would negotiate together with Jordan regarding the West Bank.

Sharaf said Jordan proposes a functional division for the negotiations. He foresaw three functional groups: (1) a group for withdrawal and borders; (2) a group for peace and guarantees, and (3) a group for the Palestinian problem. All the parties would be represented on all these groups. Sharaf said Jordan felt this would be the best thing to do whether or not there is a united Arab delegation. Sharaf then turned to Mr. Quandt and said that he could answer Mr. Quandt's question in this way: Jordan would not object to cooperation with PLO representatives in the negotiations, but, as he had said before, the Palestinians could not be part of the Jordanian delegation.

The Secretary said he wanted to ask a question about the Jordanian position on functional division of the negotiations. Was it realistic to expect to be able to make progress in negotiating territorial issues with such large groups? For example, on Sinai, does it make sense to have all the parties discuss Rafah and Sharm el-Sheikh? Sharaf said Jordan's concern is to maintain Arab unity. A functional division for negotiations may not be the most practical thing in all instances. But, he added, of course there is no need to force all the parties to attend a discussion of the details of a Sinai agreement, for example. However, the Palestinian question would have to be discussed by the overall delegation. Sharaf repeated that on the territorial question there would be no need for everybody to attend the specific negotiations. Ambassador Pickering asked if it would be convenient to have a group to work on Sinai and Golan that could report to the whole delegation. Sharaf said Jordan would be open-minded on this. Mr. Habib said the important thing is whether the Israeli-Egyptian border would be discussed only between Israel and Egypt or with others. The Secretary pointed out that Egyptians do not want others involved in their negotiations. Mr. Habib noted that the Israelis feel very strongly about this. Sharaf repeated that Jordan will be open-minded on this but it does want to maintain the principle of Arab unity. For example, the question of Gaza and other Palestinian questions must be dealt with by all the Arabs at Geneva. Lebanon, for example, will want to have as much a say as Jordan. However, if Egypt and Syria want to handle their territorial issues bilaterally Jordan would be open-minded on this.

Mr. Habib said he thought Minister Sharaf had provided the answer to this problem. For certain issues, the Arab delegation would meet as a whole, and for others, there would be sub-committees. The Secretary pointed out that the Syrians may not be as flexible on this as the Jordanians. Sharaf replied that the Jordanians have always been more flexible than the Syrians. Mr. Habib pointed out that the Israelis have to be taken into consideration too. They will not want to deal with

all the Arabs on all issues. Sharaf repeated that it was important to maintain Arab unity on major issues. He added that he thought it would even be preferable from Israel's point of view for the Arabs to maintain their unity, since it would make it easier for them to make commitments and keep them, particularly commitments on peace.

The Secretary said that our view is that there should be a unified Arab delegation to handle the procedural problem. On the substantive issues, we believe there should be a Palestinian entity, self-determination, a transitional period, and a mechanism for administration during the transitional period. The Secretary said he wanted to talk in more detail about this. Our position as he had just described it was known to the Arab states but we have not stated it publicly in a comprehensive manner up to now. So far we have spoken only of a Palestinian entity and self-determination. At an appropriate time, we will be ready to state publicly the other elements of our position, the Secretary said, but that time is not yet at hand. Mr. Habib pointed out that the Secretary had talked about all these elements of our position in background discussions with newspapermen. Sharaf said that it was unfortunate that the Arab public did not know what our full position is.

Sharaf said that on the question of the link between Jordan and the Palestinian entity, Jordan believes in the principle of unity, continuity and very close relations between Palestinians and Jordan. It believes that the Palestinians should make a conscious choice regarding the type of relationship they want with Jordan. If they want their own state, that will be fine with Jordan. If they want unity between the West Bank and Jordan, that will also be fine. But it has to be a conscious act. No outcome should be imposed on the Palestinians. That is our position, Sharaf said.

The Secretary said he thought it would be best if we could agree on a solution for Arab representation at Geneva. His view was that the united Arab delegation is the solution. He asked if Sharaf agreed. Sharaf said yes. The Secretary said the President will want to discuss this with Sharaf. The Secretary said we should now concentrate on getting general agreement on a united Arab delegation. On the delegation's composition, one way to resolve the Palestinian representation issue would be to have Palestinian mayors and other persons whose credentials would not be examined by the Israelis. They could also be PLO but not so well-known as to make it an issue. The Secretary said he thought the PLO should be able to go along with this. PLO leaders could be present in Geneva (but not at the conference) to give instructions to their people. The Secretary said his point was that the Palestinian delegation should have less well-known PLO members on it but it should be broader than just the PLO. There should be other Palestinians as well.

Sharaf said one difficulty is that there was no flexibility on the part of the PLO. They want some form of recognition and will demand it. They will want to appoint their people for Geneva. Sharaf said he did not see how this problem could be overcome. The Secretary said he realizes there is a problem, but we must find a way to deal with it or a way around it. Mr. Habib said we didn't have to accept that the entire Palestinian group be PLO. He pointed out that Israel would not accept this. Sharaf said that at some point it would be good if the U.S. could talk with the PLO about this problem. The Secretary agreed but pointed out that so far the PLO had been unwilling to take the necessary steps to make it possible for us to talk to them. Sharaf said he could understand the PLO's dilemma. What do they get in return for recognizing Israel? Would they get a U.S. guarantee of a homeland? The Secretary replied that we cannot give them a guarantee of a homeland but we can at some point make a statement regarding a homeland and self-determination. The Secretary asked if such a statement would solve the problem. Sharaf said he thought it would be helpful to focus more on the broad question of a Palestinian settlement than on the specific one of the PLO representation problem. The Palestinians support the PLO when they have no option, but when they know they have other options, they will be more reasonable. Sharaf suggested that if the Palestinians know that they can get a reasonable settlement for themselves without the PLO, they will force the PLO to change its position or they will abandon it.

The Secretary said suppose we say publicly that the Palestinian question must be on the agenda at Geneva and that this means the question of establishing a Palestinian entity through self-determination is to be an issue for negotiation at Geneva. Would that reassure the Palestinians and make them more flexible? Sharaf reported that it would certainly generate pressures on the PLO. Ibrahim commented that it would make a big difference over a period of time. Mr. Habib remarked that we do not have years; we are talking about weeks. Sharaf responded that Palestinian opinion cannot be changed overnight, but if there were a U.S. position taking into account the right of the Palestinians, this would force the PLO to become more moderate and help the PLO moderates. Ambassador Salah said that if the Palestinians feel the PLO is standing in the way of a breakthrough which would bring about Israeli withdrawal, the PLO would lose popularity and strength.

Mr. Quandt asked if there were agreement on a united Arab delegation, could Egypt, Jordan and Syria work together to select Palestinians for a united Arab delegation? Ibrahim said no, they would ask the PLO to designate the representatives. Mr. Quandt said that this is what we fear, but was there any possibility of controlling the composition of the Palestinian group. Sharaf indicated that we might be able to

get agreement on a Palestinian delegation that would not be entirely PLO. Sharaf repeated that if the U.S. would make public statements reassuring the Palestinians in regard to a homeland and self-determination, this would put pressure on the PLO and encourage Palestinian moderates. Nonetheless, Sharaf said, we shouldn't minimize the technical problem in this regard. He noted that Jordan does not recognize the PLO as the sole representative of the Palestinians. It believes that there must be self-determination and a vote. It is important, Sharaf said, that the PLO should know that it will not be able to get power automatically, but that the Palestinians are going to be able to determine their own future.

At this point the Secretary suggested the group adjourn for lunch.

The conversation resumed at the luncheon table. Sharaf asked about the Secretary's talks with the Soviets.³ The Secretary said that on the nature of peace the Soviets agree that there must be normal relations. They believe there must be a Palestinian state and that it should have whatever affiliation it wants with its neighbors. They do not oppose the principle of self-determination. They feel that Geneva must be convened before the end of the year and will work with us for that. The Secretary added that the Soviets agree with us on the question of Israeli settlements in the occupied areas. Sharaf asked about SALT. The Secretary said we made some headway on this and narrowed the differences. We will continue working on it.

The Secretary said he had some questions on the Jordanian paper.⁴ He commented that the paper was very useful and a positive contribution.

Sharaf said he first would like to comment on another point. Dayan had suggested that it was essential that the West Bank be under Israeli sovereignty. Mr. Habib interjected that the Israelis had not used the word sovereignty; they spoke of presence or control. Then under Israeli control, Sharaf continued. Jordan is opposed to this idea because it is clear that the Israelis will never leave the West Bank and Gaza. Jordan does not want to be a party to Dayan's proposal because it

³ Gromyko was in Washington September 22 and 23 primarily to discuss SALT. He and Vance discussed the Middle East on September 22 and he met with Carter on September 23. The communiqué issued at the end of the visit concludes with the brief statement: "The US and USSR affirmed that they will continue their determined efforts to convene the Geneva Conference by the end of this year at the latest." (Department of State *Bulletin*, November 7, 1977, pp. 643–644) Documentation is scheduled for publication in *Foreign Relations, 1977–1980*, vol. VI, Soviet Union.

⁴ In telegram 6818 from Amman, September 20, Ambassador Pickering reported that on September 20, King Hussein provided him with a paper entitled "Elements of a Peaceful Settlement: Proposed Ideas," which outlined Jordanian proposals for a comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli dispute. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840084–1078)

would amount to helping Israel achieve its goal of staying in the West Bank. What they are doing, Sharaf said, is trying to empty the West Bank. People on the West Bank are becoming increasingly restless. If they see there is no solution, they will move away. They will come to Jordan, since they have Jordanian nationality. Sharaf said that when the Israelis say everything is open to negotiations, what they mean, at least in regard to the West Bank, is that they will talk about it but not give in. The Secretary said he agreed that this may be true of some issues but he felt that on many of the issues Dayan would be prepared to negotiate seriously. Whether or not that would be the case for the West Bank is hard to answer. But on many issues, he felt that Dayan would press for flexibility.

Turning again to the Jordanian paper, the Secretary asked if it were realistic for the Jordanians to say that the minor territorial adjustments should each be on the basis of reciprocity. Sharaf said there need not be reciprocity in every instance but there should be an overall balance. The Secretary asked how the refugees would exercise their choice between repatriation and compensation and how Jordan would define who are refugees. Sharaf said the refugees have been defined by the UN. They are people who carry refugee cards and receive a ration. Ambassador Pickering pointed out that in Jordan refugees are defined as people who left Palestine in 1948. People who left in 1967 are displaced persons. Ibrahim commented that the term refugee is a well defined one. Sharaf noted that Ibrahim is well qualified to speak on this subject, since he is Minister of Refugees. Sharaf said refugees are persons defined by the UN as such. He reiterated that the Jordanian proposal would give the refugees of 1948 a choice between repatriation and compensation. If they chose compensation, they would become citizens of the new entity and participate in self-determination and elections.

The Secretary turned to Mr. Atherton and asked him to get for him the UN resolutions defining refugees.

The Secretary asked who would have the responsibility for compensation. Would it be Israel, or would an international fund have to be created? Mr. Habib pointed out that the Israelis will raise counterclaims for Jews displaced from Arab countries and for their property. Sharaf replied that Israel has already agreed to the principle of compensation. He added that the Arabs are ready to offer all Jews the right to return to the countries of their origin. Ambassador Salah stressed the need for foreign assistance to help build up the economy of the West Bank and Gaza, so that returnees can be integrated.

Sharaf stressed that it is important that the Palestinians be given the chance to express their desires. That is why Jordan has proposed a plebiscite and two options: a demilitarized independent state, or a link with Jordan. It is necessary to make these options clear, Sharaf said. The

Secretary asked who would determine whether those would be the only two options in the plebiscite. Wouldn't this be negotiated by the parties at Geneva? Sharaf said these are Jordan's preferences for the options. There are of course "hundreds of other options." The Secretary asked if the Syrians would not insist that the people of the Palestinian entity be able to opt for a federation with Syria and Jordan. Sharaf said this is a possibility; Jordan would consider it. Mr. Quandt made the point that the Israelis would not want to withdraw without knowing the nature of the entity that would come into existence on the West Bank. Sharaf said the Arabs would find it very difficult to accept the idea of Israel's remaining on the West Bank while the plebiscite was going on. Mr. Atherton noted that the Jordanian proposal talks about a package deal. Sharaf confirmed this and said he couldn't imagine a settlement that did not include all elements, Sinai, Golan and the Palestinians.

The Secretary asked if it is really practical to think of having the UN as the administering authority during the transitional period. Wouldn't it be more practical to have a state like Jordan administering the West Bank? Or the U.S., Sharaf rejoined. The Secretary said he really couldn't imagine Israel accepting the UN as an interim administrator. Mr. Habib asked if the Jordanians could contemplate the idea of joint Israeli-Jordanian administration during this period. Sharaf said it would be very difficult to accept this idea or to get agreement on it. After a moment's reflection, however, he added that everything depends on the atmosphere. If a new atmosphere develops during the talks, the idea might be possible. But at this stage, Sharaf said, it will not pass. Sharaf added that the tendency now among the Arabs would be to call for either the UN or the Arab League to administer the West Bank during the transitional period. The Secretary asked how efficient the Arab League would be. Could they do the job? Ambassador Pickering said he had never heard anyone speak enthusiastically about the Arab League. Sharaf indicated that he did not want to state an opinion on this. During the ensuing discussion it was suggested that there might be a joint Israel-Jordan administration in fact without its being labelled as such.

The Secretary had noted that the Jordanian paper says East Jerusalem should be under Arab sovereignty. Does this mean that it would be part of the Palestinian entity? Sharaf said yes. The Jordanians used the word Arab sovereignty because they didn't want to specify what kind of an entity there would be. The Secretary noted that there was still a problem on the Arab side regarding normal relations with Israel. Sharaf responded that, as King Hussein had told President Carter, the main problem is that the Arab countries have not thought about this very much. Mr. Atherton pointed out that the Arabs react against the

idea. The Secretary noted that the Jordanian paper had used the words “peace documents,” not peace treaty. The Secretary said we thought the Jordanians were agreed on the term peace treaty. Sharaf replied that words are not important and noted that in translation from Arabic, a peace treaty and peace agreement were often used interchangeably. The important point, Sharaf said, is that the Arabs have agreed to make an agreement directly with Israel. The first time they accepted this idea was in 1971 during the Jarring Mission. Before that, they had thought of making agreement only with the Security Council.

The Secretary said he gathered Jordan has no problems about others guaranteeing the borders agreed upon by the parties. Sharaf said that in principle that is correct. The Secretary said his guess is that when we come down to it Israel may want there to be a separate bilateral agreement between itself and the U.S. guaranteeing the new borders. The Secretary said the Israelis have not suggested this, but he foresees it as a possibility. Sharaf replied that Senator Fulbright had proposed that the U.S. guarantee Israel’s pre-1967 War borders.

The Secretary asked about the local civil service and police on the West Bank. Sharaf said that all these services, i.e., health, administration, public works and education exist on the West Bank. Some are functioning now and others could easily be reactivated. The Secretary said he gathered the Jordanians really didn’t think there would be a major problem in establishing the structure necessary to administer the West Bank following Israeli withdrawal. Ibrahim replied, “None at all.” Mr. Quandt observed that the West Bank can run itself. Mr. Habib remarked that is also Dayan’s point; the West Bank can run itself.

The Secretary said he would have to excuse himself to go to the airport; he was already late. He said he looked forward to seeing the Minister on September 28 during his meeting with the President.

113. Memorandum of Conversation¹

New York, September 26, 1977, 8:15 p.m.

PARTICIPANTS

Israel

Foreign Minister Moshe Dayan

Ambassador Simcha Dinitz

Minister Hanan Bar-On

Mr. Meir Rosenne, Legal Advisor to the Israeli Foreign Minister

Mr. Naphtali Lavie

Mr. Elyakim Rubinstein

United States

Secretary of State Cyrus Vance

Under Secretary Philip Habib

Assistant Secretary Alfred L. Atherton

Ambassador Samuel Lewis

Deputy Assistant Secretary Arthur R. Day

William B. Quandt, National Security Council

David Korn, Policy Planning Staff

Dayan asked if the cease-fire in southern Lebanon is holding.² The Secretary replied that it is. The Palestinian rejectionists are the main problem. Dayan said he guessed that there was nothing else to do now but wait for implementation of the Shtaura agreement. Dayan asked if the Secretary had seen Rabin's very hawkish statement on southern Lebanon. Dayan observed wryly that he and Begin had become "super doves" compared to Rabin.

The Secretary said he would like to say a word about our talks with Fahmy.³ The Secretary said he had given a copy of the Israeli treaty to Fahmy and discussed with Fahmy the question of a peace treaty. The Secretary said he thought that although there are big gaps between the Egyptian and Israeli positions, there is a basis for negotiations. Between the Egyptians and Israelis? Dayan asked. No question about it, the Secretary reiterated, there is a basis for negotiations. Dayan asked whether the Egyptians could negotiate with Israel without Syria. The Secretary said the Egyptians would like to but we will have to bring about the circumstances for it. The Secretary repeated that in his judgment there is a real basis for negotiations between Egypt and Israel.

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Trips/Visits File, Box 107, 9/19/77–10/25/77 Vance Meetings with Middle East Foreign Ministers: 9–10/77. Secret; Nodis. Drafted by Korn on September 28. The meeting took place in the Secretary's suite at the UN Plaza Hotel.

² See footnote 3, Document 111.

³ See Documents 107–109.

Dayan asked if there is a basis for agreement, not just negotiations. The Secretary said it is too early to say yet if a final agreement could be reached by the Israelis and Egyptians. Dayan asked whether Egypt would make a separate agreement with Israel, in case the other Arabs don't reach agreement with Israel. The Secretary said he could not yet give Dayan an answer to that, but he has raised the question with Fahmy, and Fahmy has gone back to Sadat on it. So we have only questions so far, Dayan remarked. The Secretary said he would have answers before Dayan left New York, but he could say now that the Egyptians do want an agreement with Israel.

The Secretary said he would like to fill Dayan in on the talks with Gromyko.⁴ Dayan remarked that he had never met with Gromyko, although Allon did. Dayan said the Israelis had been approached indirectly by the Soviets. He had a feeling that Gromyko would like to have a meeting with him provided he (Gromyko) didn't have to ask for it. (At this point Ambassador Dinitz handed the Secretary a letter from Prime Minister Begin to the President.)⁵ The Secretary said that Dayan could tell Prime Minister Begin that during the President's meeting with Gromyko the President had raised the question of the Prisoners of Conscience.

The Secretary said the Soviets agree with the Israelis and us that peace must mean more than the end of the state of war. It must mean normal relations. They are willing to make a public statement on this; the Secretary said he thought that would be helpful. Regarding borders the Soviets want the 1967 lines. Regarding the Palestinian question, their position is that there should be a Palestinian state that is independent and that should include the West Bank and Gaza. Regarding Palestinian representation at Geneva, the Soviets feel the best solution would be a united Arab delegation. On Israeli settlements in the occupied territory, the Soviets feel very strongly and will vote for whatever resolution comes up. These are the main points of the Soviet position as stated by Gromyko, the Secretary said.

Dayan said if the Soviets agree to Palestinians in a united Arab delegation, what do they say about the PLO. The Secretary said the Soviets think there should be PLO in the united Arab delegation. They believe the conference should break down into functional working groups along the lines proposed by the Syrians, for both territorial issues and the Palestinian problems. Dayan asked if these would be different working groups. The Secretary said yes there would be one group to deal with all territorial questions and one group to deal with Palestinian-related questions such as a Palestinian state, Gaza and the

⁴ See footnote 3, Document 112.

⁵ The letter has not been found.

West Bank, and water rights; all these things would be handled in functional groups. Not geographic working groups, Dayan asked? No, the Secretary replied.

The Secretary said the problem is the Soviets want to play a role in terms of input. They don't want to be pushed aside. They probably don't care too much about the structure of Geneva, but they are concerned about being left out. The Secretary said he didn't think the Soviets would stay locked into their position if other ways could be found to ensure their involvement. He did not think the functional approach was the be-all and end-all of the Soviet position. Dayan asked if the Soviet position regarding Israeli withdrawal to the 1967 lines was simply their position, "or do they mean it?" The Secretary indicated that he thought there might be some flexibility in the Soviet position. Dayan said Israel would say that it does not agree with the Soviet position but that it would nonetheless negotiate. Would the Soviets agree with that? Dayan asked. The Secretary replied that he thought so.

The Secretary reiterated that the Russians' greatest fear is that they will be excluded from the negotiations. Dayan indicated that in any case most of the negotiations would take place outside Geneva. In response, the Secretary stressed that there must be meaningful negotiations in the working groups in Geneva. Dayan said that during the 1949 Rhodes Armistice negotiations the really important talks took place outside Rhodes. Dayan recalled that he flew to Amman to negotiate with King Abdullah; the negotiations were really in Amman with King Abdullah, not in Rhodes. Mr. Rosenne said Geneva is only a framework. The Secretary replied that the Arabs have said that if we go to Geneva we must stay there this time. The working groups must work in Geneva. Talks outside Geneva are not excluded but there must be talks in the working groups in Geneva. Ambassador Lewis pointed out that the format would be very similar to that of the SALT talks. We have an on-going conference in Geneva as well as meetings on SALT elsewhere. Mr. Rosenne objected that the SALT negotiations are not about territory. He added that negotiations between Israel and the Arabs have to be bilateral.

The Secretary said the Arabs have not agreed to bilateral negotiations. He wanted to go over this clearly so that there would be no misunderstanding. The Secretary said that we do not like to have to say publicly things that contradict what Israel has said. But first, the Secretary said, he would like to go back to the southern Lebanon question and get it out of the way. Dayan had asked if the cease-fire was holding. The answer is yes and we hope it will hold in the future. The real problem is the rejectionists. The Secretary said he had seen a report from the Israel radio saying that if attacks on Israel territory continue this will be a basis for Israel to go back into Lebanon. The Secretary said

he wanted to make clear that we do not believe that this would be a basis for Israel to go back into Lebanon. The Secretary mentioned the President's letter to Prime Minister Begin⁶ and said the President had made it very clear that the cease-fire should be respected. The Secretary noted that we have done everything in our power to bring about cessation of military activity.

Dayan said what do you expect us to do, just sit quiet and let them attack us? The Secretary said the Israelis could shell back if necessary, but sending troops in is too much. Dayan said it is a waste of ammunition, and totally inefficient for Israel to shell back against Palestinian guerrillas. It would be different if Israel were shelling a big Arab town like Irbid. But the situation along the Lebanese border is a little like Vietnam, Dayan said. Five or six Palestinians go out into the brush and shell one of our towns. They don't stay and wait for us to shell back. By the time we do shell, they are gone. The only thing to do is go in and get them, Dayan said. To fire back to somewhere in the mountains in the hope that some PLO would be there to receive our shells would be wishful thinking, Dayan said.

The Secretary said he wanted to be very clear and frank and to avoid misunderstanding. For the last five days we have been under heavy pressure from the press and Congress in regard to Israel's use of our equipment in Lebanon in violation of our law. The Secretary stressed that when Israel sends troops into south Lebanon with U.S. equipment it is a violation of American law and we have to report it to our Congress. We have not done this so far, the Secretary said, because we want to avoid complications. Dayan said that as an Israeli he had to say that Israel could not just sit back and allow the PLO to attack Israel's towns. He could not go to the people of Kiryat Shemona and tell them "there is nothing we can do for you." If the problem is American equipment, Dayan said, maybe we can do something without American equipment, using British tanks and British and French equipment. But to let the PLO open fire during the cease-fire and have to say to our people "we can't help you," no Israeli government can say that, Dayan said. We don't want to break your laws, Dayan said, but we have to defend ourselves. The Secretary said that the real question is that what was done by Israel in moving troops into southern Lebanon to work with the Maronites was wrong. Dayan asked if Israel was responsible for the war in Lebanon. The Secretary said we only want Israel to know where we stand on this matter.

Talk then turned to the Israeli Cabinet statement of September 23 announcing acceptance of an alleged American proposal on organiza-

⁶ See Document 110.

tion of Geneva. The Secretary asked what the Israeli Cabinet had in fact decided. He pointed out that we have seen only press reports.⁷ Dayan said he had passed to the GOI “only what we were sure you had passed to us.” Dayan said that “we had absolutely no doubt about it; it was honestly what I thought we had agreed on.” The Secretary said he had no question that that was the case. There seemed to have been a real misunderstanding.

The Secretary read the text of the Israeli press release. He then went down the points made by the President in his meeting with Dayan on September 19,⁸ as follows:

1. The Arab parties would be represented by a united Arab delegation. In the delegation there should be non-prominent PLO Palestinians.

2. The working groups for the peace treaties would be Egypt/Israel, Syria/Israel, and Jordan and the Palestinians of the united Arab delegation for negotiations on the Palestine entity problem. There would be a separate working group of all interested parties, perhaps separate from Geneva, to deal with the problem of refugees. Concluding, the Secretary said there obviously was a wide gap between what the Israelis understood and what we understood.

Dayan said that on refugees Israel had said that the negotiations should not be within the Geneva framework. The Secretary said that the important point was about Jordan and the Palestinians. The Israelis had said that our proposal was that the Palestinians should be part of the Jordanian delegation. The Secretary stressed that the President’s recollection and his own was that the West Bank should be negotiated by Jordan and Palestine members of the united Arab delegation. The Secretary said this is a big difference and he wanted to clarify it.

Dayan said he recalled that the agreement was that if any Palestinian should be asked what delegation he belongs to, he would have to say the Jordanian. The Secretary said he had checked the minutes and confirmed that the President had made clear that we were talking about Jordanians and Palestinians, not Palestinians in a Jordanian delegation. In any event, the Secretary said, the problem is that the Israeli Cabinet came out with a statement which we had not seen before, and which differed from our understanding of what was said in the meeting with the President. The Secretary said he hoped this sort of thing would never happen again. We do not want to be in conflict with

⁷ The *Washington Post* reported that the Israeli Cabinet had approved the U.S. proposal for a unified Arab delegation that would include Palestinians. (Yuval Elizur, “Israel Accepts Palestinian Role At Geneva Talks,” *Washington Post*, September 26, 1977, p. A1)

⁸ See Document 106.

you, the Secretary said. But suddenly on Sunday⁹ we were confronted with a report on the wire of an Israeli Cabinet decision. We spent all day trying to find a way to deal with it. Finally, we concluded we had no alternative but to respond.¹⁰ The Secretary said it makes it very difficult for us when the Israelis do things like this. He hoped that we and the Israelis could find ways of avoiding this sort of situation in the future.

Dayan said he hoped so too. Dayan said if the Secretary felt that the Israeli Cabinet action was not helpful, he accepted that. He suggested that perhaps the right way to proceed would be to put any understandings down in writing and show them to both sides. The Secretary said it would have been much better if we had proceeded that way. Mr. Habib remarked that if the Israeli Cabinet statement had claimed to be only the Israeli position, that would not have been so bad. But the Israelis called it an agreed U.S./Israeli position. The Secretary said he thought in the future that such things should be put in writing.

Ambassador Dinitz said he was under the impression that the United States and Israel had agreed on a position, subject to approval by the Israeli Cabinet. Dinitz said the Foreign Minister had even suggested that it might be better to state that it was only an American position. The Secretary replied that that was all the more reason for Israel not to do it alone. If it were an American position, we should be the ones to put it forward. The Secretary said he had had to make a statement that afternoon clarifying the whole matter, when the press asked him about it. The Secretary said he had told the press that he welcomed the Israeli view that a united Arab delegation is a good idea. But when he was asked by reporters whether discussions should be bilateral or not he had said they should be bilateral where possible but there might be other ways. We had also had to say that the Israeli statement did not accurately reflect our views.¹¹

The Secretary said he would like to clarify this evening with Dayan what we can and cannot agree on concerning the organization of the Geneva Conference. The Secretary said, let's go down the list. He then read the following: "The Arab parties are to be represented by a united

⁹ September 25.

¹⁰ U.S. officials cautioned that the Arabs had not yet accepted the idea of a unified Arab delegation, nor what role the Palestinians would have. (Bernard Gwertzman, "U.S. Effort for Talks on Mideast Seen to Gain," *New York Times*, September 26, 1977, p. 1)

¹¹ See "Vance Says U.S. and Israel Still Differ on Talks," *Washington Post*, September 27, 1977, p. A11. Telegram 230645, September 25, also instructed the Ambassadors in Amman, Beirut, Cairo, Damascus, and Jidda to contact their host governments regarding press reports that the Israeli Cabinet had agreed to participate at Geneva with a unified Arab delegation, with certain reservations. The telegram stated that the reservations as described by media reports did not reflect U.S. views. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D770349–0523)

Arab delegation at the opening session of Geneva. Within the Arab delegation there will be Palestinians, without well-known PLO.” Ambassador Dinitz asked what we meant by the opening session of Geneva? Would this be only a brief ceremonial affair, or would there be speeches or even negotiations and voting? The Secretary replied that he did not believe it would be only ceremonial. Dayan said that Israel could agree concerning the united Arab delegation just for the opening session, but could not agree to it for any negotiations, except for a subject like the refugees. Otherwise, the negotiations would have to be bilateral, not between Israel and the united Arab delegation.

The Secretary said the second point is that after the opening session the parties would break up into the following working groups: Israel/Egypt, Israel/Syria, and Jordanians and Palestinians. The Secretary emphasized that the Palestinians would not be members of the Jordanian delegation: the formula is Jordanians *and* Palestinians. Dayan said the first point was to find out if we agree on Syria and Egypt. He asked if his understanding was correct that after its opening the Conference will break up into two working groups—Syria and Israel, and Egypt and Israel. The Secretary said yes. Before that, Dayan continued, Israel’s view is that there are not to be any negotiations with the united Arab delegation and there will not be any other negotiations with the united Arab delegation except for the refugees. As far as Egypt and Syria are concerned, all matters would be negotiated bilaterally. The Secretary said this coincides with our view of how things should be. We are not sure we can persuade all the Arabs to proceed this way, but we will try. Mr. Habib suggested that the opening session might last three or four days. Dayan said the question is not how long it will last but what will be done there.

Ambassador Dinitz said that before we left the subject he wanted to be sure there was no misunderstanding. He wanted to know precisely what the U.S. meant when it talked about the opening session. Will there be one speaker for all the Arab states or will there be several? If there are several, will one of them get up and speak in the name of the PLO? The Secretary said he could not give clear answers to those questions now. Dayan interjected that in any event he did not think such questions needed to be answered tonight. We do not need to go into all the details now, Dayan said, we do not need to decide now what kind of champagne we will drink when the peace treaty is signed.

The Secretary said that in addition to the Egyptian/Israeli and Syrian/Israeli working groups there would be a working group of Jordanians and Palestinians to negotiate regarding the West Bank and Gaza. Dayan asked if we might break this down into smaller parts, going into more detail. First, he wanted to ask about Jordan’s position. The Secretary said that the Jordanians’ position is that they cannot ne-

gotiate by themselves regarding the West Bank; they can negotiate only along with the other Arabs. Their view is that there should be a functional working group for this issue. Dayan remarked that there are purely bilateral matters between Jordan and Israel and asked if there should not be negotiations between Jordan and Israel alone on these issues. Mr. Quandt remarked that there should be no objection to separate Jordanian/Israeli or Lebanese/Israeli negotiations for strictly bilateral matters. Dayan noted that Israel has boundaries with Jordan outside the West Bank and that an Israeli/Jordanian peace treaty will have to be negotiated. The Secretary said he did not believe that would be a problem. Dayan said let us then note that it is the West Bank/Gaza issue that is problematic. But let us say that for Jordanian/Israeli problems there should be bilateral negotiations between Jordan and Israel. The Secretary reiterated that as far as the United States is concerned we see no objection to bilateral Jordanian/Israeli negotiations on problems solely of concern to those two states.

Dayan said the next question is what to do about the West Bank and Gaza issues. What is your position, he asked? The Secretary said the President's view is that both Jordanians and Palestinians should be involved in the negotiations on the West Bank/Gaza and Palestinian issues. He added, however, that he personally thought it would be very hard to negotiate these issues with only those two—i.e., Jordanians and Palestinians—involved. The Syrians will almost certainly want to get involved in any such negotiations. Dayan said the Syrians have no ground to be involved in negotiations regarding the West Bank and Gaza. The Egyptians might make a claim to such involvement, on the grounds that Gaza was under their control until 1967 and they want to have a say in its disposition. But, Dayan said, we never thought the Syrians would try to get involved. The Secretary said the Palestinians are so closely tied with the Syrians that he thought the Syrians would want to be a party to anything concerning them. Mr. Habib remarked that the Palestinian issue is one that concerns more than one country. Dayan asked if he understood correctly that the President believes that the West Bank issue should be negotiated by Jordan and the Palestinians. The Secretary said yes and repeated that he himself thought the Syrians would also want to be involved.

Dayan then said he would like to suggest that, regarding the West Bank and Gaza, negotiations would be with the Jordanians and the Palestinians. Dayan cautioned, however, that he did not know if he would have a majority in the Israeli Cabinet for this position. Mr. Rosenne interjected that "nobody can be brought into Geneva unless we agree." Mr. Rosenne pointed out that the Israelis had always insisted the Palestinians be part of a Jordanian delegation. Dayan said he was saying that there should be a separate group dealing with the West Bank and Gaza.

On one side there would be Israel and on the other, Jordan and the Palestinians. Dayan added, however, that Jordanians and Palestinians would not be two separate delegations. The Secretary replied that we do not see the Palestinians as being part of the Jordanian delegation. Israel would be negotiating the question of the West Bank and Gaza with Jordanians and Palestinians as co-equals. Dayan said he understood, the negotiations would be with the Jordanians and Palestinians in one delegation. The Secretary said it would not be a single delegation—there would be Jordanians and Palestinians as members of a unified Arab delegation. The Secretary again explained that the Jordanians and Palestinians would be separate groups, not members of the same delegation. Mr. Rosenne objected that to put the Palestinians on the same level as the Jordanians or the Egyptians would mean recognizing them as a state. Dayan said we are talking now about who we are going to negotiate with, not anything more. He again asked if Israel would be negotiating regarding the West Bank and Gaza with Palestinians and Jordanians. The Secretary replied affirmatively. Dayan then said that he agreed to what the Secretary was proposing.

Ambassador Dinitz then asked if he might have a word privately with Dayan. The two got up from the table and went to the corner of the room; they were joined by Mr. Rosenne and Mr. Bar-On.

When Dayan returned to the table, the Secretary remarked that we want no flags and no name plates at Geneva. Dayan said that his colleagues were concerned about the formula for negotiations regarding the West Bank and Gaza. We seem to be putting Palestinians on the same level as Jordanians, Egyptians and Syrians. And there seems to be an implication that Israel would be negotiating regarding a future Palestinian state or entity. Dayan said perhaps it would be better to forget about what had been said about the organization of the negotiations and instead talk about what we are negotiating about. First of all, Dayan said, he would have to reiterate Israel's position that there should be no foreign sovereignty on the West Bank. However, he added, we do want to negotiate about how we and the West Bank Arabs can live together. So, Dayan said, let's talk about what we would negotiate about. Israel would say it thinks there should be no foreign sovereignty and no state. The other parties would disagree.

The Secretary said he would like to repeat the American position on this issue. Our view is that there should be a Palestinian entity. We have chosen the word carefully because it does not say a state, it leaves room. But we believe there can be no resolution of the Palestinian question without a Palestinian entity, preferably one linked to Jordan. On this point, the Secretary remarked, there is a real difference of opinion between Israel and ourselves. But we feel the issue has to be on the agenda at Geneva. If not, it would probably not be possible to have real

negotiations at Geneva, and the parties might not even agree to come to Geneva.

Dayan said the President had told him he did not support a Palestinian state. The President had said this also to the press, Dayan said. Dayan then asked “what do you mean by a Palestinian homeland or entity if it is not a state?” The Secretary said he would tell Dayan what he thought the President had been saying. The President meant that there ought to be some territory—territory linked to Jordan—as a homeland for the Palestinians. In his own mind he has not ruled out a state if the parties want a state, but preferably the entity should be linked to Jordan. Mr. Rosenne interjected that the word Palestinians is not to be found in Resolution 242. Since Resolution 242 is the basis for Geneva, to add the Palestinian issue now would not be in conformity with Resolution 242 or with the U.S./Israeli Memorandum of Understanding.¹² Mr. Rosenne then read from an Israeli government Statement of Principles regarding the West Bank.¹³

Dayan said perhaps the best thing to do would be to find a way to mention each subject without defining it. The Secretary said suppose we refer to it as the Palestinian question. Dayan said suppose Israel would agree to say the West Bank, the Palestinians and Gaza could be discussed at Geneva. Then Israel could come forward with its views and the other party could state its views as well. The subject can be mentioned, Dayan said, and each side can interpret it as it sees fit. The Secretary said he thought that was a constructive idea. The subject could be put on the agenda but we would not say who would discuss it and we would not try to define it too clearly. Mr. Habib suggested that the subject might be called the West Bank, Gaza and the Palestinians. The Secretary said that is good, that moves us forward. Mr. Habib cautioned, however, that the Arabs will be split over the issue of functional versus bilateral negotiations. The Secretary asked whether the question of free navigation should be a separate issue. Mr. Rosenne said he thought it should be dealt with in the Egyptian/Israeli working group, and Ambassador Dinitz made the same remark. The Secretary said that was fine. Dayan confirmed that the free navigation issue should be dealt with in the Egyptian/Israeli working group.

The Secretary said it is important to note that the Soviets say that peace is not just the end of war, but normalization of relations. Mr. Rosenne asked if that included diplomatic relations? The Secretary said we had discussed that with the Soviets. Gromyko said “normal relations between states.” Dayan remarked that that type of relations did not even exist between the Soviets and Israelis. The Secretary said Gro-

¹² See footnote 12, Document 103.

¹³ Not found.

myko had specified that when there is progress in the Middle East peace talks, the USSR would reestablish relations with Israel.

Dayan raised the question of American guarantees. The Secretary said he had not yet had a chance to discuss this at length with the President. But, he added, what we are talking about is a bilateral treaty between the United States and Israel similar to treaties the U.S. has with the NATO countries. This is a treaty that would put us on the line with you, the Secretary said. The Secretary said it was his view that the President and he would recommend that we sign such a treaty with Israel in the framework of peace. The Secretary said it was further his view that we would be able to get the votes in Congress for approval for such a treaty. Dayan said he was not familiar with the NATO treaties. He said he understood that the Secretary was informing him of his (the Secretary's) attitude. The Secretary said yes he was telling Dayan what our attitude is. Dayan asked if we would consider similar treaties with the Arabs. The Secretary said yes but he did not think the Arabs would ask for such treaties. They might want Security Council guarantees. Dayan asked what the Security Council could do to guarantee the Arab states? The Secretary said the Security Council would decide as appropriate to take action as appropriate (laughter). But the Secretary stressed that he was talking about a U.S./Israeli agreement, ratified by the Senate. The Secretary asked Mr. Atherton to get out the typical kind of agreement we have with the NATO countries. The Secretary said he would talk with the President about this, if Dayan thought it useful. Dayan said he felt Israel must know what its various possibilities are in the different contingencies. Then, he added, we will have to look at them, "take a cold shower" and decide.

The Secretary said there is another matter he wanted to mention to Dayan. The Soviets have talked with us about the possibility of issuing a joint statement concerning the Middle East conflict and the need to convene in Geneva. The Secretary said the issue will come up again when Gromyko meets with the President. But he wanted to let Dayan know about it now. He could not be sure that anything would come of the idea but if something does, he said, we will show Israel the draft of the joint statement before issuing it.¹⁴ Ambassador Dinitz said the Israeli side would much appreciate this but he knew that there are things which the Soviets and the U.S. agree on that the U.S. and Israel do not agree on. Thus a joint Soviet/American statement might prejudice Israel's position at Geneva. The Secretary said we have not made any final decision on this, we just want to let the Israelis know that it is under consideration. If we do make such a statement it will simply cover where we stand and where we hope things will go before the end

¹⁴ See footnote 4, Document 118.

of the year. Ambassador Dinitz said he hoped the statement would not be given to Israel in final form, but that the Israelis would have a chance to comment and propose changes. The Secretary said they would.

Dayan remarked that the Secretary had earlier told him that we had given the Egyptians a copy of Israel's draft treaty. Only the treaty, the Secretary said, not the letter. Dayan asked if Israel could get something similar from the Arabs in return. The Secretary said we may be able to get something from the Egyptians and the Jordanians; the Jordanians have given us a very full paper. The Secretary said we would give the Israelis anything we could.

Dayan asked about the possibility of Arab resolutions modifying Resolution 242. The Secretary said our position on this is that we are discouraging anybody from trying to modify 242 or reinterpret it. We have discouraged all parties from doing anything in regard to 242. We are saying, "leave it alone."

What about resolutions concerning Israeli settlements? Dayan asked. The Secretary said that will come up. We will be faced with a resolution on settlements and it will create a problem for us. Dayan asked whether this would be in the Security Council or the General Assembly. Mr. Habib said so far there is a proposed GA resolution. Ambassador Lewis pointed out that the likelihood of a resolution condemning Israeli settlements depends on the situation. If there is no progress toward Geneva then a resolution becomes much more likely. If there is progress towards Geneva we will be in a much better position to fend one off. Dayan asked what we would do in case such a resolution were presented in the Security Council. The Secretary said that would depend on what the resolution says. He added that Dayan knows our views regarding Israeli settlements. Mr. Rosenne asked if we could get such a resolution stopped if we knew Geneva was going to convene? The Secretary said if we make progress toward Geneva, it should be possible to stop such a resolution.

Dayan asked if the Secretary saw negotiations with Egypt possible before Geneva. The Secretary said if we can agree on Geneva and can resolve the problem of Palestinian representation and how Geneva will be organized, then we might be able to make progress also on substance before Geneva. Dayan asked if the Secretary thought there could be West Bank mayors in the Palestinian delegation. The Secretary said he thought there could be some mayors in the Palestinian delegation. The Secretary added that he did not think, however, that not-well-known PLO could be excluded from the Palestinian delegation.

Dayan said Israel is very interested in knowing whether there is a possibility for negotiations between Israel and Egypt. The Secretary said there can only be such a possibility if there is a real Geneva Conference coming up, a conference which deals with all issues and at which

the Palestinians are represented. Dayan asked about the problem of the Soviets. The Secretary said the difficulty with the Soviets is that they are concerned about being left out. We have to give them a role that gets them off their insistence on functional negotiations. The Soviets want functional negotiations because they feel it gives them a role. If we can assure them that they will have a role in non-functional working groups they will feel good. Dayan observed wryly there will be groups at Geneva but they won't be working.

Dayan asked what he should tell Prime Minister Begin about what had been agreed between himself and the Secretary. The Secretary said let's try to put something down on paper. Mr. Habib pointed out that even after we put our understanding down the Israelis should not announce it until we get Arab agreement. Dayan agreed and turned to Ambassador Lewis and suggested that the Ambassador might see Prime Minister Begin when he (Lewis) returns to Israel later this week and inform the Prime Minister of what was agreed. The Secretary said the U.S. side would do a paper that evening which Ambassador Lewis could take with him to Israel.¹⁵

The Secretary said he would be meeting with Syrian Foreign Minister Khaddam on September 28. It was important to hear what Khaddam would have to say since the Syrians will be the most difficult of the Arabs to deal with. The Secretary said that after the talk with Khaddam he would want to speak again with Dayan, perhaps on September 29. The Secretary said we will want to keep in touch with the Foreign Minister on a daily basis. Dayan agreed. He said he would be away in Los Angeles October 6 and 7 but otherwise he would be in New York.

Dayan asked what the Israeli and American sides should tell the press about their meeting. The Secretary said he was inclined to say this was one of a series of meetings, and that such meetings would continue while we are in New York. That is enough, the Secretary said. Dayan said it would be good if the U.S. side said that it was pleased by the meeting. The Secretary replied that we would be glad to say that. Mr. Habib remarked that the press will ask about the Israeli government's statement regarding the convening of Geneva. Dayan said we can say we discussed Geneva. The Secretary said we would say we discussed the whole range of topics, and that he had already said all that he intended to say about the Israeli government's statement. In parting, Dayan said to the Secretary that he was sorry he had spoken out so hotly on the question of south Lebanon but he had to tell the Secretary how he felt about this problem as an Israeli. The Secretary said he fully understood.

¹⁵ Not further identified.

114. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, September 28, 1977, 11:40 a.m.–12:25 p.m.

SUBJECT

Summary of the President's Meeting with Foreign Minister Khaddam of Syria

PARTICIPANTS

The President
The Vice President
Secretary of State Cyrus Vance
Mr. Alfred L. Atherton, Jr.
Mr. David Aaron
Ambassador Richard Murphy
Mr. William B. Quandt
Mr. Hamilton Jordan
Mr. Jody Powell
Mr. Robert Lipshutz
Mr. Stuart Eizenstat
Mr. Isa Sabbagh

His Excellency 'Abd al-Halim Khaddam, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Syrian Arab Republic
His Excellency Sabah Qabbani, Ambassador of Syrian Arab Republic
Mr. Abdassalam Aqil, Private Secretary to Deputy Prime Minister
Mr. Samih Abu Fares, Interpreter

President: I am very pleased to welcome the Foreign Minister and his colleagues and I apologize for the delay in beginning the full meeting. We had a thorough discussion about the arrangements for convening the Geneva Conference² and I would like to outline our position at this time. I'll give my version of our discussion and will welcome any corrections that the Foreign Minister might make. I pointed out that our public and private commitments to the Arab governments and Israel have not changed. I am completely dedicated to getting a peaceful solution to the Middle East problem and our approach is based on the principles that we have explained and which we support very strongly. I pointed out that we are carrying out several simultaneous negotiations: the United States and Israel; the United States with each of the Arab countries; the United States with the Soviet Union; and we are trying to bring about agreement not only between the Arabs and

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Subject File, Box 2, Arab-Israeli Peace Settlement 1977: Volume I [II]. Top Secret. The meeting took place in the White House Cabinet Room. Brackets are in the original.

² According to the President's Daily Diary, Carter met with Khaddam from 10:32 to 11:35 a.m. (Carter Library, Presidential Materials, President's Daily Diary) No memorandum of conversation of this discussion has been found.

Israel, but among the Arabs themselves. Without flexibility, there is obviously no hope for progress. I think that the Foreign Minister would agree that Syria is not famous for flexibility (Laughter), and neither are the Israelis. But President Assad has taken a very constructive view in calling for a unified Arab delegation and by saying that Palestinian rights matter more than who represents the Palestinians at Geneva. Although we do not yet have Israel's agreement, the proposal that we make has in our view the best chance of succeeding and I would like to outline our views.

Geneva should be convened this year with a unified Arab delegation, which will include Palestinian representatives, and will include PLO members. The only caveat is that the PLO representatives should not be well known or famous persons.

I know that Foreign Minister Khaddam prefers to have three committees at Geneva, to deal with peace, withdrawal, and the Palestinian question, and that these will each be made up of members of the unified Arab delegation. He feels that this is an important principle. I replied that in our view there should be an arrangement whereby the subcommittees would be formed as follows: Egypt and Israel to discuss Sinai; Syria and Israel to discuss the Golan Heights; Jordan and Israel on specific topics of a bilateral nature; and in the discussions on the West Bank, the Palestinian entity, and the rights of the Palestinians, this would be between Israel, Jordan and the Palestinians, including members of the PLO. If desirable, there could be a separate group on the refugee problem, including Palestinians from several countries, such as Lebanon, Jordan, Syria, Kuwait, and even Iraq, but for the refugee question, there might be a separate discussion. This is not necessary, but might be a possibility. In order to accommodate the Syrian position on the three committees, the Arab nations and the Palestinians could consult constantly with one another and could approve agreements with Israel only if they are satisfied with the agreements on all of the other fronts. No one would need to sign an agreement with Israel unless he were satisfied with the other agreements as well.

My guess is that a detailed discussion on the Sinai, including the question of outposts, security forces, drawing of maps, would be done by technicians and subcommittees, but the final agreement would be made by heads of state. My belief is that unless this proposal proves to be acceptable, the chances for a Geneva Conference will be damaged very badly. We have committed ourselves to consistent involvement and we are trying to treat all of the parties fairly, including the Palestinians. I described to the Foreign Minister the text of an invitation that we would issue with the Soviets that is now in its final stages of preparation. The Secretary of State has pointed out that the text is not yet final, but the principles for reconvening a conference are in their final

stages of preparation. In my opinion, once the principles have been agreed upon, then the invitation can be issued without much further difficulty. The Foreign Minister expressed a keen interest in how the parties would be addressed when the invitation is actually extended.

Secretary Vance: We are not yet there.

President [to Secretary Vance]: You and Foreign Minister Khaddam can work on this.

Secretary Vance: We haven't yet discussed this with the Soviets. We are not that far.

President: The other question covered was PLO acceptance of Resolution 242 and the right of Israel to exist. We have a signed agreement committing our nation's word of honor that we will not meet directly with the PLO until this is done. I expressed my doubt that Syria had fully agreed with our proposal, and I stated our hope that Syria and President Assad would help to get the PLO to accept Resolution 242.

Foreign Minister Khaddam: It would be unfortunate if the United States remained committed forever to Henry Kissinger's promises!

President: I have reconfirmed this commitment in my own words. We would like to begin discussions with the PLO directly and this would help us to understand their special needs and to arrange for their representation at the Geneva discussions.

Foreign Minister Khaddam: If you permit, I would like to make a comment. As for Palestinian representation, our view is that we prefer that the PLO be present on all matters of interest to the Palestinians. This is the case whether the questions are touching on the West Bank or Gaza, or on those questions outside that area. There is a simple reason. No one can claim to represent the Palestinians except the PLO. If I may repeat the imagery I used with the President, when you talk about normalizing relations with Cuba, it makes no sense for you to talk with the Cuban refugees in Florida. Likewise, there is no point in dealing with Palestinians who are not part of the PLO. This would be like Secretary Vance discussing SALT with the White Russian emigrants in Europe. It is also true that no Palestinian would claim the right to speak for the Palestinians other than the PLO.

On Resolution 242, we sent a text to Secretary Vance.³ It is the maximum that we have managed to get from the Palestinians. Resolution 242 addresses itself only to the refugee problem and the issues of the 1967 war, and it is not up to date. I frankly think that the United States role should transcend the commitments of Henry Kissinger. The PLO is now an observer at the United Nations. There are twice as many states that recognize the PLO as recognize Israel. The United States in the past

³ See footnote 4, Document 101.

did vote for UN Resolution 181 in 1947,⁴ which proposed the creation of two states, one Jewish and one Arab. This was a historic commitment. The United States at the UN has voted for all the Resolutions calling for the right of return of all the Palestinian refugees. That also is a historic commitment.

As for the Palestinians, Resolution 242 does not address their problems. We could talk with Secretary Vance and come up with a draft which would help the Palestinians to attend Geneva and to participate. We would approach this with an open mind, the drafting of a new resolution. As to the President's reference that we did not try to influence the Palestinians, I would like to point out that we have tried to. But our concern is that we be able to deal with a Palestinian leadership that is capable of adhering to resolutions. Any leadership which represents nothing would have no importance. There are also certain detailed points which I will discuss with Secretary Vance later.

I would like to repeat our opinion on the formation of committees. I will also convey to President Assad the proposals that you have made. Of course, we see in the US proposal for a unified Arab delegation a positive step in a contribution to peace.

President: The Foreign Minister asked earlier if I foresaw separate agreements and I said "Yes." But Syria need not sign any agreement unless it is satisfied with all of the other agreements as well.

Foreign Minister Khaddam: We need to look at things clearly. Among the Arab nations, there is a mutual defense agreement. Assume that we reach a separate accord with Israel and that we sign, but that Egypt does not. If war then broke out between Egypt and Israel, we would be involved and our agreement with Israel would mean nothing. That is why I suggest a unified Arab delegation and a single treaty, since this would help keep the peace in the future. I refer to this because we want an agreement to be based on solid ground. This is especially important since we live in a world of such uncertainty. So if the foundations are not solid, the results will not last. Israel's attitudes also make us look at basic factors. Prime Minister Begin has said that Palestine is only a part of Israel and that Israel considers her boundaries to include some of Lebanon, Syria, and elsewhere. Today I saw a translation of an article from *Time* Magazine on US aid to Israel, and it included remarks by Senator Stone attacking the American Administration in the presence of the Israeli Foreign Minister.

Secretary Vance: Foreign Minister Dayan called after that and apologized. He was deeply upset.

⁴ See footnote 2, Document 32.

Foreign Minister Khaddam: I would have locked up both Dayan and Stone!

President: I understand the problem you describe, but the example you use of Cuba is not exactly the same. There is no Palestinian nation; there is a Cuban nation.

Foreign Minister Khaddam: But there is a Palestinian people.

President: That's right. We are trying to include the Palestinian people and PLO representatives. We are working to include the PLO representatives in Geneva, but this remains the most difficult issue for us to get agreement on. We need to have a Geneva conference, so that we can induce Israel to participate.

Foreign Minister Khaddam: If we let ourselves follow this to its logical conclusion, Israel in the end would be telling Jordan, Syria, and others who they should name as their representatives as well.

President: There is nothing I have outlined which is unfair to Syria or to the Palestinians or to any Arab country. I would like your government to endorse and approve the proposals that we have described to you. I would like to ask Secretary Vance to put this in writing so that there will be no mistake. If you could approve, and if we could get Egypt, Jordan, and the Soviets to agree, then I think we can get Israel to agree and go to Geneva, where we can meet the needs of the Palestinians, the need for peace, and the need for withdrawal. Only then can we make progress. We need you to be supportive and not be an obstacle to progress.

I have had a constant awareness of your special concern, and these proposals do not violate any of your principles. But I need you to be accommodating on the details of the arrangements and these may have to be different from those that you prefer. Of course, others will also have to be accommodating.

Foreign Minister Khaddam: I will convey to President Assad exactly what President Carter says.

President: If we could get an early favorable reply, we and the Soviets would be ready to prepare an invitation to consult with you and to get to Geneva before the end of the year. We will be careful not to surprise or embarrass you as we prepare for Geneva. I am just as committed to protecting the legitimate interests of the Palestinians and the refugees as I am to protecting Israel. The crucial thing for me is that I be able to earn and maintain your trust and the confidence of the others as well. If I betray that, the prospects for peace will perhaps be lost. So I want to ask you to be flexible on details, as long as we do not violate your principles.

Foreign Minister Khaddam: I would like to underscore for President Carter the great and deep appreciation that President Assad had for his

integrity and his hard work and efforts, as well as those of Secretary Vance. We will spend every effort to get to the goal of a just and lasting peace. President Carter is the first American President who has so consistently followed the path of peace in the Middle East in earnest. Even if we disagree on some things, even profoundly, I must say this. As far as we are concerned, we want to continue and increase the cooperation between our two countries. I will convey to President Assad the substance of the US proposal. I will convey to you his reply. We will conduct some inter-Arab consultations as well. I believe that for the Arabs to agree on certain aspects will be better than for them to disagree.

President: Yes.

Foreign Minister Khaddam: I want to repeat that I appreciate President Carter's receiving me. When are you coming to Damascus? We have heard of your upcoming trip.

President: I don't want you to get tired of me.

Foreign Minister Khaddam: On the contrary, we would like to see you and we will let you see the Golan Heights after Israel's withdrawal. You have seen perhaps the city of Quneitra, and you can see how the Israelis left it.

President: When a peace treaty is signed, perhaps then I will visit.

Foreign Minister Khaddam: We really wish that you would come the day that peace is established, but Israel's behavior, and the American generosity in aid to Israel, are not encouraging.

President: I know that you will do everything possible to help bring about my visit. I will make a permanent commitment to do all that I can while I am President to bring peace in the Middle East.

Foreign Minister Khaddam: Thank you.

President: Give my best regards to President Assad.

115. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, September 28, 1977, 1 p.m.

SUBJECT

Secretary's Luncheon with Foreign Minister Khaddam of Syria

PARTICIPANTS

Syria

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Abd al-Halim Khaddam
Syrian Ambassador to the United States Sabah Kabbani
Mr. Abou Fares, Interpreter

United States

Secretary of State Cyrus Vance
Deputy Secretary Warren Christopher
Under Secretary for Political Affairs Philip Habib
Assistant Secretary for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs
Alfred L. Atherton, Jr.
Ambassador Richard Murphy
Mr. William Quandt, National Security Council
Mr. David Korn, Policy Planning Staff
Mr. Isa Sabbagh, Interpreter

The Secretary said that the President had noted that it was a little unclear how the working group subcommittees would report the results of their activity. The President's suggestion was that the working groups report to the Plenary. Khaddam said that in his view the subcommittees should be based on topics. If a topical committee agreed on something, it would be reported to the Plenary. The Secretary replied that there is a difference of view between Syria and the U.S. on how the working groups should be set up and on who they should report to. The Secretary said that was why he brought the matter up, to make sure that there was no misunderstanding.

Khaddam said there were two points he wanted to make. The first was that committees based on topics would make things easier. The second was that if the committees were subdivided on the basis of geography, what would be the advantage of having a unified Arab delegation—it would only be a matter of protocol. The Secretary said he did not agree. Some matters should be handled on a bilateral basis and others on a multilateral basis. As the President said, questions related to Gaza, the Palestinians and the West Bank would require more than

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Trips/Visits File, Box 107, 9/19/77–10/25/77 Vance Meetings with Middle East Foreign Ministers: 9–10/77. Secret; Nodis. Drafted by Korn on October 4. The meeting took place at the Department of State in the Madison Room.

bilateral discussion. Khaddam said if something concerning Egypt has to be bilateral, why should the Palestinian issue not be bilateral, between the Palestinians and Israel? Because there is more than one party involved, the Secretary replied. No, Khaddam said, there are only the Palestinians. That is why we say the Palestinians have to be included in the discussions of the Palestinian issue, the Secretary said.

Khaddam said that Syria's interest in the Sinai is no less than its interest in Golan. "We consider the whole thing an Arab problem." Khaddam said Syria would have no objection to having one delegation represent the Arab side for all issues, because what we are talking about is the Arab cause. If the discussions were based on a national concept, then there would be no point in having a united Arab delegation.

The Secretary said that the President thought he was meeting Syria's suggestion when he suggested that the working groups should report back to the Plenary. He thought that solved the problem. The Secretary asked if it made sense to have five parties discussing security arrangements on Golan. It seems to us that Golan is Syria's business. We can see why at the end it would go back to the Plenary, but we cannot see why others would want to tell Syria what kind of security arrangements to make on Golan. Otherwise someone would be telling Syria to put its forces here instead of there. The Secretary repeated that that does not make sense. Khaddam replied that the point is that Syria and Israel will not be negotiating regarding Golan. Syria will be negotiating Israeli withdrawal from Golan. Then negotiations will take place regarding arrangements for security, but security arrangements must be all encompassing for they affect all the Arab states. Khaddam added, however, that he had no doubt that what the President had suggested, that the results of the deliberations should be submitted to the Plenary, is constructive.

The Secretary pointed out that the Syrians had said that they would have an interest in the arrangements for Egypt, and that others would have an interest in the arrangements between Syria and Israel, but, the Secretary said, then you took a leap and said let's talk about security arrangements and said security arrangements interested everyone. In the abstract that is correct. But when you get down to a question of how big a DMZ there would be in Syria and how big a DMZ there would be in Egypt, where the terrain is different, then why have all these people waiting around discussing these detailed problems. Khaddam replied that he had mentioned security arrangements only as an illustration of Syria's view that negotiations should be on a multilateral basis rather than on a geographic basis. Khaddam said Syria would be ready to have any Arab country do the negotiations for it on security arrangements, even Iraq or Libya.

The Secretary said he wanted to make sure he understood what Syria's views are regarding Palestinians in a united Arab delegation. He would start by asking a question: Does Syria have any objection to having among the Palestinians in the united Arab delegation both PLO and non-PLO Palestinians? Khaddam replied yes, Syria does object. The Secretary asked what is the objection and what is the reason. Khaddam replied that first of all there is only one Palestinian people and one Palestinian cause. This requires one type of representation. Secondly, the PLO is the one body recognized internationally and by the Arabs as the sole representative of the Palestinians. Khaddam said that there is not one Palestinian outside the PLO who can claim to represent the Palestinians. For instance, Khaddam said if we were to agree as Israel suggests that Palestinian representation in Geneva should include West Bank mayors, the mayors would not come. They would say the PLO is the representative of the Palestinians. In any event, Khaddam said, the mayors are administrators, not political leaders. Would it be possible, for instance, for Mayor Beame to come and negotiate foreign affairs with me, Khaddam asked?² Any such suggestion would be refused by the PLO. The Security Council considers the PLO as representing the Palestinian people and the PLO has representatives attending Security Council deliberations. The UNGA has passed a resolution accepting the PLO as an observer delegation.³ In view of all of this, Khaddam said, we consider that the PLO alone should represent the Palestinians. However, we want to be helpful and will present another idea, Khaddam said. This would be an Arab League delegation. In an Arab League delegation there would be no problem about who would be Syrian or Palestinian, everybody would represent only one party, the Arab League. The delegation would go to Geneva in the name of all the Arab states. The Secretary asked whether other Arab states would agree to this; Khaddam said he believed they would. The Secretary replied that he believed they might not all agree. Khaddam said objections would only come from troublemakers. It would not be difficult to get a resolution in the Arab League for this. Khaddam added that Syria wants to move things ahead, but the results must be serious and solid. He said even King Hussein, who claims the West Bank once belonged to him, now recognizes the PLO as the representatives of the Palestinians.

The Secretary said everybody agreed that there is need for a just and lasting peace, but to achieve that we have to reconvene Geneva and get all the parties there. If you can't get them all to Geneva, you won't

² Abraham Beame was Mayor of New York City.

³ A reference to U.N. General Assembly Resolution 3210 adopted on October 14, 1974.

be able to have negotiations. So what we are trying to do is find a way to get all the necessary parties to the table so that they can deal with the issues. The issues have to be defined so that it will be clear that they include all those matters needed for a comprehensive settlement. The Secretary said he was worried that we are getting so hung up on procedure that we will lose sight of substance and we will not get a solution. What the President is trying to do in making his suggestion is cut through procedure and get all the parties to the table so that we can get down to the serious work of negotiations. Khaddam replied that President Asad had told the Secretary and the President that the moment the Arabs have a clear idea of U.S. views on what constituted Palestinian rights, then the procedural questions would disappear. The Secretary said he would like to make clear what our views are on the Palestinian issue. They are:

1. There should be a Palestinian entity.

2. Who governs it and its relations with its neighbors are to be determined by the people of the entity themselves. Nothing should be imposed upon them from outside. Khaddam said this is fine, but where will the entity be? The Secretary said the entity should be on the West Bank and include Gaza; the Secretary emphasized that while this is our view we of course cannot guarantee any outcome, there will have to be negotiations.

Khaddam asked about the refugees. The Secretary said the refugee question has to be dealt with as well. The refugee question comprises two sets of issues: one, resettlement and two, compensation. Khaddam asked hotly where the refugees would be resettled. Not, he said, in Syria—"We would refuse that; not in Lebanon either, you know Lebanon's views on the problem". The Secretary replied that resettlement is a subject that will have to be dealt with. Khaddam said Syria's view is that the best way to handle the refugee problem is to have the UN resolutions applied. The Secretary said the resolutions are not that clear. Khaddam said Syria would accept all the UN resolutions concerning refugees to which the USG is a party; we would agree to the refugee resolutions agreed to by the U.S. from the beginning up to now. Khaddam remarked that there is a 1947 UN resolution, which was supported by the U.S., which calls for the establishment of a Palestinian state, and there are resolutions calling for the return of the refugees. So, Khaddam said, in the name of the Palestinians, I will permit myself to say that they will agree to all these resolutions. The Secretary noted that Khaddam was now speaking for the Palestinians. Khaddam replied he was doing so because "we are the same people".

The Secretary said he would like to ask why all this should not be discussed and decided at Geneva. Khaddam said he agreed, but "don't you think we should have the Palestinians at Geneva?" The Secretary

replied that we have said the Palestinians must be represented at Geneva. Khaddam said that by Palestinians he means PLO. The Secretary pointed out that as the President had said in the conversation this morning there should be PLO among the Palestinians at Geneva. Khaddam replied: "There is a difference between an organization that represents the Palestinians and Palestinian representation that represents only part of the Palestinians." The Secretary said that he had to point out that if Syria maintains that only the PLO can represent the Palestinians at Geneva, then Syria may be creating a situation in which it would be impossible to reconvene Geneva. Khaddam reiterated his view that "nobody is capable of representing the Palestinians except the PLO." Khaddam added that all the West Bank mayors had declared their loyalty to the PLO. Khaddam said that he doubted even that Egypt and Jordan would accept any Palestinian representation except the PLO.

The Secretary said he understood Syria's position on this. However, the President has asked Khaddam to convey his views to President Asad. The President's view is that the most realistic way to accomplish our basic objective is to have Palestinians who are not exclusively PLO, but who include PLO, in the united Arab delegation at Geneva. Khaddam said he would convey the President's views and in any case there will be inter-Arab consultations on this matter. The Secretary emphasized that this is a critical point. We would hate to see Geneva driven onto the rocks, the Secretary said, by the parties being too rigid on the definition of Palestinian. Khaddam replied that "the rocks" are Israel not the Arabs. The question is, is it reasonable to expect to discuss Palestinian issues in the absence of the real representatives of the Palestinians? The Secretary replied that there will be representatives of the Palestinians at Geneva. Khaddam asked whether in a Syrian delegation there should be people who are not Syrian Government officials, who do not represent the Syrian Government. Khaddam said the PLO should nominate the people who will represent it.

The Secretary said that as the President pointed out, what we have here is the difference between a sovereign state and an organization. But the main question is how to get Geneva convened so that we can deal with the substantive issues. Khaddam said the reply to this is easy. The USG has suggested a united Arab delegation. This united Arab delegation could have subcommittees. The Secretary asked Khaddam precisely what he was suggesting. Khaddam replied that, for instance, let us assume that the Arabs and Israel are discussing a specific subject. The Arab delegation would nominate the people it feels should represent it at that meeting. Another possibility, Khaddam said, would be for the Arab League to represent all the Arabs in the negotiations, irrespective of the subject. Khaddam said both suggestions should be con-

sidered. The Secretary said let's take the first suggestion: of whom would the Arab League delegation be composed? Khaddam replied that the Arab League itself would name the people on its delegation as it did for its negotiations with the European Economic Community. Of course, it would name appropriate people from countries interested in the problems to be dealt with. In the Arab League delegation there would be subcommittees, some with Syrians on them and some with Egyptians on them. Khaddam said he thought an Arab League delegation could solve the problem of Palestinian representation and the organization of the conference. But he added that Syria would approach with an open mind any formula that would not cause difficulties.

The Secretary asked how the question of PLO in an Arab League delegation would be handled. Khaddam replied that it would be handled as if the PLO were an Arab state. Mr. Habib said we should resolve these procedural problems and agree on Geneva. Khaddam said fine, but Geneva is a means and not a goal. For instance, if the Arabs were to come to agreement with Israel, the agreement could be signed at Paris, the UN or anywhere. What is important is to have negotiations under the supervision of the UN. Khaddam said he would be meeting with the other Arabs as soon as they get back home from New York to discuss the problems of Palestinian representation and the organization of the conference. Mr. Habib asked if this had to wait until the Arabs leave New York; couldn't it be discussed in New York. Khaddam said there will be talks about this in New York, but the issues are so important that they will have to be decided by the highest authorities. The foreign ministers cannot make the decisions on these things.

Khaddam asked how Egypt reacted to the formula suggested by President Carter. The Secretary said that Fahmy had promised to report to Sadat the President's suggestion and to get back in touch with us. The same was true of the Jordanians. But, the Secretary emphasized, we expect to hear back from them not in the indefinite future, but in a week or so. Khaddam said he too would try to get a response to the Secretary soon. The Secretary said he would like to get a clear understanding of how the Palestinians are represented in Khaddam's concept of a united Arab delegation and how they would be represented in an Arab League delegation. Khaddam replied that the united Arab delegation would consist of four or five elements, five if Lebanon were included. But, Khaddam added, leave Lebanon out, it does not come into the picture. The Secretary asked if Lebanon could be included. Khaddam said yes, but Syria, Egypt, the PLO and Jordan would meet to decide on the composition of the delegation. The decision on composition would be conveyed to the UN Secretary General by the heads of the four governments' parties to Geneva. The Secretary asked if the elements of the

delegation would come as separate groups or as individuals. Khaddam replied the members will be a part of one unified delegation with one head. The Secretary said that that still did not answer his question. Are they separate elements representing their countries or are they individuals? The latter, Khaddam replied. A Syrian would not represent only Syria; he would represent all the Arab states. The delegation in its totality would represent all Arab interests.

The Secretary asked if we could now go on to the Arab League delegation concept, and he asked how that works. Khaddam replied that the Arab League Council would meet and issue a resolution nominating so-and-so to be members of the delegation. The Arab League delegation would represent all the Arab states at Geneva. The Secretary said he did not know how the Arab League works internally. Would there be a meeting of the Arab League in which the members of the delegation would be nominated? Yes, Khaddam replied. The Secretary said he assumed then that when that delegation goes to Geneva it would decide which of its members would work on which problems. Was that correct, the Secretary asked? Yes, Khaddam said. The Secretary asked if Khaddam had discussed this idea with his Arab colleagues. Khaddam said no, the idea had been discussed only in Syrian Government Councils. President Asad, in his desire to move the negotiations forward, came up with the idea. The Secretary asked if the Syrians had any other suggestions. Khaddam indicated that they did not.

Mr. Habib remarked that if Israel has had problems in agreeing with the united Arab delegation scheme, just imagine what problems they would have with an Arab League delegation. Mr. Habib pointed out that, by virtue of the Secretary's leadership and hard work, we had now gotten to the point where the Israelis have accepted the idea of a united Arab delegation. Now the Syrians are bringing up this new idea which will create more difficulties. Khaddam said Mr. Habib had misunderstood. Syria adheres to the idea of a united Arab delegation. It is not saying that it is suggesting something else, but it was asked to put forth alternatives and it is doing so. We are dealing with a sick person, Khaddam said, and we were asked what to prescribe. Syria still gives first preference to a united Arab delegation, but it sees that Israel is refusing everything, and it wants to be helpful. Mr. Habib pointed out that Israel is not refusing everything, it has accepted a united Arab delegation with Palestinians. Khaddam objected that the Israeli acceptance carried with it stipulations that amount to a refusal. Habib said forget about the Israeli stipulations for the moment. The Secretary said if we can reach agreement with the Arabs on something that makes sense, we will do everything in our power to get the Israelis to agree to it. We got them to accept the united Arab delegation idea after they had said they

would never do it. Now they are posing certain other conditions, the Secretary said. We will have to work on this.

The Secretary said there are two problems: how do you define the Palestinians and how do you organize the conference? We have to work on these problems together. We are agreed on one thing: the united Arab delegation. The question now is how do you compose the Palestinian element of that delegation. The President has suggested that the Palestinian element of that delegation would include PLO as long as they are not well known. The Israelis have not agreed to that, but we are willing to push them to try to get them to agree. Khaddam reiterated that the Arabs would choose the Palestinians in the united Arab delegation. Mr. Habib pointed out that we would have to have an understanding with the Arabs on what the composition of the delegation would be, so that we can get Israeli agreement. Khaddam retorted that the Arabs do not want to interfere in the choice of the Israeli delegation. Thus, it would not be right for Israel to interfere in the composition of the Arab delegation since this would be a unified delegation. The Secretary said that Mr. Habib had made a very important point. Even accepting for the sake of argument that there would be agreement that the Arabs should choose the Palestinians who go to Geneva, we would have to know who they would be. Khaddam said Egypt, Jordan, Syria and the PLO would meet and decide on this. Khaddam added that he could assure us that the formation of the delegation would not create obstacles in the path of the negotiations.

The Secretary said he would have to leave in a moment to go to the White House for the President's meeting with the Jordanians, but first he would like to turn briefly again to the question of organization of the conference. The Secretary said that the President has made suggestions that he would like Khaddam to convey to President Asad. He himself would give Khaddam a paper tomorrow with the precise wording of this suggestion,⁴ but to summarize, the suggestion is that there should be specific groups to deal with specific issues. Some would be bilateral and some multilateral. Regarding the problem that Khaddam has raised about the united Arab delegation being able to act as a whole, the President suggested that the individual working groups report to the Plenary. The Secretary said that as he understood Syria's present position, it does not agree with this kind of working group structure. The Secretary said he hoped the Syrians would change their stand on this, and he hoped Khaddam would report to President Asad President Carter's conviction that this is a wise and appropriate way of organizing Geneva.

⁴ Presumably a reference to the working paper described in footnote 2, Document 118.

The Secretary said he wanted to give Khaddam a copy of the draft done by Israel of a peace treaty between Israel and Egypt.⁵ (The Secretary handed Khaddam a copy of the Israeli draft.) The Secretary said that the Israelis have told us they would be prepared later to present drafts of similar treaties for other countries. The treaty has lots of detail, the Secretary remarked, much more than necessary. He pointed out that we have differences of opinion regarding a number of substantive points in the treaty. We don't endorse it in any way. The Secretary said that he would like to fill Khaddam in, during their next meeting, on his conversations with Dayan and on Dayan's views on substantive issues.

The Secretary said that before he left he would like to say a word on the situation in South Lebanon. The Secretary said that he was pleased that there was now a cease fire in South Lebanon and wanted to express his appreciation to Khaddam and President Asad for their efforts to help in resolving the difficulties that we have faced in recent weeks. The Secretary said we believe it essential that the Shtaura Agreement go into effect, and we will do everything we can to make sure it stays in effect. We also think the Lebanese handled themselves well in this matter, but it is absolutely essential that they get their troops into the south quickly. The Secretary said he was sure that Khaddam shared our views on this. Absolutely, Khaddam replied. Syria has for some time been asking the Lebanese to do this. The Secretary noted that when General Khoury, the Commander of the Lebanese Army, was here, we signed an agreement with him for \$25 million in equipment which we hope will help General Khoury move quickly.⁶

The Secretary again apologized for having to leave and said he would look forward to seeing Khaddam soon in New York.

⁵ See Document 100.

⁶ Telegram 226023 to Beirut, September 20, reported that the United States and Khoury signed a \$25 million FMS credit agreement on September 19. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D770342–0438).

116. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, September 28, 1977, 3–4:15 p.m.

SUBJECT

Summary of the President's Meeting with the Jordanian Delegation led by Royal Court Chief Abdul Hamid Sharaf of Jordan

PARTICIPANTS

President
 Vice President
 Secretary of State Cyrus Vance
 Mr. David Aaron
 Ambassador Thomas Pickering
 Mr. Alfred L. Atherton, Jr.
 Mr. William B. Quandt
 Mr. Jerrold Schecter
 Mr. Hamilton Jordan
 Mr. Robert Lipshutz

 His Excellency Abdul Hamid Sharaf, Chief of the Royal Jordanian Court
 His Excellency Hassan Ibrahim, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs
 His Excellency Abdullah Salah, Ambassador of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan

President: It is a pleasure to have you here. I have appreciated the constructive attitude of your government on the Middle East peace negotiations. You understand how complex the situation is with us having to negotiate among the Arabs, with Israel, and with the Soviets. We need all the help that we can get, and your government has been most cooperative and constructive. I'd like to ask how you feel about a call that we might make with the Soviets for the reconvening of the Geneva Conference. We still have the details to work out. Some of the parties insist on a unified Arab delegation, while Israel and Egypt prefer separate negotiations. All of the Arabs seem to want the PLO to be represented, but Israel is reluctant. We hope that the Soviets will take a constructive role and so far they have been very helpful and have not obstructed progress.

We are now drafting principles of agreement with the Soviet Union, and this will be useful in formulating an invitation to Geneva. We believe that the Conference at the outset should have a unified Arab delegation which will include Palestinians and PLO. Israel has shown some willingness to accept this, but not if there are well-known PLO

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Subject File, Box 2, Arab-Israeli Peace Settlement 1977: Volume I [III]. Top Secret. The meeting took place in the White House Cabinet Room.

members, but non-famous PLO figures might be suitable. You might help us to identify some of these. After the opening of meetings at Geneva, where all of the parties could spell out their views, I understand that your position is that you prefer three committees: withdrawal; peace; and the Palestinian question. In order to accommodate that concept, to which we do not object, and to get negotiations going, we believe that subcommittees should be formed as follows: Egypt and Israel to discuss the Sinai, the security arrangements there, transportation, etc.; Jordan and Israel on the specific bilateral issues between the two countries; the same between Israel and Syria on the Golan Heights; and for the Palestinian entity and the arrangements on the West Bank, this should be left for the Israelis, the Jordanians and Palestinians. If there is need for a special study of the refugees, that could be done in a multinational group.

To assure Arab harmony, the Arabs could consult, and we would even use our good offices among them. If the Syrians want to withhold agreement until they are satisfied with the solution of the Palestinian question, they could do so. I hope that this general format will be acceptable. We have no particular interest in which form is adopted, but we want to reach a solution that the parties can accept. We recognize that the negotiations may be long and tedious. We will have to let the technical groups work and then go back to the leaders for decisions. This general approach is acceptable to the Soviets and hopefully will be to the other parties. When the subcommittees reach an impasse, we would want to stick with the process of seeking agreement. The reports of the subcommittees could go back to the plenary sessions, and to their governments, and eventually could lead to agreements and treaties. I have outlined what we hope for. Perhaps you could comment. We think our views are fairly close to yours.

Sharaf: Thank you, Mr. President, for the time you are taking with us and for receiving us. I want to bring you His Majesty King Hussein's greetings. We have followed with great admiration your efforts on both the international and domestic scenes for the betterment of the United States and of the world. His Majesty and the Jordanian people have been impressed with your sincerity and courage in working against great odds to solve these many problems, and we hope your efforts will be successful in the Middle East and elsewhere. We have had the opportunity to meet with Secretary Vance and to state our views, and we provided some written proposals which also outlined our ideas.² At the risk of repeating, let me emphasize our interest in substance over procedure. There is a danger that procedures can swallow us all up.

² See footnote 4, Document 112.

President: I wish everyone agreed.

Sharaf: On the substantive points that you have outlined—with-
drawal, the end of occupation, the right of Palestinians to their national
entity through the process of self-determination, the mutual guarantees
for coexistence, and so forth—these are the components of a settlement
and we can support them. They are in the interest of Arabs, of Jordan,
and Israel as well. To reach these goals, you have proposed convening
of the Geneva Conference and we agree. Very early on, several months
ago, we suggested the idea of a unified Arab delegation. Even at the
time of UN Ambassador Jarring, we proposed that idea. In our view, it
helps keep the unity of the Arab position, and it will also be good for
Israel, because it will achieve a collective Arab commitment to peace.
So this provides a good approach to Geneva, but we would also accept
the idea of individual delegations. We would agree to have a Pales-
tinian component in an Arab delegation, and in 1974 we accepted that
the PLO represents the Palestinians.³ We still accept this, but we are
flexible. If the other Arabs agree to some formula that has Palestinian
representation without well-known PLO figures, this would be accept-
able to us. If the rights of Palestinians can be defined, the question of
representation would only be a minor problem. Not everyone agrees,
but US policy is moving in the right direction. You have helped build
momentum and you have given priority to the Middle East, and you
have outlined fair parameters for a settlement. This has helped create a
climate of optimism concerning the framework of a settlement empha-
sizing the rights of the Palestinians, their homeland, withdrawal, all in
exchange for a lasting and total peace. We suggested to Secretary Vance
that a unified Arab delegation would be our preference. Palestinian
representation in that delegation is useful and necessary. If the Arab
partners are ready to find a formula, without familiar Palestinian
figures included, we would agree. We are not wedded to any one form.

In splitting into committees, we prefer to keep issues together
when discussing principles in the plenary session with the unified dele-
gation. These issues are withdrawal and borders, peace obligations and
guarantees, and the Palestinian question. These cut across geographical
lines and all countries have a stake. We suggested in the past that the
committees into which the conference splits should be functional, not
geographic. There should be committees of the whole, based on subject
matter. Our reason for this is that it helps to maintain a collective Arab
commitment and keeps Arab unity intact and emphasizes the unity of
the problems. There may be some technical questions of a strictly bilat-
eral nature. These can be handled in informal, bilateral working

³ A reference to the 1974 Rabat Conference Declaration. See footnote 8, Document 6.

groups. The future of the Palestinians should be dealt with in a plenary session or in a committee of the whole.

There are two components of the Palestinian question. After Israeli withdrawal, there will be the question of the political future of the Palestinians. There is also the question of the refugees. The refugee question is governed by UN Resolutions on the repatriation or compensation of refugees. Concerning the political future, we believe that the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza, and those outside, after Israeli withdrawal, should decide for themselves the character of their homeland and should choose their leaders and their relations with their neighbors. Their leadership and their political future should not be imposed upon them.

In our view, a transitional international authority should take over the occupation from Israel of the West Bank and Gaza, with Israeli withdrawal occurring after a few months, perhaps six months. The international authority should prepare the climate for a referendum and should reactivate the structure of the civil service that already exists. The police force can be reactivated. The displaced persons, those who left the areas in 1967, would be readmitted. Within a period of two years, there should be a plebiscite choosing political leaders, establishing constituent assembly, and determining the kind of entity. Palestinians should be able to choose an independent state or federation with Jordan. At the right time, we will present our views on this. The option should be clear and limited. Our view of a settlement is based on these ideas. Concerning security and international guarantees, we can also explore several possibilities. We are also ready to discuss the reduction of military forces. There are various concrete measures that can be taken, short of actual Israeli forces remaining in Arab territory. We have also outlined our views on Jerusalem. East Jerusalem should return to Arab sovereignty, but the city should be unified with free access to holy places. These are the components of a fair settlement. We should agree on as much as possible before a peace conference, or early on in order to open the way to a successful conclusion at Geneva.

Concerning the idea of bilateral committees, we have some reservations. We prefer functional committees, but nothing precludes technical discussions in bilateral channels, so we are not far from your views. Our sensitivity on this issue focuses primarily on the Palestinian question. We want the other Arab countries to support the idea of self-determination. We feel that Israel has territorial designs on the West Bank, and we realize that this is the most difficult problem. We cannot accept the idea of autonomy for the West Bank and Gaza under Israeli occupation, with some special relationship to Jordan. This is a non-starter. Israel is changing the nature of the occupied territories. This is our view. We want to be as helpful as possible. I should explain

that we realize how much of an effort you are making and we want to help our common cause.

President: Our position is close to yours, and we continue to support withdrawal of Israeli forces to the pre-1967 lines, with minor modifications. We support a Palestinian homeland, although we have not talked of its political identity. We have talked of a genuine peace, eventually leading to full diplomatic relations, but the differences among the nations are profound. We see strong differences between Egypt, Jordan and Syria. Jordan and Syria are closer to one another than to Egypt. Israel wants to use every opportunity to keep occupied territory and to prevent the creation of a Palestinian homeland, and they also want peace and acceptance from the Arabs. These are difficult problems to surmount. We hope that all the parties will be flexible in order to get the process started.

If there were a unified Arab delegation, King Hussein and President Assad could claim this as a success. If later, bilateral discussions begin, you could call them technical discussions, while Israel might emphasize the importance of these negotiations. Israel does want to be recognized by each country, and wants to be dealt with equally. The Arabs want to combine in order to avoid that. The Arab countries feel that the PLO should be spokesman for the Palestinians, while Israel sees the PLO as a radical terrorist group committed to the destruction of Israel. We have a profound national interest in the Middle East. We recognize the differences among the parties, but we hope that with the convening of the Geneva Conference, which is not an end in itself, and with the expression of our views, it might be possible to build international opinion behind the Geneva Conference, and a peace settlement. This would make it difficult for any party to withdraw and risk isolation.

There may be a problem that some leaders may have made statements in the past that would limit their flexibility. There has been a history of hatred and a lack of communication. This may be the case with President Assad, President Sadat, and Prime Minister Begin, although it is less of a problem for His Majesty. But all of them face that problem. It is difficult for them to change policy. They have to take a more aggressive stand for peace than they have in the past, at least in public. It is hard to see a peace agreement unless the parties are willing to be flexible and are prepared to have a modicum of confidence and faith in the United States. We are not trying to impose our terms. We don't want to show any preference or partisanship, but we are determined to succeed, although sometimes I am tempted to say "the hell with it" and just get out, and let the parties go to war if they want. But we have seen some progress. You and Egypt have been helpful. I want to ask you to take a message to His Majesty and ask him if he will accept the format that I have described.

We have some differences on the utility of bilateral groups for negotiations. I feel that you are wrong and that we are right. It would complicate it to have so many parties involved. There is no reason for Assad to participate in talks on Sinai, or for Sadat to worry about the Golan Heights. If the Jordanians and Egyptians were to be involved in the discussion of the Golan Heights, it would guarantee a failure. I proposed to Foreign Minister Khaddam that Israel should be given this small victory, but that the Arabs can consult with one another and they could agree not to sign anything unless they are satisfied with all of the other agreements, including those dealing with the Palestinian question. President Assad can say that there will be no deal on the Golan Heights unless the Palestinian refugees and Palestinian political future have been fairly dealt with. His ultimate acceptance can be reserved until there has been an overall agreement, but we cannot get a quick agreement, and the Israeli and Arab views are still far apart.

We have some influence over Israel, but we cannot force them to negotiate. They were convinced that we saw their presence in Lebanon as unacceptable, and they got out. This is also true about the settlements. And they have been convinced by us and by world opinion that the Palestinian question must be addressed, and that Palestinian representatives, including the PLO, must be at Geneva. So they are moving in a constructive manner, slowly, and the issues remain complex.

I would be happy to see Israel accept Jordan's proposal. I don't care about where the lines are. The most sensitive issue is probably Jerusalem, and the most complex is the Palestinian question. I have expressed my concern. If you reach the point of doubting our intentions or capabilities to keep the process of peace moving forward, Jordan can always withdraw from the negotiations. We need to have some trust, and we need flexibility.

I have asked Secretary Vance after his talks with Dayan, Fahmy, Khaddam, and you, to write down some of the proposals that we have on the format of the Geneva Conference. These are acceptable to us and the Soviet Union. There are differences, and all of the parties will say they don't like some elements but this is the best that we can get, and then we should go to Geneva and hope for the best.

You know our views on the ultimate settlement. Our views are not incompatible with yours. We have said the same things to all of the parties, and we have made good progress so far. If, at Geneva, all of the parties can express their views and communication can begin, and the subcommittees can be set up, we will try to keep things moving. If we fail, we will have at least done our best, but the first step is procedural, and we have to remove the obstacles. I have said as best I can what our views are. I have other work to do than to concentrate on the Middle East, and I can't spend all of my time trying to work out these areas of

disagreement. We will try to proceed carefully and public statements like those that the Israelis made recently are difficult to accommodate. We have asked them not to do this again. We hope that you will let Secretary Vance know your views on our principles. I think that Israel has come a long way, certainly compared to before, and so have Jordan and Egypt. Syria may be more reluctant, but they are talking in good faith. I don't want to separate Egypt and Israel. I understand your concerns. I know that Jordan can't take full responsibility for the Palestinian question, which would risk the possible condemnation of Jordan by the other Arabs. I want to be responsive to your needs.

Secretary Vance: After two hours with Foreign Minister Khaddam,⁴ he said that if the Palestinian question could be left to the Arabs, this could be solved without creating obstacles to peace. Do you believe that this is true, or do you think that, if the Arabs decide, they will come up with something that would be an obstacle? For example, would they insist on well-known PLO members?

Sharaf: This is difficult. You are asking me my judgment on what Foreign Minister Khaddam said. If the various Arab parties were to realize the seriousness of the American commitment, then we could get a decision on the Palestinian representation question. Then we might be able to agree. I can't go into specifics, and I hope there have been no problems of communication or gaps with the Syrians. We will try to keep in touch with the Egyptians and Syrians. Egypt has been saying that the PLO must be represented and the Syrians have been too. I don't see how they are going to back off.

President: We also see the PLO as part of the delegation, and Israel agrees, but there is the problem about the identity of the Palestinian representatives. They should not be well-known PLO. Israel will not go to Geneva with Arafat. There is a problem of how to represent the PLO without having well-known PLO members.

Secretary Vance: Foreign Minister Khaddam said that the Palestinians could only be represented by the PLO, and I said that could be an obstacle. I urged him to be flexible, and at the end, he said that if you are serious about the Palestinian entity or homeland, then it would be easier for us and we would know how to act.

Sharaf: This is what we suggested. If the US is to commit itself to self-determination, then it will be easier for us to choose representatives. The way the President has put it is manageable.

President: It would be easier if the PLO would adopt the formula that we have outlined on Resolution 242 and Israel's right to exist, and they can add whatever they want beside that. We have signed an agree-

⁴ See Document 115.

ment with Israel, and I reconfirmed it, and I cannot break my word. We cannot meet with them until they have taken that step. The PLO, with Syrian encouragement, has said that this is a bargaining chip which they will only trade for gaining status as a nation. I am asking them to trust me as I have asked you. If the PLO could communicate with us, maybe we could have a group on refugees, and there could be Palestinians there. Others would be there on the political future of the Palestinians. That delegation should have some Palestinian mayors, some elected officials, and some prominent Palestinians from Jordan, Syria, Egypt, or Gaza, who might want to be involved. Below Arafat there might be acceptable leaders. But we need a good-faith effort, and we need a firm commitment to the concept. The makeup of the Palestinian group is a problem. They should not all have to be active members of the PLO. The mayors may be sympathizers with the PLO, but it is hard for us to inject ourselves in this question. This is mostly an Arab problem.

Sharaf: It may be manageable from what you have heard from the Egyptians and Syrians. The choice of the people would not be so difficult. Concerning our faith in the United States, we have great faith. In Jordan, we have had a very close relationship with you for a long time. Some of our colleagues may need reassurance, but not Jordan. In recent months, we have worked hard to explain issues. We have told our Arab colleagues that the United States is not a monolith, that it has a complex structure, and that the American leaders favor a comprehensive peace in the Middle East. Some Arabs still have illusions and misunderstandings, but we have trust in you and we will keep it. More specifically, we will try to work with Secretary Vance and to solve these procedural problems. We want to emphasize that we do not exclude bilateral committees. Our main concern is that the major issues be discussed in plenary. More technical problems can be dealt with in working groups. The Palestinian question should be handled by the full Arab side in plenary. The basic issue should be a collective responsibility. Israel will have to help resolve this. We hope that you will be patient while we work out these details.

Secretary Vance: Do you mean that the issue of withdrawal should be discussed in plenary?

Sharaf: It should be discussed collectively, and there would be advantage in having parallel discussions, so that talks about peace and withdrawal would go on simultaneously. Then, as Israel sees progress on peace, she may be more forthcoming on withdrawal.

President: But if Israel has to negotiate with a combined delegation, there is no way that Egypt could yield anything to Israel in any part of Sinai, even if it wanted to. Syria is already committed to total withdrawal, so I cannot see any progress there. It would prevent the settle-

ment. Syria will not agree to Israel keeping any part of the West Bank, but you and Israel might agree to some form of partition, perhaps involving only a tiny piece of territory. But if the Syrians were there, it would be almost impossible to have even these small adjustments. Both Israel and Egypt see this as an obstacle. Maybe you also do in private. We are not trying to drive a wedge between the Arabs, but if you agree to minor adjustments on the West Bank, and if Egypt accepts a demilitarized zone of a certain size, and if Syria says there can be UN troops in the Golan Heights, these are positions that should be dealt with on a bilateral basis. There would be no chance of agreement with a unified Arab delegation. This would cause me to be completely frustrated and I would not want to spend any more time on the problem.

Sharaf: It should be possible to work out the procedures. Further adjustments can be dealt with in bilateral committees. But the principle should be dealt with on one level, and the principle is that of withdrawal, and then border adjustments could be discussed in the groups.

President: That helps me. I can see a joint approach on the Palestinian political future. It is unfair to put the burden on Jordan to accommodate all of the Palestinians in its delegation. On the question of peace, Egypt might be prepared to move more rapidly, along with Jordan. Since you have already showed some understanding of this, you may go further than Syria right now. You should not be required to move at the Syrian pace. On the definition of peace, and on border delimitations, these subcommittees could do some useful work. On the Palestinian political future, and on the refugees, that could be done on a multilateral basis. Israel wants a separate discussion of the refugees as such. Of course, the refugees are also tied to the question of the Palestinian political future. But there might be refugees in Kuwait and Iraq, whose rights have been violated, and we need to talk about how to deal with the refugee camps. We could have a separate committee just for refugees, but the definition of these areas for discussion might be decided in the plenary with the joint Arab delegation, including Palestinians, mostly PLO. You should be flexible. Give us a chance to get started. I have no specific preferences, but the joint Arab delegation discussing borders makes no sense.

Sharaf: Some issues should be dealt with in functional groups and some technical issues on a bilateral basis.

President: But these should have the same status. Each side can claim some victories.

Sharaf: On the question of peaceful relations, maybe if it came to talking about potash and economic problems, then we could talk bilaterally, but there are problems like the Arab boycott that are collective in nature. The question of normalization of relations in the future is a collective problem. With peace, these issues will fall into place. If there

were peace, there would be no need for an embargo, then trade, and transportation, and water rights would be easy to solve. So some questions fall into a bilateral category, and some in a collective category. We want to ask you to be flexible in your approach and to accept some collective and some bilateral discussions. If Geneva can allow this, we believe it can be done.

President: I understand the problem that you have and your ideas. I see some openings. The Israelis are very insistent, and I agree that on some matters they should negotiate with each of the individual countries, such as on the question of boundaries. There may be some where the Arabs want to negotiate as a group, like on the political future of the Palestinians. The boycott also might be in a multilateral group and trade might be in a bilateral one. There are some logical delineations. Some of our views are very close and I hope for flexibility. We will try to be fair.

Sharaf: I would like to make one more point. Israel has said that they would accept a unified Arab delegation, but then they subverted the idea with their conditions by saying that they would only discuss the West Bank with Jordan. They gave you a semantic concession, but they retracted it in reality. The political future of the Palestinians involves responsibility of the Arabs generally, and is not just a question of the West Bank. It involves borders of the political entity, and the political future of the Palestinians. This is the basis of our concern with the need for functional groups, or for discussing the Palestinians in a plenary session. We can accept both of these approaches.

President: I'll let Secretary Vance work out the details.

Sharaf: But you have become an expert by now.

117. Memorandum of Conversation¹

New York, September 29, 1977, 10:55 a.m.

SUBJECT

Secretary Vance's Meeting with Egyptian Foreign Minister Fahmy

PARTICIPANTS

Egypt

Foreign Minister Fahmy
Ambassador Ashraf Ghorbal
Mr. Usama El-Baz, Under Secretary
Mr. Mohammad al-Baradie
Mr. Amre Moussa

United States

Secretary of State Cyrus Vance
Under Secretary Philip Habib
Assistant Secretary Alfred L. Atherton, Jr.
Ambassador Hermann Eilts
William B. Quandt, National Security Council
David A. Korn, Policy Planning Staff

The Secretary said he would like to fill Fahmy in on his two meetings yesterday, with Khaddam and the Jordanians.² The main subject was how to deal with the questions of Palestinian representation and the organization of the Geneva Conference. On the Palestinian representation question, the Secretary said there are different shades of opinion as to how to define how the Palestinian group at Geneva would be composed. The President had made clear his view to both the Syrians and the Jordanians as to how he thought the problem should be resolved. The Secretary said he wanted to meet with Fahmy alone later, and at that time he would give Fahmy a paper covering the President's view.

The Secretary said the real problem is how to organize after getting to Geneva. Both the Syrians and the Jordanians are very heavily in favor of the functional approach. We do not share that view, the Secretary said. We believe in bilateral working groups, with the possibility of multilateral discussions on some issues such as Palestinian issues. The Secretary emphasized that there was a real difference of view between the Syrians and Jordanians and us on this matter. He said we have

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Trips/Visits File, Box 107, 9/19/77–10/25/77 Vance Meetings with Middle East Foreign Ministers: 9–10/77. Secret; Nodis. Drafted by Korn on September 30. The meeting took place in the Secretary's suite at the UN Plaza Hotel.

² See Documents 115 and 116.

asked them to convey our views to their heads of state for consideration. But right now there are real differences.

Fahmy said this is very strange really, because when the Egyptians and the Jordanians were in Geneva before everyone was speaking on his own behalf. The Syrians were ready to participate within the Egyptian delegation. When the Syrians signed the Golan agreement³ they insisted on doing so under Egyptian aegis. Fahmy asked rhetorically why do they want a new procedure when there is an established procedure? How can Geneva function that way? It can't, he said, answering his own question.

The Secretary said that is what he told them. It would be a total waste of time to talk about demilitarized zones in Sinai with all the other parties sitting around the room. It doesn't make sense, the Secretary said. Fahmy said the reason is that they (presumably by this he meant the Syrians) want to block any progress. They fear Egypt may be able to go ahead and make an agreement. That is why they want one delegation. As far as Jordan is concerned, it wants functional working groups because that is the only way it feels it can ensure its own participation. The Secretary said we would prefer a formula in which some working groups are bilateral and some multilateral. Fahmy again observed that multilateral working groups for the territorial issues did not make sense; how could he speak concerning Golan? The Secretary said that the West Bank would be a mixture of territorial and political matters.

Fahmy said he had met the day before yesterday with PLO representatives who came to New York. It was a long meeting and there was a hot debate over what the PLO should do. "One or two of them were fighting against their own brothers." The Secretary asked whether Egypt should be included along with the Palestinians when Gaza is discussed. Fahmy replied that for discussions of Gaza it should be Egypt and the PLO. The Secretary and Mr. Habib remarked that Fahmy said "the PLO", not the Palestinians. Fahmy said don't believe anybody who says you can go ahead without the PLO. If this subject goes to an Arab Summit Meeting, Fahmy said, the problem will become even more difficult, the position will become even more rigid. The Secretary asked how this problem could be resolved. Fahmy said he did not know. Fahmy then asked about the President's discussion with Khaddam regarding the Palestinian representation question and the organization of Geneva.⁴ The Secretary said he had some language to

³ A reference to the Syrian-Israeli disengagement agreement signed in May 1974. See *Foreign Relations*, 1969–1976, vol. XXVI, Arab-Israeli Dispute, 1974–1976, Documents 88–90.

⁴ See Document 114.

give Fahmy later. What we have said so far is that we have agreed on a united Arab delegation including Palestinians. We are not saying anything more now. That is all I want to say at this point, the Secretary stressed. The Secretary added that he would be meeting again with Khaddam and Sharaf. Fahmy said he expected to receive a reply very soon from President Sadat concerning our suggestion. The Secretary said he would have something for Fahmy to send back to Sadat, including a personal message from the President.

Fahmy asked if the Secretary were still optimistic about Geneva. The Secretary said he still thought it possible but a lot of hard work will be required from all of us. Fahmy said the problem is not whether there will be a united Arab delegation or not. It is not a question of whether we have one delegation or four delegations, Fahmy said. Even if we agree on that problem this doesn't mean that the PLO would agree. There is the bigger issue of Resolution 242. The main issue is Resolution 242, Fahmy repeated. The Secretary replied that the main question is discussion and resolution of the Palestinian issue, not Resolution 242. Fahmy replied that the PLO will never agree to go to Geneva unless something is done about its problem with Resolution 242. The Secretary pointed out that the Palestinian question is much broader than that. Fahmy asked how can you get the PLO to go to Geneva unless the problem of Resolution 242 is resolved? By making sure that the Palestinian question is an agreed item for discussion in Geneva, Mr. Habib answered. Fahmy reiterated that he thought the PLO would not go to Geneva unless the problem of Resolution 242 is resolved. If you have other information, Fahmy said, put it on the table. But, Fahmy continued, it is wasting time to talk with me or the Syrians or anybody else about this question. You have to talk with the PLO. Fahmy said the PLO asked him in their meeting with him the day before yesterday why the Americans don't accept the formula of Arafat with Barbara Walters. Fahmy noted that Arafat had been criticized by others in the PLO for what he said to Barbara Walters.⁵

Fahmy reiterated that the problem is not the format of the delegation at all but the PLO's problem with Resolution 242. Mr. Atherton made the point that if it were agreed that the Palestinian problem is going to be on the agenda at Geneva, that should take care of the PLO's concerns. The Secretary said the key formula is that there will be on the agenda at Geneva an item concerning the establishment of a Palestinian entity and self-determination for the Palestinians. The Secretary said we have had some indication from the PLO that this would help them.

⁵ ABC News correspondent Barbara Walters interviewed Arafat in Beirut on September 22. See David Binder, "Arafat Hints Easing of P.L.O. Stand," *New York Times*, September 25, 1977, p. 10.

Fahmy indicated that he remained skeptical. In his meeting with the PLO the day before yesterday, they had even gone back on a formula they had earlier agreed to. “They are fighting each other.” Fahmy said he didn’t want anybody to confuse us regarding the PLO’s thinking. But, he said, if you have a contact with the PLO, please put me in the picture. The Secretary said we are not talking with the PLO.

The Secretary said that was all he had to discuss, except that he would appreciate now having a moment alone with Fahmy.⁶ At this point other members of the group departed.

⁶ No memorandum of conversation of this meeting has been found. For the paper Vance gave to Fahmy, see footnote 2, Document 118.

118. Memorandum of Conversation¹

New York, September 30, 1977, 3:30 p.m.

PARTICIPANTS

Israel

Foreign Minister Dayan

Ambassador Simcha Dinitz

Meir Rosenne, Legal Advisor to the Israeli Foreign Minister

Mr. Naphtalie Lavie, Press Spokesman for the Israeli Foreign Minister

Elyahu Rubenstein, Foreign Minister’s Cabinet Secretary

United States

Secretary Vance

Philip C. Habib, Under Secretary for Political Affairs

Alfred L. Atherton, Assistant Secretary for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs

Arthur R. Day, Deputy Assistant Secretary, NEA

William B. Quandt, National Security Council Staff

David Korn, Policy Planning Staff

The Secretary asked Mr. Atherton for a copy of our working paper on the organization of Geneva.² Turning to Dayan, the Secretary said he

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Trips/Visits File, Box 107, 9/19/77–10/25/77 Vance Meetings with Middle East Foreign Ministers: 9–10/77. Secret; Nodis. The meeting took place in the Secretary’s suite at the UN Plaza Hotel.

² In telegram Secto 10003 to Tel Aviv, September 29, Vance forwarded the text of the working paper on suggestions for the resumption of the Geneva Conference, which listed three points. First, “The Arab parties will be represented by a unified Arab delegation for the opening sessions at Geneva. Within the delegation there will be Palestinians, who

did not know whether Dayan had gotten yet a response from Jerusalem to our paper. Dayan asked if we had gotten Ambassador Lewis' report on his talk with Begin on the paper. The Secretary said he had just now gotten Lewis' report but had not had a chance to read all of it.³ He had been in meetings all day, since 7:00 in the morning. Dayan said he was asking because some of the things he would be saying to the Secretary were in Begin's presentation to the Ambassador.

Dayan said first he wanted to state Israel's objections regarding the proposed American-Soviet statement.⁴ Dayan then asked Ambassador Dinitz to give a run down on the cable the Israelis had gotten from Jerusalem on Begin's meeting with Lewis:

Dinitz said the Prime Minister had told Lewis he wanted to speak as a friend. The United States was going to put out a statement with the Russians which deals with withdrawal of Israeli forces from occupied territories. The Soviet position is known to all the world; the Soviets want complete and total Israeli withdrawal. This is how the world will interpret the U.S.-Soviet statement. The Prime Minister continued by saying that President Carter had told him that the U.S. would not make any more public statements on withdrawal. The U.S.-Soviet statement

may include not well-known members of the PLO." The second point read, "The working groups or subcommittees for the negotiation of peace treaties will be formed as follows: A. Egypt-Israel, B. Syria-Israel, C. Jordan-Israel, D. Lebanon-Israel, E. The West Bank, Gaza, The Palestinian Question and the Question of Refugees will be discussed among Israel, Jordan, the Palestinians and perhaps others as determined at the opening sessions of the Geneva Conference." The third and final point read, "The working groups of subcommittees will report to the plenary." The telegram noted that the paper would be given to the Israelis, Egyptians, Jordanians, and Syrians in New York on Thursday, September 29. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840076-0823)

³ In telegram 7457 from Tel Aviv, September 30, Ambassador Lewis reported that Prime Minister Begin told him "in most unequivocal terms imaginable that Israel would not attend Geneva Conference if any, repeat, any PLO members took part." He also rejected other aspects of the working paper, including paragraph 2E, which implied a "co-equal status for Palestinians," and paragraph 3. Lewis described the meeting as "somber, with Begin showing heavy physical and emotional strain." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P850106-2167)

⁴ The final version of the joint statement, which was released on October 1, is in telegram Secto 10023, Document 120. According to Brzezinski's memoirs, Vance "personally" showed the draft joint statement to Dayan "a day or so before its issuance." (*Power and Principle*, p. 108) According to Vance's memoirs, he had raised the issue of a U.S.-Soviet joint statement prior to a Geneva Conference on May 19 when he met with Gromyko in Geneva. During the summer, he "kept the Soviets generally informed of progress in the negotiations to head off attempts by them to interfere," but he also noted that he believed the Soviets ultimately had to be included in the process. On August 29, Vance met with Dobrynin, who reported that Gromyko "would like to discuss the possibility of a joint statement on the principles of a Middle East settlement." Over the next few weeks, Vance and Dobrynin discussed a draft text. Finally, on September 30, Vance and Gromyko met in New York and agreed to a final text, which was released publicly on October 1. (Vance, *Hard Choices*, pp. 191-192) A copy of an undated Soviet draft of the joint statement with a handwritten date of 9/11/77 is in the Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Subject File, Box 107, 9/15/77, Strategy for the Next Round of Middle East Talks [III]: 9/77.

was not in accord with Begin's understanding of what the President said. Begin noted further that he had sent a letter to the President a week earlier pointing out that such statements would undermine the Israeli position at Geneva.

The Secretary said that before we went further in discussion of this, there was a point he wanted to make. The Secretary stressed that the language used in our proposed statement with the Russians is precisely the language of Resolution 242; the proposed joint statement does not say withdrawal with minor modifications. Mr. Habib noted that the statement does not say withdrawal from all territories, it says withdrawal from territory. Dinitz said Ambassador Lewis had made this point in his presentation to the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister, however, had repeated that since the Soviet position on withdrawal is well known, there could only be one way to interpret this. Dinitz said Evron had said that any joint communiqué with the Soviets would be negative and would affect the delicate situation leading up to Geneva. Evron had said that a joint Soviet-U.S. statement was not the best way to advance to Geneva.

The Secretary said he would like to point out two things. The joint statement contains language calling for the termination of the state of war and the establishment of normal, peaceful relationship. It is very positive and a big step forward to get the Soviet Union to say this in a public statement, the Secretary said. The Secretary then read from a portion of the proposed joint statement and pointed out that the language therein was taken directly from Resolution 242.

Dayan then said he wanted to turn to the Prime Minister's talk with Ambassador Lewis regarding our paper on the organization of Geneva. Dayan said what Begin had told Lewis was very strong, "stronger than what I would have said." Begin intended to bring the U.S. proposal before the full Cabinet on Sunday.⁵ Dayan said that his feeling was that Begin does not believe that the proposal would be an adequate basis for Geneva, but we will see what the Cabinet says. Dayan said he wanted to explain why he thought the paper was not productive, or counterproductive, but would do so in "his own way." Dayan said he wanted first to say how he saw negotiations. One thing was sure, the kind of agreement the Arabs had in mind would not be agreed to by Israel. Dayan said he felt the only way to get peace would be a secret exchange of letters through the U.S., not by negotiations in a public forum in Geneva. If Egypt is constantly being watched over by other Arab countries we will not get a peace agreement, Dayan said; it just will not work if they are all together. The only way to get agree-

⁵ October 2.

ment is for Egypt to be able to negotiate with Israel without the Arabs, the Soviets and the PLO present.

Dayan asked if the negotiations in the working groups would be final, "or will they report back to the plenary?" The Secretary asked if Dayan was saying that it is paragraph three of our paper that is of most concern to Dayan. Under this provision Israel and Egypt would negotiate a treaty between themselves and report it to the plenary. Dayan said yes and indicated that this causes problems for the Israelis. The Secretary said this is intended to overcome the objections of some of the Arabs to bilateral negotiations. The Secretary said we feel that there should be more than one party negotiating only on the West Bank and Palestinian issues.

Dayan said he felt that a United Arab Delegation would tie Egypt's hands completely. All the Arab delegations will try to tell the Egyptians what to do. Dayan said he thought Israel and Egypt might be able to negotiate something, but not in Geneva. Of course what is agreed upon could be signed in Geneva. But if Egypt is bound by a United Arab Delegation we won't be able to make any progress, Dayan said.

Dayan said the other point he wanted to make concerns Jordan. Ambassador Lewis had pointed out that the Jordanians did not want the Palestinians in their delegation, Dayan said. Jordan does not want an independent Palestinian state, Dayan said, but will go along with a Palestinian entity. Dayan said that at Geneva the Jordanians will have to have Palestinians who can work with them when they negotiate, even if these Palestinians are not well known members of Jordan's delegation. We will need to tell the Jordanians, Dayan said, that they should take Palestinians who have ties with Jordan, the "right kind of Palestinians."

Regarding Gaza, Dayan said in his talks with the Jordanians it was clear that what they really have in mind is getting an outlet to the sea in Gaza. To justify that they would have to give Jordanian citizenship to the 400,000 Palestinians in Gaza. This, however, would create the problem of having more Palestinians in the balance against the East Bank Jordanians. Returning to the question of Palestinians at Geneva, Dayan said he believed that the Mayor of Gaza could be a member of the Jordanian delegation, since he is someone with whom the Jordanians can work. He was one of the few who went to Amman to congratulate Hussein on the 25th Anniversary of his coronation. Dayan repeated that if the Palestinians in the delegation can't work with Jordan it would be impossible to get the right sort of agreement. If there are Palestinians from outside the West Bank you won't get anywhere. Dayan mentioned that the Mayor of Bethlehem was one who could work with the Jordanians. I am for the Palestinians being active in seeking a solution, Dayan said, but we will need the right Palestinians.

Dayan said he feared that if there is a United Arab Delegation, the other Arabs will tell the Palestinians which way to go and “we will not get where we want.” Dayan reiterated that the Palestinians must be from the West Bank or Jordan. For example, he understood that the Jordanian Ambassador to the U.S. was a Palestinian. The Secretary and Mr. Habib said that the Jordanian Ambassador to the UN is also a Palestinian. Dayan said they can be on the delegation.

Dayan said the last point that he wanted to make concerned the PLO and Israel. “The Israelis will hang me when they hear what I say,” Dayan said, but he wanted to suggest something. Dayan stressed that Israel cannot agree to having the PLO at Geneva. But in fact almost all the Palestinians say they support the PLO. Perhaps we could find one who would object publicly to the PLO, Dayan said, but he would not represent anybody. Dayan said that while Israel could not accept the idea of having the PLO at Geneva, he thought he could try to persuade Begin to accept someone like the Mayor of Ramallah, even though the man would publicly announce that he is representing the PLO. (At this point in the conversation Dayan seemed to be saying that Israel might accept PLO affiliated Palestinians if the word PLO is not mentioned.)

Dayan said that unless the refugee problem is solved outside of Geneva there will be problems concerning the PLO on this score also. He remarked that if Israel were to pull out of the West Bank tomorrow and a PLO Cabinet were to come into being it would not be able to find enough room to settle the refugees in the West Bank. The PLO’s answer to the refugee question would be that they must return to Israel. Therefore, Dayan said, it is important to get agreement concerning settlement of the refugees in other countries, for otherwise the PLO will simply press for them to return to Israel.

Pointing to a copy of the U.S. working paper on the table in front of him, Dayan said he did not think this was the way to peace. Dayan said Syria, the PLO and Russia should not only come to terms with Israel, they must also want peace. An atmosphere of peace does not exist in Syria or among the PLO, Dayan said. He was not sure about the Soviets. Dayan said what he had heard is that the Soviets want an independent Palestinian state in order to have a satellite or to continue the conflict. But, Dayan repeated, he was not sure about the Soviets.

Dayan said perhaps there would be a way for Israel to go ahead and make an agreement with Egypt. Perhaps not publicly, but there might be a situation where we could not come to terms with Syria or the PLO or the Russians, but we could get an agreement with Egypt. Israel might not be able to make peace with Egypt, Dayan said, but it could make progress toward peace. In closing Dayan said he wanted again to stress that no Israeli government could accept the PLO being part of the Arab delegation at Geneva. What you should do, Dayan

said, is to get Palestinians from the West Bank or Jordan, who can work with Jordan, for the delegation.

The Secretary said he would like to respond to some of Dayan's points. On Dayan's point about the possibility of negotiation of a separate peace with Egypt, the Secretary said that he did not think that Israel could negotiate a separate treaty with Egypt without there at least being a Geneva Conference. The Egyptians could not do it without Geneva, the Secretary repeated, but even with Geneva he was not sure how good the chances were. Then on the question of Palestinians in the Jordan delegation, the Secretary said he did not think the Jordanians were saying there would not be Palestinians in their delegation. The Jordanian Ambassador to the UN may be on the Jordanian delegation at Geneva, and there may be some West Bank Mayors. But they will be very careful what they do. The Secretary said the Jordanians will not have Palestinians in their delegation in a formal sense, because that would run counter to the Rabat Summit decision and would create internal problems in Jordan.

The Secretary said we agree with Dayan that the problem of the refugees has to be dealt with. Regarding Soviet motives, the Secretary said he did not know whether the Soviets want peace in the Middle East or are simply trying to gain a foothold and to radicalize the area through failure of the peace negotiations. "I can't read their minds," the Secretary said, but to the extent that the Soviets act responsibly you have to accept that as reality. So far they have acted responsibly, the Secretary said, but I don't know what is in their heart.

The Secretary said that our paper on the organization of Geneva represents the President's view on the best way to get a conference. We are asking all the parties to take these views and study them, and give us an answer. The Secretary cautioned that we do not want anything to get into the press about the paper. He explained that he was concerned in this regard about Dayan's statement that the Prime Minister would be submitting our paper to the Cabinet on Sunday. If the Cabinet takes it up, the Secretary said, he hoped it would be on the basis that they are looking at the paper only as a suggestion. Mr. Habib interjected that it would be better if the Israeli Cabinet did not take the paper up at all. The Secretary said he agreed; he hoped that the paper could be kept between the President and the Prime Minister. He did not see why the Cabinet had to get into the act at all at this point. Mr. Habib said this is very important. If the paper is taken up by the Cabinet there will be no possibility to make modifications later.

Dayan said he wanted to return to the question of an Israeli-Egyptian agreement for a moment. He had noted that even when the Arabs speak of a peace treaty they still don't want diplomatic relations. Dayan said he felt the only way for Egypt to negotiate peace with Israel

would be through the United States, in a very small group and not publicly. But, Dayan said, maybe you are right when you say it can't be done without Geneva. Regarding Jordan, Dayan repeated his view that the Palestinians chosen must be able to work closely with Jordan. This must be done if we really want the West Bank to have close contacts with Jordan. Dayan said as far as Israel is concerned, the peace negotiations must be very strictly and clearly defined and the terms of Resolution 242 must be adhered to. And, Dayan observed, Resolution 242 does not mention the Palestinians. The Secretary said he wanted to understand clearly what Dayan meant. Was he saying that the Palestinian question could not be taken up at Geneva? No, Dayan replied, we are ready to deal with the Palestinian question. The Secretary observed that that in itself is a deviation from the strict terms of Resolution 242, since as Dayan had said 242 doesn't mention the Palestinian problem. Dayan replied that the party with whom Israel would negotiate on the West Bank is Jordan, not the Palestinians. When Israel goes to Geneva it would say that the West Bank negotiations are with Jordan. But of course, Dayan remarked, the substance of the West Bank question is the Palestinian question. The Secretary replied that the Jordanians would tell Israel that they can't negotiate regarding the West Bank without the Palestinians and that the Palestinians cannot be part of the Jordanian delegation. Dayan said that he would try to find a formula for this. For example, he would not want to discuss the future of the West Bank with the Jordanians without the participation of West Bank Palestinians. But, Dayan added, you must realize that I am more flexible on this than others.

Dayan noted that the American paper says that Israel should accept PLO at Geneva. He said he did not know what could be done about this, but he did know that no Israeli Government could accept the idea of having PLO at Geneva. Regarding the Secretary's concern over submission of the U.S. paper to the Israeli Cabinet, Dayan said he could ask the Prime Minister not to do it if he could say there is no hurry. The Secretary replied that what we are trying to do is find our way through a difficult set of problems. For this, we need to get Israel's response as soon as possible. The Jordanians would be coming in tomorrow to give us their response and others would come in after that. Dayan said perhaps he had not expressed himself properly. What he meant to say was that if he could tell the Prime Minister that Israel had not yet been asked to give a final reply and that the paper still might be changed, then perhaps they could avoid giving it to the Cabinet. The Secretary said Dayan could say that at this point the President would take Prime Minister Begin's views as being those of the Israeli Government. The Secretary indicated that there might be further changes, and therefore it would be correct to say the paper is not final. The Secretary said Dayan could say that the matter remains under discussion. Dayan

replied that in that case nothing should be said about agreement between Israel and the United States. If it comes out that you are defining our position, Dayan said, the Israeli Cabinet would object strongly unless it had been consulted.

Dayan said before leaving he wanted to ask about U.S. guarantees. We were supposed to get from you a draft of what you had in mind concerning guarantees, Dayan said. Mr. Habib replied that we could of course give Israel copies of security treaties that we have, but what we would rather do is take the time to draw up for the Israelis something that would fit their particular situation and would be meaningful. The Secretary said we should be able to give you something by the middle of next week. Dayan said he would like to be able to tell Prime Minister Begin just what sort of thing the Americans might propose. The Secretary said we would shoot for Wednesday.⁶

The Secretary said he would be talking to Sharaf tomorrow and would discuss with Sharaf the matters Dayan had raised concerning the West Bank. Dayan said if you can clarify what King Hussein has in mind we would appreciate it. The Secretary said our Ambassador will be talking to King Hussein when he gets back to Amman and will be able to give us a clear picture.

Before Dayan departed, the group discussed what should be said to the press. Dayan said he would, of course, not mention our paper. The Secretary said we should say that we have had further discussions regarding the problems involved in the Middle East conflict and the convening of Geneva. However, if word of the paper should get to the press, we should say that we are exchanging working papers only, not proposals. We will say we are dealing in suggestions, Dayan said.

⁶ October 5. They discussed U.S. guarantees on October 4; see Document 124.

119. Oral Message From Egyptian President Sadat to President Carter¹

October 1, 1977

President Sadat was pleased to receive Mr. Fahmy's report on the talks in Washington.² He read carefully what President Carter said and he generally agrees with the President's approach to the peace process.

As he stated before, President Sadat will be flexible within the limits of the agreement between him and President Carter during the closed meeting which took place in Washington.³

The President would like to share the following thoughts with President Carter:

Apparently, President Carter is suggesting a modification to what was agreed upon with respect to the concept of how the Geneva Conference should function. Instead of going to the Conference only to sign, President Carter is suggesting for understandable reasons, that a certain phase of the negotiations be conducted in Geneva. President Sadat is thinking of following formula to reconcile between the two approaches: Preparatory talks would be held through an intermediary, i.e. the U.S. The purpose of such preparatory talks would be to obtain the agreement of the parties on a paper that outlines the essentials of peace. Once this is achieved, the parties would proceed to complete remaining details of the final phase of the negotiations. President Sadat understands President Carter's desire to involve the World public opinion, especially in the United States and Europe, in the process of bringing pressure to bear on the intransigent party.

On the other hand, President Sadat concurs with President Carter's conception as to the procedure leading to the resumption of the Geneva Conference. In particular, President Sadat took note of the following points:

1. Reconvening the Conference this year.
2. Having a unified Arab delegation, that includes PLO representatives other than Arafat, at the beginning of the Conference. Afterwards, negotiations would be held through geographical sub-committees.

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Subject File, Box 76, Peace Negotiations: 10/77. Secret. Sadat sent Carter another oral message on October 3, which reads, "President Sadat agreed with Yasser Arafat today that the Head of the Palestinian Delegation in the Unified Arab Delegation to the Geneva Conference, will be an American professor from a Palestinian origin." (Ibid.) The American professor was apparently Edward Said.

² Fahmy met with Carter and Vance on September 21 and with Brzezinski on September 22. See Documents 107, 108, and 109.

³ Apparently a reference to the private meeting between Carter and Sadat on April 4; see footnote 2, Document 27.

3. Approving the procedure of the Conference in the opening session.

4. That the United States undertake to exert all efforts in order to keep the main issues in focus.

To simplify matters for President Carter, President Sadat is ready to agree with the proposals embodied in the American working paper entitled: "Suggestions for the Resumption of the Geneva Conference."⁴ However, should the issue of Palestinian representation remain as the stumbling block, resort can be made to the two proposals President Sadat made to Secretary Vance in Alexandria,⁵ namely:

a) That the Palestinians be part of the Egyptian, rather than the Jordanian Delegation in the relevant sub-committees at the Conference. In this regard, the President wants President Carter to know that such an arrangement is apt to provoke a sharp controversy with Syria and Jordan. President Sadat is willing to handle the situation that may arise if President Carter bears in mind and takes into account the necessity of establishing a Palestinian State. Meanwhile, President Sadat will continue to insist on a formal and well-defined link between the Palestinian State and Jordan.

b) If the above-mentioned option is not accepted, the Arab League could represent the Palestinians in the person of the Assistant Secretary General for Military Affairs, who is an Egyptian, along with some Palestinian representatives.

In so far as the negotiations that precede the Geneva Conference are concerned, President Sadat concurs with President Carter that it might not be practical for the negotiator or the mediator to shuttle between Cairo, Damascus and Tel-Aviv. Therefore, all participants could gather in a neutral city or perhaps in Washington or New York, where the American mediator could go-between the parties in the same manner the Rhodes negotiations were conducted.

In conclusion, President Sadat, who values highly the ties of friendship that bind him with President Carter since they met in Washington, expresses his hope to welcome President and Mrs. Carter in Cairo where both Presidents can pursue their quest for peace and justice.

⁴ See footnote 2, Document 118.

⁵ Vance met with Sadat in Alexandria on August 1. See Documents 63 and 64.

120. Telegram From Secretary of State Vance's Delegation to Certain Diplomatic Posts¹

New York, October 1, 1977, 0446Z

Secto 10023. Subj: Joint U.S.-Soviet Statement on the Middle East.

1. Final paragraph of this message contains text of statement on the Middle East agreed by the Secretary and Gromyko following their meeting in New York and Washington.² It is embargoed for release at 20:00 hours Saturday, October 1.

2. For Amman, Beirut, Cairo, Damascus, Jidda: We are making copies available to your host government representatives in New York, but you may pass it along at your end noting embargo timing and stressing confidentiality until then.

3. For other action addressees: You may make copies available to host governments (USNATO may make copies available to SecGen and to NAC representatives), also stressing embargo timing and confidentiality until then.

4. For Tel Aviv: We will inform Israelis here, to whom final text has already been made available, of decision to issue statement.

5. For Moscow: Secretary and Gromyko agreed on Sunday release but did not pin down details before Gromyko party had departed for Moscow. We have explained to Soviet Embassy Washington need to release Saturday evening in order to make Sunday papers.³ This means story will break on late Saturday news broadcasts in U.S., which will already be in early hours on Sunday in Moscow.

6. For Tokyo: Secretary informed Japanese of statement during dinner Friday evening, September 30.

7. Begin text:

Having exchanged views regarding the unsafe situation which remains in the Middle East, United States Secretary of State Cyrus Vance and Member of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the CPSU, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the USSR A.A. Gromyko have the fol-

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D770358–0288. Confidential; Immediate; Exdis. Sent immediate to Amman, Beirut, Cairo, Damascus, Jidda, London, Paris, Bonn, the Mission to NATO, and Brussels. Sent immediate for information to the Department of State, Tel Aviv, Moscow, and Tokyo. Sent for information to Jerusalem.

² See footnote 4, Document 118.

³ The *New York Times* and *Washington Post* published the full text of the statement on Sunday, October 2.

lowing statement to make on behalf of their countries, which are co-chairmen of the Geneva Peace Conference on the Middle East:

1. Both governments are convinced that vital interests of the peoples of this area as well as the interest of strengthening peace and international security in general urgently dictate the necessity of achieving as soon as possible a just and lasting settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict. This settlement should be comprehensive, incorporating all parties concerned and all questions.

The United States and the Soviet Union believe that, within the framework of a comprehensive settlement of the Middle East problem, all specific questions of the settlement should be resolved, including such key issues as withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from territories occupied in the 1967 conflict; the resolution of the Palestinian question including ensuring the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people; termination of the state of war and establishment of normal peaceful relations on the basis of mutual recognition of the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity, and political independence.

The two governments believe that, in addition to such measures for ensuring the security of the borders between Israel and the neighboring Arab states as the establishment of demilitarized zones and the agreed stationing in them of UN troops or observers, international guarantees of such borders as well as of the observance of the terms of the settlement can also be established, should the contracting parties so desire. The United States and the Soviet Union are ready to participate in these guarantees, subject to their constitutional processes.

2. The United States and the Soviet Union believe that the only right and effective way for achieving a fundamental solution to all aspects of the Middle East problem in its entirety is negotiations within the framework of the Geneva Peace Conference, specially convened for these purposes, with participation in its work of the representatives of all the parties involved in the conflict including those of the Palestinian people, and legal and contractual formalization of the decisions reached at the Conference.

In their capacity as co-chairmen of the Geneva Conference the U.S. and the USSR affirm their intention through joint efforts and in their contacts with the parties concerned to facilitate in every way the resumption of the work of the conference not later than December 1977. The co-chairmen note that there still exist several questions of a procedural and organizational nature which remain to be agreed upon by the participants to the Conference.

3. Guided by the goal of achieving a just political settlement in the Middle East and of eliminating the explosive situation in this area of the world, the U.S. and the USSR appeal to all the parties in the conflict to understand the necessity for careful consideration of each other's le-

gitimate rights and interests and to demonstrate mutual readiness to act accordingly.

End text.

Vance

121. Memorandum of Conversation¹

October 1, 1977, 8 a.m.

PARTICIPANTS

Jordan

Abdul Hamid Sharaf, Chief of Royal Court
Hasan Ibrahim Salah, Foreign Minister
Zaki Nusaybah, Permanent Representative to UN
Abdallah Amin Salah, Ambassador to U.S.
Khalil Salem, Ambassador to France

United States

Secretary Vance
Philip C. Habib, Under Secretary for Political Affairs
Alfred L. Atherton, Assistant Secretary for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs
Arthur R. Day, Deputy Assistant Secretary, NEA
Ambassador Thomas Pickering
David Korn, Policy Planning Staff

SUBJECT

Secretary's Bilateral with Jordanian Court Minister Sharaf (Breakfast Meeting)

The Secretary said we have been talking with the Soviets about the possibility of a joint statement.² We will be issuing it tomorrow morning. The statement covers the issues involved in the reconvening of Geneva. The Secretary then read from portions of the statement calling for resolution of the Palestinian problem and recognition of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people. The Secretary said he thought this would be a useful document; it is important to have the two co-chairmen state that there must be a resolution of the Palestinian question, including the legitimate rights of the Palestinians. The Secre-

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Trips/Visits File, Box 107, 9/19/77–10/25/77 Vance Meetings with Middle East Foreign Ministers: 9–10/77. Secret; Nodis. No location is noted for this meeting, but Vance was still in New York.

² See Document 120.

tary noted that the statement calls for convening of the conference by December.

The Secretary then asked Sharaf whether he had had a chance to reflect further on our working paper.³ Sharaf said they had consulted on it and conveyed it to Amman. His Majesty has it now. We are studying it and, of course, we would like to pursue it further, Sharaf said. The Secretary said the paper is just a suggestion for resolving the issues. If you have differences on it you should come back to us and say where it is wrong; we are not locked into cement on it.

Sharaf said that Jordan is committed to the idea of a united Arab delegation. We want to advance the Arab cause. For us, Sharaf said, the most immediate problem is the nature of the process by which the Palestinians reach self-determination and Israel withdraws from the West Bank. Sharaf said the Jordanians are concerned over how self-determination and withdrawal would affect Jordan; they want their interests to be protected. Sharaf stressed that Jordan wants to maintain close contact with the United States on all matters concerning the conference. Obviously, Sharaf said, we are concerned that the occupied territories be returned and we hope that the leadership on the West Bank will be positive and moderate.

Sharaf said he had a few questions regarding our paper. When we speak of the opening session do we mean the plenary? The Secretary said yes. Sharaf observed that the plenary goes beyond ceremony. Regarding paragraph 2(e), Sharaf said when you speak of “others” do you mean Syria and Lebanon? The Secretary noted that for the discussion of the refugee question the parties might want to ask countries from outside the conference also. The Secretary said we put this in to leave flexibility; perhaps it could be worked out at the opening session. Sharaf asked how Israel reacted to the paper. Very negatively, the Secretary said. What did they find objectionable, Sharaf asked? The Secretary enumerated the Israeli objections as follows:

- (a) the reference to well-known PLO;
- (b) the provision about reporting to the plenary;
- (c) they are not happy with paragraph 2 (e);
- (d) they want to talk about the West Bank only with Jordan.

Sharaf asked how about Gaza? The Secretary said the Israelis are more positive about the handling of Gaza. Sharaf asked about the Israeli attitude on discussion of refugees. The Secretary said the Israelis accept that this problem cannot be handled bilaterally; they say they would be happy to meet outside Geneva for it.

³ See footnote 2, Document 118.

Sharaf asked how the agenda would be drawn up at Geneva. The Secretary said it would be done by the co-chairmen. The parties could suggest amendments. The Secretary said that is the only way you can make sure of getting the right formula for discussing the Palestinian question. The Secretary then asked Sharaf if he thought the idea of the co-chairmen setting the agenda was a good or a bad idea. Sharaf said he thought the agenda should be drawn up in consultation with the parties. Yes, the Secretary said, but the co-chairmen will decide.

Ambassador Nusaybah asked whether, assuming that the procedural problems can be resolved and the parties can get to Geneva, the Secretary thought the Israelis are really prepared to make a deal. The Secretary said they are prepared to make a deal on Sinai and the Golan. On the West Bank, they are prepared to negotiate, but they keep putting off the issue of when there might be other sovereignty there. They want to talk only about how things would be administered during the transition. Sharaf asked if the Israelis have spoken about the possibility of sovereignty other than Israel's on the West Bank. The Secretary said they foresee this ultimately, though there are many differences of view among the Israelis on the West Bank question. Ambassador Nusaybah asked if the Israelis would be ready to accept a UN administration for the West Bank. The Secretary said the answer is no at this point. The Israelis want to work out something between Jordan and themselves. They say they have to sit down and discuss the West Bank with you and the West Bank Palestinians. They say they do not want to administer the West Bank, they are ready to work out something with Jordan. Ambassador Nusaybah said the West Bank Palestinians have been talking with the Israelis for several years about this. Peres asked them why they didn't accept local autonomy. But the autonomy that was offered them was not real, the mayors would have no power. Ambassador Nusaybah asked if this is what the Israelis have in mind now? The Secretary said he thought they were thinking of something more.

Sharaf said Jordan is open-minded about the question of whether there should be another Security Council resolution. He said Jordan is really interested less in the formulation of a text than in what actually happens. Perhaps the joint Soviet-U.S. statement would serve as a basis for Geneva. (Sharaf seemed to be saying that the Jordanians were not keen on a Security Council resolution.) The Secretary said we feel another resolution would be disruptive at this point.

Sharaf asked what the agenda would consist of. The Secretary said it is a little too early to say, but speaking generally it would include the various matters to be considered: the question of withdrawal, the question of Palestinians and a Palestinian entity, and the nature of peace. Sharaf asked if the agenda would say that the following question could be discussed and then set out how committees should be formed. The

Secretary said we really have not focused on that; the thing we have focused on is the agenda being a vehicle for insuring inclusion of the Palestinian issue. Sharaf said Jordan prefers functional committees for discussion of the major issues, i.e., withdrawal, peace guarantee and the Palestinian question. Mr. Habib commented that if you do it that way you will run into trouble right off the bat. You have got to leave room, Mr. Habib said, for bilateral as well as multilateral dealings. We want to avoid a head-on conflict between those who want functional committees and those who want bilateral committees. The Secretary said that in defining the issues you have to add the nature of peace. Sharaf observed that the group was now talking not about the agenda but the question of organization of the conference. Ambassador Nusaybah said he had a question regarding the nature of peace. What if the Arab confrontation states reach a peace agreement with Israel? Could the Israelis later say it is not valid because Algeria, for example, has not yet made peace with Israel? The Secretary said no, the Israelis would not do this.

Sharaf asked how the question of Palestinian representation at Geneva would be handled. The Secretary said we are looking to you to help on this. Sharaf said by “us” do you mean the Arab parties? Particularly Jordan, the Secretary said. We have talked to all of the Arabs about this, the Secretary said, and obviously it is the key question as far as convening of the conference is concerned. The Secretary said that at the conference we will have to determine how we can include among the Palestinians a voice that will be acceptable to the PLO and yet at the same time not drive Israel into refusal to come to the conference or into leaving the conference when it opens. Ambassador Nusaybah asked what the Soviet position is. The Secretary said the Soviets say the PLO represents the Palestinian people by virtue of the Rabat-Arab Summit decision. Therefore, they have to be included at Geneva. The Soviets recognize however that this presents problems. The Secretary said he thought the Soviets would accept anything acceptable to the Arabs. For them it is a practical matter, the Secretary said. Sharaf asked what the Soviets say about the principle of self-determination. They accept it, the Secretary said. Mr. Atherton said the Soviets endorse self-determination as a way of getting a state for the Palestinians.

Sharaf said we feel strongly about self-determination for the Palestinians. Jordan had intimate relations with the Palestinians, and there are a million Palestinians on the East Bank. Sharaf said he did not want to go into a lot of detail, but it was obvious that the Rabat decision on the PLO came about mainly because the Israelis were so adamant. But Jordan has repeatedly endorsed the idea of self-determination for the Palestinians. King Hussein has spoken many times since 1967 about the right of the people of the West Bank to self-determination. The Secretary said we agreed, for two reasons. The first is that we do not think

there can be a settlement unless the process of self-determination is used. The second is that self-determination is a way of resolving the difficult problem of whether the PLO are in fact the people who should govern the West Bank, or should it be someone else? The Secretary said it is up to the Palestinians to answer that question.

Sharaf remarked that it is always the people who have the greatest ability to make trouble who succeed in grabbing power. Sharaf said he hoped that that problem would be taken into account; there is a serious moral problem there. Amb. Nusaybah pointed out that if there is to be a lasting settlement there must be self-determination, the Palestinians must put their seals of approval on it. Otherwise people will come and say it was an imposed settlement. The Secretary said he did not want anyone to misunderstand. At this point, the Israelis would be opposed to self-determination; they prefer to negotiate regarding the West Bank with Jordan. Sharaf said Jordan understands that. Sharaf then reviewed Jordan's reason for supporting self-determination. The Secretary said he thought that if the Israelis could be sure that the West Bank would be linked to Jordan they might not oppose self-determination. But they fear that self-determination will lead to an independent state. Ambassador Nusaybah said everybody understands that the questions to be asked in the self-determination poll will be important.

Sharaf asked what would happen to the U.S. paper concerning the five principles?⁴ The Secretary said he thought that at some point it might be useful for the co-chairmen to discuss the paper on principles. We could say that these principles are the main issues to be resolved at the conference. But, the Secretary said, we really have not thought in detail about how to use the statement of principles.

Sharaf said he wanted to ask what might seem to be a strange question. What does Jordan gain by participating in this process? The Secretary replied that he suspected Jordan might gain restoration of some of its territory in the long run, depending on what happened in the process of self-determination. Mr. Habib remarked that you have to participate in the process if you want to gain any benefit from it. The Secretary said yes, if you don't participate you might find that you don't like the outcome.

Ambassador Nusaybah raised the question of Jerusalem and stressed its importance. The Secretary said the question of Jerusalem has got to be resolved. We did not put it in the joint Soviet-U.S. statement because we did not want to single it out, the Secretary said. Referring to the U.S. paper, Minister Ibrahim asked if the PLO could be formally designated as a party to the conference. The Secretary replied

⁴ See the Attachment to Document 54.

that if you did that the Israelis would not go to Geneva; there would be no conference. Ambassador Nusaybah said the main concern of the Palestinians is not with the PLO, it is freeing their territory from Israeli occupation. Ten years of occupation is more than any people can be expected to endure. Ambassador Nusaybah stressed that the important thing is to get Israeli withdrawal and self-determination for the West Bankers.

As the meeting concluded, the Secretary asked if he could have a few minutes alone with Sharaf.⁵ The rest of the party then left the room.

⁵ No memorandum of conversation has been found.

122. Memorandum of Conversation¹

New York, October 1, 1977, 1:15 p.m.

PARTICIPANTS

Lebanon

Foreign Minister Fuad Boutros
Ghassan Tuwayni, UN Permanent Representative
Najati Kabbani, Ambassador to the U.S.
Ghazi Chidiac, Consul General in New York

United States

Secretary Vance
Philip C. Habib, Under Secretary for Political Affairs
Alfred L. Atherton, Assistant Secretary for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs
Arthur R. Day, Deputy Assistant Secretary, NEA
Ambassador Richard Parker
David Korn, Policy Planning Staff

SUBJECT

Secretary's Meeting with Lebanese Foreign Minister Fuad Boutros

(The Secretary first met privately with Foreign Minister Boutros, for approximately 20 minutes, before the group meeting began.)²

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Trips/Visits File, Box 107, 9/19/77–10/25/77 Vance Meetings with Middle East Foreign Ministers: 9–10/77. Secret; Nodis. The meeting took place in the Secretary's suite at the UN Plaza Hotel.

² No memorandum of conversation has been found.

The Secretary said he had given the Minister a copy of the joint U.S.-Soviet statement³ which was to be issued at 8:00 that evening. The Secretary stressed that the statement was a positive one. He pointed out that it specifically referred to the legitimate rights of the Palestinians and the need for a resolution of the Palestinian question.

The Secretary said he would like to talk about Southern Lebanon. He asked Mr. Habib to give a run-down on the current situation. Mr. Habib said that the Israelis understand that 850 Palestinians will remain in identified positions following the withdrawal of Palestinian forces from Southern Lebanon in accordance with the Shtaura agreement. If these remaining 850 Palestinian guerrillas do not take advantage of being in their positions, everything will be all right. But if they do take advantage of the cease-fire then there will be trouble. The Israelis will not tolerate that. Foreign Minister Boutros noted that until recently the Israelis were still refusing to acquiesce in the presence of the 850 PLO. Boutros asked if it was Israel's understanding that the withdrawal of the PLO would be followed by the entry of the Lebanese Army in a few hours. Mr. Habib said no, it was expected that there would continue to be a cease-fire after withdrawal but there was no such time limit for the entry of the Lebanese troops. Mr. Habib stressed, however, that it is important that Lebanese forces be sent to the South as soon as possible. Boutros asked if Israel would take advantage of the PLO withdrawal to the 10 kilometer limit in implementation of the Shtaura agreement. He pointed out that Israeli action would jeopardize the agreement. Mr. Habib said no, they won't, and they don't have any desire to, as long as the Palestinians maintain the cease-fire. Mr. Atherton added that as long as the Shtaura agreement is being implemented and the Lebanese Army is coming into the South, the Israelis will not interfere.

Boutros asked if we knew what the Israelis would raise in the ILMAC meeting. Mr. Habib said we don't know precisely, but in general terms we expect they would want to discuss the military aspects of the cease-fire, the positioning of the Lebanese Army in the South, and the protection of the Christians who were fighting on their side in the South. Boutros remarked that if the Shtaura agreement is implemented the Christians will no longer be in danger. Mr. Habib replied that in that case there will be no problem. Mr. Habib asked whether PLO withdrawal had begun. Boutros said no, under the cease-fire provisions it is understood that everybody would stay in place. Mr. Habib said we had heard that some of the PLO who came down late in the fighting had begun to move out.

³ See Document 120.

Boutros said the question of implementation of Shtaura seemed now to be in Lebanon's hands. Boutros again asked whether Israel would tolerate the 850 PLO who are supposed to remain in position following the withdrawal of the bulk of the PLO forces. Habib said Israel will not give approval to their remaining but it won't take any action as long as these PLO troops don't do anything. Boutros asked what about the Christian militia? Mr. Habib said the Israelis will restrain them. The Christians can't do anything without Israeli support. Mr. Habib reiterated that the Israelis will not let the Christians move.

Boutros then thanked the Secretary effusively for what the U.S. had done to bring about the cease-fire. He added that Lebanon would need as much assistance from the U.S. for the implementation of the Shtaura agreement as it got for the cease-fire. The Secretary said we will continue to do what we can. Mr. Habib again stressed the importance of getting Lebanese troops in place in the South as soon as possible. Mr. Habib said he assumed the Foreign Minister had spoken to General Khoury about this. Boutros said he agreed entirely; Lebanese forces would be moved in as quickly as possible. We will inform you of the timing, Boutros said. Mr. Habib suggested that the Lebanese also inform Israel through the ILMAC. Boutros said he did not know how ILMAC will work. The Secretary endorsed Mr. Habib's suggestion that the Lebanese inform the Israelis through ILMAC of the timing of the entry of their troops into South Lebanon.

The Secretary said that during their private conversation he had reviewed with Boutros his earlier discussions with the Israelis and the Arab states and had brought Boutros up to date on the status of the peace negotiations. Now he wanted to ask specifically whether Lebanon wishes to take part in a reconvened Geneva Conference. Boutros replied that Lebanon definitely does. He said he had called in the American and Soviet Ambassadors in March of this year to inform them of Lebanon's interest in attending Geneva. Boutros said the Soviets had replied, saying that they were taking note of the request and would look into it when the conference was reconvened. The Secretary said that all the other parties to Geneva agree that Lebanon should participate. Therefore, there should be no problem. Ambassador Tuwayni said Boutros had brought this up with Secretary General Waldheim and Waldheim had agreed that Lebanon should be at Geneva. Boutros emphasized that Lebanon must be present at Geneva, particularly for the resolution of the refugee problem. He noted that Syria has 100,000 Palestinian refugees and is refusing to resettle them there, but Lebanon which has a much smaller population has a much larger number of refugees. Boutros said it would be impossible for Lebanon to settle the refugees on its territory. Other arrangements would have to be made for them.

The Secretary said that, as he had told the Foreign Minister, the big questions before us now are: 1) How to resolve the question of Palestinian representation at Geneva and how to organize the conference. The Secretary said the Syrians, the Soviets, and to some extent the Jordanians, favor a functional approach to the organization of the conference. They would like to have three functional committees: one for withdrawal and borders, one for Palestinian questions and one for the nature of peace and guarantees. The Secretary said we do not agree with this. We think the best solution is some mixture of bilateral and functional working groups. For example, the Secretary said, we cannot see that others should be involved in the peace negotiations between Lebanon and Israel; the same is true, the Secretary said, of Israel-Egyptian negotiations. Boutros indicated that he agreed.

Ambassador Tuwayni said there had just been a press report regarding the possible formation of a PLO government in exile. This government would include West Bankers as well as PLO and might have a non-PLO president. Mr. Day said this had often been spoken of; it was known as the Kerensky solution. Mr. Day added that, of course, Kerensky didn't last very long.⁴ Ambassador Tuwayni asked the Secretary if the U.S. would recognize a PLO? The Secretary said he believed it would be a mistake to rush into anything. Mr. Day said the formation of a PLO government in exile would make negotiations much more difficult. The Secretary said he agreed, and that in itself is a good reason for going slowly. The Secretary asked what kind of time schedule the PLO had in mind for this. Tuwayni said there would probably not be a decision before the seven Arab League Ministers' meeting on November 12. Tuwayni indicated that the PLO's decision might also be affected by whether or not there is progress in New York on Resolution 242. They are not about to do anything tomorrow, the Secretary asked. No, Tuwayni replied.

Tuwayni raised the question of a possible resolution supplementing 242. Boutros asked what the Secretary's opinion was on this. The Secretary said we would be very concerned about any modification of 242, or any "242 plus" resolution. The Secretary pointed out that if you play around with 242 you give the parties an excuse to walk away from Geneva. The Secretary noted that in our joint statement with the Soviets we spoke of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people and the resolution of the Palestinian problem. He also noted that the U.S. and the USSR, as co-chairmen of the Geneva Conference, can make sure that the Palestinian issue is on the agenda at Geneva. Tuwayni said that

⁴ Alexander Kerensky served as the Chairman of the Russian Provisional Government from July 21 to November 8, 1917, when the Provisional Government was overthrown by the Bolsheviks.

that should make Egyptian Foreign Minister Fahmy's proposed resolution irrelevant. The Secretary said he had talked with Fahmy about the resolution and Fahmy said he would not do it if we really think it would have a negative impact.⁵ The Secretary said he had also taken this up with the Romanians. He had asked everybody to desist and not to change 242 or push 242 plus. The Secretary said he thought our joint statement with the Soviets should be helpful to the PLO.

The Secretary excused himself from the luncheon, saying that he had to go to another meeting. He appreciated having this opportunity to speak with Foreign Minister Boutros and looked forward to seeing the Foreign Minister soon. In the ensuing conversation, Mr. Habib asked the Lebanese what kind of meetings the Arab Foreign Ministers will be holding in New York. Tuwayni said a meeting has been called regarding the non-aligned statement, which might replace the modification of 242. Tuwayni said that if the parties were moving towards Geneva and if "people are happy" then there would be less pressure for modification of 242. The Arabs would be content with a General Assembly resolution in the form of a general statement.

⁵ They met on September 29; see Document 117.

123. Memorandum of Conversation¹

October 1, 1977, 3 p.m.

SUBJECT

Meeting with Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Saud

PARTICIPANTS

Saudi Arabia

Foreign Minister Prince Saud

Ambassador to the US Ali Alireza

Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Abdulla Mansuri

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Trips/Visits File, Box 107, 9/19/77–10/25/77 Vance Meetings with Middle East Foreign Ministers: 9–10/77. Secret; Nodis. Drafted by Korn on October 6. No location is noted for the meeting, but Vance was still in New York.

United States

The Secretary

Under Secretary for Political Affairs Philip Habib

Assistant Secretary Alfred L. Atherton, Jr.

Deputy Assistant Secretary Arthur R. Day

David Korn, Policy Planning Staff (notetaker)

(Before the meeting began, Mr. Atherton told the Prince about the joint statement that the US and the Soviet Union were planning to issue that afternoon.)²

Saud said Mr. Atherton had told him about the joint statement. The Secretary gave Saud a copy of the statement and said he thought it would be helpful. The Secretary drew Saud's attention to the phrases in the statement concerning the resolution of the Palestinian question and the rights of the Palestinians. The Secretary reiterated that the statement ought to be helpful to the Palestinians. Saud asked who drafted the statement, the US or the USSR? The Secretary said the drafting was combined.

Saud asked how the Palestinians would be represented at Geneva. The Secretary said we have not yet agreed what is meant by Palestinian representation. However, the Secretary said, all the parties have now agreed to go to Geneva on the basis of a united Arab delegation. The Secretary pointed out that ten days ago the Israelis said they would never go on that basis. But the question of Palestinian representation remains to be resolved. As does that of the organization of the conference. The Secretary said we are spending most of our time on these two questions.

The Secretary said we have done a working paper on the organization of Geneva³ and have given copies of it to the parties. (The Secretary handed a copy of the paper to Saud.) The Secretary stressed that the paper contains only our suggestions on how to handle the issues, it is not a proposal. We have asked the representatives of the parties to convey our thoughts as contained in the paper, to their head of government, and have asked them to give us their comments.

Saud asked what the Soviet position was on these issues. The Secretary said the Soviets would not take a position until the Arabs do, and the Arabs have not yet taken any position; there is not a Soviet position yet. Saud asked about the phrase in the paper concerning "not well known PLO"; the Secretary said that does not mean that there cannot be Palestinians other than PLO. Saud asked if the Israelis had accepted the provisions of our working paper. The Secretary replied with an emphatic no. He said the points in the paper are our own suggestions as to

² See Document 120.

³ See footnote 2, Document 118.

what is the fair and best way to move forward. Saud asked about the September 23 Israeli government statement accepting a US proposal on Geneva.⁴ The Secretary explained that what the Israelis had accepted was not what the US had proposed, or even suggested. The Secretary said he had issued a statement pointing out that what the Israelis had said was incorrect.⁵

After carefully reading over the joint Soviet-US statement, Saud remarked that “this is novel.” He noted that this is the only joint statement that the Soviets and the US have issued on the Middle East. The Secretary said yes, this is the first time we have issued a statement with the Soviets on the Middle East. The Secretary said he had suggested some time back to Gromyko that it might be useful if we issued a joint statement on the Middle East. Before coming to New York for the General Assembly, Gromyko had sent us a draft.⁶ We went over it and put in our views, and after negotiations with the Soviets it was agreed upon. Saud said he was sure there would be questions about the statement. The Secretary said yes, there will of course be many.

Saud asked why the statement had not called for PLO at Geneva. The Secretary said that in our working paper we have “not well known PLO.” We use this term, the Secretary said, because if you have well known PLO at Geneva the Israelis will not come. We assume that the Palestinian element of any united Arab delegation would be very closely in touch with the PLO, and we imagine that those Palestinians selected to go to Geneva would be in sympathy with the PLO. Saud said that he did not see how agreement could be reached if Israel did not want to deal with the PLO. Saud asked if Israel would use the Palestinian representation issue as an excuse for not moving forward. The Secretary pointed out that we had issued a statement some two weeks earlier calling for Palestinian representation at Geneva.⁷ Israel cannot be under any illusion that the Palestinians will have to be there.

Saud asked about Israel’s reaction to the joint statement. The Secretary said it was very strongly negative.⁸ But, he added, the Israelis at first opposed the idea of a united Arab delegation and have now given in on it. We must pursue our efforts. With regard to our working paper, the Secretary again cautioned that it only contains our suggestions, it is not an official US proposal. The Secretary stressed that the paper

⁴ See footnote 7, Document 113.

⁵ See footnote 11, Document 113.

⁶ See footnote 4, Document 118.

⁷ See footnote 17, Document 103.

⁸ The Israeli Government’s immediate response, reportedly drafted by Begin, was issued on the morning of October 2. (“Israel Reacts to Statement,” *New York Times*, October 2, 1977, p. 16) See also Document 118.

should not become public. Saud asked about paragraph 2(e) of the paper. Was Egypt included in the list of those negotiating on Palestinian issues because of Gaza? Yes, the Secretary said, and also because of the refugee question. The Secretary said others would also be interested in the refugee question, perhaps Saudi Arabia too. Saud said yes, his country would be interested in that.

Saud asked about negotiations between Lebanon and Israel. The Secretary said the Lebanese would negotiate a peace treaty which would affirm the present borders. Saud asked about reaction to the working paper. The Secretary said so far we have only preliminary indications. Saud then praised the US negotiating effort and commended the working paper. It does not clarify all the complicated issues involved, Saud said, but it is an important beginning. The Secretary said we have asked the representatives of the parties to try to get us the reaction of their governments to the working paper by the middle of next week, while the Foreign Ministers are still in New York.

The Secretary said he would like to discuss South Lebanon briefly. We now have not only a cease-fire in South Lebanon but a basis for implementing the Shtaura agreement. We hope that will take place within the next 24 hours. The Lebanese have told us that they will do their best now to move their troops into South Lebanon. Saud praised the US efforts to bring about a cease-fire in South Lebanon and to assist in the implementation of the Shtaura agreement. The Secretary said we have leaned heavily on the Israelis. Saud said the Israelis have been trying to sabotage the Shtaura agreement. It was the intervention of the US that brought about the cease-fire. The Secretary said we have signed an agreement with General Khoury for military equipment for the Lebanese army⁹ which we hope will make it possible for the Lebanese to move quickly. Saud said his government is very happy about American support for Lebanon. The Secretary said we will continue to give the Lebanese whatever assistance we can. The Secretary said he thought Prime Minister Boutros had shown a lot of firmness and had done very well. Saud agreed that Boutros is a good man but added that he needs something to back him up.

The Secretary said we will need Saudi Arabia's help and advice in resolving the question of Palestinian participation in a united Arab delegation at Geneva. The problem is how do you accomplish this in a way that gives the Palestinians, including the PLO, a voice and that doesn't prevent Israel from going to Geneva? The Secretary said that would be difficult. Saud said that in any case he thought Israel would refuse to talk with the PLO. The Secretary said if they are well known PLO, yes,

⁹ See footnote 6, Document 115.

but otherwise the Israelis might not necessarily refuse. Saud asked what difference it made to Israel if the PLO at Geneva were well known or not well known. There is a big difference, the Secretary said. This is a way of starting. The Israelis have said for years that they would not negotiate with the PLO. It will take them time to change. Mr. Habib pointed out that one of the Israeli arguments for not negotiating with the PLO is that it stands for the destruction of Israel. For the Israelis to agree to negotiate with the PLO would imply their recognition of it and its right to establish a state.

Saud asked about the positions of the Arab states on the Palestinian representation question. The Secretary said that some think there must be not well known PLO in the delegation while others take the more rigid line that all the Palestinians at Geneva must be PLO. The Secretary said there are also differing views regarding the organization of the conference. Some say negotiations should be on a functional basis while others say they should be bilateral. Our view, the Secretary said, is that the negotiations ought to be bilateral in some cases and multilateral in others, depending upon the issues. Negotiations on the West Bank, for instance, should be multilateral. But on Sinai, it seems to us they should be between Egypt and Israel. And on Golan, between Syria and Israel. The Secretary pointed out that there are many detailed questions that are solely between Egypt and Israel or Syria and Israel. To have all the other parties telling Egypt or Syria how wide their demilitarized zones should be makes no sense. Mr. Habib pointed out that the West Bank and Gaza cannot be negotiated solely between Jordan and Israel. You have to have the Palestinians and Egypt as well.

The Secretary said he thought our joint statement with the Soviets might solve some of the problems associated with the Palestinian issue. The Secretary said Saudi Arabia could be of considerable help to us on this matter. Saud said the Israelis seemed to have moved backward on the Palestinian question, they say there is no Palestinian question. Saud noted that another complicating factor was the lack of communication between the PLO and the United States. The Syrians have from the US a commitment that their territory will be returned and so does Egypt. This makes them secure enough to agree to negotiate with the Israelis. But, Saud said, the Palestinians don't have any such commitments. If they had guarantees, they would move forward. The Secretary said we cannot give guarantees but we can make known what our position is. We can produce an agenda item at Geneva on the Palestinian issue but we cannot guarantee anything. However, the Secretary pointed out, we have said that we favor a Palestinian entity. We are also for Palestinian self-determination.

Saud asked how Palestinian self-determination would be implemented. The Secretary said it would be done by a plebiscite. This is the

democratic way, the Secretary said. The Palestinians would elect a constituent assembly and they would choose their own future. The Secretary said the Jordanians have given us some very clear ideas as to how a plebiscite might be done. The Jordanian suggestions are very interesting, the Secretary said. The Secretary added that on many occasions he had said privately that there should be self-determination for the Palestinians. He had come very close to saying it publicly the other day, but had not gone quite that far.

Saud asked again about the differences between the Arab States concerning the organization of Geneva. The Secretary said that some of the Arabs think they should sit down with the PLO and come up with a proposal on Palestinian representation that won't scare the Israelis off. Some are more rigid. Mr. Atherton said it would be fair to say that there is no Arab government that does not say that the PLO should be at Geneva, but they differ on how. Saud asked about Egypt's position concerning the united Arab delegation. Mr. Habib said they would accept it, although it is not their preference.

Saud said the most important thing is that the PLO know where they are going, that they know what is going to happen. Pointing to the joint Soviet-US statement, Saud said this will increase PLO bewilderment. The Secretary asked why. Saud said the PLO will not know whether the statement represents the US or the Soviet position. Everybody knows the US and the USSR have differences on the Palestinian question. Does the joint statement mean that the Soviets have gone backwards or the US forwards? The Secretary replied that we did not intend to cause confusion, that Saud should reassure the PLO that we want Palestinian representation at Geneva. The Secretary said he did not think that the Soviets have withdrawn from their positions on the Palestinian issue. However, if the Arabs decide they want to handle PLO representation in a certain way, the Arab decision would probably be acceptable to the Soviets. Saud said the Arabs see Geneva as a way to get the PLO in, not to keep them out. The Secretary said that is exactly what we want to do, get them in, but not only PLO. Saud said that is very difficult for them. The Secretary said he understood this. Mr. Habib said our formula is one that can work. But if the PLO insists on a separate delegation, you will never get to Geneva. Mr. Habib added that the Israeli position is that there should be no PLO at Geneva, not even not well known PLO. But, Saud objected, the Israelis are having discussions with the PLO, they are talking with the West Bank Mayors. Mr. Habib replied that the Israelis have decided to say that the Mayors are not PLO.

The Secretary said the Israelis still maintain that they should not have to withdraw to the 1967 borders and have a Palestinian entity on the West Bank. Their position is tough, the Secretary said, but there

have to be negotiations. When people get into negotiations, rigid positions diminish. But if you don't talk, positions remain stuck.

The Secretary again stressed that our working paper should not be made public. He said we are giving copies of it only to the confrontation states and asking them to keep it confidential. Ambassador Ali Riza said that an American journalist had shown him a copy of the paper a week ago. (There ensued discussion as to how a copy of the paper might have come into the hands of a newspaperman.)

Saud said he would have to be going now. The Secretary said he would like to talk with Saud again before Saud went back to Saudi Arabia, and the two agreed that they would meet again.¹⁰ The Secretary said he would like to discuss the Horn of Africa at that time. Saud agreed. He said Saudi Arabia's main concern regarding the Horn is that the Soviets not be allowed to impose something on both Ethiopia and Somalia. The Secretary and Saud agreed to stay in contact regarding the Horn.

¹⁰ Vance met with Prince Saud again on October 25 and discussed the Horn of Africa, South Africa, North/South issues, and U.S. weapons sales to Saudi Arabia. (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Trips/Visits File, Box 107, 9/19/77–10/25/77 Vance Meetings with Middle East Foreign Ministers: 9–10/77) Carter also met with the Prince on October 25; see Document 136.

124. Memorandum of Conversation¹

New York, October 4, 1977, 6:55 p.m

SUBJECT

Summary of the President's Meeting with Foreign Minister Moshe Dayan
of Israel

PARTICIPANTS

President
Secretary of State Cyrus Vance
Zbigniew Brzezinski, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs
Alfred L. Atherton, Jr., Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South
Asian Affairs
William B. Quandt, NSC Staff

Moshe Dayan, Minister of Foreign Affairs
Simcha Dinitz, Ambassador to the U.S.
Meir Rosenne, Legal Adviser, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Elyakim Rubinstein, Director, Foreign Minister's Bureau; Adviser to Foreign
Minister
Naphtali Lau-Lavie, Spokesman, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

President: I need to know where we are in terms of getting to Geneva. We felt that we made some progress with the Soviets in the statement that caused you so much concern.² I thought it represented a good statement, and should be seen in combination with my remarks at the UN today.³ I hope you aren't bothered by those. My only concern is to help bring the parties to the bargaining table.

I want to reconfirm that we will carry out our commitments completely. I will say the same thing to you that I say to the others and I will not deal behind your back. I am eager to accommodate the special concerns of Israel. I know that Israel is not able to have much trust in anyone, because if she were ever betrayed, it would be catastrophic.

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Office, Outside the System File, Box 48, Chron: 10/1–13/77. Top Secret. Brackets are in the original. The meeting took place at the UN Plaza Hotel. According to the President's Daily Diary, Carter, Vance, and Brzezinski met earlier that day with Fahmy from 12:04 to 12:48 p.m. (Carter Library, Presidential Materials, President's Daily Diary) No memorandum of conversation has been found. Carter wrote in his diary about the meeting that Fahmy "agreed with our joint statement with the Soviets, reported that the Jordanians and Syrians had some problems with it, brought me a letter from Sadat urging that nothing be done to prevent Israel and Egypt from negotiating directly with our serving as an intermediary either before or after the Geneva conference." (*White House Diary*, p. 112)

² See Document 120 and footnote 8, Document 123.

³ Carter spoke before the U.N. General Assembly that morning addressing nuclear arms control and the Middle East peace process. The full text of the speech is in *Public Papers: Carter, 1977*, Book II, pp. 1715–1723.

There would be real danger in creating a breach between my government and yours. It would be a serious problem if there were a public airing of our differences over the issues of going to Geneva and of reaching peace. I would not want to go public with all of our arguments, or to confront ours with yours. That would put us in a confrontational posture of appearing to be in opposition to Israel, and I don't want to see that.

I hope that you can tell me what facets of our actions and of the US Soviet statement and of our dealings with the Arabs have caused you concern. We want to move on together with an open demonstration of harmony. Otherwise, Israel will seem to be almost alone, and that is the last thing that I want. If there are problems, I hope you will let me know. We are not doing anything surreptitious. We are not having any secret talks with the Soviets or with others. What we have said in private is the same as we have said in public, and there are no changes in our positions. But the parties cannot be adamant about every single word without stopping progress. We have seen some constructive changes in the Arab and Soviet positions, but our positions have not changed. I would like to see us try to resolve our differences.

Dayan: I hope that we can minimize our differences, but it has never happened that we could overcome them all. I do believe that this is the best time to make progress. I have been negotiating with the Arabs for a long time, first with King Abdallah, and then after Suez, and in 1967, and in 1973. I can compare those situations with now. We are all for a Geneva peace conference as soon as possible, and we approve of your efforts. If sometime we can go into substance in more detail, I would like to outline what I think could be done. The key lies with Egypt and with the settlement of the refugee problem. The West Bank issue without a refugee settlement would remain an insoluble problem. The issue would be different on the West Bank if the refugees had already been settled.

The US-Soviet paper was taken very badly in my country. It was seen as a change in comparison with other agreements concerning Geneva. I will try to avoid discussing it now, but it is totally unacceptable to the Israeli government. I would like to ask if we are being requested to go to Geneva on the basis of this document. We do not accept it. But maybe we are not being asked to accept it in order to go to Geneva. Can you reassure us that we can go to Geneva on the basis of UN Resolutions 242 and 338 and other agreements between us and not on the basis of this US-Soviet statement? If we do not accept this statement, and we do not, the fact that we do not should not block our going to Geneva. If I am asked by you to accept the statement as the basis for Geneva, the Government will have to decide its policy, but the Government decision would be that Israel will not go. How much does this bind us?

President: The statement was not meant as a final basis for all the negotiations at Geneva. It does not contravene any of the agreements that we have reached with you. The United States does not intend to impose a settlement. We understand that progress might be made with Egypt, for example, even before Geneva. We have a difficult problem in trying to get a formula for the Palestinians to participate in the negotiations. My understanding of what you said is that you would accept the Palestinians in a joint delegation at Geneva if they were not well-known PLO members. They might be PLO, but you would not examine their credentials.

We are obliged to have some continuing consultations with the Soviets before Geneva. They are and have been co-chairmen of the Geneva Conference. The last time we met at Geneva the United States and the Soviet Union asked the Secretary General of the United Nations to convene the conference.⁴ We do not insist that you accept all the elements of the US-Soviet statement. It would be helpful to know what you cannot accept. Syria also disagrees with some of the statement, as does Jordan, and some of the parties object to what was left out. In the past, the Soviets have always, along with the Arabs, referred to the national rights of the Palestinians. We did not allow that. The Soviets have always claimed that the PLO were the only representatives of the Palestinians, and we refused to let the PLO be mentioned. The Soviets and the Arabs have always said that Israel should withdraw to the 1967 borders, and that is not included. The Soviets have always claimed that Israel should only get non-belligerency as part of the settlement, but in the statement we issued it calls for contractual agreements or peace treaties to be concluded. The statement also calls for normal diplomatic relations.

Secretary Vance: Normal relations.

President: And it calls for international guarantees which we and the Soviets would offer if the parties want them. These might be offered by one or both parties. So there are many elements in the statement that the Arabs do not accept. We did not expect Israel to adopt all of the statement. I would like you to point out the parts that have caused you the most concern. There may be a nuance of a difference over the term Palestinian interests or rights, but rights are better than national rights from Israel's perspective. This is an agreement that we reached with the Soviet Union and it is not binding on you or the Arabs. I understand you are also concerned about our not including UN Resolutions 242 and 338. But the Soviets wanted to refer to all UN resolutions, and we

⁴ Secretary General Waldheim issued the invitations to the 1973 Geneva Conference at the request of the United States and Soviet Union. See *Foreign Relations, 1969–1976*, vol. XXV, Arab-Israeli Crisis and War, 1973, Document 407.

finally agreed not to mention any resolutions, but to include the essence of Resolutions 242 and 338 in the statement.

Dayan: If all UN Resolutions were mentioned, that would be unacceptable. Geneva is to be resumed on the bases already accepted by the parties, and with nothing new. When they go, the parties can propose changes. We'll give you our reservations and our criticisms, but maybe we will not convince you.

President: If the final agreement between you and Egypt, or between you and Syria, is different from what we have outlined, that would suit me fine. I won't impose my will on you. And we cannot permit the Soviets to do so, if you reach different conclusions.

Dayan: Can we go to Geneva saying that Israel remains bound by UN Resolutions 242 and 338 and other agreements between us, but not this statement? Can we ignore it and just not give our acceptance of it?

Secretary Vance: Resolutions 242 and 338 remain the basis for Geneva, as the President has said. What you say about the statement is your own business. The President indicated that in many ways it is very constructive, but you don't have to agree with it in its entirety. It is not the basis for Geneva. It's a statement of what we see as important.

President: If you say that you are going to Geneva, but that you don't accept all of the US-Soviet statement, but you will remain bound to UN Resolutions 242 and 338, and to your understandings with the United States, that would suit me fine. If you have some special problems, you might give them to us in a memo.

Dayan: The Israeli Government will not accept the US-Soviet statement, and I can now say that we are not asked to do so.

President: That's true, but the way that you express your views will have an impact on the chances for Geneva. If you say you don't agree with all of the provisions, but you will go on the basis of 242 and 338, that would be fine, but if your emphasis is on your rejection . . .

Secretary Vance: Suppose you say 242 and 338 are the basis for Geneva, and you don't agree with some or all of the US-Soviet statement.

Dayan: I can't make that statement. I cannot say that Israel will go on the basis of 242 and 338, and just ignore the US-Soviet statement.

President: It's a matter of emphasis. You can state your disagreements, but if you emphasize them, it could be a problem.

Dayan: We do want to go to Geneva, and we have a positive attitude. We are not here to react to the US-Soviet statement. I can use this. I don't agree with all or some of the provisions, and I am not going on the basis of that statement, but on the basis of resolutions 242 and 338 and other agreements. I have to go back to Israel some day. It must be clear that we did not accept the statement.

President: I would like to ask you that when you make your public statements to be as constructive as possible. That would put the Arabs on the defensive. They don't accept it all either.

Dayan: I don't think the Arabs are so sensitive. I will say what I think.

President: You should do it so that it helps our common goals.

Dayan: We are talking about the future of the country, and I must make our position very clear. Can I say that all our agreements are still in effect?

President: Yes.

Dayan: We may want to publish all of the agreements that have been made in the past. There is a terrible mood in Israel. If you could find a way, although I cannot speak for you, but if you could say that all of the agreements you have made will be kept, that would help.

President: I have looked over all of the commitments and I have seen nothing with which I disagree, but there are many commitments and we would like to go over the text of anything you plan to publish to see whether it is particularly sensitive.

Dayan: Your statement would not have to go into that kind of detail. I would just like you to say that all agreements would be kept.

Secretary Vance: But some of the agreements deal with issues like the role of the Secretary General of the UN, and it would be wrong to downgrade his role by publishing some of those documents.

Dayan: We will coordinate what we feel should be published. I am asking for general reassurances that agreements will be kept.

President: That doesn't bother me, but I hope you will coordinate with Secretary Vance.

Dr. Brzezinski: Would publication of these documents follow your statement that you will go to Geneva on the basis of Resolutions 242 and 338, and your reservation on the US-Soviet statement, or would it be issued jointly?

Dayan: I don't know. We wouldn't do it right away. But I have to meet the press after this and report to my government. They want reassurances in principle, even if we don't go into detail, and they want to know if we can go to Geneva on the basis of Resolutions 242 and 338. They also want to know that I have received assurances from the President that all agreements will be adhered to. Later we may want to go into detail, but I will coordinate that with Secretary Vance.

I want to make two points. We do want to go to Geneva, and we want an understanding that Resolution 242 does not call on Israel to go back to the 1967 boundaries. You know this is our interpretation, and it is yours. We have a whole file of statements from your people on this. 242 talks of territories, not the territories, and it talks of the need for se-

cure and recognized boundaries. So 242 does not call on us to go back to the 1967 lines, although we are free to go back if we want.

President: That would help! I never said you had to go back completely. I have spoken of minor adjustments, and I promised Prime Minister Begin that before the Geneva Conference I would not use that term in public. I have never had any intention of drawing maps for negotiations.

Dayan: I want to make clear our position. We told you and we repeated that we do not accept full withdrawal.

President: That's ok. But I don't want you to speak for me. We have no position on it.

Dayan: I might ask you to say something about keeping all agreements.

President: If you quote me on the 1967 lines, with minor modifications, that would be ok! I have made no commitment on borders except what I told Prime Minister Begin.

Dayan: We want an agreement, but it has to be based on agreement among the parties. We don't distinguish minor changes from any other kind. 242 does not call for withdrawal from all territories.

President: You are well advised to make your position clear.

Dayan: On the possibility of a Palestinian state, for us it is unthinkable to withdraw from the West Bank and Gaza, and turn those areas over to the Palestinians, even if they are in federation with Jordan. We must come to terms with the Palestinians who live there, and we must keep some of our military installations and some of our settlements, and we must continue to be able to buy land.

President: I understood that you have had some talks with Jordan about how this question could be resolved, including the idea of a possible partition of the area.

Dayan: If they make such a proposal, we will discuss it, and we won't necessarily reject it.

President: We are talking frankly. If Jordan were to offer an acceptable proposal on partition, and if in that part that they got back they were to turn it into a homeland for the Palestinians, affiliated to Jordan, would that be ok?

Dayan: It would be ok. But we have to find out if this is their idea, and we would have to see the lines. If they say it is not a separate state, but that we should divide the area, and within the Jordanian area there would be a Palestinian state, we will take it into consideration. We tried for ten years to get agreement on partition. I don't think that they will take half of the West Bank and set up an independent state. You can hardly set up an independent state in the entire area.

President: I've never heard any of your neighbors say that they want a fully independent Palestinian state. Saudi Arabia has said that they favor that, but I haven't heard any of them pursue this, and I've never pursued the idea. I've spoken of an entity or homeland.

Dayan: If Jordan were to propose complete withdrawal, we will not negotiate over that, even if the area were to be tied to Jordan. We will discuss partition and living together. We do not say that the Palestinians have nothing to say about their future. We have to come together. But if we have to pull out our military installations, that would be unacceptable. We will not negotiate over a Palestinian state. We can talk about partition, or living together, or autonomy, but not pulling out altogether.

President: I won't respond to that. I hope that we can work something out with the Arabs and the Palestinians, but I have no preconceived plan for how to settle that question.

Dayan: What I would like is your assurance that you will not use pressure or leverage on us to get us to accept a Palestinian state, even if it is tied to a Jordanian federation. I don't expect you to reject such a state, but I do want assurances that you will not use pressure on us to negotiate for such a state.

President: I don't intend to pressure you, but I don't want you to tell me ahead of time that there will be no Geneva Conference unless I promise not to use pressure on you. I know your views on withdrawal to the 1967 lines and on the Palestinian state, and I know you can withstand any pressure or leverage that we might try to use, but I don't want you to ask me to promise not to use pressure on any particular issue. I will deal fairly with Israel, and I am completely committed to Israel, but I don't want to single out any particular issue. I am not a high pressure kind of person. I prefer to talk and discuss. But I can't give you any agreement not to try to use my influence with you.

Dayan: I am not urging that.

President: You have my word of honor. We don't want to use any pressure, except for public opinion.

Dayan: On this point, I want you to know how we feel. We cannot survive with a Palestinian state, even if it is part of Jordan. I am not a coward, but I do not want to create impossible situations. I don't want the United States to have to protect us, unless it is against the Soviet Union. But if there were a Palestinian state, Israel would be only eight miles wide and we would have no early warning. The PLO would dominate it.

President: I wouldn't favor that.

Dayan: We have to deal with all of this, and our major concern is security. We have a feeling that you and the Soviets will try to impose a

Palestinian state. I would feel very badly if I asked for assurances about this, and then asked you not to pressure, and if you were to say “No.” But I did ask and you did say “No.”

President: It is not fair to put me in this position. If you said to me that I should not use pressure on you to turn over Jerusalem . . .

Dayan: No, that is not a life or death issue. You can pressure Israel. You might be able to force us to do something that would lead to the destruction of Israel. Ben Gurion was ready to make peace without Jerusalem, but a Palestinian state on the West Bank with the PLO in control, and with the Russians gaining a foothold, is an entirely different matter. I do ask for your assurances on this. We will not negotiate on this, even if the others ask us to. We won’t do it. We won’t even negotiate over it.

President: Let me respond. You make it difficult for us and for the Arabs when you do not permit any spokesmen for the Palestinians to participate. We need to resolve the question as to how the Palestinians can feel represented at Geneva. I think that if we could get agreement to let Palestinians be represented, as I understood your position before, which would include the PLO, but not well-known PLO members . . .

Dayan: They will be well-known by the time they come.

President: But you and Begin said that you would not examine credentials. We would like to let the Arabs work out a Palestinian representation. I don’t know how many they might include. Maybe two, or three, or five. Then let us go over the list with you in private. Then let that group of Palestinians speak for the Palestinian interests. This has been most difficult for us to work out. I have spent dozens of hours of my time on this. I personally believe that Israel is being too rigid. We want a solution that will permit us to go ahead.

Dayan: What is so rigid? I did not say that anything was unacceptable. If those Palestinians live in the West Bank or East Bank, but not from Lebanon, they should be there and they should speak for themselves.

President: Now you are creating a new obstacle. You never told me before that you would only accept Palestinians living in the West Bank. This is a serious problem. There are other Palestinians who would want to be there.

Dayan: We are speaking about the Palestinian delegation. Prime Minister Begin has insisted that the Palestinians be part of a Jordanian delegation. They should be part of Jordan. They should come from the West Bank, Gaza, or the East Bank of Jordan. If they are from Lebanon, they will represent the refugees and the PLO. They will be representatives of the PLO, even if they are not well-known. We agree to Palestinians in a Jordanian delegation, but if not that delegation, there

might be some other form. We will deal with the people who are there, but if there are Palestinians from Lebanon, they will be representatives of the PLO. If they are not living there, they will be PLO.

President: What if they come from Egypt?

Dayan: That would be like Jordan. If we agree to talk with Egypt about Gaza, then there should be Palestinians in the Egyptian delegation to discuss Gaza. We could possibly agree to that provided these Palestinians are in the Egyptian delegation when discussing Gaza.

President: You offered before to discuss the refugees with a multilateral group outside of Geneva.

Dayan: I still agree. That could include Lebanon, Jordan, Syria, Egypt and Israel. There are some refugees elsewhere, but they should not be there. But we could accept a multilateral delegation for that specific issue. There are also Jewish refugees who left Arab countries who have claims, but this group will not discuss the future of the West Bank or Gaza.

President: How do you see Lebanon at Geneva?

Dayan: If Lebanon should ask to participate, we will support it.

President: Good.

Dayan: What can we do about your pressure?

President: We are trying to break a deadlock on Palestinian representation. You and Secretary Vance should work out some language on the issue of pressure. I don't ever intend to press you or impose a settlement, but I am reluctant to be pinned down on one point. I understand that this is a matter of great concern to Israel, and I want some means to go to the Arabs and work out Palestinian representation.

Dayan: We did pass our ideas on to the Secretary and I hope that they are not unacceptable.

Secretary Vance: I haven't had time yet to study your paper.⁵ The Jordanians have made clear that they will not accept Palestinians in their delegation, and we cannot ignore that fact.

Dayan: I told the Secretary that if that is so, Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza will participate even if they are not in the Jordanian delegation.

President: As an independent group?

Dayan: No. We will not recognize them as a separate group. I can't say how it would be done, but we can find a formula. The negotiations should involve Egypt, Jordan and Israel, but Palestinians could be included.

⁵ Not further identified. Possibly a reference to the Israeli draft treaty. See Document 100.

President: Jordan will not accept and you can understand why. Jordan has to worry about Iraq and Libya and others.

Dayan: The Rabat Conference, yes. That is not a problem.

President: But it is not yet solved.

Dayan: If we agree on the principles for Geneva, and if this is the only problem, we will overcome it, provided that the Palestinians are not an equal delegation, which would mean that they are entitled to a state, and we will not touch the idea of a state. We can talk with Palestinians about the future of the West Bank, and about how we can live together and we can do everything. We are not asking for Israeli sovereignty there. We don't want to annex the territory. We want to know what their interests are, other than having a state and sovereignty of their own. We want to live together in the territories and we don't want to give them back. We need your understanding. There can be Palestinians in the negotiation, but not on the basis of a future state, and we can find a formula. If Jordan does not want them in their delegation . . .

President: Would Egypt take them?

Secretary Vance: No.

President: I hope that you will agree to convene with one Arab delegation, then to negotiate separately.

Dayan: We accepted, provided it is only for the opening, and then each negotiation will be on a bilateral basis leading to peace treaties.

President: But how do you negotiate the West Bank and the Palestinian question? With whom?

Dayan: With Jordan we will discuss the West Bank. We took the territories from Jordan, and we will talk with Egypt about Gaza, and we can include the Palestinians who are living there, both in the West Bank and in Gaza.

President: Let me ask a question. There is a problem because Syria is excluded. I can't see them as the only party not represented.

Dayan: We could leave Egypt out also.

Secretary Vance: Egypt will want to negotiate on Gaza.

Dayan: Syria has no claim to deal with these areas.

President: I have a meeting now with the European group. You and Secretary Vance might want to continue talking, and we can meet together again later. I think we are getting down to some possible areas of agreement, and I think we can remove the few remaining obstacles.

Dayan: If it is convenient, I'll be glad to meet again.

Secretary Vance: Let's come back about 9:30 and continue the discussion.

[The meeting resumes at 9:30 p.m. without the President.]

Secretary Vance: We can reconfirm all of the commitments we have made to you in the past. That is no problem. The problems remain in two areas: the question of Palestinian representation; and the question of how to deal with the West Bank and Gaza in the organization of the Geneva Conference. Foreign Minister Dayan says that he has a problem with the use of arms or economic aid as a form of pressure, not with our simply expressing our views. This helps to define the issue.

Dayan: We want you not to use that kind of pressure just on the Palestinian state question. We want you not to use those means during the negotiations.

Secretary Vance: Congress can, of course, do what it wants, but we can say that we will not withhold essential equipment or economic assistance as a way of putting pressure on Israel. But you have to help solve the question of Palestinian representation. You are being overly rigid.

Dayan: We have a number of problems. On the legal side, with whom are we to negotiate? The parties to the negotiations are states. Resolution 242 provides a clear basis for the negotiations, and 242 is related to the 1967 war. We are reluctant to move away from that. We are happy to see in your paper that Jordan, Egypt, and the Palestinians are to negotiate with Israel over the West Bank and Gaza. We agree that all should be dealing with the question. If too much emphasis is given to the Palestinians, what role would there be for Jordan and Egypt? If the West Bank is dealt with between Israel and the Palestinians, there would be no room for Jordan. But if the negotiations include Jordan and Egypt, what grounds are there for the Palestinians to be there?

Secretary Vance: Neither Egypt nor Jordan will say that they can deal with Gaza and the West Bank without a Palestinian expression of their views as well. They can't do it; there has to be a Palestinian voice.

Dayan: I am not saying it should be done without them. Let both of them be there.

Secretary Vance: Jordan and Egypt will not take them as part of their delegations.

Dayan: Let's agree that Egypt, Jordan and the Palestinians should be there. Palestinians should be from the West Bank and Gaza, and Israel should be there. There is a question of whether the Palestinians should be part of the Egyptian and Jordanian delegations. If not, then we have to find a way to make it work, but the Palestinians should not be there as a separate group.

Secretary Vance: Why not? If the Arabs are willing to submit individual names of the Palestinian element of a unified Arab delegation, and if you can say "Yes" or "No," how would that hurt you?

Dayan: We have to be very careful of any new element at Geneva. If there is a new party, that would be a change.

Secretary Vance: If you want peace negotiations leading to a solution to the problem, you have to have flexibility.

Dayan: We would be in a bad position if we said there could be no Palestinians, but we say let the Palestinians be with Egypt and Jordan. What problem is there of having the Jordanians and the Palestinians together?

Secretary Vance: Do you say they have to be part of the Jordanian delegation?

Mr. Quandt: Why not just say that the Palestinians are there along with the Jordanians and Egyptians as part of the unified Arab delegation?

Dayan: We can say that these are the parties, but we cannot say that there is a separate Palestinian group. We have to look for some solution, but we cannot agree to a newcomer to the conference. If we say there is a working group for the West Bank and Gaza, and that it will have within it Jordanians, Egyptians, and Palestinians, then we don't have to talk about delegations. We should focus on the working groups. For the West Bank and Gaza, on the Arab side, there will be Jordan, Egypt, and the Palestinians, plus Israel. Then the role of the unified Arab delegation is the assembly of all the working groups. We don't have to talk about national delegations at the working group level. (Other members of the Israeli delegation arrive at this point.) The Palestinian Arabs should come from the West Bank and Gaza. We would have Jordanians, Egyptians, Palestinian Arabs, and Israel. The unified Arab delegation would be breaking into working groups. We should start with the idea of working groups and then explain what they do in relation to the unified Arab delegation. We are not in a position for a final formulation yet. But we won't give the Palestinians the status of a separate delegation.

Secretary Vance: They can be an element of a unified Arab delegation.

Dayan: But not an equivalent party, like Egypt or Syria.

Secretary Vance: The unified Arab delegation will just have a one-time function. After that, there will be working groups.

Dayan: They should not be a separate delegation, but they can be part of working groups dealing with the West Bank and Gaza. There should be Egypt, Jordan, the Palestinians, and Israel, or members of the unified Arab delegation who belong to that working group. I haven't reached any conclusions, but will this be all right for the Arabs? It would be best for us if the Palestinians were in the Egyptian or Jordanian delegation.

Secretary Vance: But they won't agree. This is especially a problem with Jordan.

Dayan: We will let you know. We will consult. Then we will see if the Arabs can agree. Will they insist on a fully separate delegation? We don't want to go half way and then find that it doesn't work. If you check with them and find it is all right, then we can go along. If they reject it, then we would have no part of it.

Secretary Vance: We'll check with them.

Dayan: Let's leave this for a while.

Secretary Vance: We'll have to come back to it and discuss the question of the Palestinian element in the Arab delegation. The Arab side will give us a list and then we will check it with you. The Arab delegation will not include anyone you do not agree to. Is this possible for you?

Dayan: If you give us a veto . . .

Secretary Vance: A reasonable veto.

Dayan: If in any way they represent the PLO or the refugees . . .

Secretary Vance: If they only come from the West Bank, that is too rigid a formula.

Dayan: I am careful not to say that they have to come only from the West Bank. They do not only have to come from the West Bank or the East Bank or Gaza, but they cannot represent the PLO, the refugees, or be from Lebanon. If they come from Egypt, we will not say no. If we are reasonable, and we can object to names, you know our attitude on the PLO and on representatives of the refugees. Then we will go over the names. They should be from the West Bank and Gaza, but if someone like Musa Alami,⁶ who is living in London, were suggested, it might be ok.

Secretary Vance: I have made suggestions which I hope that you will consider.

Dayan: In any case, we are talking about people who are originally Palestinians, not Iraqis, and so forth. Palestinians might live in Britain, or France, or the United States, who would be acceptable, but they should be Palestinians.

Secretary Vance: I am suggesting that you do reasonable screening, but not use unreasonable criteria.

Dayan: We should be nice.

Secretary Vance: You should try to be as practical as possible.

Dayan: We will see who the people are.

Secretary Vance: But once you start placing them in pigeon holes, then you have problems. If we can give you the names of individuals, I think we can find a solution.

⁶ Musa Alami was a Palestinian politician and nationalist.

Dayan: As long as we do not have to agree to new members of the Geneva Conference, then we won't have to agree to any new party except for Lebanon.

Secretary Vance: They will be part of the unified Arab delegation. Let's talk in terms of names of individuals.

Dayan: How will they be defined?

Dinitz: How will the working paper read on this point?

Secretary Vance: We will try to get a list of names for you, so that you can subject it to reasonable screening. The individuals will be part of the unified Arab delegation.

Dayan: I am not sure whether it is better to talk about working groups which are part of the unified Arab delegation, or the unified Arab delegation which then splits into working groups.

Rosenne: The terms of reference of the Geneva Conference give us the right to say no to additional participation.

Secretary Vance: The problem is a practical one, not a legal one.

Dayan: There are two problems concerning the Palestinians, and we will have to consult with our government.

Secretary Vance: I am prepared to recommend to the President that we take care of the other problems, that we will not use pressure by withholding military assistance. I will recommend this to the President.

Dayan: Could we go over the paper that I gave you?

Secretary Vance: I think it should read that the Arab parties will be represented by a unified Arab delegation. The idea of Palestinians in a Jordanian delegation won't work. This should not be just for the opening session. Then the conference should break into working groups after the opening session. After the opening session, then there would be working groups.

[At 10:15 p.m. the President arrives.]

Secretary Vance: There were two main issues being discussed when you left. On the question of pressure, I have said that I would recommend that you consider making a statement that we would not use the withholding the arms or of economic assistance as a form of pressure, but that we would not tie this to any specific issue. On the question of Palestinian representation, we would suggest proceeding as follows: There would be a unified Arab delegation which would split into working groups after the opening, and the working group on the Palestinian question, on Gaza, and on the West Bank, would consist of Israel, Egypt, Jordan, and the Palestinians. I suggested that the question of which Palestinians should be resolved by our getting the Arabs to provide the names of individuals, which we would then pass to Israel and they would use a reasonable procedure for screening those names. If there are problems, we will try to keep those individuals out.

President: Is this acceptable to you?

Dayan: I can't say for sure, since I have to consult with my Government. I personally tend to go along. There should be an understanding in writing that we do not accept that the Palestinians form a separate delegation. If that were to happen, we would have to agree to the presence of a new delegation. We do agree concerning Lebanon, but we shall not agree to a new Palestinian delegation. This would be the same as accepting a Palestinian state. Secretary Vance said that there would not be a separate delegation, that they would be part of the unified Arab delegation, and they would be part of working groups.

I am not sure about the criteria of reasonable screening. We won't accept representatives of the PLO or people from the refugee camps, but he asked about Palestinians from Egypt, and I gave the example of Musa Alami, who is in London. I won't go back to the line that they must live in the West Bank, but they cannot represent the PLO, but if they are not PLO and are Palestinian in origin, and if they live elsewhere, it would be possible. Secretary Vance said that there would be no problem for the United States to say that all agreements between the United States and Israel will be carried out.

Secretary Vance: That is no problem.

Dayan: We have agreed about the question of pressure, and not just about the Palestinian state, and I said that it referred only to the withholding of economic and military aid, not a statement of your positions.

President: I have already said that and so did the Vice President's speech.⁷

Secretary Vance: I have also said it.

Dayan: I was suggesting that we go over the paper that we gave you. We have just discussed the question of the working groups.

President: I have avoided giving secret agreements to you or to the Arabs. I want to be free to tell them anything that we agree on. I don't like private agreements, and I won't do it. It is better not to. Also, if we submit names to you, this could be an obstacle, but we will ask the Arabs to work with us. There can be no veto for Israel, but we will consult you. If there is a name you cannot accept, you will not go to the conference. But we cannot agree on the Arabs' behalf that you have to give your agreement to each individual, but we will try to get names that you can accept.

Dayan: For the Palestinians, we suggested that we not deal with individual names, but that Palestinians be part of the Jordanian delegation. Then we were told that this would not work.

⁷ See footnote 2, Document 40.

President: Jordan won't accept it.

Dayan: Secretary Vance suggested that we work from names. Israel would have the right not to agree.

Secretary Vance: I suggested that you do reasonable screening, and that you convey your views to us.

Dayan: If we fall back from our position on only national delegations and if we accept the idea of looking at names, then we will have to agree to each individual. We will have to explain why we don't accept some individuals if that arises.

Dr. Brzezinski: What does it mean not to be a member of the PLO?

Dayan: I said that there could be West Bank residents. It is ok if they sympathize with the PLO. But if someone comes from Lebanon, he will be PLO, and we just don't accept that. I gave as an example an individual outside the West Bank who might be acceptable, but there can be no PLO in any form.

President: If they come from the West Bank, and if they are PLO, then that's ok. But if they are from Lebanon, you will say no.

Dayan: Those in the West Bank we control. If they are not in jail, we are now dealing with them and we can deal with them in the future. For example, there are the mayors. Some are PLO. I was pressed by Secretary Vance to say that they should not all have to be from the West Bank and Gaza.

President: But you would look at those from outside the West Bank and Gaza carefully.

Dayan: If they are from Lebanon, we will say no.

President: But if Lebanon is a party to the conference, and if a PLO member comes with the Lebanese delegation . . .

Dayan: If he is with Lebanon, that is ok. That is not an issue.

President: We will have to talk to the others.

Dayan: There is a problem still with the question of the Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza. I know your attitude on keeping your agreements and I am not worried, but in my experience, I think we may have to come to you at some point in order to make progress with the Egyptians, and you will have to be included.

President: I have no objection. If the Arabs say that in order to get an agreement, they will do X, and if they want us to convey that promise to you, we will do so. The proposal on what we will say about pressure suits me fine. But if we get into an Egyptian-Israeli negotiation, and if we find there are some difficulties, I would like to have the opportunity to propose a compatible solution. I won't withhold arms, but I would like to suggest a solution. If you have no objection . . .

Dayan: We won't celebrate . . .

President: Yes, and I don't want to do it, but if it would help you and Israel [Egypt?] to reach an agreement, and if we could do it with Jordan and Syria too, we would do it without pressure, but we would still want to be able to use our influence.

Dayan: I have only asked for reassurances about military and economic aid, and no imposed solution.

President: It's not the first time that I have said that.

Dayan: You have said that you would offer your own proposals.

President: But only when a stalemate has been reached and a final conclusion can be achieved. I want to reserve that right.

Dayan: It's ok, as long as you support us!

President: Nothing would please me better than to have peace treaties concluded and to have this conflict over with. That is our goal. I have no preconceived notions. It would help us if you could say what is crucial for you. We shouldn't make all items of crucial importance.

Dayan: We do want to aim for a comprehensive peace plan and for peace treaties. But some of the Arab parties may still be reluctant. I don't think we should avoid trying to make an agreement with Egypt, just because Syria may oppose it. Or maybe we can only get three-quarters of the way to an agreement. But we should not have an all or nothing approach. Our objective is full peace, but we should look for other possibilities.

President: Correct. There is the added problem of the Syrians. They are very reluctant to see the Arabs negotiate separately. I have told Khaddam that if Israel and Jordan reach an agreement on the West Bank, and you sign, Syria can withhold its signature on its own treaty if they do not like the terms of the Jordan-Israel agreement. But Egypt and Jordan don't want Syria to be involved in those talks. I don't know how to deal with the Syrian problem, but bilateral talks should be about to go forward. We will continue to serve as an intermediary, as you wish. We are in this to stay. We will not be deterred by problems. The talks are no doubt going to be long and difficult.

Dayan: If you try to do this with the Russians, it won't work. This is very delicate. Maybe you can reach some agreements, but they should not be included in the negotiations. We will have to have secret negotiations with heads of state in the Arab world.

President: We want a settlement as much as you do. I have pointed out that we can be a mediator because both Begin and Sadat trust us, as do Hussein and Assad. But if the Egyptians do not believe that we would be fair, they could not work with us. They do not trust the Soviets, and we agree with them.

Dayan: It hurt us when you said that you see us as the obstacle to peace. I am sorry that you have that impression.

President: Let me speak frankly. On many of these difficult questions, you have been very adamant. Why does it matter so much what form Geneva takes? When we talk about negotiations on Palestinian interests, or rights, or refugees, how can you insist that there only be one country involved, and that on Palestinian representation there cannot be anyone from the PLO? These have all been your positions, and they show no flexibility. My biggest concern has been Israel's position. Syria has also caused me concern, but Jordan and Egypt have been eager to take a flexible approach. Recently, I have seen some signs of progress. But for months, Israel was an absolute obstacle to movement to Geneva. I am being very frank. I am relieved to see there has been some change and that you are now trying to help find solutions.

Dayan: I wish you could see the peace treaties . . .

President: I have read every word of them.

Dayan: We could not be more open. There are no "nos" in those documents. These are proposals and we will negotiate openly. But how can we sit with the PLO, with their Covenant, and with what they do? How can we accept that their objective is to destroy Israel? We don't want to negotiate about a Palestinian state or about full withdrawal, even if the state were to be part of Jordan, but we are not being an obstacle to peace. Those conditions would spell the end of Israel. If the last war started on the 1967 lines, with only eight miles between Tel Aviv and the Arabs, I don't know what would have happened. The United States did not exactly rush to our assistance. I would hate to think of having to depend upon American soldiers to defend Israel. At first, the United States would not send arms to Israel. What if we had depended on the United States? But we can take care of ourselves if we have proper borders and military installations. But we can't have this with the Palestinian state, even if it is demilitarized, because that would prohibit Israel from being there too. For you, this is foreign policy, but for us, it is part of our future. We don't want a breach, but what would be worse, a breach with the United States, or a Palestinian state which would spell our destruction? This is our view. We hope for progress.

President: We recently have seen some adequate flexibility on your part, but for the first six months I saw no flexibility in Israel. Once we got texts from you and from Jordan and from Egypt, and even an outline from Syria, we began to see some flexibility. I am not being critical, and I want to tell you that I appreciate the recent improvements, but I did feel that Israel was an obstacle.

Secretary Vance: That's right.

President: The others have been very cooperative and have given us some options. Sometimes your public statements have been very difficult to accommodate. I am not insensitive to the special need of your government to express its views, but I am concerned that you put ob-

stacles in the way of Geneva and of finding a solution. I have never had those doubts about Egypt and Jordan. I do have doubts about Syria, but Assad has been somewhat helpful. I have had difficulties with Syria and Israel.

Dayan: I agreed with Secretary Vance that for the opening sessions of Geneva we will go as a unified Arab delegation, and then maybe we can negotiate through you with the other Arab countries. Maybe we can make more progress with Egypt or with Jordan.

President: Jordan is worried especially in recent weeks.

Dayan: There are mayors on the West Bank who are Jordanian citizens and they do not depend on Jordan. King Hussein invited them for his 25th anniversary celebrations and they refused to go. They sent back his invitations and said that he was not their leader. This started with the buildup of the PLO. Hussein told me about this. This is what produces the negative mood. This shows how bad the situation is. He got the signal. He knows he cannot speak for them.

President: From the beginning, King Hussein realized that he could not speak for the Palestinians. This was opposed by Syria. Even when Sadat proposed this, Jordan was negative. Recently he has been totally opposed. He could not accept this. I do not know if Assad is able to show any more flexibility. Syria wants to negotiate not only on its own territory, but wants to have a voice on the West Bank as well. I don't see that as legitimate. There are some problems with the idea of the Arab delegation. The problem for us is to juggle all of these balls at once.

Dayan: It is difficult for Egypt when Syria is in opposition. If Egypt cannot sign a treaty, we may have to go for less than that, working through you. Perhaps we could end the state of war. We could consult with you, and you could give us a letter, and it might be difficult for Egypt to conclude a peace treaty with Israel while Syria is left out, but some progress could be made. It would be ok if Saudi Arabia wants to offer its views on Jerusalem. Jerusalem will have to be solved, but this is not the most difficult problem. Egypt could move if it is supported by Saudi Arabia. Syria and the PLO can make no progress. So Saudi Arabia's position is crucial. The question is whether they will support Egypt, backed by the US.

President: Saudi Arabia wants to see peace if they can achieve it. They are very vulnerable and they have great wealth. They have been quite forthcoming and have been prepared to help us. I am not sure how they would choose. They see their responsibility to hold the Arab nations together. But they also want a peace settlement and they are very close to us.

Dayan: They won't support the pro-Soviet regimes. If the Syrians are stubborn, would Saudi Arabia support them?

President: I can't say. I won't try to guess. I hope that the Soviets can use their influence to encourage Syria to participate.

Dayan: We hear that the Soviets want an independent Palestinian state in order to gain a foothold in the area.

President: I can't deny that.

Secretary Vance: Syria complained about the US-Soviet statement and felt that it brought pressure on them to go to Geneva. They are not so anxious to go.

President: The Syrians were also furious about my speech today.

Secretary Vance: I am not sure they will line up with the Soviets.

Dayan: I share your hopes.

President: We can't be sure that the Soviets really want peace.

Dayan: The Soviets do not want war, but Sadat needs to show the Egyptians why it was worthwhile for him to turn to the United States and to break with the Soviets. If there can be no Palestinian state and if the Syrians remain reluctant, then only Egypt can really make progress. They can get substantial withdrawal, and I am not sure what role the Soviets would play, but if you don't help Egypt make progress, then things will bog down.

President: That is not my position. I will help any individual state make progress on a settlement, or we will help all of them. If the Syrians are opposed to Geneva or adamant on the PLO, and if Egypt is willing to go forward, we will help.

Dayan: You're not just an interested party. You have invested a lot.

President: I agree. How do you see the Golan Heights?

Dayan: I didn't want to go up in 1967.

President: And now?

Dayan: I don't know. It depends on the suggestions that are made. I must think about Israel's future security and I have to think about what happens in Sinai and what happens on the West Bank and what happens on the Golan Heights. If we have to go back on all fronts, it would be difficult. If on one front we make substantial withdrawal, maybe on the other fronts we can't do as much. We shall not go all the way to the old line and we do not want to leave settlements.

President: Does that mean not going back to all of the lines everywhere?

Dayan: Not everywhere. I'm not sure. I would not say that we could go back to the 1967 lines everywhere. We would have to see a map and we would have to know about what kind of guarantees you could give. My attitude is that for the first time Egypt is ready and the others may not be. "If you take one wheel off a car, it won't drive." If Egypt is out of the conflict, there will be no war. This is true of Egypt

and if Egypt is out and the war is over, and we have a US guarantee, then we can reduce our military force. We have to worry about our military preparations, but if Egypt is out and stays out, and if the US takes some responsibility, we can reduce our forces. Jordan and Syria will not then make war and then we could make progress. We can't make peace on all fronts now. Israel won't pull back from all of the territories. Nowhere will it go all the way, but we have to see the whole map. We can get a West Bank agreement and there will not be annexation, and there will be no sovereign rule of others there, and we will keep our military installations and settlements and must have free access. There is no other way, especially for Gaza. If Israel were to leave Gaza, what would they do? Then the terrorists would come in again, and there would be the refugees, and no jobs, and it would be an impossible situation. We have to sit down and try to work out the future of Gaza. We can do without Gaza, but there are problems of four hundred thousand people there.

President: I can see some flexibility in Sinai and some on the West Bank, but I don't see much flexibility on the Golan Heights. On the Syrian side, they want to go back to the international border, which is one of the few recognized international borders. How would you meet Israeli needs?

Dayan: Is it true that you said that Israel should never go down from the Heights?

President: No. I said that it should not relinquish control to Syria. But Syria could have sovereignty, but it should not have military placements on the Golan Heights, but they could have sovereignty.

Dayan: That's one of the possibilities. We can distinguish between sovereignty, and military presence, and settlements. The Syrians won't like that, but maybe the Egyptians could accept.

President: I think the Egyptians will be reasonable. How do you see the question of guarantees?

Dayan: It is easier to say what I don't want. I don't want US soldiers on our borders taking care of Israel.

President: What about the observers in Sinai?

Dayan: I don't like your people being there.⁸ The U.S. is coming into a situation in Sinai to provide early warning, and this is wrong. We would like a U.S. commitment to the Middle East like you have with NATO, but we would like to be partners, allies, and Israel could maybe help the Sixth Fleet. But you can tell us what you want. We don't object to a US base in Israel. We would do this by all means. I approve of your

⁸ A reference to the U.S. Sinai Field Mission.

need for good relations with the Arabs. But you can have whatever you want in Israel—airfields, ports . . .

President: Some Arabs have recommended that we have a defense treaty with Israel. There wouldn't be any price to pay for it.

Dayan: But US soldiers should not be taking care of my family. If we can reach an agreement with Egypt, we can both reduce our military forces, and you can guarantee that there will be no military buildup, and we could both get arms from you and you could check any buildup. If one party attacks, the U.S. would take responsibility to prevent that. It would help deter it. But if you were to come in, it should not be for fighting, but for deterrence.

President: I understand.

Dayan: This must be part of the peace treaties. We had a bad experience in 1957. Secretary Dulles gave us some promises that if war broke out, the U.S. would act. In 1967, Israel turned to the U.S., but no one would even take the issue to the Security Council. At least the question could have gone to the Security Council and then there would have been no war. But President Johnson did not want to act like the world's policeman.

President: What could be done at Sharm al-Shaikh?

Dayan: We have been there two times. Ben Gurion, who was my teacher and leader wanted to insure the free passage of the waterway, but it does not have to become Israeli. It is not so simple. We have to go into this seriously, and the issue cannot be isolated from what happens elsewhere.

President: That's helpful. Let me say a word about the present situation. It puts me in a difficult spot being attacked by the American Jewish community and by Congress publicly. If I respond, it seems like there is a cleavage between the United States and Israel. I don't want to be in a position of counter-attacking, and I hope you can be constructive. If I say something to cause doubts, I can't expect you to desist from criticizing me, but I am trying to take your position to the Egyptians and Jordanians and Syrians. It is important for me to withstand criticism, and I sometimes get that from you and from your government. It is helpful for you to have such strong support for you in this country, and I am glad you do, because that adds to your ability to trust us. But we need progress now, and we need to let the world know that we are working together for a common goal.

Dayan: It is possible that we can reach agreement, especially on these procedural issues, and we will keep on exchanging views. If you can say that all agreements remain in force and that there will be no imposed settlement and that there will be no pressure involving the use of economic aid and military aid, that would help. Israel can go ahead and

object to a Palestinian state, but I will say that I told you our view on this, and I will say that I explained our view in not returning to the 1967 lines, and that I did not accept the US-Soviet statement, but I was not asked to do so. I can also say that Resolutions 242 and 338 remain the basis for Geneva and if we can reach agreement on principles for reconvening Geneva, then I can say to the American Jewish community that we have such an agreement and they will be very happy. But if we say anything about the PLO or about the Palestinian state, and that this is bad for Israel, there will be screaming here and in Israel. I haven't said a word yet about the US-Soviet statement. We need to have some agreed formula, but I can go to Israel and to the American Jews. I have to say that there is an agreement and not a confrontation.

President: We might have a confrontation unless you are willing to cooperate. But a confrontation would be very damaging to Israel and to the support of the American public for Israel. If we proceed in good faith, we can avoid a confrontation. If there is a confrontation and if we are cast in a role against Israel and with the Arabs, Israel would be isolated, and this would be very serious. It would be a blow to your position. I am not asking you to help me, but I want you to help the chance for peace in the Middle East. I want you again to say that everything is negotiable. Otherwise, your position would seem retrogressive.

Dayan: All items are negotiable within the Geneva framework, which means Resolutions 242 and 338. But that does not mean that everything is negotiable; just those things referred to in the resolution. There is nothing in the previous Geneva framework that cannot be negotiated. That means territory, Sinai, the West Bank, all the territories, and the problem of the Palestinian Arabs, but if you are talking about a Palestinian state, we will say that is not a problem for Geneva, and we are not open to new ideas. The negotiations will take place in the Geneva framework and the PLO will not be there.

Secretary Vance: If you say what you said, it carries a strong negative impression. It sounds as if you don't agree on X, Y, and Z. If you could say that you are positive about Geneva, and that you agree with the United States that 242 and 338 are its basis, then you could say that you don't agree with the US-Soviet statement. But if you state all the negative points first, it will leave a bad impression.

President: It would help if you could give as constructive a report as possible.

Dayan: But I don't want to mislead. Our attitude on the US-Soviet statement is very negative.

Secretary Vance: But that should not be the first thing you say.

Dayan: I'll be asked that and I'll be asked about the PLO and a Palestinian state. If you want a positive announcement, if I could come out and say that we agreed, that would help. But if there is no agreement,

then we have problems. If I can say we have reached agreement, that would be one thing. But if there is no agreement, there would be other results and I'll be pressed. I can't overestimate the problems of a confrontation. I am worried by a confrontation. But if we have to talk about the US-Soviet statement as the basis for Geneva and about a Palestinian state and the PLO, then we cannot agree. I would like to be able to go to the Israelis and the press saying that we agree.

President: I can't control what you say.

Secretary Vance: You will have to say that these matters still have to be discussed with others.

Dayan: I would like to be able to say that you have presented your suggestions and we are close to agreement. I know you have to go to the Arabs. But if you could agree on principles, then you could go to the Arabs anyway.

President: I understand, but how you present it to the public will be important, and I hope you can give it a constructive tone. If the emphasis is on what you will not do, that will make things more difficult.

Dayan: We do want to go to Geneva. We believe this is possible. We are close to agreement in principle on the opening of the conference. You have to discuss this with the Arabs. I will recommend to my government what we have discussed. I will be asked my comment on the US-Soviet statement, and I will say that it was not accepted by Israel, but this was not a condition for going to Geneva. The basis for Geneva remains Resolution 242. I will say that I explained Israel's opposition to a Palestinian state and to full withdrawal to the 1967 lines. I will state our position on the PLO that we will not accept them at Geneva. I have to say this. I cannot avoid it.

President: Can you say, in addition to the first part, which is very good, that you could accept any Palestinians who come from the West Bank or Gaza?

Dayan: I can say that we want to sit with them to discuss the question.

President: And if reporters come back and say that someone is a PLO member from the West Bank?

Dayan: I would stick to what I said if he is just a PLO sympathizer.

President: What if he says he is a member?

Dayan: He had better not. We cannot accept that.

President: If he comes from Jericho, but is a PLO member . . .

Dayan: We want to talk to those who live there. We can't discuss this with Hussein.

President: Do we need to issue a unilateral statement, or could we do a joint statement?

Dayan: It would be ok if we could agree on what we should say and on what you should say.

Secretary Vance: You can say what you want, but let's avoid a public confrontation. You can speak your piece, but I hope you can be positive. I won't go down with you to meet the press.

Dr. Brzezinski: Why can't you make three points? You will go to Geneva on the basis of Resolution 242. You will sit down with the unified Arab delegation, including Palestinians. You have reservations on the US-Soviet statement, but you have been reassured by the US President about the commitment to all agreements, and there will be no pressure.

Dayan: That would be misleading if that were all that I said. We have said more than that about the unified Arab delegation.

President: I understand our areas of agreement and disagreement. I am not concerned. I am not displeased. I have to go now to get ready for tomorrow.

Dayan: It would be bad if we did not say anything tonight. It would help if you could say that you adhere to all of your agreements with Israel, and that there will be no pressure.

President: We could do a joint statement. Israel does not have to agree with all of the US-Soviet statement. Let's stay flexible. You could express your disagreement the way that we and the Chinese did in the Shanghai communiqué.⁹

[At 11:40 p.m. the President leaves.]

Discussions continued until 2 a.m., and the attached working paper and joint statement were agreed to.

Attachment

Working Paper¹⁰

October 5, 1977

WORKING PAPER ON SUGGESTIONS FOR THE RESUMPTION OF THE GENEVA PEACE CONFERENCE

1. The Arab Parties will be represented by a unified Arab delegation, which will include Palestinian Arabs. After the opening sessions, the conference will split into working groups.

⁹ The United States and People's Republic of China issued the Shanghai Communiqué on February 27, 1972. Both countries pledged to normalize relations, avoid hegemony in the Asia-Pacific region, and increase economic and cultural contacts. The United States also acknowledged a one-China policy and agreed to limit military installations on Taiwan.

¹⁰ Secret.

2. The working groups for the negotiation and conclusion of peace treaties will be formed as follows:

- a. Egypt-Israel
- b. Jordan-Israel
- c. Syria-Israel
- d. Lebanon-Israel¹¹

3. The West Bank and Gaza issues will be discussed in a working group to consist of Israel, Jordan, Egypt, and the Palestinian Arabs.

4. The solution of the problem of the Arab refugees and of the Jewish refugees will be discussed in accordance with terms to be agreed upon.

5. The agreed basis for the negotiations at the Geneva Peace Conference on the Middle East are U.N. Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338.

6. All the initial terms of reference of the Geneva Peace Conference remain in force, except as may be agreed by the parties.

Attachment

White House Press Release¹²

New York, October 5, 1977

JOINT STATEMENT BY THE UNITED STATES AND ISRAEL

The U.S. and Israel agree that Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 remain the agreed basis for the resumption of the Geneva Peace Conference and that all the understandings and agreements between them on this subject remain in force.

Proposals for removing remaining obstacles to reconvening the Geneva Conference were developed. Foreign Minister Dayan will consult his Government on the results of these discussions. Secretary Vance will discuss these proposals with the other parties to the Geneva Conference.

Acceptance of the Joint U.S.–U.S.S.R. Statement of October 1, 1977, by the parties is not a prerequisite for the reconvening and conduct of the Geneva Conference.

¹¹ All the parties agree that Lebanon may join the Conference when it so requests. [Footnote in the original.]

¹² No classification marking. The statement was issued after the meeting. (Department of State *Bulletin*, November 7, 1977, p. 640)

125. Memorandum of Conversation¹

October 5, 1977, 10:15 a.m.

SUBJECT

Bilateral Meeting with Syrian Foreign Minister Khaddam

PARTICIPANTS

Syria

Foreign Minister Abd al Halim Khaddam
Ambassador to U.S. Sabah Kabbani
Mr. Abou Fares, Interpreter

United States

The Secretary
Under Secretary for Political Affairs Philip Habib
Assistant Secretary Alfred L. Atherton, Jr.
Ambassador Richard W. Murphy
Deputy Assistant Secretary Arthur R. Day
David Korn, Policy Planning Staff
Issa Sabbagh, Interpreter

The Secretary welcomed Foreign Minister Khaddam. Khaddam said that he was happy to meet with the Secretary, especially after the Secretary's several meetings with Foreign Minister Dayan. Khaddam added that he would be leaving New York today to return to Damascus.

The Secretary said that he had had two meetings with Dayan in the last few days. He had had two meetings with Gromyko on the Middle East. The Secretary said that in the meeting with Gromyko he had discussed the problems that had to be overcome before Geneva could be reconvened. We discussed the desirability of issuing a joint statement which would reflect our views regarding the Geneva Conference and the key issues to be decided at Geneva. We and the Soviets then worked out a joint statement which we issued last Sunday² and which reflects the views of the co-chairmen. The Secretary noted that the Israelis do not agree with some parts of the US-Soviet joint statement, and the Arabs do not agree with some parts of it. It is a statement of the views of the co-chairmen the Secretary reiterated. We plan to tell this to the press today and to make clear that we are not asking the parties to agree to these views as a condition for the reconvening of Geneva. The

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Trips/Visits File, Box 107, 9/19/77–10/25/77 Vance Meetings with Middle East Foreign Ministers: 9–10/77. Secret. Drafted by Korn on October 6. No location is noted for the meeting, but Vance was still in New York.

² October 2. See Document 120.

Secretary pointed out that we had made a statement last night saying that Resolutions 242 and 338 are the basis for the reconvening of Geneva. The Secretary said that in the conversation with Dayan last night we discussed subjects concerning the reconvening of Geneva and we issued a joint statement at the end of the talk. The Secretary then gave Khaddam a copy of the statement issued the previous evening at the close of the meeting with Dayan.³

The Secretary asked if Khaddam would like to comment on the joint Soviet-US statement. Khaddam said he did have some comments. The joint US-Soviet statement refers to certain political principles, but some of the principles that appear in the statement do not appear in Resolution 242. Khaddam asked if the statement issued at the close of the talk with Dayan cancelled out the joint Soviet-US statement. The Secretary said no, Israel doesn't agree to everything in the joint US-Soviet statement, and the Arabs don't agree to everything in it, but the statement still represents our views. The Secretary said we hope to convince the Arabs and Israel that the principles of the statement are sound but we do not consider them a basis for reconvening Geneva. The Secretary then again asked Khaddam if he would like to give his views on the joint US-Soviet statement.

Khaddam said the joint statement has not yet been discussed by the Syrian government and thus he could only give his own initial reaction. Khaddam said he felt the statement ignored certain basic matters. First of all, it refers to withdrawal from occupied territories. We reject this, Khaddam said. Syria rejects giving up even one inch of territory. Secondly, the statement ignored the question of Palestinian representation at Geneva. Thirdly, the statement went beyond Resolution 242 as far as the concept of peace is concerned. Khaddam said these were his initial impressions. The Syrian government will have to discuss the joint statement, however, in the light of what has happened in the US meetings with the other parties. Khaddam added that the Arabs will also have to arrive at a consensus regarding the Soviet-US statement.

The Secretary said he understood that this is Khaddam's initial view and that we will be given further Syrian views later. The Secretary said we hope the statement will commend itself to Syria's acceptance. Khaddam replied that it was not easy to accept something that was being imposed. The Secretary said we are not trying to impose anything. We said last night that the statement is our view and the view of the Soviets and we hope that it will commend itself. We hope the inherent wisdom of what was contained in the statement will commend

³ See the second attachment to Document 124.

itself to Syria and the other parties. Khaddam reiterated that the views he had expressed were his initial reaction. Syria's final view on the matter will be decided by the Syrian government. He pointed out again however that he felt the statement had gone beyond the terms of Resolution 242.

The Secretary said we intend to keep fully in touch with all parties. We will not say one thing to one party and another to the other. Khaddam said he had noted that President Carter's speech to the General Assembly⁴ went beyond the terms of the joint statement. He said the speech did not please a number of the Arab delegations. The Secretary asked what was the problem. Khaddam said first of all the speech was not balanced. It mentioned all the Israeli interests but said the Arab interests would be subject to negotiation. Secondly, it did not say one word about withdrawal. Khaddam said the President's speech defended the Israeli position. The speech was a justification of the wars waged by Israel against the Arabs. The President referred to human rights and praised the role of Israel in protecting human rights. Our question, Khaddam said, is what kind of human rights are you talking about when Israel butchered the Arabs and drove them from their homes. Khaddam said the State Department had recently made public documents which include a report from the American Consul General in Jerusalem describing Israeli atrocities.

Khaddam said his final point was that the President said Palestinian rights are a subject for negotiations. We find this a step back from the President's earlier statements, in particular the statements on the Palestinian homeland, Khaddam said. For instance, the Soviet-US communiqué referred to the participation of all the parties, including the Palestinians, at Geneva. In the President's speech there was no mention of Palestinian representation at Geneva. Khaddam said that if a President before President Carter had spoken in this manner, we would not have been so upset, it would have been considered normal. But now President Carter is playing the role of mediator. A mediator should know that just as Arab rights are subject to negotiation, so should Israeli rights be subject to negotiation. Khaddam said the Arabs had discussed the President's speech among themselves yesterday and agreed not to make a statement that would embarrass the President or even to refer to the President's speech in public remarks. They agreed on this position, Khaddam said, because they wanted to facilitate the role that President Carter has taken on himself. Khaddam said that in making his comments on the President's speech, he only wanted to be frank.

The Secretary said he appreciated Khaddam's frankness. The Secretary pointed out that it is very difficult in a speech to say exactly the

⁴ See footnote 3, Document 124.

same things that were said before. If one word is dropped, the impression is given that there has been a change in position. The Secretary said he wanted to assure Khaddam that neither President Carter's position nor that of the US has changed. The Secretary added that he felt it was very constructive of the Arabs not to issue a public statement about their concerns but instead to raise them with him privately. Our common objective, the Secretary said, is to resume negotiations toward a just and lasting peace, and that can come about only through serious negotiations. All of us will have to work together and have frank exchanges of views.

The Secretary said we will be interested to hear Syria's views on the question of the organization of Geneva after Khaddam returns to Damascus and talks to President Assad. The Secretary said we believed that the most desirable way to approach the problem of Palestinian representation is through a united Arab delegation which includes Palestinians. The Secretary noted that on the question of the organization of the work of the conference there appear to be differences of views between ourselves and Syria. Our view is that there should be both bilateral and multilateral working groups. The Secretary said both the President and he had explained why we think this is the most constructive way of discharging the work of the conference. Syria has indicated that it has a different point of view. The Secretary said he would like to ask Khaddam to discuss this problem with President Assad and to communicate with us. The Secretary said we would be awaiting Syria's answer.

Khaddam said he would discuss this with President Assad, but it would be useful for him to know what progress was made in the discussions with Dayan and with the Egyptians, the Jordanians and the Syrians. Khaddam remarked that the Secretary had spent six hours with Dayan yesterday. The Secretary said yes, and he had not gotten to bed until after 2:30 this morning. The Secretary said we had asked the views of the parties on two matters: the question of Palestinian representation at Geneva and the organization of the work of the conference. There seems to be agreement among all, albeit reluctantly by some, that a united Arab delegation, including Palestinians, is the best solution to the first issue. Khaddam asked if the Palestinians in the united Arab delegation would be represented by the PLO. The Secretary said that the exact makeup of the Palestinians is yet to be agreed upon among the parties. The Secretary said that we hope to have something concrete to put to the parties on this as a result of further discussions.

Regarding the organization of the conference, the Secretary said, the parties are split. Syria and Jordan lean toward a functional approach. The Egyptians lean strongly toward a non-functional approach, i.e., a geographic approach. The Israelis also strongly favor a

geographic approach. Khaddam asked what the Soviets' position is. The Secretary said the Soviets lean toward a functional approach. Khaddam said that puts us in the majority. (Laughter)

The Secretary said we believe the working groups should be both bilateral and multilateral, depending on the work to be done. We believe, for example, that the negotiation of a peace treaty between Syria and Israel should be between Syria and Israel. However, when you start dealing with Palestinian issues such as the West Bank and Gaza, we believe that these cannot be resolved on a bilateral basis. They must be handled multilaterally and obviously the Palestinians have got to be included in the working group so that they may speak for themselves. Khaddam said that if one follows the view that the treaty between Syria and Israel has to be negotiated bilaterally, why should not Palestinian issues be negotiated bilaterally between the Palestinians and the Israelis. The Secretary replied that Jordan has an interest in the West Bank, so it should be included in the negotiations on that subject. Egypt has an interest in Gaza, so it should be included also. Khaddam objected that Jordan's interest in the West Bank and Egypt's interest in Gaza date from a period that is no longer with us. Khaddam said the Council of the Arab League as far back as 1949 took the position that the West Bank and Gaza were trusts in the hands of Jordan and Egypt, pending Palestinian independence. Khaddam said Syria does not believe that the Palestinians lack men who can represent them at Geneva better than the Jordanians or the Egyptians. Syria's view is that there is a problem which has two parties to it, one Israeli and the other Arab. Syria feels that the Arab side should be included for negotiations for all matters, just as the Israeli side should be included for all matters. Khaddam recalled that in his previous conversation with the Secretary he had said that Syria would have no objection to having any Arab country represent it in the negotiations with the Israelis.⁵ He wanted to reiterate that position now.

The Secretary replied that, as a lawyer, Khaddam of course knew that even though the West Bank and Gaza were held in trust for the Palestinians, until a trustee has discharged his trust, he is still responsible for it. Therefore, Jordan and Egypt should be able to speak on West Bank and Gaza matters until these problems are resolved. Khaddam said Syria would agree to Israel's handing over these trusts to Jordan and Egypt; then the Jordanians and the Egyptians could hand them back to the Palestinians. But, Khaddam said he realized the question is not so simple. He wanted to say in the utmost earnestness that if you desire to have peace, the Palestinians must be invited to the negotiations and must shoulder their responsibilities. The Secretary said that

⁵ See Document 115.

as a practical matter both Egypt and Jordan have said they want to be parties to the negotiations on the West Bank and Gaza. We have taken their wish into account. Obviously, the Palestinians must be included also. The Secretary added that we will look forward to receiving Syria's views on the organization of the conference after Khaddam returns to Damascus and discusses the matter with Assad.

The Secretary said he wanted to mention two other things and then would have to go to the UN to be with the President for the signing of the Human Rights Convention. The Secretary recalled that he had promised to tell Khaddam when we talked with the Iraqis and the PDRY. The Secretary said he had a talk two days ago with the Foreign Minister of Iraq.⁶ He had indicated that we would be pleased to help develop bilateral relations between the United States and Iraq. The Secretary said the conclusion of the conversation was that until there is further progress on the Middle East conflict, the Iraqis prefer to leave matters as they are. In our discussions with the PDRY we have agreed in principle to renew diplomatic relations. We will be sending a representative to discuss the details of how this should be implemented. The Secretary said he wanted to tell this to Khaddam because we had sought Khaddam's advice regarding both countries. Khaddam thanked the Secretary.

In closing, the Secretary said he thought President Carter would be sending a letter to President Assad by about the end of the week. Ambassador Murphy would deliver it.

⁶ No memorandum of conversation has been found.

126. Memorandum of Conversation¹

New York, October 5, 1977, 3–3:15 p.m.

SUBJECT

Summary of the President's Meeting with Lebanese Foreign Minister
Fuad Boutros

PARTICIPANTS

President
Secretary of State Cyrus Vance
Dr. Zbigniew Brzezinski, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs
Mr. Alfred L. Atherton, Jr., Assistant Secretary of State for Bureau of Near
Eastern and South Asian Affairs
Ambassador Richard Parker, U.S. Ambassador to Lebanon
Mr. William B. Quandt, NSC Staff
Honorable Fuad Boutros, Foreign Minister of Lebanon

President: Is Lebanon interested in going to the Geneva Conference?

Mr. Boutros: Secretary Vance raised this question in March.² In the past we were always eager to avoid being placed in the position of admitting that we had a problem of borders with Israel. But if the Geneva Conference is going to discuss more than withdrawal, if it is to deal with peace, the future of the Palestinians, then we do want to be involved. We have an interest in signing a peace treaty and we are interested in the question of the Palestinians in Lebanon. Secretary Vance gave me a working paper dealing with the groups that would be at Geneva.³ Lebanon was only mentioned as part of the geographic groups which would deal with borders and treaties. The other question in which Lebanon is interested, perhaps even more than some other parties, has to do with the people who are in our countries, the Palestinians and the refugees. We would be grateful if you could admit that Lebanon should also be part of that functional group.

President: Israel has proposed that outside of the framework of the Geneva Peace Conference there should be a discussion of all of the refugee problems on a multinational basis, and Israel said it would be very flexible on representation. Concerning negotiations with Lebanon,

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Subject File, Box 66, Middle East: Peace Negotiations 1977 Vol. I [III]. Secret. The meeting took place at the UN Plaza Hotel.

² Presumably a reference to Vance's meeting with President Sarkis on February 18. See Document 13.

³ See footnote 2, Document 118.

it should be possible for Lebanon to include within its own delegation some Palestinians. But Israel feels that the question of the West Bank and Gaza should be decided by Israel, Egypt, Jordan, and the Palestinians who live there. Within that framework, you can choose your own delegation, and there will be a multinational approach to the refugee question. The Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza, plus Egypt and Jordan, will talk about the West Bank and Gaza, and that can go on simultaneously. That might be adequate. Israel is not willing to broaden the West Bank discussion to include Syria and Lebanon.

Boutros: We don't want to be involved in the West Bank. We are not looking for new problems. Syria might cause you problems on that, however.

Secretary Vance: Israel is now willing to have the refugee question discussed at the conference. Their position has moved. It can be discussed by all states, including Lebanon.

Boutros: Very good. We are very pleased with the situation as it has developed in south Lebanon, and we appreciate your help.

President: It is important to move rapidly now to put your forces into the south and to get the PLO out. Otherwise, Israel will be impatient, and the Christians may move in.

Boutros: If there is no legal Lebanese authority in the south, Israel will fill the vacuum. We are having some minor problems with the PLO, but they have also moved their position a lot. I think it can be worked out. The Lebanese crisis by itself cannot be disconnected from the Palestinian problem and from the broader Middle East. We have to do everything possible to alleviate the burden on Lebanon. We have to find some interim solution to the problems of Lebanon. We cannot accept the idea that the future of our country depends on the solution to the Middle East crisis. The United States can do a great deal to help. First, you can talk to the Christians in Lebanon. The Christians may try to go too far. I would be grateful if, through your relations with Israel, you could draw Israel's attention to the fact that partition in Lebanon cannot lead to a good solution. We would like you to take that into consideration. Lebanon must keep its ties to the Arab world.

Ambassador Parker: Some Christians favor the partition of Lebanon into Christian and Muslim areas, and some believe that Israel agrees with this idea. We cannot bring the PLO and the Christians together, but we are in touch with the Christian leaders and we do urge restraint.

President: How are your relations with the PLO?

Boutros: We have rather normal relations, but there are tensions and problems. We insist that they apply the Shtaura agreement. They signed a paper committing themselves to this. We got them to sign a minute of the meeting in which they made these commitments. This

was difficult for them to do, since they are a pseudo state, a revolutionary movement, and we cannot expect them to act like an established state. When Lebanon backs the Palestinians, it does not do so simply for reasons of solidarity. We are also defending our own country. We want to get rid of trouble in Lebanon by solving the Palestinian problem.

President: Is there room for Palestinians in Lebanon?

Boutros: We want to get rid of those who are already there. The Lebanese Constitution cannot allow the delicate balances that exist to be changed.

President: How many Palestinians are there now?

Boutros: Five hundred to six hundred thousand is the total Palestinian population. They are not all fighters. This is in a total population of two and a half million.

President: We will proceed on the basis of your being a full member of the Geneva Conference. We agree that partition would be a mistake and we will try to help. I hope that in every instance you will be able to play a constructive role. Some of the parties have been very rigid. We need to have people negotiate in good faith. We will welcome your advice and Secretary Vance will stay in close touch.

Boutros: I want you to understand Lebanon's role. Israel will always remain alien in the Arab world and will not be accepted. But Lebanon will be a real link between east and west, as we were in the past. We are trying to regain that role. We want to play a role of wisdom as a mediator, and as one who promotes discussions.

127. Telegram From Secretary of State Vance to the Department of State¹

New York, October 6, 1977, 2259Z

Secto 10054. For Tarnoff. Subject: Presidential Message to Begin.

1. Please clear following message with White House and, upon clearance, dispatch to Tel Aviv.
2. Begin message:

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840072–1997. Secret; Immediate; Nodis.

Subject: Presidential Message to Prime Minister Begin. Action: Tel Aviv Immediate. For the Ambassador.

1. Please convey to Prime Minister as soon as possible the following message from the President to Prime Minister Begin.

2. Begin message:

Dear Mr. Prime Minister:

I have been greatly relieved to learn that your indisposition has not been serious and that you are getting along well. You have my very best wishes for an early return to your normal activities.

We have had excellent discussions with Foreign Minister Dayan.² Through those talks we have developed a suggested procedure for the Geneva Conference that I believe provides a fair basis for moving ahead. It will not satisfy all the desires of any of the parties, but it strikes a balance that gives no party special advantage. We are discussing the matter in general terms with the Arabs and will seek their specific agreement when we have your response.

As Foreign Minister Dayan will have reported to you, this procedure would provide for the Arab parties to be represented at Geneva by a unified delegation that includes Palestinians. After the opening sessions of the conference, working groups would be formed to negotiate peace treaties between Israel and Egypt, Israel and Syria, and Israel and Jordan. If Lebanon joins the Conference, an Israel-Lebanon group would also be formed.

The issues of the West Bank and Gaza would be discussed in a working group consisting of Israel, Jordan, Egypt and the Palestinians. The question of refugees would be discussed in accordance with terms to be agreed upon. The suggested procedure also provides that the agreed basis for the negotiations at the Geneva Peace Conference on the Middle East is UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 and that all the initial terms of reference of the Geneva Peace Conference remain in force, except as agreed by the parties.

I am sure you agree with me that it is extremely important, after the lengthy period all of us have spent on procedural issues, that we be able to turn to the substantive problems. Procedure should not become an end in itself. The problems that all of us are committed to trying to solve are those of substance, that can be dealt with best at Geneva. I very much hope that we will be able to reach agreement among the parties to the suggested procedure that we have worked out with Foreign Minister Dayan. At the same time I am asking all concerned to keep an open mind about the possibility that further refinements may be needed before full agreement can be achieved.

² See Documents 118 and 124.

I want to assure you, as I have assured Foreign Minister Dayan, that the United States remains steadfast in its commitment to Israel's security. We intend to continue our intensive effort to help the parties achieve a peace settlement on the basis of Resolutions 242 and 338, which I believe will provide the surest long-run security for Israel.

Sincerely, Jimmy Carter

End message.

3. Drafted by: NEA: ARDay. Clearances: NEA—Mr. Atherton P—Mr. Habib, White House—Approved: the Secretary.

End message.

Vance

128. Memorandum of Conversation¹

New York, October 7, 1977, 11:40 a.m.

PARTICIPANTS

Jordan:

Hassan Al-Ibrahim, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs

Hazem Nuseibeh, Permanent Representative to UN

Abdallah Amin Salah, Ambassador to U.S.

Khalil Salem, Ambassador to France

United States:

Secretary Vance

Philip C. Habib, Under Secretary for Political Affairs

Alfred L. Atherton, Assistant Secretary for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs

Arthur R. Day, Deputy Assistant Secretary, NEA

Hassan Ibrahim explained his request for the meeting by saying that many changes had occurred since the previous meeting,² and it was important to be clear about the current situation. The Secretary said he also had wanted a chance to talk. He then described the discussion we had had with the Israelis, primarily about two matters: Israeli views on the U.S.-Soviet joint statement, and Israeli reactions to our proposals on the convening of the Geneva Conference.

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Trips/Visits File, Box 107, 9/19/77–10/25/77 Vance Meetings with Middle East Foreign Ministers: 9–10/77. Secret; Nodis. Drafted by Day on October 12. The meeting took place in the Secretary's suite at the UN Plaza Hotel.

² See Document 121.

The Secretary said that Israel had expressed disagreement with some points in the U.S.-Soviet statement. We took note of the Israeli disagreement, but told the Israelis that the statement reflected our views. We said we regretted that they did not agree—some Arabs also disagreed with the statement—but it remained our view, nonetheless. We hoped they would come to agree in time, but meanwhile we made clear to them that they did not have to accept the statement as condition for participating in a Geneva Conference. Resolutions 242 and 338 remained the basis for Geneva.

Ibrahim said the Jordanian Government had studied the joint statement and supported it. The Secretary expressed appreciation. Ibrahim noted the statement contained a number of elements important for a settlement. The Secretary pointed out that the statement did not pretend to cover all the important elements. Ibrahim observed that there had been an attempt to amend Resolution 242, but that as a result of the U.S.-Soviet statement voices were now saying that there was no need for that. If we stressed the resolutions now, however, Ibrahim continued, there may be more pressure for amending them.

With respect to the working paper on Geneva procedure, the Secretary said there was nothing specific to give the Jordanians now in the way of a piece of paper. It had not yet been put to the Israeli Cabinet, he explained, and it would just be wasting the time of the Arab Governments to ask their agreement at this stage. He said he did want to give Ibrahim a summary of the contents, however.

Regarding Palestinian participation, the Secretary went on, the paper states that Israel supports a unified Arab delegation including Palestinians. It does not spell out how the Palestinian representation should be constituted, however. All of us will have to continue to work on that question. The paper provides that after the plenary session, the work of the conference will be done in working groups: Israel-Egypt, Israel-Syria, Israel-Jordan and Israel and Lebanon. Another working group would deal with the question of the West Bank and Gaza. This group would consist of Jordan, Egypt, Israel and Palestinians. The Palestinian question would be dealt with there. Still another working group would deal with refugees.

This is what we have been suggesting all along, the Secretary said—a combination of bilateral and functional working groups. The Secretary said he realized the Jordanians had some reservations about this, as did the Syrians. He said he hoped the Jordanian Government would reflect on this point. He felt that the arrangement called for in the working paper seemed a reasonable and effective way to deal with the problems involved. He said his own view was that the idea was acceptable to Egypt. We hope it will be acceptable to Israel. Once we had something definite to give to Jordan—probably next week—we would

let them have it. He said he wanted to emphasize that these were only suggestions and were not cast in concrete.

Ibrahim asked if there was anything in the latest version concerning the working groups reporting to the plenary. The Secretary replied there was not. Nuseibeh then asked if the working paper was therefore the same as the one the U.S. had earlier suggested. The Secretary replied that there were changes. The reference to “not-well-known PLO members” was no longer in it. He explained that we thought it better to focus on precise names. Habib interjected that focussing on names was an alternative to considering the problem in terms of organizations.

Nuseibeh raised the question of invitations to the conference, asking how they would be addressed. The Secretary replied that this was not decided but that his own idea was that it could be handled as in 1973—with Co-Chairmen letters to the Secretary General, on the basis of which he would issue a call to the parties.

Ibrahim referred back to the question of the working groups reporting to the plenary, saying that this was an important provision in the earlier paper. The Secretary responded that, if the Jordanians felt this way, they should come back with that point in their comment.

The Secretary replied to a question from Ibrahim by saying that we thought the Palestinian question was best dealt with in the working group that he had described. Ibrahim then noted that the paper did not provide for the composition of the working group on refugees. The Secretary said that this should be determined by the parties. He himself thought that all parties would have an interest in the subject and should be members of the working group.

Nuseibeh asked if there was any substance to the report that the question of compensation to Israelis should be covered. The Secretary replied that it was dealt with in the working paper. Nuseibeh argued that most Arab countries make the point that the Jews can return, whereas Israel does not take the same position with respect to the Palestinian refugees. Furthermore, he said, the Palestinians have no connection with questions of any compensation that may be due Israelis from Iraq or other Arab countries. Habib noted that the working paper speaks of two categories of refugees—Palestinian Arab refugees and Jewish refugees.

Ibrahim asked whether he might hear about Arab reactions to the working paper. The Secretary said he hated to speak for others but could say in general terms that Egypt was quite positive, while Syria was much more reserved. Atherton reemphasized that we had not actually given the paper to the other Arabs. The Secretary said he regretted that we had to be so sketchy at this stage, but until it was sufficiently concrete this seemed best. The Jordanians now have the essence

of the paper in any case. Habib commented that the paper as it now stands derived from the discussions in past weeks. The Secretary made the further point that we had not gotten precise responses from a number of countries to our earlier draft. We did get one from the Israelis, and that had led to the revisions. He said we hoped we could get prompt comments from the Jordanians when we gave them the paper.

The Secretary concluded by referring to his remarks at the lunch for the Arab League member states,³ where he said that we would all have to try to be flexible and to concentrate on the important things where there was no question of sacrificing principle. He said he thought with regret of the time that had been wasted in dealing with procedural questions in the Vietnam peace efforts. He thought we might have lost a chance for a peace treaty in 1969 because of disagreement on procedural matters.⁴ Thousands of lives had been lost as a result. Nuseibeh replied that he fully agreed on the need to focus on the key issues.

As the meeting was concluding, Ibrahim commented that there was not much time left to consider the date of a conference for this year. The Secretary commented that he thought we would have to be thinking of a convening in December.

³ Vance hosted the annual luncheon for the Arab League member states on October 6. A summary of the luncheon is in telegram Secto 10055, October 7. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D770365–0829)

⁴ Vance served as a delegate on the U.S. negotiating team at the Paris Peace Talks with North Vietnam.

129. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, October 13, 1977, 10:30 a.m.

SUBJECT

Arab-Israeli Peace Efforts; Israeli Domestic Politics

PARTICIPANTS*Israel*

Yigael Yadin, Leader of Democratic Movement for Change
Ambassador Dinitz

United States

The Secretary
Under Secretary Habib
Assistant Secretary Atherton
Walter B. Smith II, Director, NEA/IAI (notetaker)

Professor Yadin asked the Secretary how he saw the situation. The Secretary said he thought we had made some progress, although there remained some tough obstacles. The New York talks² had moved things along. He was glad Israel had agreed to the working paper, which we were sending to the Arab countries with a note from the President urging agreement.

Yadin asked whether there had been any Arab reactions yet. The Secretary replied we had only told the Arabs the outlines of the paper so far. We had not wanted to give them a piece of paper until Israel acted. As for reactions to the outlines, in the case of Jordan and Egypt there had been an understanding and a rather positive attitude. Syria was much more skeptical. Yadin asked if this was an understatement, and the Secretary agreed, adding that the Syrians would be tough. The Secretary thought the Soviets might be difficult too, although he was only guessing. Yadin asked if the paper did not fall within the framework of the U.S.-Soviet joint statement from the U.S. viewpoint. The Secretary said the Soviets would watch closely what the Syrians would say.

Yadin asked whether the Geneva conference would convene if the Syrians refused to go. The Secretary said the Syrians probably would go to Geneva, but there would be a lot of hard work to get them there.

¹ Source: Department of State, Office of the Secretariat Staff, Records of Cyrus Vance, Secretary of State, 1977–1980, Lot 84D241, Box 10, Vance Nodis Memcons 1977. Secret; Nodis. Drafted by Smith on October 17. A copy was sent to Ambassador Lewis at the Embassy in Tel Aviv. The meeting took place in the Secretary's office.

² A reference to Vance's conversations from October 1 to 7 in New York with the Foreign Ministers of Jordan, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Israel, and Syria.

Yadin commented that the Arabs usually became suspicious of any proposal which had Israel's prior approval. He found it amazing that the Israeli Cabinet had approved the working paper unanimously.³ He had been informed in a telephone conversation earlier in the morning by a colleague in Israel that the other parties had been very critical of the government's decision. Dayan had been attacked the day before by all the parties on some of the points. The Secretary asked which points. Yadin said that Peres, whose attitude happened this time to coincide with Rabin's, was against the idea of a united Arab delegation and was against going for a peace treaty. Peres in fact was against trying to reconvene Geneva.

Dinitz observed that Peres was not so much against Geneva as he was against a united Arab delegation and a role for the Palestinians. Yadin commented that the united Arab delegation and Palestinian issue united the parties in Israel. Yadin had anticipated that the Begin government would approve the working paper, but he thought that the paper represented the maximum flexibility that the government could have. It was ironic that Israeli doves were now attacking the hawks for being too dovish. The question now was whether the Arabs would accept the working paper as it stood. If the Arabs insisted on changes, there would be serious trouble in Israel. Herut⁴ was now criticizing Begin himself.

Yadin asked if there was a fair chance that Egypt and Jordan would accept the paper as it now stood. The Secretary replied he thought they might. The Secretary emphasized, however, that the worst thing that could happen would be for someone to suggest publicly that Egypt and Jordan were ready to accept it. They would have to appear to be dragged into it. Yadin asked again if in the end they would accept, and the Secretary said that he hoped so. Habib voiced the opinion that getting their agreement would be tough. He was certain we would receive Egyptian and Jordanian comments that we would have to raise with Israel. The Secretary thought this was especially true in the case of Syria. Habib added that the Soviets would also back the PLO view, as well as the Syrian one, and the Secretary agreed. Habib felt that a major note of caution was therefore needed. Yadin predicted serious troubles in Israel over any amendments to the working paper.

³ The *New York Times* reported that the Israeli Cabinet unanimously approved the working paper on October 11. (William E. Farrell, "Israeli Cabinet Backs US 'Working Paper' for Talks in Geneva," *New York Times*, October 12, 1977, p. 1) On October 13 in Jerusalem, Dayan released the text of the paper, which the *New York Times* printed in full the next day. (October 14, 1977, p. 9)

⁴ Established during the 1940s, the Herut Party based its political philosophy on Revisionist Zionism and represented the right wing of Israeli politics.

Habib asked Yadin about the views of his party.⁵ Yadin replied that there was a unanimous consensus in Israel against the creation of a third state in addition to Israel and Jordan and against negotiating with the PLO. Whenever the Israelis suspected in a paper that these two things were implied, everyone in the country would stand together. The Israelis differed on the future of the West Bank. Yadin's party favored returning part of the West Bank to the Arab country located to the east of Israel. If the Arabs objected to the absence in the working paper of reference to the PLO, Yadin predicted that the Israeli Government would have the full backing of the whole country. Habib thought that this matter could be dealt with. However, repeated Israeli statements between now and the reconvening of Geneva about possible solutions which would circumvent the PLO could force the Arab governments to back off. Yadin replied that Begin was compelled to state publicly the things that were not possible, such as the fact that a third state run by the PLO could not be discussed at Geneva. If there was to be a working group comprising the Palestinians, Jordanians, and Egyptians, everything in fact would be discussed, but the exclusion of the PLO was the crux.

The Secretary confirmed that point 3 of the working paper⁶ did provide for participation by Palestinians, Jordanians, and Egyptians. Yadin said that the Israelis had discussed this matter long ago and had recognized that there would be discussion of any subject that any party wanted. Yadin asked if the working paper provided that working group 3 would be third one chronologically. The Secretary said the working paper did not deal with timing. Habib suggested it would be better before Geneva not to go into the timing question, and the Secretary agreed. Yadin asked if the working paper implied that working group 3 would be the third one chronologically, and the Secretary said no. Dinitz interjected that Dayan had not permitted him to raise such questions as the timing factor. Yadin predicted that if the Arabs said that the deliberations of working group 3 had to come first, there would be a problem.

Yadin said he personally thought that the working paper was the lesser of evils, provided the Arabs would agree to it without change, but he feared the possibility of further Arab reactions and Israel's being asked to accommodate them. Surely the Arabs had known the essentials. The Secretary said that they did because he had given the essentials to the Arabs. The Arabs knew that the working paper called for bi-

⁵ See footnote 4, Document 35.

⁶ Point 3 concerns discussions of the West Bank and Gaza by a working group composed of Israel, Egypt, Jordan, and Palestinian Arabs. See the first attachment to Document 124.

lateral working groups except on the subject of the West Bank, Gaza, and refugees. Yadin observed that not only Egypt but also Jordan had initially opposed multilateral working groups. The Secretary noted that the Jordanians were now more flexible. Dinitz commented that originally the U.S., Jordan, Egypt, and Israel had all opposed a united Arab delegation. Yadin described the adoption of the idea of the united Arab delegation as a big concession to Syria, and the Secretary agreed.

Yadin asked when Geneva might reconvene, and the Secretary said December. Yadin wondered if this would be before Christmas, and the Secretary thought that it would. Yadin speculated that there would be a Christmas break, and Habib pointed out that only the Lebanese cared about Christmas. The Secretary thought there would be an effort to complete the plenary before Christmas and continue thereafter in working groups. Yadin asked how long the plenary would last, and the Secretary suggested that it would take several days. Yadin said he gathered it had not been decided at what level the plenary would be held. The Secretary felt that the plenary would last a week at most. Habib opined this would depend on the co-chairmen. The Secretary commented he had gavelled down speakers in the past.

Yadin said that when he left Israel on October 7 there had been a sense of crisis there. Pressures were growing on the DMC to agree to a national unity government. The party would have to take tough decisions, but it was possible that Begin this time would help with those decisions. Yadin was of the opinion that eventually there would be a national unity government, as Israel would face perilous moments. Begin would have to compromise with the DMC. The Secretary asked on which issues. Yadin replied that his party was more moderate than Begin on foreign policy issues and would have to be given a free hand at least to express its views. Begin himself had now gone amazingly far in the foreign policy field, thanks to Dayan, which would make matters easier for the DMC. However, there were internal problems, above all on the issue of electoral reform. Begin had been adamant on this issue because the religious parties did not want to be annihilated. Yadin thought a formula could be found. There also were some personal problems, as Yadin had spoken too harshly about Begin and the way he had conducted the negotiations with the DMC. There was now a growing sentiment within the DMC in favor of joining the government because of Israel's external situation and Begin's health.

The Secretary asked if the Labor Party might also join. Yadin said he did not know. Shortly before leaving Israel he had taken part in a television interview with Rabin, and Rabin's attitude toward joining the government was negative. Rabin had said that Labor could not join because of differences over foreign policy and its opposition to the pursuit of peace treaties instead of interim agreements. Peres too had

voiced opposition to joining the government. Yadin was not so sure that the opposition was firm, especially if Begin made a concrete proposal. The Secretary asked if Peres truly was the head of the Labor Party. Yadin said he was, although Rabin was vying for the role. Yadin added that Peres could work well together with Dayan. Although the declared policy of the Labor Party was not to join the government, pressures from the U.S. and from the situation, plus internal problems, could bring about changes.

Dinitz remarked that the U.S. would not use pressure on Israel, only “leverage.” Yadin said he wanted to discuss the term “leverage” with Brzezinski. Habib said that all the U.S. wanted was for Israel to let the U.S. preserve the ambiguities in the working paper so that the U.S. could get something done. The Secretary said he had made very clear to the press, even though the press would not print it, that the U.S. would not withhold military or economic assistance as a form of pressure. He had told Dayan that he would say this and it did appear once in the *New York Times*. Yadin asked if he could quote the Secretary to the Israeli press. The Secretary replied that Yadin could say that the Secretary had informed Yadin that he had already made this statement publicly and had repeated it to Yadin.

Yadin asked if the Secretary would be coming soon to Israel. The Secretary said he did not think so. Yadin asked who would represent the U.S. at Geneva after the Secretary’s attendance at the plenary, observing that the conference could go on for a year or two. The Secretary said he did not know and that there were no volunteers.

The Secretary asked if the reaction in Israel against the U.S.-Soviet joint statement remained as strong as it was initially. Yadin said yes. The Secretary wondered why. He could partly understand the Israeli concern but considered the statement a major Soviet step forward. The Soviets had come out for full peace, and the PLO was mentioned nowhere in the statement. On the territorial issue the statement simply reiterated the formulation in Resolution 242. There was nothing about a Palestinian state, for which the Soviets had pressed very hard. Eban had said the other day he saw no reason to worry about use of the term “legitimate rights.”

Yadin said that the statement had caused him real concern, but perhaps he had given it the wrong interpretation. As he had seen it, the U.S. faced a problem because the PLO had said no Geneva conference if based on Resolution 242, and the U.S. found it impossible to amend 242 and thought of the joint statement as a way out. The statement would constitute an amendment to 242 if it were brought before the Security Council. The Secretary recalled we had later declared that the statement reflected our views but was not a prerequisite for Geneva. Yadin said this had eased Israeli fears. Nevertheless, the statement brought

the Soviets back into the picture. Yadin personally understood that the Soviets were indeed in the picture. The Secretary noted that the Soviets could be a spoiler but now perhaps might play a constructive role. Yadin said the bad thing was the timing of the statement because everyone in Israel was so suspicious of U.S. intentions. In fact, the October 13 Knesset session had been called by the DMC and the Labor Party on the subject of the joint statement. But now the interest in debating the joint statement had waned and the working paper would be the main issue. Perhaps the joint statement was necessary from the U.S. viewpoint, but it was not helpful to Israel.

The Secretary said we had thought that the statement would be helpful to Israel. One point made very clear to us by all Israelis, both the Labor and Begin governments, was the need for not only an end to the state of war but also the establishment of normal relations. Dinitz interjected that this point in the joint statement was not novel, as the Soviets had previously favored full peace in the Middle East, as in the Brezhnev statement.⁷ The Secretary replied that past Soviet formulations had been different. Atherton added that the Soviets previously had not used the term “normal relations.” Dinitz insisted the Soviets had talked previously about contractual peace, and the nuance therefore was not so sharp. Habib pointed to the fact that our success in getting the Soviets to support the establishment of normal relations had come on the eve of the reconvening of Geneva. Dinitz conceded that the use of the word “normal” represented Soviet movement. The Secretary pointed out that he had been told repeatedly that full peace should include normal relations. Habib added that the joint statement also spoke of contractual relations. There was an interrelationship between the content of the statement and the fact that it was made on the threshold to Geneva.

Dinitz said that one could argue that the Soviet agreement to omit negative elements from the joint statement, such as a Palestinian state, the 1967 borders, and the PLO did not mean that the Soviets had ceased to advocate these things. One had to judge the areas of agreement expressed in the statement and not its omissions. The U.S. had assured Israel that the sense of Resolutions 242 and 338 was present in the statement even though the resolutions were not mentioned. It was the area of express agreement that concerned Israel, such as the stress on negotiations only within the framework of Geneva and the mention of Palestinian rights. Israel felt that the statement put the U.S. in a certain straitjacket and for that reason it was not good from the U.S. viewpoint. Therefore, when the U.S. said that Israel should have liked the

⁷ Not further identified. Possibly a reference to Brezhnev's statements during Fahmy's visit to Moscow in June. See Document 45.

statement, it raised Israeli eyebrows. Furthermore, Israel was not given an opportunity really to discuss the statement, having been given a draft U.S. version and draft Soviet version. The Secretary observed that Israel had presented detailed criticisms, and the U.S. had discussed them at length. Dinitz said that the U.S. had dismissed the Israeli criticisms. The Secretary replied that the U.S. simply had not agreed with Israel, but the U.S. had sought Israel's views.

Yadin characterized the issue of the joint statement as spilt milk and said that the question of how to go forward was the main point. In his assessment the working paper was the maximum that Begin could offer. Habib said he wanted to be certain that Israel would allow the U.S. to preserve the ambiguities. It worried him when Israel said that a given formulation was immutable and nothing else would do. This document should not be considered immutable. The Arabs might suggest changes which would leave the ambiguities intact. Yadin acknowledged this would be all right, but if the Arabs wanted to pin down the ambiguities, there would be a problem. The Secretary agreed and predicted that some Arabs would want to do so and others would not.

Yadin repeated his feeling that the unanimous acceptance of the working paper by the Israeli Cabinet was remarkable and wondered whether Begin's poor health might not have been a factor. Dinitz suggested that the main reason was the realization by Likud that it would have a difficult argument over the working paper with the Israeli public at large and that it should present a united front. Yadin agreed with this interpretation, noting that in the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Security Committee on October 12, Dayan had been attacked violently even by Likud members.

Yadin asked whether the U.S. would receive Arab reactions within a week. The Secretary predicted about ten days and noted that the Arabs might want first to convene their foreign ministers. The Secretary confirmed to Yadin that the U.S. message urging Arab acceptance of the working paper had been at the chief-of-state level. Atherton predicted that at least Syria would want a foreign ministers' meeting. Habib thought it might be better not to have a rapid Arab response. Yadin thought that an inter-Arab meeting would be bad. The Secretary recalled that an Arab foreign ministers' meeting was scheduled for mid-November and suggested that the confrontation-state foreign ministers might convene afterwards.

Yadin suggested that following his meeting with the Secretary the press be told that these problems had been discussed but that nothing specific be said. The Secretary told Yadin he wanted to ensure the latter understood the U.S. stood four-square behind its commitment to the security of Israel, and there had been no change at all in this respect. Yadin asked if this meant the U.S. stood with its previous written com-

mitments to Israel. The Secretary pointed out that the U.S. had specified this in the joint statement with Israel issued before Dayan left.⁸ Yadin recalled there had been some recent misunderstanding on the matter. Ambassador Lewis had told him he should ask Evron. Dinitz said Evron had cabled him about it. What actually happened was that Rosenne had raised legal questions, and Habib had then explained that the U.S. and Israeli sides were not discussing those questions at that point. The Israeli protocol of the conversation lost the nuance. Habib confirmed that the protocol evidently had lost the context and that the misunderstanding had been disturbing.

⁸ See the second attachment to Document 124.

130. Minutes of a Policy Review Committee Meeting¹

Washington, October 13, 1977, 4:50–6 p.m.

SUBJECT

Secretary Blumenthal's Trip to Middle East

PARTICIPANTS

State

Philip Habib (Chairman)
Richard N. Cooper
Sidney Sober

Defense

Charles Duncan
Leslie Janka

OMB

Randy Jayne

Treasury

W. Michael Blumenthal
Anthony M. Solomon
C. Fred Bergsten
Lewis Bowden

Commerce

Frank Weil

Energy

Harry Bergold

JCS

Lt. General William Smith

CIA

Robert Bowie
David Blee

NSC

Samuel Huntington
Gary Sick (notetaker)
Timothy Deal

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Brzezinski Office File, Country Chron File, Box 32, Middle East: 1–2/79. Secret. The meeting took place in the White House Situation Room.

Mr. Habib opened the meeting by providing some general background on Secretary Blumenthal's proposed trip to the Middle East, which would provide a chance for him to see leaders in the Middle East and to give them a chance to get to know him. *Secretary Blumenthal* indicated that from his point of view the trip was essentially to meet the Saudi Arabian leaders and to attend the Joint Commission meeting there.² Also it was an opportunity to become personally acquainted with the Ministers of Finance of the various countries, with particular reference to their financial role and issues involving oil pricing. He wanted to discuss the oil price problem with Middle East leaders and to create a bond between himself and the various leaders in the area, or in the case of Iran, to recreate that bond, which had become rather strained during the last Administration. In the case of Egypt he wanted to discuss economic assistance and development; and in Saudi Arabia, also to focus on financial aspects of petrodollars. Mr. Solomon and Mr. Bergsten would also have the opportunity during this trip to develop personal contact with their counterparts. *Mr. Solomon* noted that a U.S. committee on the boycott had just returned from the Middle East and had discovered that the Arab governments were better posted than US businessmen in general about the effects of the boycott and had clearly expressed a desire to accommodate the new rules in order to maintain their business links with the United States. *Mr. Habib* briefly reviewed the President's forthcoming trip and noted there would be a fuel stop in Saudi Arabia in addition to the announced format. The President's trip will come shortly after Secretary Blumenthal's trip and shortly after Prince Saud and the Shah visit the United States. State will relay background information on Prince Saud's visit to Secretary Blumenthal since he will be in the Middle East at the time that meeting takes place. *Mr. Habib* reviewed the current status of the peace process and the working paper which had been presented to Israel. He expected Secretary Blumenthal to encounter the most difficult questions about the peace process during his visit to Israel. He did not expect very intense questioning by any of the other countries. There were four points which needed to be made in response to these questions: first that the United States commitment to Israel's security remains firm; that there will be no use of economic and military pressure on Israel; that we continue to stand by Resolutions 242 and 338; and that we continue to stand by the commitments made during the Sinai II Agreement in 1975. The key words on the peace settlement are "comprehensive, just and

² A reference to the U.S.-Saudi Joint Commission on Economic Cooperation, which was first announced on June 8, 1974, by Secretary Kissinger and Prince Fahd. The first meeting of the Joint Commission was held February 26–27, 1975, in Washington. Blumenthal visited the Middle East October 22–29 primarily to discuss oil prices. See *Foreign Relations*, 1969–1976, vol. XXXVII, Energy Crisis, 1974–1980, Document 134.

durable.” *Secretary Blumenthal* noted that in Israel he plans to talk primarily on economic matters and to try to keep it to that.

Mr. Habib then turned to the economic side, noting that *Secretary Vance* feels strongly that there should be no cut in the present level of economic assistance to any countries involved in the Arab-Israel dispute during the current peace process, taking Israel as the baseline country. He reviewed briefly the military sales package which is being considered for Egypt in the Congress at the present time and also reviewed the MIG maintenance program which is being considered. *Mr. Sober* recalled the IMF reforms adopted by Egypt, the reduction of some subsidies, and the subsequent riots which followed earlier in 1977.³ *Mr. Habib* summarized President Sadat’s difficult position; his military forces are running down, and the peace process must bear fruit within the next five to six months or he will be in serious trouble. He also noted that there has been some dissatisfaction evidenced on the AID program in Egypt which will be covered in the Secretary’s briefing book. He then turned to Israel. *Secretary Blumenthal* asked about the proposed offset arrangement on defense procurement by Israel. *General Smith* noted that Israel wants us to buy defense goods from Israel in proportion to their purchases from the United States. DoD does not agree with this approach. *Mr. Cooper* asked how we could square our opposition to this with the arrangement we have with the Swiss which is comparable. *Mr. Weil* noted that the Swiss arrangement is not a formal U.S. Government arrangement, but is commercial. *General Smith* noted that the basic difference is that we are writing off Israel’s credits which is quite different from actual purchases from the United States. *Mr. Habib* said that *Mr. Sober* would provide a coordinated paper on this issue in time for the trip. Israel is requesting a level of aid of \$2.3 billion instead of \$1.7 billion. He noted that during last year we had transferred \$100 million to budget support from the commodity program and that we should get credit for that in his talks with the Israelis. He also felt that *Secretary Blumenthal* should attempt to deflate expectations of a significant rise in economic support. *Mr. Janka* noted that the Israelis want a memorandum of understanding to formalize an offset agreement. The United States will procure defense goods from Israel as possible, and we will make our best effort to procure from them, but we do not want to formalize this agreement. *Secretary Blumenthal* asked what level of procurement we have now and *Mr. Janka and General Smith* said they would check that out and make sure it was available to him in time for the trip. *Mr. Habib* noted that Israel has an arms industry and, using US components, produces a number of military systems for sale abroad. Because of our participation we have the right

³ See footnote 17, Document 3.

to approve or disapprove sales to third countries. We object to sales to Latin America of equipment that we would not ourselves sell there. He expected the Israelis to raise this issue and to pursue it particularly in terms of balance of payment problems, unemployment, production, and so forth. The Israelis would argue that there should be no objection to selling Kfir aircraft in Latin America when they are going to turn to the French and buy Mirages anyway. On the Chariot Tank we agreed to use FMS credit to develop Israeli production facilities.⁴ Now the Israelis would like to extend this arrangement to other areas. However, we indicated at the time of the Chariot agreement that this was a one-time exception and should not be extended to other areas. *Secretary Blumenthal* wondered what the immigration situation is at the present time. *Mr. Habib* noted that we have talked quietly to the Soviets on this; there have been some results—the numbers are up and Begin is aware of this fact. *Mr. Janka* noted that the Israelis have recently presented us with their Matmon C proposal for defense planning⁵ over the next decade and it will take us at least 90 days to study that. So, in response to defense procurement questions, the Secretary could always say that we are studying Matmon C.

Mr. Habib then turned to Kuwait, noting that it was generally neglected but extremely important in terms of oil production and financial aspects. *Mr. Cooper* noted that Kuwait is not a moderate on oil prices and has closed in some of its production. *Mr. Solomon* wondered whether the Kuwaitis in fact have a significant margin of increase available. *Mr. Bowie* said yes, but he would check out the details. *Mr. Cooper* said that this is the first contact with Kuwaitis at this level and it is important to make our arguments clearly as far as production is concerned. *General Smith* noted that the Chief of Staff of the Kuwaiti Armed Forces was here last week. He is looking for more military equipment to purchase from the United States; but the United States has been urging restraint. *Mr. Solomon* wondered whether there are any sticks or carrots we could use in support of our arguments on oil pricing. This would apply to all countries, not just Kuwait. *Mr. Habib* noted that Saudi Arabia in particular is responsive to the dangers of inflation and the effects on developing countries of oil price increases. *Mr. Sober* noted that there were no sticks or carrots to be used in Kuwait and that he could expect some very sharp discussion from Oil Minister Atiki. The best approach would be to focus on the effects of oil price increases

⁴ See footnote 9, Document 57.

⁵ Matmon C refers to a list of military equipment presented to the United States on October 3. This had been preceded by Matmon B, which Israel had submitted after the October 1973 Arab-Israeli War and which the United States approved during the Ford administration. See *Foreign Relations, 1969–1976*, vol. XXVI, Arab-Israeli Dispute, 1974–1976, Document 260. Matmon is the Hebrew word for “treasure.”

on the United States' economy and the consequent effect on the dollar and the Kuwait portfolio.

Mr. Habib then turned to Iran and the Shah. *Secretary Blumenthal* wondered how to approach the price issue with the Shah. *Mr. Cooper* suggested that the Secretary had best be the "heavy" on this subject since the President was not likely to be good in pressing the Shah on this issue. *Secretary Blumenthal* noted that he hoped to talk to the President on the risks involved in oil price increases and would try to do this in a worldwide context. *Mr. Habib* noted that the Shah has a prickly character. He suggested that the Secretary avoid discussions on the F-16, the F-18L and other major arms sales questions.⁶ *Secretary Blumenthal* wondered what were the relations between Israel and Iran. *Mr. Habib* noted that the relations were quite important, particularly in terms of oil supply to Israel. Iran's relations with South Africa may provide a way of putting the squeeze on South Africa; however, this should not be raised at this time. The Shah is no longer pushing for nuclear reprocessing and may soon initial a nuclear agreement with the United States. He then turned to Saudi Arabia.

Mr. Sober noted that Secretary Blumenthal is scheduled to participate in an inauguration project in Jubail, which would be a very good gesture and appreciated by the Saudis. *Mr. Habib* reviewed for the Secretary the significance of the separate Saudi armies—the regular army and the national guard—in the internal politics of Saudi Arabia. He noted that the Saudis will probably raise the question of the Horn of Africa, where we don't want to get involved in arms transfers; but we are with them in trying to get rid of Soviet influence. In relations with the PDRY we try to follow the Saudi lead. On arms transfers, Saudi Arabia wants F-15s, which we have promised; but this is going to give us extreme difficulty with the Congress in trying to get it approved. *Mr. Cooper* noted that it would be useful to have a chronology on the history of arms transfers to Saudi Arabia. *Mr. Janka* noted that he would take care of that prior to the trip. *Mr. Sober* noted that he would be there and is up to date on this information. *Mr. Solomon* asked what were Saudi Arabia's relations with the Shah and *Mr. Habib* noted that they were good. *Secretary Blumenthal* said he would like to keep up with late developments up to the time of his visit. *Mr. Cooper* noted particularly that we will need a scenario on oil and oil pricing. *Mr. Solomon* noted that we want to head off any price increase in 1978. *Secretary Blumenthal* agreed, noting that a five percent increase would equal an additional \$5 billion balance of payments deficit for the United States. *Mr. Solomon*

⁶ Presidential Directive 13 limited U.S. arms sales to various countries, including Iran. For example, 250 F-18L fighters intended for sale to Iran had been canceled because of this directive in June. (*Los Angeles Times*, June 2, 1977, p. 1) PD-13 is Document 33.

noted that there is a strategy paper due next week on this subject. *Secretary Blumenthal* again noted that he would talk to the President on this subject, noting that a price increase will really hurt this time.

Mr. Habib closed the meeting, noting that the timing of the Secretary's visit was very appropriate and that he thought it would be extremely worthwhile to maintain contact with the various Middle East leaders at this level at such a key time in our Middle East strategy.

131. Editorial Note

On October 14, 1977, President Jimmy Carter sent the "Working Paper on Suggestions for the Resumption of the Geneva Peace Conference" to Syrian President Hafez al-Asad in telegram 246487 to Damascus (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Box 88, Syria: 9/77–3/78), Jordanian King Hussein in telegram 246493 to Amman (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Box 56, Jordan: 9/77–1/78), and Egyptian President Anwar al-Sadat in telegram 246490 to Cairo. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840070–0360) In addition to sending the working paper, Carter wrote personal messages to each leader seeking to overcome procedural issues in an effort to convene a new Geneva Conference. In all three messages, Carter wrote, "The proposed procedure would provide for the Arab parties to be represented at Geneva by a unified delegation that would include Palestinians. After the opening sessions of the conference, working groups would be formed to negotiate peace treaties between Israel and Egypt, Israel and Syria, and Israel and Jordan. If Lebanon joins the conference, an Israel-Lebanon group would also be formed. The issues of the West Bank and Gaza would be discussed in a working group consisting of Israel, Jordan, Egypt and the Palestinians. The question of refugees would be discussed in accordance with terms to be agreed upon. This formula would permit negotiations of the issues that are of importance to the conflicting parties."

Carter also addressed Palestinian representation, noting, "The precise means for assuring Palestinian representation within a unified Arab delegation remain to be worked out. My hope is that the Arab parties can cooperate with us to assure that an acceptable formula can be found to include individual Palestinians within the unified Arab delegation without reference to their organizational affiliation." The working paper is the first attachment to Document 124.

132. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, October 14, 1977, 9:35–10:20 a.m.

SUBJECT

Summary of Dr. Brzezinski's Meeting with Yigael Yadin of Israel

PARTICIPANTS

Dr. Zbigniew Brzezinski, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs
 Gary Sick, NSC Staff (Notetaker)

Yigael Yadin of Israel
 His Excellency Simcha Dinitz, Ambassador from Israel

Dr. Brzezinski opened the discussion by noting that Foreign Minister Dayan's reference to his discussions with the President as "brutal" were extremely unhelpful and were not true.² *Ambassador Dinitz* said that he could not believe that Mr. Dayan actually said that; he had been in the meetings and it was not true. He was going to check with his Government. *Mr. Yadin* noted that he had heard people refer to it as a "tough" meeting. He did note, however, that the Hebrew word which could be translated as "brutal" had quite a different connotation in Hebrew and this might have been the problem. *Ambassador Dinitz* noted that Mr. Dayan had never used this expression with him in reference to these conversation. *Dr. Brzezinski* noted that the word "brutal" was carried in quotes in the *Post*. Moreover, *Time* Magazine had reported that Mr. Dayan during his trips around the United States had suggested that the President was naive in his Middle East approach and, although well intentioned, would lead to the destruction of Israel by the approach he had adopted about getting a settlement. *Mr. Yadin* said Mr. Dayan should authorize a retraction of that statement and also should clarify his remarks since Dayan has specifically told him that he was very impressed with the President during his meetings. *Ambassador Dinitz* indicated that he would make inquiries in Israel.

Mr. Yadin asked how Dr. Brzezinski saw the current situation. *Dr. Brzezinski* noted that the present situation is uncertain. There is no certainty that the Arabs will accept the working paper which the Israeli Cabinet had just approved, especially the Syrians. It is also uncertain whether the Soviets can play a constructive role in the peace process.

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Subject File, Box 67, Middle East: Peace Negotiations 1977 Vol. II. Top Secret. The meeting took place in Brzezinski's office.

² The *Washington Post* reported on October 14 that Israeli newspapers quoted Dayan as characterizing his October 4 meeting with Carter (see Document 124) as "brutal." (H.D.S. Greenway, "Dayan Makes Plan Public," *Washington Post*, October 14, 1977, p. A1)

Their motives are cloudy in this area. The other uncertainty is what will happen after meetings actually begin in Geneva, assuming that the conference is convened. We must ask ourselves how to make this process work. We don't want a situation where Israel will be isolated and ganged up on by the United States, the Arabs and the Soviets in a Geneva Conference. We need to talk about the nature of an overall settlement which would give Israel that which it is entitled to, i.e., objective and subjective peace and cohabitation with her Arab neighbors. True peace requires arrangements, military and otherwise, which in the age of nationalism Arabs find very difficult to accept and which we can't impose on them. We need a more creative search for security arrangements, especially with respect to the West Bank. It is impossible to define Eretz Israel in terms of 19th Century European nation states. The ideal solution would be if the Arabs could have their own passports, move back and forth freely, have some share in political power, a common market type of arrangement with religious freedom and with the possibility of Israelis participating in all aspects of life on the West Bank, which could include some type of Israeli security forces—not permanently and not coming in to police Nablus for example.

Mr. Yadin noted that his own views and the views of his party differed significantly from those of *Mr. Begin* and his party. However, four months ago he would not have dreamed that *Begin* could agree to the working paper which he had just pushed through the cabinet. This is a major achievement. If Syria now objects and greater pressure or persuasion is brought to bear on Israel, you can't really expect that they will move further. The germ of an agreement is there in the working paper to work in the right direction. His (*Yadin's*) own view is that Israel and Egypt should work out a preliminary agreement ad referendum, with consummation to come at a later date after other aspects have been solved in order to avoid the kind of fears that would be built up by Egypt moving to an agreement unilaterally with Israel. However, the chronology should be Egypt-Israel first, with Jordanian and Palestine issues coming later, since the Palestine or West Bank issues will be the most difficult. We should aim at the bilateral aspects first and only later move into multilateral aspects of a solution.

Dr. Brzezinski noted that the Arabs fear that Israel is trying to split Egypt away from the Arab camp by dealing with it first; however, it is obvious that even if you start with all four issues, some will move faster than others. *Mr. Yadin* said he was aware of the fear of the splitting off of Egypt from the other Arabs, but that this should be handled as a first "phase of discussion" not a final decision, like SALT. *Dr. Brzezinski* said he saw no problem with discussing the Egypt-Israel question first on a de facto basis, but this order could not be formalized. *Ambassador Dinitz* said he felt the Egyptians would probably like the idea of moving

quickly on the Egypt-Israel front. *Dr. Brzezinski* agreed and noted that an early agreement between Israel and Egypt could possibly provide an incentive for other members to move toward a settlement on other fronts.

Mr. Yadin noted that this incentive would be true in Israel as well, since an early success would build confidence and momentum. He noted that there were very different views within Israel between the government, the Labor Party, and the DMC. We (the DMC) think that any Palestinian entity should be incorporated within a West Bank-Jordanian entity. Eventually this could even be the Hashemite Kingdom of Palestine. However, the key thing is to avoid a third Palestinian state between Israel and Jordan. This process can be a gradual one. Actually, the Begin-Dayan position is not too different from this if one leaves aside final objectives. The stage which they propose as a settlement is in fact a necessary step toward the sort of objective that Yadin and his party favor. The Americans and the Arabs call this an interim step, while Begin and Dayan say this is the final step. But it is a necessary step in either case. There is probably room for negotiation. It does, however, involve military control. *Dr. Brzezinski* noted that military control gives negative leverage. Israel must understand that settlements are considered signals of permanence and actually interfere with the peace process rather than providing any real security. *Mr. Yadin* noted that in the recent Knesset the DMC formulation with respect to settlements had stressed the security aspects and had allowed a considerable degree of ambiguity with regard to the PLO. The DMC position is that they want to give back the West Bank but they do not want the PLO to head a state there. If the final arrangements for the West Bank could be put off for some time that could make the job easier. There is a possible consensus within Israel for a West Bank settlement.

Dr. Brzezinski noted that there seems to be an impression that the United States is pushing for an independent Palestinian state. *Mr. Yadin* said that that is in fact the view in Israel. *Dr. Brzezinski* noted that the President had said and that he had said that that was not in fact the U.S. objective. *Ambassador Dinitz* noted that even if that is not the U.S. intention, the natural trend is there and visible in the series of statements on homeland, entity, Palestinian rights, and so forth. *Dr. Brzezinski* said that it is the US dilemma that we must bring to public attention all of the issues which must be solved in a settlement but that we cannot spell out all of the details of the shape of a final settlement. *Mr. Yadin* noted that there is the feeling that the United States is pushing Israel toward a PLO Palestinian entity. This has created a violent reaction within Israel. Anything which can be done to ameliorate that situation would be helpful.

Dr. Brzezinski asked whether Yadin himself actually viewed the PLO as a monolithic band of brigands and terrorists. *Mr. Yadin* noted

that in contrast to Begin's prohibition against having any dealings with the "so-called PLO," the DMC position was not to have any dealings with "an organization officially committed to the destruction of Israel and terrorism," thus leaving some latitude and ambiguity if the PLO should change its position. *Dr. Brzezinski* said he saw the PLO as an amalgam of different forces, some of whom were killers who were not even very brave. Others were radical, but nationalist in their objectives. And others were quite moderate. The name of the game is to strengthen the moderate factions. *Mr. Yadin* noted that if the PLO should declare that it will remove the famous clauses in its Covenant there might be some possibility. He noted there was a theoretical clash between objectives. For example, if Arafat took over Amman this would in some respects be a good thing since the Palestinians would then have their "entity." But of course it would be bad since it would also result in the replacement of Hussein who is a good friend both of the United States and even of Israel. *Dr. Brzezinski* noted that excluding any dealings with the PLO may mean that no negotiations will be possible with the moderates in the Palestinian camp. It simply is not useful at this time to spell out precisely who will attend a Geneva Conference or how they participate. *Mr. Yadin* noted the irony that the DMC and Labor parties are now attacking Begin for being a "dove."

Dr. Brzezinski asked whether he believed that Begin would be able to seize the opportunity to make peace if circumstances permit. *Mr. Yadin* felt that if this involved an independent entity on the West Bank, the answer was no. However, he thought the combination of Begin and Dayan was the best possibility currently available for acceptance of a peaceful settlement. Maybe peace is possible if things run along their normal course and the less difficult issues are tackled first.

Ambassador Dinitz noted that *Dr. Brzezinski* had said some time ago that it would be better to keep the Palestinian issue on the back burner. *Dr. Brzezinski* noted that it is not undesirable to solve what can be solved first and that it would be counterproductive to try to solve the hardest issues first. But that this could not be formalized. For example, if there is an impression that the Egyptian situation is iced and if Israel proceeds with more settlements, that will suggest that Israel is in fact exploiting the Egyptian situation.

Mr. Yadin noted that perhaps the Americans have overlooked the importance of the clause in Begin's platform which calls for no extension of Israeli law to the West Bank so long as peace negotiations are in process. It is important to stress this clause with the Arabs because it is real and important.

Dr. Brzezinski noted that in his view if one wished to create or devise a foreign policy which was wholly counterproductive and harmed one's own interest as much as possible, one would do just what the

Arabs were doing for a number of years. There is no way to insure that the Arabs won't revert to the irrationality of the past. However, it is only within approximately the last three years that the Arabs have shown any skill in their foreign policy and in the process they have succeeded in putting Israel on the defensive in a number of cases.

Mr. Yadin wondered what the Egyptian reaction to the working paper would be. *Dr. Brzezinski* noted that they feel uneasy and due to the heavy publicity on the US-Israel side, they feel that the situation is "precooked." *Mr. Yadin* noted that prior to the leaks in Israel the essential elements of the working paper were leaked to the *New York Times* by a senior US official. *Dr. Brzezinski* guessed that Egypt and Jordan would go along with the paper.

Ambassador Dinitz said that it is necessary to tell the Syrians that Israel has moved in their direction in accepting the working paper, but they cannot move toward a more radical position. He saw the US-Soviet statement as encouraging the Syrians to take a harder line and to press for more concessions from Israel.

Mr. Yadin wondered what he should tell the press on the subject of the Palestinians. *He and Dr. Brzezinski agreed* that it would be useful to stress that the United States is not pressing for an independent Palestinian entity and to reiterate that the talks with the President were not "brutal."

133. Telegram From the Embassy in Egypt to the Department of State¹

Cairo, October 19, 1977, 1339Z

17348. Subj: Letter From President Sadat to President Carter—Egyptian Reaction to U.S. Working Paper. Ref (A) State 246490, (B) Cairo 17194, (C) Cairo 17082.²

1. As I was leaving Fahmy's apartment this morning after a sharply abbreviated meeting to discuss two other matters (septels), one of his aides rushed in bringing an envelope. Fahmy gave it to me, explaining it was Sadat's reply to President Carter's latest letter (Ref A) and transmitting a working paper (WP) reformulation which he, Fahmy, had drafted on Sadat's instructions. As it turned out, the WP reformulation was not included in the envelope and I subsequently had to get a copy from his staff at the MFA. Since he was short on time and the reformulation was not included in the envelope, there was no opportunity to discuss the matter. As we were riding down the elevator together, Fahmy did make a few scattered observations, which are being reported by septel.

2. Text of President Sadat's letter to President Carter follows: quote:

Dear President Carter,

I received with thanks your letter dated October 14, 1977, and I concur completely with your assessment of the situation and that we should tackle the real issues in a pragmatic manner concentrating on the substantive rather than the procedural aspects.

I am grateful (sic) with your assurances anew that you are still committed to what we have agreed upon when we met in Washington

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P850052–1905. Secret; Immediate; Nodis.

² Telegram 246490 to Cairo, October 14, is described in Document 131. In telegram 17194 from Cairo, October 17, Eilts summarized his meeting with Fahmy, in which he stressed the "overriding need to break shackles of procedural details so that we can get to Geneva." Fahmy indicated that he and Sadat "would go to Geneva without 242, a [working paper] or anything." The stumbling block was persuading the PLO and Syrians that the working paper represented a document they could find acceptable. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P850052–1934) In telegram 17082 from Cairo, October 14, Eilts reported on Fahmy's preliminary reaction to the working paper, which included several concerns over language. Despite these reservations, Fahmy noted that Egypt did not want to "be 'fussy,'" and it shared Carter's desire to facilitate an early reconvening of the Geneva Conference. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P850052–1943)

so far as the questions related to peace, Israeli withdrawal, security arrangements and the question of the Palestinians.³

I share your views that we should have succeeded in achieving greater progress so far as the substantive issues are concerned but I am aware of the various difficulties which made it impossible to reach that desired goal.

I have examined thoroughly the working paper which I have received enclosed with your above mentioned letter. Moreover, I have discussed its contents with Yasser Arafat where I have noticed that he is forthcoming.

You may recall however that after convening the National Security Council of Egypt I have conveyed to you my agreement on the original American working paper which was handed to Minister Fahmy during his visit to Washington.⁴ Furthermore my approval of that paper was conveyed to almost all the Arab heads of states, and as such I am still committed to the main substantive parts of that paper.

I have in the meantime noticed that in the new working paper⁵—which was leaked by Dayan as an Israeli paper in the Knesset—there is a serious departure from the original paper to the extent of amending some of the basic points contained in the original, in addition to some new points of procedural character to which I do not attach great significance.

As you most properly (sic—probably?) know Minister Fahmy conveyed our views to Secretary Vance through Ambassador Eilts on both the substantive and procedural points. In the light of my far reaching talks with Arafat I attach herewith a reasonable pragmatic formula which I believe could tremendously enhance the chances of convening the Geneva Conference later this year without prejudice to the position of any of the parties concerned.

Having said that, I would like to emphasize that Arafat is still committed to what he told me concerning the representative of the Palestinians at Geneva, as was conveyed to you through Minister Fahmy.

In concluding, I would like to convey to you my warmest thanks and deep conviction that you will use your influence through discreet diplomacy in order to reach an acceptable and constructive compromise and that you personally and the United States will continue to

³ See Documents 25 and 27.

⁴ See footnote 2, Document 118 and Document 119.

⁵ The new working paper included the revisions made after Carter's meeting with Dayan on October 4. See Document 124.

play a major role towards the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

Sincerely

Mohamed Anwar el-Sadat

Unquote.

3. Text of Fahmy's attached WP reformulation is given below:
Quote:

Working Paper on Suggestions For the Resumption of the Geneva Conference

1. The Arab parties will be represented by a unified Arab delegation for the opening sessions at Geneva. The delegation will include not well known members of the PLO.

2. The working groups or subcommittees for the negotiation of peace treaties will be formed as follows:

A. Egypt-Israel

B. Syria-Israel.

C. Jordan-Israel.

D. Lebanon-Israel.

E. The West Bank, Gaza, the Palestinian question, and the question of refugees will be discussed among Israel, Jordan, Egypt, the Palestinians and perhaps others as determined at the opening sessions of the Geneva Conference.

3. The agreed basis for the negotiations at the Geneva Peace Conference on the Middle East are U.N. Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338.

4. The working groups or subcommittees will report to the plenary. Unquote.

4. Egyptian public media announced noon today that President Sadat's reply to President Carter's latest letter had been given to me earlier in the morning.

Eilts

134. Editorial Note

On October 21, 1977, President Jimmy Carter sent Egyptian President Anwar al-Sadat a handwritten and hand-delivered letter. Carter wrote, "When we met privately in the White House, I was deeply im-

pressed and grateful for your promise to me that, at a crucial moment, I could count on your support when obstacles arose in our common search for peace in the Middle East. We have reached such a moment, and I need your help.” Carter continued that “Secretary Vance has provided clarifications to many of your questions regarding the procedures outlined in the United States working paper. There is adequate flexibility in the language to accommodate your concerns.” Carter concluded that the “time has now come to move forward, and your early public endorsement of our approach is extremely important—perhaps vital—in advancing all parties to Geneva.” He identified his letter as “a personal appeal for your support.” A photocopy of the letter is in William Quandt, *Camp David*, pages 140–141.

135. Telegram From the Embassy in Syria to the Department of State¹

Damascus, October 21, 1977, 1538Z

6626. For Secretary From Murphy. Department Pass White House for Dr. Brzezinski. Subject: Assad Letter to Carter. Ref: State 246487.²

1. Met with FonMin Khaddam afternoon October 21 at his apartment to receive Assad’s letter in reply to President Carter’s October 13 message (reftel). Signed original forwarded by pouch. Khaddam’s presentation and Embassy comments by immediately following septels. Following is unofficial translation by Syrian Presidency.

Begin text:

“His Excellency Jimmy Carter

President of the United States of America

Washington

Dear Mr. President:

I received your letter dated October 13, 1977 and I was pleased with your expressed determination to continue efforts aimed at establishing just and lasting peace, and with your conviction of the importance of moving quickly into a new phase of the search for peace.

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840070–0959. Secret; Immediate; Nodis.

² Telegram 246487 to Damascus, October 14, is described in Document 131.

I also appreciate your concern with a problem which has become the gravest among world problems, and your stress on the extreme importance of reconvening the Geneva Peace Conference in order to reach the goal to which we all aspire, namely the goal of establishing just and lasting peace in this sensitive area of the world.

Your letter has confirmed the impression conveyed to me by our Foreign Minister, Mr. Abdul Halim Khaddam, following his discussions with you and with Secretary of State Mr. Cyrus Vance. It also confirmed the desire and determination you expressed to him, to overcome obstacles on the road to the peace conference.

As I thank you for this great interest and for your endeavors, I assure you that the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic is determined to continue its efforts to achieve progress, because peace is a necessity for our region as well as for the whole world. The policy of obduracy and rejection exercised by Israel will not make us give up our belief in the importance and necessity of peace.

Dear Mr. President, with all this in mind, and following the receipt of your letter and the working paper attached thereto, I gave much thought to what can be done, and I considered all aspects of the situation, with a view to finding a working formula that can push forward the movement towards just peace.

I want to mention that I am only concerned with the working formula in as much as it is linked to the final settlement, and that form concerns me only in as much as it is linked to the substance. Therefore, we have to seek a formula which serves the ultimate objective, namely achieving a solution which should be at the same time comprehensive and just.

Analysis of the question under discussion confirms that its basic components are the following three main elements:

1. The Palestine problem.
2. The territories occupied in 1967.
3. The state of war.

Therefore, the sought formula should make it possible to deal with these three issues in the light of the United Nations Resolutions.

So, I consider that the broad lines of the working formula could be as follows:

1. A unified Arab delegation to the Peace Conference will be formed, composed of Syria, Egypt, Jordan and the P.L.O., this being consistent with the nature of the Arab-Israeli conflict. I am sure you are aware that, throughout history, peace negotiations which followed the various wars fought by several parties, were carried out by all the parties concerned together.

2. The plenary of the Peace Conference will discuss the general and shared issues, which are the substantive questions, with a view to finding solutions for them in the light of the United Nations Resolutions. The most important of these substantive issues are:

- (1) The Palestine problem.
- (2) The question of ending the occupation of the Arab territories.
- (3) The question of ending the state of war, and the arrangements and guarantees of peace.

3. Following the adoption (Arabic “i graar”—also translatable as “settling”, “confirmation” or “acknowledgement”, which have a shared nature), subcommittees will be set up to make geographical arrangements (geographical subcommittees) for the implementation of the agreements concerning the substantive issues.

Dear President Carter, such a formula is apt to put an end to many of the complications. Thus, on the one hand we would have discussed in the plenary issues of a shared nature, and on the other hand we would have adopted the subcommittees for geographical arrangements.

As I have already mentioned, Mr. President, there are questions which are not of a bilateral nature such as the conditions and guarantees of peace, the question of the withdrawal and the Palestine problem. All the more so if we proceed from the desire that peace should be comprehensive. Bilateral negotiations may abort chances of comprehensiveness of peace.

Dear Mr. President, in sending to you these proposals which I consider as a positive and constructive contribution, despite my conviction that we still consider our point of view concerning the committees (organized by) topics as pertinent, I am motivated by the desire to avert a stalemate at a certain point, and by our conviction of the importance of continuing search for all means conducive to eliminating obstacles and achieving progress. I am hopeful that these ideas will constitute a practical and useful contribution towards attaining the objective of establishing just, lasting and comprehensive peace.

I wish to renew to you, Mr. President, my expression of thanks for your efforts wishing you happiness, and your country progress and prosperity. Sincerely, Hafez al-Assad. Damascus, October 21, 1977.

End text.

- 2. Department pass Amman, Cairo, and Tel Aviv.

Murphy

136. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, October 25, 1977, 11:05 a.m.–12:30 p.m.

SUBJECT

President's Meeting with Prince Saud ibn Faisal al-Sa'ud, Saudi Minister of Foreign Affairs

PARTICIPANTS

The President
The Vice President
The Secretary of State
Ambassador John West
Mr. Robert Lipshutz
Mr. Alfred L. Atherton
Mr. David Aaron
Mr. Jerrold Schecter
Mr. William Quandt

Prince Saud ibn Faisal al-Sa'ud, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Saudi Arabia
Abdallah Muhammed Alireza, Deputy Foreign Minister
Ahmed Sirraj, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Ali Abdallah Alireza, Saudi Ambassador to the United States
Nizar Madani, First Secretary, Saudi Embassy, Washington

President: We only have a short time today, so I would like to start directly to discuss the situation of the Middle East peace settlement. We have reached a critical point, and we have done the best that we could, after long debate, to bring the parties to a point of maximum compatibility prior to the Geneva Conference. We have seen evidence of flexibility on the part of all of the leaders, that we have gone as far as we can go as a mediator to alleviate each of their concerns. It is a matter now of each party quibbling over words, and we need to break away from this and go to Geneva for the common purpose of reaching peace. I recognize that there are special problems among the Arab nations, and that there are differences of opinion between Egypt and Syria on how to organize a delegation, on whether there should be bilateral or multilateral groups to do the work, on the role of the plenary, and on how the Palestinian question should be addressed. We cannot resolve all the differences between Presidents Assad and Sadat. King Hussein seems to be more amenable to compromises.

Israel after a long debate has finally agreed to two difficult points: a unified Arab delegation at Geneva, which they opposed for a long

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Subject File, Box 2, Arab-Israeli Peace Settlement 1977: Volume I [III]. Top Secret; Sensitive. The meeting took place in the White House Cabinet Room.

time, and which they now accept; and the representation of Palestinians, not in any of the national delegations. This has been difficult for them, but it was done with our influence. The Cabinet agreed. We think that the concerns expressed by the Arab leaders have on the whole been met, but it would be a mistake to try to write down all of the details in a document that would become public. We don't believe that Israel will oppose PLO members in national Arab delegations, and they will let Palestinians represent the West Bank and Gaza and will not inspect their credentials. They will agree to discuss these issues on a multinational basis, and will do the same with the refugee question. Compared to their earlier demands, they have come close to what the Arabs wanted. Assad is now concerned about the relative importance of the plenary, and of keeping discussions in a multinational framework in contrast to strictly bilateral discussions. This is covered by the 1973 procedure whereby the working groups should report back to the conference.² Assad seems to be concerned about the possibility of divisions among the Arabs, but it is up to the Arabs themselves to decide how much they want to consult with one another. We have nothing except support for that approach.

There is another question of the PLO as such being a negotiating partner. This is not possible, and it would violate our own promises to Israel. Each of the participants in the Geneva Conference has the right to approve any new groups at the conference. All of them agree to Lebanon. The Israelis have agreed that Palestinians can be at the conference, and that they will not look at their credentials.

I think that it has become completely fruitless to try to reword the working paper. We drafted it as best we could. We made some modifications, and then we gave it to Israel, and then we modified it again. Now the parties seem to be frozen on words. And I am not prepared to go through another round of revisions. I think we need Saudi Arabia's help to get the parties to Geneva. If the Arabs feel that their interests are not adequately protected, they can always withdraw from the discussions.

My public and private statements have been the same, and we put some of our proposals in writing. I hope that all of the leaders will be able to accept the present working paper. They should then let the United States and the Soviet Union request that the UN Secretary General convene the conference with the unified Arab delegation, and with working groups that would report back to the plenary, which would have to ratify any final agreement. And we should let the Palestinians be represented in national delegations as they choose, and as a separate

² A reference to the procedures established for the 1973 Geneva Conference.

entity to discuss the West Bank and Gaza and the refugee question. This proposal accommodates both Arab and Israeli concerns. It is important that Saudi Arabia use its influence to promote further accommodation. It has not yet been possible to get the PLO to disavow its goal of the destruction of Israel, and the PLO will not accept Resolution 242. We do hear, however, that Arafat is willing to go along with the procedures I have described.

Saud: Thank you, Mr. President. I would like to be very frank in what I say. Saudi Arabia is not directly involved in the negotiations, and we are only aware of developments insofar as you and the other Arab parties keep us informed. But Saudi Arabia is deeply concerned, and time is now of the essence. The example today of the attempt to assassinate Foreign Minister Khaddam is a reminder of how volatile the situation is.³ Saudi Arabia's destiny is involved in seeing this problem solved. We do not feel there are any basic differences between Egypt and Syria. There may be some differences in how they evaluate the intentions of the parties, but both of them want to negotiate for peace. The Syrians are worried . . .

President: They are not reluctant to tell us so.

Saud: They are afraid that Geneva will only be a formal meeting, and that it will not settle substantive problems. They see that Israel wants to divide the issues, and to avoid the Palestinian question entirely. They think that Israel wants partial solutions. They are anxious not to allow this to happen, but they are not opposed to peace. Syria is being attacked in the Middle East for giving up its national goals. Their fear is understandable, but they do want Geneva. I don't know if Syria has received any clarification on the role of the unified Arab delegation. But they want all of the issues to be integrated and they want to avoid separate deals so that a true settlement can be reached.

They are on their guard against separate agreements. The important element for a true settlement is that there be Arab unity in this period. We all realize that this is important if we are to achieve peace. The Syrians are doing all that they can. Khaddam is touring the Middle East, and has been in Saudi Arabia and the UAE. We are doing what we can to identify areas of common objective. This is a never-ending process for us, and we are not tired and we will continue.

The Arabs need most of all to get some indication of intent that the Palestinian issue is to be discussed. This is the core of the question behind Palestinian representation, and is a crucial factor. If the intent is to solve the Palestinian question, then any serious negotiation would

³ On October 25, a Palestinian attempted to assassinate Khaddam at the Abu Dhabi airport as he prepared to depart the United Arab Emirates. The assassin missed Khaddam, instead killing the UAE Minister of State Saif ibn Said al-Ghubash.

want those who are the fighters to be involved. This is why we see the refusal to allow the PLO to be at Geneva as an indication that the problem is not going to be solved. I am being very frank. This is how the Arabs see the issue. It is very clear what the questions are for Egypt and Syria and what they will get from a peace settlement, but this is not true for the Palestinians. Egypt wants territory, and Israel wants normal relations. But the Palestinians do not see clearly what they can get from a settlement. This is a substantive issue, but it takes on importance even when talking about who will take the responsibility for representing them. These are their worries, and they are not unreasonable. These worries do not indicate a lack of interest in peace. On the contrary, they want to negotiate and to resolve problems.

President: Let me ask you if you think that the present working paper and our statements about our purposes are adequate?

Saud: Let me get back to the question of intent. The working paper is a compromise which tries to incorporate various elements. The problem is that it does not tackle the question of the Palestinians at Geneva. The first paper had referred to "not well known members of the PLO," and then that was removed. What does this mean? Is this an attempt to avoid discussing the Palestinian entity? Does this mean that only West Bank residents can participate? Does this mean that those outside of the West Bank and Gaza are not involved in the problem? The first working paper also had reference to a procedure for the working groups to report to the plenary, but then that was dropped. What does that mean?

President: Has Secretary Vance explained to you the agreement that I reached with Dayan on Palestinian representation? Let me review it for you. In the Lebanese delegation, for example, there would be no prohibition on PLO members participating. They could belong to any of the national delegations. In addition, over Israel's very great opposition, agreement was reached that Palestinians could be represented on their own in a unified Arab delegation. I thought the Arabs would be pleased by that. The Palestinians can be at Geneva to discuss the Palestinian question. I would now like people to agree to go to Geneva and to let the United States and the Soviet Union prepare an agenda. The agenda would include the Palestinian question, the definition of peace, and the territorial question. But to try to spell out in writing that the PLO will be represented will insure Israel's refusal. We have a private agreement with Dayan, however, that the PLO can go to Geneva.

Concerning the plenary, we propose that the 1973 procedures be followed. This provides for the working groups to report back to the plenary. I told Foreign Minister Khaddam that if Syria does not accept the results of the West Bank-Gaza negotiations, Syria can withhold its own agreement with Israel. It would be a mistake now to go back to Is-

rael and try to revise the working paper. The paper passed the Israeli Cabinet by a very narrow vote. But they did agree to discuss the West Bank and Gaza with Palestinians, and to discuss the refugees on a multi-national basis that could even include Saudi Arabia and Iraq. Israel has made a major sacrifice. I don't see any comparable flexibility on the Syrian side. We now need to get the Arabs to get together and to say that they either will or will not go to Geneva.

Saud: Has Israel agreed that the United States and the Soviet Union should prepare the agenda?

President: We will rely on the procedures of 1973. We have not yet discussed this precisely. The plenary can be part of the Geneva process. But we need agreement that the Arabs will now go to Geneva on the basis of the 1973 procedures. At this point, I don't see that the Syrians are showing adequate flexibility. They seem to be more adamant than the PLO. And Egypt is not yet willing to say publicly that it is willing to go to Geneva. There is also the question of our role. We want to help all that we can. We think the conference should be convened under the UN Secretary General, the parties should make their opening speeches, and then the working groups should be formed. Some details can be worked out at Geneva. We need flexibility, and I think we have gone about as far as we can before Geneva. In the last session I had with Dayan, Israel made a serious effort to come up with compromise formulations for the first time.

Secretary Vance: We should try to use the procedures from the past as much as possible. This is how we would suggest handling the question of the relationship between the working groups and the plenary. Israel has said that they will use those procedures.

President: Israel is very eager to see these procedures used because that gives them the chance to approve of any new groups at Geneva. Syria also wants to keep cohesion on the Arab side, and the 1973 procedures can accommodate that. If there is no agreement on the 1973 procedures, we could waste a lot of time trying to get agreement on new procedures, and so we will lean very hard on all of the parties to get 1973 procedures adopted.

Saud: I appreciated what you said about not giving up on the peace-making effort. The United States must remain involved. This is not just our belief, but is also the belief of others. It is crucial for the peace settlement. At the same time, there are fears and uncertainties among the Arabs, and they are not all irrational. There is a long history to this problem. We see Israel in a different light from you. The history of our interrelationship with Israel does not lead us to trust them.

President: Israel has the same history of distrust toward the Arabs.

Saud: But we are not trying to tell the Israelis who should speak for them, although they are insisting that they choose the Palestinians with

whom they will discuss the West Bank and Gaza. To reach a compromise on this problem, there will have to be discussions. The PLO representative in New York, Qaddumi, told me that the level of representation for the Palestinians is not as important as Palestinian rights. But he is worried that the question of representation will be used to avoid real discussion of the Palestinian issue. That is not in anyone's interest. If peace and normalization are to be achieved, we need to solve the Palestinian question.

President: Do you think that a public statement by the United States and the Soviet Union would help?

Saud: Especially now it would help to get an Arab consensus. It would be more than useful.

President: When we have an agreement with Syria or Israel, and it is supposedly private, sometimes it is unilaterally announced. When we took the working paper to the Jordanians, Egyptians and Syrians, we were close to agreement. Then we gave it to Israel, and they announced it as a US-Israeli paper. We don't want that to happen again. We want the Arabs to agree to go to Geneva with the 1973 procedures, and we will speak out on the need for a comprehensive peace based on the territorial settlement, resolution of the Palestinian question, and a definition of peace. If they agree, then we would propose to issue a final invitation. We can't go on renegotiating the wording of the working paper. The words in the working paper have no real meaning in and of themselves. The final result and the attitude of the parties at Geneva is what counts. We should close the discussion on the working paper and think of what else we can now do.

Saud: The environment for negotiation that existed after the US-Soviet communiqué came close to creating a consensus among the Arabs of the sort that you said was needed. Even the Palestinians reacted well. What shocked people, especially the Palestinians, who had gone so far as to praise the US-Soviet communiqué, was the subsequent joint US-Israeli statement. This seemed to be putting the United States in the position of aligning itself with one of the parties. This caused concern which was reflected in Syrian comments at the time. The US-Soviet statement had created great expectations.

President: We still stand behind every word in the US-Soviet statement. The Syrians themselves were the first to express concern over that statement. The Syrians were concerned that it did not refer to the PLO or Palestinian national interests. Israel was also upset by the statement.

Saud: The Syrians mentioned one point to us—the fact that the 1967 borders were not referred to.

President: Both Syria and Israel said that they could not accept all of the US-Soviet statement, but the statement did represent what we and

the Soviets saw as the basis for negotiations. We do not require that the parties accept every word of that statement as a prerequisite for going to Geneva. What we want as a prerequisite for going to Geneva is acceptance of Resolutions 242 and 338 only. There can be too much concern for exact words. We had a long discussion with the Soviets on the paper, and we got some compromises. But it doesn't suit all the other parties. There has been no backing off from that statement, and it, along with Resolutions 242 and 338, are elements of our policy.

Saud: You're right that we need to promote greater consensus within the Arab world.

President: It doesn't seem to exist at all.

Secretary Vance: We've already said most of what is necessary to promote a consensus among the Arabs in the US-Soviet statement.

President: We could say it again, along with the statement on the 1973 procedures, if that would get the Arabs to go to Geneva.

Saud: His Majesty will have more thoughts on this when you come to Saudi Arabia. In the meantime, he will see President Sadat next week. There are efforts underway to get this consensus. We see it as vital.

President: Let me add that if we reach private agreements, they should not go public. There shouldn't be any talk of a US-Saudi document, for example. But if the Arabs say that they want us to reaffirm that the Palestinian question, the question of borders, and the question of peace will be on the agenda, and if we can confirm that the 1973 procedures will be used, and if that would convince Syria and the others to attend, then we can take that step. We need to get the Arabs together, and then we will go to the Israelis. But we should do it privately. The Israelis publicized our proposal as a US-Israeli proposal, and this of course made it harder for the Arabs to accept.

Saud: I think that Dayan did that on purpose.

President: I'm sure that he did.

Saud: The Arabs have handled their discussions with you quite discreetly, and we do not make a habit of discussing in public what we say to you in private. We, of course, are not directly involved in the negotiations, but we are interested. We have no inhibitions in working for a successful negotiation, and for the unity of the Arab parties. That has long been part of Saudi policy. We are not asking for any kind of joint statement with you.

President: What do you suggest?

Saud: I haven't heard the Syrian views recently. I will see the Syrians after my return, and I will report to His Majesty and he will get in touch with the Syrians.

Secretary Vance: Jordan and Egypt are likely to accept what the President has suggested. We are not so sure about the Syrians.

Saud: Will the Palestinians accept?

President: That depends. When we hear about the PLO positions from the Egyptians, they seem flexible. When we hear from the Syrians, they seem adamant. It depends on who carries the message.

Saud: The representative of the PLO has apparently rejected the US-Israeli paper. But the refusal seems to be hedged.

Secretary Vance: It left some room, and it was not as closed as some said. I saw some flexibility. We hear through the Egyptians that the PLO is flexible, but the Syrians carry a different message.

President: The essence of the problem is that unless we go to Geneva, the problem cannot be solved short of another round of conflict. Therefore, we need maximum flexibility from all the parties and good faith negotiations. I know there is a good deal of distrust and many radical statements have been made in the past. I am pleased with the accomplishments that we have made so far, but we can't go much further without Geneva. The most difficult problem is lack of consensus among the Arabs. That is now the hardest part, and you can help there. You can provide leadership.

Saud: I don't know if it is any harder for you to work with the Arabs than it is for you to work with the Israelis.

President: Up until my talks in New York, I thought the most difficult party was Israel. But they yielded on two issues, the unified Arab delegation and Palestinian representation.

Saud: The Syrians are concerned with two problems. They want the working groups to report to the plenary.

President: They can be handled as part of the 1973 procedures. Egypt and Syria see this differently. Syria wants the Arab delegation to act as a unit.

Saud: They are afraid of another separate agreement.

President: I understand. The differences are not only between Israel and Syria, but also between Egypt and Syria. We think Geneva should be convened with the Arabs as a unified delegation, including Palestinians, and that working groups should be set up so that the Syrians will negotiate about the Golan Heights, the Egyptians will negotiate with Israel on Sinai, and Jordan will negotiate on strictly bilateral issues. But the Palestinians should participate in the talks on Gaza and the West Bank, along with Egypt, Jordan, and Israel. This is a major Israeli concession. They had to change their policy. Israel also agreed to discuss the refugees on a multi-national basis which could include Lebanon and Syria. I can't say that Israel will agree that there should be a strong role for the plenary. There is nothing improper in Israel's posi-

tion on this. But if the Arabs insist that a unified agreement must be reached among the Arabs before the bilateral issues are finally resolved, they can do that. They can withhold their final agreement. This will guarantee that the Palestinian question is treated as part of the whole, and we can help.

Saud: Would this be done outside of Geneva?

President: It can be done in the plenary at Geneva. This could be decided among the Arabs in private, and then they could simply announce it as their policy. But there is no reason not to go ahead with the bilateral meetings on Sinai and the Golan heights. We don't want to see the Palestinian question ignored. If it is not solved, then Geneva would be a waste of time.

Saud: There is a problem of leaving some issues undecided. You're asking the Arabs to settle their differences outside of Geneva, but then in Geneva they would split up into separate groups. I think that the Arabs have already compromised a great deal. A unified Arab position is central to the success of the negotiation. Israel's maneuvers are sometimes harmful, and leaks make it difficult for the Arabs to respond to your proposals.

President: I don't deny that. I am not trying to defend Israel. We were trying to mediate the conflict by being evenhanded. Maybe the United States should reissue a unilateral statement on the three key elements of a peace settlement.

Saud: That would be excellent. That would help. It should not be a US-Saudi statement though.

President: I would be glad to do that. We'll try to regain the kind of momentum that we hoped to achieve by the US-Soviet statement. We can do that, and afterwards we will see if Israel is willing to go to Geneva, and we will also reaffirm the 1973 procedures. I have no doubt that Israel, Jordan, and Egypt are ready to go. The problem is Syria, and their distrust of Israel and their fear of a separate Egyptian-Israeli agreement. We'll try to assuage that concern. I'm not trying to be critical.

Saud: The role of peacemaker is not easy.

Secretary Vance: If the original procedures are followed, the two co-chairmen would say that the parties have agreed to go to Geneva, and they will ask the UN Secretary General to call the conference. The unified Arab delegation can include Palestinians, but there will be no individual invitations. We will simply use the same procedure as in 1973. We will report to the members of the Security Council that the conference is going to be reconvened. There will not be individual notifications. If we stick to these original procedures, we should be able to get to Geneva.

President: All of the parties need to save face. Some of their old statements are a problem. We want to get the conference going, and we will give some private assurances of our good faith.

Saud: I see no objection. Would you do this in public or in private?

President: Whatever. We might make a public statement, and we will also reaffirm the 1973 procedures. Otherwise there could be an endless debate over the role of the co-chairmen, the Secretary General, and if we had to renegotiate all of that, I would just throw up my hands. We don't need to redo that. There may be some parts of the procedures that the Syrians may not like, and some the Israelis won't like, and some that we won't like, and some that the UN Secretary General won't like, but we should just stick with the 1973 procedures.

Secretary Vance: There was even a problem of where the parties should sit in 1973.

Saud: They didn't sit for long that time.

President: This time I think they will. All of the parties want peace, including Syria. I don't deny that. Of all those whom I have met in these talks, I have enjoyed my talks with Assad and with Khaddam as much as any. They don't equivocate, and I understand Assad's problems.

Saud: Maybe we should let the Syrians and the Israelis do all the negotiations!

President: We'll proceed on the basis that I've described. Secretary Vance can be in contact with all of the parties, and then later we will make a unilateral statement, followed by a statement reaffirming the 1973 procedures. We aren't going to withdraw from our involvement as long as the parties trust us to act as fair mediators. If it takes three, two years, or one year, we will try to provide the core around which the issues can be discussed. The UN Secretary General has too much of a formal role, but we will be there in the bilateral groups and in the plenary, and I am in it to stay.

Saud: You are not an uninvolved intermediary.

President: I know. And neither are you. The Arabs respect your government and know that it will act in good faith. They have important religious bonds with you, and they know how important peace is to your country.

Saud: It is essential to us.

President: If there were another war in the Middle East it could spread to involve more countries.

Saud: The destruction of the next war would be terrible.

President: I will personally assure you that I will stay in the process until it is over. If we ever do something to cause you concern, I want you to contact me directly. I can't afford to lose your confidence. I know that the parties don't trust the Soviet Union, and the UN doesn't have

enough strength. I recognize our unique role. But there are times when I have to go to the leaders of the Middle East countries and ask them to move forward, and we are now at such a point.

Saud: We appreciate that, and greatly value the honesty and directness with which you talk to us.

President: I have been reassured with the thought that the United States and Saudi Arabia are acting in concert. We want you to remain involved, even though you will not be at Geneva. You have a profound influence. It is crucial that we work closely together.

Saud: The commitment of Saudi Arabia to the Arab cause and to peace is sacred.

President: Let me change the subject. We don't want you to let the price of oil go up next year.

Saud: You know where our heart is on that question. Ours has been a position of reasonableness and this will continue. We are hopeful that the next meeting of OPEC will be reasonable. We need to analyze the situation carefully. In December OPEC will meet. Your visit to a number of OPEC countries can be very helpful.

President: It is not accidental that I am visiting several oil producing countries. We recognize your leadership on this issue.

Saud: I have been encouraged by recent statements from several OPEC members which have been quite reasonable, even those from Algeria and Nigeria. I think the environment will be good.

President: I hope you'll keep Secretary Vance informed on how we can help on this issue.

Saud: That has become normal between us.

[Omitted here is material unrelated to the Middle East.]

137. Telegram From the Embassy in Jordan to the Department of State¹

Amman, October 26, 1977, 1322Z

7858. Subject: Message From King Hussein to President Carter. Ref: Amman 7856.²

Advance text follows of letter from King Hussein to President Carter (reftel) dated October 26, 1977.

Begin text: Dear Mr. President:

I wish to thank you most sincerely for your message of October 15 which contained your proposal for the reconvening of the Geneva Conference.³ I am deeply impressed with your commitment to a just settlement for the conflict in the Middle East and your personal involvement in the construction of the structure of such a settlement. Your insight into the realities of the Middle East situation is matched only by your inspiring dedication to the cause of justice and durable peace. In my contacts with my fellow leaders in the Arab world I am sparing no effort to urge them to meet your brave and constructive initiatives with a positive attitude and genuine cooperation. I appreciate the difficulties that you and many of us in the region face in trying to steer events in a constructive direction in view of the complex circumstances and accumulated problems relating to the Middle Eastern and Palestinian questions. I have been in touch with our main Arab partners in the peace efforts and urged them to focus, as you suggested, on substance rather than form and procedure. I have urged them further to help remove the obstacles in the way of convening the Geneva Conference so that any efforts you may exert on behalf of the United States may be more fruitful and more directed to the real issues of withdrawal, the Palestinian future and guaranteed peace.

While fully aware of the necessity of addressing ourselves to the issues of substance, I nevertheless believe, Mr. President, that some organizational and procedural issues have direct bearing on the future progress of the negotiations in Geneva. Moreover, the satisfactory solution of these problems can open the way to the participation of all the parties in the Conference. Having considered thoroughly the American

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840089–1705. Secret; Immediate; Nodis.

² In telegram 7856 from Amman, October 26, Ambassador Pickering reported on Royal Court Chief Sharaf's point by point analysis of King Hussein's letter. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840084–1034)

³ Apparently a reference to the October 14 message Carter sent Hussein. See Document 131.

“working paper” enclosed in your message, we have, in Jordan, arrived at the following points regarding it:

1. The “working paper” is a procedural one and has therefore to be read together with your other substantive pronouncements regarding withdrawal and Palestinian self-determination in the framework of a peace settlement.

2. We support the idea of a unified Arab delegation which would include representatives of the Palestinian people.

3. We believe that the determination of the political future of the Palestinian Arabs who reside in the West Bank and Gaza as well as the refugees must be discussed collectively in the Conference and on the basis of the principle of self-determination in the context of withdrawal from the West Bank and Gaza. The question of the refugees need not be separated from other aspects of the Palestinian question.

4. There is no connection between the real and existing problem of the Palestinian refugees and the claim that a problem of “Jewish refugees” exists and is connected with the Arab-Israeli conflict.

5. We favor discussion of the main joint problems (such as the Palestinian problem and peace obligations and guarantees) in a collective context, whether in plenary or committee, and the discussion of strictly bilateral questions in a bilateral context in the conference.

Mr. President,

We are not wedded to any specific organizational formula for the Geneva Conference. Nor do we want to complicate the way to the convening of the Conference. Our remarks are of a general character and can be expressed in various organizational forms.

I do hope sincerely that the Conference would be convened soon and that we can all then devote our efforts to the more fruitful, if equally painstaking, task of negotiating a just and durable settlement.

I am encouraged by your personal perseverance in this matter and your wise and fair judgement. I shall continue to work closely with you and cooperate to my fullest capacity so that our joint efforts may lead to a just peace in our region and a positive era of relationship between the Arab world and the United States.

I wish you every success together with good health and happiness.

End text. Comments reftel.

Pickering

138. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, October 27, 1977, 3:30 p.m.

SUBJECT

Soviet Jewry; Jewish-Arab Contacts; Middle East Peace

PARTICIPANTS

Nahum Goldmann, President, World Jewish Congress
The Secretary of State

Dr. Goldmann said he wished to speak about four subjects:

Klutznick Visit to Egypt

He said that President Sadat had sent him a message, via Tito, asking that he appoint a representative of the World Jewish Congress (WJC) to come to Egypt to meet with Sadat and make preparations for the visit of a high-level Jewish delegation in the near future. Goldmann appointed Philip Klutznick, chairman of the WJC Board, who will take over from him this weekend as the Congress' President. Klutznick had checked out the idea with both Begin and Dayan. Neither had any objection, but they had asked Klutznick to delay the visit for a few weeks, while "delicate negotiations" were in progress. Goldmann said he thought Klutznick should not delay and asked him to discuss the trip with Secretary Vance. If the Secretary agreed that Klutznick should not delay, Goldmann said he thought Klutznick should tell Dayan that, as an American citizen, he was heeding the advice of the Secretary of State and was proceeding to Egypt.

The Secretary said that Mr. Klutznick had not yet gotten in touch with him, but he would telephone him himself that afternoon and suggest that he make the trip soon.

Jewish-Arab Conference

Goldmann said that he had been trying for about a year to arrange a meeting of prominent Jewish and Arab intellectuals. There will be Israelis included on the Jewish side and Palestinians on the Arab side. The meeting would discuss Jewish-Arab relations: past, present, and future. Willy Brandt had agreed to try to arrange such a meeting, which is now tentatively scheduled for January 27–30, 1978 in Vienna. Sadat and Asad have been informed about the meeting by Brandt and

¹ Source: Department of State, Office of the Secretariat Staff, Records of Cyrus Vance, Secretary of State, 1977–1980, Lot 84D241, Box 10, Vance Nodis Memcons 1977. Confidential; Exdis. Drafted by G. Kulick (NEA/IAI). The meeting took place in the Secretary's office.

Kreisky respectively, and have not posed any objections. Professor Yudovich of Princeton is drawing up a proposed list of Arab invitees. There will be about sixty participants on each side. On the Jewish side, participants will include Saul Bellow, Pierre Mendes-France, and probably Henry Kissinger (“as a Jewish intellectual, not as American diplomat,” Goldmann noted.) Goldmann described the meeting, if it comes off, as a “moral breakthrough.”

Cultural Rights of Soviet Jews

Goldmann noted that for many years he had fought with little success for rights of Soviet Jews to publish their own newspapers, books, etc. and to worship freely, which he considered as important as the right to emigrate. Goldmann was convinced that this was an ideological problem for the Russians, because the Jews do not fit into their Marxist construct for dealing with “the nationalities problem.” Willy Brandt volunteered to Goldmann to raise this issue with Brezhnev, with whom Brandt has carried on a private personal correspondence (in their own handwriting) for a number of years. Brandt asked Goldmann to prepare a memorandum on the problem which he said he would send to Brezhnev as his own.

Goldmann said that Brandt had indeed passed the message to Brezhnev and had learned that his query had been referred to chief ideologue Mikhail Suslov. Suslov had asked that Goldmann be informed that he was working on the problem and that it would take a long time to resolve. Ambassador Dobrynin confirmed to Goldmann last May that Suslov had the problem in hand.

Dobrynin is trying to arrange for Jewish delegation headed by Goldmann to visit the USSR. Goldmann said he had laid down several conditions, including visiting six specified cities to meet with their Jewish communities, and a meeting with a top Soviet leader, preferably Suslov. Dobrynin had also asked Goldmann for a memorandum on the Jewish cultural-rights problem which he said that he would submit directly to Brezhnev.

Middle East Peace Negotiations

Goldmann said the subject he most wanted to discuss with the Secretary was Middle East peace. He led off by stating his disillusionment with Rabbi Schindler, Chairman of the President’s Conference, who he said used to be more of a dove than he, but who has now sold out his principles because of his ambitions. Goldmann urged the Secretary not to pay too much attention to criticisms from the American Jewish community for whom he expressed great disapprobation. He recalled that American Jewry had strongly resisted the partition of Palestine in the early days, but later came to praise President Truman for supporting such a solution. He predicted that if the present efforts for peace

through compromise bear fruit, the Jewish community will similarly praise President Carter. He added, however, that Israelis should not make major concessions for less than full peace, which he believes the Arabs were ready to accept. "The Jews are a very stubborn people. That is why they have survived," he said, but they must often be forced to do what is in their own best interest. The Bible says that God brought the Jews out of Egypt "with a strong arm", he said, because, as the Talmud notes, if He had not used "a strong arm", the Jews would never have left their bondage in Egypt.

Goldmann said that he had asked Kissinger why he had not forced the Israelis to make essential compromises for peace, and Kissinger replied that it was because President Ford had lacked a majority in Congress. President Carter has that majority, Goldmann said, and "I believe he can succeed where Ford could not." Goldmann said he feared we would drag out the peace process so long that a tragic war might break out.

The Secretary agreed that continued progress was essential if war was to be averted.

Goldmann said that he had received a message from one of Arafat's personal emissaries with whom he met regularly, saying that if Israel remained rigid and refused to deal with the PLO even after it accepted Resolution 242, the United States should agree to hold parallel talks with the PLO while the Geneva talks are going on. Goldmann said he believed that if the United States threatened this, the Israelis might change their mind and deal with the PLO. Arafat had asked that Goldmann pass this idea along to the Secretary.

The Secretary said he believed that it is still possible to resolve the Palestinian participation issue. The key is assuring that the Palestinian question is solidly on the Geneva agenda. If it is, the PLO will probably be flexible on who should speak for the Palestinians in negotiations. The Israelis have now accepted the idea of discussing the West Bank and Gaza problems with joint working groups of Jordanians, Egyptians, and Palestinians.

Goldmann said that PLO representatives have told him that if the United States would agree to deal with the PLO, the PLO will amend its covenant. Before the meeting of the Palestine National Council in April, Goldmann said he had advised his PLO interlocutor that the Council should delegate to Arafat and the Executive Committee the authority to amend the charter at a propitious time, without referring it back to the PNC. Prior to the recent Damascus meeting, the PLO had already decided to accept Resolution 242 in exchange for a dialogue with the United States. But when Begin got the Knesset to say that Israel will not deal with the PLO even if it changed its Covenant, the PLO drew back from accepting 242.

Goldmann said that he was now writing an article for the January, 1978 issue of *Foreign Affairs* on the subject of “The (George) Ball Thesis from a Zionist Point of View”. Goldmann said that he regarded Israel’s current leadership as caricatures of the Zionist ideal. He described Begin as a “retarded child”, who is brilliant in some spheres and hopelessly backward in others. As an example of the latter, when a member of a group of American Jewish scholars recently asked Begin how Israel will cope with the prospects of an Arab majority in Israel if Israel annexed the West Bank, Begin said that two million Jews would immigrate to Israel to settle the area within a few years!

Referring to his meeting with the American Jewish leadership, the Secretary said that they were angry, but he hoped that he had corrected some inaccurate assumptions and misperceptions of fact.² For example, they had believed that the Soviet-American statement had alienated the moderate Arabs, when in fact Egypt and Jordan had thanked us for issuing the statement, which they said had helped them greatly. We had also reassured the Jewish leaders that we would not use military and economic assistance as pressure against Israel.

Goldmann said he thought we might have gone too far in making such categorical assurances, since pressure would be needed in the future if peace was to be achieved.

² No memorandum of conversation has been found.

139. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Egypt¹

Washington, October 28, 1977, 1351Z

258388. Subject: Presidential Message for Sadat. Ref: Cairo 17817.²

1. To save time, we are sending you in this telegram the proposed talking points and Presidential message to Sadat for your meeting with him this evening. Text has not repeat not yet been fully approved and therefore cannot be delivered until we give you the green light. We will Flash and/or phone you as soon as approval is received, together with any last minute changes that may be made.³ If you have not heard from us as time for your meeting approaches, you will have to be judge of the latest time you must cancel appointment and request rescheduling Saturday morning.⁴

2. Following are points you should make orally as appropriate in delivering Presidential letter in para 3 below.

—We appreciate that Sadat and Fahmy are making a sincere attempt to suggest changes in the working paper that would make it acceptable to the Arab side. We recognize the importance of their concerns on the various points they raise. However, our objective appraisal is that while the working paper exercise has served a valuable purpose, we would all be wasting a lot of time trying to push it through to an agreed text. It is not just the problem of reconciling Egyptian and Israeli views; as Sadat and Fahmy know, the Syrian concept is far afield from either the Egyptian or Israeli positions.

—To continue the process of committing all this to writing will tend to widen rather than narrow the gap. We therefore think the time has come to get away from paper exercises. As we have repeatedly stressed, element of ambiguity is required if we are to make it to Geneva. We are convinced that, even though procedure can be related to

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P850052–2266. Secret; Flash; Exdis (Handle as Nodis). Drafted by Michael Sterner (NEA); cleared by Atherton, Quandt, and Thomas Martin (S/S–O); and approved by the Secretary. Repeated immediate on October 28 to the White House.

² In telegram 17817 from Cairo, October 28, Ambassador Eilts requested confirmation as to whether Carter's message to Sadat would be available by the time of his evening appointment with Sadat and Fahmy on October 28. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D770396–1028)

³ Telegram 258391 to Cairo, October 28, transmitted Carter's approval of the text of the message with two revisions. "In paragraph 2, delete first sentence of first tick. Second sentence, which becomes first sentence, revised to read: 'We recognize the importance of the concerns raised by Sadat and Fahmy on the various points they raise.'" (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P850052–2265)

⁴ October 29.

substance, negotiations create a dynamic of their own which will tend to reduce to more manageable proportions variations in procedural arrangements that can seem significant at the outset.

—We believe the President's letter contains the reassurance Egypt seeks on the question of the status of the multilateral working group or groups that are to take up the Palestinian question—i.e., West Bank and Gaza, and refugee problems. If Sadat queries you as to exactly how we see this working group constituted at Geneva, say we believe it should be set up in the same way as bilateral groups. Any written formulation attempting to describe precisely what this working group is supposed to do (e.g., “discuss” versus “negotiate”) is difficult to resolve and in any case essentially semantic, so we need move beyond this. We believe it will be possible at the plenary conference to define the responsibility and composition of this working group in simple terms that will be acceptable to both sides. We would not support any attempt to downgrade the importance of this group in relation to other working groups.

—If Sadat favors this new approach, we look to him to broach it with the Palestinian leadership and hope this can be done as soon as possible. We discussed this approach with Prince Saud,⁵ who seemed receptive. We will also be proposing it in next day or so to the Syrians and Jordanians, but wanted first to broach it with our Egyptian friends and get any quick, initial reaction they may have.

—We have not yet taken this up with the Israelis, and do not plan to pending a response from the Arab side. This puts a premium on expeditious response from the Arabs, since the longer we delay, the greater the risk of public leaks and attendant hardening of positions. It is obviously essential that the Arab leaders to whom we are communicating this proposal hold it in absolute confidence. Premature public disclosure of the working paper as a result of the Israeli Knesset debate has compounded the difficulty of reaching an agreed text. We want to do everything possible to avoid this problem in our new effort.

—For Sadat's own information, you may say the visit of Prince Saud here was cordial and very useful. Saud is a strong advocate of PLO participation at Geneva, and we were able to explain to him in detail the complexities of this issue and why we think ways have to be found to get around this issue. He felt that a statement by us making clear that the Palestinian question has to be dealt with at Geneva would make a solution of the representation issue easier.

⁵ See Document 136.

—As for the Syrian and Jordanian replies,⁶ they contained no surprises. The Syrians continue to want explicit PLO participation and favor having the main issues negotiated by the unified Arab delegation, although they did for the first time agree that geographic or bilateral groups could be formed to work out implementing details. The Jordanians also prefer that at least the peace and Palestinian issues be dealt with by the unified Arab delegation but indicated flexibility to accommodate the need to overcome procedural hurdles and get to Geneva.

3. Begin text of letter:

Dear President Sadat:

Thank you for your recent reply to my letter.⁷ I particularly appreciate the constructive approach reflected in your letter, as well as Foreign Minister Fahmy's helpful discussions with Ambassador Eilts. I am gratified that you share my view that we must not allow our main purpose to be thwarted by obstacles and delays over procedure.

I have now had the opportunity to study carefully your suggestions for changes in the working paper as well as the replies we have received from the other Arab governments. The exchanges we have been conducting concerning the working paper on procedures for a Geneva Conference have served a useful purpose. They have achieved agreement among the parties on some key points where before there had been serious disagreement, and they have pointed the way to the next steps we should now take in preparing to convene the Conference. So far as the text of the working paper itself is concerned, I do not, frankly, see any likelihood of reaching agreement on a paper acceptable to all parties nor do I believe that this is necessary. Keeping the concerns and desires of all the parties in mind, I believe there is sufficient flexibility, and that we have provided sufficient clarification of our views, to meet your basic concerns, with the understanding that any remaining problems can be worked out at Geneva where every party will be in a position to protect its interests. I believe we can now move boldly to convene the Conference in a way which will safeguard the positions of all.

I am planning to send letters in the next day or so to President Assad and King Hussein setting forth the new step we propose, but in the spirit of our close personal cooperation I wanted first to broach the subject with you and to seek any advice you might care to give. Since time is increasingly short, I would most appreciate it if you would give

⁶ For the Syrian reply, see Document 135 and for the Jordanian reply, see Document 137.

⁷ See Documents 133 and 131, respectively.

the matter consideration and convey your reaction and any initial comments to Ambassador Eilts when he calls upon you to deliver this letter.

The issues of principal concern to the Arab parties involved have been Palestinian representation and the organization of working groups and their relationship to the Conference plenary. With respect to the question of Palestinian representation, I believe we have already made significant progress in reaching agreement that Palestinian representatives can be included in a unified Arab delegation. On the basis that you and Foreign Minister Fahmy and I have already worked out, I believe it will be possible for Palestinian representatives to be chosen by the Arab side who will be acceptable to all and who will faithfully represent Palestinian views.

I know that there is concern on the Arab side, nevertheless, that the Palestinian question itself might not be adequately addressed at the Conference. While I fully understand this concern, I believe it is a needless one since I have long been convinced that no negotiations and no settlement are conceivable without a resolution of the Palestinian question. In order to remove any doubts on this score I am prepared, if the Arab side agrees to the course of action I am proposing in this letter, to make an unequivocal public statement that the Palestinian question, as well as the questions of withdrawal and borders and of peace, must be dealt with seriously at the Conference with the aim of finding a comprehensive solution to all aspects of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

So far as the functioning of the Conference is concerned, a continuing role for the Conference plenary is assured by following procedures agreed to when Geneva was first convened in December 1973. At that time, Secretary General Waldheim announced at the closing session that working groups created by the Conference would submit their reports to the Conference. Furthermore, we have with difficulty achieved Israeli agreement that there will be a unified Arab delegation with Palestinian representatives included, and that the West Bank and Gaza, as well as the refugee question, will be dealt with in multilateral or functional groups whose membership will include not only the states concerned but the Palestinian representatives as well.

With these understandings, I propose that I now proceed to work out with the Soviet co-chairman a call for reconvening the Geneva Conference. Specifically, I envisage following the procedure used in 1973, with a letter from the co-chairmen notifying Secretary General Waldheim that the parties have agreed to meet at Geneva. The letter would, in this case, state that the Arab parties have agreed to form a single delegation including Palestinian representatives; it would state that the Conference procedures followed in December 1973 should govern the reconvened Conference; and it would describe the working group

structure as bilateral except for those issues which it is generally recognized lend themselves to a multilateral approach.

As I mentioned at the beginning of this letter, it would be helpful to me, Mr. President, to have your reaction and advice on the course of action we now propose. It will not be easy, I fully appreciate, to persuade certain of the parties to proceed to Geneva with the element of ambiguity surrounding some of the procedural questions we have been discussing. Yet I am convinced that if we are to get to Geneva at all, it will have to be on this basis.

I would be particularly interested in your assessment as to how the Palestinians and Syrians would react to this proposal. I would also value any suggestions as to the tactics and arguments we can best use to bring them along.

I urge that you send me your private agreement to this procedure. If you will give me your help and trust by agreeing to the approach I have outlined with a view to reconvening the Geneva Conference in December, I will undertake the difficult task of obtaining Israeli agreement to this approach which I have not yet discussed with them. I cannot emphasize too strongly that, if this approach is to succeed, it must be held in absolute confidence.

I am convinced that we are now at a critical moment in the efforts my administration has been making since taking office nine months ago to chart a course that will lead to a just and lasting peace in the Middle East. I want to assure you again, with all the weight of my office and the strength of my personal convictions, that I intend to persist in the search for peace in the Middle East, however long this takes, and to use the influence of the United States to the fullest extent in this effort.

With my warmest regards, Jimmy Carter. End text.

Vance

140. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Syria¹

Washington, October 30, 1977, 0411Z

259812. For Ambassador from the Secretary; WH for Z. Brzezinski. Subject: Message From President Carter to Assad. Ref: Damascus 6626.²

1. You should request an appointment with President Assad as soon as possible to deliver the message from President Carter contained in paragraph 2 of this telegram.³ In delivering the message you should make the following points orally:

—Emphasize that the proposal made by the President in his message is an effort to move past the procedural issues and into active negotiations at Geneva. We understand the point made by President Assad in his October 21 letter⁴ that form is important to the extent that it is linked to substance. What we have tried to do is find a procedure that would create as few obstacles as possible while protecting the substantive interests of all the parties.

—The President's letter refers to the selection of Palestinian members of the Arab delegation. You should explain to Assad that what we have in mind is an arrangement along the following lines: The Arabs would select the individual delegates, including the Palestinians, by whatever method they choose. They would then inform us of the identity of the Palestinian members of the united Arab delegation, and we will undertake to ensure in advance that Israel will not use the presence of these individuals as an excuse not to attend the Conference. In describing this arrangement, stress that this is not a means for giving the Israelis a veto on individual members of the Arab delegation. We will urge Israel to be reasonable and will do our utmost to keep this procedure in quiet diplomatic channels. The Arab parties should be aware that a unified Arab delegation whose Palestinian members are not described in terms of organizational affiliation, and whose official positions do not make such organizational affiliation obvious, seems to us the only practical way of insuring Israel's participation in the negotiations.

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840076–0213. Secret; Niact Immediate; Nodis. Drafted by Sterner (NEA), cleared by Atherton and Quandt, and approved by Secretary Vance. Sent immediate for information to the White House.

² See Document 135.

³ Telegram 259811 to Amman, October 30, transmitted a substantively identical letter from Carter to King Hussein. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840084–1880)

⁴ The letter is in telegram 6626 to Damascus.

2. Begin text: Dear President Assad: I very much appreciated the effort you made in your October 21 letter to find a formula that would get us to Geneva without becoming bogged down in procedural disagreement. In the same spirit, and encouraged by your response, I strongly believe that the time has now come for us to move boldly to reconvene the Geneva Conference.

The working paper that I sent you⁵ enabled us to achieve agreement among the parties on some key points, such as a unified Arab delegation, including Palestinians. So far as the text of the working paper itself is concerned, however, I do not frankly see any likelihood of reaching agreement on a paper acceptable to all parties, nor do I believe this is necessary. Keeping the concerns and desires of all the parties in mind I believe there is sufficient flexibility, and that we have provided sufficient clarification of our views, to meet your basic concerns, with the understanding that any remaining problems can be worked out at Geneva where each party will be in a position to protect its interests.

I appreciate that there are two issues of particular importance to the Arab parties: the representation of the Palestinians in the negotiations, and the structure of the working groups and their relationship to the plenary.

With respect to Palestinian representation, I believe the procedure Ambassador Murphy will describe to you for selection of the Palestinian members of the Arab delegation will make it possible for Palestinians to be chosen by the Arab side who will faithfully represent Palestinian views.

I understand, moreover, that Arab concern about Palestinian representation would be eased if there could be some assurance that the Palestinian question will be adequately addressed at the Conference. I would be prepared, if the Arab side agrees to the course of action I am proposing in this letter, to make an unequivocal public statement that the Palestinian question, as well as the questions of withdrawal, security, and peace, must be dealt with at the Conference with the aim of finding a solution. I remain convinced that a Middle East settlement must include a just solution of the Palestinian question.

So far as the functioning of the Conference is concerned, a continuing role for the Conference plenary is assured by following procedures agreed to when Geneva was first convened in December 1973. At that time, Secretary General Waldheim announced at the closing session that working groups would submit their reports to the Conference.

⁵ See Document 131.

Furthermore, we have with difficulty achieved Israeli agreement that there will be a unified Arab delegation with Palestinian representatives included, and that the West Bank and Gaza, as well as the refugee question, will be dealt with in multinational groups whose membership will include not only the states concerned but the Palestinian representatives as well. Whatever differences remain over the composition and functioning of these groups should be possible to resolve at Geneva.

Finally, to ensure coordination on the Arab side with respect to issues dealt with in bilateral working groups, there is nothing to prevent the Arabs from stating that no agreements reached will come into force until agreement has been reached on all aspects of a peace settlement, including the Palestinian aspect.

With these understandings, I propose that I now proceed to work out with the Soviet co-chairman a call for reconvening the Geneva Conference. Specifically, I envisage following the procedure used in 1973, with a letter from the co-chairmen notifying Secretary General Waldheim that the parties have agreed to meet at Geneva. The letter would, in this case, state that the Arab parties have agreed to form a single delegation including Palestinian representatives; it would state that the Conference procedures followed in December 1973 should govern the reconvened Conference; and it would describe the working group structure as bilateral, except for those issues which it is generally recognized lend themselves to a multilateral approach.

I urge that you send me your private agreement to this procedure. If you will give me your help and trust by agreeing to the approach I have outlined with a view to reconvening the Geneva Conference in December, I will undertake the difficult task of obtaining Israeli agreement to this approach, which I have not yet discussed with them. I cannot emphasize too strongly that, if this approach is to succeed, it must be held in absolute confidence. Any publicity would clearly destroy its chances of success and probably any hope of reconvening Geneva this year.

I am convinced that we are now at a critical moment in the efforts my administration has been making since taking office nine months ago to chart a course that will lead to a just and lasting peace in the Middle East. I want to assure you again, with all the weight of my office and the strength of my personal convictions, that I intend to persist in the search for peace in the Middle East, however long this takes, and to use the influence of the United States to the fullest extent of this effort.

With my best wishes, Sincerely, Jimmy Carter. End text.

Vance

141. Telegram From the Embassy in Egypt to the Department of State¹

Cairo, November 3, 1977, 2255Z

18241. Eyes only for the Secretary from Ambassador. Subj: Letter From President Sadat to President Carter. Ref: (A) para 5, Cairo 17863, (B) Cairo 18232.²

1. Shortly after his first call, Fahmy called again to ask me to come right over to his apartment. When I arrived, he recalled President Sadat's comment to me of a few days ago of a "bold new initiative" that Sadat was contemplating (Ref A) and said he had a message to President Carter on the subject. Fahmy said the President was anxious that his message be seen only by President Carter, you and Dr. Brzezinski on the Washington side, and hoped that President Carter could give him his reaction by Saturday, November 5. Did I still have "back channel" used during previous administration?³ Told him this had been discontinued under new administration, but I thought message could be safeguarded in manner Sadat wished. Fahmy then gave me two documents, the first being a personal letter from President Sadat to President Carter, dated November 3, 1977, and the second a proposal by President Sadat to convene an international Middle East summit conference in the Arab sector of Jerusalem in December. Texts of these documents follow:

2. Text of personal letter from President Sadat to President Carter:

Quote: Dear President Carter,

You may recall that I, in my personal letter delivered to you on Monday, October 31, 1977,⁴ while supporting your tireless efforts to

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Subject File, Box 67, Middle East: Peace Negotiations 1977 Vol. III [II]. Top Secret; Immediate; Eyes Only; Nodis; Cherokee. Sent to the White House Eyes Only for Brzezinski as telegram 263868, which is the original.

² In telegram 17863 from Cairo, October 28, Ambassador Eilts reported on his meeting with Sadat on October 28 when Eilts read to Sadat the letter from Carter in Document 139. Eilts reported that Sadat believed a "very bold act" was required in the current situation. Eilts added that Sadat believed this especially important considering the growing pressure that pro-Israeli forces were mounting in the United States. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P850052-1874) In telegram 18232 from Cairo, Ambassador Eilts reported on his phone conversation with Foreign Minister Fahmy, which included Fahmy's comment that "he might get in touch with me later this evening on an 'important matter.'" (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P850052-1867)

³ In 1972, President Nixon authorized Henry Kissinger to open a back channel with Fahmy that remained in place through the Ford administration.

⁴ According to Carter's diary, Sadat sent him a "private" handwritten and sealed letter that responded to Carter's letter of October 21, which is quoted in Document 134. Carter wrote that in Sadat's letter, Sadat "said he's going to take bold action to strip away the argument about semantics and get down to the real issues of Geneva. He didn't indicate what he would do." (*White House Diary*, p. 126) This letter has not been found.

convene the Geneva Conference this year, informed you of my intention to propose a bold step in order to accelerate and enhance the process of peace towards a final settlement.

I was and am still committed to the points we discussed. Having this in mind, I have been evaluating the evolution of the peace process since the first meeting of the Geneva Conference up to your efforts since you have assumed the Presidency. Now, I am fully convinced that much time and effort were spent on issues of procedural nature, to the extent that the procedural aspects overshadowed the substantive essentials for peace. Moreover, I believe that if this situation is to continue unchecked, it would jeopardize the prospects of peace through endless bickering over procedural issues.

For the aforementioned reasons, I would like to inform you that I feel it imperative to move substantially ahead by proposing a new formula which I hope, would constitute a breakthrough on the road to peace.

Therefore, I came to the conclusion that it is necessary to upgrade the level of the peace conference, together with reaching specific decisions on the major problems pertaining to the final settlement.

Moreover, I believe it would be useful to enlarge the membership of the forum to discuss the “essentials of peace”, adding certain powers which carry a certain weight on account of their status. It is with this in mind that I am proposing a major step in the form of an international summit conference for peace in the Middle East.

I am sure that you will notice, Mr. President, from the annexed text of the proposal that the site of the conference would be the Arab sector of Jerusalem. Also, it may be noted that the terms of reference of the proposed summit are worded in such a manner as to conform to the established norms which have been accepted by the international community and reiterated in policy statements issued by the European Community, the United States Government and the Soviet-U.S. joint communiqué of October 1, 1977.

It is apparent that there is no contradiction between the proposed summit, which should last only for a few days, and the Geneva Conference which is to receive the decisions of the summit in order to translate them into peace treaties.

I have advisedly proposed the convening of the summit conference during the month of December, so that the Geneva Peace Conference would meet immediately afterwards on the basis of your initiative. I sincerely hope that you will find it possible to lend your support to this proposal as it is designed mainly to cement and bolster your initiative and endeavor to achieve a just and lasting peace in the near future.

I would like to inform you that I have not consulted with any other leader on this proposed initiative except you, Mr. President. I would like you to know that I intend to make this initiative public in my speech addressing the People's Assembly on November 9, 1977.

Sincerely yours

Mohamed Anwar el-Sadat Unquote.

3. Text of President Sadat's proposal:

Quote:

I. An International Summit Conference for Peace in the Middle East shall be convened in the Arab sector of Jerusalem during the month of December 1977 for the purpose of achieving a just and lasting peace in the region.

The leaders of the United States, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the People's Republic of China, France, the United Kingdom, Israel, the Arab Republic of Egypt, the Syrian Arab Republic, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, Lebanon, Mr. Yassir Arafat and the United Nations Secretary General will take part in the Conference.

II. The mandate of the Conference is the establishment of a just and lasting peace based on the following terms of reference:

1—The termination of the Israeli occupation of all Arab territories occupied since 1967.

2—The formulation of adequate guarantees necessary to safeguard the political independence and territorial integrity of all states in the area and their right to live in peace.

3—The realization of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people.

4—The termination of belligerency and the conclusion of peace treaties between the parties.

III. The Summit Conference shall refer its decisions to the President of the Security Council, so that the Security Council transmits it to the Geneva Conference, which shall be convened forthwith with a view to formulate the decisions of the Summit Conference into peace treaties to be concluded between the parties concerned.

The Geneva Conference shall fulfill its task as soon as possible, and at any rate, not later than June 30, 1978, Unquote.

4. Fahmy then said he wished to add a few explanatory comments.

A. Sadat's new proposal, he asserted, does not contradict President Carter's recent new initiative, but is complementary and supportive.

B. So far as Egypt is concerned, it does not care which of the invitees from the big powers will or will not come. If, for example, China does not wish to come, this is perfectly all right.

C. The purpose behind Sadat's new initiative, Fahmy explained, is "to give momentum and a real push to the peace efforts and to take some of the domestic pressure off President Carter."

D. So far as the mandate for the proposed conference (para II of proposal) is concerned, he thought this was very mildly cast. Thus, the termination of Israeli occupation language was very close to that used by the EC-9 and is fully consistent with the preambular language of UN Resolution 242 on the non-acquisition of territory by force. The guarantees were consistent with what has repeatedly been discussed. The legitimate rights of the Palestinian people are mentioned, but he, Fahmy, had deliberately chosen not to speak of Palestinian state. He thought the pertinent language was virtually the same as the US/Soviet joint communiqué, which President Carter had reiterated only yesterday.⁵ He also drew attention to the fact that he had specifically mentioned treaties rather than agreements and said he had done so advisedly.

5. Such a summit conference, Fahmy continued, could give "serious instructions" to the subsequent Geneva Conference. It would in no way change plans for Geneva as they have been developed in President Carter's most recent proposal. The Israelis, Fahmy contended, should be happy with Sadat's new proposal. It involves Arab leaders (including Arafat) going to Jerusalem and "shaking hands" directly with Begin. It should not frighten Israelis since both the UK and French are friendly. It is also consistent, he argued, with the US/Soviet joint communiqué. So far as the Chinese are concerned, if they should decide to show up, he was sure they will not harass the Israelis.

6. As I was leaving, Fahmy said President Carter should feel free to give Sadat his candid comments on the Egyptian proposal. He claimed, incidentally, that apart from Sadat, Fahmy and myself, no one in Egypt yet knows about the proposal.

Eilts

Unquote.

Vance

⁵ On November 2, Carter spoke to the World Jewish Congress on this subject. (*Public Papers: Carter, 1978, Book II, pp. 1955–1957*)

142. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Egypt¹

Washington, November 5, 1977, 0129Z

264771. For the Ambassador Only From the Secretary. Subject: Message for Sadat.

1. You should seek an appointment at the earliest possible opportunity to deliver the following letter to President Sadat from President Carter.

2. Begin text: Dear Mr. President: Ambassador Eilts has conveyed to me your tentative proposal for calling an international summit meeting to be held in Arab Jerusalem.² I very much appreciate your trust and confidence in seeking my views on your idea prior to announcing it or discussing it with others.

3. After serious reflection, I must tell you that this public announcement may seriously complicate, rather than facilitate, the search for peace in the Middle East. Without careful and private agreement being reached that the leaders of Israel, Syria, the Soviet Union and other nations would attend, their public rejection might be embarrassing both to them and to those who would be willing to participate.

4. There is a strong possibility that the first order of real business, no matter who attends, will be procedural or structural in nature and this is the type of work which heads of state would prefer that others carry out.

5. Mr. President, my own limited experience and study of history indicate that a summit conference is often a better forum for confirming agreements previously arrived at through quiet diplomacy than for reaching new agreements, and especially when the views of participants are as divergent as they are with respect to the final terms of a Middle East peace settlement.

6. I believe that we have made good progress, and an initiative as bold as this may indicate an abandonment of the tediously evolved and fragile agreements already reached.

7. After Geneva is convened and progress is begun, your proposal could always be made at a crucial and dramatic moment to avoid failure or to consummate success.

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840072–2098. Secret; Niact Immediate; Nodis; Cherokee. Drafted and approved by Secretary Vance. Cleared by Tarnoff and Lowell Fleischer (S/S–O). Repeated immediate on November 5 to the White House.

² See Document 141.

8. You asked me to comment privately and frankly, Mr. President, and I have done so. In the spirit of the close personal relationship between us, I strongly hope that you will not make your proposal at this time.

9. Let me add that I am making intensive efforts to obtain agreement from all parties, and especially the Syrians, to our proposed procedures so that the Geneva Conference can open soon. With warm wishes, Sincerely, Jimmy Carter. End text.

Vance

143. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Saudi Arabia¹

Washington, November 5, 1977, 0130Z

264772. For the Ambassador From the Secretary. Subject: Message From the President to King Khalid.

1. You should arrange urgently to convey following letter from the President to King Khalid.

2. Begin text:

Your Majesty: I am asking Ambassador West to deliver this letter to you urgently because of my concern that we not lose momentum in our efforts to reconvene the Geneva Middle East Peace Conference. In the certainty that you share my conviction of the importance of this goal for our two nations, I am writing to seek your help in bringing the Arab parties together so that we may not lose the present opportunity.

As Your Majesty is aware from my discussions with Prince Saud,² and from further details that Ambassador West has conveyed to His Highness, we believe that no further time should be wasted on procedural questions, and that we must proceed directly to reconvene the Conference. This requires acceptance by both sides of pragmatic solutions to the problems we have been discussing. Palestinian delegates who can effectively represent Palestinian views should be included as members of the unified Arab delegation, but the Arab parties should

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840081–2089. Secret; Niact Immediate; Nodis; Cherokee. Drafted by Sterner; cleared by Atherton, Habib, Quandt, and Lowell Fleischer (S/S–O); and approved by Secretary Vance.

² See Document 136.

understand that Israel will not negotiate with well known PLO members. There must also be agreement that primary emphasis in negotiations will be on bilateral working groups, except for a multilateral group or groups that would take up the Palestinian issues. The 1973 procedures, which we approve, give the plenary group a significant role to play.

I am convinced that under such arrangements the Arabs will be able to negotiate with confidence and with the assurance that the substantive issues of deep concern to them will be fully dealt with. You have my guarantee that the United States will not permit conference procedures to be used to place any party at an unfair disadvantage. At Geneva, we will be able to use our full influence to ensure progress toward a just and lasting peace. I hope I can count on your trust and confidence in my determination to pursue this course whatever the difficulties, because the national interests of the United States require it.

We have had encouraging initial responses from Prime Minister Begin, President Sadat and King Hussein, but I am frankly more concerned about Syria and the Palestinians. It is evident that significant differences persist within Arab ranks. As time passes while the Arabs consider their reply, public statements are beginning to appear that indicate growing disillusionment with the prospects of reconvening the conference.

I am convinced, Your Majesty, that our two governments must act vigorously and promptly if we are to arrest this dangerous drift. It would be a tragedy if Arab disunity or the persistence of unrealistic demands on the part of some of the Arab parties were the cause of our missing the opportunity to get to Geneva. If we allow the present opportunity to slip by, I do not believe another will occur for a long time to come.

Our two nations have much at stake in seeing that no further time is lost in achieving agreement on a reconvened conference. The friendship between our two countries is such that I know that you will do your utmost to bring the Arab parties together in a prompt and positive response to our proposal which I conveyed to Presidents Sadat and Assad and to King Hussein after discussing it with Prince Saud in Washington.

With my warm personal wishes for Your Majesty's continued success and good health.

Sincerely, Jimmy Carter. End text.

Vance

144. Telegram From the Embassy in Egypt to the Department of State¹

Cairo, November 9, 1977, 2120Z

18646. Subj: Arab-Israeli Aspects of Sadat Nov 9 Speech.

Summary: in dramatic and emotional ending to People's Assembly speech, Sadat extensively praised Pres Carter's peace efforts, emphasized importance of Geneva being held and his determination to "go to the Knesset itself" to insist on withdrawal from occupied territories and recognition of legitimate rights of Palestinians. Neither Israel nor any other power nor wrangling over procedural matters would be able to stop him. Sadat also announced agreement to visit Asad in near future and sending of VP Mubarak to mediate Algerian Moroccan dispute.² Sadat considers Arab summit meeting premature. End summary

1. During course of 2 hour and 20 minute speech Nov 9 inaugurating new session of PA (almost all of which read from prepared text and all but 50 minutes devoted to domestic affairs), Sadat's most dramatic announcements were given in series of extemporaneous insertions.

2. Sadat extensively praised Pres Carter for giving "top priority" and devoting "great efforts" to peace process. Carter had for first time placed problem of Palestinians before American people in its human and political dimension, including right to self-determination and setting up a state on their own soil. Similarly joint US-USSR statement demonstrated unanimity of view of superpower "although recent history has shown no superpower can dictate its will to anybody". "Statement is positive" and helps open way to Geneva.

3. Sadat said as result of 1973 War, Arabs had succeeded in exporting to Israel frustrations that Arabs had experienced and it is these Israeli frustrations which explain "hysterical way" in which Israel has treated US working paper. In fact his working group proposal that Israel had rejected was nothing more than a proposal put to Sec Vance last Aug. He emphasized that Geneva must be held and Palestinian reps must be chosen in a free way with which Israel has nothing to do.

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D770426-0780. Unclassified; Immediate. Sent immediate for information to Algiers, Amman, Damascus, Beirut, Tel Aviv, Rabat, Jidda, Moscow, and London. Sent for information to Paris.

² Beginning in 1976, Algeria provided bases and military support for the Polisario, a military group that sought control of the former Spanish Western Sahara, under the control at that point of Morocco. Accordingly, Algeria and Morocco experienced increased tensions during the late 1970s.

4. Egypt is not concerned with procedural aspects, but wants to go to Geneva to negotiate the crux of the problem regardless of procedures. In forceful, emotional terms, Sadat said he is going to Geneva to insist on the withdrawal from occupied territories and recognition of the legitimate rights of Palestinians and neither Israel nor any other power will be able to stop him. Israel is only trying to make Arabs frustrated and hysterical by procedural wrangling so Arabs will say they won't go to Geneva. Sadat said he was prepared before the Assembly, before the Arab world and all of the world to say "I am ready to go to the Knesset itself to debate with them" (this comment drew strong approval from Assembly).

5. Arab coordination. After emphasizing importance of Arab solidarity from prepared text, Sadat earlier in speech departed from text to say that during trip he had worked hard for coordination with Saudis and was very pleased to have Arafat in attendance tonight (sitting between VP Mubarak and PM Salim) as Chairman of PLO, the "only legal rep of Palestinians". Sadat revealed that shortly before session, he had spoken with Pres Asad on the phone and agreed to visit Asad in Damascus after "tending to some pressing issues at home". Sadat expressed sadness over today's news of tension between Algiers and Morocco and announced VP Mubarak would depart tomorrow in attempt to mediate that dispute.

6. Arab summit. Sadat left little doubt that in his mind an Arab summit was "premature". Arab strategy decided upon at Rabat summit that there would be no bargaining over Palestinian rights and that PLO was sole legitimate rep of Palestinians was still valid. Since "we are on verge of going to Geneva" there was no need for summit to determine new strategy. However, Egypt remains committed to concept of solidarity and if others wanted it, Egypt would be in the forefront as always.

4. Further details and comment by septel.

Eilts

145. Telegram From the Embassy in Egypt to the Department of State¹

Cairo, November 10, 1977, 1540Z

18742. Subj: Sadat's Nov 9 speech: Geneva or Bust. Ref (A) Cairo 18646, (B) FBIS JN091832Y, (C) Cairo 18743 (Notal).²

Summary: Although only one third of Sadat speech devoted to foreign affairs, it was forceful reiteration of his commitment to peace settlement, reliance on US, Israeli withdrawal and Palestinian rights. Sadat has, at considerable risk, put Israel and other Arabs on notice that Egypt will not be deterred by procedural issues from going to Geneva. Move is consistent with Sadat strategy since 1973 and forced upon him by what he perceives as Israeli intransigence, Arab wrangling and necessity to give greater support to US peace efforts. If Geneva does not take place soon Sadat may find himself uncomfortably far out in front of his Arab brothers. End summary.

1. Foreign policy portion of Sadat's Nov 9 speech to PA devoted to peace process. Said Egypt's goal establishment of peace, which will enable everyone to live in his homeland and within secure borders. He reviewed recent efforts to reconvene early Geneva, noting Egypt wants serious conference to reach just and comprehensive settlement within set time table. Conf must not become platform for propaganda.

2. US. Sadat praised Pres Carter for giving ME problem top priority over domestic and international issues. Egypt "very appreciative". However, Sadat noted US bears special responsibility in view of political, diplomatic and military support it has extended Israel. Despite this, within a few months of assuming office, Pres Carter forced American people for first time to address Palestinian question in its political and humanitarian aspects. Said this first serious attempt to "correct US policy" and "establish it on sound principles."

3. Working papers. Sadat reviewed history of "working papers" to facilitate resumption of Geneva. Said second version drafted under "influence of furious Israeli campaign" aimed at compelling US resume stand of absolute support for Israel. Under these circumstances it "nat-

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D770415–0983. Confidential; Immediate. Sent for information to Abu Dhabi, Algiers, Amman, Baghdad, Beirut, Damascus, Jerusalem, Jidda, Khartoum, Kuwait, London, Moscow, Paris, Rabat, Tel Aviv, the U.S. Mission at Sinai, and Tunis.

² Telegram 18646 from Cairo is Document 144. In telegram 18743 from Cairo, November 10, Ambassador Eilts summarized the portion of Sadat's November 9 speech to the Egyptian People's Assembly that dealt with domestic affairs. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D770417–0139) FBIS JN091832Y has not been found.

ural for Egypt to have reservations” about paper, which it had not hesitated to express frankly.

4. US/USSR statement. Sadat noted joint Soviet/American statement positive despite fact that, during last quarter-century, superpowers cannot impose their will on anyone. Nevertheless, because of statement road to Geneva now open on new basis which “differs from Israel’s views”.

5. Two points. Sadat stressed Egyptian position based on two points: representation of Palestinian people must be “free and true”, and one “in which Israel has no connection or say”; and discussion of Palestinian issue, including political and humanitarian aspects, must be within atmosphere “free of ambiguity and falsehoods”.

6. Opportunity. Sadat maintained current period offers historical opportunity force Israel abandon occupied territories and expansionist dreams. At same time, Israel must cease opposing “Palestinian peoples rights for dignified and honorable life in their homeland . . . ” Otherwise, it will be forced to “unmask its true face to the world.” Said Egypt does not fear confrontation with Israel—Arab strength surpasses anything Israel can mobilize. Following Oct War, Israel shrunk to normal size: it is state which can be stopped; whose aggression can be repulsed.

7. Coordination. Sadat maintained progress possible because of Arab solidarity. Noted his coordination efforts in Saudi Arabia, with Arafat, King Hussein and Asad. (Description of Arafat, who was present, as “leader of PLO, sole legitimate rep of Palestinian people” was sole such reference in course of speech). Said he had talked with Asad on phone before addressing meeting and would visit Damascus after completing some “pressing tasks”. On Arab summit, said Egypt does not object but feels meeting at this time “premature”. Rabat strategy still applicable; nothing has changed. If, however, other Arabs want conf, Egypt will not object.

8. Procedures and Geneva. Sadat disclaimed interest in procedural aspects of getting to Geneva. Said “We are prepared to go to Geneva and sit there for the sake of peace, irrespective of all the procedural claims Israel is making . . . ” Egypt will agree to any procedural process. Quibbles over procedure are Israel trick to get Arabs reject conf. Israeli procedural objections one result of fact that after Oct war Arabs “transferred to Israel all factors of division . . . ” Israel nervous and hysterical. At Geneva, Egypt will demand return of Arab territories occupied in 1967 and Palestinian rights, including right establish own state. “Neither Israel nor any power will be able to prevent Egypt from demanding these legitimate rights” whatever procedures are agreed upon. Point is to get to Geneva.

9. Knesset. In most emotional passage, Sadat said “I am ready to go to Geneva . . . I am ready to go to the ends of the earth . . . I am ready to go to their house, to the Knesset itself, to debate them”.

10. Comment: Sadat's offer to go to Knesset is a first for an Arab leader and should be seen as his way of dramatizing lengths to which he prepared to go to achieve peace, not as serious possibility. Principal aims of Sadat's obviously carefully thought out, although seemingly extemporaneous and emotional remarks on peace process were, in our view (A) to demonstrate Egypt's commitment to Pres Carter's peace efforts and to to give additional support to them in face of mounting Israel Zionist pressure; (B) to remind Syrians and PLO that Egypt alone among Arab states has option of going it alone; (C) to stress that Sadat will not be diverted from substantive negotiations on core issues of withdrawal and rights of Palestinians by peripheral or procedural matters, either by Israelis or other Arabs. (This position is fully consistent with Sadat's negotiating strategy during Sinai I and Sinai II and his refusal to treat such matters as Gulf of Suez conflict and anti-boycott legislation as other than peripheral matters.); and (D) to spell out more forcefully than heretofore that Arabs, at least Egypt, will not fall into Israeli "trap" as they have so many times in the past by overreacting to Israeli hard line positions or military action by saying no to negotiations. (As if to emphasize this point Sadat did not even mention Nov 9 Israeli strikes in Southern Lebanon.)³

10. Whether purposefully or not Sadat also seemingly undermined Fon-Ministers meeting in Tunis beginning Nov 12.⁴ He made clear that Arab coordination on peace process already taking place at chiefs-of-state level with Saudi Arabia, from which he had just returned; Jordan, whose King had just visited Cairo; and Syria, which he is to visit in the near future. Furthermore, Sadat considers Arab strategy decided upon at Rabat as still valid and sees no basis for summit meeting to amend it. Nevertheless, GOE officials will be watching closely Syrian actions at FonMin meeting to see if Syrians go beyond expected theatrics and seriously attempt to mobilize Arab world against Sadat.

11. With regard to Sadat's visit to Damascus after settling "pressing business" we understand that wording designed to avoid setting date in order await outcome of FonMins meeting and Asad reaction to speech. Sadat has been irritated by Syrian concentration on procedural aspects of reconvened Geneva and last night was obvious effort to force Asad's hand.

12. Arafat, too, must wonder whether Sadat prepared to go Geneva without PLO. Egyptian press did stress that Palestinians must be

³ On November 6, several Palestinian rockets struck the northern Israeli town of Nahariya, killing two Israelis. On November 8, the IDF retaliated with artillery attacks on Palestinian positions in Southern Lebanon. On November 9, the IDF launched airstrikes at Palestinian positions in Southern Lebanon. ("Israel Attacks Sites in Southern Lebanon With Jet and Artillery," *New York Times*, November 9, 1977, p. 8)

⁴ The Arab League Foreign Ministers met in Tunis November 12–14.

represented by freely Arab chosen del but did not specify that this be drawn from Arafat's ranks. His assertion that Egypt agrees to "any procedural process" is apparent acceptance of Israel's right to reject PLO negotiating role. Despite this, Sadat "is going to Geneva."

13. Behind Sadat's decision to publicly dispense with procedural issue in favor of concentration on substance is suspicion that Israel has no intention of concluding settlement at this time. Sadat may feel that only by demonstrating this to world in unequivocal manner will he be able to obtain degree of US pressure he feels necessary to force ME solution. He showed little give on crux of Arab position: Israel must withdraw and recognize Palestinian rights, including right to establish own state. Where he did give was on how to get Israel to confront these demands across bargaining table. Latter, to Sadat, is central issue.

14. In short, Sadat has at considerable risk demonstrated once again sincerity of his commitment to a peaceful settlement and determination to get to Geneva and negotiate the core issues. It is not, in our view, a move he has made out of desperation, but a move consistent with the strategy he has pursued since 1973 and one that he perceives is now forced upon him by Israeli "intransigence" and need of US administration for Arab support in face Zionist pressures.

15. His hand will be strengthened if gambit succeeds and co-sponsors able to convene Geneva in relatively near future. If, however, conference is long delayed, Sadat may find that he has gotten out uncomfortably far beyond his Arab brothers.

Eilts

146. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Egypt¹

Washington, November 12, 1977, 1645Z

271710. For Ambassador. Subject: Message for President Sadat From President Carter.

1. Please convey at earliest possible time the following message from President Carter to President Sadat.

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P850052-2257. Secret; Niact Immediate; Nodis. Drafted in the White House, approved by Atherton, and cleared by James Thyden (S/S-O).

2. Begin text:

Dear President Sadat:

Ambassador Eilts has kept me informed of the forthright and courageous stand that you have taken in public and in your consultations with other Arab leaders regarding the need to reach agreement now on the reconvening of the Geneva Conference.

Your forceful reiteration of Egypt's commitment to peace and of your determination not to be deterred or delayed by petty differences over procedure are acts of uncommon statesmanship. You have my admiration and my pledge to work hand in hand together for the peace that we both seek. The coming days will be crucial to our effort to bring about an early reconvening of the Geneva Conference. If we persevere—and we shall—I am sure we shall succeed.

I am proud of your friendship.

Sincerely,

Jimmy Carter.

End text.

Vance

147. Memorandum of Telephone Conversation¹

November 17, 1977, 3:53–4 p.m.

PARTICIPANTS

President Carter

Prime Minister Begin

Begin: Good to hear your voice. How is your mother? Give my regards to your family.

I am proud to inform you that President Sadat is arriving on Saturday² at 7:30 p.m. The next morning he will pray at the Mosque of the Dome. I will invite him to go with me to Yad Vashem.³

¹ Source: Carter Library, President's Plains File. Secret.

² November 19. On November 12 in Tel Aviv, Begin issued an invitation to Sadat to come to Jerusalem for talks. ("Begin Invites Sadat To Visit Jerusalem for Talks on Peace," *New York Times*, November 13, 1977, p. 7)

³ Yad Vashem is a Holocaust museum in Jerusalem.

Carter: I will call President Sadat and urge him to go to Yad Vashem.

Begin: Thank you. On Sunday in the afternoon President Sadat will address the Knesset and Sunday evening he will be entertained at a State dinner. We will receive him with full military honors; one of our best units will be at the airport to greet him.

I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart for what you have done. Without you it could not have happened. I am sending you a cable which we will publish.⁴ The world should know of your contribution.

Carter: You must have observed Fahmy has resigned.⁵ There is the need for some tangible contribution for Sadat to take home. He has run high risks. There should be something tangible that he can take as a success.

Begin: Both US Ambassadors—the one here and the one in Cairo—have done much to make this possible. I will write you more fully on Tuesday.⁶

Carter: There has been a great response in this country to this initiative.

The conversation concludes with an exchange of salutations and best wishes.

⁴ Not further identified.

⁵ On November 15, Egyptian Foreign Minister Ismail Fahmy submitted his resignation, which was announced on November 17, in protest over Sadat's decision to visit Jerusalem. In telegram 19286 from Cairo, November 18, Ambassador Eilts offered an extensive analysis of Fahmy's resignation and its potential impact on Egyptian politics. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D770434-0112)

⁶ November 22.

148. Telegram From the Department of State to the White House¹

Washington, November 18, 1977, 1510Z

276353. Subject: Instruction for Ambassador.

1. Through your talks with Begin and Dayan and Habib's November 10 briefing of Dinitz (State 269650)² we have kept the Israelis informed of the general tenor of our discussions with the Egyptians, Jordanians and Syrians regarding Geneva procedural problems. Since the subject may come up during the Sadat visit, we want Begin and Dayan to be filled in fully on the situation as it now stands.

2. As Israelis know, for over a month now the United States has been engaged in consultations with Egypt, Jordan and Syria in an effort to overcome the procedural obstacles to the reconvening of the Geneva Conference. Immediately after receiving GOI concurrence in the working paper, the President wrote to Sadat, Hussein and Asad to transmit the text of the working paper and to urge that they accept it as a basis for the reconvening of the Geneva Conference.³ Arab responses underscored the difficulty of getting agreement on a text which would pin down all outstanding procedural questions. The Egyptians wanted to go back to an earlier draft of the working paper which mentioned non-prominent PLO, called for "negotiation" of the West Bank/Gaza issue and specifically stated that the working groups would report to the plenary. Syrians stuck to their demand that the plenary do the substantive negotiating, though Asad was ready to have the plenary's decisions implemented by bilateral working groups (we did not seek from Asad elucidation of this idea and therefore do not know precisely what he had in mind). Jordanians maneuvered for ground somewhere in between the Egyptians and the Syrians.

3. As our consultations with the Arab parties proceeded it became clear to us that any effort to negotiate a detailed text of agreed procedures for Geneva would involve, at a minimum, protracted exchanges, with the danger ever present that hardening of attitudes and public statements could make it difficult or impossible to reach the objective of

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Subject File, Box 20, Geneva: Israel: 10–11/77. Secret; Immediate; Nodis; Cherokee. Sent for action to Tel Aviv and Jerusalem. Sent for information to Cairo, Amman, Damascus, and Jidda.

² In telegram 269650 to Tel Aviv, November 11, the Department reported on Under Secretary of State Habib's briefing of Dinitz about U.S. talks with Arabs over the reconvening of the Geneva Conference. Habib noted that the United States was waiting for an Arab response to the working paper's procedures for convening the conference. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840070–0418)

³ See Document 131.

opening negotiations. At the same time, it was evident that, when one left aside texts, the parties shared much common ground. What we needed was an approach that would permit us to get to Geneva without becoming bogged down in procedural disagreement but would at the same time protect the parties' substantive interests.

4. We have been considering an approach which we believe will do so and have explored it in our exchanges with the Arabs. This is that the United States, along with the Soviet Union as co-chairman, proceed to notify the United Nations Secretary General that the parties have agreed to meet at Geneva. This is the method used for convening the December 1973 Geneva Middle East Peace Conference. Our letter to the Secretary General would state that the Arab parties have agreed to form a single delegation including Palestinian representatives; it would further state that the conference procedures followed in 1973 should govern the reconvened conference; and it would describe the working group structure as bilateral except for those issues which it is generally recognized lend themselves to a multilateral approach. Formula for choosing the Palestinian members of the united Arab delegation would remain the one agreed upon between Dayan and ourselves during the New York talks,⁴ though of course this would not be stated in the letter to the Secretary General or in any other document.

5. Israelis will recognize that foregoing evolution of our thinking was reflected in Habib's November 10 talk with Dinitz and Lewis' meeting with Dayan same day.⁵ We believe that the foregoing approach offers the kind of constructive ambiguity which is needed if the parties are to be able to move past procedural issues into active negotiations at Geneva. Some problems are going to have to be left unresolved at this stage in confidence and faith that they will become resolvable when larger perspectives open at Geneva. At the same time, we want to stress that what we suggest is fully consonant with the working paper which the U.S. and Israeli Governments have agreed upon; it does not in any way contradict or abrogate the terms of the working paper.

6. Sadat has accepted the approach described above and Hussein views it favorably. Asad has not yet commented on it but apparently continues to hold out for a larger role for the plenary. On the question of Palestinian representation, Asad has thus far said nothing. We are now considering what further steps might be taken—without compromising any of the principles agreed upon between ourselves and Is-

⁴ See Document 124.

⁵ On November 10, Lewis met with Dayan, Begin, and Weizman regarding the situation in Southern Lebanon, but did not discuss negotiations. No record of a discussion solely between Lewis and Dayan on November 10 has been found. (Telegram 1825 from Jerusalem, November 10; National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D770415-0489)

rael—with Asad. We have also discussed these ideas with the Soviets, who are considering them.

7. We hope we can count on Begin's and Dayan's support for this proposed method of moving on to Geneva. We are ready to discuss with them any special concerns they may have, but we must stress that in our view the approach we have described represents a valid basis on which to proceed. We consider it imperative that modification of the approach be avoided, since that would put us back into another and most likely endless round of negotiations with the Arabs. [illegible] that this approach embodies the substance of the working paper agreed upon between the U.S. and Israel. Everything agreed therein remains valid. What we have done in effect is to describe a method for the practical implementation of the working paper, without continuing the time-consuming process of attempting to formalize textually the area of agreement.

8. Please go over foregoing with Begin and/or Dayan as soon as possible, in any event before Sadat's arrival. You should make clear that we are counting on their agreeing to this approach since it is the only way we see to maintain the momentum that will be created by Sadat's visit. It would be a real setback if, after this extraordinary breakthrough in relations between Israel and Egypt, the parties were to go back to hassling over every detail of procedure. Furthermore, Israelis must realize that Sadat must be able to show something for his acceptance of Begin's invitation; otherwise he could be in deep trouble. No one anticipates agreement on broad issues of substance, but if Sadat can return from Jerusalem and announce agreement on reconvening Geneva on basis of approach outlined above or some other method of proceeding mutually agreeable and likely to be acceptable to Hussein and Asad, minimum expectations of Egyptian and Arab publics should be met. Likewise assurance to Sadat by Begin that Israel will not raise undue objection to names of Palestinians to be proposed by the Arab side, on understanding that selection will be on basis discussed with Dayan in New York, and in which Sadat concurs, would be significant achievement.

9. As soon as Sadat's visit is over we will want to be in touch with Begin and Dayan on how to move forward quickly. Vance Unquote.

Vance

149. Telegram From the Department of State to the Consulate in Jerusalem¹

Washington, November 18, 1977, 2106Z

277205. For Ambassador Lewis. Subject: Message From President Carter to Prime Minister Begin.

1. You should deliver following letter from President Carter to Prime Minister Begin at earliest opportunity.

2. Begin text:

Dear Mr. Prime Minister:

I deeply appreciate your taking the trouble to call me yesterday regarding President Sadat's visit to Jerusalem.² I share your hope that this bold act of statesmanship will bring the Middle East closer to peace.

As you will have noted, however, there is considerable and growing criticism of President Sadat in the Arab world over his decision to visit Israel. His adversaries will seize upon it in their efforts to block progress. This makes it all the more important that President Sadat be able to demonstrate that his action in going to Jerusalem was not a futile gesture. If he cannot show palpable proof that it has advanced the prospects of peace and served Arab interests he will be charged with the betrayal of Arab interests, and moderate leadership in the Arab world may be discredited.

I am sure that you and your colleagues share our concern in this regard. We fully recognize that the substantive issues of territory, the Palestinian problem and the nature of peace cannot be resolved in the short time allotted for President Sadat's visit. A step of historic proportions could however be accomplished if the visit could close with the way cleared for Israel and all the Arab parties to reconvene at Geneva in December or shortly thereafter. Ambassador Lewis has already briefed you on our views as to how procedural details can be put behind us in order to move on promptly to Geneva. As he has told you, there remains the problem of Syrian attendance at the conference. If you could make clear in your talks with President Sadat and in your public statements that Israel is ready to deal seriously with the Palestinian problem and also to do its utmost to reach a settlement with Syria, Jordan and Lebanon, Sadat's position would be measurably

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840077–2601. Secret; Immediate; Nodis. Drafted by Korn; cleared by Atherton, Habib (draft), Quandt, and Tarnoff; and approved by Secretary Vance. Sent immediate for information to Amman, Damascus, Cairo, and Tel Aviv.

² See Document 147.

strengthened and the outlook for Geneva much improved. It also occurs to us that a constructive step that would make Syria's agreement to Geneva easier—and strengthen Sadat's position—would be Israel's agreement to Syria's being included as a member of the working group that would deal with the West Bank and Gaza. I hope you can make such a proposal to President Sadat.

Another point that would be helpful concerns the matter of the plenary at Geneva. While as we have made clear we agree with Israel that the plenary should not be a forum for substantive negotiation, we do believe that the plenary should have a continuing existence, pursuant to the procedures adopted in 1973. President Sadat shares this view, and of course you well know the importance that President Asad attaches to this subject. Any accommodation that the Government of Israel might be able to make to President Sadat on this subject would help enormously in meeting the concerns that I have mentioned.

I make these suggestions in the spirit of friendship and candor which mark our close personal relationship and the enduring ties that bind our two countries. I am sure that you will agree with me that it is of the utmost importance to both our countries that this historic first visit by a President of Egypt to Jerusalem be a success and lay the groundwork for the peace that we all seek.

I would appreciate any thoughts that you may have on these or other steps which might be taken to secure that goal.

Please do not hesitate to call me on the telephone at any time it would be useful.

Sincerely,

Jimmy Carter.

End text.

Vance

150. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Egypt¹

Washington, November 18, 1977, 1933Z

277051. Subject: Message for Sadat.

1. Please see Sadat as soon as possible to convey the following.

2. President Carter appreciated the opportunity to talk with President Sadat on the telephone today.² In particular he wishes to affirm once again the assurance he made then that Sadat has the full support of the United States in his current effort for peace.

3. On one point in his conversation the President is not certain he made himself fully understood to President Sadat. The President's concern is that Sadat's visit result in some tangible benefit for the Syrians so as to reaffirm our commitment to the concept of negotiations among all the parties at Geneva. What the President is suggesting is that Sadat endeavor to obtain Begin's agreement to include Syria, in addition to Egypt, Jordan, Israel and the Palestinians, in the conference working group that would be set up to discuss the West Bank and Gaza.

4. Since the President was not certain that his telephone conversation had enabled him to convey this suggestion in sufficient clarity, he is asking Ambassador Eilts to clarify the point orally with President Sadat.

Vance

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P850052–2243. Secret; Immediate; Nodis. Drafted by Sterner; cleared by Atherton, Habib, Quandt, and Sydney Goldsmith (S/S–O); and approved by Secretary Vance. Repeated immediate on November 19 to the White House.

² According to the President's Daily Diary, Carter spoke by phone with Sadat on November 18 from 8:25 to 8:32 a.m. (Carter Library, Presidential Materials, President's Daily Diary) No memorandum of telephone conversation has been found. In his diary, Carter wrote, "There's increasing pressure on Sadat from the Arab countries not to go to Israel, but there's no doubt that he's going. I called to give him my encouragement, my admiration." (*White House Diary*, p. 138)

151. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Israel and the Consulate in Jerusalem¹

Washington, November 19, 1977, 0128Z

277905. WH for Brzezinski. Subject: Briefing on Role of Plenary for Begin/Dayan. Ref: Tel Aviv 9442.²

1. Begin and Dayan should know from extensive conversations we and Israelis had in New York as well as subsequently that to get Syrians to come to conference, we will undoubtedly have to agree that plenary will have some form of continuing existence. Although plenary may thus have to be convened from time to time under this concept, we would expect it would not have a very important role. We believe once conference is launched it will develop its own dynamics which will reinforce bilateral format, especially given both Israeli and Egyptian preferences in this regard. The Israelis have our assurance that we will work to keep the plenary from being used to block or veto progress toward a settlement in any of the working groups, or to obstruct or complicate working group proceedings.

2. You may convey foregoing to Begin and Dayan in connection with guidance we have provided earlier. If they indicate Israel seeks more specific assurances as to U.S. position, say it is difficult to see any need for being more specific.

3. FYI—In conveying this information bear in mind that we want if possible to avoid exercise of negotiating U.S.-Israeli agreements about procedural issues beyond agreed minute on Palestinian representation.³ It may come to this on one or other point, but we do not want to give Israelis any encouragement in this direction, since clearly we need to retain maximum flexibility to play our middleman role. End FYI.

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P850106–1576. Secret; Niact Immediate; Nodis. Drafted by Sterner; cleared by Atherton, Quandt, and Robert Perito (S/S-O); and approved by Habib. Sent Immediate for information to the White House.

² In telegram 9442 from Tel Aviv, November 18, Ambassador Lewis noted his upcoming meeting with Begin and Dayan and asked the State Department if it could provide more guidance on the role of a unified Arab delegation as well as offer more reassurances to the Israelis regarding U.S. “willingness to reach private procedural understandings with them to safeguard their basic position, whatever ambiguities or symbolic concessions might be required for public purposes.” Lewis noted this “could be critical to a forthcoming Israeli position with Sadat.” (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840072–2456)

³ Not further identified. Possibly a reference to the September 12 statement; see footnote 17, Document 103.

4. Also, remind Begin and Dayan, if you get on this subject and pass to them above information, they must absolutely ensure that our comments about U.S. position on plenary does not leak. If it does, Syrians will immediately say they can accept no such arrangement. We simply must not go down this road again.

Vance

152. Editorial Note

On the evening of November 19, 1977, Egyptian President Anwar al-Sadat arrived at Ben Gurion Airport for the first visit to Israel by an Arab head of state since Israel's founding in 1948. The Israeli Government provided Sadat and his entourage a formal welcome at the airport with a 21-gun salute and the playing of the Egyptian and Israeli national anthems. Sadat greeted Israeli leaders both past and present at the airport, including Prime Minister Menachem Begin, President Ephraim Katzir, and former Prime Minister Golda Meir. Sadat stayed at the King David Hotel in Jerusalem during his 36-hour stay in Israel. He visited the Al-Aqsa Mosque, Church of the Holy Sepulcher, and the Israeli Holocaust memorial Yad Vashem during his stay. He also gave a speech in Arabic at the Knesset, calling for Israel's withdrawal from territory acquired during the 1967 Arab-Israeli war as well as a permanent home for the Palestinians. A full translation of Sadat's speech is in the *New York Times*, November 21, 1977, page 22. Begin followed Sadat's speech with an overview of several issues relating to the Arab-Israeli dispute and noted that everything relating to the dispute was open to negotiation. A full translation of Begin's speech is in the *New York Times*, November 21, 1977, p. 17.

On November 21, at the end of the visit, Begin and Sadat issued a communiqué to the press that expressed the need for a continued dialogue between Israel and Egypt that would lead to the signing of peace treaties in Geneva. During the news conference, Begin said, "During the visit, a momentous agreement was achieved already—no more war, no more bloodshed, no more attacks, and collaboration to avoid any event which may lead to such tragic developments." The agreed communiqué and the transcript of the two leaders' news conference and final statements are in the *New York Times*, November 22, 1977, page 16.

153. Memorandum of Telephone Conversation¹

November 21, 1977, 3:14–3:20 p.m.

PARTICIPANTS

President Carter
Prime Minister Begin

Begin: (After usual salutations) The main thing, Mr. President, is that we will avoid another war. We have made practical arrangements with Sadat to avoid war. I want to thank you for all you have done. This is your achievement.

We agreed to negotiate and we want to go to Geneva. Sadat was not interested in such matters as unified delegation or any other procedural questions.

The arrangements we have made are very confidential and very far-reaching. I will communicate with you separately.

Carter: We are very proud with what you have done. You have shown courage and sensitivity. We are very interested in helping in whatever way we can. When will your message come?

Begin: I am very tired. I had to make all the arrangements, to give interviews, many of them to American television. I am now again talking to Barbara Walters.² It was all a major intellectual and physical effort. I will write you thus tomorrow.

Carter: I watched your interviews on television and I expect to have replayed for me the other interviews which I did not see.

Begin: In my interview with John Chancellor³ I spoke about you. Did you see the Knesset speeches?

Carter: I watched Knesset. The speeches were very constructive.

Begin: I believe they paved the way to the arrangements that President Sadat and I have made. I also have a request to make of you: You are planning a trip . . .

Carter: Late December—early January.

Begin: Please visit both Israel and Egypt. You will get the greatest reception. Sadat was deeply moved with the reception that he received. If you come, our people will take you to their hearts. You could add two days to your itinerary: one day in Jerusalem; and one day in Cairo.

¹ Source: Carter Library, President's Plains File, Box 2, Israel, 11/77–2/79. Secret.

² Barbara Walters was an ABC News journalist.

³ John Chancellor was an NBC News journalist.

Carter: I will consider it; in the meantime do get some rest and I will await your message.

The conversation concludes with an exchange of salutations and best wishes.

154. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, November 23, 1977, 9:30–10 a.m.

SUBJECT

Summary of the President's Meeting with the Romanian Foreign Minister

PARTICIPANTS

The President

The Vice President

Mr. Philip Habib, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs

Dr. Zbigniew Brzezinski, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs

Mr. William B. Quandt, NSC Staff

The Honorable George Macovescu, Foreign Minister of Romania

His Excellency Nicolae M. Nicolae, Ambassador from Romania

Foreign Minister: President Ceausescu sends his best regards.

President Carter: I am very proud of our friendship with him.

Foreign Minister: I have a message for you from my President. (The Foreign Minister hands the President a letter.)²

President Carter: It's a pleasure to have you here. You have made a long trip. We are looking forward to next spring when we hope to have President Ceausescu with us.

Dr. Brzezinski: We hope to find a time in the late spring for his visit.

President Carter: It will be a pleasure to have him here. We have a strong friendship with your country and we are proud of our good relations.

Foreign Minister: We feel that our relations have developed well, and President Ceausescu wants to extend this. He considered this to be a good time to send me here with some ideas on the Middle East, espe-

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Subject File, Box 66, Peace Negotiations 1977 Volume I [III]. Top Secret. The meeting took place in the White House Oval Office.

² The letter has not been found.

cially after the visit of President Sadat to Jerusalem. In the last three months, President Ceausescu has met with Prime Minister Begin and then with President Sadat. He talked at length with both of them. You have also talked to them. I would like to tell you about our interest in the Middle East. We have no special interest, no strategic or economic interests in the Middle East. We do trade with the Arabs and with Israel but we have no special interests. Our main interest is in peace. We consider our security to be in danger if peace is not reached. We want peace and understanding in the Middle East and we are working hard for it but we are not mediators in the Middle East. We try to provide an open channel for the two parties to use, so that they can transmit ideas, can see each other's point of view, and we sometimes add our own, but we are not mediators.

President Ceausescu saw both Begin and Sadat, and now they have met each other. Our estimation is that this is an important step for peace and for understanding, but I have travelled many times between Jerusalem and Cairo and I know how deep the lack of confidence between the parties is. Now a first step has been taken toward building some confidence and we think it is a good step. The next main step is to go and convene the Geneva Conference, but the parties needed to help prepare it directly, and we think that has been done. There are now some differences in the Arab world.

President Carter: I've noticed!

Foreign Minister: We see a dramatic situation, and my President believes it is the right time to help Sadat. Sadat has support at home and support from Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Sudan, Morocco, Jordan, and Tunisia. In fact, this represents a majority of the Arabs. Against him is Assad, and some others like Algeria and the PLO.

I can say that President Ceausescu has sent a message through an emissary to President Assad and to Arafat. He sent Mr. Poungan, but we have no news yet of his meetings. If we receive news, we will tell you. Our interest is to try to calm the situation. We understand the Syrian and PLO position but we want them to calm down. Now is the right moment to go for peace. If we lose time, there will be dangers.

President Carter: President Ceausescu has played a constructive role in getting the meeting started. This shows the confidence that the two parties have in your President. I thought that President Sadat and Prime Minister Begin would get along well, and that seems to have been true. I have been disappointed by the negative attitude of President Assad. We have tried to encourage Assad to be moderate. He personally has refrained from attacking Sadat, but his government has been very negative. We had some news this morning that Sadat has asked the PLO to leave Egypt. Your officials have relations with Arafat and we do not. Arafat has also been reticent to attack Sadat, but others

have been very critical. I agree with you and President Ceausescu that the time has come to move toward a comprehensive peace. We are pleased with Jordan's statement³ and if Syria were more positive, Jordan would be able to go further. The Lebanese attitude also depends on Syria. What do you suggest doing next?

Foreign Minister: My President has some suggestions. He thinks that it is important to try to convince Begin to respond to Sadat with flexibility. Sadat has played his big card. This is the right time for Israel, with your help, to take steps to show flexibility and to move on to the Geneva Conference. We have to go to Geneva in the near future. We can't lose momentum. Secondly, my President felt that it would be a good idea to send Vice President Mondale or Mr. Vance to Egypt to talk to Sadat and then to travel in the area to show your continued interest in the region. Third, my President feels that the time has come for you to talk to the PLO. Even Mr. Begin does not reject this idea.

President Carter: Perhaps you already know that we have a public agreement that was signed between Mr. Ford and the Israeli Government, and was reaffirmed by me that states that we will not meet with the PLO unless the PLO abandons its insistence on the destruction of Israel. We have asked Arafat to accept Resolution 242, and he can add a statement of his concern that the Palestinian question is not included in 242, because 242 only talks of refugees, and then we would be glad to meet directly. But I can't break a promise as long as the PLO calls for Israel's destruction.

Foreign Minister: I understand. But even Sadat used to say No for a long time and now he has gone to Jerusalem. We need more flexibility. You should tell the Israelis that you want some contacts and then the PLO will become more flexible. We know them well and they are in difficult positions. They don't know how to react. It is also time for you to discuss with the Soviets how to reconvene the Geneva Conference as co-chairmen. We might send an invitation to the parties or do this through the United Nations. We think it is best to talk to the Soviets and to keep them in a positive frame of mind.

President: We are in close touch with the Soviets. I think that there are two or three people now, President Assad and President Brezhnev. We are ready to move rapidly through the UN to call for the Geneva Conference. We can do this once we have an agreement with the Soviets on the format, and indications from Assad that he will attend. I

³ On November 19, the Jordanian Cabinet issued a statement regarding Sadat's visit to Jerusalem that urged Arab countries to avoid "negative results that may ensue from the latest developments" and to avoid "falling prey to inter-Arab disputes, dissensions, and divisions." ("Jordan Hopes to Avoid Rupture," *New York Times*, November 20, 1977, p. 20)

would be reluctant to exclude Syria if they want to cooperate. In a few days, we will have information from the Israelis and the Egyptians. Then we can judge our role. I have talked to Prime Minister Begin, but I have not yet heard from President Sadat. They were both tired after the visit. President Ceausescu could help with President Assad. After your emissary has met with Assad, we would like to know anything you learn about how we might best approach the Syrians. I have been pleased with the Soviet attitude as expressed in the joint statement. They could, of course, obstruct a Geneva Conference but we see no evidence that that is their intention. They have played a constructive role as compared to the past and are now eager to move to overcome the problem we have with Syria.

Foreign Minister: Concerning the substance of my trip, my President was very happy that you would agree to see me. The main point is to make clear that we need to help President Sadat. If he falls or if he is isolated, there can be no peace in the Middle East. His trip to Jerusalem was an important step.

President Carter: What is your relationship to Saudi Arabia?

Foreign Minister: We have had none. We see each other sometimes and talk, but we have no diplomatic relations. They are not prepared for them.

President Carter: We have had good cooperation from the Saudis. They help Egypt, and we don't want to see that disrupted. Most of the world admires Sadat for his move and we hope that the meeting he had will be a success.

Foreign Minister: He sees himself as a strong leader who can afford to make this kind of move.

President: He is a strong leader and he has proved it. I am glad to see that you are taking constructive steps and that they are fully in line with our own. I hope that we will keep exchanging views.

Foreign Minister: This has been our first mission since the Sadat trip.

Dr. Brzezinski: Has Mr. Poungan gone to see Arafat?

Foreign Minister: Yes, he left two days ago.

President Carter: We look forward to hearing the report. We have good relations with Assad and I like him. I think he is a fine man.

Foreign Minister: Our direct bilateral relationships are good and President Ceausescu looks forward to his visit here.

President: I look forward to meeting him.

Foreign Minister: If the Vice President could come to Romania, or Secretary Vance before Ceausescu's visit, it would be very good. It should not be linked to a visit to the Middle East.

President: The Vice President does not need much encouragement to travel.

Vice President Mondale: I went to Romania in 1968, and I met the Foreign Minister at that time and we had a good talk.

President Carter: It is hard to keep him here.

Vice President: I'll become an expert on Romania.

Foreign Minister: It would be good to have you in our country.

155. Telegram From the Embassy in Egypt to the Department of State¹

Cairo, November 23, 1977, 1606Z

19466. For the Secretary From Ambassador. Subj: Sadat's Assessment of His Visit to Israel and Where Do We Go From Here? Ref (A) Cairo 19346, (B) State 280087.²

Summary: Sadat elated about his reception in Israel and in Cairo on his return. Calls trip his "greatest victory," greater than Oct war. He liked Begin and Weizman, especially latter. Gave his pledge to Weizman there would be no more wars between Egypt and Israel and that "security" is factor which needs be taken into account in peace talks. Intends announce this in People's Assembly speech Saturday.³ This does not mean he accepts Israeli concept of security requiring a territorial dimension. Implies talks confined to generalities with little focus on specific procedural details. He and Begin agreed follow up on two levels: discreet Tuhami/Dayan talks in Morocco dealing with political aspects,⁴ and Gamasy/Weizman talks in Romania (and later, subject Israeli agreement, in Egypt) on military (security) aspects. No

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840072–2055. Secret; Immediate; Nodis; Cherokee.

² In telegram 19346 from Cairo, November 19, Ambassador Eilts reported on his November 19 meeting with Sadat prior to his departure for Jerusalem. Sadat reviewed his plans for his trip and noted that reports showed that 99 percent of the Egyptian people supported him. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840072–2066) Telegram 280087 to Cairo, November 23, instructed Ambassador Eilts that he should inform Sadat at his November 23 meeting with him that the State Department wanted a briefing on results of Sadat's visit to Jerusalem and the opportunity "to consult closely with him on next steps with the parties to capitalize on momentum his visit generated." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P850052–2242)

³ November 26.

⁴ Dayan and Tuhamy met secretly in Morocco on September 16.

date yet fixed for followup talks, but Sadat opined they should, if possible, be concluded by Dec 20 to allow convening of Conference late Dec or early Jan. Adequate advance preparations needed for Conference and USG should play positive, behind-the-scenes rule.

Thinking out loud, he asks for Pres Carter's views re (A) desirability of announcing during his Saturday address to People's Assembly that problem is a bilateral one and should be resolved in direct Arab/Israeli talks; (B) announcing at same session his readiness to invite all the parties to a conference in Cairo, not Geneva; and (C) idea of having an experienced Israeli diplomat discreetly assigned to AmEmbassy Cairo to conduct day-to-day dialogue on outstanding issues. AmEmbassy communications would be used. Also, he asks that President Carter send message to Begin seeking latter's reaction to points B and C above.

Mindful of Israeli sensitivity to West Bank, Sadat still toying with idea of Palestinian state in Gaza to which he would be willing offer territorial additions in adjacent Sinai area. He professes be unworried about Arab neighbors' reactions, saying they will come around. He does not wish USG to intervene with Syria or SAG lest our doing so be interpreted as at his behest. Emphasizes above ideals still preliminary and suggestions by Pres Carter or PriMin Begin would be welcome. End summary.

1. Met with Sadat today for about two hours. VP Mubarak was also present. Since Sadat has come down with a bad cold, meeting took place in upstairs apartment his Giza residence. Sadat wanted Pres Carter to have an immediate account of his impressions in Israel, as well as his thoughts on how to continue the momentum generated by his visit. He was somewhat rambling in his comments with frequent repetition. I have sought order his discrete observations into some kind of a logical format, which Sadat agreed was correct when I summarized the conversation for him at the end of our talk.

Visit to Israel:

2. Sadat was euphoric about his reception in Israel and in Cairo on his return. Both had exceeded anything he had imagined was possible. Young and old, men and women, had cheered him. As he put it, I have become the "national hero" not only of Egypt but of Israel as well. He repeatedly spoke of how touched he had been by the women of both Israel and Egypt who had welcomed him. He had made the trip because of Pres Carter's personal letter,⁵ but had never dreamed that Israeli, Egyptian and world reaction would be so enthusiastic. Upon his return, four million cheering Egyptians had lined the streets. Even Nasser had

⁵ The text of Carter's letter is in Document 139.

never experienced anything like it. These past two days, he said at one point, have been his “greatest victory, even greater than the Oct War.

3. Sadat said he liked both Begin and Weizman, although it was clear from the rave notices that he gave Weizman that the latter made the greatest impression. Weizman had congratulated him on Egyptian successes in Oct War. Weizman had also asked that Sadat give him his word that there be no more war and no sudden Egyptian attack. He, Sadat, had given his word that there will be no more war between Egypt and Israel. They should sit down and settle the outstanding issues between them. Weizman had also indicated his wish to meet Gamasy, for whom he professed great respect. In his private talks with Begin, Sadat had said that Pres Carter told him about the Israeli PriMin. Begin had responded that Pres Carter had also told him about Sadat. As a result, Sadat said, his talks with Begin were warm and cordial and had achieved some positive results. Begin had broached his desire to visit Cairo, but had understood when Sadat pointed out why this is not feasible right now.

4. Primary Israeli concerns, Sadat related, were two: security and no war. In his talks with the Israeli leadership, they had agreed that there would be no more war between Egypt and Israel and that “security” considerations would have to be addressed. He and Begin had differed on what “security” requires, but this was after all their first meeting and further pertinent discussions were needed. As a result of his visit, the vicious circle of mutual distrust had been broken. As indicated in the joint communique,⁶ they had agreed to continue their mutual consultations with a view to moving toward a settlement.⁷

4. In this context, Sadat continued, agreement had been reached to hold discreet follow on talks at two levels: political and military. On the political front, Dayan will meet with Sadat’s special envoy, Tuhami, in Morocco. Sadat noted that Dayan and Tuhami had already met there and that Pres Carter is aware of this. On the military level, Gamasy would meet with Weizman as soon as the latter’s leg injury heals. It had been agreed that these meetings would take place in Rumania to please Ceausescu, but the thought had come to Sadat this morning that after the first meeting in Rumania, subsequent meetings might take place in Egypt. Weizman, he thought, is not that conspicuous in appearance and meeting could take place at the President’s guest house at Giannaclis. Changing the venue of the Gamasy/Weizman talks to Egypt had not yet been tried out on the Israelis. No time yet fixed for these meetings, but it had been agreed that they should begin soon. Sadat hoped there might be sufficient agreement on both the political and

⁶ See Document 152.

⁷ The following paragraphs are misnumbered in the original.

military (security) aspects by Dec 20 to warrant convening a multilateral conference either in late Dec or early Jan.

5. Begin had also given him a “dossier”, which he showed me, containing the Israeli peace plan which had earlier been given to us.⁸ He, Sadat, had not yet read it and, in my presence, turned it over to Mubarak. Begin had said that if Sadat does not agree to the points in the Israeli peace plan, they are open to discussion. Sadat had replied that he agrees on security and no war, but the theory of security borders is not acceptable and would be interpreted as expansion. This document will presumably be the basis of the two sets of bilateral talks.

6. His speech to the Knesset, Sadat recalled, had made the points about Arab requirements. Sadat subsequently felt it may have been a bit too harsh and Begin had made this point to him. Sadat had conceded the point, but noted it was the first time they had met and they had not yet had any private meeting. Nevertheless, his speech had been received in a “democratic” way and this already was achievement. His trip, he repeatedly stressed, had broken down the psychological barriers that have for so long existed. Weizman had in fact urged him to remain another 24 hours to sign an Egyptian/Israeli agreement. He had refused, insisting he had not come to sign an agreement, but to get things started once again for an over-all Arab/Israeli settlement. He had made the same point to the Israeli Min of Justice.

7. Note: Sadat said nothing about Palestinian representation or PLO involvement in a united Arab del. I tried to probe Sadat on what procedural arrangements may have been worked out, but got nowhere. I suspect talks dealt largely with broad generalities and specifics were ignored.

Maintaining the momentum:

8. His visit, Sadat said, “has put us in a completely new position here.” It must be followed up. He was not worried even though he had not yet read the Israeli peace plan. Pres Carter’s earlier personal message to him had triggered his resolve for some “bold, new initiative.” He recalled that he had earlier tried out on Pres Carter his idea of a conference in Arab Jerusalem, which he now called Fahmy’s idea, but that Pres Carter had considered this to be premature. Although he previously had not surfaced to us his thought of going to the Knesset, he had had the idea even before the “conference in Jerusalem” concept. After our rejection of the conference idea, he had reverted to his original plan.

9. Now, thinking out loud, he wanted Pres Carter’s counsel on whether it might be advisable publicly to announce in the PA on Sat-

⁸ See Document 100.

urday, Nov 26, that peace arrangements should be in the form of an Arab-Israeli agreement. "It is our problem", Sadat said, "and we should not need guardians to handle this for us." Although it would appear on the surface that this would mean dropping the super powers involvement, that would not be intended. The Sovs would doubtless react badly; however, if they wished to participate, he did not wish deliberately to ignore them. They could still do so. In any case, discreet US assistance in the background would always be needed. But this would not require the type of US "pressure process" that he had once thought necessary. US pressure on Israel no longer requires a US-Israeli confrontation. Here Sadat mentioned that he had not known, until Begin told him, of the "hot line" that the Israeli PriMin has with Pres Carter.

10. Sadat said he had still another idea. He is thinking of announcing in the People's Assembly on Saturday that, after his visit to Israel, the Geneva Conf is really not needed any longer. Instead, he would be prepared to invite all the parties concerned to come to Cairo to negotiate peace. He had not discussed the idea with Begin, but thought the Israelis would be agreeable. If the other Arab confrontation states agree, everything should go smoothly. If they do not agree, they will be in the wrong in the eyes of the Arab and world public. There should be no objection to coming to Cairo, an Arab capital, for peace talks. Husayn, he was sure, would come. The Syrians and the PLO might balk. If they do, a "complete" Arab-Israeli agreement could still be worked out and initiated. This would then be sent to the Arab leaders to consider. Again, the Sovs might not be happy with such a procedure, but if Pres Carter agreed to come, then Brezhnev would certainly do so. Otherwise, if Gromyko cared to come, this was agreeable. He had not focussed on modalities, but thought invitations by the Geneva Conf co-chairmen would be one way to handle this. The President emphasized that this was a completely new thought which had come to him only this morning, and that he would welcome President's Carter's reaction.

11. Then Sadat disclosed a third new idea. If President Carter thought it desirable and Begin agreed, an experienced Israeli diplomat could be discreetly assigned to the American Embassy in Cairo to resolve day-to-day problems between Egypt and Israel. He would be listed as an American and no announcement would for the time being be made that he was in fact an Israeli diplomat. Such an Israeli diplomat should use our communications channels, not separate Israeli channels. This thought had also come to him just this morning after reflecting on statements of Israeli leaders deploring the lack of day-to-day dialogue. He had not discussed it with Begin.

Message to Begin:

12. The President then asked that President Carter convey to Prime Minister Begin a message from Sadat. Depending upon President Carter's reaction to his aforementioned ideas, the message should indicate two things: (A) that Sadat would welcome having an Israeli diplomat discreetly assigned to the American Embassy in Cairo to convey his messages to Begin, using our communications channels. This assignment would not be publicly announced. (B) How would Begin react to a public invitation by Sadat in his Saturday speech that, instead of convening in Geneva, all the parties be invited to come to Cairo to negotiate and sign a peace agreement.

13. If President Carter also wished to convey any of the other points he, Sadat, had mentioned, this was agreeable to him. In that case, however, the other points should come as a message from President Carter to Begin.

14. Although Sadat had not read Israeli peace proposal, he had some random thoughts about what such an agreement should contain. He had sensed that the concept of an independent Palestinian state did not appeal to Begin or Weizman. However, the Palestinians should not be ignored lest doing so enable rejectionist Arabs to use them against Sadat outside Egypt. As a compromise, he was toying with the idea of proposing that the West Bank be turned over to UNEF for, say, five years. During this time a plebiscite could be arranged for self-determination. In the next five years, many things will doubtless happen and the present Palestinian leadership will be "uncovered" (he meant changed). Neither Husayn nor the PLO would control that state. In the case of the Gaza Strip, this should be separate from the West Bank, but also under UNEF. A new Palestinian leadership could be prepared in Gaza. The "main weight" of the Palestinian state would thus be in Gaza, not the West Bank. He would even be prepared to give such a state part of Sinai, specifically, Egyptian Fafah and even Yamit. He had tried out these ideas on Begin, but recognized that it is a "head-ache" for him. He, nevertheless, hoped something along these lines can be worked out with the Israelis in the Tuhami/Dayan talks.

15. Sadat reiterated his strong view that good advance preparations for a comprehensive settlement are necessary. There should be no multilateral conference until adequate advance preparations are made through the Tuhami-Dayan and Gamasy-Weizman talks, which will soon get underway.

US role with Sadat's critics:

16. Sadat asked Mubarak how Arab neighbors are reacting. Mubarak said Jordanians have calmed down, but Syrians and Iraqis still violently critical. Sadat dismissed them, saying they will sooner or later come to their senses.

17. Asked for his thoughts on what US might do to help mend the rift in the inter-Arab relations, especially with Saudi Arabia and Syria, Sadat opined that we should do nothing. After our last demarche to the Saudis,⁹ King Khalid had sent a message to GOE indicating we had made an approach and saying some nice things. Sadat did not like the inference that he had asked US to intervene with the Saudis and the Syrians. If we now approach the Syrians, they will announce that Sadat has asked us to do so and will seize on this to brand him as an “American stooge.” At some point, perhaps another visit by Secretary Vance to the area would be desirable to help persuade the Arab confrontation states to participate in a Cairo conference. This would have to be assessed as we move along.

18. In concluding, Sadat emphasized that none of the above thoughts are yet firm. If either we or the Israelis have any changes to suggest, he would welcome having them. In any case, as he saw it, arrangements were already worked out in Israel to continue the momentum of the peace process. Our behind the scenes help will, of course, still be needed and appreciated.

19. As I was leaving, Sadat asked that any comments President Carter may have on the several ideas adumbrated above be conveyed only to him or, if he is not available, to VP Mubarak. For the moment, Acting FonMin Boutros Ghali is not being brought into the picture, although he may be brought in at a later point.

Eilts

⁹ See Document 143.

156. Telegram From the Embassy in Israel to the Department of State¹

Tel Aviv, November 23, 1977, 1956Z

9708. Subject: Begin Letter to President—Sadat Visit.

1. At meeting with Prime Minister Begin (1800 local) at his home in Jerusalem, Prime Minister gave me letter to President Carter, text

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840072-2373. Secret; Niact Immediate; Nodis; Cherokee.

below. He asked me to stress sensitivity of contents. Letter is being shared only with Dinitz in Washington and with Prime Minister's closest advisors here. Report on meeting with Begin follows septel.

2. Begin text.

Dear Mr. President,

I write to you now in the wake of our telephone conversation of November 21.²

President Sadat and I agreed to continue our dialogue on two levels: the political and military. Meetings will take place, hopefully soon, between a personal representative of President Sadat who enjoys his full confidence, and Foreign Minister Moshe Dayan who, of course, has my complete confidence and that of the Cabinet. At the same time, the Defense Ministers of our two countries, General Gamassi and Ezer Weizman, will seek to work out arrangements to make an unintentional armed clash between us impossible.

President Sadat and I agreed to go to Geneva as soon as feasible, but no date was determined. President Sadat wishes the Conference be prepared on the substantive issues. These we discussed in preliminary manner. We promised each other to discuss them further in the future, knowing that we have differences of opinion concerning the contents of the peace treaties we seek to negotiate and sign. To make clear our positions, I gave the honored guest our draft peace treaty and the covering letter addressed by Foreign Minister Dayan to Secretary of State Vance.³

I feel, Mr. President, that President Sadat's visit, the reception he received by our parliament, government and people, as well as the nature of our private meetings and exchanges, are good for Egypt, Israel and for the cause of peace. We shall continue the dialogue on all levels for the purpose of concluding peace treaties.

May I again express to you, Mr. President, my deep gratitude for your contribution to this last development. We shall need your understanding and help in the future.

Yours respectfully and sincerely, (signed) Menachem Begin. End text.

3. Suggest Department repeat this message to Cairo.

Lewis

² See Document 153.

³ See Document 100.

157. Telegram From the Embassy in Israel to the Department of State¹

Tel Aviv, November 23, 1977, 2150Z

9710. Subject: Meeting With Begin on Sadat Visit. Refs: A) State 277205, B) Tel Aviv 9708.²

Summary: Begin and Dayan this afternoon gave me letter to President and report on Sadat visit. Begin and Sadat agreed to establish two continuing channels, one for military liaison, one for peace negotiations. Sadat is not interested in procedural issues, wants substantive negotiations settled in advance, with Geneva as ceremonial ratification. He will not make separate deal, wants agreement in principle on Palestinian problem before negotiating Israel-Egypt issues. Begin is less clear on how Assad and Hussein are to be brought into the process. He urges, however, that USG should not press for early Geneva but should support continuing negotiations among interested parties as preparatory. Both Begin and Dayan pleased with Sadat's and their own performance, show few signs that they feel they came in second.

1. I met with Prime Minister Begin and Dayan at PM's home at 1800 local today. Brubeck and Avner also present. Begin and Dayan were in a relaxed mood, obviously very pleased with the results of the Sadat visit. They show little sign of being perturbed by criticism of Israeli performance in local or foreign press. Begin, in particular, shows no signs of feeling he came in second best to Sadat. On the contrary, they seem equally pleased with performance both sides and very satisfied with results. Begin is obviously concerned, however, that any leak about diplomacy set in motion would be highly damaging and made a special plea that his report be held very close.

2. Basic result of visit, as indicated in Begin letter to the President (ref B) is that Israel and Egypt have established two channels for on-going peace negotiations. Weizman and Gamasy will open a negotiating track in next several weeks on arrangements to avoid misunderstandings and military tensions. Dayan and an Egyptian counterpart yet to be named (probably not Butros Ghali) will, during the same period, begin negotiating toward peace. Begin emphasizes that these will be serious, substantive talks, aimed at tangible results. Both sides accept there are serious differences but agree everything is negotiable ("whatever Sadat may say in Egypt," says Begin). Next move is up to

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840072-2367. Secret; Flash; Nodis; Cherokee.

² Telegram 277205 is Document 149. Telegram 9708 is Document 156.

Sadat; GOI is now waiting for specific proposals from Sadat on where and when, for next move.

3. Sadat told Begin he cannot make a separate peace (“we never even discussed that,” according to Begin). First issue on the agenda is the Palestinian question on which, Begin says, they expect to reach “agreement in principle” though not in detail. Following that will be Israel-Egypt issues. How and where Syrian issues are to be settled was not explained, nor how details of Palestinian issue to be settled. However, Sadat was emphatic that he is not interested in procedural questions. Dayan tried to engage him several times along lines of President Carter’s letter (ref A) and got no response. According to Begin, Sadat wants substantive issues settled in private negotiations before Geneva, with Geneva as a ceremonial occasion to ratify agreements. Sadat believes it impossible to have serious negotiations in Geneva atmosphere. Problem, as Begin says he and Sadat see it is “how to negotiate the substance of a comprehensive settlement before going to Geneva.”

4. When I pressed them on how this scenario leads to Geneva, Dayan reiterated Sadat’s disinclination to discuss procedures and said that if President and Brzezinski think Sadat is interested in procedural questions they are wrong. Next stage is Weizman-Gamasy talks on cooling military situation, second stage is Dayan-Egyptian political talks. Rather than further USG initiative at this time, we should simply support further discussion among the parties, not press for early Geneva. Begin and Dayan agreed that Sadat is not pressing for an early conference, thinks intensive preparations more important. He does not believe present momentum leads directly to Geneva, especially given Syrian, Russian and PLO reaction to his visit.

5. In response to my questions, Begin had no thoughts on how to engage Syrians in negotiation. Assad is very difficult; “I tried to invite him, but no response.” They would like to open dialogue with Jordan and have the means, but think it better to wait till later in Israel-Egypt negotiations. Dayan does not think Hussein is prepared yet for negotiations, would not come if invited, and cannot at this stage negotiate on West Bank-Gaza. Re PLO, Dayan had urged Ghali on arrival to avoid mention and, whether because of that or not, Sadat had [not?] done so (I think from other evidence that the advice had an effect). Begin had urged Sadat to meet with West Bankers to show their support for visit but Sadat said he would be guided by Prime Minister’s wishes. He did not want to seem to be asserting role as spokesman for Palestinians. There was no discussion of Palestinian representation at Geneva, including “American professor” idea.³ When I asked about discussion of

³ The American professor is apparently a reference to Professor Edward Said. See footnote 1, Document 119.

Syria, Begin said only that Sadat had shrugged off protest in Arab world. (Begin thinks was partly self solace but that he may mean it and be right).

6. Both Begin and Dayan pictured Sadat as essentially sharing Israeli unhappiness over US-Soviet communique. They quoted Sadat as saying it “brought in the Russians,” and that he did not want to go to Geneva with the Russians involved.

7. Begin showed some sensitivity over Sadat’s failure to give him specific invitation to Cairo, attributing it to security concerns and saying Sadat had suggested “Sinai or Ismailia” for a meeting. Dayan, I think more accurately, cited Sadat as saying as long as Israelis hold Egyptian territory, it is very difficult for him to issue invitation. They were defensive about criticism that Israelis did not “give Sadat something to take back”, which they attributed to American and European press (when I noted it was also in Israeli press they did not answer). Dayan’s argument was that it would have been unwise to offer something of bilateral interest to Egypt, Sadat had not asked for anything re Palestinians, and they could not usefully make an offer for Syria. They had been concerned Sadat would maneuver in order to go home and say he had unveiled Israeli motives, they didn’t really want peace. Instead, when asked what he wanted to make his trip a success, Sadat has asked only that they talk honestly and sincerely. All conversations were in that spirit. Sadat had been much impressed by warmth of Israeli welcome and Begin thought Israeli handling of visit (except for translators) had been “almost perfect.” Begin thought that Sadat was “beginning to understand” the real problem of Israeli security by end of visit, as evidenced in his Monday press conference emphasis on security as well as peace as legitimate Israeli interests.⁴

8. Dayan sees Sadat as preoccupied with his economic problems and complaining about the burden of military spending. Sadat, he says, is not taking this initiative to get back Sharm which has no political or economic significance. Begin concurred and they elaborated on Egypt’s economic problems. They urge that USG hold out hope to Sadat of large-scale economic assistance, but make it conditional on reaching Israel-Egypt peace. They see this as key to Sadat’s effort now for settlement.

9. Comment: I hesitate to say much until we are able to compare Begin’s to Sadat’s version of the visit. From Begin’s account, it looks as though our Geneva scenario has been considerably modified and the new track has, obviously, a heady odor of Israeli-Egyptian bilaterals. Both Begin and Dayan, however, were very open and enthusiastic, and

⁴ November 21. See Document 152.

Begin genuinely thinks that his report to the President is good news for both of us. I really feel, at this stage, that they believe they are still moving constructively toward Geneva and that Begin and Sadat are working for a comprehensive rather than a bilateral settlement. The Israeli perspective may be myopic but, for now, it does not really seem Machiavellian. Begin talked like a man sharing a success with us and feeling that he, with Sadat, is engaged in seeking goals that they share with the President. He gave no sign of concern about the stubborn substantive differences that, presumably, still divide him from Sadat on the issues, or particularly the West Bank/Palestinian issue has been sidetracked. Whatever he may think is the solution to these apparently intractable problems, I suspect his engagement in seeking a comprehensive solution is still genuine. That may be a tribute to the potent effect Sadat has had, not only on the Israeli public, but on Begin himself.

10. Suggest Department repeat this message to Cairo.

Lewis

158. Memorandum From Secretary of State Vance to President Carter¹

Washington, November 24, 1977

SUBJECT

Analysis of Sadat-Begin Talks

We have now received reports on their talks in Jerusalem from both President Sadat and Prime Minister Begin.² It is apparent that a new situation has been created which requires some adjustment in our approach to Middle East peace. Briefly, *the present realities seem to be*:

—Egypt and Israel have agreed to continue direct contacts at the political and military levels. Therefore, in the immediate future our intermediary role, while still important, is less central than in the past.

—Both Egypt and Israel say they want to try to work out the substance of an overall peace settlement prior to Geneva, although Israel

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Subject File, Box 3, Arab-Israeli Peace Settlement 1977: Volume II [III]. Secret; Nodis. Carter initialed at the top of the page.

² See Documents 155 and 157.

probably hopes that talks would result in early agreement on an Egyptian-Israeli treaty. Therefore, an early reconvening of Geneva is unlikely.

—Both Egypt and Israel believe that Syria and the Soviet Union can be ignored at present.

—Sadat, however, apparently hopes to be able to show some movement on the Palestinian issue as a way of protecting himself from the charge of abandoning the Arab cause.

—Saudi support for Egypt is essential, but Sadat does not want us to approach the Saudis (or the Syrians) on his behalf.

—The breach between Sadat and Assad is serious, and probably cannot be healed immediately. It may have to run its course, but this does not mean that Syria will throw in its lot with the rejectionists.³ Indeed, it is in our interest to prevent this.

—Jordan is in a very awkward position and will fear a separate Egyptian-Israeli agreement. But Hussein is open to the idea of direct talks.

Sadat has asked your advice on three points:

1. He intends to say in his speech to the People's Assembly on Saturday⁴ that the Arab-Israeli conflict should be solved directly by the parties concerned, not by outside powers.

2. He is toying with the idea of issuing invitations to all the parties to a conference in Cairo as a substitute for Geneva.

3. He has suggested that an Israeli diplomat (who would not be publicly identified as such) be posted to the U.S. Embassy in Cairo to facilitate direct communications.

I believe that Sadat should be encouraged to place primary emphasis on direct talks among the parties to the conflict. This is perfectly consistent with our own approach. For the moment, of course, only Egypt, and possibly Jordan through established secret channels, are prepared for such direct talks.

Concerning a Cairo Conference as a substitute for Geneva, I think we should discourage Sadat from moving in this direction at this time. At this point, neither the Soviets nor the Syrians would come, and it is in fact likely that the Israelis would be the only takers. This could only serve to dramatize Sadat's isolation among the front-line Arab states. Instead, I suggest that we tell Sadat that we are favorable to his idea of working on the substance of peace agreements through bilateral talks with Israel, and with the emphasis he has placed on the need for careful

³ See footnote 3, Document 78.

⁴ November 26.

preparation prior to any multilateral conference. At some point, his idea of a meeting in Cairo might be helpful, and we would like to discuss this further. However, we think it would be desirable to continue to emphasize that the objective remains an overall settlement and an eventual peace conference open to all the parties.

I think we should discuss further with Sadat the idea of an Israeli diplomat being assigned to our Embassy in Cairo. We will raise the idea with Begin and get his reactions.

If you agree to this approach, I will send the attached messages through Ambassador Eilts and Lewis⁵ indicating our support for the idea of bilateral Israel-Egyptian talks to prepare the way for an eventual peace conference. We will discourage Sadat from his specific suggestion of calling immediately for a conference in Cairo, and will sound him out on ways of insuring Saudi support and what we can say to the Saudis.

We will also want to be in touch with the Jordanians, Syrians and Soviets in the near future. A primary objective will be to prevent the Syrians from joining the rejectionists, but for the moment it does not seem as if an early reconvening of Geneva is the way to accomplish that.

We will obviously need to give early thought to the longer-run implications of the situation resulting from Sadat's new approach and to adjusting our own long-term strategy to it. It is clear that Sadat himself has not thought through precisely all of the implications and that he is overly optimistic about the ease and speed with which his negotiations with the Israelis can proceed. He will almost certainly at some point come to us for help in moving the Israelis on specific issues. At this point, however, Sadat's initiative has clearly generated its own pressure on the Israelis to reassess some of their long-held positions. We will want to let that process work to see what it can produce and should not at this point ourselves begin to press the Israelis, but should rather adopt an encouraging posture toward them.

The other area to which we will need to give attention is how we help improve the intra-Arab atmosphere, for our own interests as well as Sadat's, and how we lower expectations for an early convening of Geneva during a period when nothing very visible will be happening, and there is little concrete that can be said to others. It is clear that Israel's real objective is to engage Sadat in separate Israeli-Egyptian negotiations and that Sadat will be tempted to go that route if the other Arab parties continue to hold back. This has both dangers and opportunities, and we will need continually to keep under review how we can

⁵ The messages are not attached. See Documents 159 and 160.

encourage the bilateral track while keeping alive the prospects for a comprehensive settlement.

Finally, we will need to give some thought to how in our public statements and in our consultations with Congress we convey some of these new realities and the new emphasis in our own policy.

Recommendation:

That you approve the draft messages to Cairo and Tel Aviv.⁶

⁶ Carter did not indicate his approval or disapproval of this recommendation.

159. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Egypt¹

Washington, November 25, 1977, 1546Z

282008. WH for Brzezinski. Subject: Instructions to Ambassador for Meeting With Sadat. For the Ambassador From the Secretary. Ref: Cairo 19466.²

1. Please try to see Sadat as soon as possible to convey the following comments to him in response to his report to you.

2. Tell Sadat we are, first, very grateful to him for the full and timely report of his conversations in Israel. President Carter is personally appreciative. It is now clear that Sadat's visit to Israel will be regarded as a momentous event in the history of the Arab-Israel conflict. Negotiations he and Israelis are proposing to set in motion, together with the impact his visit has had in psychological terms, open up dramatic and hopeful new prospects for a peace settlement.

3. We want to assure Sadat that the United States is fully in support of him in this bold new venture, and that we remain ready to be of whatever assistance we can. Objective of U.S. policy throughout this long conflict has been to promote the most direct, expeditious process of negotiations among the parties.

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P850002–2321. Secret; Flash; Exdis Distribute as Nodis Cherokee. Drafted by Sterner; cleared by Quandt, Habib, Atherton, and Robert Perito; and approved by Secretary Vance. Sent immediate for information to Tel Aviv and the White House.

² See Document 155.

4. We do not know what the Soviet feelings are about this but their ability to interfere, once the Middle Eastern parties themselves establish negotiating momentum, is in our opinion limited. We ourselves have no problem in the parties proceeding in this manner, and, in answer to Sadat's specific question in paragraph 9 of your telegram, we would have no problem with his stating in his Peoples Assembly address that peace treaties should be reached through direct negotiations among all the parties. This coincides not only with our view but also with Israeli policy as we understand it.

5. We would like for Sadat to be as specific as possible concerning the relationship between his bilaterals with Israel and the comprehensive settlement among all the parties which both he and Begin have stressed remains the overall objective. Sadat has emphasized that "careful preparation" is needed—presumably to be accomplished in the bilateral talks he is launching with Israel—leading to the convening of a multilateral peace conference. How far does he believe the process of bilateral Egypt-Israel exploration can go before negotiations must involve the other parties? In the meanwhile, assuming the bilateral talks with the Israelis are productive but take some time, how does he propose that the rest of the Arabs be kept from mobilizing against him and withdrawing from peace talks because of their suspicions that a private Egyptian-Israeli deal is in the making?

6. As we see it, while Sadat could proceed without support from some of the other Arab states, one important key to his strategy will be retaining Saudi support. How far has he taken Saudis into his confidence about his coming program for negotiations? We take his point about our not attempting to carry his brief in Saudi Arabia but we will continue on-going dialogue with Saudis on this and other subjects and we need to know what Sadat would prefer us to say to them in connection with his initiative. We would also like to hear his view as to what line we can best take with the Syrians and Jordanians, with whom we will continue close consultations.

7. While we recognize that it will not be possible to allay all suspicions in Arab world, or to bring all the Arabs along with Sadat in his strategy, we consider it important that Sadat stress in his public statements his continuing commitment to comprehensiveness of a peace settlement and to early convening of a Middle East Peace Conference in which Palestinians and other parties would participate. Whatever he chooses to say publicly about his continuing talks with the Israelis can best be projected as exploration of substantive issues preparatory to, and a logical and necessary step toward, the convening of a Middle East Peace Conference. In this respect it is worth recalling that Sadat himself insisted that Sinai I and II agreements be cast in terms of step toward overall peace settlement—indeed, Sadat will recall that the

Egyptians drafted the title to these agreements which stressed this point. It seems to us that the “Geneva Middle East Peace Conference” has by now become a symbol of very important progress that has been made since 1973 in Arab-Israel negotiations, and that its preservation as an umbrella, particularly in terms of public pronouncements, will strengthen Egypt’s ability to pursue its bilateral explorations with Israel. The Geneva venue for such negotiations is of course not crucial in itself but the continuing objective of a “Middle East Peace Conference” remains valid and necessary.

8. For this reason we believe Sadat’s proposal that he in effect bury the Geneva conference in his speech to the Peoples Assembly Saturday³ could be understood as an abandonment of a comprehensive peace and therefore would have adverse repercussions. The Israelis would no doubt accept the proposal for a Cairo conference instead, but we doubt if the Syrians, or main body of Palestinians would, and even the Jordanians might be a problem. If Sadat were to make such a proposal on Saturday, it might only serve to depict Egypt as violating a commitment made to other involved parties and isolated in its search for peace. While a conference other than at Geneva might become a good idea at some stage in the future, provided it includes Palestinians and others, we think it would be a mistake for him to propose it in public speech on Saturday as an alternative to Geneva. We believe Sadat would be better served, for the reasons set forth above, to restate his commitment to a reconvening of the Geneva Conference as the ultimate objective, even if, in practical terms, the immediate focus of Egypt’s diplomatic activity will no longer be directed towards an early reconvening. Such a restatement would also be entirely consistent with the line both Sadat and Begin took at the conclusion of their talks.

9. With respect to Sadat’s idea of having an Israeli diplomat stationed clandestinely at the U.S. Embassy in Cairo, you should say that we see some problems and would wish to explore other alternatives with Sadat and Begin which might serve equally well.

10. We see no reason why direct, continuing discussions leading to a comprehensive peace settlement should not continue at the ministerial level between Egypt and Israel.

Vance

³ November 26.

160. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Israel¹

Washington, November 25, 1977, 1619Z

282029. WH for Brzezinski. Subject: Letter From President Carter to Prime Minister Begin. For the Ambassador From the Secretary.

1. Please deliver following letter to Prime Minister Begin.

2. Begin text:

Dear Mr. Prime Minister:

I appreciate your letter of November 23 and the additional details that you have given Ambassador Lewis on your talks with President Sadat.²

Let me say first of all, Mr. Prime Minister, that I agree with you that President Sadat's visit, the reception he received in Israel and your private meetings and exchanges were good for Egypt, Israel and the cause of peace. The method that you and President Sadat have decided upon to continue your dialogue will have my support. As always, we stand ready to assist in any way that the Governments of Israel and your neighbors may desire, though our preference of course has always been that the parties deal directly among yourselves.

President Sadat has also given us, through Ambassador Eilts, a report of his impressions of the visit and of his thoughts on next steps,³ and they are much the same as those you have conveyed. We are gratified that you both reconfirmed your commitment to a comprehensive settlement at Geneva, embodied in peace treaties, though in the light of the promising new developments that have emerged from your talks we recognize that time should be allowed for its preparation. We further agree that it is important that Israel and Egypt give fullest consideration to ways in which the other parties can be brought into the negotiating process. I know we all agree that to be strong and durable a settlement must be comprehensive, and I am glad that you appreciate the danger of making the negotiations seem to be exclusively an Israeli-Egyptian undertaking.

Mr. Prime Minister, in hardly a week's time, thanks to your and President Sadat's initiatives, the Middle East has moved closer to peace

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840072–2378. Secret; Flash; Exdis Distribute as Nodis Cherokee. Drafted by Korn; cleared by Atherton, Habib, Quandt, and Robert Perito; and approved by Secretary Vance. Sent immediate for information to Cairo and the White House.

² See Documents 156 and 157.

³ See Document 155.

than in all the negotiations of the past thirty years. It hardly needs saying that the path ahead will be difficult. I know that you recognize better than anyone the magnitude of the changes that will be required to reach agreement. You may be sure that the Government of Israel will have the full support of the United States in the period ahead as it takes the momentous decisions necessary for the just and lasting peace that we have so long sought.

Sincerely,

Jimmy Carter.

End text.

3. When delivering foregoing, or on other early occasion, we would like you to explore with Begin or Dayan an idea put forward by Sadat in conversation with Eilts November 23.⁴ Sadat asked Begin's and our comment on the possibility of assigning an Israeli diplomat to the American Embassy to convey messages to Begin and to resolve day-to-day problems between Egypt and Israel, using our communications. Sadat's idea is that the Israeli diplomat would be listed as an American and no announcement would be made for the time being that he was in fact Israeli.

4. You should say that in principle we like the idea of direct diplomatic link between Egypt and Israel but would like to have some time to think it through. We are frankly concerned about the obvious complications that could be created by having an Israeli diplomat under American cover in the American Embassy in Cairo. There may be other alternatives that would accomplish the same purpose. Before going further, however, we would appreciate having Begin's and Dayan's thoughts.

Vance

⁴ See Document 155.

161. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassies in Egypt and Israel¹

Washington, November 26, 1977, 1501Z

283132. Subject: Sadat Speech. Ref: Cairo 19563.²

1. You should inform Sadat we are considering his latest proposals. However, the President has asked you to say: "Unless careful preparation is made and the other parties are consulted privately, President Carter believes that the proposed December 3 Cairo conference will be rejected."

2. You should then say the U.S. will be glad to help prepare for such a preparatory conference and consult with other parties about it. Therefore, President Sadat should delay any announcement of such a conference.

3. We see the need to discuss the proposal with some of the other participants. Begin is not in good health and we need at least 24 hours to consult with him, as Sadat has requested.

Unquote.

Vance

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Cables, Box 109, 11/25–30/77. Secret; Immediate; Exdis Distribute as Nodis Cherokee. Repeated to the White House for Brzezinski only.

² In telegram 19563 from Cairo, November 25, Ambassador Eilts reported on his meeting that day with Sadat at which Sadat told Eilts (in what Eilts referred to as a "bombshell") that the next day he would announce that Egypt would be ready on December 3 to "receive in Cairo representatives of all the parties for preparatory talks for the Geneva Conference." Sadat said that he viewed the proposed Cairo talks as a replacement for the working group that he had originally proposed to Vance. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840072–2045) In a November 26 speech to the People's Assembly, Sadat invited all the parties to the Arab-Israeli dispute, including the Soviet Union, to a conference in Cairo to resolve difficulties to reconvening the Geneva Conference. (Christopher Wren, "Aim Is To Speed Peace," *New York Times*, November 27, 1977, p. 1)

162. Memorandum of Telephone Conversation¹

November 30, 1977, 3:03–3:06 p.m.

PARTICIPANTS

President Carter
Prime Minister Begin

The conversation opened with Begin expressing his gratitude for the President's statement at his morning press conference.² He indicated he had listened to it and was most gratified and encouraged by it. He then indicated that one of his staff will be meeting shortly with a member of President Sadat's staff to develop the Cairo meeting.

He then went on to repeat again his request that the President visit both Israel and Egypt during his trip.³ He assured the President that his visit "to my country will be an unforgettable event."

The President responded that "I will consider it personally." He then went on to inquire about "prospects for Cairo." Begin responded that he has high hopes. "We will make progress with all the meetings that are going on. There will be parallel meetings and we will reach an agreement. I will keep you fully informed."

President Carter stated to Begin "don't hesitate to send me messages and to keep me fully informed."

There was then a brief exchange about Begin's forthcoming visit to London and then Prime Minister Begin concluded by asking when can the President let him know about "your decision about the visit to Israel?" The President responded that he will let him know in a week or two and the conversation ended with an exchange of pleasantries.

¹ Source: Carter Library, President's Plains File. Secret.

² At his November 30 morning press conference, Carter stated that the development of direct contacts between Israel and Egypt represented a "historic breakthrough." (*Public Papers: Carter, 1977*, Book II, pp. 2054–2057)

³ A reference to Carter's upcoming nine-day tour of six nations, which began on December 29 in Poland and included a stop in Egypt on January 4, 1978. He did not visit Israel until March 1978.

163. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, December 5, 1977, noon–12:30 p.m.

SUBJECT

Summary of Dr. Brzezinski's Meeting with Syrian Ambassador Sabah Kabbani

PARTICIPANTS

Dr. Zbigniew Brzezinski, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs
Ambassador Sabah Kabbani of Syria
William B. Quandt, NSC Staff

Ambassador Kabbani noted that he was pleased to have the chance to exchange views at this time. *Dr. Brzezinski* replied that much had happened in the Middle East and that it was important to compare ideas and to develop a long-range perspective. The President has a very favorable recollection of his meeting with President Assad² and hopes to maintain a close relationship with him. Secretary Vance will be going to the Middle East in part to keep that relationship intact. There are bound to be questions and uncertainties, and we hope to sustain a dialogue and to deal jointly with problems as they arise. *Ambassador Kabbani* said that Syria is also eager to continue a dialogue and that recent developments in Tripoli indicate that Syria is still hopeful about going to Geneva in an orderly way.³

In response to Dr. Brzezinski's question about why Syria had not shown more flexibility on Geneva previously, *Ambassador Kabbani* replied that Syria does want to go to Geneva, but that now Arab unity has been weakened and this will make a comprehensive solution more difficult. *Dr. Brzezinski* stated that it might have been possible to avoid this situation if more flexibility had been shown earlier. In his view, Presi-

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Subject File, Box 67, Middle East: Peace Negotiations 1977 Vol. II. Secret. The meeting took place at the White House in Brzezinski's office.

² See Document 32.

³ On December 2, Arab leaders from Libya, Syria, Iraq, Algeria, Southern Yemen, and the PLO met in Tripoli for a two-day meeting to address possible action to take against Egypt after Sadat's visit to Israel. Leaders proposed economic and diplomatic sanctions, but by the end of the meeting, the five countries and PLO representatives agreed to a mutual defense accord and a "resistance front." (Marvine Howe, "Arab Meeting Fails to Forge Joint Front Against Sadat Moves," *New York Times*, December 5, 1977, p. 1) The final communiqué, or Tripoli Declaration, issued on December 5 did not directly oppose a negotiated settlement, reportedly at Syrian insistence. As a result, Iraq walked out of the conference. (Marvine Howe, "Hard-Line Arab Bloc Is Formed at Tripoli," *New York Times*, December 6, 1977, p. 11) Egypt responded to the conference's measures by breaking diplomatic relations with Libya, Syria, Algeria, and Southern Yemen.

dent Sadat's visit to Jerusalem stemmed from his concern over the lack of momentum toward Geneva, with some parties placing too much emphasis on procedural detail. *Ambassador Kabbani* replied that Syria had placed its trust in the American efforts and believed that they were sincere, but was somewhat concerned that words were not always followed by actions. The United States, in his view, could not be both mediator and ally in Israel.

Dr. Brzezinski cautioned that it was not possible for the United States to dissociate itself completely from Israel. The United States has a special relationship with Israel based on history, psychology and politics. The United States has a special sense of responsibility to ensure Israel's existence. The Arabs now no longer seem to question Israel's existence in any case, and this makes a peace settlement possible. The American relationship with Israel does not preclude close ties to the Arab world, and if there were a comprehensive settlement, the United States could have ties with the Arabs that are as close as those that it has with Israel. Once war is behind us, the area will experience a great period of development and we will want to be closely related to the countries there.

Ambassador Kabbani said that Syria does not object to the special relationship between the United States and Israel, but it does not feel that Israel should be able to impose its views on American policy. *Dr. Brzezinski* responded by saying that the United States cannot deliver Israel forceably to a peace conference. There will have to be negotiations. We do want Israel to show flexibility and we have offered to examine all issues deliberately, but now we should talk about the future. There seem to be several possibilities. There could be an Egyptian-Israeli arrangement, but one would have to ask whether it would last and whether Sadat would want one in any case. The second possibility is that no agreement will be reached and that there will be a breakdown in the process of searching for peace. This will be very bad and could produce profound disappointment, perhaps leading to hostilities. If a separate arrangement is not likely, and if a breakdown is undesirable for all parties, we should explore a third possibility, which is to build on the recent developments in a positive way. President Assad, in very difficult circumstances, has shown courage in remaining committed to the Geneva Conference.

Dr. Brzezinski urged that Syria consider the possibility of building on the new Egyptian-Israeli relationship. A psychological barrier has now been broken. The Israelis know that some Arabs want peace. Mr. Begin has also indicated that he may be prepared to talk seriously. Now the Israeli government is ambivalent about its policies, and the internal opposition is more moderate. Mr. Peres and Mr. Eban are ahead of Begin. This should be exploited. If there is no separate deal, and if there

is no breakdown, then we should try to build on the Egyptian-Israeli relationship as a catalyst, and should try to widen it to include others. The United States feels that Syria has an important role to play. We still hope for Geneva, but we think that even before Geneva important developments can occur.

Ambassador Kabbani noted that the time has now come for the United States and Israel to take major steps. There are no more taboos. The United States is reluctant to impose its views, but the United States must do something. Sadat's step was courageous. But now Syria wants something from the United States and from Begin in response. The Cairo meeting will only be a show. The Middle East problems will not be solved by this approach. There must be a serious effort to deal with substantive issues. The American role is to explain to Begin what he must do and how a Geneva Conference can be reached. The United States now has the ball in its court. The current atmosphere in the United States is very helpful, because the United States can now do anything. *Dr. Brzezinski* responded by noting that the American public does expect further progress and signs of Israeli flexibility. *Ambassador Kabbani* believed that the United States should specifically tell the Israelis what needs to be done. He then asked what was wrong with the Waldheim initiative⁴ or a conference under UN auspices. *Dr. Brzezinski* noted that Waldheim had planned to invite the PLO and that PLO participation in such a conference did not make sense, given the PLO's refusal to accept Resolution 242.

Ambassador Kabbani made the observation that Sadat, in going to Israel, had criticized former Arab concepts of non-acceptance of Israel. Israel should now reexamine its own positions on how to deal with the Arabs and the Palestinians and should do some self criticism of its own. This would pave the way for a breakthrough. He was critical of the American insistence on adhering to the terms of the Sinai II agreement. *Dr. Brzezinski* said that the United States cannot repudiate an agreement made by a previous Administration. The United States has tried to be flexible, and a formula has been developed that would allow for Geneva with Palestinian participation. We should not reopen this issue. Instead, we should try to exploit what has happened and to bring others into the process. The alternative to joining the process would be for Syria to stay on the sidelines with the Soviet Union, and this would not be good for Syria. The greater the flexibility that Syria can show, the more pressure it will bring on Israel. *Dr. Brzezinski* urged that the

⁴ The Waldheim initiative refers to U.N. Secretary General Waldheim's attempt, beginning with a trip to the Middle East in February 1977, to reconvene the Geneva Conference under the auspices of the United Nations. A major aspect of the initiative was the intent to include Palestinian negotiators, although they would not necessarily be PLO members.

Syrians show the same political imagination that President Sadat has shown. He urged that the parties not worry about working papers, and that instead they should declare their willingness to go to a Conference. If Syria refuses to go, it will be labelled the intransigent party. Whoever is labelled the intransigent, whether it is Begin or the Syrians, will be isolated. Within Israel, there is a mounting cry for greater flexibility. The United States will not try to impose its views, but it will encourage flexibility and moderation, but Syria also has a role to play in bringing this about. *Ambassador Kabbani* replied that Syria had dealt with Israel for thirty years and had seen no indication that Israel was willing to change its approach to dealing with the Arabs. Israel must now give something. The American role should be to remind them of this fact. *Dr. Brzezinski* agreed that Israel would have to respond to Sadat's step, but that the United States will not impose its will on Israel and then deliver Israel to Syria. The parties instead will have to discuss and negotiate. *Ambassador Kabbani* felt that the discussions should begin from the basis of the principles that the United States itself had enunciated regarding withdrawal and a Palestinian homeland.

Dr. Brzezinski called President Sadat the first Arab leader to recognize the importance of public opinion in both the United States and Israel. Sadat is now the most popular Arab leader in the United States. By contrast, Syria is making it easy for Israel to remain in a rigid position. Syria is not viewed as being sufficiently flexible in its own views. It is important to learn to play a political psychology game. Begin himself is a master of this art. But Sadat has now put him on the defensive. If you want Israel to be flexible at Geneva, you don't have to give anything away on substance, but you have to show a flexible attitude. *Ambassador Kabbani* noted that President Carter had referred to Egypt, quite correctly, as the largest Arab country. If Egypt gets nothing from Israel, how can Syria expect anything. Egypt has to show some results. Sadat can only hope to represent the other confrontation states if he gets something.

Dr. Brzezinski agreed that there was a need for flexibility on the Israeli side. If that occurs, Syria should join the process. *Ambassador Kabbani* said that Syria has been flexible, but there are real problems that must be faced: continued occupation of Arab territory, settlements, and refugees. These are real problems, not just psychological problems. In Damascus alone, there are 150,000 Palestinian refugees. They would not understand an attitude of flexibility unless something were specifically done to improve their lot.

Dr. Brzezinski said that he was aware of these facts and that he appreciated the position that President Assad has taken in difficult circumstances. He expressed his hope that the two Presidents would remain in touch through Secretary Vance during his upcoming visit, and

through any other means that the Syrians chose. *Ambassador Kabbani* concluded by expressing his hope that the two governments would continue to stay in touch.

164. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) to President Carter¹

Washington, undated

SUBJECT

Prospects for a Separate Egyptian-Israeli Settlement

Our Ambassadors in Egypt, Israel, Syria, Jordan and Lebanon have all been asked to comment on the prospects for, and consequences of, a separate Egyptian-Israeli peace agreement. We have received lengthy responses from each Ambassador, the main points of which are summarized below:

1. *Egypt*. Ambassador Eilts feels that President Sadat is serious when he says that he will try to work out with Israel principles for a comprehensive settlement. He will then present these principles to the other Arab states for approval, and will proceed to negotiate his own agreement with Israel in that context. Ambassador Eilts finds it difficult to believe that the Israelis will offer Sadat the kind of comprehensive settlement that he could present to an Arab Summit as the basis for a just and durable peace. Sadat recognizes this possibility and will look to American pressure on Israel to prevent this from happening.

If Sadat cannot achieve agreement on principles for a comprehensive settlement, he will nonetheless try to work out some kind of a Palestinian agreement. He is toying with the idea of UN control over the West Bank and Gaza for a period of time and has also discussed the idea of a Palestinian state in Gaza and part of Northern Sinai. Sadat has recently been placing less emphasis on the PLO, and has been looking for other sources of leadership among the Palestinians.

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Subject File, Box 19, Geneva: Egypt: 12/77. Secret. Outside the System. Sent for information. Brzezinski did not initial the memorandum. A December 6 covering memorandum attached from Quandt to Brzezinski requests that the memorandum be sent to the President. Brzezinski indicated his approval.

In the end, Sadat will probably consider a separate deal with Israel if it is a sufficiently good one. Ambassador Eilts believes that the Egyptian public and the military leadership will go along with Sadat if he takes this course. Sadat does not seem to be particularly concerned about Saudi reactions. Ambassador Eilts concludes that the Saudis would probably continue to support Egypt. The Ambassador notes that if the Israelis want a separate peace with Egypt, they are going to have to pay a price for it, and probably a higher price than they presently think. Sadat is not determined to have peace at any price with Israel. Ambassador Eilts believes that we should continue to press Sadat and the Israelis for a comprehensive settlement. (Ambassador Eilts' cable is attached.)²

2. *Israel.* Ambassador Lewis feels that Prime Minister Begin is genuinely prepared to make a try at a comprehensive settlement. He notes, however, that considerable momentum is building for a separate deal with Egypt, and that Dayan and Weizman are particularly tempted to move in this direction. Dayan apparently sees comprehensive negotiations primarily as a cover for the pursuit of a bilateral agreement. The key obstacle to moving beyond a bilateral agreement with Egypt is the current Israeli position regarding the West Bank. While many in Israel would agree to substantial withdrawal from the West Bank in return for peace, Prime Minister Begin still seems reluctant to consider that possibility seriously.

3. *Syria.* Ambassador Murphy believes that if the Syrians see Egypt moving in the direction of a bilateral agreement, they will not necessarily immediately turn rejectionist or decide to join the negotiations. Assad does not want a confrontation with Israel while his army is bogged down in Lebanon. He might well continue to reject Sadat's initiatives, without being stampeded into the arms of the rejectionists. Continued Saudi support and an open dialogue with the United States will be important to Assad during this period if he is to resist the rejectionists' alternative.

4. *Jordan.* Ambassador Pickering thinks that King Hussein is genuinely concerned about the consequences of Sadat's move. He fears radicalization in the area, with Jordan being caught between Egypt and the other Arabs. Hussein very strongly favors emphasis on a comprehensive settlement, and particularly hopes for American pressure on Israel concerning the future of the West Bank. Jordan will try to maintain high level contacts with both Syria and Egypt as well as Saudi Arabia. Hussein will not take a forward role in negotiating for the West Bank at present, but this could change if the Israelis make a sufficiently

² Telegram 289268 to the White House, which repeated the cable from Cairo, is attached but not printed.

attractive offer. Ambassador Pickering believes that Jordan would prefer a continuation of the status quo to a separate Egyptian-Israeli peace agreement.

5. *Lebanon*. Ambassador Parker, who has had long experience in the Arab world, believes that Sadat can get away with a separate peace with Israel. Despite radical opposition to such a move, he thinks that an Egyptian-Israeli agreement would have good prospects for lasting. The Saudi role will be critical. Whether the Saudis will support an agreement reached between Egypt and Israel will depend to a large degree on circumstances. Ambassador Parker concludes that the Israelis, at a minimum, would have to make concessions which the Palestinian majority can accept, even if the PLO, Syrians, and rejectionists do not. He suspects that something well short of the PLO maximum demands could eventually be sold to Palestinians, but he sees no signs that the Israelis are going to meet even minimalist demands.

He does not believe that a separate peace between Egypt and Israel will create a momentum for a wider settlement unless Begin is able to offer terms which are considerably more attractive than anything the Israelis have mentioned to date. The impact of a separate Egyptian-Israeli agreement in Lebanon would quite likely be very serious. If Syria and the Palestinians decide to fight Sadat's move, Lebanon could become a battleground. In those circumstances, a resumption of the civil war would be a possibility, with the Christian rightists turning to Israel and Egypt for support in their objective of carving out a separate Christian state.

165. National Security Council Annual Report¹

Washington, undated

NSC ANNUAL REPORT

I. The Arab-Israeli Conflict

The Situation in Late 1976. At the end of 1976, the chances for progress in resolving the Arab-Israeli conflict seemed to require new diplomatic initiatives from Washington. During the previous year, there had been virtually no movement toward accommodation. The combination of an election year in the United States and the civil war in Lebanon had meant that 1976 was essentially a lost year in the peace-making process.

Nonetheless, there were a number of positive signs. First, the United States was on comparatively good terms with all of the key parties. At the same time, the Soviet profile in the area was quite low, and it seemed unlikely that the Soviets would play a significant role in the upcoming round of diplomacy. The divisions in the Arab world that had become evident during the Lebanese civil war had just been moderated by the initiative of Saudi Arabia, and Saudi willingness to play an active and constructive role in support of peace was a new and welcome development.

When the Carter Administration assumed office in January, expectations were high that new initiatives would soon be launched. The choices that were generally considered were a resumption of step by step diplomacy, and the more ambitious objective of establishing a framework for a comprehensive settlement.

Initial Goals of the Administration. From the outset, there was strong agreement in the Administration that the Arab-Israeli conflict should be given very high priority. The most effective way for the United States to contribute to a Middle East peace was believed to be the development, in consultations with all of the parties, of a broad framework of agreed principles for a comprehensive peace settlement. Instead of concentrating on small steps toward an uncertain future, we would try instead to help sketch the outline of an agreement which would then be developed further through negotiations and implemented over a period of time.

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Subject File, Box 67, Middle East: Policy/Goals: 10/77–4/78. Secret. Although no drafting information appears on the report, Quandt and Sick sent it to Brzezinski under a covering memorandum, December 9, in which they wrote that they had attached “our draft of the Annual Report for the Middle East.” They noted that they focused “on the Arab-Israeli diplomacy and Indian Ocean negotiations.” (Ibid.)

From this perspective, a conference at Geneva was a desirable target, but was not an end in itself. Our initial goal was to develop a framework for negotiations, with Geneva being reconvened once that framework had been established. The United States would not try to impose a solution, but would use its influence with the various parties to encourage direct negotiations within some commonly agreed frame of reference. Above all, we wanted to keep the focus of the diplomatic activity on the need for movement toward an overall peace in the Middle East; to break the stalemate of the past year; to draw the Syrians and moderate Palestinians into the negotiating process; and to develop a momentum towards peace that would become self-sustaining.

Policy Implementation. The initial phase of our diplomacy involved high-level consultations with all of the principal parties to the conflict. Secretary Vance undertook an initial trip to the Middle East in February, which established several basic points. First, all agreed that a new effort to resume negotiations was necessary. The idea of a comprehensive agreement was welcomed, with different degrees of enthusiasm, by all of the parties. None preferred a resumption of step-by-step diplomacy. In addition, it was widely understood that the key issues that would have to be resolved through negotiations were the nature of peace, the establishment of recognized borders and of effective security arrangements, and the resolution to the Palestinian question.

The next phase of our efforts consisted of Presidential meetings with Prime Minister Rabin, President Sadat, King Hussein, Crown Prince Fahd, and President Assad. These talks took place between March and May, and resulted in a much clearer definition of the issues. The President began deliberately to reveal through his public comments the broad outlines of our strategy. One objective was to break down some of the conventional slogans that had come to characterize the positions of the parties. In March, he became the first President to emphasize the need for full normalization of relations as an essential element in a peace agreement. He spoke of open borders, trade, and diplomatic relations as tangible signs of Arab willingness to coexist in peace with Israel. He also introduced an important, but complex, distinction between the establishment of politically recognized borders and security arrangements that might exist along, and beyond, those borders during a transitional period, and even as part of a final agreement. With that distinction in mind, he expressed his view that it would be possible as part of a peace settlement for Israel to meet the fundamental Arab requirement of withdrawal to the 1967 borders with only minor modifications.

His third innovation was to concentrate attention on the Palestinian issue. In particular, he noted that the Palestinians would have to

accept Israel's right to exist, and that if they did so, they should have the right to establish a homeland on their own. It was clearly stated that these were issues that the parties should work out themselves through negotiations and that the United States could not impose the terms of an agreement. It was further said that the implementation of any agreement should be phased over time so that no party would be asked to make concessions without receiving something in return. Israel, in particular, would not be expected to withdraw all of its military forces in one step, but rather should have the opportunity to test Arab intentions over some period of time before full withdrawal would occur.

The United States had not anticipated that the May elections in Israel would bring about a change in government. Our approach had been predicated on the well-known positions of the Israeli government concerning withdrawal in exchange for peace. When Prime Minister Begin assumed office, it took some time to assess the new elements in his policy. The most obvious change had to do with the West Bank and policy on Israeli settlements in the occupied territories. On both of these points, Begin appeared to be adopting a harder line than his predecessor. A new formula was articulated which appeared to preclude Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank, which was difficult to reconcile with the formula that all issues were negotiable and that U.N. Resolution 242 remained the basis for a peace settlement.

In order to get a clearer picture of Prime Minister Begin's views, the President invited him to Washington in July, and this led to some agreement on how to proceed in the months ahead. We would not talk about the 1967 borders with minor modifications, and we would play down the emphasis on a Palestinian homeland. Prime Minister Begin in return, committed himself to exercising restraint with respect to settlements and to consulting with us before undertaking any action in south Lebanon. He reiterated his position that all issues would be negotiable. He strongly preferred that the United States not deal with the substance of a settlement, but rather only with procedures to get the parties talking to one another.

Secretary Vance's second trip to the area took place in August, and was designed to expand the areas of substantive agreement prior to the convening of the Geneva Conference. He took with him proposals on both substance and procedure, and had very useful exchanges of views with all of the leaders in the area. It was apparent, however, that the substantive gap remained very wide, and that in the absence of the ongoing negotiation process, it would be difficult to narrow that gap. At this point, a consensus emerged within the Administration that a shift of focus toward the early reconvening of the Geneva Conference was needed.

We arranged for talks at the Foreign Minister level during the UN General Assembly sessions in September and October, with the primary purpose of resolving procedural issues and allowing the early reconvening of the Geneva Conference. At the same time, however, we received from some of the parties draft treaties to be used as a basis for future negotiations.

Two difficult issues emerged concerning the reconvening of Geneva. First was the difference among the Arab parties themselves. Egypt, like Israel, preferred that negotiations take place primarily in bilateral groups to maximize flexibility. By contrast, the Jordanians and the Syrians, realizing their comparatively weaker positions in the negotiations, wanted negotiations to take place initially between Israel and a unified Arab delegation, a suggestion which the Israelis strongly opposed. The second area of disagreement concerned Palestinian representation at Geneva.

The United States, as well as the Arab parties, took a position that Palestinians should be represented in negotiations. The Arabs tended to insist that the PLO be involved in some form, although there was ambiguity on this point. Israel insisted that the only Palestinians that could be present at Geneva would be those who were members of the Jordanian Delegation. During the talks in September and October, some progress was made in narrowing these differences. All parties eventually agreed to the idea of a unified Arab delegation in which there would be Palestinians present. A formula for selecting Palestinians was also developed which might have been acceptable to all of the initial Geneva participants.

As these discussions were proceeding, however, the Soviets became increasingly anxious to be involved in the pre-Geneva process, and they took the initiative in September of proposing a joint statement to be issued by the Geneva co-chairmen. Their initial draft was comparatively moderate, and this encouraged the Administration to respond favorably to the idea of a joint statement.² Over a period of two weeks, a common document was negotiated, and on October 1st it was publicly released. Substantively, it contained a few new points. In particular, it committed the Soviet Union to normal peaceful relations and used the term the "legitimate rights of the Palestinians." It was hoped that the US-Soviet statement would have a moderating effect on the more intransigent Arab parties. Shortly after the US-Soviet statement, the United States and Israel put the finishing touches on a document describing procedures for a Geneva Conference, and eventually the Israeli Cabinet accepted that document.

² See footnote 4, Document 118.

Once Israeli acceptance of the working paper had been achieved, the emphasis shifted to the Arab parties. The discussions began to bog down by mid-October. The Syrians, in particular, were very reluctant to respond to the working paper, although President Sadat gave his acceptance without qualification. We then urged the parties to overcome procedural differences, and toyed with the idea of issuing a joint call with the Soviet Union for a reconvened Geneva Conference, spelling out the basic rules of procedure and structure for that Conference in the invitation.

Before this could be done, President Sadat began to consider new initiatives of his own. We had urged him to take a public position in support of a peace settlement and Geneva. In early November he announced that he was prepared to go to Israel to lay his case before the Israeli Government and people. When this offer was taken up by the Israelis and an invitation was extended, a new phase in the peacemaking effort began.

President Sadat's historic trip to Israel did more to break down the psychological barriers between Israel and the Arab world than any single step in the preceding thirty years. Expectations that peace was now possible rose sharply, and strong momentum developed behind the Egyptian-Israeli dialogue. The United States threw its support behind President Sadat and Prime Minister Begin, while emphasizing the link between this step and the goal of an overall peace settlement. By December, the United States, along with Israel, Egypt, and the UN representative, was committed to participation in a preparatory conference in Cairo. Geneva was less imminent than it had appeared to be in October, but the prospects for peace seemed better nonetheless. In order to assess the new situation, Secretary Vance undertook his third trip to the area.

Difficulties. The most controversial of the points in the President's approach to a comprehensive peace settlement in the Middle East proved to be his idea of a Palestinian homeland. The reasons for this are complex. First, there was the unfamiliarity with the Palestinian issue, since it had not been seriously discussed by previous Administrations. Secondly, the debate over the Palestinian question tended to be taken out of context, and it was difficult to maintain a distinction between Palestinians and the PLO. An impression was created that the United States was placing the Palestinian issue at the head of the agenda, rather than keeping it within the context of an overall peace agreement which would include strong Arab commitments to peace and to security. The United States also made it clear that, under certain circumstances, it would agree to talk to the PLO, and this led many critics of the Administration to believe that the United States was promoting

PLO participation in the Geneva Conference, with the ultimate objective of establishing a PLO-dominated state on the West Bank and Gaza.

By fall, there was a very intense domestic reaction. Part of the fault was of our own making, and part was no doubt over-reaction on the part of the media and of the American Jewish community. Nonetheless, it seems fair to conclude that the Palestinian issue was introduced too early and without adequate care to keep it in perspective. This resulted in a loss of domestic support for our policy, which came at a particularly unfortunate time in terms of the peacemaking efforts. If we had instead concentrated on getting the Egyptians and the Syrians to commit themselves to Geneva and to an overall peace settlement, the Palestinian issue would have more easily fallen into place at a later date. The offer of a dialogue with the PLO also proved to be premature, since the PLO, caught between Egypt and Syria, was unable to respond to our initiative.

The second difficulty which compounded our problems on the domestic front was the US-Soviet communique. Although the document in fact contained little new and had little substantive consequence, it set off a storm of protest, bringing together traditional anti-Soviet forces and supporters of Israel.³ It was widely believed that the United States was bringing the Soviet Union back into a prominent place in the negotiations. This created an atmosphere in which the negotiation with Israel over the working paper for Geneva was influenced by the need to calm the domestic crisis of confidence. We may have accepted some language that subsequently made it difficult for the Arab parties to respond positively.

With the working paper in hand, the Israelis made it clear that they would make no further concessions on procedures to get to Geneva. Pressure then was directed at gaining Arab acceptance of what was

³ In the days following the October 1 release of the U.S.-Soviet joint statement, several leading Americans excoriated the Carter administration for working with the Soviets on this statement. Senator Henry Jackson referred to it as "a step in the wrong direction." Senator Robert Dole criticized the statement as an "abdication of Mideast leadership by President Carter." Rabbi Alexander Schindler, Chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, stated that his organization was "profoundly disturbed by the joint U.S.-Soviet statement which, on its face, represents an abandonment of America's historic commitment to the security and survival of Israel." George Meany, President of the AFL-CIO, noted that he did not "think it's going to work." ("Mideast Peace Initiative Provokes Criticism in U.S.," *New York Times*, October 3, 1977, p. 6) The statement also impacted the New York City mayoralty race as candidates Edward Koch and Mario Cuomo provided strong rebukes of the Carter administration. Koch argued "that it is outrageous that the United States Government should associate itself in any way with the Soviet Union when it comes to the Middle East." Cuomo accused Carter of using "mailed-fist techniques to make Israel submit to P.L.O. conditions." (Frank Lynn, "Koch, Cuomo Assail Carter on Mideast," *New York Times*, October 4, 1977, p. 8)

widely seen as a US-Israeli document, one which was clearly less acceptable than earlier drafts had been. For several weeks, we seemed to be concentrating excessively on words and legalisms, rather than on broad areas of agreement that would be required for the convening of the Geneva Conference. During this period, frustration grew in Egypt, Syria and Israel, and our own credibility seemed to suffer. The working paper exercise, in retrospect, was not very productive. The same results could have been achieved in other ways, and probably would have been if it had not been for the crisis set off by the US-Soviet statement.

Sadat's bold initiative brought us into a new phase, and by December we were embarked on a course which enjoyed much wider support among the American public and which seemed once again to hold good promise of moving the parties toward a peace settlement.

Accomplishments. The Administration broke new ground by concentrating on the key elements of an overall peace. The President's expression of the requirements of a real peace, including open borders, trade, diplomatic relations, was an important innovation. The distinction between political borders and security arrangements was also likely to be of enduring value. The focus on the need for a Palestinian homeland or entity was also well placed and has gained wide acceptance.

The Administration's efforts clearly did help to break the stalemate that had existed throughout 1976, and new momentum was given to the search for peace. The emphasis on negotiations and direct talks was instrumental in ultimately bringing Egypt and Israel together.

Through its largely unpublicized efforts, the Administration helped to limit the dangers of the unstable situation in South Lebanon. Had this been allowed to get out of control, it could have jeopardized the broader movement toward a peace agreement. The same was true of the issue of Israeli settlements in occupied territory. There is no doubt that American influence was instrumental in limiting and containing the scope of Prime Minister Begin's settlement policy, and thereby defusing its disruptive effects on the peace powers [*process*].

In addition to conducting diplomacy aimed at an Arab-Israeli peace settlement, the Administration maintained strong military relations with Israel, and expanded military ties with Egypt. These are particularly important achievements in light of the new Egyptian-Israeli peace effort.

Changes in Goals. Our long-term objective of an overall peace settlement in the Middle East has remained constant. There have been changes, however, in the means to that end. By the end of the year, it was clear that Geneva was no longer as central to our thinking as it had been several months earlier. The prospects for US-Soviet cooperation in promoting a comprehensive settlement had also dimmed. More em-

phasis was being placed on the Egyptian-Israeli dialogue and ensuring support for that part of the peace process. In particular, we were anxious to develop Saudi, Jordanian, and ultimately Syrian, involvement in the new approach to peace in the Middle East. Less emphasis was being placed on the PLO and more on moderate Palestinians.

The Next Stage. In the coming months, we will try to capitalize on the momentum developed by President Sadat's trip to Israel and the initiation of direct Egyptian-Israeli talks. Saudi support will be essential, and we will also try to encourage Jordanian and moderate Palestinian participation in the peacemaking effort. The door should be left open for Syria, but it is [not?] essential that Syria participate at this stage. Nor should we go out of our way to bring the Soviets into the negotiations.

In brief, while our goal remains that of a comprehensive settlement, our own role has been modified somewhat as a result of the Egyptian-Israeli dialogue, and our policy is directed toward supporting and encouraging those talks, while trying to draw in other moderate Arab parties. If Egypt and Israel can develop common principles for an overall settlement, we should support that effort and urge other parties to join the negotiations. We should use our special relationship with Israel on behalf of increased flexibility. If an Egyptian-Israeli agreement is the only part of an overall settlement that can be resolved at an early stage, we will have to carefully consider how we can best support movement in that direction without losing sight of our longer term goals. In the process, we will want to strengthen our relations with our friends in the area—Israel, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Iran. This represents, after all, a potent coalition on behalf of peace, and is a good basis from which to protect virtually all of our regional interests.

[Omitted here is material unrelated to the Middle East.]

166. Message From the White House to the Embassy in Egypt¹

Washington, December 9, 1977, 1525Z

WH70027. Please deliver the following message to Secretary Vance immediately.

To: Secretary Vance

From: Zbigniew Brzezinski

The President asked me to convey to you the following:

Please inform President Sadat that you will raise with Begin the desirability of a public Israeli statement expressing willingness in principle to withdraw from Arab lands occupied in 1967 and to resolve the Palestinian question in all its aspects, through negotiations with all the parties. Please explain to Sadat that he retains the option to call for such a statement publicly in the event that the Israelis are unresponsive.

At the same time it is important for Sadat to understand that movement towards peace in the Middle East will require the involvement of other Arab parties, and notably moderate Palestinians, the Jordanians, and the Saudis. He should therefore refrain from actions or rhetoric that have the effect of dividing the Arabs and focusing international attention on Arab extremism rather than on the need for Israeli moderation. Sadat risks engaging in self-defeating policies if his initiatives detract from the need for serious negotiations beyond the purely Israeli-Egyptian relationship.

In talking to Begin, you should emphasize that the proposed statement would not bind the Israelis, for it would leave the truly thorny questions to be worked out in negotiations. In the meantime, it would help to generate pressure on the other Arabs to come in and to negotiate seriously. From Begin's point of view this could have the advantage of engaging the Egyptians, the Jordanians and the moderate Palestinians in a serious negotiating process, leaving for the time being the Syrians and Soviets on the sideline. A generalized statement as suggested above would enable Sadat to claim that he has achieved a significant breakthrough; it would reinforce Israel's position as the peace-seeking party; and it would make it difficult for the moderate Arabs to object to more direct Israeli-Egyptian negotiations.

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Subject File, Box 8, Backchannel Messages: Middle East: 2/77–1/78. Secret; Flash; Eyes Only. Vance traveled in the Middle East December 9–15, visiting Cairo from December 9–10, Jerusalem December 10–12, Amman December 12–13, Beirut December 13, Damascus December 13–14, and Riyadh December 14–15.

I suggest that Sadat invite highest level of negotiators to meet in Cairo, perhaps the Foreign Ministers. Begin should be encouraged likewise.

End of President's message.

Enclosed please find the text of a letter which the President has approved for Prime Minister Begin.²

Brzezinski

Begin text:

December 9, 1977

Text of letter from President Carter to Prime Minister Begin.

Dear Mr. Prime Minister:

President Sadat has suggested in a message to me³ and in his conversations with Secretary Vance, that additional important initiatives are needed to exploit the momentum generated by your historic meeting with President Sadat in Jerusalem.

President Sadat has suggested that a public Israeli statement regarding Israeli willingness in principle to withdraw from Arab lands occupied in 1967 and to resolve the Palestinian question in all its aspects through negotiations with all the parties would have the effect of generating significant pressure on the Jordanians, the Palestinians, and the Syrians to negotiate more seriously. President Sadat is also prepared to offer specific suggestions to be used in order to persuade the other Arabs to face up to realities.

I believe that such a statement would be helpful while leaving you the necessary flexibility to negotiate a peace agreement that protects and enhances Israel's national interests. It is sufficiently generalized to leave open the key negotiating issues and yet sufficiently positive to make it difficult for the Arabs to block peace and lay blame for failure on you and Sadat.

Secretary Vance will discuss the issues in considerable detail with you but I thought you would be interested to know that President

² In telegram Secto 12023 to the White House, December 9, Secretary Vance noted that it would be "useful for me to have a personal message from you to deliver to him [Begin] which encourages more flexibility on the part of the Israelis so as to make it easier for Sadat to deal with the other Arabs." He noted that a previous "personal letter from you to him is on the way," but suggested that "something more substantive may be needed." He then proposed the text of a message from Carter to Begin. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840072-1428)

³ No message has been found. Possibly a reference to a message Carter mentions in his diary entry for December 7: "Sadat sent me a message wanting me to urge Begin to make a public statement on withdrawal from occupied territories and working toward a solution to the Palestine problem. We'll pursue this, either directly to Begin or through Vance's personal visit later this week." (*White House Diary*, p. 146)

Sadat is looking for ways to promote the momentum that has been achieved.

With warm regards and admiration,
Sincerely,
Jimmy Carter
End text

167. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Cairo, December 10, 1977, 12:45–1:40 p.m.

SUBJECT

Secretary's Meeting with President Sadat

PARTICIPANTS

President Sadat
Vice President Husni Mubarak
Prime Minister Mamduh Salim
General Abd al-Ghani Gamasy
Foreign Minister Butros Ghali
Hassan Kamal

Secretary Vance
Ambassador Hermann Eilts
Under Secretary Philip Habib
Assistant Secretary Alfred L. Atherton, Jr.
Harold Saunders, Director, INR
William Quandt, NSC Staff

(The Secretary had previously met privately with President Sadat for over one hour.)²

The Secretary began by expressing his admiration for the bold and historic initiative taken by President Sadat. His trip to Jerusalem helped to break down barriers and to establish the basis for a just and lasting peace. He has the thanks and respect of the people of the United States and of President Carter. The Secretary expressed our hope to build on the momentum created by President Sadat's visit, and that the Cairo

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Trips/Visits File, Box 108, 12/7–17/77 Vance Trip to the Middle East: Meeting Minutes, 12/77. Secret; Nodis. The meeting took place at the Barrages Rest House.

² No memorandum of conversation has been found, but for a report on this meeting, see Document 170.

meeting would be part of this process. The United States will do what it can to support these initiatives. Summarizing his private talk with President Sadat, the Secretary said that they had discussed the Cairo Conference and its purposes in removing procedural obstacles and paving the way for a comprehensive settlement. In his visits to other countries in the area, the Secretary will urge the Syrians, the Jordanians and the Saudis to continue to support the peace process that is under way. The Syrians should not exclude themselves. The United States will urge them to play a constructive role. Referring to Mr. Habib's trip to the Soviet Union,³ the Secretary said that the Soviets had been unhelpful and we had told them this.

Mr. Habib elaborated upon his conversations in the Soviet Union, noting that he had charged the Soviets with negativism. The United States viewed President Sadat's initiatives as bold, and as part of the peace process. If the Soviets were really interested in peace, they should not object to these moves. In no way was the Sadat initiative contrary to the US-Soviet statement of October 1. The Soviets accused the United States of collusion with Egypt and of having deliberately undermined the Geneva Conference. The United States pointed out that the Cairo Conference and Geneva are not incompatible. Egypt and Israel are still talking about a comprehensive settlement. Mr. Habib had emphasized the irrationality of the rejectionists' viewpoint and urged the Soviets not to support the rejectionists.⁴ There has been some moderation of the Soviet propaganda since then. Mr. Habib was received courteously by the Soviets but the difference of opinion was clear.

The Secretary reverted to discussion of the Cairo Conference, and said it would presumably begin with speeches about the importance of peace based on Resolution 242 and the need to carefully prepare before going to Geneva, and resolving procedural problems and preparing steps for an ultimate comprehensive settlement. The Cairo Conference will be part of an open process and no time limit will be set. The Secretary reminded President Sadat that Assistant Secretary Atherton would head the American delegation.

President Sadat said that he was glad to hear from Mr. Habib about his talks in the Soviet Union. He said that he was not worried about the rejectionists. After the Sinai II agreement, they had been much more vehement. The rejectionists are little more than the Soviets' agents in the Arab world. South Yemen has given them a base. We all know Qadhafi.

³ Under Secretary Habib met with Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko and other Soviet officials from December 5 to December 6 in Moscow.

⁴ See footnote 3, Document 78.

Yesterday *President Sadat* had seen King Hussein who had been in Damascus. The King reported that President Assad is raving, that he has lost his mind, and that he has threatened to give nuclear bases to the Soviet Union. He said he would never agree to what comes out of my initiative. The President also stated that he had heard from Crown Prince Fahd after Assad's visit in Saudi Arabia. King Khalid seemed susceptible to Assad's arguments, but the real discussions were left for Fahd, Sultan, and Abdullah. The King had been influenced to some degree by Assad's argument that the visit to Jerusalem constituted de facto recognition both of Israel and of Jerusalem as Israel's capital. King Khalid has nothing to do with politics. The others were more understanding. Assad has also gone to Kuwait. When the rejectionists wanted to freeze relations with Egypt, Egypt responded by breaking relations. They had not anticipated this.

President Sadat said that Assad was the only loser in the Tripoli Conference.⁵ Iraq had lost nothing. It was far from Israel and would not fight. It faced no threat. It can afford political slogans. Qadhafi did nothing new. Boumediene is also far away and he can say what he wants. Assad was the main loser. He wants to join the peace process, but the Baath party causes him problems. He will always reject what comes from Egypt. The US-Israeli working paper had caused a quarrel with Syria. This became the main motive for President Sadat's visit. Egypt had agreed, and the Syrian Baathists had opposed. Now Assad has lost everything. He has gone to Saudi Arabia and Kuwait because he did not expect Sadat's drastic response. The President referred to his moves as showing the Syrians and the Soviets that the problem is in Egypt's hands and that he will proceed to the end.

President Sadat expressed his gratitude to President Carter and to Secretary Vance for their understanding and help. He said that he would always continue, as he had told President Carter and Secretary Vance, to proceed forward in the peace process. Some had said that the American role was now less important. But they are wrong. The United States' role has been emphasized by Sadat's visit to Jerusalem and President Sadat stated that he depended on President Carter and on Secretary Vance to understand his initiative. The main influence on what he started has been President Carter. The President had not told him to do it. No one had thought he could do it. But through his correspondence and his exchange of views, he had drawn the conclusion that such a step was necessary, but found that he would be in dispute with Syria for years over the US-Israel paper. He said "to hell with the paper." He, President Sadat, was ready to go to Geneva.

⁵ See footnote 3, Document 163.

The Soviets were engaging in a hypocritical action. Five years earlier, when Sadat was in Moscow, the Soviets had proposed to his Ambassador, Murad Ghali, that President Sadat meet with Mrs. Meir in Tashkent. They had just arranged a reconciliation meeting between the Indian Prime Minister Shastri and Pakistani President Ayub Khan. But now they attack Sadat for having met with the Israelis.

President Sadat emphasized again that the rejectionists' bloc consists of the Soviets' allies in the Middle East. The United States should not ignore this point. They will continue in the Arab world and in Africa to create difficulties. The Soviets cannot be convinced that the United States and Egypt are not plotting against them.

Turning to the Cairo meeting, *President Sadat* said he had proposed a meeting according to his theory that he had discussed last April.⁶ He felt then that there should have been a working group to prepare for Geneva. But when he had proposed this idea, the Syrians had rejected it. He was worried about going to Geneva and discussing procedures for one or two years. Therefore, he proposed the Cairo meeting after his visit to Jerusalem. He thought that he had made an impact on Israeli and American public opinion. Whenever Egypt pushes forward for peace, Syria will reject such a move. But in the end, they will come along. There was an angry reaction after Sinai II, but Assad eventually made up with Sadat. This is the Syrian way. Assad's trip to Saudi Arabia and Kuwait shows that he is scared after the break in relations. Relations have been broken for two reasons: First, Sadat was telling the others that they should be polite. They have become impertinent in their accusations. Second, Sadat wanted to show the Arabs and others what the real size of the rejectionists was. Cairo will be open to any delegation—the Palestinians, the Syrians, and King Hussein—to join the preparations for Geneva. He told King Hussein this yesterday. He also told him to take his time and the King was very understanding. The King could not understand the rejectionist position. It was as if they had not read Sadat's speech before the Knesset, or listened to his statements. What was it that they were rejecting? Did they object to his position on Arab Jerusalem? On withdrawal? Or on a comprehensive settlement? It has been a childish argument.

Secretary Vance asked whether the Tripoli group would fade away or whether it would do something else. *Sadat* replied that it would talk and would hurl abuse at him. It would use Carlos⁷ and the Palestinians for hijackings and for attacks on Embassies. This is the only thing that

⁶ See Documents 25–27.

⁷ A reference to Venezuelan-born Ilich Ramirez Sanchez, who adopted the nom de guerre "Carlos" when he joined the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) during the early 1970s and engaged in several terrorist acts during the 1970s and 1980s.

they can do. Sadat had intended to break relations to show the world the way to deal with the group at Tripoli. They count for nothing! Nothing! Even Assad, after the October war, thought that he had a big role to play. After Tripoli, he is the only loser. He has lost everything.

Mr. Habib emphasized two additional points from his talks in Moscow. The Soviets feel left out. They know of Sadat's initiative and of American support and they know that they cannot do anything about this. They understand that the rejectionists offer them very little. They are confused about the present situation. For the Soviets to have a role, they need a comprehensive settlement in Geneva. Some of what they proposed is unacceptable. They said that everyone at Geneva should participate in all discussions. Habib said this was not possible. *Sadat* said this was the Syrian position. *Habib* went on to note that the Soviets believed that the co-chairmen should have a role of concurrence, but Mr. Habib replied that if the parties themselves agree, there is no need for such a role. And, if they disagree, there is no point in it. The Soviets also say that they support the PLO and want the PLO to be represented. They also want a prior commitment to the creation of a Palestinian state. Habib pointed out that if the PLO were brought in on those terms, there would be no conference. He spelled out a formula that would help to resolve the Palestinian representation. This had been settled prior to President Sadat's trip but the Soviets had not been helpful in building momentum for Geneva.

President Sadat noted that he had heard from the Saudis that they had told President Assad that the Tripoli decisions had cancelled the Rabat decisions. One could no longer say that the PLO is the only representative of the Palestinians, etc. (Subsequently, at his press conference after the meeting, President Sadat emphasized that the Tripoli group had rejected the Rabat Conference's commitment to a peaceful settlement based on full withdrawal and on the solution of the Palestinian problem. He emphasized, however, that he stood by the position that the PLO represents the Palestinians.)⁸

Returning to the question of the Soviets, *President Sadat* said that they are a hopeless case. *Mr. Habib* said that he had urged them to play a constructive role as co-chairman. *President Sadat* then spoke of UN Secretary General Waldheim's initiative in calling for a conference in New York.⁹ He said he agreed to such an idea after the Cairo meeting. He would be prepared after Cairo to go to New York, to Washington,

⁸ For the transcript of Vance and Sadat's December 10 news conference in Cairo, see the Department of State *Bulletin*, January 1978, pp. 40–41.

⁹ On November 29, Waldheim proposed talks in New York after the conference in Cairo to prepare for a reconvened Geneva Conference. (Kathleen Teltsch, "Waldheim Accepts Sadat Invitation, Urges U.N. Talks," *New York Times*, November 30, 1977, p. 3)

or to Geneva, but the Soviets feel that they are rapidly losing ground in the area.

168. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Jerusalem, December 10, 1977, 9:30–11:45 p.m.

SUBJECT

Secretary's Meeting with Prime Minister Begin

PARTICIPANTS

Israel

Prime Minister Begin

Deputy Prime Minister Yadin

Foreign Minister Dayan

Defense Minister Weizman

Yehuda Avner, Prime Minister's office, notetaker

United States

Secretary Vance

Ambassador Lewis

Under Secretary Habib

Assistant Secretary Atherton

INR Director Saunders

The Secretary and Prime Minister met alone first for about 20 minutes.² Then a light snack was served in the dining room. The following were the only points of substance there:

V: . . . Mubarak is the only one Sadat tells everything to.

. . . Sadat told me about his meeting with Hussein. He found a great deal of common ground. Hussein supports Sadat's visit and Cairo meetings and would like to attend them at an appropriate time. You may see some contrary stories from the press, but it was very satisfactory and Sadat was well pleased. Hussein told Pickering the same.

The meeting then moved to the living room where systematic discussion of the issues began:

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Trips/Visits File, Box 108, 12/7–17/77 Vance Trip to the Middle East: Meeting Minutes, 12/77. Secret; Nodis. Drafted by Saunders. The meeting took place at the Barrages Rest House. Vance visited Jerusalem from December 10 to December 12.

² No memorandum of conversation has been found.

B: I welcome you, my dear friend. We start now very important talks. The theme is peace. First, we will set the agenda for our talks tomorrow: 0930–1245 in Cabinet room; private lunch so the Secretary can have time with his colleagues; 1530–1830 afternoon meeting; 2000 dinner at King David. Perhaps after dinner some private talk. It will be a broader meeting tomorrow. Israel will have Dinitz, Burg, Horowitz, Evron, Ehrlich or one of his colleagues.

We would ask you to give us your impressions of Cairo.

V: First, I bring the warmest best wishes and friendship of President Carter and the admiration and respect of all Americans for what you and President Sadat have done for peace. The President wanted me to come and see how we can help. We welcome that there are now direct conversations between Egypt and Israel. We want to do what we can to help continue the momentum.

Now to report very briefly on my visit with President Sadat.³ He is relaxed and confident that the course on which he embarked is the right one. He is deeply moved and deeply convinced he is right. He feels he has the unanimous support of his people and his army. This morning, for instance, General Gamas was talking with reporters at the Barrages while President Sadat and I were talking alone. He invited reporters to pick any military installation and they would be permitted to go there and talk to personnel and find out for themselves whether President Sadat has support in all levels of the military.

Sadat believes Hussein and Assad will follow his lead. He is not concerned about rejectionist outbursts. If the momentum is lost, however, things could change. His focus remains on a comprehensive peace. His objective is agreement on the concrete principles that will govern such a peace so that the parties to the peace can then negotiate the details of individual peace treaties. He believes the trip to Jerusalem gave Israel what it has sought for so many years—recognition and acceptance by its major Arab neighbor. As Begin knows, Sadat is committed to a just peace. He is determined not to lose the momentum generated by his decision. He is now waiting for Israel's decision for peace. Sadat has asked that Israel make a declaration that would do two things:

1. State Israel's readiness to withdraw from the territories occupied in 1967 with minor rectifications on the West Bank *and*
2. State Israel's readiness to resolve the Palestinian question in all its aspects.

Those are his exact words. One way to do this would be to make the declaration at a meeting in Cairo with Begin, Carter, Waldheim

³ See Document 167.

present. He hopes this would take place soon—in the next two weeks or so. Soon after, he hopes he could change the level at the Cairo meetings to the Foreign Minister level.

Sadat went on to say that certainly Israel will want to assure that its security needs can be met. He understands that and has discussed it in a general way with you. He believes a decision now would consolidate the peace process. He is confident that Hussein would join the peace process and Saudi Arabia would support it. He said he has taken a bold initiative in visiting Israel.

B: He did.

V: . . . and he does not want to see the opportunity lost. We discussed other matters. He brought me up to date on other conversations. He would like the secret talks to continue but would welcome bringing them “out into the daylight.” He would propose doing so after a Declaration.

In terms of the Cairo Conference, he sees it starting at the experts level . . . in the early stages trying to develop principles that would govern further discussions, resolve remaining procedural questions, include a later broadening of the discussions, and merge into the Geneva forum. He believed bilateral matters can be resolved and can move forward in parallel. But they must move forward in the framework of a broader agreement.

That is the essence. I can go into details if you wish.

B: I will explain what we are going to do. We do not want to lose time. We can achieve peace with those who want to make peace with us. His visit was an act of courage; we are a people who can appreciate courage. On the other hand, the act of recognition was by him and his country, but the Arabs at Tripoli⁴ were not ready to make peace. We have sympathy in Morocco. We don’t know about Saudi Arabia or Lebanon. Syria is our neighbor. Jordan is fluctuating.

So what we state today is: We want a comprehensive settlement. We don’t want to drive wedges between the Arabs. We responded quickly to his initiative. We received him warmly. But Sadat cannot make peace for Assad. Perhaps Assad will change his mind. But now he is not ready for peace. We want to maintain momentum. Let us work on it. What are we going to do?

Dayan will report on his talk with Tuhami on the problem of Sinai. In that conversation, we made a real contribution to the peace process. Now there is the question of the Palestinian Arabs. I will bring a plan for what I call “home rule for the Palestinian Arabs.” I cannot elaborate now. I will convoke our special Defense Committee. I hope the plan

⁴ See footnote 3, Document 163.

will be approved Tuesday.⁵ I would like to leave Wednesday morning for Washington to present it to President Carter. I would hope he could see me Thursday. I hope the President will accept my plan. It is not a Palestinian state but it is a dignified solution for the Palestinian Arabs. It is home rule of the inhabitants, by the inhabitants, and for the inhabitants.

If the President shall approve or suggest changes, we shall look at them again. I shall stop in London for a few hours on my way back to explain my plan to Prime Minister Callaghan. Then we can go immediately to Cairo—Dayan or I if I am invited. (Ezer Weizman is going to talk about “avoiding clashes.”) If everything goes well, we can have a breakthrough in several weeks.

We should not discount an Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty as a beginning of the process. We did not press a separate treaty.

Now I will ask Dayan to report.

D: I know you got from Ambassador Lewis the paper I left with Dr. Tuhami.⁶ He was not in a position to commit his President. I didn’t know when he was speaking for Sadat and when he was just limited by his instructions.

We didn’t ask for changes in the international border. All military forces would be withdrawn. We asked for a belt under UN forces which could not be withdrawn without agreement of both parties. The only flag there in the zone would be the UN flag, but the UN is not a state so it wouldn’t become sovereign. Israeli settlers would be allowed defensive forces, e.g. no planes or tanks but mobile police units, anti-aircraft, anti-tank weapons. And all Israeli settlements would remain. It’s a very small number. The same thing about Sharm al-Shaikh. Israelis could come and go. The same with Egyptians at al Arish. Egyptians can interpret this as not giving one inch of Egyptian territory. This is based on two statements by Sadat to Begin:

1. No Egyptian forces east of the passes.
2. He would declare Sharm al-Shaikh passage an international waterway.

Tuhami repeated we should withdraw entirely. Israel would be paid compensation. I said forget the compensation, but we found water and oil through all of this area. There would be free movement of people. I said this is just a suggestion. We will have to take it to the Cabinet if Egypt gives a positive reaction. If not, let’s forget it. We are doing this to meet Sadat.

⁵ December 13.

⁶ Not further identified.

One of the interesting points was that he did not want to receive anything on the Golan. He read out a letter from Sadat asking us for a detailed working paper on the Sinai “meter by meter” and a paper on more general principles on the West Bank.

He wants to keep the Cairo Conference at a lower level for now.

We promised to provide a working paper. We will be ready by the end of the week if he wants to arrange another meeting.

V: That is consistent with what in effect Sadat was saying to me. He believes he could negotiate an agreement with Israel but he needs a framework of principles with each party going ahead with its own agreements. The West Bank has to be handled with some statement of principles.

D: Did you have the impression he would accept our paper as a basis for negotiation?

V: He thought it was a beginning. He thought something could be worked out. But he cannot proceed with an Egyptian-Israeli agreement except in a larger framework.

Weizman: I will be seeing Gamasy about preventing “accidental happenings” in the Sinai. I would like to reflect on security problems. Leaders come and go, so we must discuss security looking to the future.

—Of course, we will want agreements on a favorable peace. But it will have to be a peace with such ingredients that the future will not be unsafe. So we have to look to the future. Sometime I would suggest Sadat be compromising on his own territory with our security problems in mind. There are 101 possibilities.

V: His problem is sovereignty. He is flexible on security matters.

Habib: He also recognizes he can’t have a partial solution.

W: We understand. There are various solutions.

Yadin: You can have a comprehensive agreement, but there are stages of agreement.

B: I completely understand Sadat’s need for movement. But as far as this declaration is concerned, we will have to include elements he has not even taken account of:

- peace treaties;
- negotiated boundaries;
- security measures.

I would rather publish a plan than a formula in a few words.

On the Cairo Conference, perhaps we may suggest that before Wednesday we agree there will be some opening statements and then we will discuss the principles of the peace treaties.

V: I’m sure that would be acceptable. The speeches can mention the importance of peace, . . . as a basis for negotiations, comprehensive

peace. Sadat hopes there would just be one agreed spokesman. He would suggest that, after the opening session, the remaining sessions be closed. He would be happy to have principles discussed as long as this was not revealed publicly. No formal minutes will be kept.

D: Who will be the parties at Cairo? Siilasvuo? PLO?

V: At this point, Sadat expects no Palestinians. If it changes, they will let us know.

They raised a question. They would like to take a picture of the opening to show the other empty seats. They say they need it for public.

W: Including PLO?

B: They should write “delegation” or “spokesman of the Palestinian Arabs.”

Y: Or have empty chairs without signs.

D: There will be reporters asking questions. We would say: We knew Palestinian Arabs were invited, but if they say PLO we will not be there.

On a different level, do you think they would go on in separate meetings to work out agreement with us?

V: As long as it is in parallel with negotiation of an overall agreement. They expect another private meeting. Incidentally, they want Weizman to come to Cairo to see President Sadat before going to Gianlyclis for his meeting with Gamasy.

B: Shall we hear from our friend, Philip Habib, on his trip to Moscow?

H: First, I told the Soviets we fully supported President Sadat’s initiative and the Cairo meeting. Second, we found their negativism unconstructive.

V: ... and that we were unhappy with their conduct.

H: ... and we hoped it would not continue. I met for eight hours with the Foreign Ministry one day and spent 1½ hours with Gromyko the next day. They objected to “obliteration of Geneva” and contradiction of our joint statement. I indicated this was no obliteration of Geneva and no American-cooked-up scheme ...

Gromyko said there are a few people in the world who might believe that the US was not behind Sadat’s initiative. I said I hoped he was one of those few.

They make it very clear they don’t want to be excluded.

Then we had quite a lengthy discussion in which they were carrying a brief for the Syrian-PLO position and I was carrying a brief for the Egyptian and Israeli positions. I said I found it inconsistent that they should support the Tripoli group and still maintain their basic policy. If they went with the rejectionists they would be anti-peace.

Their fundamental problem is they don't want to be excluded from an area where they have important interests.

I told them: If you insist on PLO at Geneva there will be no meeting. The Israelis won't sit with them.

We ended on the note that there will be a meeting in Cairo and the Secretary is going on his trip. We will talk with you when we get back.

They considered it a plot to produce a bilateral agreement. They spoke of the importance of all participants having the right to approve all agreements. We would want the co-chairmen to have the right of concurrence. I rejected that. They were very polite.

B: Do we have any idea how the Egyptians propose the Cairo meetings be chaired?

V: The Egyptians do not wish to chair. They asked about whether Siilasvuo could chair.

B: We will consider it tomorrow. Please tell the President: If people here call it an historic moment, it is President Carter who created it.

169. Telegram From Secretary of State Vance to the White House and the Department of State¹

Jerusalem, December 11, 1977, 0050Z

Secto 12056. White House for the President and Dr. Brzezinski only. Department for the Acting Secretary Only. Subject: Secretary's Meeting With Prime Minister Begin—December 10.

1. I met for two hours tonight with the Prime Minister Begin, initially in private and then with his principal Ministers (Yadin, Dayan and Weizman).² At Begin's request, I reported to him on my talks with Sadat and conveyed in detail Sadat's proposal for a declaration in principle on withdrawal from the occupied territories and a solution of the Palestinian question. Begin did not reject Sadat's proposal, and he and his colleagues seemed to understand the need for a decisive step on Israel's part which would demonstrate to Sadat's critics that his major move in visiting Jerusalem had been reciprocated. While the Israelis will almost certainly suggest modifications in the kind of declaration

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840072-0401. Secret; Flash; Override; Nodis; Cherokee.

² See Document 168.

Sadat wants, I have the impression that they sense that something like this will be required to keep Sadat engaged in bilateral negotiations while protecting his Arab flank.

2. Begin then surfaced a dramatic proposal of his own. He said that by Tuesday³ he expected to have approval within the government of a serious proposal for a solution to the West Bank/Gaza problem which he described as a plan for “home rule;” he could not reveal the details until he had discussed it with the Defense Committee of the Cabinet. Once that approval is received, he wants to travel to Washington this Wednesday to discuss this plan with you and to ascertain your views. He would also stop in London (presumably on his return trip) to present the proposal to Callaghan. He would then propose to go to Cairo to present it to Sadat. If it were accepted, he said this could constitute a breakthrough to an Egyptian-Israeli settlement which could lay the groundwork for a comprehensive Arab-Israeli peace.

3. After discussion of Begin’s proposal with my colleagues, including Ambassador Lewis, my recommendation is that you agree to see Begin for a quick, low-key business meeting, but that we ask him to delay his trip one day so that I will be back for his meeting with you which would be on Friday, December 16. I do not see how we can turn down a serious request from the Prime Minister of Israel and believe that, by broadening your discussion with him, you could turn such a meeting to the advantage of our overall objectives. We would have to impress upon Begin that his trip would have to be announced as an occasion to discuss with you the overall Middle East situation in the new conditions that have been created by the events leading up to the convening of the Cairo conference. In this context, we could couple support for Sadat’s proposal for a declaration of principles with a discussion of Begin’s Palestinian proposal, without commitment to the latter if, as I suspect, it will not be satisfactory as a final solution of the Palestinian problem. We would have to impress on Begin that secrecy about his principal purpose in visiting Washington is essential if Sadat’s ability to continue the course he is on, and our ability to support Egyptian-Israeli negotiations, are not to be jeopardized.

4. I am asking Hermann Eilts to inform Sadat in general terms of Begin’s proposal for a visit to Washington and the reason for it, since there is always the risk of leaks and we must protect our credibility with Sadat. It is possible that Sadat may also ask to come to Washington to make his case, in which event it seems clear to me we would also have to receive him.

³ December 13.

5. I gave Begin this evening the signed letter from you which was prepared before I left Washington.⁴ I plan to give him the second letter tomorrow⁵ but, in view of his initiative this evening, thought it better to delay the second letter until I had your reaction to his proposal. If you agree with my recommendation, I will so inform Begin when I deliver the second letter, making clear that it must be kept secret that his purpose in coming to Washington is to present a “home rule” plan for the Palestinians, and that you will of course want to discuss the negotiating situation broadly with him including Sadat’s proposal.

6. I will be meeting with Begin most of the day Sunday,⁶ beginning at 9:30 am Jerusalem time, and would hope to have your response to convey to him in the course of the day. In our talks Sunday, we will also cover various procedural questions still outstanding relating to the Cairo conference which came up during my talks in Cairo.

Vance

⁴ The letter has not been found.

⁵ The text of the second letter is printed in Document 166.

⁶ December 11.

170. Telegram From Secretary of State Vance to the White House and the Department of State¹

Jerusalem, December 11, 1977, 0101Z

Secto 12059. White House for President and Dr. Brzezinski Only. Department for the Acting Secretary Only. Subject: Message to the President—Meeting With Sadat.

1. We met this morning for about 3 hours with President Sadat and other senior advisors, including Vice President Mubarak, Prime Minister Salim, General Gamasy and others.² At the outset, President Sadat and I spent almost two hours in a private conversation. The reason for this is the fact that only Vice President Mubarak is privy to Sadat’s thinking, and Sadat does not want to inform the others at this time. During our *tete-a-tete* we covered the following matters.

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840072–1437. Secret; Flash; Exdis (Handle as Nodis); Cherokee.

² A reference to the meeting on December 10; see Document 167.

2. I opened our meeting by delivering to him your letter³ and conveying your admiration and warmest best wishes. He was most appreciative and sent his highest regards to you. He repeated that the inspiration for his dramatic initiative had been his conversations with you and your request that bold action be taken to break through the procedural tangle which was delaying the convening of the Geneva Conference.

3. He then turned to substance, saying that he had made a fundamental and dramatic move when he went to Jerusalem and that there was now a crying need for an appropriate response. He said that response should take the form of a declaration by Begin: (1) That Israel is willing in principle to withdraw from the Arab lands occupied in 1967, with minor rectifications with respect to the West Bank; and (2) that Israel is ready in principle to resolve the Palestinian question in all of its aspects. He said that although it would not be necessary, he would like President Carter to join in the declaration, which could be made at a meeting in Cairo at which there would be present Prime Minister Begin, President Carter, President Sadat, Secretary General Waldheim and perhaps others.

4. He then added that you might wish to invite Brezhnev to Cairo. He said that he was sure that Brezhnev would not come, but that if you thought it would be a good idea, it would be fine with him. He said that he believed this would present the declaration in the most dramatic and effective context and would accomplish his purpose of demonstrating to the Arab world that he had achieved the goal which all of the Arab world sought. He added that he would hope that the declaration would make some reference to his initiative.

5. He stressed to me several times the importance to him that Begin make this declaration, and the need for the United States to put its weight behind persuading Begin to do so. He said that he hoped the declaration could be made promptly, i.e., within a week or two, as this would strengthen his position in the Arab world.

6. He then digressed to say that Assad had been touring various Arab capitals attacking Sadat and telling the various leaders with whom he was meeting that Assad was prepared to make available nuclear bases to the Soviets in the Middle East, and made other threatening statements. Sadat said that such statements had frightened one or two of the Mid-East leaders, particularly King Khalid. He said that Prince Fahd had sent a message to him yesterday urging me to put pressure on King Khalid when I came to Riyadh to support Sadat. He urged that we underscore our desire for reaching a peaceful, compre-

³ The letter has not been found.

hensive solution and state that we intended to stay with the matter until that objective was achieved.

7. Sadat then digressed again to talk about his proposal for the West Bank. He said that he believed the West Bank should be put under UN oversight for a transition period of five years, at the end of which there would be self-determination. I asked him what he meant by self-determination in light of the fact that he had stated on several occasions that any Palestinian entity should be linked with Jordan. He responded initially that was still his position, and that self-determination merely meant a plebiscite on the question of federation or confederation with Jordan. After further reflection, he said that the West Bankers should also be given the option of independence. He said that this, however, was not a real option, as he believed that the PLO was losing ground and that within one year after the transition period started, the PLO would no longer be a factor to be feared. He said that the PLO had hurt its position by its recent actions, and that Sadat's own actions had further weakened their influence.

8. In response to my question, he indicated, however, that the PLO would have to be dealt with in connection with the Cairo meetings, should they ultimately decide to participate, and certainly in any Geneva Conference. I asked him how this could best be done and whether or not the arrangements which we had talked to Fahmy about were still in the picture. He replied affirmatively, saying that he was still in touch with Arafat and that Arafat would be coming to Cairo within the next two days. He said that Palestinian representation would be taken care of by the designation of a few Palestinians who would be either non-PLO or non-well-known PLO, and who had been cleared in advance with the Israelis.

9. Returning to the subject of an Israeli declaration, he said that after such a declaration he would wish to raise participation in the Cairo meetings to the Foreign Minister level. He would then want to move away from secret meetings and have the Foreign Ministers working "in the daylight." I told him that that coincided with our thinking.

10. Sadat went on to say that once the declaration is made he will call on all the other invitees to join the Cairo meeting. I asked him whether he would also call an Arab summit. He said he had not made up his mind on that point, but that he would send the declaration to heads of the other Arab nations through an Arab League representative.

11. I asked Sadat what he believed should be done if it was impossible to persuade the Israelis to make the declaration he had requested. He said that if the declaration cannot be made as requested, it is better that no declaration be made, he said that a weak declaration would

hurt him, whereas he could live with no declaration, even though that would, in his judgment, set back severely the peace process.

12. I then asked him what he expected to come out of the initial Cairo meeting and how he proposed that we should deal with the public affairs aspects of the meetings. He replied that the meetings should open with the normal speeches about peace and the desire of all the parties for a comprehensive solution. He said that we should stress that 242 is the basis for a just and lasting peace in the Middle East and therefore for this informal preparatory meeting. In terms of public statements, Sadat said we should emphasize the fact that Geneva cannot convene without further preparation. He said we should stress the necessity of resolving the remaining procedural questions and the other necessary preparatory steps in looking forward toward a comprehensive settlement in Geneva. He further stated that we should emphasize that the Cairo meeting is open and that there is no fixed time schedule for its completion. I said that although we would not be stressing it at the outset, I assumed we would be working on basic principles to convene a Geneva Conference and the preparation of an agenda and other guidelines.

13. I indicated to him that I thought that the Conference might ultimately produce: (A) a set of principles; (B) resolution of the remaining procedural problems; (C) a skeletal draft of an Egyptian-Israeli treaty; (D) perhaps a draft on arrangements for the Palestinian area, i.e., the West Bank and Gaza; and (E) a draft agenda.

14. With respect to Gaza, he said that he wanted you to know that he is in touch with the leading figures in Gaza who will be coming to see him soon, and that they are backing him wholeheartedly. He added that he was prepared to give additional land to Gaza in order to provide adequate port facilities and additional territory.

15. I then asked what message he would like us to convey to President Assad. He said that we should indicate to Assad that Sadat was not seeking a partial agreement and is committed to reaching a comprehensive settlement. Sadat said that I should also tell Assad that Sadat is prepared to go to Geneva, or any other place, to complete the peace process, and that Cairo is merely a method of clearing away the procedural problems which remain and taking other steps to pave the way for an ultimate Geneva Conference. In response to my question, he said that he wholeheartedly supported our urging Assad to return to the peace process.

16. With respect to Saudi Arabia, he repeated the suggestion that I press King Khalid hard to support Sadat and the peace process taking place in Cairo. He suggested further that I stress that Sadat was not seeking a bilateral settlement, and is committed to a comprehensive settlement.

17. With respect to King Hussein, Sadat reported on the latter's visit to Cairo, which has just ended. He said that they had reached general agreement on all items and that Hussein was backing Sadat's peace efforts. He said further that Hussein would join the Cairo meeting at the appropriate time—which Sadat said would be following the Israeli declaration. Sadat said they had also talked about the West Bank and that the two were in agreement that the West Bank must be linked to Jordan. He said that he was confident that during the transition period Hussein's influence would increase steadily and there was no question but that the West Bank would eventually be linked to Jordan, rather than become an independent state.

18. Sadat then told me that he planned to continue secret meetings between Dayan and Touhami for the time being. He said that quite frankly he would prefer to deal with Weizman, whom he particularly liked, but that he realized that Dayan was important because of the unique position that he held in the Israeli picture. Sadat said that he believed that there would be no problem in reaching an agreement on Sinai, and this was merely a question of sitting down with Weizman and his experts to complete the necessary work on security measures. Sadat said he did not foresee any real problems in bringing this to fruition. He repeated again, however, his strong preference for a comprehensive settlement.

19. Sadat then expanded on what he had meant by saying that once the Israeli declaration was made and the Cairo meeting was held, all those who wanted Geneva should go to Geneva to complete their respective negotiations. He said that as far as he was concerned he didn't need to go to Geneva because there was no problem in working out his bilateral agreement, but that he would do so because of the great importance which you attached to Geneva. He then repeated his great admiration for you and for the part that you had played in bringing this new momentum to the peace process. He also mentioned again that if you should come to Cairo at the time of the declaration, he would like to ask the United States to become a party to the 1888 Constantinople Convention which provides for freedom of navigation in the Suez Canal,⁴ as he had previously suggested at the time of my August meeting with him.

20. I also discussed the question of F-5's. Sadat said he would prefer to deal with this in January by putting it in a package with F-16's for Israel and perhaps F-15's for Saudi Arabia.

⁴ The United States was not a signatory of the Constantinople Convention of 1888, which guaranteed the right of free passage for all ships through the Suez Canal in peace and war.

21. In sum, we had a good talk. The most urgent thing that came out of the meeting was his proposal for a two-part declaration by Begin. I am passing this on to Begin as requested and will communicate the results later.

Vance

171. Telegram From Secretary of State Vance to the Embassy in Egypt¹

Jerusalem, December 11, 1977, 1610Z

Secto 12073. Subject: Discussions With Israelis About Cairo Conference.

1. In course of first formal meeting between Secretary and his party and Israeli side morning December 11,² Begin and Dayan raised number of questions about Cairo Conference. Israelis have asked that we convey to Egyptians their views on number of points and also to seek clarifications on others. Believe it best to do this with Boutros Ghali, but you might also suggest, when you request appointment, that Foreign Minister seek to have Abdel Meguid present when you talk with him.

2. On procedural aspects, Secretary reported that Egyptians suggested U.S. chair meeting or as alternative, that Siilasvuo chair. Making it clear they were not motivated by ad hominem considerations as they liked and admired Siilasvuo personally, Begin said he did not like this idea since it would convey “wrong image” if military representative were to chair an essentially political meeting. Begin said his first preference would be to have U.S. chair meetings. Secretary said he was not enthusiastic about this alternative since it might establish undesirable precedent for Geneva Conference at later stage when Soviets might seek to use it to justify prominent Soviet role. By process of elimination we recommend to Egyptians what Begin and Dayan agreed was acceptable alternative, viz. that chair should alternate between the two countries.

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D770461–0385. Secret; Niact Immediate; Exdis. Sent immediate for information to the Department of State.

² No other record has been found.

3. Second point was Egyptian desire to have at first public session empty chairs for invitees who are not showing up. Israelis do not like this idea, and Begin made same point that Secretary did when he was in Cairo that televising scene of empty chairs might convey sense Conference was failure rather than scoring propaganda gain for Egyptians. Both Secretary and Israelis agreed that in addition problem of nameplates could bog whole Conference down before it even opened. Begin suggested as alternative that all parties in their opening speeches make the point that the Conference was open to all the Geneva participants and those not present were absent of their own accord. We agreed to put this suggestion to Egyptians, saying also, that it is agreeable to us. You should make further effort with Boutros Ghali to dissuade him from proceeding with empty chairs scenario which Israelis made clear could cause real problems for them.

4. Israelis agree, as do we, with suggestion that no formal minutes be kept of proceedings, and that there be only one agreed statement to press after each meeting to describe what happened.

5. In discussion about possible Palestinian representatives attending in future, Secretary in response to request promised to seek confirmation from Egyptians that for this initial series of meetings no Palestinians are expected to attend.

6. On final point of procedure Israelis asked that we convey to Egyptians their preference that opening session which will presumably be open to press and television be confined to opening speeches by each of four delegates. There would then be adjournment until next day, when first closed working session would take place.

7. Moving to question of Conference agenda, Dayan said Israel would like this agreed before Wednesday.³ From their side, Israelis would like to see meeting concentrate on: (1) the general nature of the matters that ought to be included in an Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty and (2) the nature of peace. Dayan asked if we could get from Egyptians some idea of subjects they wished to take up and Secretary agreed to do so. We understand from our talks in Cairo that Egyptians want agenda to include statement of principles governing a comprehensive settlement. We would also like to know whether Egyptians plan to have Cairo meeting take up unresolved procedural problems of Geneva Conference and if so in what terms.

8. Ben-Elissar suggested to Atherton and Secretary subsequently agreed it was good idea, that Abdel Meguid convene informal get-together of participants at Mena House⁴ late Tuesday evening or early

³ December 14.

⁴ The Mena House is a luxury hotel in Cairo.

Wednesday morning so as to go over procedures and mechanics of opening meetings to assure matters go as smoothly as possible. Would appreciate your sounding Egyptians out on this.

9. We will be meeting with Israelis again this afternoon to go over this ground once again. We will send you immediate report of any additional points we want you to take up with Egyptians.

Vance

172. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Amman, December 12, 1977, 3–4:30 p.m.

SUBJECT

Secretary's Meeting with King Hussein

PARTICIPANTS

King Hussein
Crown Prince Hassan
Prime Minister Munir Badran
Royal Court Minister Abdel Hamid Sharaf
General Zayd Bin Shakir
Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Hassan Ibrahim
Ambassador Abdallah Salah

Secretary Vance
Under Secretary Philip Habib
Ambassador Thomas Pickering
Assistant Secretary Alfred L. Atherton, Jr.
William B. Quandt, NSC Staff

The King welcomed the Secretary of State and expressed his appreciation for the opportunity to hear the Secretary's views. The King offered to be as helpful as possible. *Secretary Vance* replied that he was pleased to be in Jordan and hoped to get the King's advice on how the United States could be helpful. He extended the best wishes of President Carter.

The Secretary began with his report of talks in recent days. In Cairo, he had been impressed by the fact that President Sadat seemed to be re-

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Subject File, Box 3, Arab-Israeli Peace Settlement 1977: Volume II [III]. Secret; Nodis. The meeting took place at the Hashemmiyah Palace. Vance visited Amman from December 12 to December 13.

laxed, confident, and sure of his support for his position in Egypt. Sadat had been pleased with his meeting with King Hussein. At the outset, he reaffirmed his commitment to a comprehensive peace settlement. He said that he was not seeking a separate settlement and would not do so. His strategy in the Cairo meetings would be to develop basic principles for an overall settlement. He would be forthcoming on the questions of peace and security, and he looks to Begin to be forthcoming on the questions of territory and the Palestinians. The Secretary had conveyed his request to Prime Minister Begin that Israel take actions leading to a settlement. Sadat wants an Israeli statement on withdrawal and on the Palestinian question. The Secretary had transmitted to Begin the precise nature of a statement on withdrawal and on the Palestinians. In effect, Sadat wants withdrawal from all of the occupied territories, with only minor modifications, and a resolution of the Palestinian question in all of its aspects. Begin seemed to understand the need to respond. The atmosphere in Jerusalem has changed. Before, it was hard to get the Israelis to discuss substance. This was not the case this time. From the beginning, the Secretary told them about President Sadat's request. They took this seriously and seemed to understand its importance. The general impression in Israel is that Sadat's visit has caused a profound change. Israelis can no longer say that the Arabs are not serious about peace.

The Secretary went on to say that Prime Minister Begin appears to realize that Israel faces a historic opportunity. Those close to Begin agree. He is struggling to come up with a response. One cannot predict the outcome, but the Israelis are seriously wrestling with the problem at this time. The Secretary promised to keep King Hussein closely informed.

Turning to the American views, *the Secretary* pledged our full support for the peace process. The United States will attend the Cairo meeting. We have made clear that our goal remains an overall, comprehensive settlement, in which all of the issues would be resolved and all of the parties would participate. We have received assurances from Sadat and Begin that they also share that view. They do not just want a bilateral agreement. The Cairo Conference was discussed with both the Israelis and the Egyptians. They are making progress on thinking about agendas and procedures. At the outset, there will be discussion of three topics: the substantive principles of a settlement; the discussion of main elements of a peace treaty; and a discussion of how one might resolve procedures for Geneva. It is the belief of both Sadat and Begin that there will be a Geneva Conference and that the work of the Cairo meetings is to prepare the way for Geneva.

The Secretary noted that President Sadat had probably said to King Hussein that he believed there should be some type of working group

before Geneva. He does not want Geneva just for ratifying agreements, but he does feel the need for preliminary spadework. This will be the role of the Cairo meeting. His previous suggestion had been turned down, but the Cairo meeting is the same idea of a working group in a different form. The Secretary then said that he would be going to Beirut and Damascus tomorrow. He would appreciate the King's thoughts on how to deal with the Syrians. If possible, President Assad should be included at Geneva. We hope to encourage him to keep the door open and not to close the road to peace.

The Secretary said that he fully understood the special position of Jordan at this time. The President appreciates King Hussein's response to him and the recent letter.² With respect to the Palestinian question, this was discussed with President Sadat. He indicated that he envisaged the West Bank being linked to Jordan, after some transitional arrangements over a period of time, which would help to establish the basis for such links. In the end, there should be self-determination on the ultimate form of the link to Jordan. He has no further details, but he seems to envisage some UN role during the transition. The Secretary said he would like to know King Hussein's own thinking on how the United States can be helpful on this issue.

The Secretary then described President Sadat's thinking on the PLO. Sadat believes that the PLO has damaged its position by its recent actions. The power of the PLO is weakening and this process may well continue. It will be less of a political force in the future than it is now. Sadat expects the Palestinians to be represented at Geneva, but he does not expect them to be at Cairo. He believes that they should be represented by Palestinians who could be acceptable to the Israelis. This would finesse the question of the PLO.

The Secretary said that Sadat had also discussed the question of upgrading the level of representation at Cairo if progress is being made in the talks. This would particularly be done if the Israelis were forthcoming in making a declaration. If that were done, he would raise the level of talks to the Foreign Ministers and would accelerate the process of negotiations. Both Sadat and Begin believe that Geneva is possible within the next two months or so. They will be bending their efforts to that end.

² Telegram 9018 from Amman, December 5, transmitted a letter from King Hussein to Carter in which King Hussein expressed his surprise at the "startling chain of actions and reactions [which] engulfed our area, starting with President Sadat's decision to visit Jerusalem and Israel." He urged Carter to "spare yourself the effects of excessive overwork" due to remarkable events of the previous month. He concluded, "The road ahead for the achievement of peace in our area and in the world is long, and we all need your good health, energies, and wisdom." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P850002-2128)

Turning to the role of the Soviet Union, *the Secretary* asked Mr. Habib to review his talks there.³ The Secretary noted that we have told the Soviets that we were unhappy with their recent conduct. We believed that they were not using their influence constructively. Mr. Habib went to have a frank discussion with them and his talks lasted for eight hours with the experts on the Middle East and then for one and a half to two hours with Foreign Minister Gromyko. *Mr. Habib* said that he had wanted to leave certain impressions with the Soviets. First, we did not appreciate their negativism, and their attacks on President Sadat and the Cairo meetings. They made clear that they thought the United States had worked with Egypt and Israel to bring about Sadat's visit. This suits their purpose. They see this as an effort to blow up Geneva, and to move them out of the scene. They feel that they are being ignored and left out. They made it clear that they still want Geneva. This is a means for them to restore their role. They want to be taken seriously as a world power. They claim that they are holding a brief for the Syrians and the PLO. They accuse us of reneging on the joint statement of October 1. Mr. Habib said that he had placed before them the facts. There was no validity in the charges. There is no inconsistency between the current process and the search for a comprehensive agreement. We had an argument over the way in which the Soviets could play a constructive role. Gromyko agreed that the process had been slow, but that progress was being made. We pointed out that the United States had brought about a number of changes, while the Soviets had done little to move the more radical elements towards Geneva. In the end, we left them with the idea that a process is underway with the Cairo meetings, with Secretary Vance's trip. We will be supporting that process. When this stage is completed, the United States would again talk to the Soviets. There is a contradiction in the Soviet support of the rejectionists and their acceptance of Geneva and of Israel's existence. The United States is not trying to exclude the Soviets. *Secretary Vance* added that the United States will not go out of its way to draw the Soviets in, but if there is a Geneva Conference, they should participate. We would expect them to play a responsible role. They understand our position.

The King then described some of his recent talks. He first asked the Secretary to convey to the President his feelings that the President had made a personal contribution to the development of peace in the area. The process had begun in 1973, but the personal impact made by the President was very important. The President's sincerity and his commitment to a just and durable peace have been major factors in the recent developments. They had made an impact. It was felt that a chance

³ See footnote 3, Document 167.

for peace might not come again, and this encouraged action. King Hussein expressed his thanks for that.

The King then said that he had been caught by surprise by Sadat's actions. First he had received a letter from President Carter concerning Geneva.⁴ The King then waited for some Arab reaction. He expected some coordination of positions. Then he received a second letter,⁵ and this led him to get in touch with the Syrians. He found them talking of an American-Israeli paper, and they compared it unfavorably to the US-Soviet joint statement. They were beginning to ask questions about why they should go to Geneva. They thought that Israel was in a strong position. A conference would bring the possibility of compromises at the expense of Arab rights. Why should they go? Why should they assume the historical responsibility of making concessions? The King had taken time to tell the Syrians that Jordan was not much involved in the process because of the Rabat decisions. But Geneva had begun in 1973, and therefore Geneva remained an important part of the search for peace. The King had said that it would be irresponsible if the Arabs did nothing. The world would not take the Arabs seriously. The situation on the ground would freeze. People have already been under occupation for ten years. If the Syrians were worried about the fragmentation of the Arab world, the King felt that it would be best to call a meeting and to develop a common position. The King was willing to sit down with all of the parties, including the PLO. They could then agree on the action that was necessary to recover the occupied territories, to regain Jerusalem, and to bring about Palestinian self-determination and a comprehensive settlement. They could agree that there would be no implementation of an agreement until there was full agreement among the parties. The King argued that a line of this sort should be developed and then defended. He argued that the Arabs drop their concern for form, and begin to deal with substance. After long discussions, he thought that the Syrians had accepted this point of view.

The King then went on to Saudi Arabia and explained the situation there. He suggested that they join him in the discussions. He then went to Egypt and there he found strong hostility to Syria, just as strong as he had felt in Syria toward Egypt. Sadat did speak of a comprehensive settlement based on withdrawal and Palestinian rights. He was concerned about the possibility of negative attitudes being expressed in Tunis.⁶ He did not favor the calling of a summit meeting. Perhaps the Foreign

⁴ A reference to the letter transmitted in telegram 246493 to Amman, October 14. See Document 131.

⁵ A reference to the letter transmitted in telegram 259811 to Amman, October 30. See Document 140.

⁶ A reference to the Arab League Foreign Ministers meeting in November.

Ministers could prepare for Geneva. The King left Cairo with a feeling of progress. Some of Sadat's advisers asked the King to go back to Syria in order to establish direct contact between Assad and Sadat. He had heard in Egypt much anger at Syria, but he thought that there was some possibility of progress. The Saudi Foreign Minister agreed that it was worth trying.

The King said that he had been in the process of preparing a message to President Carter when President Sadat announced his trip to Jerusalem. The King described the feelings he had during Sadat's visit. He said that they had made quite an impression. His own feelings had gone from admiration to anger, to puzzlement. He had just been in Cairo and Sadat had said nothing. The King had felt that Sadat had something up his sleeve, however. The visit then took place, and Jordan made no statement. It was a very brave move, and hopefully, it will be constructive. The King had sent his Prime Minister to Damascus to urge the Syrians to temper their reaction. He spent many hours with them, but came back saying that the best they could hope for was an avoidance of personal attacks on Sadat, that the Syrians were very upset. Assad's comments included many veiled threats. He saw a plot being hatched in Washington and in Cairo. He spoke of an American-Israeli-Egyptian axis. He was ready to counter this by opening his country to the Soviets. If the road between Jerusalem and Cairo could be opened, so could the road between Damascus and Baghdad. Assad expressed his belief that the Palestinians would now unify. He expected more terrorist activities.

The King said that he had been on the verge of getting in touch with Sadat when the Cairo meetings were called. This again had surprised him, to say the least. He waited, and then decided to speak out. He took a balanced position. He recognized Sadat's courage and the fact that Egypt had given much to the Palestinian cause. He referred to the leadership of Egypt and the role that Egypt had played in the October 1973 war. He could not agree that Sadat could be accused of being a traitor. He then went to see Assad again and was in touch with the Saudi leaders and those in the Gulf. He told Sadat that he would like to stay in touch. It would be "the biggest disaster" if Sadat were pushed into a separate settlement. There is a risk that Assad's stance would force Sadat to do what Assad most fears. Then there could be no solution. When the King saw Assad in Damascus, Assad had just returned from Tripoli. He took the same line as he had with the Prime Minister. He was feeling that he might get help from the Libyans. He spoke of two or three thousand Libyan tanks being sent to Syria if Syria wanted them. He also thought he might get other modern equipment. Algeria had expressed the same attitude. Iraq offered twelve divisions and money. The Palestinians were pulling themselves together. The King had long

discussions with Assad. They agreed that Libya, Algeria, and Iraq could play no role in solving the Palestinian problem. Assad did say that he had stood firmly against a total rejectionist attitude. The Iraqis have been against peace and against Resolutions 242 and 338. Assad had opposed the rejection of those resolutions. He thought that he had played a constructive role in Tripoli.⁷ Nevertheless, he felt a bit trapped. The King said that he still believed that Assad was the most courageous and the wisest man in Syria among the present leadership. He seemed more in control of himself. He has not said much himself. His attitude is very reminiscent of the position taken after Sinai II. It is still marked with clichés. He says that he will never meet with Sadat again. He is against mediation. He was not happy about the King's going to Cairo. He said that he would not have anything to do with Sadat's initiative, but he does still accept Resolution 338. There is no contradiction in his attitude. The King said that he had heard this before, and that the Syrians should control their emotions and should study their actions.

The King had then gone to Cairo and had sent messages to the Saudis and the Gulf leaders on the results of his talks. He warned them of a possible attitude that would drive Egypt to feel alone and would cause Egypt to make a separate agreement. The King then described his visit to Cairo. Sadat had been touched by the visit and thought that he had broken down psychological barriers. He seemed to have support among the Egyptian people. He was wondering about what the results of the trip would be. The King had a long talk with Sadat. It was frank and open. The King described it as the best talk he had since 1970. Sadat, after 1970, had been pro-PLO. This time he was more relaxed and confident than when the King had seen him before. The King had asked him about what guarantees he had of an Israeli response. He asked what had justified the President's optimism, apart from the impact of the visit. Sadat was frank in saying that he had no guarantees except understanding of the terms for peace, the need for a comprehensive settlement, and the return of territory. He also stressed the need for Arab sovereignty over Jerusalem. This is important to all Muslims. The King said that Sadat had never pressed him to attend the Cairo meetings. He realized it was more important for Jordan to play a role in trying to restore cohesion to the Arab world. He issued the invitations to the Cairo meeting to keep the momentum going. He was convinced that this was the only way.

The King said it is not realistic for the Arabs to think in terms of destroying Israel. They need to face up to the need for a political settlement. Sadat understood the barrier in Israeli thinking. They feel iso-

⁷ See footnote 3, Document 163.

lated. No one will talk to them. He decided on his own and he did not want to put other Arab leaders on the spot. King Hussein told Sadat that it would have been better if he had informed the others in advance. As to the future, Sadat had told the King that he is waiting for Begin's response along the lines of a statement of willingness to exchange territory for peace, and to respect the rights of the Palestinians. Then there would be an Arab Summit, and Sadat would tell the other Arabs what is possible. They can then make their own decisions and work out the details of agreements. If this does not happen, Sadat will tell people that he has failed and he will turn over leadership to others. The King said that he believed that Sadat was sincere in saying this. Sadat is extremely serious.

In speaking of details, Sadat had wanted to discuss the West Bank and Gaza. The King had wanted to remove obstacles to Palestinian representation, but not by means of an agreement with the PLO or an agreement in advance on a link between Jordan and the Palestinian entity. The King felt that the Palestinians should decide on their own leadership and on whether they wanted links. This is why he stressed the need for self-determination. The West Bank and Gaza should be under international auspices for some time and then should be given a chance for self-determination. The King noted that Sadat is now using these same words. Sadat said that he had arrived at these conclusions after the King's visit and after his own visit to Jerusalem. He believes now that the peoples in the occupied areas should decide for themselves. Sadat spoke of the need for Jordanian involvement, and of some international supervision for a period of five years. The King said that his own view was that three years would be more realistic, but that the people should decide in any case. After going to a summit, Sadat said that if Assad does not want to negotiate for the return of the Golan Heights, this is his privilege. That Egypt is not looking for a separate deal.

The King said that the Secretary General of the Arab League was worried about Egyptian public reaction. The public is in favor of a separate deal. This has been fueled by the attacks from other Arab states. A separate deal, according to King Hussein, could cause serious problems. There will be no peace, if it is not a total and comprehensive peace, according to the Secretary General, and the King said that he agreed with that assessment. When the King left Cairo, he felt a great challenge to do all that was possible to help. He felt that it was his sacred duty to do the impossible to get some cohesion in the area. He does not know if he can succeed.

The King said that he had been in touch with the Saudis and others, including the Moroccans, to explain his position. He had received messages from all of them, and they agree with him. He expressed his belief

that the Secretary would hear from Assad the same views that the King himself had heard, but the King believed that it was possible to overcome the Syrians' negative views. The King bases his belief on the assumption that Sadat can deliver. If he does, everything will change. Every effort should now be bent to assure success. There must be a positive response. Otherwise, Sadat will have played his last card. This will have been his greatest gamble. Sadat is sincere, but if there is no reply, he will be in deep trouble.

Secretary Vance said that he shared this view. The United States will do all that he can to bring about this response. The King then referred to the Palestinians and their future. The PLO has been weakened. Whether this continues will depend on results. *The King* has the impression that the Soviets have stirred things up. Jordan will be more exposed to dangers than Egypt. The King said that it was important to look at the overall picture. For example, there were continual attacks from the Soviets on Iran. The Soviets must see Iran as a stumbling block in the way of their overall designs. They want to march into this area. They have good relations with Iraq. The Iraqis now have nine divisions, are forming another, and have plans for two more. These twelve divisions will not be needed in Palestine. They are not intended for that. There are between two and three thousand Soviet tanks in Libya. One can also note the Algerian attitudes. A delegation from Mauritania has recently come to Jordan asking for support. If things break out in the Middle East, the important targets would be Saudi Arabia and the Gulf. The Soviets would have lots of power then, and they already have conventional superiority in Europe. The stakes go well beyond the Arab-Israeli conflict. The Soviets definitely have a plan for the Middle East. They are trying to move into the Middle East and Africa. Jordan is trying to convince its friends that they need to be strong enough to face threats and Jordan knows that the United States appreciates this position. Jordan is a shield for Saudi Arabia. The King fears that there will be an increase in terrorism, there will be attempts to undermine those who stand for reasonableness and logic and for a just peace. There may be many difficult moments. Jordan will need help, especially in the military fields. Some gaps must be filled. Jordan will do all that it can. Jordan wants assurance that it will not be easily pushed around.

The King said that Sadat had indicated that his views on the PLO had changed. He also hoped that the Lebanese would come to the Geneva Conference. It is important for Lebanon to be able to get the Syrians out of their country. There is also the need to solve the Palestinian problem there.

Secretary Vance thanked the King for his very thoughtful remarks. The King has explained why the Syrians equivocated. Concerning the overall Soviet threat to the area, the Secretary said that he shared much

of the King's perceptions. He had talked to the Shah and knew his concerns. He understands the Shah's needs to keep a strong defense.

The Secretary said that he would be happy to take another look at Jordan's needs and see what could be done. Ambassador Pickering can follow up on this and the Secretary will talk to the President. *Mr. Habib* asked if there were any changes in what Jordan needed militarily in light of the changed threat. *The King* said there was a need for adjusting delivery schedules. Jordan cannot meet its budgetary obligations even this year. Jordan will try to raise money from Saudi Arabia and hopes that the United States can help. Jordan does not yet have FMS guarantees for credits. Jordan is operating from Yemen, to Oman, to Mauritania, and needs help. *General Bin Shakir* said that Jordan had only been able to acquire an additional C-130-H after selling two C-130-As. Jordan has signed up for a lot of equipment, but deliveries for artillery will not be filled until early 1979 or early 1980. This will be too late. *The Secretary* said that he would try to speed things up.

The King said that Jordan was doing all that it could on economic development. *The Secretary* noted that we were increasing our security supporting assistance in the coming fiscal year. No final figures have been reached, but the Secretary will be discussing the Maqarin Dam situation⁸ with the President in the future. He knows of its importance to Jordan.

The Secretary returned to the question of our advanced knowledge about the trip to Jerusalem and noted that we had been surprised. Sadat had spoken of a letter from the President,⁹ but that letter merely said that the situation was getting tangled up in the debates over procedure and we should all try to break through to Geneva. Concerning the Cairo meetings, the United States knew about them the day before Sadat's speech.¹⁰ We asked for a delay saying that consultations could take place. We think the meetings are a good idea but we would have preferred consultations first. Sadat felt the need for momentum. We will support their meetings and we will participate.

The Secretary said that we had the impression that Sadat had made an impact in his talks with the Saudi leadership, especially with King Khalid. *King Hussein* said that they had no information on this. They did know that King Khalid had been very upset by Sadat's decision to

⁸ The Carter administration attempted to use water development as a building block for peaceful relations among Jordan, Syria, and Israel. The Yarmouk River, which runs between Jordan and Syria, offered Jordan a chance at considerable water flow if a dam could be built at Maqarin. The project failed to materialize during the Carter administration.

⁹ Apparently a reference to the letter quoted in Document 134.

¹⁰ See footnote 2, Document 161.

go to Jerusalem. Others in the leadership were more understanding. The King had done all that he could to put this in perspective.

The Secretary then asked what the United States could do to help the situation in Lebanon. He feared that South Lebanon might flare up again soon. He noted that the Lebanese were equipping three brigades to send to the South. *The King* replied that the Lebanese cannot send any troops to the South until the PLO is withdrawn. *The Secretary* agreed and wondered what any of us could do. He noted that Sarkis cannot do anything if the Syrians disagree. *The King* concurred that Syria is the key. He thought that the Secretary's visit would help and hoped that we would keep him informed after his trip there. The King said that after visiting Saudi Arabia later in the week, he would be going back to Syria. *Mr. Habib* noted that Israel would have little patience if the PLO carried out attacks from the South.

Mr. Atherton commented on the organizational plans for the Cairo meetings. Egypt and Israel have different views. They have argued over chairmanship, the possibility of empty places at the table, and other issues. Both parties do want it to work and they have a seriousness of purpose.

The Secretary asked the King's view of the possibility of a Syrian-Iraqi rapprochement. *The King* thought that this was remote because of their differences, and because Assad is overstretched in Lebanon. Assad is not strong now in Syria, but if there were a change in leadership in Syria, there might be a possibility of rapprochement with Iraq, and that would be very serious. Any change in leadership in Syria would be bad. The King was not sure whether Assad was still committed to Geneva or not. *The Secretary* said that in Damascus we would emphasize our desire to continue our bilateral contacts and then we were prepared to continue working for a just peace, a comprehensive peace, and that we were against bilateral arrangements. We hope that when Geneva convenes, Syria will be there. It is still our belief that Geneva is possible. It could occur in the next month or two.

The Secretary then turned to the question of the Horn of Africa. We have been in close touch with the Saudis about this. The Secretary mentioned that he had recently had meetings with two special envoys from Somalia in the last month and a half. They were urging the United States to deliver arms. Up until now, no arms from the United States were being sent to either side. We are urging negotiations. The Soviets are increasing amounts of arms to Ethiopia, along with advisers. Our figure is 700 million dollars in equipment. For the moment, recent Ethiopian operations have failed, but down the road a different picture might be seen. There are problems within the Ethiopian military. There is also the problem of Eritrea. It is hard to evaluate the future. The prospect of large amounts of Soviet equipment going to Ethiopia is fright-

ening. The OAU seems incapable of acting. We remain close to Nigeria on this problem. The Nigerian Foreign Minister has gone to Moscow where he got a very frosty reception. The Soviets said that they would continue to help Ethiopia and would not change their policies. The Secretary said that he had also discussed this with his NATO colleagues, the French, the British, and the Germans, and none is supplying major arms to Somalia. The Somalis are getting some arms from Italy which are being paid for by Saudi Arabia. We are asking ourselves what we can do. We have not reached any final conclusions. We are carefully watching the situation in South Yemen, and the possibility of a major Ethiopian drive against Somalia. This would create a new situation. The Secretary noted that Sadat is worried about these developments and he has talked to Numeiri.

Mr. Sharaf returned to the questions of changes in Israeli psychology. He asked if there was any indication that Begin was considering withdrawal as part of the solution of the Palestinian problem. Or is he mainly talking about rights for Palestinians within Israel? *The Secretary* said there are different views on this in the Israeli government. He expects an early decision. The Likud differs from Labor on this. There are elements in the Cabinet who feel that there must be a fresh look at the question. They are in the process of debating this. The Secretary could not predict how it would come out. Begin does realize that he must come to grips with the Palestinian question. *Mr. Habib* said that they will not simply stick with their own position. *The Secretary* said that we were not sure what position they would take. *Crown Prince Hassan* stated that Israel's security is ultimately linked to demographic changes. Israel cannot absorb all of the Arabs under its control into its own society. Therefore, they may be planning for an exodus of Arabs from the occupied territories. The alternative to a Palestinian state may be Palestinians migrating to the oil-rich countries. In some ways it may be easier to find a solution if this does happen. The Israelis will be less worried. If the demographic situation does not change adversely from their point of view, they may be more relaxed.

Secretary Vance said that there were two currents in Israeli thinking. Some think of a functional solution for the West Bank. Others talk about withdrawal after a transitional period. They have not reached any conclusions yet. They might turn over the administration of the West Bank to the local population and keep a few troops at selected points. Otherwise, the population would be enjoying a semi-autonomous existence, and would be governed either by the West Bankers themselves or by Jordan. The alternative would be to look to some kind of transition, ending with total withdrawal. It is not clear from what areas Israel might withdraw. They are talking about a partial withdrawal. *Minister Sharaf* noted these two approaches were not

irreconcilable. If one can first build institutions for self-government, then there might be a transitional period, ending with self-determination. But without a Palestinian solution, Sadat and others cannot move.

173. Telegram From the Embassy in Lebanon to the Embassy in Syria¹

Beirut, December 13, 1977, 1500Z

6237. SecDel for Saunders. Subj: Secretary's Discussions With Sarkis, Hoss and Boutros.

1. Following is uncleared report of Secretary's conversations in Beirut with President Sarkis, Prime Minister Hoss and Foreign Minister Boutros Dec 13. Habib and Saunders also present.

2. Secretary said that he and President had been discussing his forthcoming visit to Syria and he had asked President his advice on what to say. President had just commented on how we should avoid trying to pressure Assad. He would like to ask now for President's views regarding the south.

3. Sarkis said Syrians might have an interest in Palestinian withdrawal from the south but they did not have the means to enforce it. At same time he was convinced that Palestinians themselves did not want to withdraw. The situation in the area as a whole reflected on the south and made things even murkier. He did not expect any new elements in the near future. Secretary said perhaps it would be useful for him to comment on the situation as perceived by the Israelis. They were very concerned that the situation might heat up again. In particular, they believed this might occur because of increased activities by rejectionists leading to renewed fighting and firing of rockets into Israel. If that happened, the Israelis would react swiftly and very strongly. There should be no doubt about this and nothing would stop them.

4. Secretary said Israelis had told him they heard Palestinians in the south were being reinforced. Could the Lebanese confirm this? Boutros asked where reinforcements were supposed to have come from. Secretary said Israelis did not say. Boutros asked if they felt an at-

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840072-0377. Secret; Niact Immediate; Nodis; Cherokee. Sent for information to the Department of State. Vance visited Beirut on December 13.

tack was likely. Secretary said they were concerned that fighting might occur. Boutros asked how the Israelis assessed the Syrian attitude and Secretary said they thought Syrians were unwilling to pressure the Palestinians.

5. Boutros said, for his own information, assuming Lebanese could resume discussions with Palestinians and could develop a new formula for withdrawal, was there any possibility that the Israelis would accept less than they had been offered before? Secretary said, no, they would want more. They had told him they wanted the Palestinians to withdraw 21 kilometers to take the entire border out of rocket range. Habib noted that they might still agree that this could be done in stages and not necessarily all at once.

6. Secretary asked President for his views on implementation of Shtaura III.² Sarkis responded that as indicated earlier the Palestinians were not interested in implementing it and the Syrians for the time being were unable to force them to do so. With regard to Secretary's question about reinforcements, if they came from abroad Israelis were in position to interdict them if they wished. Why didn't they do so?

7. Parker interjected that what President was referring to were reports circulating for the last two weeks that elements of the Ayn Jalut Brigade³ had come from Egypt to Lebanon by sea.

8. Secretary said he did not see how the Israelis could prevent people infiltrating in small numbers by sea. Boutros said they could do so and Hoss noted that they had done so in the past.

9. Secretary asked if President excluded possibility of movement of Palestinians from north to south. President said that when Syrians entered Lebanon, Palestinian forces in the north had been small in number, and there was possibly more need for them in northern part of country than in the south. He did not exclude the possibility of movement from above the Litani to south, but he thought it likely to be small.

10. Secretary asked about progress being made in training of new battalions. President said three battalions were to go to the south in the context of the Shtaura Agreement. Their training had been completed but they were not in a position to go there for the time being. Lebanese possibilities were limited in the best of conditions and their forces were not now in a position to try to remove the Palestinians. General Khoury was trying to recruit from all sectors of the population, but the mixed units he was putting together were still in the minority because the na-

² Apparently a reference to the third phase of the Shtaura Agreement, which had yet to be implemented. For the Shtaura Agreement, see footnote 2, Document 76.

³ The Ayn Jalut Brigade was one of three brigades that comprised the Palestinian Liberation Army (PLA). The Egyptians sponsored the brigade, which was originally based in Gaza before the June 1967 Arab-Israeli War and Israeli control of Gaza.

tional consensus had not moved forward. Movement on the consensus was blocked by the south, among other things, and formation of an army which would deal with the south was blocked by the lack of consensus. Lebanese were in a vicious circle.

11. Secretary asked if in event it proved possible to implement the third stage of Shtaura troops would be ready to move into the south. Boutros said unequivocally yes.

12. Secretary asked what was the state of rebuilding institutions in Lebanon. Were they making satisfactory progress?

13. President said the possibilities were limited as long as there was no progress on consensus. If there were consensus, progress would be much more rapid. In any event the Lebanese had moved with respect to the army and the security forces and with respect to other administrative agencies, such as electricity companies, water companies, etc. In the economy as a whole, some sectors were better off than before the war, while others were still lagging. If it had not been for the lack of consensus, the economy would have gone much further. Considering the circumstances, progress was satisfactory. (The word he used to express last thought, and which has been used with me several times in the past 24 hours by Boutros, is "irtiyah," meaning satisfaction, gratification, pleasure, joy, delight.)

14. Secretary asked if it would be possible to make progress on national consensus before there was an overall Arab-Israeli settlement. President said it would be possible but difficult. Prime Minister Hoss said that if Lebanese could settle the problem of the south, they could detach themselves from the overall problem as far as forming Lebanese internal consensus was concerned. Habib noted that presence of Palestinians would remain problem. Boutros seconded him. Secretary said that if one could stabilize the south it would help nevertheless.

15. Sarkis said he wanted to distinguish between presence of Palestinians and presence of armed Palestinians. Armed presence now exists in the south and is an obstacle to consensus. The presence of Palestinians is a problem, but its elimination is not one of the conditions for consensus.

16. Secretary asked if it would not be advisable to stretch out our FMS military aid program over next year given the absorptive capabilities of the Lebanese army. President responded that he much preferred the present tempo. Military assistance was an important manifestation of American support which they very much needed. Hoss said a stretching out might be interpreted as a lack of support.

17. Sarkis said Lebanese needed support in all fields. He thanked Americans for their moral and political support to date, but hoped there would be more. In particular, there were a number of actions which had impact on local attitudes: return of Pan American, resump-

tion of construction of Embassy building and return of Embassy personnel, for example. Anything which reversed positive trend of American actions would have bad effect. Anything that could be done to build confidence in the Government of Lebanon would help in dealing with those who did not support the idea of a unified Lebanon.

18. Secretary asked if we could demonstrate to Congress if we went for \$50 million for FMS that people were being recruited rapidly enough to justify expenditures of that magnitude in fiscal 78. Boutros responded that we could be absolutely sure of that.

19. Habib asked if Secretary had discussed with President Geneva and the Lebanese role in that Conference. Secretary said he had and he had told the President that the Palestinian and refugee questions would be dealt with from the beginning. If the Lebanese were not there, they would find themselves in a position where they would not have a voice in these vital questions.

20. Boutros said that when the Lebanese were in a political position to go to Geneva they would not delay a second. They felt they had a real interest to be there. Question was what were the conditions under which Geneva was to take place? If it were to be held tomorrow, Lebanese would not delay one day if political conditions permitted.

21. Habib said we understood the Lebanese position on Cairo but we hoped they would be able to attend Geneva from the beginning.

22. Secretary asked what he should say if he was asked whether Lebanon wanted to go to Geneva. Hoss said it would depend on what the basis of discussion was. Habib replied that the Conference would be convened to discuss Resolutions 242 and 338.

23. President said we should be frank. Lebanese wanted to go if political conditions permitted. They would have to say yes one day or another. But if they said yes prematurely, it would mean resumption of troubles in Lebanon which would not be in interest of either Lebanon or area. Lebanese would do their best to attend. It was important that both co-chairmen attend. It would mean that half of the obstacles were over.

24. Secretary asked if both co-chairmen called for resumption of Geneva and the Syrians said they would not go, could the Lebanese go? Sarkis did not have to answer that if he did not want to. Sarkis said this was very important matter. The Syrian "no" might be expressed at many levels. It might be for the Syrians and not for others. Lebanese would try to agree with Syrians that any such no was not for them. Lebanese had greater interest than anyone in Geneva. They also had a greater interest than anyone else in getting along with the Syrians. They must reconcile these two imperatives.

25. Boutros said Lebanese had to avoid initiating irreversible process which was not in the general interest. Were they wrong? Secretary said that was a question they must answer for themselves.

26. Boutros said it would all depend on timing. If they had consensus and an army, the situation would be much different.

27. President asked if Secretary considered it possible for the two co-chairmen to convene Geneva without Syria. Would the Soviets do that? He did not think that was a reasonable proposition. Secretary said it was very unlikely but nevertheless possible. Habib noted that holding such a conference was not our objective.

28. Boutros asked if Secretary thought there was a risk of war. Secretary said there was a risk of conflict, but he did not think the risk of war was great at the present. If everything we were doing failed that risk might rise. We hoped we could avoid that situation. Boutros asked what if there was a unilateral settlement. Secretary said he did not want to answer that question because we are hoping for an overall settlement.

29. Hoss asked if there were any possibility of Israelis reconsidering their position on Syrian forces south of the Litani. Secretary said there was not. (Boutros began waving [hands?] in distress as soon as Hoss raised question and implied to Hoss in Arabic that this was a silly question to ask.) Habib said Israelis were not going to have Syrian regular troops on their border.

30. Sarkis asked if Secretary had clear idea of difficulties GOL was going to face if problem with the south was not solved and national consensus were held up as a result. Secretary said he did see the difficulties this would present. As for solutions, he honestly did not see any outside implementing Shtaura III. Boutros interjected, "or wait for overall settlement."

31. President asked Boutros again in Arabic "Do they see the danger of the south? Everything is connected to it." Secretary said we understood very clearly the danger of the south and he would make sure that President Carter understood it as well. President said that without it there would be no unity.

32. Boutros asked when we thought Geneva Conference might be held, assuming Cairo negotiations went well. Secretary said that if they went well it might be possible to have Geneva by end of February. This was an optimistic view and he could take a more pessimistic one. Hoss asked what we expected to come out of Cairo. Secretary said that would depend very much on Israeli response to the Sadat visit. This would determine the speed with which Geneva could be reconvened. In this connection, he had told President there had been fundamental change in Israel in terms of public perception and realization that it is now possible to discuss peace. The atmosphere was totally different from what it was the last time he was there. People everywhere were talking about how they could move towards peace. The situation would never be the same again.

33. Boutros asked what if Geneva were to be held without all the parties being present. Secretary said we assumed all would attend. Boutros asked if PLO would be there. Secretary replied that Palestinians would be.

34. Boutros asked if Soviets would accept Geneva without the PLO. Habib said they had agreed with us on use of the word Palestinians, not PLO, in the joint statement. PLO appears nowhere in that document. Boutros asked if Soviets still adhered to that agreement. Secretary said they did.

35. Boutros asked what Israelis would have done if PLO had gone to Cairo. Secretary said he did not know and he did not think Israelis knew either. He thought the Israelis would have agreed to Palestinian representatives who were acceptable to both the PLO and Israel. Sadat had said Arafat had accepted such a proposal. Boutros commented that Arafat had then changed his mind. The Lebanese had had a lot of experience with that.

Parker

174. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Damascus, December 13, 1977, 4–6 p.m.

SUBJECT

Secretary's Meeting with Foreign Minister Khaddam

PARTICIPANTS

Foreign Minister Khaddam
Abdallah Khani, Deputy Foreign Minister
Hammoud Shoufi, Director of North American Affairs
Abu Fares, Interpreter
Secretary Vance
Ambassador Richard Murphy
Harold Saunders, Director, INR
Under Secretary Philip Habib
William Quandt, NSC Staff
Issa Sabbagh, Interpreter

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Trips/Visits File, Box 108, 12/7–17/77 Vance Trip to the Middle East: Meeting Minutes, 12/77. Secret; Nodis. The meeting took place at the Syrian Foreign Ministry. Vance visited Damascus from December 13 to December 14.

Foreign Minister Khaddam welcomed the Secretary to Damascus and said that he was prepared to listen to what the Secretary had to say. *The Secretary* said that he appreciated Khaddam's willingness to meet with him on such short notice. The President felt strongly that in light of recent events it was vitally important for the Secretary to come to the Middle East and to speak with the Syrian leadership. The President wanted the Secretary to reaffirm our continued desire to work closely with the Syrians. He strongly feels, as does the Secretary, the importance of the bilateral relationship between the United States and Syria. He wanted to speak personally with the Minister and to hear the Syrian assessment of the situation, so that the United States could best decide how to proceed to our common objective of a durable, just, and comprehensive settlement of the conflict in the Middle East. The United States has an overwhelming interest in a comprehensive settlement. We believe that a partial settlement would leave crucial issues unresolved, especially concerning the Palestinian issue, and that would become a continuing source of instability. Another war and serious economic dislocations might be likely. It is our judgment that a partial settlement would divide the Arab world and this would not be in anyone's interests. The Secretary said that he assumed from talks with the Syrians in the past that they would share this view.

The Secretary said that he wanted to give the Syrians the facts of the background to the initiatives, and to report to them on the results of his recent talks. It has been said that the United States planned the events that led to Sadat's trip to Jerusalem. This was reported in newspapers, and some said that the Syrians themselves believed it. The Secretary said that he could tell Khaddam that the United States did not know about the trip until it was publicly announced by Sadat. But it has had a profound effect, not only in Israel, but also in the United States and elsewhere. The Secretary said that he had been in Europe recently at a meeting in Brussels.²

In the United States, there has been a change in public opinion. A recent public opinion poll by Mr. Harris³ showed that for the first time, 52% of the American public believed that the Arabs want peace, whereas only 48% believe that Israel is especially anxious for peace. This is a complete reversal of the situation. The effect in Israel has also been fundamental. This shows itself in several different ways. Whether one talks to the Prime Minister or Members of his Cabinet, or the press, or ordinary people, they all say the situation has fundamentally changed and will never be the same again. They believe that the Arabs

² On December 8, Vance met with NATO Foreign Ministers in Brussels.

³ A reference to Louis Harris, whose company Louis Harris & Associates developed the Harris Poll in 1963 to poll Americans on various issues.

do want peace and are prepared seriously to discuss it. There has been a profound emotional impact on the Israelis. They recognize that the time has come to face up to issues that have been ignored for a long time. They feel it is up to them to respond to the initiatives that have already been taken.

The Secretary said that when he went to Cairo to meet President Sadat,⁴ Sadat asked him to convey several points to the Israelis. First, Sadat does not want a separate or partial peace with Israel. Second, he expects Israel to respond with a statement of willingness to negotiate the return of Arab lands occupied in the 1967 war, with minor modifications on the West Bank. He also expects them to state their willingness to solve the Palestinian question in all its aspects. He indicated that the Cairo Conference would prepare the way for the Geneva Conference, but ultimately the final agreements would have to be negotiated at Geneva. The Secretary said that he had reported these matters to Prime Minister Begin, first alone, and then with the Prime Minister and a few of his top Cabinet Members, including Mr. Yadin, Foreign Minister Dayan, and Defense Minister Weizman.⁵ These are the principal figures in the Cabinet. The Secretary had told them what President Sadat expected, and they all said that they understood what was being asked. They understood the need for an Israeli response. They would have to deal promptly with this in a serious fashion. The Secretary sensed a tremendous change in mood and in the way in which they received this information, compared to his earlier meetings. They know they are dealing with serious problems and they will discuss it in a positive way. They did not raise obstacles or negative road blocks. The Secretary said that he could not predict how the Israelis would respond, but they have indicated they will give a response in the near future. From the Secretary's standpoint, he thinks there is hope for a serious discussion of issues to accomplish a just, lasting, and comprehensive settlement.

The Secretary said that he had also discussed the work at the Cairo meetings, but that he did not believe it was necessary to go into details on this. Concerning his talks in Amman,⁶ the Secretary said that he had reported to King Hussein on his views of the new situation. The King had explained his position and his deep desire to restore greater harmony and unity to the Arab world. The King had repeated his total commitment to a comprehensive settlement. The King had been particularly insistent upon the need to solve the Palestinian problem. He also

⁴ See Documents 167, 170, and 171.

⁵ See Documents 168 and 169.

⁶ See Document 172.

reaffirmed the importance of the return of the occupied territories, and showed a special interest in Jerusalem.

The Secretary said that he had met with this morning with President Sarkis⁷ and had discussed South Lebanon. He had also raised the broader problems of the Middle East and of a comprehensive settlement. President Sarkis understood the need for a comprehensive settlement and for a fundamental resolution of the Palestinian question because of the effects that had on his own country. The Secretary had talked to him about the question of a Geneva Conference. He repeated his desire for a comprehensive settlement at Geneva. He went on to say that specific action by Lebanon, if the Co-chairmen were to call for a Geneva Conference, would depend upon the circumstances at the time. He expanded on this to say that Geneva must deal with fundamental problems such as the Palestinians and the refugees. This in brief is what the Secretary had discussed in the previous stops on his trip. He reiterated that it is important to find out Syrian thinking, and their views on what steps should be taken to reach their objectives. President Carter and Secretary Vance feel that it is important to understand the Syrian views, so that we can help promote a true peace, a comprehensive peace, and a just peace.

Foreign Minister Khaddam said that he had been interested in hearing the American views, and would like to know what the United States felt should be done. He also would like to know what President Sadat and Israel think can be done in the future.

The Secretary said he had already touched on the second point. Sadat and Begin believe that we should all go to Geneva after some constructive work has been done. They had the ultimate goal of going to Geneva, with all parties, and with all issues being dealt with in a comprehensive settlement. Concerning American views, the United States believes that it should capitalize upon the opportunities that now exist. We will participate at Cairo to see whether we can help, through those informal meetings, to prepare for Geneva. What we ultimately seek is a Geneva meeting with all the parties present to negotiate a final settlement which will encompass all of the issues. It is necessary to have a response in the near future from Israel, and we believe that they mean what they say about an early response.

Foreign Minister Khaddam thanked the Secretary for his review of the situation in the Middle East, and for his emphasis on a final, and just settlement in the Middle East. Khaddam said that he knew the United States understood Syria's positions, but he would like to emphasize several points. The United States sees President Sadat's visit to

⁷ See Document 173.

Israel as having positive aspects. He said that this was also the view in Europe. This is not surprising to Syria. It is natural that Israel's friends will be pleased by this visit, and it is not surprising to hear voices praising Sadat for his courage. What is regrettable is that these same Europeans have called similar actions in the past treason. The French, in connection with DeGaulle and Petain, felt that DeGaulle was a hero because he did not deal with the enemy, and they condemned Petain because he did. Petain did nothing compared to Sadat, but he was sentenced to death as a traitor to his country. What Sadat has done is spoil everything that had been accomplished for peace. Syria cannot deal with things on the basis of their effects in the United States and Europe. What matters is the effect in the Arab world. President Nixon had to resign from office because he told a lie that was a blemish on the honor of the United States. He said that he had not known about the spying on the Democratic Party.⁸ Despite this small lie, he had to resign. This reflects well on the American people. It is a positive phenomenon, showing that the American Administration has the respect of its people.

But what Sadat has done, according to Khaddam, is not the right of any Arab ruler. The struggle has been between Israel and the Arabs, not just Israel and Egypt. No Arab ruler can take a step which adversely affects the Arab cause. President Sadat has taken upon himself the right to do this, but he will be tried and taken to account as is the case of any traitor. Neither Sadat nor anyone else can take a step alone to peace. This has to be an Arab decision. Sadat says that he does not want a partial peace. But how else can Syria describe what he has done. He should not have taken upon himself the right to go to Israel without the agreement of the other Arabs. He who visits Israel, and recognizes Jerusalem as its capital, and places a wreath on the tomb of the Israeli unknown soldier who has killed Arabs, has done something which was not his right to do. This is worse than a partial solution. Those who think that Sadat can speak for the Arabs are mistaken.

Khaddam said that Sadat should be pitied. Publicity has gone to his head. It is driving him crazy. Every day he gives new interviews. Sadat and the Syrians had agreed that there should be no unilateral actions, but he broke that agreement. Subsequently, if it was necessary for Nixon to resign for his small lie, Sadat should resign twenty times. He has given the impression that the Egyptian people are behind him. Syria disagrees. We know the Egyptian people, and the coming days will show that we are right. They will never forgive their leader for this great sin, this blemish on the honor of the Egyptian people. History is filled with examples. Before the visit, everyone was talking about Ge-

⁸ A reference to the Watergate scandal of 1972.

neva. There were attempts being made to facilitate its reconvening. The United States had contacts with all the parties. So why did Sadat make his visit? If he was serious about a comprehensive peace, why did he choose this time to make the visit? The efforts were still moving forward. In Syrian opinion, Sadat had prepared this event for some time. The contacts he had had with Syria were merely a smoke screen to help prepare the way for the visit. There is no similar example in history of a leader of a country at war with another of giving everything without getting anything in return. The closest example was that of Rudolph Hess, when he went to England during the Second World War.⁹ But he was not a head of state. And that visit was fruitless. In our opinion, this visit has complicated matters and has gotten the efforts off the track. A new situation has been created in the area. A great political imbalance has been created. Consequently, we do not see that this path will lead to peace.

Khaddam emphasized that Syria does want peace, but this is not the way to it. This is the path of submission, and is an insult to Arab honor and dignity. The Syrians also think that the question of Geneva is not now valid. Anything that now takes place at Geneva will be looked at from the framework of Sadat's visit. If Sadat thinks that he can bring peace, let him try. He has done something that he will have to pay for. The price is that Egypt must return to its natural place. Some parts of the world see this as exciting. But the press has quoted Mrs. Meir, who was asked about whether Sadat and Begin deserve the Nobel Peace Prize, and she responded that they should get the Oscar for the best actors.

Khaddam emphasized that peace must preserve the dignity of the peoples who are engaged in it. Everything that trespasses on dignity will lead nowhere. If some Americans were excited by the visit, there were millions of Arabs whose hearts were bleeding at the sight of Sadat bowing before the Israeli flag, embracing Golda Meir, and so forth. The Foreign Minister said that he had a son of 13. When his son saw the pictures of Sadat in Jerusalem, he asked his father why Syria had not arrested Sadat when Sadat was in Damascus before his visit to Israel. His son does not want war, but he does insist on a minimum of self respect, like all Syrians. In Egyptian law, Sadat could be brought to trial.

Khaddam said that he believed that the United States had had a hand in Sadat's visit. Sadat has made statements which suggest this, particularly when he refers to the exchange of personal letters with

⁹ In May 1941, Rudolf Hess flew to England, with no permission from the German Government, in an attempt to convince the English to sign a peace treaty with Germany. He was captured by British forces after parachuting out of his plane and detained for the rest of the war.

President Carter. Possibly the Americans did not have direct knowledge, but it is rumored that Sadat has been working for American intelligence since the 1960s, so maybe the CIA engineered the whole thing (laughter). Whether the United States had a role or not, the important thing is what Sadat has done.

Secretary Vance stressed that the letters Sadat has referred to were similar to those sent to President Assad. The President had emphasized that the talks were getting bogged down on procedures, and that it was time to go to Geneva. *Khaddam* replied that Sadat had created a different impression by referring to hand-written messages. And if he, as Foreign Minister, did not understand fully, it should not be surprising that other people could not understand. Subsequently, there had been evidence that the United States was urging other Arabs not to criticize Sadat's efforts. This was another factor. Also the United States agreed to go to the Cairo Conference. All of these things have left Syrians with the impression that the United States was behind this. No one can believe that Ceausescu managed to convince Sadat to make this trip.¹⁰ *The Secretary* said that he thought that Sadat had made his own decision.

Khaddam said that if this came out of Sadat's head, we should wait to see how far it goes. Perhaps it would end on the scaffold. Sadat may talk about no bilateral agreement, but his visit was already part of a bilateral approach. Why was it not worth discussing this step, which has been so important, with the other Arabs? *Secretary Vance* said he could not argue about this. There had been no prior consultation in any case with the United States. *Khaddam* said that he would believe what the Secretary had said, but he wanted to give the reasons behind the impressions he had. One word of Secretary Vance's was worth a million from Sadat. *Khaddam* then referred to the fact that Ismail Fahmi had not even been able to accept Sadat's action,¹¹ and Fahmi was the most pro-American of all the Egyptians. Henry Kissinger had even told *Khaddam* that he had made Fahmi Foreign Minister. When the Secretary expressed doubts about that, *Khaddam* explained a story that Kissinger had told about his first meeting with Fahmi. In any event, if Fahmi could not digest the step that was taken by Sadat, how could others be expected to accept it? Sadat's visit was that of an individual, and it was leading to a unilateral solution. Syria's goal remains the achievement of peace, but not through this method which tramples on Syria's dignity, and on Arab rights. All of these activities have frozen

¹⁰ Romanian President Nicolae Ceausescu served as an intermediary for the Israelis and Egyptians as Romania was the only Eastern bloc country to maintain full diplomatic relations with Israel. On November 23, Carter met with Romanian Foreign Minister George Macovescu at the White House to discuss the Egyptian-Israeli situation. See Document 154.

¹¹ See footnote 5, Document 147.

the way to Geneva. Peace in the region can only be between two parties—the Arabs and Israel. Now Sadat's actions have caused the possibility of peace to fall by the wayside. The Syrians, the Jordanians, the Palestinians, the Lebanese, and the Egyptians were all agreed on Geneva. Now what will the results of Sadat's trip be? There will now be Egypt and Israel on one side, and Syria, the Palestinians, and others against them. When Egypt returns to our side, and leaves the Israeli side, we can resume discussions. Now Sadat is with the Israelis and is serving the interests of Israel. Khaddam said that he could not understand the warm feeling for Begin. He is sure that Sadat embraced Dayan more warmly than he did Secretary Vance.

Khaddam said that this is the situation as he sees it. There is no real possibility for continuing efforts in light of Sadat's visit to Israel and the results that have come from it. Syria considers that Sadat has gone against his people's will. When he was here, he told President Assad that if he failed in his visit, he would resign. He would insist on getting full withdrawal and Palestinian rights. When he finished the visit, we heard his declaration that he had achieved a psychological breakthrough. That apparently is now enough of an achievement for him, and he had decided not to resign. Syria has no choice but to respect the will of its own people. It is of no use to the Arabs to gain the support of 52% of the American people if in the process they lose 100% of their own people. Even in the United States, if President Carter were to take a decision which gained him the support of the entire world, but which lost him the support of the American people, he would not take such a decision. We in Syria feel a great bitterness toward Sadat.

Secretary Vance noted the Foreign Minister had said that Geneva would not be valid because it would be seen in the framework of recent events. But the Minister had also stated that he was still interested in peace. The question then is how to achieve peace. *Khaddam* said that his attitude toward Geneva was caused by the view that it would be held in the shadow of Sadat's visit and would be based on those results. There is an imbalance in the situation. When the balance goes back, this will be a different story. The balance will go back by cancelling the visit of Sadat and its results. It is not possible now to deal with Sadat. This is the 20th time that he has told lies to the Syrians and has stabbed them in the back.

The Secretary asked about the notion of imbalance. *Khaddam* said that in the past there had been two parties—the Arabs against the Israelis. All of the Arabs, from Mauritania to the Yemen, but especially Egypt, Jordan, Syria, the Palestinians, and Lebanon. Now what has happened has taken Egypt out of that fold. The situation has become imbalanced. Among the Arabs, there is one who has moved ahead of the others and has started from the end. Now there is one head of state

who sees Israel as being closer to him than his own Arab brothers. We are consistent in our attachment to the goal of peace, but we need patience. We will be patient until the balance is restored. We are not in a hurry. The sun always rises in the East and sets in the West, and we will watch patiently, but the balance will come back.

The Secretary asked if Syria's objectives had changed. *Khaddam* said no. Syria's goal is peace, and will remain peace. The disagreement with Egypt is over the path of submission that Egypt has chosen, not over the goal of peace. New developments may require recalculations, but goals do not change. *Mr. Habib* said that this came as a cold shower. If Syria remains committed to the goal of peace, Syria should wait to see if the results will move in the direction of peace or not. There is a process underway that cannot be evaluated on the basis of one visit. It did not begin with the Sadat visit nor with one man. We believe that Syria wants peace, otherwise the Secretary would not have come. Our purpose is to try to sustain the process. Syria should wait and see. They should not reject the process until they see where it is going. The Secretary did not come to ask the Syrians to go to Cairo or to love Sadat. He came for the same reasons as always—to help the process of peace. Peace in our interests and in Syria's. If Syria is prepared to be patient, it can wait and watch the results. *Khaddam* replied cryptically by referring to an Arab proverb about knowing a letter's content by reading the address. *Mr. Habib* jokingly responded with a proverb that one should follow the thief to the door. *Khaddam* said that they had followed this particular thief 20 times, but Syria is no longer prepared to allow Sadat to rob them blind. *Mr. Habib* repeated again that peace is what we are all working for. The Secretary is talking about peace, and Syria should remain patient. *Khaddam* responded that no one could expect Syria to accept Sadat's initiatives. He said that the reactions to Sadat had not even begun in the area. The results will be worse than the establishment of Israel itself. The Arab world will go through many changes, and the world will be surprised by the depth of developments.

Mr. Habib asked if Syria would be joining those well known proponents of peace, Iraq and Libya. *Khaddam* said that one should not look at the situation from the point of view of today's political map. The situation should be analyzed at a deeper level. Syria's concern and apprehension have caused them to look at the situation with great seriousness. *Khaddam* said that he believed that Egypt was going for a bilateral peace with Israel. This is the prevailing view in the Arab world, not just among the rulers, but also among the people. This feeling will cause deep reactions. Many may not be able to withstand the consequences. Secretary Vance and *Mr. Habib* will recall that Syria has said previously that one should not push the Arabs beyond certain limits of reasonableness. The Arabs have their own political situation.

For outsiders to look at the area in their own terms is incorrect. Some countries wanted to support Sadat, but they did not dare do so because of their peoples' views. This does not mean that they are against peace, but they believe this is the wrong way to peace. It makes no sense to jump into the unknown and to give up rights.

The Secretary said that he did not follow this logic. If Sadat is calling for the return of the occupied territories and a solution to the Palestinian question, why is that not consistent with Syria's objectives? *Khaddam* said Egypt had moved too far from reality. When the head of the Knesset received Sadat, he quoted from Isaiah to the effect that the people of the world will come to the mountain of God and take their instructions from Jerusalem. Israel is not prepared to give up anything. Sadat had already met Dayan in Morocco before this.¹² Sadat was also shown a map of what the Israelis were prepared to concede. The map says nothing about Palestinian rights or the West Bank and Gaza. The map gives Egypt most of Sinai. Syria sees the visit by itself as the culprit. Why did Sadat go to Israel at this time when a serious attempt was being made to reconvene Geneva? He knew Arab reactions and he knew that this would cause cleavages in the Arab world. Why then did he visit Israel? There were other considerations in his mind that had no bearing on peace or withdrawal or the Palestinians. If Sadat thinks he can get peace alone, he is imagining things. Sadat believes that if he brings about a resolution of the conflict with Israel, he will be able to count on American pressure on the oil countries for more money. These were the considerations in his mind apart from the achievement of peace. He knew that Syria could not accept and would disagree. But we were his partners, so why did he do this? It is not up to Sadat to make the judgments on whether Syria or the Palestinians should be part of this. That decision was not his to make. There was no consultation. He has taken decisions long ago, well before the US working paper. All of this was decided before September and October. Sadat has said that he made up his mind five months ago. So in effect, he reached this conclusion without any consideration for the other Arabs. It is critical to answer the question of why he went. President Assad discussed this with him for seven hours. Sadat had no justification. Assad said that he should not hurry. He urged that the parties go to Geneva first, and then discuss all issues. Sadat said that no, he had made up his mind and would go to Jerusalem despite Arab criticism.

Khaddam said that he assumed that the Americans through their contacts would have known about the results of such a visit. When the Syrians first heard about this they all thought that Sadat was simply proposing to go to the Knesset in order to embarrass the Israelis.

¹² Presumably a reference to the Dayan-Tuhamy meeting in Morocco.

Khaddam had asked Ismail Fahmi in Tunis about this, and Fahmi said that Sadat would not really go. King Hussein was also in Cairo before the visit, and he could not tell if Sadat was serious or not. If Syria, Jordan, and the PLO had no bearing on his decision, then who did? These are the parties that can make peace or war. Is it reasonable to believe that Sadat will drag us to a conference to give up our rights, and that we would thank him for this? We should wait to see the results in Egypt.

The Secretary said that he knew nothing of the map that Khaddam spoke of. *Khaddam* said this happened in Romania. Ceausescu is seeking a role for himself. *The Secretary* said that he could not read Sadat's motives. But he thought that all those who wanted peace should wait to see the results and should keep their options open. Khaddam said that the visit had caused a sharp turn of events in the area. It leaves no choice but to wait and see. The visit had derailed the talks that were underway previously. Khaddam then asked about the Egyptian-Israeli plans at the Cairo meetings. *The Secretary* said that they will probably discuss several things, such as the return of occupied territories, the Palestinian question, the nature of peace, and the remaining procedural issues on the way to Geneva. *Khaddam* asked if the Israeli delegation would be authorized to discuss these issues. *The Secretary* said that he thought they eventually would discuss them, although this may come later. *Khaddam* asked if it was possible that the level of representation would be raised, and the *Secretary* replied that he thought it might be. *The Secretary* offered to keep the Syrians informed of the Cairo meetings if they were interested.

Khaddam asked if the purpose of the Cairo meetings was to discuss all of the substantive issues, what would the role of Geneva be? This tended to substantiate Syrian idea that everything was already cooked up in advance. *The Secretary* said that he thought they would try to get agreement on general principles. That will be difficult. In response to Khaddam's question about how long the Cairo meetings would last, the Secretary said that he had no idea. He hoped that soon it would be possible to move to Geneva, but that the Syrian view of Geneva fills him with great sadness. *Khaddam* said that the Syrians were saddened because they had hoped for different developments. But he said that the Secretary should not be too sad because things were already beginning to move toward their natural course. If the press continues to chase Sadat, it will turn him into another Bokassa or an Idi Amin.¹³ He is making a big mistake. The Foreign Minister then told a story about the period of the Egyptian-Syrian union. The parties in Syria were dis-

¹³ Jean Bedel Bokassa ruled the Central African Empire. Idi Amin was President of Uganda from 1971 to 1979. Both had reputations of brutality and oppression.

solved and it was decided to form a single political establishment called the National Union. Nasser issued a decree naming Sadat the president of that union. This caused commotion in Syria, because it was known that Sadat was close to the Muslim brethren.¹⁴ He was not particularly religious, but he was close to the Muslim brethren. Syria sent Bitar to see Nasser and to object to Sadat's appointment. Nasser said to Bitar that Sadat could not be placed in any executive job. He could only be asked to head the party, or the National Assembly, or the National Union. Nasser said that the problem with Sadat is that he makes mistakes and is not subject to corrections. This was in 1958. Sadat is clearly incorrigible. The situation is unfortunate. The movement toward peace involves serious efforts. In any case, Khaddam said that he was not pessimistic. Peace will one day be achieved. He then asked if the Secretary had any information on when Dayan might visit Cairo, or maybe Begin might go. *The Secretary* said he knew nothing about this.

Khaddam said that the Syrian people had seen the Sadat visit on television. It had been very painful to watch. Americans cannot understand the feelings in the area. Americans have not gone through the same experiences as the Arabs. *Khaddam* said that Kissinger must now be pleased. He is leading a campaign to get the Americans out of the negotiations and to leave the parties face-to-face. *The Secretary* said the United States would continue to play its part. The parties should talk to one another, and the United States will do what it can to facilitate that process. Once they are talking, the United States will help to bridge differences. This has always been our role. *Khaddam* said that he was not doubting the present American position, but he was commenting on what Henry Kissinger was advocating. *The Secretary* said that Kissinger had never said this to him. *Khaddam* said that Kissinger had spoiled Sadat. When Kissinger came to the area, Sadat spoke of him as "my dear Henry." Now his tongue has gotten used to this and he speaks of "my friend Begin," "my friend Dayan."

At 6:00 p.m. the meeting ended and the group went to meet with President Assad.

¹⁴ Muslim brethren is another name for the Muslim Brotherhood, founded in Egypt in 1928 as an Islamic political group.

175. Telegram From Secretary of State Vance to the Embassy in Israel and the Department of State¹

Riyadh, December 14, 1977, 1200Z

Secto 12126. State Please Pass White House for Brzezinski. Cairo for Atherton. For Charge From Secretary. Subj: Report on Secretary's Meeting With President Assad, December 13, 1977.

1. I met later Tuesday afternoon for two hours with Foreign Minister Khaddam,² followed by another two hours with President Assad.³ Although the Syrians disagree profoundly with Sadat's policy and our support of it, the tone of the meetings, especially that with Assad, was quite positive.

2. I began by restating our commitment to a comprehensive peace and the reconvening of the Geneva Conference. I explained that we support the Cairo meeting as part of a process that we hoped would advance the cause of peace.⁴ I then reviewed the results of my trip to date. Assad showed considerable interest in the atmosphere in Israel, asking many questions about indications of changes in thinking. I told him that there has been a fundamental change in Israeli attitudes and that the Israeli leadership and public seemed to be aware of the need to come to grips with the key issues and to take a step which would be a serious response to Sadat's decision.

3. In the course of lengthy discussion of their own views, Assad and Khaddam were both critical of the Sadat trip to Israel because in their opinion, it had disrupted the "equilibrium of forces" in the area, had weakened the Arab position, and had thus made Geneva impossible until a "new equilibrium" was found. As Assad described the situation, in the past the Arabs had been united against Israel. Now one of the key Arab countries has "joined the other side."

4. Assad was careful not to attack Sadat personally, although he was highly critical of his actions. Both he and Khaddam stressed that Syria is still committed to the goal of peace, but the situation had changed and the Cairo meeting will serve no purpose. Assad is worried by the prospect of a bilateral Egyptian-Israeli agreement. He doubts

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840072–1395. Secret; Immediate; Exdis Handle as Nodis; Cherokee. Sent immediate for information to Cairo.

² See Document 174.

³ No other record of the meeting has been found.

⁴ Atherton attended the first session of the Cairo Conference, which opened on December 14. His remarks at the opening session are printed in the Department of State *Bulletin*, January 1978, pp. 47–48.

that Begin will really take the hard decisions that Sadat is demanding of him. The skepticism goes far to explain his distress over Sadat's initiative. He believes Sadat has given a great deal with little likelihood of getting much in return. He seems to imply that if the Israelis were to change their positions on territory, the Palestinians, and Jerusalem, then the peace process might open up again. But he is skeptical that this will happen, and thus prefers to sit on the sidelines until the picture clears.

5. Assad was anxious to convey the point that our bilateral relations remain strong and that we should remain in touch. I told him in private of the upcoming Begin trip.

6. You should draw on the above as you think appropriate to brief Dayan on my discussions in Damascus.

7. In addition you should make the following points about my stops in Amman and Beirut:

A. In Amman,⁵ I found Hussein supportive of Sadat's initiatives, convinced that his views and Sadat's are close, particularly on the West Bank and Gaza. He repeated his conviction that there would be no real peace unless the Palestinian question is solved. Hussein says he will continue his efforts to keep Assad from joining the rejectionists.

B. In Beirut,⁶ I conveyed Israel's concern for moving the Palestinians out of rocket range of the border. Sarkis emphasized his strong interest in getting the Palestinians out of South Lebanon so that progress can be made in rebuilding a national consensus. However, they still do not feel they have the capability to enforce a full pullback. I conveyed Israeli statements that they would need to take action if there were serious attacks on Israel from South Lebanon. On the question of reinforcement of Palestinians in the south, they thought the likelihood small that reinforcements are coming from inside Lebanon.

Vance

⁵ See Document 172.

⁶ See Document 173.

176. Telegram From Secretary of State Vance to the Department of State¹

Riyadh, December 14, 1977, 2145Z

Secto 12130. White House for the President and Brzezinski. Department for Warren Christopher only. Cairo for Ambassador and Atherton only. Subj: Meetings With the Saudi Leadership.

1. I had a very full and good day of talks today with the Saudi leadership. I met first with Foreign Minister Saud for approximately one hour and then for approximately forty-five minutes with King Khaled in presence of Crown Prince Fahd and Princes Abdullah, Sultan and Saud. Finished with a meeting of almost two hours with Fahd at which Abdullah, Sultan and Saud were also present.²

2. I gave the Saudis a full rundown on my talks with Sadat, Begin, Hussein and Assad. I underscored our determination to keep up the momentum of negotiations begun by Sadat and Begin and the dedication of all concerned—ourselves, the Egyptians, and the Israelis—to the principle of a comprehensive settlement. I filled Saudis in on Begin's visit to Washington and on his understanding of the need for steps to match those taken by Sadat. They were interested to hear about the changes that Sadat's visit to Israel has brought about in Israeli thinking on the Arabs in general and the Palestinian issue in particular. They emphasized that specific steps are needed soon and made clear that they look to the US to bring the Israelis along. They were obviously gratified and reassured by our pledge to work for a comprehensive settlement. In this regard, Fahd said he thought Assad would join the negotiations if Sadat were successful in getting the Israelis to take the steps he has asked of them.

3. Khaled and Fahd both expressed strong support for our peace efforts. They said they realized that US success is in their own interests. They said our failure would be damaging to them as well as to us and would benefit only the Communists and their friends. Khaled and Fahd repeatedly made the point that Communists are working against US peace efforts. Khaled gave a long explanation of the initially reticent Saudi reaction to Sadat's visit to Jerusalem, indicating that it was mainly due to surprise and to Sadat's having ignored their request,

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840072-1466. Secret; Immediate; Exdis Handle as Nodis; Cherokee. Sent immediate for information to Cairo. Vance visited Riyadh from December 14 to December 15.

² Memoranda of conversation of Vance's meetings with the Saudi leaders are in the Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Trips/Visits File, Box 108, 12/7-17/77 Vance Trip to the Middle East: Meeting Minutes, 12/77.

once Sadat had announced the visit, to delay it. But Fahd said “We support what is happening”, and he, Khaled and Saud all urged us to use our influence with the Israelis to bring about the sort of Israeli reciprocal move that Sadat needs.

4. Saud spoke at length about, and Fahd also stressed, Saudi concern that the Israelis might try to use Sadat’s visit to Jerusalem to legitimize their presence there. He warned that this would be a grave mistake. He said he hoped the US would not take Sadat’s visit to Jerusalem as a reason to move our Embassy there. I assured him that we had no plans to move our Embassy from Tel Aviv. Fahd also mentioned the importance of a just settlement of the Palestinian question, but did not dwell on it and seemed to be raising it more out of duty than anything else.

5. I conveyed your appreciation for Saudi Arabia’s leadership in the move for a freeze on oil prices. Khaled said SAG is vigorously pursuing its efforts for a freeze and thinks they will be successful. Khaled noted that in addition to Iran, Kuwait, Qatar and Abu Dhabi are now with Saudis on this issue, and he said the President of Venezuela had sent him a message saying Venezuela would vote with the majority. Khaled pointed out that the main advocates of a price increase, Libya and Algeria, are also the states that are stirring up trouble. “We don’t want to help them” he said.

6. In our subsequent conversation, Fahd expressed concern that the drop in the value of the dollar would impede Saudi efforts to secure an oil price freeze. Those in OPEC who want a price increase would use the downward trend of the dollar to buttress their arguments. He noted that it was also a matter of concern to the Saudi Government because it affected the value of Saudi holdings in the US. I assured Fahd that the problem of the value of the dollar is a matter of highest priority for the US Government.

7. Fahd also raised the question of Saudi Arabia’s request for US arms, stressing the SAG’s need to show the Saudi people and the military that the country has weapons to defend itself and pointing to the danger from Iraq and South Yemen, both of which receive Soviet arms. Fahd said it was urgent now that the Saudis see something done soon. I said I had already begun talks with key members of Congress regarding the Saudi request for F-15s, that the response was generally good and that we would go forward in January with a proposal to Congress.

8. We also discussed the Horn and Aden. The Saudis clearly would like us to do more for Somalia but did not raise request that we provide arms. Fahd said that, in response to Saudi intercession, the Somalis had assured Kenya that they have no territorial ambitions in Kenya. I stressed the need for Somalia to take advantage of the current situation

to move for a negotiated settlement, and Fahd agreed. They will wish to raise the question of Somalia during your visit as they consider the Horn to be the most pressing problem after that of a Middle East settlement. On Aden, the Saudis share our concern over the possibility that the Soviets will be given facilities there to replace those they lost at Berbera. [*1½ lines not declassified*] Fahd said they would keep the Aden regime under close scrutiny. He asked that we continue to hold up on sending diplomatic representation to Aden and I agreed to do so.

9. To sum up, it is clear that now that their initial shock is past—Saud said people in Saudi Arabia wept in grief at the sight of Sadat in Jerusalem—the Saudis very much want Sadat to succeed and are counting heavily on us to use our influence with the Israelis. They themselves will undoubtedly do everything they can to help Sadat short of publicly taking his side in his polemic with the other Arabs. They see their role as one of working to heal the rift in Arab ranks and quietly bring the Syrians and Palestinians into the peace effort, and this undoubtedly is where they can be most effective. Their remarks on Jerusalem are a reminder of the importance that they attach to that issue and their sensitivity about it. They confirm that while the Saudis may be expected to accept anything agreeable to the other Arabs on most aspects of a settlement, they will want to be consulted closely on Jerusalem and will probably have very specific views about it.

Vance

177. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, December 16, 1977, 9–10 a.m.

SUBJECT

Summary of the President's Meeting with Prime Minister Begin of Israel

PARTICIPANTS

The President
 The Vice President
 Secretary of State Cyrus Vance
 Deputy Secretary of State Warren Christopher
 Dr. Zbigniew Brzezinski, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs
 Samuel Lewis, Ambassador to Israel
 Harold Saunders, Director of Intelligence and Research, Department of State
 David Aaron, Deputy Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs
 William Quandt, National Security Council Staff
 Jody Powell, White House Staff
 Hamilton Jordan, White House Staff
 Stuart Eizenstat, White House Staff
 Robert Lipshutz, White House Staff
 Jerry Schecter, National Security Council Staff

 Prime Minister Menahem Begin
 Ambassador to the United States Simcha Dinitz
 Ambassador to the United Nations Chaim Herzog
 General Ephraim Poran, Military Assistant to Prime Minister Begin
 Attorney General Aharon Barak
 Hanan Bar-On, Minister, Embassy of Israel
 Haim Landau, Member of Israeli Delegation to the United Nations
 Shmuel Katz, Advisor to the Prime Minister
 Yehuda Avner, Advisor to the Prime Minister
 Zvi Efrat, Assistant to the Attorney General

President: I am delighted to welcome you and your colleagues here. We have seen dramatic events recently in the Middle East created by the far-sighted courage that you and President Sadat have shown. An opportunity has been created for a breakthrough to peace in the Middle East and in the world. There is a chance now for the Middle East region to be truly blessed. This places a great responsibility on your shoulders, but I know that no leader could handle that responsibility better. I look at your popularity ratings in Israel with envy. You have a great responsibility and a great capacity for flexibility. Your people will follow you. We want to offer our good offices when the negotiations begin. During

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Subject File, Box 66, Peace Negotiations 1977 Volume I [III]. Top Secret; Sensitive. The meeting took place in the White House Cabinet Room. Begin arrived in the United States on December 14.

the last few years, we have followed a course based on Resolution 242, which envisages an exchange of real peace for what the UN Resolution calls for on withdrawal and secure borders.

President Sadat's action was dramatic and far-reaching. It was almost the ultimate concession that he could make, a guarantee of real peace. He will even agree to withdraw most of his troops from Sinai. The world is now awaiting your response. There is a great interest in what you have to say. I would like to hear your positions. Any agreement, of course, is your responsibility and that of your neighbors. We have a vital interest, but we are not responsible for the negotiations. Our good offices are available. I am thankful that you are in a strong leadership role at this time. I am confident that you can lead your people forward.

Prime Minister Begin: I was here just five months ago. You received me very graciously,² and since then it seems like an eternity has passed in terms of the events that we have seen. I thought it would be advisable to bring you Israel's new proposals, so that you should be the first to study them. I asked Secretary Vance to inquire if I could come, and you were gracious to respond positively. So here we are. I am gratified to have this opportunity. I had very fruitful talks with Secretary Vance in Jerusalem.³

I would first like to describe President Sadat's visit. It was a historic event. It is hard to find any precedent for such a visit taking place when a state of war exists. It is also unprecedented for a leader of a country to be received the way we received Sadat during a state of war. I want to express my gratitude to Ambassador Lewis and to Ambassador Eilts who helped make the visit possible.

The Israeli people took President Sadat to heart. They expressed the Israeli people's longing for peace. President Sadat's visit to Yad Vashem was a serious moment. Only when he saw those pictures with his own eyes could he understand. He said that this was important for him. In Parliament, he made a speech and he met opposition groups and talked freely with them. He had a very interesting meeting with Mrs. Meir. He met with all the opposition groups for frank discussions and then we had private talks which were also characterized by frankness. We put our cards on the table and did not hide anything. We had some differences of opinion, but in our Sunday night private talk we agreed that our differences of opinion would not preclude negotiations. Negotiations always start from differences.

² See Documents 52, 53, and 57.

³ See Document 168.

We made a momentous commitment to one another that there would be no more war and no more bloodshed.⁴ This was a most serious development. We had had a false alarm just a few weeks before his visit, and we wanted to avoid such dangers. Our Defense Ministers will meet in the next week.

Since President Sadat's visit, we have been consulting on ways to make peace. We believe it is a propitious moment and we want peace with all of our neighbors. We regret that Jordan and Syria have not joined the negotiations. Lebanon would like to, and we have no problems with Lebanon. All we need is a signature on the basis of the present border between us. I have invited King Hussein and President Assad to talk with me. We want peace with them. I did not mention to President Sadat a separate agreement or a separate peace treaty. I asked him if he could stay to discuss issues in more depth, but he could not. My suggestion to prolong our meetings had nothing to do with trying to convince him to make a separate peace. But peacemaking can start with one peace treaty and then go on to others. We don't need to sign all of the peace treaties on the same day. We could start with Egypt, although we would prefer to be talking to all of the parties in Geneva. President Sadat understands. We started to talk substance, and I told Sadat that the Sinai Peninsula could not be filled with soldiers. This would increase the danger of war. He said that he understood.

Sadat initially offered a 15 to 20 kilometer demilitarized zone on both sides of the border. But then he said that he understood Israel was a small country, and he would only expect something symbolic on the Israeli side of the line. But the problem was on his side of the line. I explained to him that Katyusha rockets had a range of 21.6 kilometers. The Egyptian army could not be so close to our borders. Sadat then indicated that the Egyptian army would not go beyond the Giddi passes. A week later Foreign Minister Dayan met Sadat's adviser, Mr. Tuhami. We said that we would accept a demilitarized zone beyond the passes. The Egyptian army could stay where it is. (The Prime Minister brings out a large map of Sinai to indicate the details of his proposal.)⁵ Mr. Tuhami did not want to discuss the Golan Heights with us. He said that was not now the main problem. Assad does not agree to negotiate. He has taken himself out of the deliberations. Egyptian forces can stay in Sinai up to the passes. Between the passes and the international border there will be a demilitarized zone.

I am prepared to make the following proposals for a peace agreement with Israel. Israel will ultimately withdraw to the international border. The Sinai will go under Egyptian sovereignty. For a transitional

⁴ See Document 152.

⁵ The map is not attached and has not been found.

period of three to five years, Israeli outposts will remain in a few locations along the line going from Al Arish to Ras Muhammad. The town of Al Arish will be under Egyptian control. This will be for a transitional period. When we used to speak of demilitarization, we hoped that all of Sinai would be demilitarized, but now there are some troops east of the Canal. So for a period of three to five years, Israel wants some outposts on this median line, and wants to keep intelligence collection facilities on two hills, on Jabal Libni, and on one other. This would provide early warning. We also want to keep two airfields, one near Al Arish and one near Elath. We would like to keep these. The second stage of withdrawal would be phased with diplomatic relations. Both withdrawal and diplomatic relations can go in phases. We can begin with consular relations, then go to charge d'affaires, and then when Ambassadors are exchanged, we will withdraw from our last outposts.

We are concerned also with freedom of navigation. We went to war twice over this issue. Elath and Sharm al-Shaikh have been blockaded in the past. When I spoke to Sadat, I told him about our need for free navigation. He said that he was prepared to declare the Tiran Strait an international waterway. This should be included in a peace treaty. That would be a good start. But we have to make sure that it will last, since we are both mortals. We have to think about the future. So we agreed to put in a UN force, an international force, with a provision that it cannot be removed without a unanimous resolution of the UN Security Council. This would let the US cast a veto if necessary. This would avoid the 1967 problem. We would like this arrangement to stay in effect until the year 2000. This would take us beyond one generation. So this agreement could stand for 23 or 24 years, with the exception of the brief transition line that I indicated. We were making a special contribution to the peacemaking effort. Since 1967 all Israeli governments have felt that a strip of land to Sharm al-Shaikh should be under Israeli control. Now we are prepared to give it up.

In the north, we have a problem of the area between Rafah and Al Arish. We are suggesting that Israeli settlements stay even after Egyptian sovereignty has returned. There will be Jews living in Egypt just as there are Arabs living in Israel. We will ask for security to be provided by a UN force. There should also be some small Israeli defense forces at selected points to protect our people. In no way do we think this will infringe on what President Sadat requires. We are offering a great change in our position and there are great risks, but we will take them for peace.

I will now go into our second proposal. The Syrian problem cannot be dealt with now. Egypt does not want us to go into details on the

Syrian front now. If Assad later joins, then we can offer a plan. Now I would like to describe our proposals for Judea, Samaria and Gaza.

President: In my opinion, there is nothing in your proposals that Sadat could not accept. It seems very reasonable. Maybe you could expedite the time schedule. Perhaps I don't understand all of the details yet.

Prime Minister: Thank you. That's very gratifying to hear. I believe the proposals that I am presenting are fair and offer a real solution, a humane solution. From Israel's point of view, they will be very risky. But we are prepared to take them in order to solve the human problem of the Palestinian Arabs and to make peace possible. This will also make it possible for Sadat to take credit for his trip. It will offer a solution to the Palestinian Arab issue. The proposal will offer home rule for the Palestinian Arabs in Judea, Samaria, and Gaza. It has been accepted by the Ministerial Defense Committee but it is still subject to Cabinet approval. I have authority to present it on behalf of the Defense Committee. But the Government has not yet confirmed the proposal. (The Prime Minister then read from the proposal.⁶ After reading 21 articles, the Prime Minister made comments on them.) When we say that the Administration of the Military Government will be abolished and the Administrative Council will take over, we have to explain the legal problem of who will empower the Administrative Council. We may have to have the Military Governor transfer powers to the Administrative Council, but we did not write this down yet, because it is a legal problem.

Concerning security, we may have to add the idea that Israel will remain responsible for public order as well as security. The Administrative Council will be able to deal with all problems of daily life. Israel has to be able to deal with problems in the event that the PLO tries to take over. Israel must have reserved for itself the right to deal with public order.

We think that this is a fair proposal because it did not decide on sovereignty. This has been left out. We do claim sovereignty over Judea, Samaria, and Gaza. We think this is the right of our people but Sadat says that the Arabs also claim sovereignty. So there are two claims and we will leave the issue open. It cannot be solved for now. If we say that we demand sovereignty over the land, the Arabs will not agree. And we won't agree if they claim sovereignty. Secretary Vance has said that it is not clear who has sovereignty in Judea and Samaria. This is an important statement. There are different claims. We should leave this issue for now and go on and take steps that will make peace

⁶ Attached below.

possible. The proposal deals with human beings. There are one million Arabs in the areas under consideration. They have never been able to deal with their own problems. When Jordan was there, sometimes there were more disturbances and even some physical oppression. This was very tragic. In Gaza, Egypt ruled and never gave the residents Egyptian citizenship. The refugees were closed up in slums. Now there are 330 thousand people there. Israel can make a proposal for all million Palestinian Arabs to rule themselves. They can deal with their own problems. We won't interfere with their daily activities. There will not be Israeli rule in Judea, Samaria, and Gaza. There will be local rule with free elections to the Administrative Council. The residents will have free options on citizenship. They can be Israeli or Jordanian citizens. This gives them the freedom of choice. The stateless category in the proposal refers to the Gaza residents. In Judea and Samaria, the Palestinian Arabs are already Jordanian citizens. This will not be changed. In Jerusalem, they can keep their Jordanian citizenship. In Gaza, they are stateless. They lost their British Palestinian citizenship. They have no Egyptian citizenship. They will now all have the right to vote.

The problem of Israeli security is decisive. National security is required to make the lives of our civilians safe. If there are Arab guns on the green line, all of our civilians will be in mortal danger. If there are many guns, as there would be in a Palestinian state, all of our citizens would be in artillery range and all could be killed instantly. There is a smaller problem of security, which we call the Strella problem. The Strella is a hand-held missile which can shoot down any plane. It could be in the hands of any individual. It would cause a horrible national security problem. Israel will have to deal with security. It will therefore have to keep some military camps and some powers over internal security. If Israel did not take these measures, it might solve the Palestinian Arab problem, but it would put its own civilians' lives in jeopardy. This proposal will give the Palestinian Arabs autonomy and give Israel security. It will make peace possible. It will remove the problems of who has claims to sovereignty. Since it is impossible to see exactly how the proposal will work, we agree to review it after five years. This will allow us to see how reality develops. Mr. President, I am very grateful to have the chance to discuss this with you.

President: I would like to raise some questions. The basis for our agreement and our negotiations with Israel and with the Arab leaders about a peace settlement has been UN Resolution 242. I understand that all Israeli governments have endorsed this. The crux of Resolution 242 and of 338 is that Israel will withdraw from occupied territories in return for secure borders and permanent peace. I realize this language has been interpreted differently by Arabs and Israelis. We have taken the Israeli view that the language does not call for total withdrawal to

the 1967 borders. The question has been left open, however, in your presentation. I have three questions: To what degree are you willing to commit Israel to the principle of withdrawal in the West Bank, or Judea and Samaria? Is it possible to withdraw except for minor adjustments? Are you talking about some adjustments in order to establish secure borders? Or are you saying that you will not accept an independent Palestinian state, as we agree? Or are you concerned now or in the future with Arab commitments to peace? I hope that Israel will not ignore that the crux of 242 involves withdrawal in exchange for peace. My second question is how immigration of Palestinian Arabs into the territories who now live elsewhere will be handled? My third question has to do with sovereignty. You have left this open. I assume that you are talking of this as an interim arrangement but how would the question of sovereignty be resolved later?

Prime Minister: On Resolution 242, I have showed you a map of the Sinai Peninsula and what I am prepared to do there. No one can say that Israel is unwilling to withdraw. I have committed Israel to withdraw from the Sinai and this poses serious risks. Sadat might one day be out of office. He could be replaced by someone else. We remember what happened in 1967 with the remilitarization of Sinai. Egypt can reach Israel's southern border very quickly. War broke out quickly in 1967. We will retain some geographic positions for three years. But the Egyptian army will still be in the eastern part of Sinai. They have the second and third army there. But I have committed Israel to the deepest possible withdrawal. This poses risks for the future but I am prepared to do it for peace. This is a principle that is completely accepted by Israel.

On the question of the Palestinians and Judea and Samaria, this raises the question of the green line. Resolution 242 does not oblige Israel to total withdrawal. It simply talks about territories occupied in recent conflicts, not the territories and not all territories. It envisaged the establishment of secure boundaries. Israel would lose all of its security if it withdrew to the earlier border. This is not just a matter of a hostile army being on the West Bank. There were always the problems of incursions. For nineteen years, this went on. The line itself was indefensible. Such a line cannot be defended. Israeli towns such as Jerusalem, Safad, Afula, and so forth are all near the line and we would not be able to stop incursions. We have had a positive experience since Israel has been on the Jordan River. There has only been one incursion in the last two years. For us it is a question of life, our men, our women, and our children. We will leave the question of sovereignty open, undecided. But let us have security. If we withdraw to the 1967 lines, there will be permanent bloodshed. The PLO exists. There is no security in having an arrangement that will ensure permanent bloodshed and will cause

Israel mortal danger. We propose a territorial solution for Sinai. But we can't have one in the East. We'll deal with Assad later. We will deal fairly with our neighbors. Israel must have security for life. Our proposal is not in contradiction with Resolution 242. The 1967 line did not constitute a secure border.

Dr. Brzezinski: Do I understand you to be saying that your security border could be on the Jordan River, but your territorial sovereign claim would extend only to the 1967 line, with this Administrative Council arrangement ruling over the area where sovereignty is unclear?

Prime Minister: That is right. There will be autonomous rule for the local population.

Dr. Brzezinski: So the sovereignty in that area would be undefined. Israeli sovereignty would only go to the 1967 line.

Prime Minister: Israeli state sovereignty will go to the 1967 line.

Dr. Brzezinski: Who will give the authority to the Administrative Council?

Prime Minister: This is a legal problem.

Dr. Brzezinski: But it is also a political problem.

Prime Minister: It is more of a legal problem.

Dr. Brzezinski: If the authority flows from the Military Governor, this would be different than if the authority were to stem from the UN or from an international agreement.

Prime Minister: I agree and this will have to be decided.

Dr. Brzezinski: Who would be able to expropriate land?

Prime Minister: We don't want to expropriate land, but if it will happen, this Council would do it, subject to the concept of public order.

President: Who would control immigration?

Prime Minister: This Council. Going back to Resolution 242, there is no contradiction. On immigration, this is a problem that the Administrative Council could deal with, but only reasonable numbers of new immigrants could be accepted. We could only accept new immigrants up to the point where our own security would not be affected.

Secretary Vance: So this would be dealt with by the Administrative Council, subject to Israel's view on possible security problems. The Council would not have total authority.

Prime Minister Begin: That is right.

Attorney General Barak: There is no department for immigration.

Prime Minister: Maybe this will not be a real problem. Some Palestinian Arabs will prefer to go to Kuwait. If there is such a problem, we will deal with it in a humane way. Families will be able to unite and so forth.

Attorney General Barak: On the question of sovereignty, the legal norm would be for the Military Governor to delegate authority to the Council in order for it to act. If authority came from the Israeli state, this would imply that we had claimed sovereignty there.

Secretary Vance: Does the Military Governor reserve the right to revoke the powers that he has delegated?

Attorney General Barak: In principle, yes.

Dr. Brzezinski: Then there is Israeli sovereignty.

Secretary Vance: At least, de facto.

Attorney General Barak: But the Military Governor is not the sovereign authority.

Secretary Vance: We will have to think about that.

Prime Minister: This is a unique proposal to deal with a unique situation. We are dealing with problems for which there is no precedent. This is *sui generis*.

President: There is another concern that I have not described. This is how the proposal would be described in public. If it were interpreted as ignoring withdrawal and failing to deal with the Palestinian question in all its aspects, this could be a blow to Sadat and it might even bring him down or lead him to resign. He told the Knesset his position, and he has committed himself to this position with other Arab leaders. I hope you will consider as you approach your meeting with Sadat that any public statement that you make should be in terms that are acceptable to him.

Prime Minister: My intention in bringing this to you, and then taking it to Sadat is that I would like to be able to say to Sadat that you see this as a fair basis for negotiations. This is really a step forward. If he agrees to no Palestinian state, and if the US agrees, and if Great Britain agrees, as Mr. Owen said, this can be the only solution. There is no such thing as a demilitarized state. This proposal can be the basis of good talks with Sadat. We will meet in Ismailia in the open, not in private. I want to help him, but I cannot forego the security of my people for anything. I am sorry there were some leaks about this proposal but that happens anywhere.

Dr. Brzezinski: Never here!

Prime Minister: Thank you for bringing me back to reality?

President: What do you mean by demilitarization?

Prime Minister: There should be no Arab forces.

President: What about Israeli forces?

Prime Minister: Yes, they should be there in closed camps. Otherwise, Israel will be open to attacks.

President: Can they be confined to the Jordan Valley?

Prime Minister: We'll see. This is a question for military experts, but I think the hills are more important than the river. If the mountains are under the control of the PLO, we must be on the mountains to defend our people. The military can be in a number of camps. They won't mix with civilians. Otherwise, Israel will be defenseless.

Secretary Vance: How do you see the question of your sovereignty in this area?

Prime Minister: Israel has claims. They are not being put into effect. The other side also has claims. So we will leave this unresolved. We will deal with human beings. We will solve problems. This is not a proposal just for five years, but we will review everything in five years, including perhaps sovereignty, but not necessarily. It could be a shorter or longer period.

Dr. Brzezinski: You seem to be talking about this proposal as part of a process to establish peace. From the Arab point of view, it is more palatable if you talk about it as a process and if you leave it less defined. Otherwise, it may be seen as a modified Basutoland.⁷ If it is part of a process, even if it is vague in outcome, then they can discuss it.

Prime Minister: I agree.

President: How long will you be here? Can we get together again?

Prime Minister: After Shabat.

President: Can we meet tomorrow at 7 p.m.?

Prime Minister: Yes. Let me give copies of the paper to you and to Secretary Vance.

Dr. Brzezinski: Why do you mention Bethlehem as the seat for the Legislative Council? Why not East Jerusalem?

Prime Minister: It cannot be East Jerusalem, because Jerusalem is the capital of Israel. And it cannot be Nablus either. Bethlehem is the best. There cannot be two capitals in Jerusalem. They should have their own proper capital. Bethlehem is the center of communications. Maybe it could be Ramallah, but we must exclude Nablus.

⁷ Basutoland was under the control of Cape Colony, which was originally established by the Dutch East India Company in 1652. The Cape Colony's inability to control Basutoland led the British to make it a Crown colony in 1884. The reference in this context is presumably to the difficulties of controlling an area with a large population by a small minority of outsiders.

Attachment

Proposal⁸

December 15, 1977

Proposal Subject to the Confirmation of the Government of Israel

**HOME RULE, FOR PALESTINIAN ARABS, RESIDENTS
OF JUDEA, SAMARIA AND THE GAZA DISTRICT**

1. The administration of the Military Government in Judea, Samaria and the Gaza district will be abolished.
2. In Judea, Samaria and the Gaza district administrative autonomy of the residents, by and for them, will be established.
3. The residents of Judea, Samaria and the Gaza district will elect an Administrative Council composed of eleven members.
4. Any resident, 18 years old and above, without distinction of citizenship, or if stateless, is entitled to vote in the election to the Administrative Council.
5. Any resident whose name is included in the list of the candidates for the Administrative Council and who, on the day the list is submitted, is 25 years old or above, is entitled to be elected to the Council.
6. The Administrative Council will be elected by general, direct, personal, equal and secret ballot.
7. The period of office of the Administrative Council will be four years from the day of its election.
8. The Administrative Council will sit in Bethlehem.
9. All the administrative affairs of the areas of Judea, Samaria and the Gaza district, will be under the direction and within the competence of the Administrative Council.
10. The Administrative Council will operate the following Departments:
 - a. The Department of Education;
 - b. The Department of Religious Affairs;
 - c. The Department of Finance;
 - d. The Department of Transportation;
 - e. The Department for Construction and Housing;
 - f. The Department of Industry, Commerce and Tourism;
 - g. The Department of Agriculture;

⁸ Top Secret; Sensitive.

- h. The Department of Health;
- i. The Department for Labor and Social Welfare;
- j. The Department of Rehabilitation of Refugees;
- k. The Department for the Administration of Justice and the Supervision of the Local Police Forces;

and promulgate regulations relating to the operation of these Departments.

11. Security in the areas of Judea, Samaria and the Gaza district will be the responsibility of the Israeli authorities.

12. The Administrative Council will elect its own chairman.

13. The first session of the Administrative Council will be convened 30 days after the publication of the election results.

14. Residents of Judea, Samaria and the Gaza district, without distinction of citizenship, or if stateless, will be granted free choice (option) of either Israeli or Jordanian citizenship.

15. A resident of the areas of Judea, Samaria and the Gaza district who requests Israeli citizenship will be granted such citizenship in accordance with the citizenship law of the State.

16. Residents of Judea, Samaria and the Gaza district who, in accordance with the right of free option, choose Israeli citizenship, will be entitled to vote for, and be elected to, the Knesset in accordance with the election law.

17. Residents of Judea, Samaria and the Gaza district who are citizens of Jordan or who, in accordance with the right of free option will become citizens of Jordan, will elect and be eligible for election to the Parliament of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan in accordance with the election law of that country.

18. Questions “arising from the vote” to the Jordanian Parliament by residents of Judea, Samaria and the Gaza district will be clarified in negotiations between Israel and Jordan.

19. Residents of Israel will be entitled to acquire land and settle in the areas of Judea, Samaria and the Gaza district. Arabs, residents of Judea, Samaria and the Gaza district will be entitled to acquire land and settle in Israel.

20. Residents of Israel and residents of Judea, Samaria and the Gaza district will be assured freedom of movement and freedom of economic activity in Israel, Judea, Samaria and the Gaza district.

21. These principles may be subject to review after a five-year period.

178. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, December 17, 1977, 7:05–8:35 p.m.

SUBJECT

Summary of the President's Meeting with Prime Minister Begin of Israel

PARTICIPANTS

The President
 The Vice President
 Secretary of State Cyrus Vance
 Dr. Zbigniew Brzezinski, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs
 Samuel Lewis, Ambassador to Israel
 William Quandt, National Security Council Staff
 Hamilton Jordan, White House Staff
 Jody Powell, White House Staff
 Robert Lipshutz, White House Staff

Prime Minister Menahem Begin
 Ambassador to the United States Simcha Dinitz
 Attorney General Aharon Barak
 Haim Landau, Member of Israeli Delegation to the United Nations
 Shmuel Katz, Advisor to the Prime Minister
 Yehuda Avner, Advisor to the Prime Minister

President: The public reaction to your visit has been very good. I talked to President Sadat yesterday² and told him of your constructive actions. There is momentum now for peace, but if it were to falter it could be damaging to Sadat. He looks forward to seeing you next week. He is pleased with your actions for a peaceful settlement. I did not go into specifics with him. Secretary Vance and Dr. Brzezinski have had a chance to talk with you today.³ They have told me of your helpful attitude in the search for peace.

I am concerned that the public discussion of your plans for a settlement of the West Bank issue not be harmful to Sadat. I think the Sinai proposal will be well received.⁴ There may be a few minor matters of concern still to be solved. I would like to raise some questions tonight

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Subject File, Box 66, Peace Negotiations 1977 Volume I [III]. Top Secret; Sensitive. The meeting took place in the White House Cabinet Room.

² According to the President's Daily Diary, Carter spoke with Sadat from 10:49 to 10:53 a.m. (Carter Library, Presidential Materials, President's Daily Diary) No memorandum of conversation has been found.

³ No memoranda of conversation of meetings between Begin and Vance or Begin and Brzezinski have been found. Brzezinski described his meeting with Begin on the afternoon of December 17 at Blair House in *Power and Principle*, pp. 118–119.

⁴ A reference to the Israeli proposals explained in Document 177.

to clarify your proposals. Perhaps you would like to expand on some of your ideas first.

Prime Minister: Congratulations to you on the marriage of your nephew. We say Mazel Tov. I appreciate your view on our proposals. I don't want to try to commit you to them, but we have a mutual interest in peace. We would like you to approve our proposals as a fair basis for negotiations. That would be good for public opinion here, in Israel, and in Egypt. Yesterday Ambassador Dinitz and I met with four Senators, Senator Jackson, Senator Javits, Senator Stone, and Senator Case. Two are Democrats and two are Republicans. They gave me a vow of secrecy. They will keep their word and they have not yet said anything about the content of my proposals. I can tell you, Mr. President, that you will have the support of the Senate for these proposals. They were received very enthusiastically. Senator Jackson used the most positive terms in describing them. I also saw Rabbi Schindler today. He is on the dovish side from our point of view. He was very enthusiastic. He will make a statement. I think the Jewish community in the United States will support my proposals. Senator Jackson is sure that the American people will support these proposals. It is very important that our proposals be termed a fair basis for negotiations.

Now I would like to add some suggestions. I had contact with my Foreign Minister last night and I would like to make two proposals on his behalf. I will give Mr. Dayan credit for these proposals, since we say that he who gives credit brings redemption.

This first proposal has to do with legislation. He suggests formation of a special committee which would have representatives of the Israeli government, the Jordanian government, and the elected Administrative Council. That committee will inspect all of the laws that are now in force and will decide on which laws to keep in effect and which to discard. We think this is a good idea. It would depend on negotiations with Jordan, but we are suggesting that a committee of all three parties review laws and regulations and develop new legislation.

The second suggestion concerns the Arab refugees in Lebanon and elsewhere. We don't think that those elsewhere, such as in Jordan, will want to come into the West Bank and Gaza, but those in Lebanon might. In reasonable numbers, we would accept. Dayan has suggested that a committee be formed consisting again of the two governments, Israel and Jordan, and the Administrative Council to determine criteria for refugees coming into the area. The Foreign Minister suggests, if it is agreeable, that he will be the Israeli representative on the two committees. On the legislative committee, I would propose to add the Attorney General. This could be a very serious commission and we will be able to rely upon it.

I have a third suggestion of my own to make. Jerusalem has not been mentioned, but we do not want to overlook the Muslim, Christian, and Jewish interests in the city. My idea, which will require further consideration, is to have international religious councils take care of the holy shrines. The Muslim shrines should have a committee consisting of Jordan, Egypt, Syria, and Lebanon, along with Saudi Arabia, Iran, and Morocco. This committee would take care of Muslim shrines, and they would have full autonomy and could guarantee free access to those shrines. They can also take care of financial problems for the upkeep of the shrines. The Muslim world will be well represented, and even Iran, which is not an Arab country, could be involved. Morocco is now a very friendly country. For the Christian holy shrines, the Vatican, and other religious authorities, including representatives of the Protestants, should be on a committee. Even the Baptists could be included!

President: I am waiting for you to name the Chairman!

Prime Minister: We would let them control the Christian shrines. For the Jews, our own Rabbis, along with sages from the Diaspora, would look after the shrines. This is my idea. If you ask the Secretary of State to find out if this would be acceptable to the Muslim countries, I think it would create good will. Let them take care of the shrines. This is an ecumenical idea.

President: Would this be patterned after the Vatican?

Prime Minister: It is not easy for me to say. If the Christians agree ... (Prime Minister misunderstands the President's question.)

President: I am asking whether the holy places would be under independent authority.

Prime Minister: We will have to consider. The holy shrines should have autonomy, but we will have to consider further. I think this is a constructive proposal.

Secretary Vance: Are you talking of three different groups? One group would consist of the Arab confrontation states and three other Muslim countries for the Muslim shrines. A second group would consist of the Vatican and representatives of other Christian denominations for the Christian shrines. And a Jewish group for the Jewish shrines. Would these all be separate?

Prime Minister: Right. They would be separate. Maybe they would have liaison officers to be in touch with one another. Why not?

I have another suggestion. If it is agreed upon by all, I suggest that the Administrative Council appoint two representatives to deal with each of the adjoining governments, Israel and Jordan. We would be ready to invite representatives of the Administrative Council to sessions of our Cabinet to discuss issues of common concern. That way

they could hear our reaction. It should be the same on the other side. This would create an atmosphere of cooperation, an exchange of views. We would have free discussions. We will have liaison officers and the Administrative Council will have representatives to the governments to its east and west.

To sum up, I have thought a great deal during the day. There are great risks in what we are promising. We cannot rely completely on the promises that Sadat made concerning no more war. I am not suspicious of him.

In 1973, he did surprise us, but that was a military deception. Now he is talking to us, but he is mortal and we have to think of the future. The Sinai Peninsula will be partly demilitarized, but the second and third Egyptian armies will be on the east side of the Canal. They can move to Ashkelon within hours and there will be no Israeli army there to stop them. This will pose great risks. We don't know who Sadat's successor will be. I want to stress that Israel is taking serious risks in the future. We want peace, and we will do all that is humanly possible. There are even greater risks on the West Bank. The West Bank is not a proper term, since it refers to all of the territory between the river and the sea. This used to be called Cisjordan, in contrast to Transjordan. But now this mistake is commonly accepted of using the term "West Bank," but we prefer to say Judea and Samaria.

If we should withdraw from these areas, the PLO would take over and we would be in mortal danger. We have no doubt about that. Qadhafi has said that a Palestinian state would simply be a stage before reaching the sea. It would also be a danger to Jordan. They have not forgotten Black September.⁵ There would be a danger to Egypt also. When I told this to President Sadat, he said "Quite right." It would become a Soviet base. It would be just two hours from Odessa by plane. This would be an intolerable risk. We must obviously have our encampments there. There would be otherwise a perilous danger for Israel, Jordan, Egypt, and the whole free world. British Foreign Secretary Owen said that the West Bank would obviously have to be demilitarized, and therefore it could not be a state. It is a contradiction in terms to talk of demilitarization and a state.

President: Would demilitarization, in Mr. Owen's view, exclude Israeli troops also?

Prime Minister: Yes, but there is a paradox; namely, that only Israel can prevent the remilitarization of the West Bank, so we must uphold law and order there. This is the uniqueness of our proposal. It is im-

⁵ A reference to the Jordanian Crisis that began in September 1970. See *Foreign Relations*, 1969–1976, vol. XXIV, Middle East Region and Arabian Peninsula, 1969–1972; Jordan, September 1970.

bued with good will. We are offering these people a historic change, and Sadat can take credit for this. The Palestinian Arabs for centuries have been under the Turks, then under the British, then under the Jordanians, who were very oppressive, and now for eleven years they have been under the military government of Israel. The latest rule has been the most benevolent, but it is still military government. Now that part of the great Arab people, the Palestinian Arabs, will rule themselves. Autonomy means self-rule. They will have that in all spheres. Only security will be left to us. There will be autonomy and self-rule for the Palestinian Arabs, and the Palestinian Jews will have security. I think it is fair.

President: Let me respond. I would like to clarify some points. We will continue our role as a mediator. We will respond to any requests from you and President Sadat to be helpful in the search for peace. We will also keep our own communications open with those who are not represented in Cairo.

Concerning your proposals for the area west of the Jordan, I am concerned that if they are interpreted negatively, that could have a devastating effect on Sadat and on world opinion. If they gain a positive interpretation, that could have a positive effect. There are some codewords that cause me concern. For example, I understood yesterday and tonight that there would be withdrawal of Israeli forces to outposts and encampments to maintain security. For the Arabs, including Sadat, the word “withdrawal” is very important. If you speak of withdrawal, after your negotiations with Jordan, with Egypt, and with the Palestinian Arabs, if you say you will withdraw to those outposts which are necessary for Israeli security, that would be a very positive way to express your proposal. It could be very helpful.

Concerning your proposal on self-rule, on autonomy for the region, it also could be seen as very positive. The determination of whether this appears as an empty proposal, or one full of meaning will depend on how much autonomy and self-rule is being offered. This needs to be defined. If you have a military governor, and if the population is allowed self-rule just as long as it behaves, but the military governor can restore Israeli control whenever he wants, then this has no meaning. We believe that how these proposals are cast, and how your well-constructed ideas are interpreted, will be crucial.

You said something very significant to Dr. Brzezinski yesterday. You said that Israeli sovereignty would be limited by the 1967 borders. That could be a very constructive statement. It could bring you approbation and could help create a proper attitude. If that were not your position, it could raise grave questions. You have said that sovereignty in the other areas is not yet fully defined, and that in your talks with Jordan, Egypt, and the Palestinian Arabs, you would have to work out

a definition of that sovereignty. This would be done on a time scale commensurate with your development of a sense of security and trust in the Arabs. But if it takes too long, there could be a negative reaction. If you are dedicated to move forward quickly, that would be very good.

Dr. Brzezinski has suggested the idea of UN forces in the area west of the Jordan and he has told me of your negative reply. I hope that the question would be kept open. I understand why you are negative, but I hope you will not reject the idea completely. There might just be token forces, but it could be crucial when you talk to Sadat. It might make the difference between an agreement with Sadat, and I hope you will keep an open mind until you see him and get his reaction.

It is clear that military questions can be resolved more easily than political ones. It will be difficult for Sadat to withstand criticisms. He has said that he will be speaking for all of the Arabs. If there is a narrow or distorted definition of your proposals for Egyptian sovereignty in Sinai and home rule for the West Bank, this could be an embarrassment for Sadat. Self-rule could perhaps be seen as equivalent to the offer of sovereignty in Sinai, but there should be no sharp difference between the two. That would be hard for Sadat to accept.

I have been gratified by your flexibility. Before your arrival I was somewhat concerned, but yesterday you said that you are suggesting steps toward a final resolution of the questions and that sovereignty would be decided after negotiations had concluded.

I would like to ask some other questions. How would power devolve to the Administrative Council? This will have momentous importance in the acceptance or rejection of the proposal. If it comes from you and Jordan together, that would give the impression that it could not easily be revoked, that it could not easily be withdrawn. It would be more significant than if power came simply from the Israeli military governor who could take it back when he sees it is justified, even if others did not feel it was justified. Whether the devolution of power were complete or only partial would also be an important question. If you reserve the right of Israel to provide security, but if the Administrative Council has all other powers, that could be quite substantial. They could have the power to expropriate land and to determine any restrictions on guidelines for immigration. That would give them quite substantial authority and would give substance to your proposals. The Arab role in Jerusalem is also important, especially to Saudi Arabia, to Jordan, and to Syria. Maybe it is a bit less important to Egypt. That is my impression. But it is important how this is handled. The Arabs do not want Israeli government approval for them to be able to go to their holy places. They do not want to consider their holy places in Israeli territory. They want to be able to go to them as a matter of their right. This is why I raised the question of whether you have in mind a parallel

to the Vatican, which would offer some autonomy to the territories that would be defined as holy places.

My other question has to do with the role of Jordan. We will use all of our influence to get Jordan involved in the questions concerning the Administrative Council. Am I right that the residents of Judea, Samaria and Gaza will be able to seek office in the Knesset?

Prime Minister: If they opt for Israeli citizenship.

President: Would there be any special status for Israeli settlements? If Israelis can go into the territories without restraint, can citizens of Jordan and other Arab countries go into the area and live without constraint also?

President Sadat is in a very vulnerable position and much will depend on how he can point to these proposals. It is important to place the emphasis on the positive aspects. If the interpretation becomes negative, this could be a fatal disappointment for Sadat. I appreciated your comment that you would wait to talk to Sadat before going public with your plan. It is important to get his positive, and possibly negative, reactions. We don't want to see him put on the defensive. I am not trying to be a spokesman for him. I'll do all that I possibly can to encourage acceptance by Sadat, but he is looking to us for help not to embarrass him. You have done an excellent job of providing proposals to help him, but negative interpretation of the details could hurt.

The proposals are a serious and good step forward. I agree with your appreciation of Sadat as a sincere man who wants peace. If you and Sadat can get agreement, Hussein will want to join the discussions, but Assad will only join much later. The PLO has been absolutely negative, and I see no role for them to play in the present peace negotiations.

Secretary Vance: Another element that will be important to Sadat is contained in your Article 21,⁶ the principle of review after five years. This will be important to him and his considerations. The principle now says that the situation "may be" reviewed. Would it be possible for you to say "will be" reviewed?

Prime Minister: OK. We can say "should be," "will be," whatever. I appreciate your remarks. After my reply, I'll ask the Attorney General to state his views on legal issues. The Attorney General was right and was sincere when he talked about the devolution of authority and the possibility of revoking that authority. Yes, the Military Governor can give the authority and can theoretically take it away. We looked at the source of authority and saw no alternative to the Military Governor. If he does not give the authority, there would be a legal vacuum. When

⁶ See the Attachment to Document 177.

you asked about revoking authority, he gave the proper legal reply that the authority could be revoked, but it has never occurred to us to revoke authority once it is given. This is a sincere proposal, one with many risks. We only want to be able to furnish security to our people. We will not interfere with their lives. We don't intend to give authority and then to revoke it. If there are some disturbances, this will not be a reason to revoke authority. Mr. President, I can say that we speak candidly. I will tell you that we do not intend to revoke those powers once they are given to the Administrative Council. The first step is for the Military Governor to give power, and then the people will rule themselves in complete autonomy. But legally, the source of authority also is the source for revoking that authority, but we do not intend to revoke it. If we can find another way, we will keep on thinking. Perhaps there is another way. We will consider the idea of a common devolution of authority, but I must consult with my Cabinet. We will consider all possibilities.

Concerning the UN force, Dr. Brzezinski did raise this question. We cannot accept this. Dr. Brzezinski asked about the agreement on Sinai and why the same could not be done for the West Bank. There is a decisive difference. We do not want the UN to defend Israel. At Sharm al-Shaikh, we have given up the old decision of all previous cabinets that we would need to keep a strip of land for Sharm al-Shaikh. We intended to keep sovereignty there. It would have been legal and legitimate. It would not have been wrong. Territorial changes can take place after wars. This happened in World War I, World War II, and the Far East and elsewhere. I have told the Rumanians about this and they can understand it. This is legitimate and we could have claimed territory, but we gave it up. We, a so-called hard-line government, gave it up. You can ask my wife, I am not a hard-liner, I am soft! But this government gave up the position held by three previous governments. Why? It is a propitious moment for peace and President Sadat told me that he cannot transfer sovereignty to Israel over any part of the Sinai. I believe him. I did it for the sake of peace. But we did need protection for freedom of navigation. So we developed a proposal for a Security Council decision, which would allow U.S. veto before removing any forces. We can achieve freedom of navigation by our compromise on a UN force. But in Judea and Samaria, that is a different story. This would mean that we are a protected state by foreign forces. We don't need them and we don't want them. There is a famous story from the Middle Ages about protected Jews. In German they are called *Schutzjuden*. They paid money to be protected. In the 1930s, I saw a street in Bratslava where the Jews lived right next to the King's palace so that they could get protection from him.

We do not want to be protected Jews. We are disciples of Jabotinsky.⁷ We don't want to be a Schutzjuden-Staat. We want to sustain our independence and to end the persecution of Jews. People used to pity Jews. We want to live as a normal nation, and we will live in danger, like all countries, but we will not place ourselves in mortal danger. If UN forces come to Bethlehem, Jerusalem is then being protected by UN forces. A Jewish state should be an independent state. No one else should protect us. We now have Polish troops in Sinai, and we do not even have diplomatic relations with Poland. We cannot have the UN on the threshold of our homes. In the desert, it is OK, but not in Judea or Samaria.

I'll consider using the phrase "a withdrawal of Israeli forces to cantonments," but I will need to consult. We can talk of withdrawal into encampments. We want to make Sadat's life easy if possible. We owe him a debt, but not too much. I want to address his Parliament, but if he denies me this right, I'll say that there was no mutual gesture. He should give me hospitality, as I gave him. I cannot wound our people in order to help Sadat. I'll consider our proposals to make our ideas acceptable to him and the Arabs. The idea of self-rule came from his visit. He can take credit for this. For the first time in history, the Palestinian Arabs will have self-rule.

President: There are questions of semantics. Would it be accurate to say that the Military Government will be ended in the West Bank?

Prime Minister: It will be abolished. That is a good way to say it.

Secretary Vance: I have thought about the devolution of authority. I would suggest another way. You would not have to give up anything, but if you could do this by agreement between Israel and Jordan, if you could both agree on arrangements for self-rule, and then set up the Administrative Council, each reserving to itself all claims of sovereignty. This might be better. Each of you would reserve your legal rights.

Prime Minister: This is a good suggestion. I will consider it.

Attorney General Barak: The model that I have tried to explain had authority devolving from a Military Governor. We did this to try to find a way to avoid the question of sovereignty. If it can be done in other ways, we will pursue them. I thought of a possibility of a peace agreement between Israel and Jordan, with the delegation of authority coming from the peace treaty. Nothing would prejudice the question of sovereignty.

Secretary Vance: Exactly.

⁷ Ze'ev Jabotinsky was a founder and leader of the Revisionist Zionist movement, which emphasized Jewish nationalism in Palestine. He also was a founder and leader of the Irgun, an underground Jewish military organization in Palestine.

Attorney General Barak: Israel will say that Israel gave authority to the agreement and Jordan will say that it also did. This would be another way. This would require agreement with Jordan.

Dr. Brzezinski: Short of full peace treaties, which might take a long time to negotiate, you could abolish the military government and then have a declaration by Israel and Jordan establishing a new authority over areas of uncertain sovereignty.

Prime Minister: We could have a declaration of peace before a peace treaty was signed. We will consider this. It is a profound legal problem.

President: We always go backward when lawyers get started! We have a few fine exceptions here!

I would like to talk about the issue of immigration. You haven't said if Jews would have the right to move into the area. I know the Arabs are eager to have the right to let Arab refugees or Palestinian Arabs move in. I can see that there would be some limit on numbers, the area can only support so many, and perhaps the level could be negotiated.

Prime Minister: I think that is right.

Attorney General Barak: From the legal point of view, there is a difference between Israelis going into the territories, and Arabs coming from Jordan into the territories. These are two different matters. From our sovereignty point of view, Israelis have the right to go to the territories. It is inconceivable that we can give the same right to the others.

Secretary Vance: I can see it would be a big problem if you were talking about others than Jordan.

Prime Minister: In practice, Jordan tends to resettle refugees in the East Bank.

President: What are the problems of Jordanians moving into the territories?

Prime Minister: We have open bridges now.⁸ We will continue to allow people in through open bridges. There are now many visits. Israel takes some risks, but it is working well. In a settlement, a reasonable number can be accepted. But we cannot have a situation of an Arab majority. The refugees should be resettled, and we will help those under our jurisdiction, including those in Judea, Samaria and Gaza. We will solve this problem. If there is an Administrative Council, we will help them through the Department of Refugees. In the Arab countries, the refugees should be resettled. There is no other way. That's how it is done everywhere else in the world.

⁸ See footnote 8, Document 7.

President: What about Palestinian Arabs in Egypt who might want to move into the Gaza area? I hope you can keep an open mind on this. There should be no prohibition. This should not be under your complete control.

Secretary Vance: It will be easier to solve this if there is a broader discussion of the refugee problem, including the international community. You could limit numbers on those who would want to go back. The Prime Minister suggested establishing a joint committee to deal with this.

Dr. Brzezinski: Another way would be to have a plan based on the absorptive capacity of the West Bank for a five-year period, and then it could be reviewed. You would not have to deal with the broader issue and could base the number on the absorptive capacity during the five-year period. This would avoid the moral and political issues.

Prime Minister: The British used the word “absorptive capacity” to keep Jews out of Palestine.

Dr. Brzezinski: That shows the importance of words.

President: When I saw Foreign Minister Dayan in New York, he suggested a multi-national group to deal with refugees.⁹

Prime Minister: Arab and Jewish refugees.

President: There would be other nations involved.

Prime Minister: We want to solve this problem, and with good will this can be solved in a few years.

Secretary Vance: If it is not solved, it will remain a festering problem, and will provide a breeding place for the PLO.

President: Other than security, are there any other powers that will be withheld?

Attorney General Barak: I explained the concept of public order. It is a broader concept than security. There may be things in the public order idea that go beyond security. If the Administrative Council decides to impose a customs tax between Israel and the territories . . .

President: Couldn't that be resolved in the peace treaty with Jordan?

Attorney General Barak: It could be covered elsewhere, and you would not need then the concept of public order, but we should retain authority for the questions that are not specifically worked out in case . . .

Prime Minister: In case of emergencies.

President: Couldn't you just prohibit customs?

⁹ See Document 124.

Attorney General Barak: We need a general concept to cover issues that we might not think about in the agreement.

Secretary Vance: We have potential problems, because the public order concept can cut across the security concept. If the police cannot handle the problem, then the security forces might move in.

Prime Minister: As I said to Dr. Brzezinski, we should give it a chance. If there is good will and cooperation, it will create favorable conditions. This is a practical proposal.

President: Do you see any special status of the Israeli settlements?

Prime Minister: No special status. We stand by our right. I have told you about Shiloh and Bethel. There are Arabs in Israel, and there are Jews in the territories. There is no problem. Of course, there are settlements, but we have a principle of symmetric justice. The residents of Israel can buy land in Judea, Samaria, and Gaza, and Arabs can get land in Israel. There will be reciprocity. They can come to Tel Aviv and buy land and build homes.

President: How long are you here in the United States?

Prime Minister: Until Monday night.¹⁰ I will be in Washington tomorrow, then I go to New York. On Tuesday I will see Callaghan. I will give him full information. I have been invited by Giscard to go to Paris. He asked me to come on Wednesday. But I want to see my Cabinet and get approval from them on Wednesday and then I want to go on Thursday to see Sadat, or maybe later, the next Sunday. Perhaps Giscard can send an emissary to London, but I would consider a stop in Paris. If I get approval by the Cabinet, then I will go to see Sadat.

President: I am concerned about your health.

Prime Minister: I have a doctor with me. He asks me every day how I feel, and I tell him that I feel well.

President: Do you do what your doctor tells you?

Prime Minister: Yes, but my wife is the real doctor. I have a feeling of mission. I will be all right. I suggest that if we make an agreement with Sadat, you might invite us both to the White House and we will sign our peace treaty here. We want a comprehensive agreement. It will be quite an event. A Christian President, a Jewish Prime Minister, and a Muslim leader, all working together for peace.

President: You can depend on it.

Vice President: I have one point. It is very important that the American people see the United States and Israel in harmony in this effort. Neither you nor the President can talk of the plan in detail. I am anxious that how we respond will not be seen as cool. It will be helpful

¹⁰ December 19.

if you could say in public that the purpose of your visit was not to negotiate or reach agreement on your plan. The point was to have a discussion of the plan between friends. The American people and the world should not think that the object was to reach agreement on the plan. Otherwise, some reporters will say that we were cool to it.

Prime Minister: I agree. The Secretary of State advised me on this. I have not talked about a plan. I have said that I have brought proposals about the peacemaking effort. I will have the opportunity to say this tomorrow on "Face The Nation."

Dr. Brzezinski: You will see Sadat soon and it might be better not to confront him with a blueprint. It might be better to discuss your ideas as general principles, and then out of this you might develop a joint document. If you give him your document . . .

Prime Minister: You suggest that I not give him the proposals? But some of the ideas about the age of voting are very good, and it shows how serious we are. I will explain my ideas, of course . . .

Dr. Brzezinski: You might mention them orally, and then later come up with a joint declaration.

President: We found that when we met with Foreign Minister Dayan we reconfirmed our commitments and we worked out some ideas. These were then viewed as a US-Israeli plan, and the fact that it was publicly identified as such made the Arabs feel reluctant to accept it even when they agreed with most of it. If you and Sadat could take your proposals, but let them come out as a joint statement, it might produce a better effect. If the public feels that this is your proposal, and if Sadat cannot accept part of it, he might be discouraged.

Prime Minister: We can negotiate these issues. It is normal that we would bring proposals for negotiation. These are questions that interest him. I can withhold the paper, but I think it would be better to leave it with him. I will be speaking alone with him.

Dr. Brzezinski: You might begin with the general principles that are attractive to him, such as no Israeli sovereignty beyond the 1967 lines, the devolution of authority, etc., and then draw him out.

Prime Minister: Dr. Brzezinski, leave this to me. He may ask for the paper. I may give it. Or I might do it your way.

President: Sadat has expressed to us, perhaps in exaggerated terms, his concern that you may present him something that he might have to reject. If you do meet, and if you issue a joint statement, the whole reaction will be one of hope, but if Israel gives him a proposal, and if he has to reject part of it, he is worried about the results. He can speak for himself. He feels that he has eliminated the need for preliminary step-by-step negotiations, and has come right to the heart of the matter by accepting Israel as an entity in the Middle East. He has gone about as

far as he can go. He has put all of his cards on the table face up. He is afraid that Israel now wants to negotiate step-by-step. Your proposals are very constructive and could provide a fair basis for negotiations. But Sadat fears that what you will bring will only be a basis for negotiations. He thinks that he has given you everything. He hopes that he will not be in a position of having to reject what you propose.

Prime Minister: I want to share some impressions with you. I spoke of your concern for Sadat's downfall or his resignation to Foreign Minister Dayan, who knows the Arabs very well. He says that you have no basis for fearing that. Sadat has his army with him completely and that is the basis of his power. There is no reason to be concerned. He will be called names by the Syrians and the PLO and by Qadhafi, but he has complete support in the army and is popular with his people. They want peace. He has no reason to reject my ideas. He may make amendments, and may make counterproposals. In two or three months, we want to sign peace treaties. You should not exclude the possibility the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty will come first. As Ambassador Herzog said yesterday, that was what happened in 1949. Six or seven months after Egypt, Syria then signed.¹¹ I will always say that this is just a first step toward a comprehensive settlement. We have even seen some good signs from Syria. They will not burn their bridges.

President: My statement on Sadat's position came directly from Sadat himself. I am not predicting what will happen. I am just relaying the message.

Secretary Vance: Sadat has said that there is no question that he has the support of his people and the army now, but Sadat said that unless the momentum is maintained, and unless Israel makes a response, then all of this could change. The support could fade and he would be in drastic trouble. I agree with what Foreign Minister Dayan says, but it is a delicate situation.

Prime Minister: I understand and we will act appropriately.

Ambassador Dinitz: It is important that you not be seen as giving a cool reception to the Prime Minister's ideas. There is one way to insure this. The Prime Minister said that it would help if you could say these ideas are a fair basis for negotiations, and that would remove any danger of the interpretation of the cool reception.

Vice President: It is important to make clear to the press that the purpose of these talks is for two friendly countries to compare their ideas and to have discussions that will help promote peace. It is not the purpose of the talks to agree to a plan or to negotiate. If that becomes

¹¹ The Egyptians signed an armistice agreement with Israel on February 24, 1949. The Syrians signed an armistice agreement with Israel on July 20, 1949.

the measure of success, it would be bad. The world should see that we are together.

Secretary Vance: You have seen the statement that we are prepared to issue. Do you have any suggestions? You have suggested that we say the President approved the proposals rather than the action.

Prime Minister: It is an excellent communique.¹²

Dr. Brzezinski: We could use the word “approach” rather than action.

Secretary Vance: We want to broaden the idea beyond just proposals.

Prime Minister: “Approach” is a good word. Very good.

President: I know the value of the words “Judea and Samaria,” but these are difficult for the Arabs to accept. Maybe it would be best if each party could use his own words in his own language. You could say Judea and Samaria. The Arabs could say whatever they want, and we will say “West Bank” in English.

Secretary Vance: I did this once in negotiating with the Turks.

Dr. Brzezinski: Each side would use its own words.

Prime Minister Begin: Could I have fifteen minutes alone with you now?¹³

President: My time is yours until tomorrow. These have been very constructive talks and I am very proud of our friendship.

¹² For the White House statement issued after this meeting, see *Public Papers: Carter, 1977*, Book II, pp. 2152–2153.

¹³ According to the President’s Daily Diary, Carter and Begin met privately in the Oval Office from 8:37 to 8:58 p.m. (Carter Library, Presidential Materials, President’s Daily Diary) No memorandum of conversation of this private discussion has been found.

**179. Message From President Carter to British Prime Minister
Callaghan¹**

Washington, December 18, 1977, 2144Z

WH70650. 1. Prime Minister Begin outlined two proposals, one dealing with Sinai and the other with the West Bank and Gaza.² He said that much of the Sinai proposal had been discussed with Sadat. The main points were total Israeli withdrawal in two stages to the international border, with a UN presence in Sharm al-Shaykh and special arrangements to protect Israeli settlements in northwest Sinai. Egyptian troops would remain west of the passes.

2. For the West Bank and Gaza, home rule under an elected Administrative Council is proposed, with security and public order remaining in Israeli hands, conflicting claims to sovereignty would be left open, and formal Israeli sovereignty would not be extended beyond the 1967 lines, except in Jerusalem. These arrangements would be subject to review after five years.

3. I conveyed the outlines of Begin's views to Sadat.³ He acknowledged that some of this had already been discussed between them, but he will object to the continuation of Israeli settlements in Sinai and to the residual security role for Israeli forces under the "home rule" proposal. Sadat also said that he could not accept Israeli sovereignty over Arab-Jerusalem, but that he would agree to Jerusalem being an open city.

4. I met again with Begin Saturday evening⁴ to go over his proposals in more detail. I urged him to build additional flexibility into his proposals for the West Bank and Gaza. I particularly emphasized the importance that Sadat not be presented with something he will feel he must reject in part or in its entirety. Since Begin is planning to see Sadat as early as Thursday⁵ of next week, it is important that Begin broaden his concepts before that meeting.

5. There are some positive aspects of Begin's proposals: the abolition of military government; no claims of Israeli sovereignty beyond

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Subject File, Box 3, Arab-Israeli Peace Settlement 1977: Volume II [III]. Secret; Sensitive; Flash. Sent via the Cabinet Office Line.

² See Document 177.

³ Carter informed Sadat of his first meeting with Begin in a message transmitted in telegram 271710 to Cairo, December 16. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P850052–2257)

⁴ See Document 178.

⁵ December 22.

the 1967 lines; Israeli forces withdrawal to military encampments to deal with security problems; self-rule for the Palestinians, and the arrangements to be of a transitional nature and to be reviewed by all of the parties concerned after a specified period. We discussed the crucial issue of ways in which the powers of the Administrative Council for the West Bank and Gaza could devolve jointly from Jordan and Israel rather than simply from the Israeli military governor as Begin had envisaged. He was very resistant to my suggestion of a token UN military presence in the West Bank and Gaza, but I think he misunderstood this as a substitute for adequate Israeli security arrangements.

6. I also urged that he present his proposals as a general framework for discussion, not as a fully worked-out Israeli plan. This would make it easier for Sadat to respond and to help shape the ways in which the ideas eventually surface for public analysis.

7. My general impression is that the Sinai proposal will be substantially acceptable, but that the West Bank-Gaza proposal has a long way to go before Sadat and other Arabs can accept it. I did not agree to accept Begin's description that it is (quote) a fair basis for negotiation (unquote).

8. It would be helpful if you could urge Begin to be flexible and if you could underscore the points that I have made.⁶

9. Because we are only stopping in Riyadh for a very brief time it will not be possible to see you there. Please send me your schedule for that ten-day period so that we can search for an alternative meeting time.

10. Merry Christmas to you and Audrey.

Jimmy Carter

⁶ Callaghan replied with an initial reaction to Carter's cable on December 19 and then sent another cable to Carter on December 21 after meeting with Begin. Both are in the Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Subject File, Box 67, Middle East: Peace Negotiations 1977 Vol. III [III].

180. Telegram From the Embassy in Israel to the Department of State¹

Tel Aviv, December 27, 1977, 1454Z

11123. For the Secretary and Saunders From Ambassador; Cairo for Ambassador and USDel; White House for Brzezinski. Subj: Begin's Report on His Meetings With Sadat in Ismailia. Refs: (A) Tel Aviv 11023, (B) Cairo 22940, (C) Cairo 22938.²

Summary: Begin is generally satisfied with Ismailia outcome,³ particularly with prospect for serious detailed negotiations in committees to convene January 15. Atmosphere of meetings characterized as very friendly and informal. Begin believes in Sadat's good faith and intentions, and now understands better his problems. But he is convinced he has gone a great distance at considerable risk with his proposals and to go much further during negotiations could be highly dangerous. He is confident Knesset will support him as far as he has thus far gone, but anticipates painful problems "with his oldest and best friends." Begin will meet Monday⁴ in Morocco with King Hassan, and Dayan is today secretly in Tehran.

1. I met with Prime Minister Begin this morning, December 27, for a little over an hour to obtain a detailed report for the President and the Secretary on the Ismailia meetings. Yehuda Avner, who was the notetaker in Ismailia, was the only other person present. Begin was calm, in good spirits, and generally satisfied with the outcome at Ismailia. He said, "It was a good conference: realistically, what more could we have achieved at this point?" He was clearly impressed by a number of as-

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840076–1194. Secret; Immediate; Exdis Handle as Nodis; Cherokee. Sent immediate for information to Cairo.

² In telegram 11023 from Tel Aviv, December 23, Ambassador Lewis reported on his meeting with Israeli Foreign Minister Dayan to discuss Begin's upcoming meeting with Sadat at Ismailia. Lewis also transmitted the text of a proposed Egyptian-Israeli declaration of principles, drafted by Begin and given to him by Dayan. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840076–1220) In telegram 22940 from Cairo, December 27, drafts of declarations proposed by the Israelis and Egyptians at Ismailia were conveyed to the Department of State. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File P850050–2392) In telegram 22938 from Cairo, December 27, Ambassador Eilts reported on the Cairo Conference, which went into recess on December 26. A new phase was scheduled to open on January 15 with political and military committees at the ministerial level to be based in Jerusalem and Cairo. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P850050–2395)

³ On December 25 and 26, Begin met with Sadat for direct negotiations at Ismailia, located on the banks of the Suez Canal. No U.S. representatives were present.

⁴ January 2, 1978.

pects of Sadat's performance and said that the decision at the very outset to set up the two ministerial committees was extremely important and was the crucial decision without which the conference would have failed. Begin is clearly tired and showing signs of the physical strain he has been under, which does not show any signs of letting up in the near future. He expects considerable personal difficulty with some of his closest friends in the debates which lie ahead today and tomorrow over his proposals in the Knesset, but he is resigned and determined to continue down the course he has now adopted and believes that his proposals are indeed well thought out and fair ones.

2. Begin said that during the first general session after lunch on Sunday⁵ he had read carefully to the two delegations the text of the two proposals they were submitting: one dealing with principles for a peace treaty with Egypt and the other the slightly modified proposal for self-rule for Palestinian Arabs. Begin said that they did not give copies of these documents to the Egyptians, but said they would forward them through our Embassy in Cairo to Sadat after returning to Jerusalem. He handed me copies this morning, and asked that they be transmitted to Sadat via Ambassador Eilts. He said that the texts were also being provided to Secretary Vance via Ambassador Dinitz, together with an explanation of exactly what changes had been made in the documents after their earlier versions had been shown to us in Washington. I am transmitting the texts of these two documents to Washington and to Cairo in septel.⁶ From a quick inspection, there are minor but significant differences from the original versions. Begin said that Sadat and his colleagues had listened very intently to the reading of the proposals, but that there had been relatively little discussion of them in Ismailia. It is understood that the Egyptians will prepare counter-proposals after they have had a chance to study the documents. These counter-proposals will be presented to the Israelis in the ministerial committees when they commence work on January 15.

3. Begin then went more or less chronologically through the sessions with me. The first private talk between Begin and Sadat was the point at which Begin suggested the formation of the two ministerial committees, and their venues in Cairo and Jerusalem. Smiling somewhat self-satisfiedly as he recalled my skepticism of Saturday night about the Jerusalem site,⁷ Begin said that in fact Sadat had accepted both the idea of the committees and their location in about two

⁵ December 25.

⁶ Both proposals are in telegram 11124 from Tel Aviv, December 27. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840076–1186)

⁷ No record of this December 24 meeting has been found.

minutes. Sadat had characterized them as “a really excellent idea which he had not thought of.” Begin said it was quite clear by the end of the meetings that without this initial decision the overall impact of the meetings would have been a failure.

4. Begin said he then read to Sadat the proposed language for a joint declaration which had been drafted by the Israelis in an effort to meet what they understood to be Sadat’s requirements (text was presumably that contained in Ref A). Sadat’s initial reaction was that this declaration would be enough for the Egyptian people, but he feared it would cause problems with the Arab world. Begin left the text of the document then with Sadat for his further consideration.

5. The working lunch which followed was apparently almost entirely social in nature, or at least did not materially advance the discussions. It was followed by the first general working meeting of both delegations which lasted somewhat less than an hour. In that meeting, Begin outlined in detail the Israeli proposals for the self-rule plan for the West Bank and Gaza and the principles for a peace treaty between Egypt and Israel. There was some although not a great deal of discussion. At several points the delegations adjourned briefly to consult among themselves in adjoining rooms. Sadat and Begin stepped to the window several times for private words with each other during these intermissions. In one of these private talks, Sadat said to Begin that he thought the proposals for autonomy “were a step forward,” which Begin took as encouraging. There was an amusing interlude either at the end of the lunch or early in the working session while President Carter’s telephone call from Plains was awaited. For about fifteen minutes the phone rang every three or four minutes, Sadat would pick it up and shout “hello,” “hello, “hello,” into it without success. The call never came through, and eventually an hour later a Presidential message arrived in place of the call.⁸ During one of the private asides, Sadat reverted to discussion of the draft declaration. He told Begin that he thought he could agree on the critical phrase dealing with the Palestinian problem with language which stated “a just solution of the problem of Palestinian Arabs.” However, after further consultation with his delegation, Sadat then told Begin privately “My friends don’t agree with me, I just can’t do it.” During this session Begin formed the impression that Sadat was pressed considerably by some of his advisors to take a tougher position than he would have preferred to take. He singled out Ambassador Meguid as the “most difficult one of the group.” For example, at one stage, Meguid read only the first paragraph of Resolution 338, leaving out paragraph two. Begin said he then

⁸ The message from Carter has not been found.

quoted paragraph two to Sadat and Sadat agreed with Begin's interpretation of whatever point was then under discussion. After it became apparent that they had reached an impasse over the wording of the declaration, Begin then suggested an adjournment until 5 p.m. in the afternoon. This was subsequently extended until 7 o'clock while both Begin and Sadat rested.

6. Apparently the main negotiation over the draft declaration took place in the evening meeting between 7 and 10 pm. At that meeting, Sadat presented an Egyptian draft in response to the Israeli draft. Begin said that large portions of it had been quite acceptable to him. However, the fourth paragraph stated "Israel undertakes to withdraw from Sinai, the West Bank, the Golan Heights, and the Gaza Strip." Begin said he, of course, had not been able to accept this language. He then made, he said, an extended argument to Sadat that Resolution 242 did not rpt not require withdrawal from "all" the occupied territories and went into the intricacies of the language of 242 and its negotiating history. At the end of this discussion, Sadat turned to his delegation and said "take it out." It was then agreed to incorporate the precise language of the operative portions of 242 in place of this paragraph.

7. The negotiation over the declaration eventually broke down over how to treat the Palestinian problem, which is not mentioned per se in Resolution 242. After lengthy discussion, the Egyptians proposed a key phrase which read "Based on the self-determination of the Palestinian people," in place of any explicit mention of a Palestinian state. Begin said that he could not accept this phrase, for it is clear that "self-determination" is tantamount to recognizing the right to an independent state, and he then apparently went through with Sadat his familiar litany about the unacceptable dangers of an independent state both to Israel and to Egypt. Begin was surprised and struck by the fact that when he mentioned the threat an independent state posed to Egypt, Sadat responded "absolutely right." Begin also said that some of the PLO are Soviet agents, and Sadat immediately responded "all of them." Begin was also very struck by another comment Sadat made on more than one occasion: Sadat said that he was telling the rejectionists "Don't press us too far, or we will decide that we are no longer Arabs." Begin and Avner both attributed great significance to this statement, which put in graphic terms what they had only heard second hand about the Egyptian tendency to revert to its pharaonic tradition if pressed too far by the radical Arabs. During the discussion of "self-determination," Ambassador Meguid quoted Begin's response during his "Face the Nation" appearance on December 18 and said this indicated Begin had already accepted self-determination as synonymous with self-rule. There was apparently a rather polite but pointed exchange in which Begin said he was well aware of what he had said

and what he had meant; he had meant that it was perhaps reasonable for some people to believe or to interpret autonomy as synonymous with self-determination. He did not rpt not say or imply that he could accept the phrase self-determination, for it would lead inevitably to the independent state which would present unacceptable risks for Israeli security. According to Begin, Sadat seemed genuinely to understand the dilemma between the need for protection of Israel's security and desire for a Palestinian state. Sadat said with regard to this dilemma "I have no answer for it." Begin said he then went on to make clear that Israel claimed and maintained its claim to sovereignty over the West Bank and Gaza. However, since he recognized that there were conflicting claims, he had suggested setting the claims aside to deal with the human beings involved in order to assure that the Palestinian Arabs possess true autonomy and the Palestinian Jews have the necessary security.

8. Begin was surprised by Sadat's reaction when he explained in some detail the nature of the Six-Day War as a war of legitimate self-defense. He explained that under international law, until a peace treaty is signed, Israel's occupation of the Sinai, growing out of a conflict of self-defense, is totally legitimate. He started to remind Sadat in this connection of the slogan trumpeted by the Arabs just before the Six-Day War began; Sadat interjected "yes—throw them into the sea." The fact that Sadat himself apparently accepted Begin's argument in this fashion made a deep impression on him. The evening negotiating session apparently continued with what Begin characterized as "animated and even dramatic discussion," but no agreement. The participants decided to adjourn at 10 pm to meet the next morning.

9. On Monday morning when they reconvened at 9 am, Begin again proposed that Sadat accept for the declaration the formulation "a just solution for the problem of the Palestinian Arabs." If this could not be accepted, however, he said he then proposed using the formula subsequently adopted at the press conference of having a precise statement of each side's differing views on the Palestinian issue, analogous, he said, to the technique employed on other occasions such as the Shanghai Communique between the US and China.

10. Apparently at this final session, there was a renewed effort, which Sadat for a while seemed inclined to support, to take those portions agreed upon from the declaration and make them into a formally agreed paper. Under this concept, there would be an agreed declaration, with the differing opinions on the Palestinian question publicly stated apart from the declaration itself. This idea was strongly opposed by some of Sadat's advisors who felt it would be dangerous for him to sign any document which did not have an acceptable formulation on

the Palestinian issue in it. The end result was the statement read by Sadat at the press conference.⁹

11. Begin described the incident in which Sadat overruled Meguid on the question of “peace treaty versus peace agreement” which is also related in para nine of Ref C by Elissar. He described the atmosphere throughout all of the meetings as good and “very friendly,” marked here and there with a good deal of humor and a great deal of hospitality. He described a striking vignette in which Sadat swore in his new Foreign Minister¹⁰ in a casual fashion in front of the Israel delegation so that he could take part officially in the meeting. (This image is a snapshot of how different things have become between Egyptians and Israelis since November 19.)¹¹

12. At the close of Begin’s recital, I asked a number of questions, the answers to which are summarized below. He made clear there was no real discussion of either his Sinai proposal or the Palestinian self-rule issue except in the first working meeting Sunday afternoon, and then only very limited discussion. Sadat listened very intently to the Israeli presentations but largely limited himself to saying he would have to consider the proposals and then present his counter-proposals. Begin said that January 15 would be the opening date for both the political and military committees. He described his telephone conversation last night with President Carter¹² and his invitation to the President to ask Secretary Vance to attend the meeting in Jerusalem on the 15th. He made clear that he hoped the Secretary could come for the opening sessions, although of course he would not expect him to remain throughout the many weeks which he expected the committee’s sessions to run. He said that Roy Atherton or anyone else would of course be welcome to sit in as the US representative after the Secretary left.

⁹ Both Sadat and Begin read statements at the December 26 press conference after the Ismailia talks. Sadat noted that both sides agreed to continue discussions on the future of the Palestinians since Egypt wanted a Palestinian state on the West Bank and the Israeli position was that the Palestinians in Judea, Samaria, the West Bank, and the Gaza Strip should “enjoy self-rule.” He also announced that the negotiations at the Cairo Conference in January would be at the ministerial level and that a Political and a Military Committee would be formed, the former meeting in Jerusalem and the latter in Cairo. Full texts of both Sadat’s and Begin’s statements to the press and the transcript of their press conference are in the *New York Times*, December 27, 1977, p. 16.

¹⁰ Mohammed Ibrahim Kamel replaced Ismail Fahmy after Fahmy resigned in November 1977 in protest of Sadat’s visit to Israel.

¹¹ A reference to Sadat’s visit to Jerusalem.

¹² According to the President’s Daily Diary, Carter spoke to Begin on December 26 from 10:46 to 10:52 a.m. (Carter Library, Presidential Materials, President’s Daily Diary) No memorandum of telephone conversation has been found. Carter wrote in his diary: “Monday morning Prime Minister Begin called, and although I think the meeting in Ismailia was something of a disappointment, he was quite pleased. He said he and Sadat were closer together than indicated.” (*White House Diary*, p. 153)

13. Begin insisted that there was no discussion about the problem of getting Jordan into the negotiating process. (Avner confirmed this to me later.) Sadat said several times that he could not negotiate for Syria or Jordan or the Palestinians; that he believed Jordan would one day soon join the process, but that he did not anticipate that Assad would join in the foreseeable future. He was repeatedly very pessimistic about Assad. Contrary to the statement in para one of Ref C to the effect that neither side seems to expect, nor even to want, early participation of any other parties, Begin confirmed to me more than once that he very much hoped Jordan would join the negotiations and that he hoped we would make every effort to persuade King Hussein to do so. He said he had made this point in his phone call to President Carter last night.

14. With regard to the Israeli proposal for the Egyptian-Israeli treaty, Begin did say that he had the impression the Egyptians might be ready to go to approximately two years for the transition period between phase one and the final withdrawal to the international border. Moreover, at the beginning of the reading out of the Israeli proposals, Begin read paragraph two without any comment or contradiction from Sadat. (Para two reads: "In Jerusalem the President said, *inter alia*, to the Prime Minister: A. That it is his intention to declare the Straits of Tiran to be an international waterway; B. That the Egyptian army will not move eastwards of Mitla and Gidi passes and that the whole area east of the passes will be demilitarized." The fact that Sadat did not contradict this statement in front of his delegation makes Begin confident that he will stand by it, despite what was said to Weizman by Sadat last week.¹³

15. In summing up his reactions to the meetings, Begin said he had genuinely a great deal of sympathy and understanding for Sadat's problem with the Arabs and his great courage in launching this current effort. But he stressed however that in doing everything he could to assist Sadat he could not "wound his own people", he acknowledged that he has a large parliamentary majority for the proposals he has made, despite the fact that they will cause him very great problems "with his very best friends." He said he told Sadat that not only Sadat had political problems to deal with but he had them as well. He remarked to me that to go very far beyond the proposals he had already made would indeed "wound his own people."¹⁴ Begin said to Sadat that Israel

¹³ Not further identified.

¹⁴ On December 28, Begin presented his two proposals to the Knesset, which voted to approve them. The plan for the West Bank and Gaza contained 26 paragraphs, 5 more than the plan Begin gave to President Carter on December 17 (attached to Document 177). They concern immigration to the area, freedom of movement and economic activity, the composition of the administrative council, the Israeli right of sovereignty in Judea, Samaria, and Gaza, and the administration of the holy places in Jerusalem. The proposal for an agreement on the Sinai Peninsula and the restoration of Egyptian sovereignty there in-

would be running real military risks when it withdrew totally from Sinai. He said he was willing to accept such risks because he relied on Sadat's personal word that "there will be no more war," yet, he explained to Sadat, even with most of the Sinai demilitarized, it is still only eight to ten hours from your forces to our boundary, and we cannot know what sort of successor you might have. For this reason, he stressed the extent of the risks he believed he was running. Begin returned to his capital sobered by Sadat's apparent economic difficulties and political problems, convinced of his good will and good faith, aware that there is a great deal of difficult negotiation ahead, but very satisfied that finally a true bilateral negotiation is underway between Israel and its principal Arab antagonist.

16. As I was leaving, Begin asked me to convey in strictest confidence to the Secretary and the President two other points: A. Begin will travel to Morocco to see King Hassan next Monday for a one-day visit. He hopes that King Hassan might yet agree to make it a public visit, but for the moment it is scheduled to be a secret trip. B. Dayan is today in Tehran secretly to consult with the Shah about the Cairo meetings. Begin said that Israeli-Iranian relations were now "very good indeed."

Lewis

cluded demilitarization, the retention of Jewish settlements to be administered by Israel and protected by an Israeli force, a transition period until complete Israeli withdrawal, and a guarantee of freedom of navigation in the Strait of Tiran. (William E. Farrell, "Begin Insists Must Keep Troops in West Bank Area," and "Text of Begin's Plan for West Bank and Gaza Strip," *New York Times*, December 29, 1977, pp. 1 and 8)

181. Telegram From the Embassy in Egypt to the Department of State¹

Cairo, December 27, 1977, 1638Z

23005. For the Secretary From Ambassador. Subject: Sadat on Ismailia Summit.

Summary: Sadat voices guarded satisfaction with his meetings with Begin. Atmosphere was good and candor prevailed. Because of in-

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840076-2236. Secret; Niact Immediate; Exdis Handle as Nodis; Cherokee. Sent immediate for information to Tel Aviv.

ability reach agreement on mutually acceptable declaration of principles, he and Begin decided simply declare respective positions and agree to disagree. This posture, as declared in joint press conference, helps both Begin and him. Positive progress made on Sinai in that Israelis agree to international border, though differences remain on Israeli settlements and airfields. Cairo Conference upgraded to ministerial level with ministerial level Political and Military Committees subsumed thereunder. Political Committee will deal with unresolved Palestinian question, Israeli settlements in Sinai, possibly demilitarized zones in Sinai and nature of peace. Re latter, Sadat reiterates Egypt ready for diplomatic relations, open borders, etc., but these may not be stipulated in treaty lest doing so suggests they were imposed. Military Committee will address itself to two-phased Israeli withdrawal, air-dromes which Israelis wish retain, demilitarization. Re latter, Sadat envisages four types of military zones in Sinai. Sadat looks to continued U.S. role in terms of guarantees, at appropriate time, and in meantime for continuing discreet pressure on Israelis to accept concept of self-determination for Palestinians. He would like to have President Carter present should satisfactory declaration of principles or a model agreement for Palestinian question be worked out. Hot line established today between Abdin Palace and Jerusalem. Sadat will send reports of Ismailia meeting to Saudis, Gulf States and Hussein. End summary.

1. Met with Sadat this morning for about an hour and half at his Gaza residence. He was in a somber mood, but also indicated guarded satisfaction with his meetings with Begin. Said he was tired and recalled he had not had a day to relax for the past three or four months. He wished to give President Carter and you a report on the Ismailia talks. As is usually the case, his presentation was somewhat disjointed, with frequent repetition, but I have sought to order it below.

2. Atmosphere: Sadat described atmosphere of the talks as good. Begin was "fair, strong and decisive." The two men had dealt with each other in a candid and open way. He liked Begin. Begin had not been "nervous" when controversial issues concerning the Palestinians were discussed. As before, "Ezer" (Weizman) had been very positive. Dayan had been "showy," but had also indicated a genuine desire to establish peace.

3. Declaration of principles: Sadat recalled that he had earlier informed President Carter of the need for a suitable declaration of principles. He had had to accept something of a change in that concept. The Israelis had tabled a draft in which they spoke of "self-rule" (later he used "self-autonomy") for the Palestinians on the West Bank and Gaza. Had this been announced, it would have created difficulties for Egypt. He had then tried out on the Israelis an Egyptian draft calling for "self-determination." Begin had rejected this, pointing out that it

would ultimately mean an independent Palestinian state. All Israelis, Begin had insisted, including the opposition parties, are opposed to an independent Palestinian state. They believe such a state will sooner or later come under “outside” influence or dominance. Sadat interjected that he thought the Israelis were worried about the Soviets influencing such a state.

4. Since neither draft was acceptable to the other party, Sadat said he and Begin had decided simply to declare their respective positions and to agree to disagree on the subject. This had been done at their joint press conference.² From Begin’s vantage point, this was fair enough. It in effect “postpones” any such declaration. It will also help Begin in meeting the objections of some Likud members who oppose him. Such an agreement to disagree also serves Egypt in the Arab world. It makes it clear that Sadat is seeking self-determination for the Palestinians and also demonstrates that GOE is seeking a comprehensive settlement.

5. Sinai: Positive progress had been made on the Sinai issue. Begin had told him in their private talk immediately after arrival that the Israeli Cabinet had agreed that the international border should be the boundary. True, some differences remain on the retention of the Israeli settlements and leasing or acquiring in some way the two airdromes in Sinai. These points will be discussed between Defense Ministers in their meetings.

6. Upgrading Cairo Conference and ministerial committees: Sadat noted that Begin had proposed at the outset that the Cairo Conference be elevated to ministerial level and that Political and Military Committees (also at the ministerial level) be subsumed thereunder. He, Sadat, had agreed. The Political Committee is to meet in Jerusalem and the U.S. and U.N. will be asked to “join.” (Roy Atherton had suggested I ask the President why the change of designation for the U.S. and U.N. from “participants” to “observers” had been made for the Political Committee. Sadat seemed puzzled about the change, although he noted that the principal discussions will be between Egypt and Israel. He also commented that the Israelis had not asked for “observers” in that committee.) The Military Committee will consist of the two Defense Ministers. No U.S. or U.N. participation is needed because of the high sensitivity of the subjects discussed. U.S. and U.N. participation would also invite press interest, which is undesirable. He had told Begin that the U.S. is already “behind us.” When the parties are ready to talk about guarantees, they could contact the U.S. Begin saw no need for the U.N. to participate and he, Sadat, agreed. He had also suggested to Begin that if any difficulties arise, SFM-type monitoring stations could be set up. Begin had agreed.

² See footnote 9, Document 180.

7. The two sub-committees will work in the context of the Cairo Conference and “report to the plenary when they reach decisions.” The Political Committee will meet on the fifteenth, since Dayan has a previous engagement. The Military Committee will meet on the seventh or eighth, probably at Gianaclis. Weizman can arrive via Israeli aircraft.

8. Work of the Political Committee: Sadat said he regards the Political Committee as of lesser importance than the Military Committee, but had not so indicated to the Israelis. As he saw it, the Political Committee will discuss the following:

(A) The unresolved Palestinian issue. He envisaged two alternatives coming out of its discussions:

—A declaration of principles along the lines he had previously proposed, provided mutually acceptable language can be devised. He doubted that this would be possible, however, since several unsuccessful efforts to do so had been made during the Ismailia summit.

—In six to eight weeks time (Begin had opined in perhaps three months) a “model agreement or treaty” might be prepared, which would set out the principles of resolving the Palestinian problem in its various aspects. He was hopeful this would prove possible. Time had been too short at Ismailia to try to do so. Begin had said everything is negotiable except the destruction of Israel. This is reasonable enough, but “no one” today is thinking in terms of destroying Israel. In the first direct negotiations with Israel, the Israelis had behaved fairly. “Let us hope it will continue like this,” Sadat said. The Israeli objection to self-determination for the Palestinians is weak, in Sadat’s view, and world public opinion should be able to help change it.

9. Sadat again noted that, even if a Sinai settlement is worked out earlier, he will not announce or implement anything until some solution is found to the Palestinian impasse. Asked if he had said this to Begin, Sadat replied in the negative. However, he had spoken of the need for a comprehensive settlement in the press conference and Begin had agreed.

(B) The Israeli settlements in Sinai: Begin had again urged that they be allowed to remain. Sadat had refused. Sadat noted that the Israeli position on wanting to retain the settlements is weak in the eyes of world public opinion.

(C) Demilitarized zone in the Sinai: Sadat claimed that Dayan had pressed to have this item discussed in the Political Committee. Despite the fact that it is basically a military question, Weizman had been “shy” and had only mildly argued for its inclusion in the Military Committee. In view of the difference between his two Ministers, Begin had proposed that the subject be dropped for the moment. He and Sadat will agree before the committees meet in which of the two committees the demilitarized zone issue will be discussed.

(D) Nature of peace: Sadat again mentioned that, as part of a “package” deal, he had told Begin (and Weizman earlier) that Egypt is ready for diplomatic relations with Israel, open borders, trade, etc. However, he would not agree to stipulating this in any treaty, the Israelis will have to take his word for it. He thought he had amply demonstrated that he abides by his word. If such things are in a treaty, it would appear as if they were imposed on him. (Sadat wanted President Carter to know that on the points concerning the nature of peace about which he and President Carter had differed last April,³ all of these are now agreeable in a “package” settlement.)

10. Work of the Military Committee: The Military Committee will address itself to following problems:

(A) Withdrawal in Sinai: Begin had proposed that this take place in two phases: the first, Israeli withdrawal to a line beginning just east of Arish (with Arish under Egypt) to Ras Mohamed; the second, from that line to the international boundary. Begin had mentioned three–five years and the President had spoken of his desire to have withdrawal completed by October 1978, or by the end of 1978 at the latest. Details will have to be worked out by Gamasy and Weizman.

(B) Israeli desire to retain two airdromes: Begin had repeated to him what Weizman had requested, namely, Israel is anxious to retain the airfields at Ras al Naqb and Sheikh al Suwaiyid. These are needed for Israel’s large aircraft inventory (which USG has given Israel, Sadat pointedly noted) and, in the case of Ras al Naqb, to protect Eilat. Sadat had rejected Israeli offer to lease or cede these areas and had emphasized that he cannot accept any continuing Israeli presence in Sinai. The airfields could be “plowed up.”

(C) Sharm el Sheikh: This had not been an issue. Weizman allegedly agreed it is no longer of strategic importance, since Bab al-Mandab can be blockaded. Sadat had agreed in principle to UNEF forces being stationed there, so long as no Israeli troops were included.

(D) Demilitarization of Sinai: Sadat assumed that this subject will be discussed by the Military Committee, where he thought it should properly be handled. The Israelis had wished to demilitarize the entire Sinai. This was unacceptable to him. He had told Begin that his main forces “will not exceed east of the passes” with details to be discussed by the committee.⁴

³ See Documents 25 and 27.

⁴ The Military Committee, headed by General Gamasy and Weizman, began meeting in Cairo on January 11. The meeting recessed on January 13 and Weizman returned to Israel. (“Chronology of Recent Events,” Department of State *Bulletin*, February 1978, p. 37)

11. Having in mind the apparent confusion that has arisen on Sadat's ideas with respect to the Sinai, I asked him to clarify this point. He said he envisaged a four-zone concept:

—In the area between the Suez Canal and the passes (including the Heights), the main Egyptian forces will be stationed. The exact eastern line could be worked out in the military committee.

—In the area east of the passes to El Arish, about eighty kilometers in breadth, there will be a limited armaments zone. High-caliber, long-range artillery will not be stationed in this zone.

—In the area between Arish to the borders, approximately forty kilometers in breadth, there will be light, frontier-type forces with light weapons.

—A ten kilometer zone from the border will be demilitarized and manned by the U.N. or some other force. (Nothing was said about a similar demilitarized zone on the Israeli side of the border, but to best of our knowledge this is still an Egyptian concept.)

12. U.S. role: Asked how he envisaged future U.S. role, Sadat said he had been thinking about how the situation might evolve. He hoped that in the next six to eight weeks some way might be found out of the Palestinian impasse. Assuming that this takes place and the Sinai problems are satisfactorily resolved, the parties would have to turn to the U.S. to assist with guarantees and early warning stations. But, Sadat emphasized, there should be continuing quiet "U.S. pressure" on Israel to be more forthcoming. He saw no need for President Carter to be in a confrontation posture with the Israelis, at least not at present. He hoped nevertheless that President Carter will be willing to continue to urge upon the Israelis the need to resolve the Palestinian question through self-determination. President Carter has publicly stated his support for "self-determination" for the Palestinians. As Sadat saw it, the difference between the Israeli concept of "self-autonomy" and his concept of "self-determination" is not that great. Begin, Sadat said, needs continuing "pressure." Weizman had in fact made this point to Mubarak. Such pressure should come from the United States, Western Europe and international public opinion. It will make it easier for Begin to make the right decisions, which he cannot do in one step.

13. Sadat emphasized that, now that he has in effect given the Israelis what they want in the context of the "nature of peace," he has made all the concessions that he can. Now it is up to the Israelis to make some concessions. He did not regard withdrawal as a concession, since the Israelis are illegally on Egyptian territory. He hoped that his actions have given President Carter "full maneuverability" to urge the Israelis to be responsive. Should a satisfactory declaration of principles or, better still, a model agreement on the Palestinian question be worked

out, he hoped President Carter might be present in Cairo when it is announced.

14. Communications between GOE and GOI: Sadat also noted that he had today agreed to establish a “hot line” between Abdin Palace (the Presidency PBX switchboard) and Jerusalem.

15. Sadat is sending report of Ismailia summit to Saudis, Gulf State leaders and to King Hussein.

16. Sadat’s comments on Hussein’s role being sent septel.⁵

Eilts

⁴ Apparently telegram 23057 from Cairo, December 28. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840072–2232)

182. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Tehran, January 1, 1978, 8:20–8:50 a.m.

SUBJECT

President’s Meeting with King Hussein

PARTICIPANTS

Jordan

King Hussein
Court Minister Sharaf
General Amar Khamash

United States

The President
Secretary of State Vance
Dr. Zbigniew Brzezinski
Ambassador Thomas Pickering
Assistant Secretary of State Atherton
Gary Sick, NSC Staff (notetaker)

(The first two minutes of the meeting were taken up by a photo opportunity. When the press had left the room the President summar-

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Subject File, Box 1, Arab-Israeli Peace Negotiations 1978: Volume I [I]. Top Secret. The meeting took place at the Saadabad Palace. Carter visited Tehran from December 31, 1977, to January 1, 1978, as part of a nine-day tour of six nations, which began on December 29 in Poland.

ized his private discussions with King Hussein which had begun at 7:58 a.m.)²

The President said that he had talked to His Majesty about the ultimate parameters of the West Bank and Gaza problem which have to be solved. Ultimately any solution must be in the context of Resolutions 242 and 338. His Majesty could accept some minor modifications in the western part of the West Bank, perhaps with some compensating arrangement in a corridor between the West Bank and Gaza. The President had mentioned that Sadat would possibly be willing to expand the size of the Gaza Strip into the Sinai to some extent. The King had agreed that it would be a mistake to create a completely independent Palestinian nation between Israel and Jordan. As far as what Jordan would accept, a disarmed and demilitarized West Bank or Palestinian entity with a United Nations presence would be acceptable as part of an overall settlement. The President had described the best side of Mr. Begin's proposals. Begin is willing to defer the question of sovereignty on the West Bank and was willing to accept devolution of power to a West Bank entity from Jordan and Israel. Israel would be willing to withdraw to a few military cantonments and Begin said that he could accept such an outcome at the end of a three-year transition period. This could in fact provide an opportunity for peace. From the U.S. point of view we prefer self-determination which does not involve a completely independent state. How would Jordan join into this process? Jordan would require just two principles: first, withdrawal to the 1967 boundaries with some minor modifications; and, secondly, the right of self-determination in principle. At that point, it would then be appropriate for Jordan to participate in negotiations. But President Sadat may prefer to represent the Arab position alone. We do not know at this point.

King Hussein thanked the President for his summary. He noted that he had talked to President Sadat earlier. The King felt that as long as the principles of Arab sovereignty over the Arab part of Jerusalem, Resolutions 242 and 338, a settlement of the Palestinian problem, total peace, and a complete package—as long as these are used as guidelines, it is OK. The King noted that he is doing all he can to support Sadat.

The President noted that the King had told him in their private meeting that Sadat had accepted the principles which the United States had proposed earlier in the year.³ This came as a surprise to the Presi-

² No memorandum of conversation has been found.

³ Presumably a reference to the U.S. working paper sent to leaders in the Middle East in October 1977. See Document 131.

dent, since we had waited impatiently for an answer on those principles.

Secretary Vance wondered whether principles should be stated generally, such as Resolution 242, or whether they should be more specific.

King Hussein said that he needs as much as possible. If Jordan should move now, it would look like they were exploiting the situation and they would be subject to criticism. The President said that there are two crucial elements: first is withdrawal with minor modifications, and the second is a resolution of the Palestinian problem in all of its aspects.

Secretary Vance wondered if with two broad principles such as this, could King Hussein participate in the negotiations. Hussein said yes, he could.

Dr. Brzezinski said he saw Begin's proposal as an interim solution for three to five years, with long-term objectives, and the devolution of authority from Israel and Jordan, Israeli forces withdrawing, a token UN or other presence in the area, and all of this subject to revision after three to five years. King Hussein wondered why there should be an Israeli presence at all. Dr. Brzezinski said there is an Israeli presence now. They must have something like this to let them begin getting out. Secretary Vance said that also a declaration of principles such as this provides a means of modifying Begin's position.

King Hussein said he was concerned that the Jerusalem situation might stay as it is and never change. Dr. Brzezinski said that we want Begin to accept our version of his principles. That would be difficult if in three to five years it called for moving to self-determination. Secretary Vance said that Sadat and Begin are close to agreement on Palestine, although there was some trouble with respect to withdrawal. Maybe we could go back and get a general statement and then move toward a resolution of the issue.

The President asked the Secretary if he saw anything which King Hussein had said which was inconsistent with the position we took in Jerusalem or elsewhere. Secretary Vance said no, that if we could get the things back in Begin's proposal that he mentioned in Washington, then perhaps we could go to the principles.

The President noted that with respect to Jerusalem, Mr. Begin sees a triple administrative body comprised of Christians, Arabs, and Jews to oversee the Holy Places. King Hussein said that Jerusalem was an Arab city and an Israeli city at the same time. Jerusalem has now been extended to cover a greater area than ever before. It was hard to see how it could be absorbed. The President said yes, it is a matter of principle and religion. What we say here may never be accepted by Israel, but we need to find a way. King Hussein said he never saw why it could not be one city, a city of peace.

If he gets involved, and he hoped to get involved, he wanted to get involved, he already has the PLO against him. They will lose more and more, but the Soviets, Iraq, even Syria and Libya are shifting into line. Jordan is very exposed. Maybe the real targets are the sources of energy. The whole situation is coming to a head. Israel is finding it difficult to compromise. Jordan was also finding things difficult. Jordan needs as much help from her friends in the United States—on the ground—and the Saudis as she can get.

The President noted that eventually an agreement must be worked out which is mutually acceptable to Jordan, Israel, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia. However, an agreement would not necessarily have to be acceptable to Syria, Iraq, and Libya in order to work. The President said he knows how recalcitrant Israel can be. It is a tiny country. When U.S. Jews are aroused about danger to Israel, they prevail in the media. The President hoped that King Hussein would exhibit maximum flexibility and not make his acceptance dependent upon Syria. King Hussein said he was prepared and willing to collide with Syria and Iraq, but to do so he needed to have the Gulf Arabs form a bloc.

Secretary Vance said he had a couple of questions. First of all, would it be preferable when the conference reconvenes in Jerusalem, to try to formulate a statement based on these two principles and then move on? King Hussein said absolutely. The statement of principles is needed. The Secretary asked if he would need to have these enumerated before he could join the negotiations? King Hussein said yes. The Secretary asked at what point it would be appropriate for any Palestinians to be invited, i.e. West Bank Palestinians? King Hussein said as soon as the principles are spelled out.

Dr. Brzezinski wondered if these principles should be more specific than Resolution 242. King Hussein said there were too many interpretations of 242. Dr. Brzezinski said there were certain advantages of ambiguity. It lets you do things that in three to five years will give you what you want, and at the same time it lets Israel avoid a commitment to something it considers itself unwilling to accept. A specific enunciation of principles would be too specific to be accepted by Israel. King Hussein said "We will be on the firing line." Secretary Vance understood the King wanted the principles to be as specific as possible but with some flexibility on the breadth of coverage.

Minister Sharaf noted that one issue was that of self-rule. He said this is easy for Israel to accept and hard for Jordan. Why ask Jordan to be involved? Dr. Brzezinski noted that Israel is conceding that both Jordan and Israel have claims to the West Bank. Minister Sharaf said that as soon as you raise the West Bank, the entire Palestinian question becomes an issue. Jordan cannot absorb all the Palestinian problems. Their opponents would say that Jordan is talking for other Arabs

without permission. Jordan's activities on the West Bank or with regard to the West Bank are much more sensitive than those of Egypt with regard to Sinai.

At that point the President said the Shah had arrived in the Palace and told the King that he must leave for the airport. He added, however, that Israel will never accept an independent Palestinian state. Everything else is negotiable. Minister Sharaf said that is why the Palestinians must be involved in the process, not Jordan only. He had the idea that the concept of a unified Arab delegation had been put aside. Secretary Vance said it was still possible to have that if they could get the principles established as we desired. We could reconstruct the formula. He wondered if King Hussein would see Sadat before January 15th. King Hussein said that if it is possible, he would like to.

As the meeting broke up Secretary Vance quickly summarized a number of points regarding FMS delivery. He told King Hussein that the 155mm mortars delivery would be accelerated. King Hussein would receive the very first of the 8" artillery that we make. He said he would speak to the Saudis with respect to FMS guarantees.

183. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Riyadh, January 3, 1978, 5:35–6:33 p.m.

SUBJECT

President's Meeting with King Khalid

PARTICIPANTS

Saudi Arabia

King Khalid

Crown Prince Fahd

Prince Abdullah

Prince Sultan

Foreign Minister Saud

Dr. Rashad Pharaon

Ambassador Alireza

United States

The President

Secretary of State Vance

Zbigniew Brzezinski, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs

Ambassador John West

Assistant Secretary of State Atherton

Anthony Lake, Department of State

Hamilton Jordan, White House

Gary Sick, NSC Staff (notetaker)

Isa Sabbagh (interpreter)

(The first few minutes of the meeting were devoted to a series of photo opportunities lasting until 5:43 p.m.)

The King began the discussions saying that he would have liked the opportunity to show the President the land of Saudi Arabia, its farming and its people. It was a great pleasure for him to say that the President is welcome in Saudi Arabia and his visit here is certainly no chore. It is a great pleasure. The Middle East problems are so complicated and the Communist threat is so great that talks are essential. Solutions of the Middle East problem will not come from relying solely on Egypt or solely on Israel. Neither of these countries can create a solution by themselves. The King sincerely hoped that a solution could come about by U.S. hand and that the Communists not have a hand in it. As the President knows, if the United States would not lend its support to Sadat's serious efforts or if the United States should leave him in the lurch, then the Communist danger would be increased so much

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Subject File, Box 1, Arab-Israeli Peace Negotiations 1978: Volume I [I]. Top Secret. The meeting took place in the Royal Guest Palace. Carter visited Riyadh from January 3 to January 4.

more. The reputation and the prestige of the United States are extremely important and the King would not want to have the prestige of the United States lowered, or God forbid, eliminated.

Referring to the Horn of Africa, the King stated that he did not want to see the situation go to the point of no return and leave the area open to increased Communist infiltration. With regard to Syria, it had been moving along well, but in view of what has happened, it is no longer moving along. The King was aware of the enticements which wealthy nations such as Libya could offer to Syria, which might in fact draw Syria in that direction.

The President responded that he was happy to have friends such as Saudi Arabia, and he hoped that our efforts might move along the same path. The differences in the Middle East have been long-standing, and during his first year in office he had devoted a maximum effort to bringing peace. There was a tendency to overestimate U.S. influence. It exists only so long as the parties have confidence in us.

The President felt that proposals we had made to Crown Prince Fahd and Foreign Minister Saud some months ago still offer a good basis for a solution to the Middle East problem.² The U.S. realizes that it is not appropriate for us to impose solutions on others. The parties must accept the solution of their own free will.

There are several basic principles which should govern the Middle East negotiations. First, the UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 must prevail. Secondly, the Israelis should withdraw from occupied territories. And third, the peoples of the West Bank and Gaza should have a voice in their own self-determination. We feel that President Sadat and his initiatives have shown great courage, and we want the world to know that he has our complete backing.

The President thanked King Khalid for his graciousness in agreeing to let him leave early enough the following morning to permit him to meet with Sadat and demonstrate the strength of our support. The President felt that it would have been better if President Sadat had notified Saudi Arabia, King Hussein and others before his visit to Jerusalem. (King Khalid interjected at that point "That's it.") If he had notified in advance, the various parties could have coordinated with him. (At that point King Khalid interrupted to say that he was interested to hear the President make that statement since everyone was accusing the United States of having engineered the entire thing.) The President continued that now that President Sadat has taken this momentous step, it is necessary to give him support.

² See Documents 75 and 77.

The President noted that he had met with the Shah of Iran and King Hussein in Tehran.³ And the further talks today would give him an opportunity to propose a unified proposal with regard to the future. He noted that in 12 days Secretary Vance would be with the Foreign Ministers of Egypt and Israel in Jerusalem. The President hoped that the Secretary's voice will represent what Saudi Arabia wants to say as well as ourselves.

The President noted that there are minor differences which he detected between the Saudi position and that of the United States. First of all, the President felt that it may be advisable, if the discussions are to make good progress, to have some minor changes in the 1967 borders. Those borders would be mutually negotiated and mutually acceptable. Primarily, the modifications would relate to borders closest to the Mediterranean Sea. This was also the position accepted by King Hussein when he spoke privately with the President, and he authorized the President to relate this to Saudi Arabia. The President indicated that he felt it would be a mistake to have an independent nation established between Israel and Jordan. (At this point the conversation was interrupted while the King conferred privately with Crown Prince Fahd.)

The President then concluded that we are afraid that an independent Palestinian state would be a concentrated target for influence by Libya, Iraq, and others. King Khalid responded that if it were established as an independent state with international guarantees, like Cyprus, there would be no room for that much agitation.

The President replied that the points that he outlined were simply opinions of ours that a new Palestinian homeland should be related to Jordan, that Israel should withdraw from occupied territory, and the people there should have a voice in their own affairs. The President noted that if the nations involved can negotiate a solution which is nearer to the Saudi views, the United States would certainly have no objections. The King asked if Jordan would accept. The President said he believed so.

Crown Prince Fahd noted that King Hussein was tied down by the decisions of the Rabat summit.⁴ The President said he could not speak for Hussein, but if that was in fact the path for permanent peace, the President believed he would accept. That was something the King must

³ For the meeting between Carter and Hussein, see Document 182. No memorandum of conversation of Carter's meeting with the Shah has been found, but according to the President's Daily Diary, he met with the Shah and Iranian officials from 6:19 to 7:15 p.m. He also met with the Shah and King Hussein from 11:43 to 11:50 p.m. (Carter Library, Presidential Materials, President's Daily Diary)

⁴ See footnote 8, Document 6.

say for himself. The President believed that King Hussein wanted to come and talk to the Saudis directly. King Khalid noted that would be fine. He then asked if the Palestinians would accept this idea.

The President said that he could not speak for the Palestinians. Very possibly those living on the West Bank and Gaza would accept it, but that is a question that he could not answer.

The President then stated that the last difference between the U.S. and Saudi position that he wished to raise was that of a transition period, to be determined, wherein it might be useful to have joint supervision by Jordan, the Palestinians, and Israel during the transition period. The U.S. prefers that the transition period be as brief as possible and include U.N. troops or others to give confidence to the people as it occurs.

So far, in every other respect the U.S. and Saudi opinions have been the same. They (the Saudis) are using a maximum effort to get peace. Historical hostility is difficult to remove. The President believed that Egypt, Jordan, and even the Syrians have enough confidence in us now to permit us to work toward peace. He would like to make one other statement: Any settlement must be multinational, even though Egypt and Israel can do the initial work. (During this last statement, King Khalid interrupted at one point to comment that the relations between the Palestinians and Jordan were almost as bad as the relations between the Palestinians and Israel.)

King Khalid replied that the President had “mentioned a side-stream pouring into a muddy pool,” referring to the relations between the Palestinians and Jordan after 1970 and with Lebanon after the civil war and other events. The King felt that it was very important that Sadat not fail in his initiatives. If he did it would be considered a U.S. failure and would harm U.S. prestige and that would be disastrous.

The President stated that he was close to Sadat both before and after his visit. He knew that President Sadat could have had a quick agreement on the Sinai but rejected that in favor of the Arab nation’s interest. “President Sadat needs your support as much as he needs ours.” “It is my hope and belief that you and I and Hussein and Sadat can present a common proposal.”

King Khalid stated that there is “no difference whatsoever between us and Sadat.” On the contrary, Saudi Arabia was doing its best to remain in support of Sadat. That was one category. Another category is what the United States does for Sadat. And a third category is what the United States does for Israel to bring about peace. Of course King Khalid had no prior knowledge of Sadat’s visit. A message arrived from Assad to intervene with Sadat and stop him. The King was away, and before he heard about it Sadat had jumped the gun. The statement

that Saudi Arabia issued after the incident irked Sadat,⁵ but there is no question of Saudi support for President Sadat's initiative.

The President responded that this is very good news. Before the night was over he hoped to draw up the key positions of Saudi Arabia, the Shah, and King Hussein so that he could provide these to Sadat at his meeting the next day. If there are differences these should be identified so Sadat would know where everyone stands. King Hussein said he was willing to participate in the negotiations if two principles were stated: (1) the withdrawal of Israeli forces from the West Bank; and (2) self-determination of the Palestinian people. The President hoped that Israel can accept this. The King interjected to note that "This is our stand, too."

The President continued, that if minor adjustments were made on the western border and a permanent tie was established between the West Bank and Jordan, that is what the United States sees as a solution. The obstacle is that King Hussein, President Sadat, and perhaps President Assad feel bound, along with Saudi Arabia, not to be flexible on these two points at all. Privately, there is a feeling that this part of the Rabat agreements could be revised. The President believed that the Israelis will recognize the international borders between Syria, Egypt and Israel. With a smile, the President added that if the Arabs were reluctant to be flexible on some of these issues, then the United States is willing to accept the responsibility for changes if those will lead to peace. (The Saudis chuckled at this.)

Crown Prince Fahd stated that he understood King Hussein's position. Israeli withdrawal and the right of the Palestinians to self-determination are principles where there is no difference in their two points of view.

King Khalid wondered if King Hussein had told his position to President Assad. The President said that he did not know. He thought that King Hussein would like to come and talk to King Khalid.

Crown Prince Fahd wondered whether Israel would be agreeable to these two principles. The President said that he hoped that, with the minor modifications he expressed, they might be amenable. The United States will use its maximum influence. There must be a transition phase and the establishment of the Palestinian homeland between Israel and Jordan. King Khalid urged that the transition period not be too long, and the President agreed. The King said otherwise many would be willing to fish in troubled waters.

⁵ The Saudi statement broadcast on Riyadh radio charged that Sadat's visit "placed the Arab world in a precarious position." (Marvine Howe, "Cairo Faces a Crisis," *New York Times*, November 19, 1977, p. 1)

The President said that he believed that King Hussein intends to consult with President Sadat before the Jerusalem talks in mid-January. The United States will stay informed and be prepared to speak accordingly when we go to Jerusalem. Perhaps Prince Saud and Secretary Vance could put in writing what we have discussed so that when we get to Aswan there would be no misunderstanding. We would be glad to put this forward as a U.S. proposal, but we want to know what Saudi Arabia believes.

King Khalid noted that he really felt that we are in a common effort. "We see your success as ours, and that's why we must go on shoulder-to-shoulder." The King noted that Saudi Arabia had always wished the U.S. success, but that now that the U.S. was "up to its earlobes in the problem," he wished us even more success.

The President noted that many are involved in this problem. He believed that the Common Market nations will help. He knew that Prime Minister Desai would support something like what we have discussed. And of course the Shah of Iran will help, particularly if he got a request from Saudi Arabia. He then asked Secretary Vance to get together with Prince Saud and put some proposals on paper.

The President stated that when Congress comes back into session he will propose the sale of F-15 fighters. Secretary Vance had done a great deal of work with Members of Congress preparing them for rapid approval. The people of the United States are more and more aware of the importance of relations between us and the need to support our efforts to work closely with Saudi Arabia on security issues. The King remarked that that was simply a patriotic duty.

The President stated that he could not guarantee how long it will take to gain approval, but the prospects looked good. He noted that when Members of Congress come to Saudi Arabia they (the Saudis) should try to persuade them. The President said that he would use his full influence.

184. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Riyadh, January 3, 1978, 10:15–10:26 p.m.

SUBJECT

President's Meeting with Crown Prince Fahd

PARTICIPANTS

Saudi Arabia

Crown Prince Fahd

Prince Abdullah

Prince Sultan

Foreign Minister Saud

Dr. Rashad Pharaon

Ambassador Alireza

United States

The President

Secretary of State Vance

Zbigniew Brzezinski, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs

Ambassador John West

Hamilton Jordan, White House

Assistant Secretary of State Atherton

Anthony Lake, Department of State

Gary Sick, NSC Staff (notetaker)

Isa Sabbagh (interpreter)

(The President met privately with Crown Prince Fahd from shortly after 9:00 o'clock until this meeting began.² Prince Saud, the Foreign Minister, arrived for the expanded meeting at 10:05 p.m., and while waiting for the arrival of the President and Crown Prince Fahd, briefly discussed with Secretary Vance some of the difficulties which Saudi Arabia had with the draft of principles which Secretary Vance had provided him earlier in the day.³ He noted particularly that no provision had been made to take care of the Palestinians outside the area of the West Bank and Gaza, and that the principles did not specify the timing of the transition period and other developments. Secretary Vance noted that he had not wanted to make the statement too specific, but rather wanted to establish certain basic general principles which could be used as a foundation for discussion.)

The President stated that the Crown Prince and himself had had a good discussion over a wide range of issues. They had talked about

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Subject File, Box 1, Arab-Israeli Peace Negotiations 1978: Volume I [I]. Top Secret. The meeting took place in the Royal Guest Palace.

² No memorandum of conversation has been found.

³ The draft of principles is not attached and has not been found.

bolstering the value of the dollar. They had had a good discussion on the Horn of Africa dispute, and Crown Prince Fahd had outlined a very good next step to be taken. On the Middle East, they had discussed the need to give support to President Sadat in his efforts. The President had told Crown Prince Fahd about the need for President Siad Barre of Somalia to get out of the posture of invader, perhaps even take his problem to the United Nations. Crown Prince Fahd had said that he would propose this to Siad Barre. The President stated that he had no objection to meeting with Siad Barre in Washington.

The President had told Fahd about the assurance which Gromyko had given to the United States that Ethiopia would not cross the border into Somalia, and on that basis we could perhaps go ahead and seek peace. But we need to get Siad Barre out of his current posture of appearing to be the aggressor.

With regard to the Palestinians, the Crown Prince had told the President that if and when a plebiscite is held in the West Bank, 80 percent of the Palestinians would support formal affiliation with Jordan; but the plebiscite must be held without outside influence.

The President noted that he now hoped to go upstairs in order to prepare for a very busy day tomorrow which would include not only the Aswan meeting, but also a formal address in Paris.⁴ He did note, though, that the Crown Prince had also pointed out that it was important that King Hussein not get in a public posture of calling for the West Bank to go in with Jordan. Secretary Vance said that that is what King Hussein had said: that the basic principles should be established without him, then he could come in and join the negotiating process.

The President stated that they had had a very good discussion and he hoped that he could be excused to get ready for the next day.

The Crown Prince asked what would happen if we did not come to an agreement on the basic principles. The President said in that case we could identify optional language. Prince Fahd said that was all right with him, but he wanted to raise one point. That is, that the Palestinian people should be given their free chance to say where they want to go. However, the outcome would be as he had told the President. The President said he understood that point, but if it was in fact left open to the possibility of a fully independent state, Israel would never accept it. The Crown Prince said the whole thing rests on Israel's readiness to have peace and security. If they will not accept that, one must wonder whether they in fact are interested in having peace.

⁴ Carter spoke at the Palais des Congres in Paris on January 4. The text of his remarks is in *Public Papers: Carter, 1978*, Book I, pp. 21–27.

The President said that a plebiscite such as we had proposed still leaves adequate room for resolution of differences. For example, if the choice in the plebiscite is between a fully demilitarized entity under the United Nations or, alternatively, an affiliation with Jordan, that is a reasonable choice.

Prince Fahd agreed that they would then be free to choose. He stated that he wanted the President to get his rest. He said that at this point “We will leave it to our Foreign Minister colleagues to fight it out over the paper.”

185. Telegram From Secretary of State Vance to the Embassy in Israel¹

Paris, January 5, 1978, 0006Z

Secto 13092. Dept please pass Vice President Mondale. For the Ambassador from the Secretary. Subj: President Carter’s Meeting With President Sadat.²

1. During President Carter’s phone call from Air Force One today to Prime Minister Begin, the President promised to send Begin a report on his talk with President Sadat in Aswan.³ You should get in touch with Begin as soon as possible and say that the President has asked you to convey the following report to him.

2. Sadat clearly attached great importance to the President’s stop in Aswan as visible evidence of our continued support for him and for the negotiating process which he and Prime Minister Begin have set in motion. In their conversation, the two Presidents devoted most of the time

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840072–1286. Secret; Immediate; Exdis (Handle as Nodis). Sent immediate for information to the Department of State.

² According to the President’s Daily Diary, Carter met with Sadat and Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany Helmut Schmidt in Aswan on January 4 from 9:15 to 10:10 a.m. (Carter Library, Presidential Materials, President’s Daily Diary) No memorandum of conversation has been found.

³ According to the President’s Daily Diary, Carter spoke with Begin on January 4 from 11:15 to 11:22 a.m. (Carter Library, Presidential Materials, President’s Daily Diary) No memorandum of telephone conversation has been found. Carter wrote in his diary, “Immediately after leaving Aswan we called Begin, who seems to be under great pressure from his right-wing allies and the settlers concerning expansion of settlements in the Sinai and West Bank. We’ll have to prevent this disrupting the entire peace process.” (*White House Diary*, p. 161)

to a discussion of how the negotiating process should proceed from here on and, in particular, to the forthcoming meeting of the Cairo Conference Political Committee in Jerusalem. Sadat indicated that Egypt would have counterproposals to the Israeli proposals which the Prime Minister presented at Ismailia.⁴ He also made clear that he attaches first priority to an agreed statement of principles which he feels is essential to him politically as he pursues the negotiation of Egyptian/Israeli bilateral questions.

3. While acknowledging that difficult problems remain to be resolved with respect to the Sinai, Sadat thought that these were solvable and did not dwell on them in any detail. His primary emphasis was on obtaining agreement on the principle of self-determination for the Palestinians. The President explained the difficulties that this poses for Israel and made no repeat no commitments in this regard. At the same time, recognizing the importance of some public expression on this issue which would strengthen Sadat's hand against his Arab critics, the President included in his public remarks following the meeting reference to the need for the Palestinians to participate in determining their own future.⁵ We believe this formulation will be usefully interpreted as reflecting some evolution in our own thinking, without prejudging the self-determination question in any significant way. In our view, however, it is not a viable position to insist that the Palestinians should have no say whatsoever in their future status, given the general acceptance in world opinion of the concept of self-determination.

4. In addition to the foregoing, Sadat made clear that he wants to continue to work for a comprehensive peace settlement which both he and we understand is also Israel's position. He expressed some sense of urgency about the importance of early progress in the Jerusalem talks.

5. The Prime Minister should know that Sadat met with the President without any of his advisers present; the only other participant was Secretary Vance for part of their meeting. The President, therefore, believes that Sadat was reflecting his own views in all that he said.

6. Finally, the President wants to give the Prime Minister his judgment that Sadat remains as committed to the success of their current negotiating process as does Prime Minister Begin and that, in our view, he continues to have strong support for this process among his people. The President wants once again to express his support and admiration for Prime Minister Begin's political courage and statesmanship in the way he has responded, despite criticism he has encountered domestically, to the unprecedented opportunity that has been opened up by the

⁴ See Documents 180 and 181.

⁵ The text of Carter's remarks is in *Public Papers: Carter, 1978*, Book I, pp. 19–20. See footnote 5, Document 187.

recent dramatic dialogue between the Prime Minister and President Sadat.

Vance

186. Telegram From Secretary of State Vance to the Embassy in Egypt¹

Paris, January 5, 1978, 1257Z

Secto 13103. For the Ambassador. Subject: Letter From President Carter to President Sadat.

1. Please deliver the following letter from President Carter, dated January 4, 1978, to President Sadat.

Begin text.

Dear Mr. President:

Although I was not fortunate enough to have as much time as I would have liked for talks,² it was a true pleasure for me to have the opportunity to meet with you once again at this most important moment in the history of the Middle East. The process which you have set in motion with your great courage and foresight must now be sustained and nourished. As I pledged to you in our meeting, I shall devote all of the resources available to me to assist you, the other Arab parties and Israel to find a true peace, a permanent peace, in place of the conflict, hostility and suffering which has for too many years frustrated the higher aspirations and capabilities of all the people of the Middle East.

Our discussions were extremely helpful to me as we approach the next round of negotiations growing out of the Cairo Conference. As I mentioned to you, it is my intention that the United States should play a more active role in the negotiating process during the meetings of the Political Committee in Jerusalem. I rely on your advice and counsel to insure that our efforts are as effective as possible and that the objectives of Egypt and the United States remain always in close accord. In that regard, it was particularly gratifying to me to confirm with you the iden-

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840072–1286. Limited Official Use; Immediate. Sent immediate for information to the Department of State.

² A reference to Carter's talks with Sadat on January 3 in Aswan, Egypt. For a report on the meeting, see Document 185.

tity of views we share regarding the underlying principle of a peace settlement.

Mr. President, it is always a personal pleasure for me to meet with you and renew the personal friendship which began so auspiciously in Washington shortly after I took office. I believe it is a good omen that we were able to greet each other anew at the beginning of a new year. Working together, I am convinced that we can make 1978 a year of peace. That is my most profound hope.

Please accept my warmest personal regards for the continued health and happiness of you and Mrs. Sadat and for the prosperity and peace which the great people of Egypt and all the peoples of the Middle East so richly deserve.

Sincerely,

(signed) Jimmy Carter

His Excellency

Anwar Al-Sadat

President of the Arab Republic of Egypt

Cairo

End text.

2. Original being pouched.

Vance

187. Telegram From the Embassy in Syria to the Embassy in Belgium¹

Washington, January 6, 1978, 1415Z

94. For the Secretary's attention. Subject: Congressmen Meet Arafat and Receive Message for Carter.

Summary: Four members of HIRC met Arafat and PLO aides in Damascus January 5. Arafat has furnished Congressman Findley message for President Carter² which Findley tentatively plans to deliver Embassy Cairo for onward transmission. We strongly discouraged any

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P850083–2358. Confidential; Niact Immediate; Exdis—Treat as Nodis. Sent immediate for information to Cairo and the Department of State. Sent for information to Amman, Tel Aviv, and Jidda.

² See Document 202.

publicity about message and requesting any Embassy involvement in transmitting text. End summary.

1. Congressman Findley (R–Ill), along with three HIRC colleagues from Codel Zablocki, met with PLO leaders Yassir Arafat, Faruk Kadumi, Basil Aql and Abu Mahir in Damascus for three hours afternoon Jan 5.³ Near end of meeting, Arafat dictated a statement which Findley undertook to relay to President Carter. I attended briefing which Findley gave subsequently for Codel colleagues and understand that message is along predictable lines that Arafat wants to maintain a moderate line and his emphasis that he had been a defender of President Carter's policies within PLO councils against hardliners. Arafat said he felt there had been a deterioration of US policy towards the Palestinian state since the US-Soviet communique.⁴ He hoped President Carter would not push him further into a corner. Arafat professed to see glimmer of hope in the President's Aswan statement⁵ even though President did not mention PLO.

2. Arafat referred bitterly to Dr. Brzezinski's "bye bye PLO" statement.⁶ He and his companions ridiculed this statement saying the Palestinians are here, will be around for a long time, and anything the US may say will not affect this.

3. Regarding Palestinian state, Arafat told Findley he would be satisfied with independent state on West Bank and Gaza Strip but it must be fully independent. PLO was ready to establish such an independent state on any part of liberated Palestine. He said he would also be ready to accept an international peacekeeping force in the new state of Palestine consisting of forces of the five veto power nations in the UN "since these forces would be subject to the command of the Secretary General" (sic). He did not specify how long these forces should stay but said this

³ A 15-member Congressional delegation led by Representative Clement Zablocki of Wisconsin, Chairman of the House International Relations Committee, traveled to Tunisia, Syria, Egypt, Jordan, Israel, Saudi Arabia, and Iran on an information gathering tour. (*Executive Intelligence Review*, Volume 5, Number 3, January 24, 1978)

⁴ See Document 120.

⁵ In Carter's remarks to the press after meeting with Sadat in Aswan on January 3 he said, "We believe that there are certain principles, fundamentally, which must be observed before a just and a comprehensive peace can be achieved. First, true peace must be based on normal relations among the parties to the peace. Peace means more than just an end to belligerency. Secondly, there must be withdrawal by Israel from territories occupied in 1967 and agreement on secure and recognized borders for all parties in the context of normal and peaceful relations in accordance with United Nations Resolutions 242 and 338. And third, there must be a resolution of the Palestinian problem in all its aspects. The problem must recognize the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people and enable the Palestinians to participate in the determination of their own future." (*Public Papers: Carter*, 1978, Book I, pp. 19–20)

⁶ In an interview with *Paris Match*, Brzezinski described U.S. policy toward the PLO after Sadat's visit to Jerusalem in November as "bye bye PLO."

was a detail which could be worked out. (Findley wondered whether this was not a new element of moderation in Arafat's position. He and other attendees could not recall Arafat having said it before.) Questioned about desirability of introducing Soviet forces into area, Arafat said the peacekeeping force might not require services of great powers, i.e. US or Soviet forces.

4. Arafat claimed that Israel need not fear Palestinian expansionism since mini-state would be surrounded by overwhelmingly superior military forces. In addition, state would take fifteen years to set up basic infrastructure of hospitals and schools and Palestinians did not intend to waste their resources on arms.

5. Asked if PLO state would have normal relations with Israel, Arafat replied "not immediately" since PLO has only one card to play and this must be used at proper time. He said diplomatic recognition would depend on Israel's behavior after establishment of new state.

6. Arafat said that President Sadat had told him the trip to Jerusalem was made at US request and under US pressure. According to Arafat, Sadat claimed he has a personal letter from Carter to this effect. Arafat disapproved of the Jerusalem visit. Nevertheless, Arafat asserted he continued relationship with Egyptian President through presence of two chief lieutenants in Cairo.

7. Arafat stressed at several points that he could act as a bridge between Israel and Arabs. The Palestinians understand the Jews from their prior life in Palestine and because "we are cousins."

8. In response Codel questioning, Arafat denied categorically that he or PLO leadership had ever ordered any terrorist incident. (sic) He said he had nothing to do with Munich⁷ but admitted he could not control all his people. Congressmen said that Arafat had been shaken by the assassination this week of PLO rep in London⁸ whom he described as his close friend. Arafat claimed that Iraq was responsible.

9. The conversation was held in English and was tape recorded. Arafat impressed Congressmen as "candid, gentle mannered and very intelligent." Arafat said he would have tape transcribed and sent to Cairo for Codel use.

10. Findley said he would like to make a public statement about his talk with Arafat, perhaps on arrival in Cairo, and would deliver Arafat message to Ambassador Eilts at Cairo. After the briefing, I talked privately to Findley. Noted that this is particularly sensitive moment for

⁷ A reference to the 1972 Munich Olympics where 12 Israeli athletes were taken hostage by armed Palestinians. When the West German police attempted a rescue of the Israeli hostages, the Palestinians killed the Israelis.

⁸ Said Hammami, the PLO representative to the United Kingdom since 1973, was assassinated in his London office on January 4.

ME negotiations. I urged he not publicize news that he had an Arafat/Carter message since this could only stimulate misunderstanding and embarrassment which would be counterproductive to present peace efforts (PLO Beirut has already publicized fact of Congressional meeting with Arafat, as far as we know without mentioning Arafat/Carter message). Said I doubted in any event White House would want Embassy Cairo or any other US mission used as vehicle for delivery of such message. Findley professed understanding but feels he has obligation to deliver message. He acknowledged he could arrange delivery on his own after return to Washington o/a January 20. He would appreciate further guidance when he reaches Cairo today where delegation will stay until proceeding to Amman January 9.

Murphy

188. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Israel¹

Washington, January 9, 1978, 2154Z

5305. Subject: Message to the President From Begin on Settlements Issue.

1. The following is the text of the message from Begin to the President on the settlements issue handed to the Secretary by Dinitz today, January 9 (septel).

2. Begin quote: Dear Mr. President, I thank you for your urgent message transmitted to me over the telephone by Ambassador Lewis on Saturday night, January 7.² The Government of Israel took yesterday the following decision:

3. 'To strengthen the existing settlements in Pithat Rafiah (the area between Rafiah and El-Arish), and alongside the Gulf of Eilat by adding arable land for cultivation and increasing the civilian population both urban and rural.'

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Subject File, Box 2, Arab-Israeli Peace Negotiations: Volume II [I]. Secret; Immediate; Nodis. Drafted by A.A. Houghton (NEA/IAI), cleared by Thomas Martin (S/S-O), and approved by Veliotis.

² Neither the President's message nor a transcript of the telephone conversation has been found.

4. The Cabinet Secretary was instructed, if asked whether this means the establishment of new settlements in the two areas, to answer no.

5. He was, indeed, asked by the press and this was his reply.

6. As far as Judea and Samaria are concerned, I asked our Foreign Minister, Mr. Dayan, to check the relevant minutes of his talks with you, Mr. President, in September 1977.³ At yesterday's Cabinet session, Mr. Dayan read from the aforesaid document, the copy of which is before me as I write. It is Government of Israel cable no. 26 of September 19, 1977.

7. In it Mr. Dayan informs me that you, Mr. President, stated to him 'the illegality of the settlements and their being an obstacle to peace.' I told him frankly, Dayan continues, 'that he is mistaken to assume that the settlements are illegal or are an obstacle to peace, and that we are not flexible. This government is no less flexible than the previous one, but there cannot be a government in Israel that will not establish settlements. I promised him that I will recommend to you that in the near future only six settlements will be established in military camps. I added that it is possible that in the course of time a decision will be taken about additional military camps in the same way.'

8. This statement by our Foreign Minister is borne out in the minutes on the exchange of views between Vice President Mondale and Mr. Dayan.

9. We had, indeed, by January 1, established those six settlements in military camps. Last week, the Cabinet decided to establish four additional settlements, all of them in military camps. This, too, is in complete conformity with what our Foreign Minister told you, Mr. President, and your colleagues.

10. I can therefore sum up and say that the Government of Israel observes scrupulously, not only in spirit but also to the letter, any promise given to you by its representatives. The Government of Israel, of course, fulfills its commitments towards its people in our land as it is in duty and honor bound to do.

11. Yours respectfully and sincerely,

12. M. Begin. End quote.

Vance

³ See Document 106.

189. Message From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) to the Ambassador to Israel (Lewis)¹

Washington, January 10, 1978, 2311Z

WH80101. Embassy Tel Aviv: For delivery immediately upon opening of business.

Please deliver the following message from the President to Prime Minister Begin at the earliest opportunity.

Begin text:

Dear Mr. Prime Minister:

Thank you for your response to my message of January 7.² As you know, the position of the United States has been consistent on the issue of Israeli settlements in territory occupied in the 1967 war. We publicly articulated our position as early as September 26, 1967.³ On numerous occasions since that time, United States representatives have expressed the disapproval of, and opposition to, the establishment of Israeli settlements in the occupied territories on the grounds that these actions contravene the Fourth Geneva Convention on the Protection of Civilians in Time of War, to which Israel is a signatory, and also that these actions are prejudicial to the achievement of a Middle East peace settlement. As concerns this latter point, we have mentioned that settlements in themselves convey at the very least the impression of permanence of Israeli occupation which clearly is not conducive to creating the appropriate atmosphere for productive peace negotiations. It must be recognized that, if considered as permanent and under Israeli military protection, the settlements per se are inconsistent with Security Council Resolution 242 which is the only framework for negotiations and which clearly envisages Israeli military withdrawals in exchange for peace.

I must tell you frankly that I can see no substantive difference, so far as the impact on the peace process is concerned, between establishing new settlements in the Sinai and increasing the numbers of settlers in existing settlements and extending the land used by the existing settlements. As concerns the discussions with Foreign Minister Dayan

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Subject File, Box 8, Backchannel Messages: Middle East: 2/77–1/78. Secret; Sensitive.

² See footnote 2, Document 188.

³ On September 26, 1967, a State Department spokesman criticized Israel for announcing plans to send settlers into territories Israel had seized during the June 1967 Arab-Israeli War. The official also noted that this Israeli policy would conflict with President Johnson's June 19 speech in which he had called for the territorial integrity of all states in the Middle East. (Hedrick Smith, "U.S. Chides Israel on Settler Program," *New York Times*, September 27, 1967, p. 1)

in September 1977,⁴ we clearly understood him to say that your government would limit new settlement activity in all the occupied territories to the eight existing military installations described by the Foreign Minister for a period of one year, that is until September 1978, rather than only for three months. He said “one year from now, there will be no new civilian settlements, there will only be settlers in uniform in military camps.” This is, obviously, significantly different from our current understanding of your plans.

Our mutual attention, and that of the entire world in the past few months, has been riveted on the dramatic prospectives for peace which President Sadat and you initiated in November. You have embarked on the path to real peace for your people and the entire area. As you know, I am firmly convinced that we must not allow this momentum for peace to be lost. I well recognize the necessity to achieve a consensus for bold new policies in a democratic society. I am genuinely concerned, however, that the most recent developments concerning settlements may set back the cause of peace by making more difficult the Jerusalem and Cairo meetings. It would be particularly regrettable if a serious setback to the current peace process were to be perceived as a result of Israeli action on settlements.

Your government has said that no settlement would be permitted to become a real obstacle to peace, and I continue to rely on that assurance. I wish to note in this respect that in our meeting on September 19, Foreign Minister Dayan stated, “Settlements will not decide boundaries, and if a settlement is beyond our final borders, it will either be removed or we will get agreement with our neighbors.”

In closing, Mr. Prime Minister, let me assure you that Cy Vance in Jerusalem will be prepared to use our good offices in any way possible to help ensure that the required momentum in the peace process is maintained. You have my admiration, my faith and my confidence.

Sincerely yours,

Jimmy Carter

End text.

⁴ A reference to Carter’s meeting with Dayan on September 19, 1977. See Document 106.

190. Memorandum From William Quandt of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski)¹

Washington, January 12, 1978

SUBJECT

The Approaching Moment of Truth

I see the Jerusalem talks as the beginning of a process that will take us down one of three possible roads:

—A broadening of negotiations to include the issues of the future of the West Bank-Gaza and the Palestinians.

—Stalemate on the Palestinian issue, but progress toward a bilateral Egyptian-Israeli agreement.

—Stalemate across the board, with mounting tensions, and threats by Sadat to resign or revert to more intransigent policies.

We will no doubt aim for the first of these outcomes, in the knowledge that we may have to settle for the second, at least for now. But I also fear that by misjudging the situation, we may only be confronted by the latter two possibilities.

The *minimum requirements* for opening the way to serious negotiation on the West Bank-Gaza-Palestinian issues are the following:

—Agreement between Egypt and Israel on the concept of *an interim, or transitional, period of self-government* for the West Bank and Gaza, with some token international presence alongside Israeli security forces. (This would require some significant modifications in Begin's "self-rule" proposals.)

—Israeli agreement that during the interim period, negotiations leading to final peace treaties would begin, and that Israel will declare that *the withdrawal provision of UN Resolution 242 applies to the West Bank and Gaza*. Israel can insist on security arrangements, border modifications, staged withdrawal, a residual presence, protection for settlements, and so forth, but the concept of withdrawal, which is totally lacking in the Begin plan, must be part of a final peace agreement. This is essential for Sadat, Hussein and the Saudis. It is the hardest issue for Begin to face, but it is also the one on which he is on the weakest ground. I would rather see us argue hard for the principle of withdrawal, which has some tangible meaning, than for the vague notion of self-determination. Self-determination without withdrawal means nothing; the reverse is not the case.

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Chronological File, Box 134, Quandt, 1/78 (2). Secret. Outside System. Sent for information.

—Some agreement on a process, or guidelines, for negotiating the future status of the West Bank and Gaza. Sadat should be able to call the process self-determination, and Begin may simply agree to call it negotiations. We could talk of a process which would allow Palestinians to participate in determining their own future and in defining their legitimate rights. In brief, we might not all use the same words, but we would agree on the process involved.

I do not underestimate how difficult it will be to meet these minimal requirements. I see no sign that Begin is ready to accept the principle of withdrawal, to say nothing of the principle of self-determination. He might agree to the vague language of the President's Aswan statement,² but that would not represent any real change in policy and would not be enough to bring King Hussein into the negotiations. At best it could serve as a very thin fig leaf behind which Sadat might try to conclude a separate deal with Israel.

If we could get agreement on the minimum requirements that I have outlined, Sadat might still end up negotiating a separate deal, but he would be less vulnerable in the Arab world. Hussein might not join the negotiations, but the burden of choice would be on him and moderate Palestinians. They would at least be tempted.

To get Begin to accept the principle of eventual withdrawal from the West Bank and Gaza will be extremely difficult, since it goes against both his ideological beliefs and his views on security. We cannot ease his concern on the former, but we can on the latter.

There are two ways of limiting the security risk in negotiations over the West Bank-Gaza and the Palestinian issue:

—*A pre-defined limitation on the exercise of self-determination.* This approach, which the President has alluded to, would try to establish an interim regime, with some international presence, and would define self-determination as a choice between such a regime and affiliation with Jordan. If we begin to promote this concept of self-determination, we can anticipate endless difficulties. Some will claim that this makes a mockery of the concept; others will argue that it leaves the hard issues of borders and security unanswered; and Palestinians themselves will be acutely aware of their limited role in shaping their own future, and might very well boycott the process. Israel would realize that eventual withdrawal is implied by this approach, and thus Begin will be inclined to reject it. The Labor opposition, by contrast, would be inclined to accept, but would argue hard for major border changes.

—*A pre-defined process of negotiations tied to the principle of self-determination by means of a referendum.* This approach would seek to establish an interim regime and a negotiating process that would include Israel, Jordan, Egypt and Palestinian representatives. To launch the process, mutual commitment to the concepts of peace, security and withdrawal, as embodied in UN Resolution 242, would be required, but

² See footnote 5, Document 187.

no effort need be made at the outset to define the end result of negotiations (state, homeland, entity, federation, confederation, and so forth). The only other commitment that would have to be made prior to the onset of serious negotiations would be that the results of the negotiations, as embodied in a peace treaty, would be ratified by means of a referendum in which Palestinians would vote. There would be an element of choice, but it would be limited to saying yes or no to the terms of a treaty. Israel would not have to accept in advance any outcome to which it is not prepared to agree. The risk, of course, is that Israel could block progress in the negotiations indefinitely, but this is a risk in any event.

The advantage of this approach is that it commits Israel to a process and a principle, withdrawal, not a specific outcome, whereas for the Arabs it also has the attractiveness of appearing to be open-ended (anything the parties can agree to) and would offer self-determination to the Palestinians by means of participation in the negotiations and in ratifying the peace treaty. Whereas the limited-choice referendum would probably have to be confined to Palestinians living in the West Bank and Gaza, this approach could include all Palestinians in the referendum, since they would have an overwhelming incentive to vote yes on the peace treaty as the way of ending the interim regime and Israel's military presence.

The Palestinian negotiators will be much freer to participate in negotiations if the results are presented to all Palestinians. The legitimacy bestowed by a referendum open to all Palestinians will also be much greater than by one limited to only the one-third of the Palestinian community living in the West Bank and Gaza.

In summary, I would maintain that the key to broadening the scope of negotiations lies in getting Begin to change his position on the principle of withdrawal from the West Bank and Gaza. He presently excludes these areas from the withdrawal provision of 242, a position that no one in the international community accepts. To make his acceptance easier, we also need an understanding of how the negotiations concerning the West Bank and Gaza will proceed in a way that provides safeguards for Israel and, at the same time, is sufficiently attractive and open-ended to gain the participation of Jordan and moderate Palestinians.

This cannot be achieved in a few days in Jerusalem. I think Secretary Vance should make the case for this approach, but should not immediately back down and settle for less, such as an Aswan-like statement. If necessary, he should leave Jerusalem without having reached any agreement, then he should talk to Sadat about next steps. At the risk of being a bit Machiavellian, he could urge Sadat to make a firm public statement of his position, perhaps even a bit tougher than his real position, at which point we could intervene with an initiative to break the deadlock, which he would then accept. At that point, the President might consider his fireside chat to the American people.

191. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) to President Carter¹

Washington, January 13, 1978

SUBJECT

Your Discussion with Prime Minister Begin on Sinai Proposal

The attached cable² conveys Prime Minister Begin's strong disagreement over the interpretation we have given to portions of your discussions with him on December 16th and 17th³ concerning his proposal for Sinai. You can compare his version of the conversations with our own records from the excerpts quoted below. You will note that your own comments, while supportive, did contain qualifications which are missing in the Israeli version. I think that we should correct the record so that Prime Minister Begin will not interpret our silence as acceptance of his interpretation of our position.⁴

December 16, 1977

Israeli Version. (Prime Minister speaking) "In the North we have the problem of the area between Rafah and El-Arish. The Israeli settlements are there (and he points at the map). We suggest they stay. We will also have there UN forces and there should also be included a small Israeli defense contingent." (Prime Minister points out where settlements are.) "This is the outline of what we decided to do to establish peace with Egypt. It is a great change and from our point of view a great risk."

U.S. Version. "In the North, we have a problem of the area between Rafah and Al Arish. We are suggesting that Israeli settlements stay even after Egyptian sovereignty has returned. There will be Jews living in Egypt just as there are Arabs living in Israel. We will ask for security to be provided by a UN force. There should also be some small Israeli defense forces at selected points to protect our people. In no way do we think this will infringe on what President Sadat requires. We are offering a great change in our position and there are great risks, but we will take them for peace."

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Subject File, Box 2, Arab-Israeli Peace Negotiations 1978: Volume II [I]. Top Secret. Outside the System. Sent for information. The date is handwritten.

² Telegram 8857 from Tel Aviv is attached but not printed.

³ See Documents 177 and 178.

⁴ At the end of the first paragraph is a handwritten note in the margin by Carter that reads, "ok. J."

Israeli Version. (President speaking) “I wish first to say that in my opinion there is nothing in this proposal that Sadat could not accept. It is very reasonable. The time schedule should be expedited.”

U.S. Version. “In my opinion, there is nothing in your proposals that Sadat could not accept. It seems very reasonable. Maybe you could expedite the time schedule. Perhaps I don’t understand all of the details yet.”

December 17, 1977

Israeli Version. (President speaking) “What I am concerned about is that the public reaction to your proposal on Judea, Samaria, and Gaza will not prove to be harmful to Sadat. We believe that the Sinai proposal will be well received by him.”

U.S. Version. “I am concerned that the public discussion of your plans for a settlement of the West Bank issue not be harmful to Sadat. I think the Sinai proposal will be well received. There may be a few minor matters of concern still to be solved.”

192. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Egypt¹

Washington, January 15, 1978, 2145Z

11071. Subject: Letter to Sadat From President Carter.

Please deliver following letter from President Carter for President Sadat. Begin text:

Dear Mr. President:

Although our pleasant and fruitful discussions took place in Aswan only a few days ago,² I want to share with you these further thoughts on the eve of the Political Committee meeting in Jerusalem.

Our objective in these meetings will be to help the representatives of Egypt and Israel to move as quickly as possible to the substance of the issues with which we now must deal if there is to be concrete movement towards peace. I know that is your objective as well, and believe the way we have worked together in the last few days to resolve the

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840148–1475. Secret; Immediate; Nodis. Drafted by Brubeck (NEA), cleared by Quandt and Lowell Fleischer (S/S–O), and approved by Atherton. Sent for information to Tel Aviv.

² See Document 185.

issues that arose over the agenda proves that our approaches are the same. I agreed that Secretary Vance should postpone his departure until the issue of the agenda had been resolved because I wanted to demonstrate that he is going to Jerusalem to discuss substance and not to engage in negotiation over words that will not by themselves move us closer to peace.³

As I have reflected on our discussions, I have perceived that our common objective is not just a statement of principles for its own sake but basic decisions on the main elements of a peace agreement which could then be reflected in a declaration or in any other form that would be politically useful. Cy Vance will be concentrating on those elements in Jerusalem and will do what he can to keep the discussions there focused on them.

I deeply appreciate the way we have been able to work together. It is my desire that we should continue to work this way in the days ahead for the sake of the larger objective we share.

Thank you again for your hospitality in Aswan. My greatest regret from my trip was that I was not able to stay with you and your people longer. But the hour we had together proved how easily we communicate with each other and how quickly we can reach common conclusions.

Cy will stay in close touch with you through Ambassador Eilts while he is in Jerusalem and will look forward to reporting to you personally on his way back to Washington.

Sincerely, signed Jimmy Carter.

End text.

Vance

³ Vance delayed his departure, originally scheduled for January 14, because of Israeli and Egyptian differences on the wording of the Palestinian issue in the agenda of the Political Committee meeting in Jerusalem. (Bernard Gwertzman, "Vance Delays Trip to Mideast Parley at the Last Minute," *New York Times*, January 15, 1978, p. 1) The first meeting of the Political Committee was postponed from January 15 to January 17.

193. Letter From President Carter to Israeli Prime Minister Begin¹

Washington, January 15, 1978

Dear Mr. Prime Minister:

You have been often in my thoughts these past weeks since our meeting in Washington.² I have referred back many times to our personal conversations in my recent efforts to further our mutual purpose of bringing the Middle East nearer to real peace. I hope we can both now turn to the task and the opportunity still before us. Mutual friendship and trust, and our shared purposes can surmount any remaining differences. This seems the moment, therefore, to share with you what is in my mind as we approach the moment for great and perhaps historical decisions in the Jerusalem meetings.

Through Ambassador Lewis, I tried to keep you fully informed of my recent discussions with President Sadat and other leaders in the Middle East. I came home impressed by their spirit of realism, of compromise, of a deep desire for peace on which we must now build. Some of the public comments in recent days have reflected the pressures and stresses that, understandably, you and President Sadat are feeling with long held convictions and important interests at issue. I am confident, nonetheless, that the mutual respect and good will which you and President Sadat have achieved can withstand these stresses.

You know of my admiration for the vision and the sense of history with which you and President Sadat have responded to this extraordinary opportunity. I appreciate, also, the depth of feeling with which you and your countrymen must, understandably, confront decisions so fundamental and so vital to security and to peace for Israel. Yet, I am equally confident that the leadership you are providing will lead Israel to real peace, and to the security that only peace can provide.

Secretary Vance will share with you my appraisal of how, building on the base of understanding you and President Sadat have created, we hope it will now be possible for the Foreign Ministers at Jerusalem to move together to settle the remaining differences. I know that this will call for fundamental and far-reaching decisions by both of you, even beyond the impressive steps you have already taken. Yet I have faith that you and President Sadat have, in rare measure in our generation, the wisdom and courage required. Cy Vance stands ready to work with you, and he will of course be in daily touch with me. We are privileged

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, President's Correspondence with Foreign Leaders File, Box 9, Israel: Prime Minister Menachim Begin 11/77 to 6/78. No classification marking.

² See Documents 177 and 178.

to be associated with you in this great opportunity to bring peace and security to Israel and her neighbors.

Sincerely,

Jimmy Carter

194. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Jerusalem, January 16, 1978, 9:35–10:50 p.m.

SUBJECT

Summary of Secretary Vance's Meeting with Prime Minister Begin of Israel

PARTICIPANTS

Secretary of State Cyrus Vance
Ambassador Samuel Lewis
Assistant Secretary of State Alfred L. Atherton, Jr.
Assistant Secretary of State Hodding Carter III
Harold H. Saunders, Director, INR, Department of State
William B. Quandt, NSC Staff

Prime Minister Menahem Begin of Israel
Foreign Minister Moshe Dayan of Israel
Ephraim Evron
General Ephraim Poran
Dan Pattir
Yehiel Kadishai
Elyahim Rubinstein

The *Prime Minister* expressed his great pleasure at receiving a gracious letter from President Carter² and welcomed Secretary Vance to Jerusalem. He thanked the Secretary and Ambassador Lewis for their assistance in bringing Egypt and Israel together on the difficult issues of the agenda for the conference. Israel had found the Egyptian proposals unacceptable, and Egypt would not accept Israel's ideas. The American draft, with the suggestions of Ambassador Lewis, led to the ultimate solution.³

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Subject File, Box 2, Arab-Israeli Peace Negotiations 1978: Volume II [I]. Secret; Nodis. The meeting took place in the Prime Minister's office. Vance visited Jerusalem from January 16 to January 20 to attend the opening session of the Egyptian-Israeli Political Committee.

² Document 193.

³ The draft agenda was not found.

The *Prime Minister* noted that Israel had prepared three documents for the conference. First, Israel would table its draft of a peace treaty which had originally been presented in Washington.⁴ Secondly, Israel would present its plan for Administrative autonomy for Judea, Samaria and Gaza.⁵ Third, before the sessions begin, Israel will present a third document, which will be a Declaration of Principles. This should be the first order of business.

The *Prime Minister* proceeded to dwell on content of the third document. He described how at Ismailia he had spoken to President Sadat in private about a draft statement. He had read it to Sadat who had said that it would be all right for the Egyptian people, but that there would be problems with the others in the Arab world. The Prime Minister asked for a counter proposal from President Sadat, which he received in the evening. He and Sadat had already agreed to form the two committees and this was an important step. The Prime Minister also wanted an agreed written declaration. The Egyptians then presented a Declaration of Principles, some of which were agreeable to Israel, and some of which were not at all acceptable. A three-hour debate ensued, and an agreed text was produced which contained the operative parts of Resolution 242, plus an added paragraph on the Palestinians. The following day President Sadat's advisors said that they could not agree with the Palestinian formulation, so there should be no declaration at all. Sadat wanted to have it, but he did not overrule his advisors. Instead, each side's position was read in the press conference.⁶

The *Prime Minister* continued to describe how he had worked on the Declaration of Principles. Mostly it is based on what was agreed to at Ismailia. The Prime Minister then stated that he had presented Israel's two peace plans to the President, the Vice President, and to Secretary Vance in Washington. The President had been very gracious. The peace plan had specifically included the problem of settlements in Northern Sinai. The minutes of that meeting indicate that the Prime Minister clearly explained that there would be settlements and that Israeli defense contingents would defend them. (The Prime Minister reads from the Israeli minutes of the meeting.) The Prime Minister then quoted President Carter as having said that there was nothing in these proposals that President Sadat could not accept. He said that they were very reasonable, but that the time frame should be expedited. (The Prime Minister reads the precise quotes from the minutes.) The Prime Minister went on to say that the record showed that the President had said that he thought the Sinai Proposal would be well received by Pres-

⁴ See Document 100.

⁵ See the Attachment to Document 177 and footnote 14, Document 180.

⁶ See footnote 9, Document 180.

ident Sadat. The official statement issued after the meeting had mentioned a constructive approach, and had talked of a notable contribution. The President himself on December 28 had spoken of a great deal of flexibility and a long step forward, in referring to the Israeli proposals.⁷

The *Prime Minister* said that he had many other quotes, but that he did not wish to take more time. These are important statements. The Prime Minister claimed that he had not revealed anything of the discussions, but that he was accurate in saying that the President had referred to the proposals as a fair basis for negotiations. He did not say that he had the support of the United States or that the United States had endorsed the proposals. In the meantime, the Prime Minister had brought these proposals to President Sadat and they had included reference to the settlements in Sinai and to Israeli defense units. It is one of Israel's principles that there will be no Israeli settlements without Israeli defense units. The Prime Minister had told President Sadat that he would respect Egypt's principles, but that Egypt should respect Israel's principles as well, and this is one of Israel's principles. President Sadat had said nothing against this plan. He did not accept it, but he did not say one word against it.

The *Prime Minister* went on to describe the developments of the past two or three weeks. He defended his proposals for Sinai as far-reaching, offering no change in the international border and only having settlements on three percent of all the Sinai Peninsula. He quoted from an earlier discussion between Dr. Brzezinski and Ambassador Dinitz in which Dr. Brzezinski said that minor rectifications in the border might be possible and that Israel could demand up to fifteen kilometers in the Sinai. But Israel did not do this, and yet it is now being called adamant and extremist. The Prime Minister said that he found this astonishing. He is not surprised that the Egyptians may say this, but even some people in the United States are inclined to say this. They think that Israel should go further. Congressman Zablocki also said this, as if he were speaking on behalf of the Arabs. He said that Israel had not been responsive to Sadat's visit to Jerusalem.

The *Prime Minister* said that he wanted to ask Secretary Vance to let the Egyptians know about the American attitude toward his peace plan as defined in Washington. The Americans should let the Egyptians know during the Jerusalem conference of their attitude. If the Eryp-

⁷ On December 28, Bob Schieffer of CBS News, Barbara Walters of ABC News, Tom Brokaw of NBC News, and Robert MacNeil of PBS jointly interviewed Carter about several issues. During a discussion about the Middle East, Carter volunteered that "Prime Minister Begin has taken a long step forward in offering to President Sadat, and indirectly to the Palestinians, self-rule." A full transcript of the interview is in *Public Papers: Carter, 1977*, Book II, pp. 2187–2202.

tians have the impression that the United States will pressure Israel to give more, it will make them intransigent. The Prime Minister said that he already had many problems because he was willing to give up too much, and that his best friends, as well as the settlers, and of course, the opposition leaders, were all attacking him. He had met with the settlers. He had been interrupted in the midst of a meeting of his own Herut party. No one in Israel can agree to dismantle settlements. Such a government would be overthrown in no time. Egypt should not have the impression from the talks in Jerusalem that the United States will try to change the Israeli position. Israel has already made a sweeping peace proposal. Some of these proposals are absolutely vital for Israeli security. The United States should repeat what was said in Washington about how these proposals would contribute to peace. The Egyptians should know that they cannot count on American pressure. Israel will never destroy the homes of its settlers. There is no reason for them to leave. They have turned the desert into gardens.

Secretary Vance stated that he was pleased to see the Prime Minister again and that the United States and Israel enjoyed close ties of friendship. He said that he would look forward to receiving Israel's draft Declaration of Principles.

Turning to the discussions in Washington, the *Secretary* said that his clear recollection was that the President had said that he could accept the proposals on Sinai as a fair basis for negotiations and that he thought that they would be well received. Apparently, he was incorrect in his judgment concerning some points. There were also some statements in the press that implied that the President had endorsed the Israeli proposals, and he, of course, did not use that word. He did say that they were a fair basis for negotiation. The United States has stuck to that line. But we have had to say that we do not endorse the proposals. As a fair basis for negotiations, the proposals can be responded to by the other side putting forward proposals which may lead to some changes. Concerning the West Bank proposals, there were some changes in the draft of the document presented in Washington. The *Prime Minister* said that he had been obliged to submit the document to the Cabinet and to make some amendments.

Secretary Vance said that some of these amendments changed the thrust of the plan. He would nonetheless be willing to say here in Jerusalem that the plan offers a fair basis for negotiation. Nonetheless, the United States and Israel do differ on settlements. But if the United States is asked for an endorsement, it will not agree, since this has a different connotation.

Foreign Minister Dayan intervened to ask where we could go from here. The next day the conference would convene and the agenda would be confirmed and there would be speeches in the opening ses-

sion. The first item would deal with the Declaration of Principles. Israel would present its proposal. The Egyptians would probably not accept it. They will have a draft of their own. What procedure should then be used? Secretary Vance said that he assumed that until Egypt and Israel had put forward their proposals on the principles, it would be inappropriate for the United States to do anything on the first day. Basically, Egypt and Israel should negotiate with one another. The United States will then study the drafts, and then later we can put forward a view of our own about the proposals. If there are differences, we may help to bridge them. We want to remain flexible. We will not put anything of our own on the table.

Dayan said that a subcommittee might be formed to work out the principles. The *Secretary* said that he thought this would be very useful and that our own thinking was going along these lines. *Prime Minister Begin* suggested that a special subcommittee be set up to work on the peace treaty since that was primarily a legal problem. The *Secretary* agreed that this was the easiest of the items. He asked about how the second agenda item on guidelines for the West Bank and Gaza should be dealt with.

Foreign Minister Dayan suggested that we deal with the items in sequence, and perhaps form a subcommittee at some time on this topic. *Secretary Vance* suggested that working groups might take the proposals and come back at the end of the second day to review the situation. Then on the third day we would see if we could bridge the differences. All three items could be discussed at the same time. *Prime Minister Begin* suggested that we start with the easiest and then move to the harder problems. The third topic on the agenda is the peace treaties. That will require the work of lawyers and jurists and should be the first item to be disposed of. A subcommittee should work on drafts of peace treaties. This will take lots of time, perhaps weeks. Then there will only be two items to deal with. *Dayan* said that this was all right with him, but he was not sure that the others would agree. The third item is already on the agenda, but Egypt wants to start with the first item, the Declaration of Principles.

Secretary Vance said that the third item might be turned over to a working group because it is more technical than political. The political level should discuss the first two items. The *Prime Minister* said this was a sound suggestion. *Secretary Vance* said that it should be discussed with Foreign Minister Kamel. *Foreign Minister Dayan* suggested that the first two items be dealt with at the same time.

Prime Minister Begin then returned to his opening remarks. He said that he had never used the words that the President endorsed the proposals. He had said that the President agreed that his proposals offered a fair basis for negotiations. He did say that Israel had the support of

United States and Britain, but then Ambassador Eilts was told to say to Sadat that the United States did not endorse Israel's views on settlements. But the President had, in fact, said that Israel's proposal was very reasonable and this came very close to an endorsement. Israel is not trying to use American support against Egypt, but when President Sadat hears that the United States does not endorse Israel's views, this hurts. The Prime Minister again read the quotations of President Carter's statements, especially from his press conference of December 28th. His statements imply that Sadat should accept the proposals because they are very reasonable. This was an objective statement, but now there is an impression that Israel's proposals demonstrate intransigence, and that Israel has not given Sadat enough. This is an untrue impression of the actual American view. There has been no expression of adamancy or extremism. This impression should be corrected in the political committee. The United States should say that the Israeli proposals are very reasonable.

Secretary Vance said again that he was prepared to say that the proposals offered a fair basis for negotiations, but that he did not want to deceive the Prime Minister. The American position on settlements is different concerning their legality. We will not deceive the Prime Minister on this position. The *Prime Minister* then left the room to get some papers. Upon returning, he noted that when he had first visited the White House in July,⁸ the President had made a distinction between new settlements and the addition of settlers to existing settlements. The *Secretary* queried whether the President had approved the latter approach or had simply said that it was less objectionable. The *Prime Minister* then reviewed the exchange concerning settlers going to military camps. The *Secretary* said that he did not want to argue over the distinction between military camps and civilian settlements. The United States was opposed to both, but had less problem with the idea of military camps. The *Prime Minister* agreed that the American interpretation on this point was consistent, but the President had said in public that he had no objection to adding settlers to existing settlements. During his July visit, this was said. *Secretary Vance* said we object to both, and our basic objection remains. The *Prime Minister* then quoted again from the President's meeting with former Prime Minister Rabin on March 8, 1977.⁹ He noted that the President had said that he had looked at the map and had seen where the settlements in Gaza were located and he could see that they had strategic significance. Dr. Brzezinski had talked

⁸ See Documents 52 and 57.

⁹ See Document 20.

to Ambassador Dinitz on March 18, 1977,¹⁰ and had said that peace would entail substantial withdrawals, but that 15 or 20 kilometers in the Sinai could constitute a minor adjustment in the border, and that this would be consistent with Resolution 242. When the United States says that all of the settlements are illegal, this strengthens the Egyptian demand to remove the settlements. When the President says that the settlements are illegal, then Sadat is encouraged to cry out against them. The Prime Minister again requested that the United States use the phrase that his proposals are a fair basis for negotiations and are very reasonable.

The *Secretary* stated again that the President had viewed the overall proposal for Sinai as very reasonable but he had not singled out the settlements issue in particular. The *Prime Minister* argued that the settlements were included in the proposal. The *Secretary* said that there is no question of bad faith concerning this difference of opinion, but there has been some misunderstanding. The Secretary would state that the proposal as a whole was a fair basis for negotiation, but this does not change the American position on the illegality of settlements. Israel has a different position on this, but if the United States is asked, it will repeat its well-known position. The *Prime Minister* said that he could not go on with the discussion, but that he must say that there is some sadness about this development. He had left Washington with so many positive adjectives about his peace proposals from the President, the Vice President, Dr. Brzezinski, the Senators with whom he met, the great Senator Hubert Humphrey, and all of the adjectives were positive, and these were factual statements. He quoted again that the President had termed them very reasonable. The *Secretary* agreed that this was a characterization of the overall proposals, but that our position on settlements remained the same. The *Prime Minister* argued again that he had mentioned the settlements, and that the President had expressed his view on the proposals right after hearing about the settlements. Israel believes that the settlements are legal and they were brought to the attention of the President and he said just after that that there was nothing in the proposal which Sadat would reject. He did not want to repeat the record, but the United States had said that this was a fair basis for negotiation.

Foreign Minister Dayan returned to the question of the proposed agenda. He said that Israel had suggested that the question of civilian settlements should be on the agenda for the political group, but it is not on the agenda. Israel will not bring the settlements up in the discussions. The Egyptians did not want it included on the agenda. So the agenda now has no reference to settlements. Within the discussion of

¹⁰ No memorandum of conversation has been found.

principles, they may raise the question. Otherwise, it will not be there. As far as Israel is concerned, there is no need to touch the subject. They may raise the question in the military committees. Israel will not raise it. Israel can do without the discussion. The settlements are there, and if they are not discussed, the settlements will stay there.

The *Prime Minister* stressed that Israel cannot remove those settlements. No one can do it. This is the objective situation. No Israeli government can do it. Now Israel is even asked why no change is being made in the international border. The Prime Minister said that he had told Sadat that his demand for total withdrawal would only be acceptable to five out of 120 members in the Knesset. *Secretary Vance* said that he would be glad to discuss these points with President Sadat, but he was not sure if the question of settlements was a political or security issue. The *Prime Minister* said it was absolutely a security issue. He asked Foreign Minister Dayan to explain the security considerations.

Foreign Minister Dayan said that he would present the Israeli view on settlements in northeastern Sinai. This is part of the comprehensive plan and the individual parts cannot be judged alone. Israel presented its plan for Sinai based on two principles. The desert should be a buffer between Egypt and Israel, and Egypt could keep some of its forces in Sinai. Israeli forces would be withdrawn to the international border and the area in between would be either demilitarized or would be limited force zones. There could be some warning stations. On the border near Israel, Israel wants it to be under the control of Israelis. Israeli experience with Egypt has proved a necessity for this. Israel wants control from Sharm al-Shaikh to Rafah. This seemed to pose problems of reaching an agreement with Egypt after the Sadat visit. But there had been problems in the past about infiltrations from Gaza, with as many as 1500 casualties in the 1954 to 1955 period. The area along the Israeli border, in the Sinai, in the area from al-Arish to Sharm al-Shaikh, should be under the UN flag, but with Israeli civilians there and with Israeli airfields there. There is literally no substitute for the one airfield near Eilat. The others will be expensive to move. So this is the Israeli concept. If Israel is to withdraw all of its forces from Sinai and recognize Egyptian sovereignty over all of Sinai, with no border changes, then practically speaking there should be Israelis there under the UN flag from Sharm al-Shaikh up to the north. This is one alternative which can take care of Israeli security. The other approach is the more conventional Israeli concept of not going back to the old border. The previous Israeli governments insisted on annexing a belt along the border from Sharm al-Shaikh to the Mediterranean. Because of Sadat's move, Israel thought that to insist on a change in the international border would be too much for Sadat. But what Israel has offered to Egypt includes a UN presence and settlements in the UN zone and at Sharm al-Shaikh. If

there are settlements, they must be connected to Israel. They now get their water from Israel and they market their goods in Israel. They must have some kind of Israeli force protecting them, not necessarily a military force, but police forces, perhaps under a UN flag.

The *Foreign Minister* said that he had discussed this with Tuhami twice and that the second time he had put it in writing. At the time, he had the impression that Tuhami did not reject the idea. He was so impressed by Israel's willingness to cede sovereignty over all of Sinai, that he did not react particularly to the settlements, but then he got used to the proposal and it is now taken for granted that Israel will go back to the international border, but if Israel cannot keep the settlements, we will have to return to the old position, and we will have to look for changes in the border for our security. We have a record of thirty years of dealing with Egypt, and we cannot just rely on Sadat's promise to provide us with security. We can't rely on him for security. If the last war had started from an international boundary, we don't know what would have happened. We must assume our responsibilities. Either Sadat accepts changes in the international border, or we keep our settlements.

Prime Minister Begin, responding to Dayan's suggestion that perhaps there could be an exchange of territory, said that Sadat had rejected that in his *October* interview.¹¹ *Secretary Vance* asked if the Prime Minister was opposed to the idea. *Prime Minister Begin* said that Israel had made no such suggestion. If Egypt were to suggest such an idea, then Israel might consider it. Israel could not make such a proposal.

Secretary Vance asked how many settlements there are in the Sinai. He asked about the relationship of Israeli law to the settlements. The *Prime Minister* said that Israeli law does cover the settlements. He referred to Yamit, and 8 to 10 other agricultural settlements. The total population was 3000. The *Secretary* asked if this included those in Rafah and those on the coast toward Sharm al-Shaikh as well. *Foreign Minister Dayan* said it included both places, that there are settlements in the north and some on the gulf. There are none in between, with perhaps one exception. They will have to be part of the Israeli community. Sharon has suggested that the zone might have a relationship with Egypt, but within the zone daily life would be regulated by Israelis. There would be someone for the zone who would deal with Egypt to pay taxes and to deal with the Egyptians, but the individuals within the zone would be governed by Israeli law. Tuhami had said that if there

¹¹ The interview, which appeared in the Egyptian news magazine *October*, was first reported in the *New York Times* on January 8. ("Sadat Bars Israelis as Sinai Settlers," p. 6) A more complete report of appeared in the January 15 edition. ("Sadat Voices Doubt on Peace Endeavors," p. 6)

were problems between two Israelis, the problem should go to an Israeli court, but the area should remain under Egyptian law.

Secretary Vance asked what the settlements could do for Israeli security that demilitarized zones and watch stations could not do better. *Foreign Minister Dayan* said that if the settlements were not there, in peacetime Arabs would settle in the area. Once Israel leaves, the Bedouin and others from al-Arish will take over the area. The whole area from al-Arish to Gaza will be inhabited by Arabs. Only by having Israeli citizens in that area can there be a buffer between Gaza and its 400,000 inhabitants and the 40 million Arabs in Egypt. The UN cannot do anything. *The Secretary* asked what effect the settlements had on early warning and on military deployments. *The Foreign Minister* replied that if there was a continuous Arab population from Egypt to Gaza, there would be a renewal of the threat of terrorism. At one time, Israel had placed barbed wire around all of Gaza. Now Gaza is open and there are no checks on who will go in and out of Gaza. If this whole area from al-Arish to Gaza were to return to Arab control, and if extremists were to come to power, then there would be problems inside Israel and Israel would have to go back in to control the area.

The Secretary asked if it was clearly Israeli policy not to establish any new settlements in Sinai. *Prime Minister Begin* said that the answer was positive. The Government had decided only to enlarge the arable area for the existing settlements and to enlarge the population at Yamit. But there will be no new settlements. The Prime Minister had written to the President about this.¹² He believes that the settlers should stay. Otherwise, there will be a lowering of morale and, if population is not added, it will be very difficult. In the near future, there is no reason to have new settlements. It is hard to get new arable land.

Foreign Minister Dayan said that there might be a problem of some settlements planned by the previous government. These were not the present government's decision, but some construction work had begun. These were not new settlements, but some construction work began six months ago. The present government may want to look at these settlements again. In response to the Secretary's question, the *Prime Minister* said that there were three or four of these settlements.

The Foreign Minister explained that this did not involve anything other than placing some settlements between those that already existed. The building was already half done. When the Egyptians were here, Israel thought about taking them to see the settlements, but concluded it might not be a good idea. When Israel came to the area after 1967, there was only one area that was uninhabited and where there

¹² See Document 188.

was no water. Then Israel brought water from the Jordan to build up the area. There is little problem now in Gaza with terrorism. When Israel came, Gaza was full of PLO. Now everyone in Gaza is working. If Israel leaves, it would be necessary to close off the border again around the West Bank and Gaza. We would have to have some place for a check point to see who comes and goes. Secretary Vance said that he understood the situation. He also confirmed that he would speak to Foreign Minister Kamel and to President Sadat.

195. Telegram From Secretary of State Vance to the White House and the Department of State¹

Jerusalem, January 17, 1978, 0021Z

Secto 1009. White House for the President and Dr. Brzezinski Only. Department for S/S—Tarnoff. Subject: Secretary's Meeting With Prime Minister Begin—January 16.

1. We arrived in Israel tonight against the background of reports of a deeply disturbed Prime Minister Begin. He had been stung by Sadat's recent interview in a Cairo magazine in which Sadat seemed to make personally critical comments about him and said that there had been no response from Begin to his initiative. He was upset by the exchanges with us on past Israeli commitments about Israeli settlements in occupied territory, as well as by what he believed to be some backing away from the degree of support he believed he had received in Washington for his proposals on the Sinai (including the Sinai settlements) and the West Bank. He has suffered the criticism of some of his oldest political collaborators and members of the House International Relations Committee arrived here yesterday saying that Israel had not adequately responded to Sadat's initiative.

2. I met privately with Begin for 15 minutes² and allowed him to get some of these concerns off his chest immediately. I delivered your letter,³ and he was deeply moved. He left our private meeting to describe the letter in glowing terms to Dayan, and after Dayan had read the letter he fully agreed. Our slightly larger meeting with Dayan and a

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P850033–0465. Secret; Immediate; Nodis.

² No memorandum of conversation has been found.

³ See Document 193.

few of Begin's immediate advisors began in a most cordial, if moderately somber, atmosphere.⁴

3. Begin opened the larger meeting, after his usual cordial greeting, by reading through the record of what had been said to him about his broader proposals in the Sinai when he was in Washington. It was clearly a matter of deep personal concern to him because I believe he left Washington honestly convinced that he had at least general support from you and from those members of the Senate with whom he had spoken. He maintained that he deliberately avoided telling anyone that he had American "endorsement" for his proposals, but he felt that the generally positive response constituted, as he put it, "a form of endorsement." I believe he felt that there had been some questions raised about the integrity of his handling his understanding of the American position and he had also been hurt by the impression of Israeli intransigence that had been created by the appearance that the U.S. was backing away from his proposals. He asked that I make clear to the Egyptians that the U.S. is not changing its position on the Israeli proposals as a fair basis for negotiations and as "very reasonable." If we did not do as he asks, he feels the Egyptians would be encouraged to expect heavy American pressure on Israel.

4. I promised to tell the Egyptians again that we feel Begin's proposals are a fair basis for negotiation. I also said, however, that I wanted to be absolutely clear that, on the question of settlements, we do disagree with the Israeli position and hold the view that the settlements are not legal. I therefore held the line against promising Begin we would describe his proposals to the Egyptians as "reasonable."

5. On the question of settlements, he was silent for a period, shrugged his shoulders, and said, "I must say there is some sadness about this development. I left the White House with so many blessings . . . all adjectives used about my proposals were positive." He felt that those positive words had come immediately after his mention of the plan he had for keeping Israeli settlements in the Sinai under Israeli legal and security protection. He concluded this part of the discussion by saying, "I will not be repetitive. Let it be as it is."

6. I then asked Dayan to discuss procedures for the meeting tomorrow. Briefly, we will begin a short opening public session at 1100 with five minute opening speeches by each of the three of us. After photographs, we will go into closed session, in which the Israelis plan to put forward their draft declaration of principles and we expect the Egyptians to follow suit. While there is still uncertainty about how to proceed after that, the idea is under discussion of forming working

⁴ See Document 194.

groups to provide drafts of the declaration and possibly guidelines on a West Bank/Gaza agreement. The Israelis will submit their “self-rule” proposal as the basis for dealing with the West Bank/Gaza issues, and will rely on the draft they presented in Ismailia for the declaration of principles. At Begin’s own suggestion, a third working group would be set up to deal with draft treaties, with the draft received last September as the Israeli contribution, but this group would not be expected to produce results for some time because of the complicated legal issues involved.

7. Begin’s distraction by the question of misunderstandings was typified by the fact that, almost in the middle of Dayan’s presentation, he came back to the subject to point out that he had “never used the word endorsed” with regard to our position toward his proposals, but they had been called “very reasonable” and a “fair basis for negotiation.”

8. We then turned to the Israeli rationale for wanting to maintain settlements in the Sinai. In response to my questions, Dayan explained the importance in his view of establishing an Israeli-controlled belt between Gaza and concentrations of Egyptian population in the Sinai as a form of buffer against the infiltration of terrorists into Gaza, and then on into Israel. He is firmly convinced that this is a necessary course, along with the arrangements in the Sinai for limiting military forces, for enhancing Israel’s security. If this is not acceptable to Egypt, Israel will have to insist on border changes. We had some tentative discussions of what the relationship of those settlements to Israel and to Egypt might be, and I will pursue this subject in greater detail in my subsequent conversations with Dayan. He did raise one cautionary note that, while Israeli policy is to construct no new settlements in the Sinai, there is a problem on three or four settlements on which construction began under the previous government. The implication was that some of these might be brought to completion and could create controversy.

9. As for our strategy through the Political Committee meetings Wednesday and Thursday,⁵ I will have to wait until after my conversation with Egyptian Foreign Minister Kamel Tuesday morning to see what may be possible. My tentative thinking is to see whether we cannot push for a draft declaration of principles, at least with bracketed language, so that when I see Sadat on Friday I will be able to give him some measure of the prospects for these talks. Work on the guidelines for negotiations relating to the West Bank and Gaza will proceed more slowly because the issues are much more difficult, but we will see how far we get. Some progress will probably be necessary in order to help in

⁵ January 18 and 19.

the development of general principles for the declaration. I will be able to give you a clearer sense tomorrow evening of how we think things will develop.

10. From what the Israelis tell me, which is supported by our own information, the Egyptian delegation is inflexible and unimaginative by temperament and operating under a limited mandate. I suspect much will depend on what I am able to report to Sadat Friday, including what Begin may ask me to convey to him directly.

Vance

196. Telegram From the Secretary of State to the White House and the Department of State¹

Jerusalem, January 17, 1978, 1930Z

Secto 1019. White House for the President and Dr. Brzezinski. Department for the Acting Secretary and Tarnoff. Subject: Jerusalem Political Committee Talks—The First Day.

1. Today combined the formal opening and first closed session of the Political Committee with the beginning of work in informal, bilateral meetings. Both sides have now tabled draft declarations of principles (sent by separate telegram)² and are looking to us to come forward with a draft that attempts to find common ground. The Israeli draft incorporates much of the language of Resolution 242, while the Egyptian draft reorders the issues mentioned in Resolution 242 and tends to state them to further their interests. We have spent the afternoon developing the draft reproduced in paragraph 7 below.

2. I met early this morning for about one-half hour with Foreign Minister Kamel.³ Kamel stressed that Egypt expects active US participation in the work of the Political Committee. He repeatedly emphasized that Egypt needs quick progress on withdrawal and Palestinian rights, and he mentioned the importance of bringing Jordan into the negotiations. I told Kamel that we felt the committee should focus first of all on the declaration of principles and that our strategy would be to let

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P850033–0474. Secret; Niact Immediate; Nodis.

² See Document 197.

³ No memorandum of conversation has been found.

Israel and Egypt put their drafts on the table before beginning our effort to bridge the differences. He agreed this was the best course.

3. At the same time I urged Kamel to give thought to presenting a counter-proposal to the Israeli proposal for the West Bank and Gaza and to consider the setting up of a working group on that issue. Kamel was very reluctant to do so. He felt the talks should concentrate at this stage on the declaration of principles. Only after other parties had joined the talks and Israel had made clear they are ready to accept Palestinian rights, Kamel said, would Egypt be able to present its ideas on a transitional regime for the West Bank and Gaza. Kamel repeatedly stressed the sensitivity of Egypt's seeming to be dealing alone with Israel on the West Bank/Gaza issue; at one point he described it as "dynamite." In view of Kamel's reluctance to come to grips with the issue directly, I suggested that the working group on the declaration of principles might also be charged with West Bank/Gaza problem since obviously the two are very closely connected. Kamel seemed to accept our explanation that it would be important to us in our work on the declaration of principles to have at least a general understanding of how Egypt would approach the West Bank/Gaza problem.

4. Kamel was perceptibly nervous (though this is his manner); he indicated he was not feeling well and it was clear that he is not comfortable with the idea of a long stay in Jerusalem. I assured him that the US will do all in its power to move the negotiations forward but stressed that the negotiations will of necessity be difficult and time-consuming and that we must all persevere and not allow ourselves to become discouraged. I said I thought it important that the Political Committee stay in continuous session rather than adjourn, so as to avoid giving the impression of a breakdown in the talks. Kamel agreed to this "as long as there is something to do." He seemed somewhat bucked up by my remarks on the necessity to keep at it but again stressed that there must be progress in the shortest possible time—which, in answer to my question, he defined as "few weeks."

5. We then went to the formal opening session where Dayan, Kamel and I made brief statements in presence of media representatives. Dayan, as host chairman, spoke first. He praised US efforts in the cause of Middle East peace, calling them a "basic and fundamental factor." He stressed the need for peace but said it can only be achieved by "concession, compromise and mutual agreement" and warned against attempting "to solve our problems and differences by ultimatums." Kamel also expressed appreciation for US peace efforts. He stressed that Egypt seeks a comprehensive peace based on withdrawal "from all the Arab territories occupied by Israel since June 1967, including Jerusalem," not a separate peace. Predictably Kamel emphasized the need for recognition of Palestinian "national rights" and for

self-determination. In my statement I pledged our active support for the efforts of the parties, stressed the need to come to grips now with difficult issues of substance, and repeated the three principles enunciated by you in your Aswan statement.⁴

6. The first closed session, which followed after a brief recess, lasted only about fifteen minutes. Dayan read the agenda and then noted, in connection with phrase “West Bank” in item (B), that Israel would use the term “Judea and Samaria.” Kamel immediately replied that as far as Egypt was concerned English version was proper one. Interestingly, having made reservation, Dayan went on in subsequent discussions to use term “West Bank.” Dayan tabled an Israeli draft declaration of principles and the Begin plan for the West Bank and Gaza. Kamel made a brief statement making clear Egyptian understanding that the Political Committee is meeting in the framework of the Cairo Conference with the aim of reaching a comprehensive settlement based on Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories and a just solution of the Palestinian problem in all its aspects, and that the agenda provides for discussion of all these problems. Egyptian delegation then passed out copies of an Egyptian draft declaration of principles after which Dayan, by previous agreement with Kamel and me, announced adjournment until Wednesday afternoon.⁵ Question of establishment of working groups was not raised.

7. We are transmitting separately the texts of the Israeli and Egyptian drafts of declaration of principles. There follows text of the proposed draft which we have done here and which, subject to any comments you may have, I propose to discuss with Dayan and Kamel tomorrow morning. My thought would be to have it ready to present at the Political Committee meeting that afternoon. This draft incorporates common language from the Israeli and Egyptian drafts, plus language from the agreed agenda for the Jerusalem meetings.

Begin text.

1. The Governments of the Arab Republic of Egypt and Israel are determined to continue their efforts to reach a comprehensive peace settlement in the region.

2. Within the framework of such a settlement the two governments express their willingness to negotiate peace treaties on the basis of full implementation of the principles of UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 in all their parts.

⁴ The text of Vance’s opening statement is in the Department of State *Bulletin*, February 1978, p. 33.

⁵ January 18.

3. There will be withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from territories occupied in the 1967 conflict and secure and recognized borders for all parties.

4. There must be a just resolution of the issues relating to the West Bank and Gaza which recognizes the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people and enables them to participate in the determination of their own future. The resolution of these issues should be achieved through talks in which Egypt, Jordan, Israel and representatives of the Palestinians would participate.

5. There will be termination of all claims or states of belligerency and respect for and acknowledgment of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of every state in the area and the establishment of normal, peaceful relations through the conclusion of peace treaties.

End text.

8. Paragraph one of our draft is composed entirely of common language from Israeli and Egyptian drafts. So is paragraph two, with exception of the words "peace treaties," "full implementation," and "in all parts." Paragraph three language is from 242 in its entirety. Paragraph four is a composite of language from agenda item number two, your Aswan statement and the US working paper. Paragraph 5 is 242 except for the final clause "and the establishment of normal, peaceful relations through the conclusion of peace treaties." This language was taken from the Egyptian draft, with the addition of the word "normal."

9. I think this is a fair and balanced draft. While I would not expect Israelis and Egyptians to accept it out of hand, I believe they will recognize that we have made a sincere effort to bridge the gap between their positions and that it fits our role as impartial mediator. I am sure both sides will see problems—in paragraph four in particular for the Israelis, and possibly in paragraph three for the Egyptians should they insist on more specificity on withdrawal. But at the very least I think the draft provides a good basis for getting negotiations underway.

10. Please let me know as soon as possible if you have thoughts on our draft or on the way we propose to proceed. I am planning to meet with Dayan at about 9:00 am and with Kamel at about 11:30 am local time tomorrow. Next formal session of the Political Committee is 3:00 pm tomorrow.

11. I had two other meetings with Americans passing through Jerusalem.

12. My first meeting of the day was with Rabbi Schindler,⁶ who saw Sadat last week and has met with Begin several times these past

⁶ No memorandum of conversation has been found.

days. Schindler seemed somewhat disappointed with Sadat; Sadat asked Schindler to convey to Begin the now-familiar message that he (Sadat) has given everything and Begin nothing. Still, Schindler was not pessimistic. He thought Begin had not yet revealed his bottom line and that Begin could get away with pulling out all the settlements in Sinai if he tries, though obviously this would be politically difficult.

13. Finally, I met for over an hour with Clem Zablocki and his Congressional group at the end of the day.⁷ We had a good exchange from which it was clear that this important cross section of the House strongly supports the active role you have directed that we play in the current negotiations. They are overwhelmingly impressed with the mood for peace they found in the Arab countries they visited and with a few exceptions believe that Israel must do more to help keep the momentum alive. At the same time, they do seem to understand the difficulties Begin has in molding a consensus in the democratic Israeli political system against the background of 30 years of distrust of Arab intentions. On the key Palestinian question, I would say that this group believes a way must be found through an interim process to return the West Bank and Gaza to Arab authority and create a Palestinian entity linked to Jordan. They also are on the whole supportive of our selling F-15's to Saudi Arabia following their visit there.

Vance

⁷ No memorandum of conversation has been found. See footnote 3, Document 187.

197. Telegram From Secretary of State Vance to the White House and the Department of State¹

Jerusalem, January 17, 1978, 1730Z

Secto 1020. White House for the President and Dr. Brzezinski. Department for the Acting Secretary and Peter Tarnoff. Subject: Drafts of Declaration of Principles.

1. Following are texts of the Israeli and the Egyptian drafts of declaration of principles which were tabled by Dayan and Kamel in the closed session of the Political Committee meeting at noon today.

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P850033-0482. Secret; Niact Immediate; Nodis.

2. Israeli draft:

Following the historic events in the Middle East, the visit of President Sadat to Jerusalem and the reception accorded to him by the people, the Parliament and the Government of Israel, and the visit of Prime Minister Menachem Begin to Ismailia on 25 December 1977, and the meetings between their colleagues and advisers, the Foreign Ministers of the Arab Republic of Egypt and the State of Israel having met in Jerusalem have agreed on the following declaration of principles to govern the negotiation of a comprehensive peace settlement in the Middle East:

1. The Governments of the Arab Republic of Egypt and Israel are determined to continue their efforts to reach a comprehensive peace settlement in the region.

2. Within the framework of such a settlement, the two governments express their willingness to negotiate peace treaties on the basis of the principles envisaged in the Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338.

3. The two governments agreed that the establishment of the just and lasting peace requires actions for the fulfillment of the following:

(A) Withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from territories occupied in the 1967 conflict;

(B) Termination of all claims or states of belligerency and respect for and acknowledgment of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of every state in the area and their right to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries free from threats or acts of force;

(C) Guaranteeing freedom of navigation through international waterways in the area;

(D) Achieving a just settlement of the refugee problem;

(E) Guaranteeing the territorial inviolability and political independence of every state in the area through measures including the establishment of demilitarized zones.

4. The just solution of the problem of the Palestinian Arabs residing in Judea, Samaria and the Gaza Strip, will find its expression in administrative autonomy—self rule.

End Israeli draft.

3. Egyptian draft:

The Governments of the Arab Republic of Egypt and Israel are determined to continue their effort to reach a comprehensive peace settlement in the region.

Within the framework of such a settlement, they express their willingness to negotiate peace agreements on the basis of the full implementation of Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 in all their parts.

The two sides agreed that the establishment of this just and lasting peace requires the fulfillment of the following:

1. Withdrawal of Israel from Sinai, the Golan, the West Bank and Gaza in accordance with Resolution 242 and the principle of inadmissibility of acquisition of territory by war.

2. The necessity for guaranteeing the territorial inviolability and political independence of every state in the area through measures to be agreed upon between the parties according to the principle of reciprocity.

3. Respect of the right of all states in the area to sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence.

4. The achievement of a just settlement of the Palestinian problem in all its aspects on the basis of the right to self-determination, through talks in which Egypt, Jordan, Israel and the representatives of the Palestinian people would participate.

5. Termination of all claims or states of belligerency and the establishment of peaceful relations among all the states in the area through the conclusion of peace treaties in accordance with the United Nations Charter.

End Egyptian draft.

Vance

198. Memorandum of Telephone Conversation¹

January 18, 1978, 2:07–2:17 p.m.

SUBJECT

Telephone Conversation Between President Carter and President Sadat

Carter: How are you?

Sadat: It's night here . . . etc. Welcome! Welcome! I am very disappointed with the Israeli attitude. They didn't get the conception of my initiative. They prefer land to peace. They shouldn't have raised the issue of settlements. They think I want peace at any price.

¹ Source: Carter Library, President's Plains File, Subject File, Box 35, Sadat (Anwar) Communication, 1/77–11/80. Secret. Carter initialed at the top of the page and wrote "ok."

Carter: I talked to Vance today.² Despite Begin's speech³ there was some progress today. I wonder if you would permit your negotiators to stay a day or two and continue negotiating?⁴

Sadat: I am very flexible but we shouldn't spoil the Israelis. Let us tell them quite frankly—we accept them in the area but not at the expense of our sovereignty or land.

Carter: I agree on that part but it would be difficult to resume the negotiations once they are broken off. It might take weeks. So why don't you not withdraw them at this point.

Sadat: It has already been broadcast. However, the Military Committee will continue its work. I will meet with them.

Carter: Couldn't you announce you are reconvening the Political Committee in a few days?

Sadat: I am ready to meet with the Military Committee. But let us give some time for the Political Committee . . . I am flexible in general.

Carter: Vance can't stay too long. He is staying one day more in Jerusalem. Then he will meet with you in Cairo. Is there no possibility of the Political Committee continuing for one day?

Sadat: In view of your request, I will be ready to meet with the Military Committee when it resumes its work. Weizman is more flexible than the others.

Carter: Vance was making good progress on the Declaration of Principles. I'll have Vance call you and report to you. At this moment there is great support for you and disappointment with Begin in this country. This can shift.

Sadat: The Israelis need a lesson. They cannot deal the way they have been dealing with us.

Carter: Stay as flexible as you can.

Sadat: I will declare that we spoke and exchanged views.

Carter: Say that you will welcome the Military Committee and that you look forward to reconvening the Political Committee.

² No memorandum of telephone conversation has been found. According to the President's Daily Diary, Carter spoke to Vance on January 18 from 5:36 to 5:44 p.m., after his phone call with Sadat.

³ Apparently a reference to Begin's remarks at a dinner held on January 17 at the Knesset, which several of the 700 guests interpreted as a condescending reproach of the 51-year old Egyptian Foreign Minister Kamel, whom Begin referred to at one point as a "young man." (*Los Angeles Times*, January 18, 1978, p. A1)

⁴ Sadat recalled the Egyptian delegation on January 18 over his frustration with Israel's stance during the negotiations in Jerusalem. He also announced that the January 19 meeting of the Military Committee would not be held. (Telegram 2156 from Cairo, January 18; National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780028–1084)

Sadat: Thanks for the call. I will be glad to talk to Vance. Greetings, etc., etc.

199. Telegram From Secretary of State Vance's Delegation to the Department of State¹

Jerusalem, January 19, 1978, 1146Z

Secto 1042. Subject: Draft Declaration of Principles.

1. Following is text of the latest draft of declaration of principles that emerged at end of the Secretary's talks with Kamel and Dayan late afternoon January 18,² before recall of Egyptian delegation was known. This draft had no official standing but Egyptian and Israeli delegations were in general, albeit informal, agreement on all parts except para 5 which deals with Palestinian issue. 5 (A) reflects Israeli position and 5 (B) Egyptian position. Re paras 3/4 Egyptians preferred to separate issue of boundaries from withdrawal and Israelis wanted them dealt with in single paragraph; para 3 represents Israeli preference and bracketed para 4 Egyptian preference. Round up and further analysis on yesterday's talks by septel.

2. Begin text.

1. The Governments of the Arab Republic of Egypt and Israel are determined to continue their efforts to reach a comprehensive peace settlement in the region.

2. Within the framework of such a settlement and in accordance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 338, the two governments express their willingness to negotiate peace treaties in fulfillment of all the principles of United Nations Security Council Resolution 242 and to achieve a just solution of the Palestinian problem.

3. There will be withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from territories occupied in the 1967 conflict. There will be secure and recognized boundaries for all states in the region.

(4. Boundaries between all the states in the area will be secure and recognized.)

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P850033–0486. Secret; Immediate; Nodis. Sent immediate for information to Cairo.

² See Document 200.

5 (A). There shall be a just solution of the problem of the Palestinian Arabs in Judea, Samaria and Gaza. They will be enabled to participate in the determination of their future through talks among Egypt, Jordan, Israel, and representatives of these Palestinian Arabs.

5 (B). There shall be a just resolution of the Palestinian problem in all its aspects which recognizes the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people and enables them to participate in the determination of their own future through talks in which Egypt, Jordan, Israel, and representatives of the Palestinian people would participate.

6. There will be termination of all claims or states of belligerency and respect for and acknowledgment of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of every state in the area and the establishment, in accordance with the principles of the United Nations Charter, of normal, peaceful relations through the conclusion of peace treaties. End text.

3. Again we emphasize that this language was worked out with negotiating teams separately and did not have political approval, although paras 1, 3, and 6 were pretty well agreed.

Vance

200. Telegram From Secretary of State Vance's Delegation to the White House and the Department of State¹

Jerusalem, January 19, 1978, 1342Z

Secto 1045. White House for the President and Dr. Brzezinski. Department for S/S–Tarnoff. Subject: Secretary Vance's Meeting With Prime Minister Begin.

1. Secretary and Ambassador met with Begin, Yadin and Weizman little after midnight January 19.² Cabinet meeting was just breaking up as Secretary arrived, having been in session more or less continuously since 8:00 pm. Begin was in surprisingly composed and relaxed mood, especially in light of his earlier telephone conversations with Secretary

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P850036–2356. Secret; Immediate; Exdis Treat as Nodis. Sent immediate to Amman and Jidda. Sent immediate for information to Cairo, Beirut, and Damascus.

² No memorandum of conversation has been found.

in which he had seemed clearly shaken by events of evening.³ Evidently, Cabinet meeting and his session with Kamel had provided some catharsis.

2. Secretary Vance began by briefing Prime Minister on his telephone conversations with President Carter and President Sadat.⁴ He said that both he and President Carter had urged Sadat to continue the Political Committee talks, at least through Thursday.⁵ Sadat's response had been that unfortunately he had gone too far to reverse. But, however, he had decided in light of President Carter's call that he wished the Military Committee to continue its work. Sadat had told the Secretary that he understood the importance of continuing the process, that perhaps his decision to break off the Political Committee talks had been a mistake but that he had gone too far to reverse it immediately.

3. Begin then recounted to the Secretary the nature of his 45-minute meeting with Foreign Minister Kamel. He said it was largely taken up by Kamel's giving a series of reasons for the breaking off of the talks. Among these were various public statements by the Israelis which indicated a continuing intransigence on basic issues, several negotiating positions assumed by the Israelis in the early sessions—such as refusal to accept the President's Aswan language in toto, Begin's toast at the State Dinner Tuesday night which was "embarrassing to him and distinctly not helpful,"⁶ and the sense of pressure the Egyptian delegation felt itself to be under in Jerusalem from the Israeli press and the general atmosphere. Begin said that Kamel had indicated he considered his recall to be in the nature of a suspension rather than a termination, and he hoped ways could be found to reconvene the Political Committee soon.

4. Begin said that he had then responded in measured tones to Kamel, citing an "avalanche of statements" from the Egyptian side which had been offensive to the Israelis in recent days. Among these he had cited an Egyptian press commentary in late December which had said he was "lucky not to be beaten up at Ismailia in light of his positions," the reference to him as "a Shylock," recent threats of "another October" and most recently Sadat's interview in *October* magazine.⁷

³ A reference to Sadat's decision to recall the Egyptian delegation from Jerusalem. See footnote 4, Document 198. No record of Vance's telephone conversations with Begin have been found.

⁴ No memoranda of conversations have been found. According to the President's Daily Diary, Vance spoke with Carter on January 18 from 5:36 to 5:44 p.m. (Carter Library, Presidential Materials, President's Daily Diary)

⁵ Thursday was January 26. Carter urged Sadat to continue the Political Committee talks in a January 18 telephone conversation. See Document 198.

⁶ See footnote 3, Document 198.

⁷ See footnote 11, Document 194.

Begin said he made clear to Kamel that he hoped the Egyptians would come back soon and the Israelis would be ready to resume the talks at any time. He also said that he told Kamel he would “keep his sentiment for President Sadat despite everything which has happened.”

5. Begin then discussed for about 15 minutes the significance of what he termed “this astonishing development.” He and the Secretary agreed that the negotiations were making good progress and that there was no justification from that standpoint for the action. Begin said “It’s a whim, Sadat is a whimsical man.” He went on to defend in a matter-of-fact way his toast at the dinner saying that political speeches at such dinners were perfectly customary, and he should not have taken offense. “What was wrong with it?” The Secretary did not reply.

6. Begin then told the Secretary that the subject of what to do next had been discussed at the Cabinet meeting, and that he had conveyed the Secretary’s views to the Cabinet to the effect that it would be most unfortunate not to agree to continue the military talks now that Sadat has said he would like them to continue. In light of the Secretary’s views, the Cabinet had decided to reverse its initial decision to refuse to continue the military talks. Instead, the decision was to keep Sadat’s proposal under consideration and the door open pending hearing the Secretary’s report on his meeting with Sadat Friday.⁸ General Tamir and the other members of Weizman’s team will remain for the time being in Cairo.

7. Yadin said that there had been a great deal of strong opposition in the Cabinet to keeping the door open in this way. He said it would be very important to try to avoid a Sadat speech on Saturday⁹ before the People’s Assembly which is tough and provocative. Begin interjected that obviously one cannot prevent him speaking since he has every right to do so, but he hoped the tone would be “good”.

8. The Secretary said that Kamel had made a public statement after returning to the hotel from Begin’s office that the negotiating process had not been broken off; rather he was going back on “consultation”. Both Begin and Vance agreed this was good and a hopeful sign. The Secretary urged Begin to keep “things as cool as possible.” He said there many examples in his past negotiating experience of such crises and they usually can be overcome.

9. As the meeting was about to break up, Weizman said he did not want to flash any red lights, but the Secretary should know that the Israelis are watching very carefully the increasing rapprochement between Syria and Iraq, and were apprehensive about their being

⁸ January 20.

⁹ January 21.

“naughty.” He also cited the growing armed build-up in south Lebanon as a worrisome factor and the possibility that Boumediene “running around the area” was a prelude to some kind of blow-up in south Lebanon which “would be the last thing we need at this moment.” The Secretary agreed there were some worrisome signs.

10. Begin and Vance agreed they would meet sometime Thursday at Begin’s convenience for a serious review of the overall situation. Begin seemed very pleased with the meeting and it ended on a sober but guardedly hopeful note.

11. For Amman, Jidda and Cairo: In talking with host governments about current situation and what is in prospect for peace negotiations, you may refer to this conversation and draw on following analysis to extent you feel this will be helpful in calming reactions. You should say that door is open for resumption of Political Committee negotiations and we are hopeful that Security Committee will meet as scheduled this weekend. Secretary will be meeting again with Begin today and, later, with Dayan. He will meet as scheduled with Sadat tomorrow. Obviously, a further assessment of what comes next must wait on those talks.

12. You should emphasize that while not underestimating seriousness of Egyptian move and degree of Egyptian concern, negotiations yesterday were serious, constructive and in good atmosphere. We see no reason why they cannot be resumed from that point when parties are ready. Discussion has focussed, of course, on how Palestinian and West Bank/Gaza issues will be dealt with in a declaration of principles governing a comprehensive peace settlement. They are difficult but had not yet gone long enough to reach impasse. Sadat’s decision came as a surprise and we do not repeat not think it reflected a crisis in the actual negotiations.

13. Israeli reaction has been to resist what they see as pressure tactics. They feel that his decision was not warranted in light of the progress that was being made in negotiations. They are certainly not inclined to be more flexible on issues after this move. Our immediate objective is to get negotiations back on the tracks, but decisions as to how we should now proceed must await Secretary’s meeting with Sadat and Sadat’s speech to Peoples Assembly Saturday, purpose of which we do not know but which we hope will not close the door or worsen the atmosphere. We intend to continue low key treatment, reflected in Secretary’s observation that all negotiations “have their ups and downs”, and concentrate on getting back to negotiations on the issues. In final analysis, there is no way to make progress on hard issues and move toward comprehensive negotiations for overall settlement except through ongoing process of negotiations between the parties, tedious

as they often seem. We will have clearer picture and fuller report for you after Sadat meetings.

14. Should be noted that public mood here in Israel has not been at all enhanced by decision to withdraw Egyptian delegation. After two months of buffeting by unexpected developments that have moved ahead at a pace faster than Israelis have been able to adjust to, they appear to be reacting unfavorably to this latest shock. This is reinforced by their inability to relate the move to the talks underway, which they understood from the media were making progress, however slowly. End result is a prevalent feeling, reflected in the “morning after” press, that Sadat is simply maneuvering to exert pressure on Israel through us, a possibility which inevitably draws Israelis together in support of their government.

Vance

201. Telegram From Secretary of State Vance’s Delegation to the Department of State¹

Jerusalem, January 19, 1978, 1702Z

Secto 1048. Subject: Jerusalem Political Committee—The Second Day (January 18).

1. Before unexpected announcement of recall of Egyptian delegation, Secretary had a full day of detailed, intensive talks with Israeli and Egyptian Foreign Ministers on the draft declaration of principles,² during which progress was made and differences were resolved or narrowed on all issues except Palestinian problem. Secretary met with Dayan for working breakfast³ and gave Dayan the draft statement that we had worked out afternoon January 17 (text transmitted Secto 1019)⁴ following study of Israeli and Egyptian drafts (texts transmitted Secto 1042).⁵ He then met with Kamel and aides for over an hour beginning at 1130, and again with Dayan briefly before the formal Political Committee meeting at 3 p.m. After that Secretary again had lengthy sepa-

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P850036–2366. Secret; Immediate; Nodis. Sent immediate for information to Cairo.

² See Document 200.

³ No memorandum of conversation has been found.

⁴ See Document 196.

⁵ See Document 199.

rate sessions with Kamel and Dayan and their aides, end result of which was draft which we have sent by septel (Secto 1042).

2. Formal Political Committee meeting lasted only about 15 minutes. Because private talks with Dayan and Kamel on the draft declaration were still going on, Secretary did not table U.S. draft contained Secto 1019. Dayan opened the Political Committee meeting with remark that he believed some progress had been made in private talks that morning. Dayan then asked if parties wished to proceed with discussion of draft declaration of principles around the Political Committee table or continue to work in private sessions as during the morning. Kamel said he preferred private sessions, and after Dayan assented, Secretary agreed too. Dayan then suggested informal talks between members of Egyptian and Israeli delegations on elements of peace treaties, under item 3 of agenda, with participation of representatives from the U.S. delegation. Kamel said Egyptians preferred to continue discussions of declaration of principles "and if we reach something then we can proceed to the other items." Dayan then proposed that Political Committee reconvene at 11 a.m. next day, January 19, and Kamel and Secretary agreed. Meeting closed with brief discussion of what parties should tell the press. Dayan suggested saying, "we have made some progress" on draft declaration and that informal consultations would continue. Kamel said he didn't know if reference should be made yet to progress; that could be done after January 19 meeting if there were progress by then. For the moment Kamel preferred to say that "continuing the informal talks is useful and necessary."

5. While the Political Committee meeting itself was a pro forma affair, in their separate meetings with Secretary the Egyptians and Israelis made a genuine effort to bridge differences and come up with mutually acceptable language. It was evident that both sides were negotiating seriously, wanted to reach agreement and were willing to make concessions to that end, of course within what they knew to be limits imposed by their governments' policies. Dayan led the effort on the Israeli side, with Attorney General Barak (who came to the final meeting directly from a session with Begin on the declaration of principles) joining in. (Rosenne was present and intervened frequently but most of the time was either overridden or ignored by Dayan.) For the Egyptians, Kamel left most of the talking to Abdel Meguid, apparently in deference to latter's expertise; Al Baz and Boutros Ghali also joined in.

6. In afternoon session with Egyptians, Secretary said that when we spoke of "legitimate rights" of the Palestinians, as in Aswan statement, we mean human rights. Secretary said for us the term human rights comprises political, civil and economic rights. Egyptians asked if

this meant “national rights”; Secretary replied that we had always refused to use that term since it prejudices the outcome. Secretary reiterated our preference that there not be an independent Palestinian state; Abdel Meguid replied that we are on common ground on this. Egyptians confirmed that they were ready to forego use of the word “national” and use only phrase “legitimate rights” in the paragraph on the Palestinian problem. In this connection, Boutros Ghali ponted out that the Egyptian side had already made numerous and important concessions in its effort to reach agreement. Egyptians had given up use of the word “national” and were not asking for use of word “self-determination.” Moreover, they were not asking that the declaration include mention of compensation and return for the refugees. Secretary later made this point to Israelis.

7. Draft transmitted Secto 1042 was the fifth of the day and was drawn up in meeting with Israeli delegation which ended about 6 p.m., which followed meeting with Egyptians which lasted from 3:15 to about 4:30. First para was taken from earlier draft and was agreed by both Egyptians and Israelis. Re second para, in the earlier draft agreed by Egyptians it had closed with the words “Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 in all their parts.” Egyptians insisted on phrase “in all their parts” (or Resolution 242 “in all its parts”) but Israelis objected to this. Therefore, in meeting with Israelis this para was reworded to speak of “peace treaties in fulfillment of all the principles of United Nations Security Council Resolution 242 ...” as possible compromise which Israelis could accept (there was no opportunity to try this language out on the Egyptians). Dayan in serious effort to meet Egyptian concerns while limiting discussion of Palestinian question to Palestinians in West Bank and Gaza, suggested adding at the end of para two the phrase “and to achieve a just solution of the Palestinian problem.” Dayan made clear that he did not know if Begin would buy this, and with a chuckle added he wasn’t even sure for himself.

8. Re para three, the Egyptians agreed to the proposed language on withdrawal and secure and recognized boundaries but wanted to separate the two. They, therefore, asked that second sentence, on secure and recognized boundaries, be split off and made a separate para. This reflects Egyptian view that present boundaries are secure and recognized and that withdrawal should not repeat not affect them. They at first asked that this separate para be put after the para on the Palestinian problem, i.e. that it be separated by another para from the para on withdrawal. However, they acceded to Secretary’s request that if the two principles must be split into separate paras they at least be kept next to each other. When this was discussed with Israelis in immediately following session, Israelis expressed strong preference that the two be joined, although Dayan indicated that if other points could be resolved

the negotiations would not come to an impasse over this point. Thus in text Secto 1042, para three reflects Israeli position and bracketed para four the Egyptian position.

9. Para six of text Secto 1042 was taken from draft previously agreed by Egyptians and therefore has approval of both parties.

10. The para on the Palestinian problem was as expected the main sticking point, and this is reflected in fact that it was not possible to do a single draft on this para even with use of brackets. 5 (A) reflects Israeli position and 5 (B) Egyptian position. Israelis had two major problems with Egyptian para. First was use of term “legitimate rights” which Dayan said Begin would never agree to. Second was fact that language of this para would open way for all Palestinians, wherever they live, to participate in the determination of their own future. Dayan said Israel could not accept this. Provision for participation in “determination of their own future” must be restricted to West Bankers and Gazans; Israel could not be expected to work with Palestinians in Lebanon, Syria, the Gulf or elsewhere. Israeli objections were, of course, the reverse reflection of what Egyptians felt they must have, though there may be some give in Egyptian position. In his meetings with the two sides the Secretary did some probing of positions on Palestinian issue and was getting more involved during last meeting with Israelis but bulk of time was taken up in working out agreement on other paras. Had talks continued as planned, we would have gotten more deeply into this in talks January 19.

Vance

202. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) to President Carter¹

Washington, undated

SUBJECT

Message from Yasir Arafat

During a meeting with Congressman Findley on January 5, Arafat asked that a personal message be conveyed to you.² Findley has already publicly spoken of such a message,³ and State has been emphasizing that there has been no change in our policy of avoiding official contacts with the PLO.

Arafat goes to some lengths to argue that the PLO has taken moderate positions, over considerable opposition, and that his ability to maintain a moderate stance depends upon his position as a "fighting and trustworthy" leader. This is very self-serving, of course, but may also contain a grain of truth. In any event, our current posture of ignoring the PLO while concentrating on the Palestinian issue and encouraging moderate Palestinian voices to make themselves heard is the appropriate position for now.

The full text of Arafat's message is as follows: "In all modesty I would like to say that I was the first Palestinian leader to express support and confidence in you following your statement on a homeland for the Palestinians."⁴

"What makes my statements significant was that they were made while the Palestine National Council was in session, where criticism of U.S. policy was at its height. More so, because we were just witnessing the last painful steps of Kissinger's step-by-step diplomacy, and its effects on the Palestinian people. When the joint U.S.-Soviet statement was made in October,⁵ we were the first official voice to say that it contained positive indications and we were criticised for that.

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Chronological File, Box 134, Quandt, 1/78 (2). Secret. Outside the System. Sent for information.

² See Document 187.

³ On January 19, Findley's office announced that Findley would deliver Arafat's personal message to Carter.

⁴ Carter first made this statement at a March 16, 1977, town hall meeting in Clinton, Massachusetts. See Document 23.

⁵ See Document 120.

“Most recently our PLO colleague in London, Said Hammani, paid with his life for these moderate positions.⁶ This is just one such example of how much it costs us to adopt moderate positions here in our Arab area.

“In spite of this, our Palestine National Council, which is the highest legislative body in the Palestinian body politic, decided last year to participate in all political and diplomatic activities and peace talks which aim at a just peace and solution in the area. Of course, this includes the Geneva Conference. Meanwhile, our Council, in the same session, decided to contact Jewish progressive and democratic forces inside and outside of Israel, and we have already done this. This moderate approach to the problem was pursued, not only at the level of the Palestinian leadership, but also among the rank-and-file of the Palestinians and we faced challenges which we managed to overcome.

“Had we not seen a fighting and a trustworthy leadership we would not have been able to maintain our moderate stance. This is why I feel bitter about our [*your?*] recent statements asserting that the PLO is completely negative and has removed itself from the negotiating process.

“However, we are trying to stress positive views so we see that your most recent statement made in Aswan⁷ carried a slightly conciliatory tone, although you did not mention self-determination for the Palestinian people, or independence, or the PLO for that matter. I see in this statement a very slight change coming on the heels of the rapid deterioration in American policy following the positive joint U.S.-Soviet statement.

“I most sincerely hope that you will not further push me into a corner because I would like to maintain my moderate balance. Otherwise, I have nothing to lose but my Kufiyah (Arab headdress).”

⁶ See footnote 8, Document 187.

⁷ See footnote 5, Document 187.

203. Telegram From Secretary of State Vance to the White House and the Department of State¹

Jerusalem, January 20, 1978, 00006Z

Secto 1052. White House for the President and Dr. Brzezinski. Department for Acting Secretary and Tarnoff. Subject: Secretary's Final Meeting With Prime Minister Begin, Jan. 19.

1. I had a final 1½ hour meeting this evening with Prime Minister Begin and Foreign Minister Dayan.² Begin was calm and reflective and it was, on the whole, a good, substantive talk.

2. We began by reviewing the latest draft of declaration principles,³ discussing in particular various formulations that might resolve the remaining, rather wide differences between Egypt and Israel with respect to the Palestinian/West Bank/Gaza issue. Begin was, at the start, ready to accept the helpful proposal Dayan made in our last meeting yesterday to include the phrase "a just solution of the Palestinian problem" in the same paragraph as that dealing with fulfillment of all the principles of SC Resolution 242.⁴ Dayan recognizes that such a phrase is essential for the Arabs. Begin finally said he would agree to this going in a separate new para 3. Begin continues to insist, however, on his language referring to "Palestinian Arabs residing in Judea, Samaria and the Gaza district but is willing to accept West Bank and Gaza in the English text." In addition to the Palestinian problem, some other important differences remain between the Egyptians and Israelis with respect to all but two of the other principles. I have the distinct impression, however, that the Israelis are anxious to complete this phase of the negotiations and that there will be further flexibility in their position. Begin made clear that, in any case, he cannot make any commitments with regard to the final text of the declaration until he has consulted the Cabinet. I am enclosing a revised copy of the draft text, as we understand it, after our talks with Begin. I will have a better feel after my meeting with Sadat about whether there is an equal desire on his part to complete the declaration. In any event, the fact remains that important differences remain to be resolved with respect to point 5 of the declaration.

3. We also discussed the question of reconvening the Political Committee, and Begin made clear that he hopes this will be possible.

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P850036–2373. Secret; Niact Immediate; Nodis. Sent immediate for information to Cairo and Tel Aviv.

² No memorandum of conversation has been found.

³ See Document 199.

⁴ See Document 201.

He said he would not, however, agree to an idea mentioned to him last night by Egyptian Foreign Minister Kamel that both committees meet in Cairo. Dayan suggested that perhaps the declaration could be completed with our help even before the Political Committee reconvenes, and that this might provide the impetus necessary both to get the negotiations started again and to bring Hussein in. I will explore this thought when I see Sadat.

4. The other principal subject of discussion was whether Israel was prepared to withdraw from the West Bank and Gaza at the end of a 5-year period if its security concerns could by then be adequately safeguarded. I reminded Begin that we consider that Resolution 242 applies to all fronts. Begin seemed to move slightly beyond the positions he has stated to us before. He said that Israel has a claim to sovereignty over the West Bank and Gaza; that it will maintain but not exercise this claim during the five years; that the status of those areas will be reviewed at the end of 5 years; and all of the 26 provisions of his self-rule plan (including IDF responsibility for security and public order and even sovereignty) will be negotiable, but that Israel's claim will not be given up "in my life". There was a glimmer in his comment that in five years, he will no longer be Prime Minister. In response to my question whether he ruled out a confederation of the West Bank with Jordan, Begin said his dream was of increasing cooperation leading ultimately to a confederation between Jordan and Israel of which the West Bank and, of course, Gaza would be a part. He repeated his view that, whatever the wishes of Sadat and Hussein, the PLO through intimidation would take over any independent Palestinian entity in 24 hours, and that Israel's military presence can prevent this. The upshot of this part of our discussion is that, although we have made progress, if we succeed in reaching agreement on a declaration of principles, negotiations on the next agenda item (guidelines for negotiations relating to the issue of the West Bank and Gaza) will be tough sledding.

5. Following is text of declaration as we have revised it to reflect this conversation with Begin and Dayan. This has not repeat not been cleared with them and should be read only as our working version. Regarding para 4 and the bracketed para 5, the Israelis prefer the two-sentence para 4 while the Egyptians would drop the second sentence and turn it into the bracketed separate para 5. Regarding para 5, 5-A reflects Israeli views while 5-B reflects the Egyptian preference.

Begin text:

1. The Governments of the Arab Republic of Egypt and Israel are determined to continue their efforts to reach a comprehensive peace settlement in the region.

2. Within the framework of such a settlement and in accordance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 338, the two gov-

ernments express their willingness to negotiate peace treaties in fulfillment of all the principles of United Nations Security Council Resolution 242.

3. The two governments agree that there shall be a just solution of the Palestinian problem.

4. There will be withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from territories occupied in the 1967 conflict. (There will be secure and recognized boundaries for all states in the region.)

(5. Boundaries between all the states in the area will be secure and recognized.)

5–A. The Palestinian Arabs in Judea, Samaria (the West Bank), and Gaza will be enabled to participate in the determination of their future through talks among Egypt, Jordan, Israel, and the representatives of these Palestinian Arabs.

5–B. There shall be a just resolution of the Palestinian problem in all its aspects which recognizes the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people and enables them to participate in the determination of their own future through talks in which Egypt, Jordan, Israel, and representatives of the Palestinian people would participate.

6. There will be termination of all claims or states of belligerency and respect for and acknowledgement of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of every state in the area and the establishment, in accordance with the principles of the United Nations Charter, of normal, peaceful relations through the conclusion of peace treaties.

Vance

204. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Cairo, January 20, 1978, 1:15–1:35 p.m.

SUBJECT

Meeting Between Secretary Vance and President Sadat

PARTICIPANTS

Egyptian

President Anwar Sadat
Vice President Husni Mubarak
Prime Minister Mamduh Salem
Foreign Minister Muhammad Ibrahim Kamil
Hassan Kamel

United States

Secretary Vance
Alfred L. Atherton
Ambassador Hermann Fr. Eilts
Harold Saunders
William Quandt
Hodding Carter
William Brubeck

(The Secretary and President Sadat met for one and one-half hours in private prior to the expanded meeting.)²

President *Sadat* said that he was pleased to see his dear friend, Secretary Vance, and was grateful for the help given by Secretary Vance during the talks in Jerusalem. Sadat expressed his appreciation for the American effort to bridge gaps and to keep the peace process going. He said that he had been very sorry to take the decision to remove his delegation, but it appeared that the approach to the whole problem was being twisted by the Israelis. They should recognize that the fact of sovereignty cannot be negotiated. From Begin's speech yesterday, one can conclude that their main goal is land, not peace at all.³ Maybe the Israelis imagine that they can have land, settlements, and peace.

President *Sadat* said that initially he had taken the question of settlements as a joke. The idea of settling on other people's land and then protecting them with your own troops not only contradicts peace, but

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Trips/Visits File, Box 109, 2/3–4/78 Visit to President Sadat of Egypt: Briefing Book [II], 2/78. Top Secret. The meeting took place in the Barrages Rest House near Cairo.

² No memorandum of conversation has been found.

³ In his comments in Jerusalem on January 19, Begin stated that Israel would never dismantle the settlements in the Sinai. He also claimed that Israel had never asked for Arab recognition or for Israel's right to exist. (William E. Farrell, "Israelis Are Dubious on Revival of Talks," *New York Times*, January 20, 1978, p. A6)

is an attempt to humiliate the Egyptians. Begin had said yesterday that he did not take the land, but that he had turned it green and that now Israel had a right to stay there.

Sadat said that after his reevaluation of the situation, he had asked Secretary Vance to convey several messages to President Carter. He hoped to stay in constant contact and to exchange views. He had agreed to what President Carter had suggested on the telephone about the Military Committee reconvening in Cairo.⁴ He had agreed that the road to peace was not closed. But in his view, Israel should make a reevaluation of the entire situation. Egypt is not asking for demands or concessions. Begin's offer to return the land is not a concession. He is talking about Egyptian land. Egypt is not putting a pistol to Israel's head. It is simply asking for peace based on justice.

President *Sadat* said that he would consider with President Carter the efforts which would be required to continue moving toward peace. He would remain in constant contact and would try to agree on steps to take in the future. President Sadat said that he would discuss further with his own delegation some of the ideas that Secretary Vance had presented. Concerning the Political Committee, he said that it would not be in action for some time to come, but the door to peace was not closed. Whenever there is a reevaluation from the Israeli side, Egypt will continue.

President *Sadat* said that he had explained to Secretary Vance how he felt about Begin's statement that Israel did not want Arab recognition. Things cannot go on this way. Sadat was worried about the American reputation in Egypt. Begin can only act the way he is now because of the large arsenal he is receiving from the United States. Sadat said that he personally understood the situation, but that his people were beginning to ask questions, as were others in the Arab world. Israel should know that the United States stands for its security, but not the security of its gains. Egypt can agree on security measures. Sadat had expressed his view of the necessity to recognize the issue of security for Israel. But this cannot be done at the expense of the land or sovereignty of others. All measures for security, such as demilitarized zones, limited armament zones, early warning stations, and any other devices that can assure them would be acceptable, but not at the expense of Egyptian land or sovereignty.

President *Sadat* said that he had explained the discussions at Ismailia. He and Begin agreed that they would turn to the United States for help when problems arose. Sadat had now asked Secretary Vance to convey to President Carter his view that the American position on

⁴ See Document 198.

many things contributes to Israeli arrogance. The Arab world may see that President Assad and the Soviets are correct. Sadat said that he was not worried about Assad and the Soviets, but if Israel is not put on a correct approach, the United States and Egypt may both face an awkward situation here and in Africa and in the world. He said that Secretary Vance's visit was of great importance and he hoped that in the future we would continue to have constant exchanges of views to work on these issues.

Secretary *Vance* thanked President Sadat for summarizing their previous discussion, and expressed his appreciation for President Sadat's understanding, and for the wisdom that he brings to these difficult issues. The Secretary reaffirmed the friendship that the United States feels for Egypt and the importance that we attach to our relationship, and the affection we feel for President Sadat and his leadership and for what Egypt has done. He assured President Sadat that we would work closely in the weeks ahead and he reaffirmed his view that the door to peace was not closed and that Egypt could count on the United States for full support.

205. Telegram From Secretary of State Vance to the White House and the Department of State¹

Ankara, January 20, 1978, 2345Z

Secto 1068. White House for the President and Dr. Brzezinski. Department for the Acting Secretary and Tarnoff. Subject: My Meeting With Sadat, January 20.

1. In sum, I believe my talk with Sadat today² had averted a breakdown in the current peace process and has kept the lines of communication potentially open, although there will have to be a period of some cooling off before formal exchanges of the Political Committee can begin again. Sadat has agreed that we can reconfirm to the Israelis their invitation to go ahead with a meeting of the Security Committee as soon as the Israelis are ready, but he would prefer working further through US to try to complete the declaration of principles before

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P850036–2382. Secret; Immediate; Nodis. Sent for information to Cairo. Sent immediate for information to Tel Aviv.

² See Document 204.

having the Political Committee meet again. We can expect a tough speech by Sadat Saturday night before his National Assembly,³ but he has agreed to calm the rhetoric after that. I am sending a quick report to Ambassador Lewis for Dayan tonight, and Roy Atherton will be returning to Israel Saturday to meet along with Lewis with Begin Saturday evening so that the Sunday morning Israeli Cabinet meeting can consider the question of sending Weizman back to Egypt for another meeting of the Security Committee. I will tell them that Sadat was encouraged by the latest version of the declaration of principles which emerged from my meeting with Begin and Dayan last night, particularly the new paragraph expressing commitment to a just solution of the Palestinian problem.

2. I found Sadat deeply disturbed over Israeli behavior in the last few weeks. I began the meeting by giving him the signed copy of your letter⁴ and emphasizing our continuing desire to help him achieve our common objective of a comprehensive peace. I told him I need not repeat our great respect and admiration for him, but in order to help him, we had to know what his strategy is rather than being surprised by events we are not prepared for. I told him it would help me to understand his thinking to know what had led up to the recall of his delegation.

3. In response, he told me the following: When he had decided to go to Jerusalem, he had done so taking into account the strong emphasis we had placed on the issue of achieving a full peace and normal relationships. He believed that his visit to Israel did accomplish what is most important to Israeli desires. He felt he had broken down a wall of mistrust and had opened the door to a comprehensive settlement. His discussions with Begin in Jerusalem had confirmed this conviction. He had felt there that the declaration of intent never to go to war again had provided another fundamental building block in the move toward peace.

4. At Ismailia, his disillusionment began. At the beginning of their meetings there, he and Begin agreed that the issue of the nature of peace had been resolved by his trip to Israel; Begin had said there would be no problem in Israel's withdrawing to 1967 borders; and Begin had intimated that the Palestinian problem could be resolved. However, when they reached the point of putting these understandings down on paper, Begin started falling away from even wanting to talk about the "Palestinian problem." Sadat said he began to have some concerns but he still thought they could be worked out. The Israelis suggested follow on meetings in the Security and Political

³ See footnote 4, Document 207.

⁴ The letter has not been found.

Committees and he had readily agreed so that understandings could be worked out.

5. When Weizman had arrived in Egypt before Begin's Ismailia visit, he raised for the first time the question of Israeli settlements in the Sinai. Sadat responded by saying he thought the proposal was a joke, and not much more was said. They discussed at length security measures for the Sinai such as buffer zones, limited armament zones, and troop levels west of the passes. He assumed that their discussion indicated that Israel knew Egyptian forces would be in the passes and between the passes and the Suez Canal.

6. Then after Ismailia, the whole atmosphere was poisoned by a series of Israeli decisions. There had been reports of work on new settlements in the Sinai and the decision to hold off on new settlements but to expand old ones. There had been reports of the Israeli intention to insist on a military presence to defend the settlements. There had been more talk about the Israeli plan for Judea and Samaria. And there had been the Begin speech Tuesday night in Jerusalem,⁵ which he angrily talked about at some length. Begin had also misquoted Sadat publicly in reporting that Sadat had said "all members of the PLO are Communists." In short, these actions confirmed his view that the Israelis just did not understand the spirit of his visit to Israel.

7. As the Jerusalem meeting of the Political Committee approached, he seriously considered not sending his delegation. This thought was reinforced when disagreement arose over the agenda, but when the US broke the impasse, he decided to go ahead and to see what would take place. Begin's speech forced his decision. Sadat is convinced that Israel's main objective is land, not security, as Begin has argued. Begin, he said, wants security, land, and peace all together. After talking about the importance of Arab recognition of Israel, Begin has now said "arrogantly "that" he does not need Arab recognition."⁶

8. Sadat believed that Israeli strategy is to put both Egypt and the US "in the marshes." He says he can survive because he has the support of his people, but the US is beginning to be blamed in the Middle East for what is happening. If the US position suffers, the Soviet position will improve and that would hurt Egypt.

9. If Israel would go back to talking about its need for security, Sadat said he is willing to do anything to help in developing security arrangements. He said he is afraid Israeli arguments stem from what Egypt and the US have done in support of Israel, and in this connection he mentioned his concern about imminent US decisions for further

⁵ See footnote 3, Document 198.

⁶ See footnote 3, Document 204.

supply of advanced aircraft to Israel. He concluded by saying that he had decided to call off the Military and Political Committee meetings and let the situation stand still so that everyone could think about it for a while.

10. When he had finished, I reiterated our desire to support both sides in their effort to resolve their problems. The Israelis have made a fundamental decision to return Sinai to Egyptian sovereignty. I felt that the issues posed by Israel's desire to retain access to its military airfields could be dealt with. We then had a considerable discussion about the Israeli desire to maintain some settlements in the Sinai. I asked whether he could accept some settlements which would be there as a result of his sovereign decision, provided there were no associated defense forces. He said that questions of principle and honor were involved, and this was a matter on which he would never concede. He said there might have been a time when a solution could have been worked out, but he felt that Begin had misled him on this subject and had dealt with it publicly in such a way that there no longer was a possibility of reaching a compromise. I then pressed him to continue the Military Committee as scheduled, pointing out the potential harm if he should be the one to cancel the meeting. He said if we believed it desirable he would do so.

11. In discussing the future of the Political Committee, I said I hoped he had not closed his mind against using it. I urged him to say publicly that the road to peace is not closed, and he did say this in the press conference which followed our meeting.⁷ He did not rule out reconvening the committee at some point, although he clearly feels that some time will be needed before this can happen, and most of the people around him were very reluctant at this point to see the work of the committee continue in Jerusalem. We talked about private meetings on Rhodes or Cyprus, or in some other neutral place. Basically, however, he would like to see the Political Committee held in abeyance for a period while we attempt to advance discussions in this area through our own efforts between the two parties. I told him that Assistant Secretary Atherton would be staying in the area and would be prepared to travel back and forth, conducting quiet talks along these lines.

12. Then we went into the draft declaration which we had produced following my meeting Thursday evening with Begin and Dayan (sent to you in our telegram last night).⁸ He has no problem with the first two paragraphs. He was impressed with the new paragraph 3 indicating agreement that there must be a just solution to the Palestinian

⁷ The transcript of Vance and Sadat's news conference is in the Department of State *Bulletin*, February 1978, pp. 36–38.

⁸ See Document 203.

problem. He found this heartening and recognized it as genuine progress. On the question of the dividing of paragraph 4, he could see no reason for not having the two sentences together in one paragraph and, although he would consult with his negotiating team, he seemed prepared to overrule them, and that would give us agreement on that paragraph. Since paragraph 6 is agreed by everyone, that brought us to the real disagreement on the paragraph dealing with the Palestinian problem in detail. I had the feeling that more work can be done on this paragraph as quiet talks go on, but he had no particular suggestions today. He likes alternate B as currently drafted.

13. We then turned to the question of what he really needs from this exercise. I asked whether he needs Hussein involved in the discussions, and he said he did. When I asked about the Saudis, he said he did not need them. I then asked whether we do not need some sort of declaration of principles to get the Jordanians involved, and he had no answer. I said it was our strategy to try to use the draft declaration in order to bring Hussein under that umbrella. He replied that made sense.

14. We then turned to discussing his speech to the National Assembly, now scheduled for 1830 Saturday evening. He said he would start by summarizing the reasons for recalling the Egyptian delegation. Although he would try not to escalate the level of rhetorical exchange with Israel, he would have to respond to what they have done. He said he would announce the need for a period of thought, and in speaking with the press after our meeting he spoke of the need for a reevaluation from the Israeli side before Political Committee discussions could continue. I urged him not to offer his resignation, and he said he did not intend to; he already has the strong support of his people.

15. He went on to say he would discuss the problems he has in connection with Soviet activities in Africa. He intends to say that he will ask the US to send someone to consider his military needs. He said he really did not care whether the US provided military equipment to him or not, but he felt he needed to dramatize the problem and believed this would bear an impact on Israel.

16. At the end of our conversation we reviewed where matters now stand. He would continue the Security Committee meetings. In principle, he is not averse to the idea of continuing in a quiet way exchanges on the declaration of principles, but he will want to consult with his advisors. He felt the need for another bold step and suggested the drafting of a treaty between Egypt and Israel that could serve as a model for other treaties in a comprehensive settlement. I pointed out that such discussions would fall naturally under the third item on the agenda that had been worked out for the Political Committee, and he did not seem to have focused on that. I said such discussions could

quite naturally parallel further work on the declaration of principles. In conclusion, he asked me to tell you that he will say that the door remains open but that he feels some cooling-off period is necessary. He asked me to urge the Israelis to permit Weizman to come on Sunday to continue the work of the Security Committee. He agreed that he would tune down the rhetoric following his speech to the National Assembly.

17. I found a great deal of residual bitterness, and our meeting served to let him get some of this off his chest. I am sending a telegram to Tel Aviv instructing Ambassador Lewis and Assistant Secretary Atherton to ask Begin to tell the Israeli Cabinet Sunday morning that I urged that Israel agree to continue its work in the Security Committee. I think he was surprised at the progress we had made on the declaration of principles because he had pulled back his delegation before we could report that to them. I will urge that General Weizman leave the subject of settlements aside for the time being and try to work with General Gammasy on other aspects of a military agreement in the Sinai. At this point, Sadat is so adamantly opposed to the settlements that I think we need a period of silence on them, if possible.

18. I believe we can expect a tough speech by Sadat tomorrow. In substance, he has left the door open, but another round of sharp rhetoric would be unhelpful, to say the least.

Vance

206. Telegram From Secretary of State Vance to Various Diplomatic Posts¹

January 21, 1978, 1320Z

Secto 1074. Jerusalem for Atherton. Subject: Status and Prospects for Peace Negotiations. Ref: Secto 1045.²

1. Following is a report on the Secretary's Thursday meetings in Jerusalem following Egyptian departure, meeting with Sadat on Friday,

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780032–1143. Secret; Immediate; Exdis. Sent immediate to Amman, Tehran, Abu Dhabi, Belgrade, Bucharest, Bonn, Kuwait, Khartoum, London, Muscat, Paris, Rabat, Rome, Sanaa, Manama, Tunis, and the Mission to NATO. Sent immediate for information to the Department of State, Cairo, Tel Aviv, Damascus, Beirut, Jerusalem, Algiers, and Moscow. Sent immediate to Jidda. The telegram was sent from the Secretary's aircraft.

² Document 200.

together with assessment of status, prospects and next steps in negotiation process. You may draw on it as appropriate for briefing high levels of host governments.

2. Following departure of Egyptian delegation Wednesday evening, Secretary met Thursday with Begin and Dayan.³ They made some further progress in refining language of declaration of principles and narrowing differences on crucial Palestinian aspects of declaration, and of course none of the drafting done in Jerusalem has formal approval of either government.

3. In Cairo on Friday, Sadat explained his cumulative disillusionment with Israeli approach to negotiation and with Israeli public statements of preceding several days.⁴ Sadat was especially concerned by Israeli continued insistence on retaining settlements under Israeli protection in occupied territory because he feels they put in question whether Israel's offer to return the Sinai to Egyptian sovereignty is genuine. He repeatedly declared, "They cannot tread on other people's land and sovereignty." He made clear his purpose is still comprehensive peace agreement. He is prepared to continue working for a declaration which will get Israeli adherence to principles that would permit broadening of peace negotiations. We explained progress made Wednesday and Thursday with Begin and Dayan on draft declaration. Sadat agrees there should be a rhetorical cooling-off period, although he feels need to set record straight as he sees it in speech to National Assembly. He is ready to go forward with Security Committee meeting, and we are urging Israel to continue with the work of that Committee. He has reiterated that door is still open for peace.

4. Our assessment is that, while recent high level of harsh rhetoric and interruption of Jerusalem talks are unfortunate, damage is not irreparable. We believe progress can be achieved in further narrowing gaps on declaration language and that Military Committee could be useful in getting parties back into constructive negotiating atmosphere. Atherton returning to Jerusalem and will remain in area to act as appropriate in helping to keep peace process going.

5. We urge that everyone avoid further aggravating situation and avoid likewise premature judgment on results of this phase of negotiations. We will continue to work toward broader negotiations and toward comprehensive settlement.

6. FYI. There are no repeat no plans for Presidential level summit, contrary to press reports, nor specific plans for a return visit by Secretary at this time. End FYI.

³ Thursday was January 19. See Documents 200 and 203.

⁴ See Documents 204 and 205.

7. For Ambassadors West and Pickering only: You may tell Fahd and Hussein more specifically that Sadat did express encouragement at progress made on draft declaration in Jerusalem and, while he still wanted to talk further with his advisors, he is prepared to discuss with us concrete ways for building on work already done so as to regain momentum. We have agreed that whatever is to be done next, it should be done through quiet diplomacy at first. That is the real reason Atherton is staying in the area, but we do not want to call attention to his activities.

Vance

207. Telegram From the Embassy in Israel to the Department of State¹

Tel Aviv, January 22, 1978, 1908Z

953. For the Secretary from Atherton. Jerusalem for USDel. Subj: Atherton/Lewis Meeting With PM Begin—Sat., Jan 21—8:30 pm. Ref.: Jerusalem 197.²

1. Following is a detailed account of the two-hour meeting Ambassador Lewis and I held last night with Prime Minister Begin, Foreign Minister Dayan and Attorney General Barak.³ Dayan's assistant, Ellie Rubinstein and DCM Viets were also present. See Jerusalem 197 for summary report of conversation.

2. Begin and his colleagues were listening to early radio reports of the Sadat speech⁴ (which was still in progress) as we were ushered into the Prime Minister's living room. To our relief Begin promptly said that

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840137–2146. Secret; Immediate; Exdis (Handle as Nodis). Sent immediate for information to Cairo. Sent for information to Jerusalem.

² Telegram 197 from Jerusalem was repeated in telegram 17297/Tosec 10154, January 22, to Secretary of State Vance. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, N780002–0005)

³ No memorandum of conversation has been found.

⁴ In telegram 2432 from Cairo, January 21, Ambassador Eilts reported on Sadat's January 21 speech to the Egyptian People's Assembly. Eilts described it as "one of the most emotional speeches he has made to that body in recent years." Eilts also noted that Sadat was "bitingly critical of Begin's response to his peace initiatives, but not as bitter as some of his recent private comments on the subject." Sadat concluded the speech by stating that the door to peace was still open and that "the peace initiative will never be dropped." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780033–0298)

before reacting to the speech he would want to study and analyze it carefully. After a brief exchange about your whereabouts and some friendly jesting over Sam Lewis' 1 am Saturday morning phone call to Dayan⁵ to give him a preliminary report on your meeting with Sadat, we quickly got down to business.

3. I told Begin you had been alone with Sadat for about two hours⁶ and that the account I was about to give him was based on your recounting of the conversation to me. I stressed that you had asked that I convey to him the full flavor and details of the meeting. Noting that at the outset of the meeting you had found Sadat in a mood bordering on anger, I said that what I was about to relate to him might make him, too, angry. But we thought it necessary that he be fully cognizant of Sadat's mood and perceptions, and of the problems and irritants relating to events of the last several weeks which are currently preoccupying him. I then gave Begin a detailed report to which he listened with great care and attention.

4. Begin interrupted my lengthy presentation only once to seek clarification on whether Sadat thought that he had conceded to the phrase "a just solution of the Palestinian problem" in paragraph three of the proposed declaration of principles. Since I have reported the essentials of this portion of the conversation in paras. 6 and 7 of reftel, I am not repeating them here.

5. At the conclusion of my report I said you had asked me to express your strong hope that Begin would agree:

A. To send Weizman back to the Cairo talks since it was the one venue for now where a direct dialogue could be continued.

B. To put aside for the time being discussions of the Sinai settlements issue in the Military Committee and to focus on other questions such as buffer zones, deployments, air fields, etc. I said it is clear that Sadat at this stage is not prepared to discuss further the matter of Sinai settlements.

C. To avoid any new settlement activity of any kind in the Sinai.

6. Begin thanked me warmly for the "important information" you had asked be conveyed to him. He said he wished to respond to several points. First, he asked rhetorically "What is the character of this man Sadat?". He thought it critical to seek an answer to this question since Sadat is one of the decisive factors in the situation. Begin said that during Sadat's visit to Jerusalem he had talked with him alone more than two hours. Sadat's last words were "You are my friend". Begin re-

⁵ Saturday was January 21. No record of this telephone conversation has been found.

⁶ See Documents 204 and 205.

lated how subsequently he had told Yadin and some of his other associates "My friends, he is a curious man. He can do good things . . . or otherwise." In retrospect this appeared to him to be an apt description of Sadat.

7. The Prime Minister then discoursed at length on what seemed to him to be a marked lack of stability in Sadat's recent performance. He was especially concerned over Sadat's penchant for making verbal agreements and then later, upon advice of his advisers, reversing himself. He cited as an example the demilitarization of Sinai. In Jerusalem Sadat had agreed on the spot not to permit any Egyptian forces east of the Sinai passes. Begin had been ecstatic over the statesmanship Sadat had demonstrated in reaching this decision. And in Ismailia when the subject came up Sadat had said nothing to indicate any change of mind. Not 48 hours later when the Israelis had communicated to the GOE through our Embassies the Israeli plan which started "Based on promises made in Jerusalem", once again not a word had been said. It was only when Weizman and Gamasy first met in Gianacelis⁷ and Gamasy handed over a completely different plan that Begin had realized something had gone wrong. He quoted Weizman as having reminded Sadat of his commitment to Begin in Jerusalem and how Gamasy had interrupted to say that Sadat was not a military man and therefore his commitments on the issue were not relevant. Begin said this episode had badly shaken his faith in Sadat's steadfastness.

8. He continued his catalogue of Sadat's capricious acts by relating various comments Sadat had made which he had interpreted as implying blessing to his plan for retention of settlements in the Sinai. He said throughout his talks with Sadat both in Jerusalem and Ismailia not once had Sadat uttered one word of caution or criticism against the maintenance of Israeli settlements in the Sinai. In fairness, he said, Sadat had stated at the conclusion of the Ismailia meeting that there were certain areas of disagreement between the parties, and perhaps in retrospect he had meant settlements as one of the problems. But the fact remained that at no time had Sadat made specific reference to the issue nor had he "said one word of rejection".

9. Begin then turned to the developments leading up to Sadat's withdrawal of the Egyptian delegation from the Jerusalem political talks. He said that FonMin Kamel had confessed to him his total surprise over Sadat's decision during his farewell call. Begin said Kamel had made clear during their final talk that in the Egyptian view the Political Committee should never have been convened in Jerusalem. It was an arm of the Cairo Conference and, according to Kamel, Sadat

⁷ A reference to Weizman and Gamasy's December 20 meeting in Egypt to discuss security issues and Israeli withdrawal from the Sinai.

now was insisting that any further talks be in Cairo. Begin ruefully recalled that when he had first told Sam Lewis of his plan to propose that a Military Committee be convened in Cairo and a Political Committee in Jerusalem, Sam had offered the personal observation that he doubted if Sadat would agree. In retrospect, Begin said, Sam had understood Sadat better than he. It was clear that Sadat and his advisers had misgivings about sending a delegation to Jerusalem from the very beginning. Even so, Begin found Sadat's decision to recall his delegation to be "an irrational act". He said Sadat, judging from preliminary reports of his People's Assembly speech, was under the impression that November 19 represents a new era in the world's history.⁸ This has led him to believe that Israel is going to give in on whatever he asks. Otherwise, there will be no peace. He must know that Israel cannot go back everywhere to the 1967 lines. He had told Sadat in Ismailia that this would be "absolutely inconceivable" and that the Israelis were not committed to do so under 242.

10. Begin said he has concluded that "Sadat is not a rational man." He is under the influence of "learned advisers" because he doesn't bother to study the details on any issue. Members of the Egyptian delegation had told MFA Legal Advisor Rosenne that they had to "protect our President because your Prime Minister is a lawyer and ours is not." Begin asked what is one to conclude from all of this. One thing seems clear. Sadat is very worried about the rejectionist front. Kamel had told him so quite directly prior to his return to Cairo. Begin said he understood this but he was at a loss to know what Israel could do about it. He could not "wound our people" in order to save Sadat from himself.

11. Begin then launched into a long, reflective and I thought quite temperate analysis of the war of words waged between Cairo and Tel Aviv in recent days. Predictably, he feels he is the injured party and that in the face of continuing provocations from Sadat and from the Egyptian press, he has been remarkably restrained.

12. Having finally purged himself of these various concerns he turned to the three problems I had told him you hoped he would give his agreement to. He said he and his colleagues would study Sadat's speech very carefully over night before taking any decision on whether to send Weizman back to Cairo. He did not wish to go into any details now, but he would telephone Ambassador Lewis as soon as the Cabinet meeting ended and inform him of the decision.⁹ On the matter of continuing work on the declaration of principles, he said he would

⁸ November 19 was the date of Sadat's visit to Jerusalem.

⁹ On January 22, the Israeli Cabinet agreed to delay the Military Committee meeting in Cairo, which had been postponed until that day. ("Chronology of Recent Events," Department of State *Bulletin*, February 1978, p. 37)

bring this subject before the Cabinet in its meeting today (Jan 22). Because the Cabinet had already decided that the Israelis should not undertake negotiations outside the framework of the Political Committee, he said it would be necessary to gain new approval to continue negotiations using our good offices.

13. On the matter of settlements, he said it was not in Israel's interest to exacerbate the situation. He agreed that it was necessary to calm the atmosphere. But how does one accomplish that after Sadat has just spoken for two hours misinterpreting much of what he, Begin, and his government has said and done in the past weeks. He thought there would have to be a debate in the Knesset on Sadat's speech. Several motions to this effect had already been tabled even prior to the speech. He would have to make a statement before Wednesday in response to these motions. He thought probably this would take place on Monday, to be followed by a full dress debate.

14. At this point Dayan intervened for the first time. He asked which elements of your conversation with Sadat should be kept secret from the Cabinet. For example, if the Cabinet were to be apprised of the possibility of beginning work on a draft peace treaty, in all likelihood it would be necessary to report this to the Knesset Foreign Affairs Committee. Inevitably, news of this would leak to the press. On the other hand, the fact that Sadat is prepared to go forward with meetings of the Military Committee is no longer secret. Therefore, he assumed we had no problem with the Cabinet being fully briefed on your discussion with Sadat on this matter. Finally, he asked how we would prefer handling the subject of further negotiation on the declaration of principles. I said I thought that, beyond referring to continuation of the Military Committee, it best simply to stick for the moment with a general formulation to the effect that Sadat wishes to proceed with the peace process. Dayan asked if we would have any objection if the Cabinet were told that you are suggesting the completion of work on the declaration of principles and have volunteered us good offices to this end. Sadat has not rejected this proposal and the GOI hopes that this will be possible. I concurred in this formulation.

15. Turning to the possibility of starting work on a draft peace treaty, Begin said he found this a significant development. He suggested that a sub-committee of the Political Committee could be established to begin work. He asked if we had any objection to discussing this in today's Cabinet session. I said I thought it was premature to discuss the subject in any way because of the high risk of it becoming public. I said Sadat had raised the idea with you in the manner of "thinking out loud" and that it in no way represented a firm proposal on his part. It seemed to me the sequence of events should first be that we finish work on the declaration. If we were successful in this there

might be more receptivity on Sadat's part to find a means to resume Egyptian-Israeli contacts on a peace treaty. In the meanwhile, if there were premature publicity, it might kill the idea since it could be interpreted by Sadat's critics as evidence that he was backing down from his suspension of participation in the Political Committee. I said that Sadat while agreeing in principle to continue work on the declaration, had also said he wanted to reflect further on this before taking a decision. Begin then agreed that neither text of draft declaration nor idea of working on a draft treaty would be discussed in today's Cabinet meeting.

16. Dayan again intervened to say he had listened to the discussion with great interest. It led him to wonder just where we were going and how we intended to get there. It seemed to him that there was a need for a review of our general strategy. For example, Sadat had said from the outset that if we could get a declaration of principles, then Hussein would join the talks. Does this still stand? Picking up on some of Begin's earlier comments, he said it was becoming difficult to keep up with Sadat's erratic changes in mood and policy. At the outset, for example, Sadat had said he did not want to discuss the Syrian front. Tuhami had made this very clear when Dayan had given him the full details of the Begin plan prior to the Ismailia summit. Now, Sadat is saying that Golan comes before Sinai. Dayan found all this very confusing. I responded that Sadat had not mentioned Syria once during his conversation with you. Thus, I could not give him any definitive answer as to what Sadat had in mind relating to Syria.

17. Ambassador Lewis then turned the subject back to Sinai settlements and our strong hope that nothing would take place in the coming weeks to inflame further this problem. In commenting on Begin's earlier remarks that not once had Sadat told him he could not live with any Jewish settlements in the Sinai, Sam said he thought it entirely possible that Sadat honestly believed at the beginning that he could work out an arrangement on settlements. But as the pressures on Sadat increased and as he saw more clearly the political effects on his position, he had been forced to change his course. Begin interrupted to recall that Ezer¹⁰ had called him from Cairo at the behest of Sadat to ask whether in fact Israel had decided to construct new settlements in the Sinai. The answer, of course, had been no. The only decision taken had been to enlarge some of the settlements already in being. Begin then went on to castigate the Israeli press for the distorted manner in which it had handled this very sensitive subject. He said a press tribunal had been established and had condemned certain members of Israeli TV for their professional conduct in handling this story. Sam pointed out that whatever

¹⁰ Ezer Weizman.

the sequence of events in the past, the one clear thing now is that this was a “tender boil” and that any further activity or any further publicity would result in greatly complicating the issue with Sadat. Begin repeated that he is not going to establish any new settlements. But he asked, somewhat plaintively, what was wrong with enlarging the present ones? This had been necessary in order to buck up the morale of the settlers. Although they knew they would not be left in a lurch, all the same they were very worried. But, Begin continued, there was one thing we should fully understand. There is no government in Israel that could survive a decision to dismantle the settlements. It would promptly be voted out of office. I said this only underscores your view that at least for the present the matter should not be discussed further in the Military Committee. Begin answered that this was also Callaghan’s view. He had written him “let’s put it on the back burner” and that probably was a good description of where it ought to be. Dayan broke in to observe that while the Military Committee can perhaps avoid discussing the settlements issue, it certainly could not avoid talking about Sharm-el-Sheik. At that point one would have to discuss the status of the civilians living there. This brought him back to his basic problem with Sadat. If you talk to him in a business-like manner, it doesn’t get you anywhere. And if you avoid contentious issues, then Sadat subsequently says that you never mentioned the matter and therefore he did what he felt he had to. All this leads inevitably to a vicious circle of misunderstandings and confusion.

18. The Prime Minister brought the meeting to an end by stating that he would recommend to the Cabinet that Israel should continue negotiating on a declaration of principles using American good offices. Turning to Dayan, he asked if he concurred. Dayan did. But, Begin ended, “We must not give up the Political Committee because of this indiscriminate attempt to dictate everything to us.” It was whimsical of Sadat to call home his Foreign Minister. It was equally whimsical of Sadat to think that he can verbally attack the Israelis at any time he pleases, and that the Israelis are supposed to remain silent. All the same, he said, we must persevere in our efforts toward keeping the peace process moving ahead.

Lewis

208. Telegram From the Embassy in Egypt to the Department of State¹

Cairo, January 24, 1978, 1350Z

2690. Literally Eyes Only for the Secretary from Ambassador. Subject: Invitation to President Sadat. Ref: State 18379.²

1. Met with Sadat for half an hour this morning³ at the Barrages before both of us helicoptered to Heliopolis to attend funeral of VP Mubarak's mother-in-law. Sadat was cordial, but also somber. He looked tired and, while he claimed recent events have not "frustrated" him, they obviously are very much on his mind.

2. Conveyed to him President Carter's hope that it will be convenient to visit our President at Camp David for discussions on how to proceed. If agreeable, President Carter believes visit should take place at earliest possible dates convenient to Sadat. I stressed need to treat this information with utmost confidentiality. Also transmitted President Carter's and your personal regards to Sadat.

3. After listening attentively, Sadat said that he had mentioned to you that he did not exclude the possibility of visiting the United States for a further talk with President Carter. He described this latest message as "significant in regard to timing." He had not had much opportunity to discuss substantive issues with President Carter at Aswan⁴ because of the shortness of the layover. He agreed that the visit should take place as early as possible and liked the idea of having it at Camp David. He said he is not interested in ceremonies. Asked when might be convenient for him, his first reaction was that he wanted to think about it some more. A few minutes later he said that, although he has a full schedule for the next couple of weeks, next week would be agreeable to him if convenient to President Carter. By next week, he pointed out, he means the Muslim week beginning January 28. He asked what dates in that week would be best for President Carter. He said that, as is his custom, he will make the trip in two days, overnighing the first day probably in Paris. Sadat recognized need for strict confidentiality and said only Vice President Mubarak will at this time be told about invitation.

4. I also took the occasion to inquire whether he had come to any conclusion about resuming the effort to arrive at a mutually agreeable

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P850059–1924. Secret; Niact Immediate; Nodis; Cherokee.

² Telegram 18379 has not been found.

³ No memorandum of conversation has been found.

⁴ See Document 185.

declaration of principles and recalled Roy Atherton had remained in the area for this purpose. Sadat commented that the version you had handed to him is, as a whole, agreeable.⁵ There are, however, some elements in it that need revision. He had turned it over to FonMin Kamel and latter's MFA "experts" to go over it in detail with a view to coming up with proposals. He thought it might be best to defer any new effort to arrive at a mutually agreeable draft declaration until after his proposed visit with President Carter next week in the United States.

5. Continuing, Sadat observed the Israelis should not be given the opportunity to regain the initiative. While the draft declaration of principles is being worked on, a concurrent and parallel effort should be made to work on a model peace treaty. The initiative for this should come from Egypt and the United States. What is needed now, Sadat asserted, is a "dramatic and courageous act on the part of the United States" commensurate with his own visit to Jerusalem, which had galvanized the world. He was not asking U.S. stop providing arms to Israel or anything like that. What he hopes the United States will be willing to do is to declare a specific American position and inform the Israelis that, while the United States' commitment to Israel's security is unchanged, we will not defend Israel's acquisition of occupied territory. If President Carter could do this, it will do much to bring peace to the area. If he cannot, Sadat thought the area (and the African continent) "is heading for catastrophe."

6. As we were leaving, Sadat noted that he had seen press reports today that the administration is considering providing 100 or 150 F-5Es to Egypt. He said this seemed to miss the point. He did not want F-5Es. He had mentioned to you his request for military equipment similar to that being given to Israel. This request, he had noted, could be used as "leverage" with the Israelis to make them more amenable to sincere negotiations for peace. Sadat emphasized that his basic objective remains a peace settlement.

7. Comment: Please advise what dates next week might be best for President Carter to receive Sadat. I expect to see the President tomorrow morning at 1100 local (0900 GMT) at a police academy ceremony. I could take that occasion to convey any additional information.

Eilts

⁵ Apparently a reference to the January 20 version (see Document 203) that Vance discussed with Sadat in Cairo. See Document 205.

209. Message From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) to the Ambassador to Israel (Lewis)¹

Washington, January 27, 1978, 2005Z

WH80181. The President wishes this message conveyed to the Prime Minister immediately after Sabbath. Vance concurs.

Begin message.

I deeply regret the effort to establish another illegal settlement on the West Bank at Shiloh.² However, I am confident that Prime Minister Begin will honor the commitment personally made to me and thus will not permit this settlement to go forward.

End message.

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Subject File, Box 48, Israel: 1–2/78. Secret.

² On January 23, members of Gush Emunim, a religious settler movement formally established in 1974, dedicated a settlement in the West Bank town of Shiloh. Israeli officials claimed it was actually a camp for workers at a government-sponsored archaeological excavation and that they had provided no official sanction for a settlement there. (*Los Angeles Times*, February 24, 1978, p. B10) According to Carter's January 30 diary entry, "The [Israeli] government did not authorize a new settlement at Shiloh, except for an archaeological site, but they've already moved twenty-five families in there—with Begin's knowledge—and he's too timid to remove them." (*White House Diary*, p. 167)

210. U.S. Paper¹

Washington, February 3, 1978

U.S. Nine-Point Proposal

1. A self-rule arrangement would be established for a transitional five-year period.

2. Authority for this interim arrangement will derive from agreement among Israel, Jordan, and Egypt. The agreement will be negoti-

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Trips/Visits File, Box 110, 6/30/78–7/3/78 Vice President Trip to Israel: 2/78–6/21/78. Secret. According to William Quandt, Brzezinski worked with State Department officials on a nine-point proposal that utilized elements of Begin's self-rule proposal. The proposal was completed by February 3, the day Sadat arrived at Camp David. (Quandt, *Camp David, Peacemaking and Politics*, pp. 171–172)

ated among representatives of these states and of the Palestinians (from the West Bank and Gaza).

3. The agreement will provide for self-rule by an authority freely elected by the inhabitants of the West Bank and Gaza. The agreement would define the responsibilities of that authority.

4. Neither Israel nor Jordan will assert their claims to sovereignty over the West Bank and Gaza during the five-year period.

5. Israeli forces would withdraw to limited and specified encampments.

6. During the five-year period, in order to implement UN Resolution 242 negotiations will be conducted and agreement will be reached among the West Bank/Gaza authority, Israel, Jordan, and Egypt on Israeli withdrawal from territories occupied in 1967, on secure and recognized final boundaries, including possible modifications in the 1967 lines, on the security arrangements which will accompany Israel's final withdrawal, and on the long-term relationship of the West Bank and Gaza to Israel and Jordan.

7. The agreement negotiated by the parties would come into effect by expressed consent of the governed to the substance of the agreement.

8. During the interim period the negotiating parties will constitute a continuing committee to reach agreements on:

a. Issues arising under the agreement regarding the conduct of the interim regime, not resolvable by the West Bank/Gaza authority;

b. The introduction of UN or Jordanian military presence on the West Bank and Gaza;

c. Provision for an economically practicable level of resettlement in the West Bank and Gaza of Palestinian refugees;

d. Reciprocal rights of residence in Israel and the territories for Palestinian Arabs and Israelis, and for land purchases with Israeli citizens and West Bank/Gaza residents entitled to buy land either in the West Bank/Gaza or in Israel.

9. A regional economic development plan would be launched, including Jordan, the West Bank/Gaza authority, Israel and Egypt.

211. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Camp David, February 4, 1978, 11:40 a.m.–1:20 p.m.

SUBJECT

President's Meeting with President Anwar Sadat

PARTICIPANTS

American

The President
The Vice President
Secretary of State Cyrus Vance
Dr. Zbigniew Brzezinski
Assistant Secretary of State Alfred Atherton
Ambassador Hermann Eilts
William B. Quandt, NSC Staff

Egyptian

President Anwar Sadat
Sayed Marei, Speaker, People's Assembly
Foreign Minister Muhammad Kamil
Hassan Kamil, Director, Office of the President
Ambassador Ashraf Ghorbal
Ahmed Maher, Director of the Foreign Minister's Office

(The President had previously met alone with President Sadat for over an hour.)²

President: President Sadat has explained to me his analysis of the present talks with Israel. Later this evening I will explain to him the political situation here in the United States. We will use this time to try to clarify the issues of concern to us. We would like to discuss now the question of how to give impetus to the search for peace in the Middle East. I've suggested to him that I would begin by outlining what he had told me, and if I misinterpret his views, he'll correct me. Let me say that I'm honored to have all of you here and I pray that our talks will help.

President Sadat: It is very kind of you to receive us.

President: President Sadat's position in some ways is of deep concern to me. We reviewed our last detailed talks in April, at which time we had discussed the questions of land, peace, and the Palestinians. There were no significant differences between us on land. On peace, President Sadat then said that there was no real chance for peace because the distrust between the Arabs and Israel was so deep. It was not

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Country File, Box 54, Middle East: Camp David Strategy, 7/78. Top Secret; Sensitive. Sadat visited the United States from February 3 to February 8.

² No memorandum of conversation has been found.

possible to have open borders, trade, and diplomatic recognition. But at my urging, he had said that maybe this could be done in five years. On the third question of the Palestinians, President Sadat acknowledged that other Presidents had not spoken of a homeland and of the need for complete withdrawal with minor exceptions. He termed the US-Soviet statement “marvelous,” because he believed that it opened the framework for peace negotiations. He stated admirably the point that he had never equivocated or bothered with procedural issues. He believed in the need for bold strategic action. He had not quarreled about the composition of groups, the shape of the table, and had agreed to any reasonable position. This is obviously the case.

When no progress was being made, he went off to make his private assessment, and he concluded that some bold action was needed. President Ceaucescu of Rumania told President Sadat that Begin was a man of deep conviction and was a strong leader. He might be different from previous Israeli leaders. Sadat therefore decided to go to Jerusalem. His first idea was to go with the other members of the UN Security Council, and he told me about that idea, and I didn’t think that it was so good. Then he decided that direct negotiations were important to Israel. He would try to do everything that Israel wanted. He would offer direct negotiations, recognition of Israel’s right to exist, full peace, and in an unprecedented way he accepted the American definition of real peace, with open borders, trade, and recognition. These were things that he was sure no Israeli leader had ever dreamt of getting before. With the exception of himself and a few others, most Arabs distrusted and even hated Israel. He decided to try to solve all of the problems in one step by going to Jerusalem and offering direct negotiations and recognition and full peace.

President Sadat recognizes that there are strong lobby groups in the United States and that this makes it difficult for an American President to act. He thought that he might be able to build strong support among Americans for the Arab position in favor of peace. He feels that his action took Israel by surprise and that the Israelis were perhaps not ready for such a step. He feels that his acceptance of Israel’s previous demands should produce American support for what he has done. He now feels very disappointed and discouraged because Israel is still adopting an incremental approach, and is showing its arrogance, that she is not ready for peace, and that Israel wants land that is not hers. When he was in Israel, he offered the Israelis full security and guarantees, and a pledge of no more war. He believes now that most Arabs, including Morocco, Sudan, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt, with as much as 90 percent of the total Arab population, have accepted his action. Some have not endorsed it in its totality in public, but the whole Arab world has changed its attitude, despite their initial shock.

President Sadat's first experience of disillusionment was in Ismailia. He wanted a declaration of principles, not detailed negotiations. After five minutes, Prime Minister Begin had proposed the creation of a political and a military committee, and President Sadat immediately agreed. During the later meeting, Prime Minister Begin put on the table a proposal which was quite different from what he had given to us in Washington and which we had described to him. Prime Minister Begin mentioned for the first time his intention of retaining settlements in Sinai, and President Sadat thought that this was a joke and was not serious. He ignored the settlements question, and thought that it was better for Egypt and Israel to discuss principles and to show harmony. The details should be left for the military and political committee.

During these meetings, he was impressed by the fact that security on the West Bank is a real problem. Egypt would have to be accommodating to that concern. In Jerusalem, the Israelis had told him "we can sign an agreement with Hussein tomorrow." The Israelis seemed to trust Jordan. They implied that the proposal that they put forward would be accepted. But the Ismailia meeting broke down, and President Sadat urged Begin to stay for one more day. But there was no progress. General Weizman had come earlier. President Sadat liked Weizman and thought he had a good attitude. He had asked Weizman whether the Israelis were serious about settlements, and Weizman had said "unfortunately, yes." When he was in Jerusalem, President Sadat sat next to Foreign Minister Dayan. Dayan had been the planner of one of the major settlements. When Sadat questioned him, he learned that the settlements were of significance.

Before the Political Committee met, Sadat feared that the agenda would not be agreed upon. Egypt was prepared to accept the American draft, but when even that effort broke down, his national security council met and considered not sending a delegation to Jerusalem. Then, at my request, he did send his delegation, but the situation was already in doubt.

Before the Jerusalem meetings, there were many statements on the Sinai settlements. Minister Sharon had talked about the need for many new settlements. Finally, the Israeli cabinet decided to fortify existing settlements. Dayan went there, and soon it became clear that the Israeli cabinet was accepting the idea of keeping settlements. When President Sadat understood that, he was prepared to take his people out of the negotiations. He made no mention of the Prime Minister's toast.

He feels that he cannot continue the political or military meetings. He plans to say this in his speech at the Press Club on Monday.³ He

³ February 6.

feels that people must understand that Egypt is a proud and sovereign nation. He is secure at home and with the Arab people. He thinks that more than 90 percent support him. If he breaks off the talks, he will have unanimous support in the Arab world and elsewhere. He has been shocked by the fact that he has given Israel all that she wanted and that Begin has escalated his demands. Begin now says “we don’t need recognition from anyone.” Begin says that Arab recognition is of no significance.

The rejectionist camp in the Arab world, in President Sadat’s view, cannot hurt him or us, but Prime Minister Begin’s attitude can. He had pointed out that, from the Arab perspective, there is disappointment with the United States. Saudi Arabia feels this way and President Sadat fears that his own people will become disappointed in the United States also. They know that Israel has only one friend, and that friend has armed Israel heavily. The United States helps Israel to exist and that is OK, but now Israel is making excessive demands. Israel intends to keep the occupied territories in the West Bank and even some in Egypt.

On the plane over here, President Sadat received messages from the leaders of Chad and Somalia. He is very concerned about the situation there. He also has Qaddafi as a neighbor, and he sees him as a Soviet agent in Africa. He wants to meet this challenge. He has tried with utmost commitment to give everything to Israel that they want. He has offered everything that the United States said Israel needed, and he has offered it on a plate of gold, in his words.

He has a six-point position for solving the problems in Sinai. First, there should be a demilitarized zone along the border of Egypt and Israel, and it should be proportional on each side of the border. This zone would be completely demilitarized, and would be very small on the Israeli side, and maybe 10 or 15 kilometers wide on the Egyptian side. Second, there would be a limited armaments zone between the demilitarized zone and the passes. President Sadat says that he never promised Begin that there would be no Egyptian forces on their own land between the passes in the demilitarized zone. He said only that there would be no main forces there.

President Sadat: I said that they would not “exceed” the passes.

President: Does that mean “not go beyond?”

President Sadat: We will not go beyond the passes. That means that from the eastern part of the passes to the demilitarized zone is a limited armaments zone. I have not gone back on my word. But we will not stay just to the west of the passes. I will hold to my word.

President: The third point was that there should be early warning systems. The fourth point had to do with the stationing of UN forces in the demilitarized zone. The fifth point concerns UN forces along the Gulf of Aqaba and in Sharm al-Sheik. He views this as a special conces-

sion. The Gulf of Aqaba will be called an international waterway. The sixth point is that there would be a permanent Egyptian-Israeli Military Committee which would meet alternatively in Al-Arish and Bersheeba. This committee would exist to help avoid confrontations.

President Sadat also mentioned the problems of the airdromes. He believes that this has possibly been resolved between Weizman and Gamasy. Israel must give them up. Concerning the one near Eilat, Israel can retain that airfield until the final withdrawal. In the meantime, the others can be converted to civilian use or they should be destroyed.

I asked President Sadat, and this was almost the only remark that I made this morning, if the Israeli settlements in the demilitarized zone might stay under UN protection. He said that this was not acceptable to him. He could accept 10,000 Israelis coming back to Egypt who had originally been from Egypt.

I pointed out to President Sadat that we needed to talk. The only possibility for a settlement is if the American people trust him and me in our work for peace. We have an unshakeable commitment to Israel as a nation. He understands this. Later after supper I'll explain the American political situation to him and what we can and cannot do.⁴ I've outlined his views now, and I hope that I've not misinterpreted them.

President Sadat: The President has mentioned everything except one point. The inspiration for my initiative itself came from President Carter. He wrote me a private letter in his own hand, and it was given to my Ambassador, and I answered the President.⁵ I quite agree with his statement of my views. When he wrote to me, I felt the weight of the Zionist lobby in the United States. I felt this was unfair to him, and I told him that I was thinking of taking some bold action. I had nothing in mind at first, but I told him that I would take some bold action and that I would inform him. The President has told you the rest, but maybe I can add something on the spirit of what has happened recently. Even before the Political Committee convened, there had been a series of statements from the Israelis on their radio and television, and they were asking for some new settlements in Sinai. The Israeli cabinet refused to authorize these, but they did fortify the old settlements. This disheartened me 100 percent. This was not the spirit that should have prevailed after my initiative. I've offered to give Israel more than any Israeli ever dreamed of. The President sent me a message that Vance

⁴ According to the President's Daily Diary, Carter, Sadat, and their wives met informally after dinner on February 4 from approximately 9:30 to 10:30 p.m. (Carter Library, Presidential Materials, President's Daily Diary) No memorandum of conversation has been found.

⁵ See Documents 134 and 141.

was going to Israel after agreement on the agenda,⁶ and this is the only reason I sent a delegation. But actions before the Political Committee met had already twisted the spirit of my initiative. I told my colleagues that they could expect no results at all, but that since Secretary Vance was going I could not let him down.

We could make no results because the approach of Israel is completely different from our own. I told the President that the Israelis have raised issues, and that the Israelis have done nothing other than what they would have done had we gone to Geneva, as if I had never gone to Jerusalem. They want to expand, they want land, there is still the hatred, and nothing has changed. I told the President that I cannot continue. Some may think that I came to ask the aid of President Carter because I might collapse otherwise, but the rejectionist camp cannot hurt me, only Begin's statements can hurt both of us. My Egyptian people are really discouraged. They think that Israel would never take such a hard line without American economic, political, and military support.

President: I tried to summarize for the President the situation in Sinai. I pointed out that in New York Foreign Minister Dayan had promised me that no more new settlements would be established.⁷ At the end of one year, there would be six settlements, with some increase in population. There would be military settlements, and settlers would put on military uniforms. Since then, 13 settlements have been established or expanded. One has been declared without the authorization of the government. On the subject of settlements, I told President Sadat that I have termed them illegal, and that we have a sharp difference with Israel over this. The American public and American Jews are concerned about the settlements issues. This has now become the key issue in Sinai, and it seems as if even some progress has been made on the airdromes. The only other difference is the level of Egyptian military presence east of the passes. Prime Minister Begin seems to have misunderstood what President Sadat had said. The President had said there would be no Egyptian main forces. In Sinai, the difference then boils down to settlements, which we see as illegal, and US public opinion will support us in that view.

The Palestinian question is one which was almost OK on the basis of Begin's original description to us in December.⁸ I never endorsed his views, because I knew the Jordanians and the Palestinians would still have to be involved. Begin later told others that we had approved his proposal, when we had in fact not done so. Then he returned to Israel,

⁶ See Document 192.

⁷ See Document 124.

⁸ See Documents 177 and 178.

and he presented his case to the cabinet, and his plan was changed before it was presented to President Sadat. Some version of Begin's proposals, with modifications, might be the basis for a five-year transitional period, with Israel, Jordan, and Egypt all being involved in the administration of the West Bank and Gaza. At the end, the Palestinians there should have a voice in their own future. We don't personally favor a separate or independent nation. Saudi Arabia and other Arab states seem to find that position acceptable. I can't describe what the governed people would want—a continuation of multinational protection, with the United Nations; a tie to Jordan; or a tie to Israel. We've tried to spell out our views somewhat. We think there should be some arrangement for five years in the West Bank and Gaza, and that then Israel should withdraw militarily, and should define borders which would be secure for Israel, and there should be some acceptable form of determination by the people who are governed.

Begin did commit himself to not claiming sovereignty for Israel beyond the 1967 borders, and he said he would withdraw his military forces into military encampments, some on the Jordan River, and others on the hilltops. I did not agree, but he did spell these views out. That might be OK. My own hope is that we should not close the door to continued discussions. My belief is that you, I, the American people, and many American Jews who are very committed to Israel, need to be able to see down the road to a reasonable settlement. They need to see a secure Israel and they also need to see how your needs can be met. It would be a horrible blow if any action were taken that foreclosed that possibility.

Secretary Vance: It would be a great blow if a statement were now made that was interpreted by the American people as foreclosing progress on the road to peace. It would be hard to recover from that. The effects would be very deep and long lasting and dangerous. I hope it will be possible for you to forego any such statement. Let's work together, and agree on the objective, and then think of how we can work to achieve that objective and lay out a timetable for it.

President: The issue that seems to be most important in Sinai and to some degree in the West Bank is the question of settlements. Israel is most vulnerable to pressure from American Jews, from Congress, from the people, and from you and from me, on this issue. I have a feeling, a political feeling, that in a showdown, Begin would lose in Israel if settlements were viewed as an obstacle to permanent peace. Most Israelis now support the retention of the settlements. They feel they can have settlements and peace. Begin is popular, and he was elected in part because of his strong commitment to the settlements. This was probably more of a campaign promise. When he was elected, he had made these promises, and he is now trying to minimize the number of the settle-

ments. In our view, any settlements are illegal. We have had some harsh words on this. We have sent messages, and I have made public statements. The Israeli government is vulnerable on this issue. Some of the Labor Party leaders, and Deputy Prime Minister Yadin, and some editorial writers in Israel have expressed concern on this issue. I can see the possibility of a five-year interim agreement on the West Bank and Gaza that would be acceptable to you, to Begin, to Jordan, and to the Palestinians. We are not yet there. But there is no insurmountable obstacle to that.

Vice President: I think you know that there have been few things in my political career that have made more of an impression than your historic trip to Jerusalem. You swept aside barriers in a simple human stroke. You risked your career and your life to change a framework of 30 years, and the reaction here was indescribable. More people watched your speech to the Knesset than almost anything in American history. In 48 hours, in the minds of Americans you became one of the world's leading apostles of peace and statesmen. I believe that it is very important for the evolution of Israeli policy that you continue to be seen in that light. The Israelis should be asked what they are doing to reciprocate. You should not let the Israeli government off the hook by saying that what you did was a one-time thing. Begin should not get you in a position where he can say that he has had no response to his moves. I can't advise you, but I fear what might happen. The night that Prime Minister Begin gave that outrageous toast to your Foreign Minister, that offended people here because they thought it was in poor taste and that it was in a spirit that was at odds with peace. Pressures were building, and people were saying that Begin had not done enough. The settlements are not popular, and they are seen as an aggravation, and as a possible disruption of peace. Then when the talks broke up, there was a new theme. People said that maybe Sadat is not serious. There is a powerful force for reform in Israel and it can bring pressure to bear on Begin to move. But I'm afraid that if there are no talks, Israel will say that Egypt is not serious. Israel will have an excuse for not being forthcoming.

President: I think this is accurate. I'll speak frankly, as the Vice President did. Israel approaches the prospect of leaving Sinai and the West Bank with reluctance. They want land and settlements. If they think they can keep American support, they don't feel that they have to leave the Sinai or the West Bank. When you went to Jerusalem, they weren't ready for the initiative. You put them in a defenseless position. I am glad the Vice President raised this. I have an understanding of your concern about the political talks, but when you withdrew, there was a feeling that it was your fault. Up to then, Begin had been condemned for his terrible toast. The American public later said that maybe it was not Begin's fault.

I won't mislead you, but without you and your support in American public opinion, I can't force Israel to change. With your support, I can put pressure on Israel to change. This is a new thing. Many American Jewish leaders see Secretary Vance and Vice President Mondale. There is a growing feeling among American Jews that Begin and the Israeli government are becoming an obstacle to peace over the settlement issue. In a showdown between me and Begin, it would be hard for American Jews not to support Begin. My hope has been that some key Congressional leaders and American Jewish leaders could join me to press Begin on a settlement. He might accept a five-year plan and then grant the West Bank residents a voice in their future. If you take a position of no more political or military talks, he'll say that Israel wants to continue the talks, and this will set us back and will remove the argument that Israel does not want peace.

I have asked for a summary of poll data on the American image of Egypt and of you. This can give an indication of what you can do to help, and I want to go over it with you. Also I want to talk to you privately about the Panama Canal Treaties and the SALT negotiations. I have a time problem that I have got to address. The Senate is considering the Panama Treaties next week. I don't yet have the votes, and if the Treaties are rejected, this will be a serious blow to my leadership, and could lead to a military confrontation in Panama. Several Senators who support the Treaties also support Israel. If there is a crisis in the Middle East, and if you break off the talks, it will make it difficult for me. I'll go into more detail later.

I hope you will give me a chance to go over American public opinion and my time problems. We ought to set this down in writing. We can say what we hope to accomplish and what time schedule. We can talk about how to give the best image to our efforts for our position. We can talk about what pressure to bring on Israel to get them to do what is right. I'd hate to see your trip here result in a more serious problem than we now have.

I also want your advice on whether I should see Begin. My impression of him is that he wants peace, and he sees himself as a Jewish leader like Moses, like Ben Gurion, and he wants to bring peace to Israel. He thinks he has a sense of purpose from God to fulfill, and he is a man of history, and there is nothing wrong with that. But he also sees himself as lonely, and he is very lonely now. I have a Cabinet that is with me, but Begin is not in that position. His closest friend is Shmuel Katz, who has now quit him. And he has problems in the cabinet. Begin would not react negatively, I think, to the building up of some support for peace here. He needs help from you and me to restrain the settlements. Sharon is making ridiculous statements on settlements, and he needs American Jews, Congress, the people here, the Europeans, and

responsible Arabs to give him time to change the political climate in Israel. This is not a question of years, but maybe of weeks. He needs to let public opinion build up for peace.

My son Chip is just back from Israel. The Israelis believe that peace is near, but they still support the settlements. The danger of keeping the settlements has not gotten through, and they do not see them as an obstacle to peace. Your experience in Jerusalem, with the children and women showing their support for peace, is the feeling of the Israeli people. Begin could be put in a more vulnerable position if the path of peace is kept open. The Middle East conflict is one of the most frustrating issues, and what you did with one move will take much longer to do in Israel. Opinion can be changed against the settlements, but he needs more time than you or I want to see pass. The Vice President is right. We can get the best result if we bring incremental pressure to bear on Israel, and if we let your image as a courageous leader be maintained. I have noticed your view that 99 percent of the influence is in Washington, and only one percent is in Israel. I don't agree with that. This takes the pressure off of the Israeli government and puts it on me. I don't object to pressure, and I'm not afraid of a confrontation or a showdown when the right time comes. But it should be clear to the world that the breakdown of progress is not due to Washington, but to Begin.

Dr. Brzezinski: I know you will do what is right on Monday. But if you announce your negative decision on the political and military talks, it will be seen that the Carter-Sadat meeting has failed. You won't gain anything from that and we won't. Only those in Israel who do not want compromise will benefit. If instead, you were to say that the political talks could be resumed, and combined that with a strong statement on settlements and a strong statement on Resolution 242 as it applies to all of the territories, then you could get strong support. If the talks were to resume, then Israel would be on the defensive, especially on the issues of settlements and Resolution 242.

President: The statement would be almost the same as what you are planning.

Dr. Brzezinski: Otherwise there will be an impression of failure of this meeting and that could have historic importance.

President: If instead of saying that you won't continue the talks, you were to say that you will continue, provided that the settlements and so forth . . .

Dr. Brzezinski: Then we could be sympathetic. Maybe you can draft some language along these lines that would be helpful.

Foreign Minister Kamil: If you'll allow me, when President Sadat speaks of not resuming the talks, it is because he does not want to be faced again with the situation such as that in Jerusalem. We do not

want to go back to Jerusalem, and then have to break the talks off again. The President will continue, provided that we will not have these confrontations again that will put us in the position of having to go back. If we can find a formula to give the right impression, we will continue, but the meetings must be postponed while President Carter and the US Administration help bring the sides nearer together. Then we can resume after clearing away the nonsense. But this has to be done when Israel is ready to give more in the spirit of Sadat's initiative. We can maybe discuss the formula.

Mr. Atherton: I agree with what has been said about how the public would view a breakoff in the talks. The Foreign Minister's view merits consideration. If Egypt could show a willingness to talk, with the United States continuing to play its role of laying the groundwork for those talks, that would help.

President: We haven't done as much as you have. What Foreign Minister Kamil said is compatible with what you said. I wouldn't go to Jerusalem with the first item on the agenda the question of settlements on your territory and who will guard them. But if a formula can be worked out, and if it could meet your demands, that would put the responsibility on us and would allow public opinion to bring pressure to bear on Israel.

Dr. Brzezinski: There are two ways that you could state your position. You could say that you are willing to resume the talks, and then discuss preconditions, such as the settlements and Resolution 242. Then the Israelis can manipulate the situation, and can hold out for their incremental strategy to slow down progress. Or you could state your willingness to resume the political talks and make an unambiguous statement that settlements cannot be an obstacle to peace and that Resolution 242 applies to everything, and this would put the burden on Israel. I favor the second approach.

Vice President: Israel says that Resolution 242 does not apply to the West Bank. But they have not said so publicly, because they would be seen as ridiculous. If that point were made, plus the settlements, Israel would not be in a popular position.

Foreign Minister Kamil: This is something very important. We understand Begin's problems. And we see the problems that you have. But we also have problems with the other Arabs, not with the rejectionists, but in any further steps we have to be able to carry Jordan and Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states with us. This is very important. We cannot go on without them. To do this, we need a declaration of principles that stresses the need for a solution to the Palestinian question and withdrawal. I wouldn't put the emphasis so much on settlements, although we will attack them, but we need to reach this key of a declaration.

Secretary Vance: I agree. The settlements and the Palestinian issue, and especially the latter, are the important points. I hope that we can work together to bridge the differences on this. We need a positive statement.

President: In preparation for these talks, we have spent time discussing the declaration of principles. I think Vice President Mondale, who is close to the American Jewish community, has described the situation accurately. There has been a consistent assumption that Israel has accepted Resolution 242 as the basis for negotiations in all occupied areas. Labor never disavowed that. The Begin government has tried to limit 242 to Sinai and Golan, but not the West Bank. They are quite vulnerable on this issue. The declaration of principles is a mechanism by which to re-endorse Resolution 242 as the basis for a settlement on the West Bank and Gaza. When we say settlements and 242 are the two key points, we mean that this could be done through a declaration of principles. Israel can't reject 242 and retain the support of the American people. This is also true on settlements. They will respond to pressure if we don't get in a position of being seen as the obstacle to peace, and if we don't threaten the security of Israel. After lunch, President Sadat and I will leave you, and we'll go over the time schedule that is possible. You might discuss these matters also and give us notes on what you come up with.

Secretary Vance: OK.

President: I feel better about our talk.

President Sadat: I have listened carefully to my friends, and I think that there is still something I have not heard from you that I was expecting to hear. But it is the important key question, and I do not know if it can be answered. Everything now is in this deadlock and everything depends on it. I differ with you about the 99 percent. I believe the American position is central. During the last decade, since President Johnson, who was prepared to give Israel carte blanche, and who said the Arabs would have to sit with Israel and reach an agreement or Israel would get full American support, this has been true that the American position counts. Israel has been able to defy the UN and the Security Council and the United States. When Israel has American backing, Israel feels that it can stay in Sinai and in the West Bank. Israel will only heed the United States. I don't know. We have reached the point where the American position must be made quite clear to Israel. It must be put in very elementary principles on which no one differs. No one can tread on others' sovereignty or land. We are not against the security of Israel. We say that Israel has a right to feel secure, yes. We say the United States can have a special relationship with Israel, yes. But we have tried since 1967 to get an American position on principles, but we could not get that.

Even in the Johnson Administration, which was 100 percent behind Israel, even there it was stated that the United States is responsible for the existence of Israel and its security, but not for defending its conquests. This has been stated even before Nixon. I wonder if the Israelis feel, or if they see an American position based on principles that have universal support, how they would react. I have no objection to continuing. I accepted the proposal of the Political and Military Committees. It only took five minutes with Begin when we were together alone. This happened before we sat around the table. In five minutes I agreed. But I wonder if there could be some specific American position.

I was elated by your invitation to come on this visit. I wanted to tell you the real facts. I want to be candid with you. My main concern has been the disappointment of my people and of the Arab people in the American position. Begin is exploiting by every means American support. He is telling heads of state something that has never happened when he says that you have supported his proposals.

I wonder if we can reach a point of getting a specific American position. I wonder if the time is suitable or not for you to decide. This will save us a lot of problems. When we reached a deadlock in the disengagement agreements, it was a very hot situation with our forces confronting one another. The old lady was Prime Minister then.⁹ She is very critical and hard line. In the first disengagement, there was deadlock and the whole thing was saved by an American proposal put forward by Dr. Kissinger.

One of the most important points is that I do not want the Egyptians and the Arabs to be disappointed in their friends in the United States. Ninety percent of them are with us. Egypt and Sudan make up 60 million, Morocco has 20 million, altogether there are 100 million Arabs supporting this initiative. But they are getting very bitter and they have been gravely disappointed by Begin. I do not give the rejectionists any importance. They will never do anything. But the attitude of Begin has done this. I wonder if the time has come. There is no obstacle on my side for the establishment of peace. It can be done in one week.

President: Let me reply. The answer is yes. The time has come for a US position to be presented on both sides. You said in Aswan that there were no differences between us on what peace should be. But if the United States puts forward a position after our meeting, it will look like a US-Egyptian proposal. Then regardless of its content, American Jews, the public and Israel will reject it. It will be seen as collusion. It is essential for me to see Begin, and to invite him, and to have a similar

⁹ A reference to former Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir.

meeting. Then let us put down an American position and go public with it. We would get worldwide support. I think you would accept it. I guess we would have differences with Begin. But I have to have the US public see that I have consulted both you and Begin first.

In the Arab world, when Dayan and I met in New York, we came up with a US plan, but it was seen as a US-Israeli plan, and therefore it was not accepted. So the answer is yes, as quickly as possible, and we can probably estimate the time schedule. I will look at my calendar, and we will have Begin over. I don't want to delay further. We've discussed this, and the time has come for a plan parallel to what Henry Kissinger did.

President Sadat: I agree. This is logical. You can't say what your proposals are after our meeting or they will be rejected. This is the same as if you were to announce them after Begin's visit.

President: Maybe you should disagree with some parts of our plan!

Secretary Vance: If we go along this road, we cannot create a situation on Monday which leaves the impression of a breakdown. In the meantime, we will work out a time schedule.

President: In fairness, President Sadat should have an idea of the time frame. I can see the problems of delay for him. I'll let Secretary Vance and Dr. Brzezinski look this over. Begin will come. He is planning to come in April, but I'd like to see him earlier.

Dr. Brzezinski: It would be useful to say that we might take a series of specific steps, and then we could work out the time for each. For example, the first step might be that you make your position public by taking a positive stance on resuming the talks, and you can be tough on settlements and Resolution 242. Second, we will back you on the settlements and 242. Third, the President would meet Begin. Four, you would come out with your comprehensive peace plan.

President: Why should President Sadat do this?

Dr. Brzezinski: There has to be an Arab plan. Israel will probably reject it, and then we can come up with a plan to break the deadlock. Our role will be more effective in breaking a deadlock. Your plan should even go further than our view.

Foreign Minister Kamil: Should the Arab plan be presented by several countries, or by Egypt alone?

Dr. Brzezinski: By Egypt alone. You have the credentials and you have the greatest credibility, especially in American public opinion.

President: I hope you will consider this carefully. I'd like to say that your proposals for Sinai seem adequate and complete. You've done all that is needed there. But there is no Egyptian, or Egyptian-Jordanian, proposal for the West Bank and Gaza. We need some sort of interim

plan. Maybe this could be considered. Begin has a plan,¹⁰ but it is too detailed. You did some fine work last year on a proposed draft peace treaty. This was helpful to us. It helped to initiate peace proposals. I hope you can think what you'd like to see in the West Bank and Gaza. That would be helpful.

Mr. Marei: I'd like to say two words. I think that if we work on this declaration, it can buy us some time. President Sadat can make his statement about 242, settlements, and the West Bank and Gaza. We would then like to see Jordan join us, along with Saudi Arabia. To get them in, we need a declaration which mentions Jerusalem. This adds a complication. And we need something for the Palestinians. This is a dilemma. The Palestinians have to be related to Jordan somehow in a confederation or otherwise. This is my impression. The first procedure is safer. We have these committees. We have a commitment to a comprehensive peace. We need to have a clear US position. Then we can start to deal with the second problem on the West Bank and Gaza once Jordan and Saudi Arabia come out with their support.

President: Would you expect an American proposal to say something about Jerusalem?

Mr. Marei: This is essential for Saudi Arabia.

President: We don't want to go into that much detail.¹¹

¹⁰ The plan, entitled "Home Rule, for Palestinian Arabs, Residents of Judea, Samaria and the Gaza District" is printed as the Attachment to Document 177.

¹¹ Carter and Sadat met again on February 5. Carter wrote in his diary, "Sadat and I had another serious discussion, and we went over the principles concerning the West Bank and Gaza, and the Palestinian Question. He basically agreed and said he did not want Jerusalem to be divided but there had to be joint sovereignty over one square mile where religious places were located." (*White House Diary*, p. 170) The White House statement issued on February 5 following the Camp David meetings is printed in *Public Papers: Carter, 1978*, Book I, pp. 279–281. The White House issued another statement on February 8 at the end of Sadat's visit; see *ibid.*, pp. 291–292.

212. Memorandum From Jerrold Schecter, White House Press Officer, to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski)¹

Washington, February 6, 1978

SUBJECT

Memorandum of Conversation with Max Kampelman on Meeting of Eight Jewish Leaders with President Sadat at Blair House on February 6, 1978 at 11:00 a.m.

Phil Klutznick indicated to President Sadat that his letter to the *Miami Herald* was being interpreted as an attempt to separate the American Jewish Community.² Sadat denied this, saying he could not do this because the AJC's commitments are too strong and historic. Sadat said he wanted understanding on the part of the AJC and the American community as a whole. He told the story behind his trip to Jerusalem and told in detail why he chose this way of breaking the psychological barrier. Sadat then stated that his objective was peace and love. He spoke a great deal about love as an important part of his motivation and religious faith. Sadat said he inherited three things from Nasser: (1) Demoralization, which he has overcome; (2) the Soviets, whom he has gotten rid of; and (3) hate, and the spirit of hate. He is still anxious to get rid of the spirit of hate from his country.

In the question period, Kampelman spoke first and paid tribute to the historic events that Sadat created. Parenthetically, however, Sadat interjected to say that if he fails he will resign. I hope the world understands that when I say something, I mean it, Sadat said.

Kampelman picked up the theme of love and said that more than a grand gesture is needed, continuity is important. He sensed this may be a problem. Sadat has to understand he will be judged by a continuous effort to achieve peace—not a single gesture.

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Box 21, Groups: 1–3/78. Confidential. Sent for information.

² On January 29, the *Miami Herald* published a letter from Sadat entitled, "An Open Letter to American Jews." Sadat wrote, "We want to put an end to an era of war and violence in our region and usher in a new dawn of peace and fraternity." He then asked four questions of American Jews. First, "Do you condone the annexation of others' territories by force?" Second, "Do you tolerate the suppression of the right of the Palestinian people to live in peace in their homeland, free from foreign rule and military occupation?" Third, "Do you forgive the suppression of human rights of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza and their natural right to liberate their land and emancipate themselves?" And fourth, "Do you agree with those Israeli officials who claim that territorial expansion is more important than the establishment of peace and the normalization of the situation?" ("Sadat Calls on Jews in America to Back His Peace Initiative," *New York Times*, January 30, 1978, p. A4)

Kampelman then raised the problem of the Egyptian press saying that Begin was lucky not to be beaten up on the streets of Ismailia. This was not a message of love, Kampelman said. He also raised the question of the Egyptian article that talked about Begin as a shylock demanding a pound of flesh. Begin gets a message that the man with whom he is dealing may not be carrying love with him, Kampelman said. Sadat denied seeing both of the controversial articles and turned to his advisers who also denied they had appeared.

Kampelman said that Sadat and Begin should be careful not to let the press influence the principals, especially since the press highlights any phrase with a negative tone. If somebody takes up that phrase, they will feel the whole speech is in that spirit. It is essential that the principals understand this. Certainly Begin is viewing Sadat on the basis of stories he is reading and vice versa.

Unless you feel love, you cannot convey it, Kampelman said and raised the question of whether Sadat really feels love for Mr. Begin. Kampelman urged Sadat to soft pedal love and develop in his heart the necessity of dealing with Mr. Begin. Klutznick said he had known Begin for 30 years and he is a complicated person who has suffered deeply. Kampelman urged Sadat to stop negotiating in public and stop attacking in public. Every time you attack it is counterproductive. You have created good will and good faith but you will lose it if you attack, said Kampelman.

President Sadat said he agreed with everything that had been said and reaffirmed his commitment to peace. As he rose at the end of the interview, Sadat added that Israel must understand that in Egyptian sovereignty there must be no settlements and no troops.

Kampelman, on hearing of the wire service leads of Sadat's speech which accused Israel of a vicious cycle of nitpicking and using old tactics and ideas,³ was upset. I hope the President will call Begin. Begin is an old, sick man and I am afraid that this kind of play for Sadat's speech will confirm his paranoia. It would help for the President to talk to him.

³ A reference to Sadat's speech at the National Press Club on January 6. In the speech, Sadat stated that he was "willing to give the experiment every possible chance, until I reach the conclusion that enough time has elapsed without achieving any tangible progress." He continued that he was "not going to rush to this conclusion, but the other side has to demonstrate the same spirit. It takes two to negotiate and reach an agreement." See Bernard Gwertzman, "Sadat Asserts Begin Hardens His Stance," *New York Times*, February 7, 1978, p. 1. Excerpts from Sadat's speech are in the *New York Times*, February 7, 1978, p. 4.

213. Note From President Carter to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski)¹

Washington, February 7, 1978

To Zbig

I have examined all my notes & dictation from the 12/16 & 12/17 meetings with Begin.² During my *private* meeting he discussed a) IL 76's→Iraq, b) The need to expedite a decision on weapon sales to Israel, & c) his hope that we would give support to Ethiopia against Somalia. Never any discussion of settlements.

In the general meeting he now says he talked of settlements in Sinai—I don't recall it & it isn't in my current (then) notes. No one in U.S. gov't to my knowledge has ever accepted the need, propriety or legality of Israeli civilian settlements on occupied territory. In referring to his general Sinai proposal I said then that it sounded reasonable.

J.C.

¹ Source: Carter Library, President's Plains File, President's Personal Foreign Affairs File, Box 2, 11/77–2/79. No classification marking. Carter wrote the note by hand.

² No notes or dictation have been found. For the memoranda of conversation of the December 16 and 17 meetings with Begin, see Documents 177 and 178. In his meeting with Vance on January 16, Begin expressed his contention that he had left the White House "with so many blessings" after his December 16 and 17 meetings with President Carter, where he discussed his plan to keep Israeli settlements in the Sinai. See Document 195.

214. Telegram From the Embassy in Israel to the Department of State¹

Tel Aviv, February 14, 1978, 1405Z

2093. White House for Brzezinski. Subj: Shilo Settlement. Ref: State 37092.²

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840137–2066. Secret; Immediate; Nodis. Sent immediate for information to the White House.

² Telegram 37092 has not been found.

1. During my private meeting with Begin morning of February 14, I pressed him for further explanation of the Shilo situation,³ as directed by reftel.

2. I reviewed with him the statements by Dayan to effect that no more civilian settlements would be established through October 1978, asked how this jibes with Shilo affair, reminded him of his earlier statement to me that he would make every effort to use “persuasion” to solve the problem, and stressed the fact that the Gush Emunin people on the site continue to say they are determined to establish a permanent settlement.

3. We reviewed at some length the political constraints under which Begin feels he is operating, and he reiterated in no uncertain terms what he had told me previously: that he cannot and will not bring himself to use military force to remove the settlers. He said that persuasion by Arik Sharon had been successful in moving the settlers from privately owned Arab land to state-owned land, and he stressed that not only had the Cabinet not approved this as a settlement but that on his recommendation it had specifically disapproved Shilo as a settlement site. The subsequent decision to give authorization for archeological exploration had been given by the Ministry of Defense and in no way contravened the Cabinet decision to turn down Shilo as an authorized settlement. He admitted that the settlers had different objectives, but he insisted that Shilo was not an authorized settlement and that the Cabinet had no intention of authorizing it. So far as the Israeli Government is concerned it is an archeological exploration and will be treated as such.

4. I pressed him very hard and very frankly to take the difficult decision to remove the settlers by one means or another in order to counteract the major credibility problem which had arisen in Washington over this very unfortunate affair. He said again, sadly, that I should tell the Secretary and the President that he cannot use military force against these fine young people. I then pressed him to use more “persuasion” to get them to leave the site completely and thereby carry out the government’s decision. He said that frankly, between us, he did not believe they could be persuaded to leave except by force.

5. So this is where we are on Shilo. The government is being ridiculed and berated in much of the press over its confused handling of this issue, as well as of other settlements questions in general in recent weeks. The Gush Emunim settlers are there and will be doing something which presumably will be in the nature of site survey and pre-excavation work under some sort of direction of an archeologist. Their own intentions to remain and eventually force the government to legiti-

³ See footnote, 2. Document 209.

mate Shilo as a settlement are clear. Begin's reluctance and indeed refusal to use military force to remove them has been stated and restated. So long as some semblance of archeology is going on, and the infrastructure for a full settlement has not been approved, I suppose one can argue as Begin does that the government is carrying out its commitments as Dayan has stated them. A less happy situation would be hard to imagine, nor one which more adversely affects the government's credibility both with the Israeli public and with us. Although it is difficult to see any tangible benefits to U.S. interests in further pursuit of the Shilo affair with Begin in the near future, any extended period of silence runs the risk of being misinterpreted. Thus, unless otherwise instructed, I intend to remind Begin periodically of our deep concern about this issue.

Lewis

215. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Israel¹

Washington, February 17, 1978, 2112Z

42823. Subject: Meeting Between Secretary and Dayan—February 16.

1. Summary: Dayan reiterated the importance Israel attaches to the U.S. role in the peace negotiations and said the GOI is looking forward to Atherton's visit. He repeatedly expressed concern, however, over what he viewed as dissymmetry between the Military Committee and the Political Committee negotiations, indicating that the continuation of the former in Cairo while the latter is pursued through shuttle diplomacy puts Israel in a situation of inferiority. Dayan said Atherton will be welcome but steps should be taken soon to put the negotiations "on an equal footing," adding that "otherwise there might be problems." He at least raised question mark about whether Israel is prepared to pursue work on declaration of principles before Political Committee convenes or to continue meeting in Military Committee while Political Committee is suspended. Dayan also raised question of F-15s for Saudi

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840142-2232. Secret; Immediate; Nodis. Drafted by Korn, cleared by Atherton and Tarnoff, and approved by Secretary Vance. Sent immediate for information to Amman, Cairo, Damascus, and Jidda.

Arabia and their stationing at Tabuk.² He said Weizman would take this up in more detail when he comes to Washington but made point that F-15 sale to Saudis has a bearing on Israeli willingness to give up airbase in Sinai near Eilat and thus has implications for Egyptian-Israeli Sinai negotiations. There was lengthy discussion of the applicability of Resolution 242's language on withdrawal to all fronts. Secretary made clear that while we agree that 242 does not call for withdrawal from all the territories, we have always considered that it applies to territories on all three fronts and thought that was the Israeli Government position too. Secretary asked whether GOI considers that 242 does not apply to all fronts? Dayan evaded direct answer saying he could only speak to position of present Israeli Government, which is that question of sovereignty on the West Bank should be open but that Israeli forces and settlements must remain there. After further questioning by the Secretary, Dayan said he is sure that Israel, prior to negotiations, will not accept any language that would mean it agrees to withdrawal of Israeli forces from the West Bank but he did not rule out that Israel could do so in negotiations. End summary.

2. The Secretary first met privately with Dayan for about one-half hour and then together with aides for about one hour before lunch. After lunch Secretary and Dayan departed for a meeting with the President at the White House.³ Present at the meeting and lunch at the Department on the Israeli side were Dinitz, Bar-On, Ciechanover, Lavie, Rubenstein, and Bentsur. On the U.S. side were Habib, Atherton, Saunders, Sterner, Quandt and Korn.

3. The Secretary said he would summarize Sadat's position as we understand it. Sadat's first goal is a declaration along the lines of the declaration that we have been negotiating. The declaration must at a minimum embody the President's Aswan language on the Palestinian problem.⁴ Sadat hopes that if achieved the declaration will bring Hussein and representative Palestinians into the negotiations. If a declaration is agreed upon but Hussein does not find it sufficient to enter the negotiations, this would pose a serious problem for Sadat. The Secretary said Sadat has not indicated specifically what he would do in such case. We have asked him but have not had a clear response from him. But, the Secretary said, we have no evidence that Sadat would require an Israeli-Syrian agreement as a prerequisite to agreement between Israel and Egypt. Our judgment is that Sadat would be unwilling to give Syria such a veto. A further point, the Secretary said, is that Sadat is not likely to agree to renew the formal Political Committee meetings until a

² Tabuk was the location of an airbase in northwestern Saudi Arabia, approximately 120 miles from Israel.

³ See Document 216.

⁴ See footnote 5, Document 187.

declaration of principles has been achieved. In this regard, the Secretary said, we believe that the differences between the parties over the language of the declaration of principles are not merely semantic but substantive. To resolve them, it may be necessary to go into the second item on the Political Committee agenda so as to give more context to the declaration. The Secretary said he would stop there and listen to any comments that Dayan might have.

4. Dayan said he wanted first to mention three positive aspects of the situation. First, Dayan said, we are in the midst of active negotiations for a peace agreement and should constantly keep the obstacles we encounter in this perspective. Secondly, while Israel wants face-to-face negotiations, it must be clear that a peace agreement cannot be reached without the participation of the United States. The experience of recent negotiations has amply demonstrated this, Dayan said. Egypt and Israel could not even agree on an agenda for the Political Committee until the U.S. stepped in, both as mediator and contributor. Without the U.S., Dayan said, it will be impossible to get agreement. Dayan said we are looking forward to Roy Atherton's return to the area.

5. Dayan commented that having made these positive points, there were also a few negative points of concern that he had to raise. A first and very important one, Dayan said, is that we do not think it proper for one committee to work in Cairo while the work of the other is suspended and the declaration of principles is negotiated through shuttle diplomacy. The two committees must be on an equal footing. Sadat cannot have it all his way. Dayan urged that the U.S. give thought to how this can be done. He reiterated that one party could not have negotiations going on in its capital while the other had nothing and thus appeared "second rate."

6. Dayan said the second point he wanted to raise concerned arms. He did not want to get into a detailed discussion of this subject; Ezer Weizman would deal with it when he comes to Washington. But, Dayan said, when asked publicly he would have to express concern along the lines of what Prime Minister Begin had said in the Knesset.⁵

⁵ On February 15, Begin stated in the Knesset "that Israel had not received all the aircraft it had requested but felt the response was generally positive and he expressed his appreciation to the President for his decision." Begin noted that Weizman "will visit Washington in the near future and will renew the request for additional aircraft." Additionally, Begin "requested the President to reconsider his decision to sell planes to Egypt and Saudi Arabia." Begin feared Saudi Arabia would become "a confrontation state because it would now have aircraft which could reach Eilat in ten minutes." He also expressed concern that the Saudis could transfer the aircraft to other Arab states. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780069–1030) Secretary Vance announced on February 14 that President Carter had approved the sale of 15 F-15s (in addition to the 25 already sold) and 75 F-16s to Israel, 50 F-5s to Egypt, and 60 F-15s to Saudi Arabia. (Department of State *Bulletin*, March 1978, p. 37)

There was just one question he wanted to raise in the present discussion and that was the sale of jets to Saudi Arabia and the Saudi air base at Tabuk, close to Eilat. Dayan said this combination would make it more difficult to close the Israeli military airfields in Sinai. The main enemy forces for Israel would be in Syria, but the F-15s would be able to carry out strike missions from Tabuk. The F-15 sale to Saudi Arabia therefore has implications for the Egyptian-Israeli negotiations. Dayan stressed that this question is of great concern to the GOI, and Weizman will want to discuss it when he comes to Washington.

7. Dayan said his final point was the question of the language of Resolution 242 on withdrawal and whether this means all fronts including the West Bank. Dayan explained that when the GOI had discussed the declaration of principles it had thought it could use language which did not mean that the principle of withdrawal applies to the West Bank. Israel had not wanted to mislead others or to be vague but it had definitely not intended to use language which would require withdrawal on all fronts. Dayan said he saw absolutely no objection to other parties—Egypt, Jordan and the Palestinians—putting forward proposals of their own which called for Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank. Begin and Sadat had agreed at Ismailia that each side should be free to present its own proposals, and Israel recognizes that there are conflicting claims. If the Arabs want to claim sovereignty over the West Bank and Gaza after three or five years Israel could do the same, but, Dayan said, we propose to leave that question open. It is one thing for each party to state its views but quite another, Dayan said, for Israel to be asked beforehand to commit itself to withdrawal from the West Bank. He (Dayan) would strongly recommend against doing so. Dayan asked how Israel could issue a declaration of principles in which it agreed to withdrawal on the West Bank and to the right of others to sovereignty over that area. Israel would make no commitment of this sort, not even an indirect one. Dayan said he had raised this point because he wanted it to be clear; it is a sensitive matter and he did not want misunderstandings about it.

8. The Secretary said he would comment on the points made by Dayan. First of all we agree that it is important that the parties are negotiating for peace and are talking about real peace treaties; that represents progress. It is also significant that the parties agree that it is important to keep the negotiations moving forward. Regarding the U.S. role, we are prepared to do everything we can. Roy Atherton will be leaving for the Middle East on Sunday⁶ and will be holding talks in Jerusalem and Cairo.

⁶ February 19. The February 5 White House statement issued during Sadat's visit noted that Carter and Begin agreed that Atherton would return to the Middle East to continue working on the declaration of principles. See *Public Papers: Carter, 1977*, Book I, pp. 279–281.

9. On the problem raised by Dayan of the continuation of the Military Committee work in Cairo while the Jerusalem Political Committee remains suspended, the Secretary said we must have more time to think about this. Perhaps future talks in both committees could be moved to Sinai. But for the moment, the Secretary said, he wanted to make it clear that we think that negotiations should continue through Atherton moving between Jerusalem and Cairo and Amman and other capitals as necessary. The Secretary asked if Dayan agreed. Dayan said he would report Secretary's views; in any case Atherton will be more than welcome in Jerusalem. But Dayan reiterated that he did not think it proper for the Military Committee to continue to meet in Cairo while the Political Committee negotiations were being conducted in a different way. There must be equality. The earlier agreement can be reached on procedures and a place for the Political Committee negotiations, the better. Dayan said Israel is not against the Military Committee continuing in Cairo. Israel does not want to stop those meetings. What it wants is that both committees should function in parallel fashion. Otherwise, Dayan said, "there might be a problem."

10. Regarding the arms issue, the Secretary said he wanted to get a clearer idea of what Dayan intended when he raised the question of the Tabuk base. Was Dayan saying that if the sale of F-15s to Saudi Arabia goes through and the Saudis station those planes at Tabuk in 1981–82, this would affect Israel's views regarding its Sinai proposal? Dayan said he was certain the stationing of F-15s at Tabuk would affect security considerations in the negotiations. The prime target of F-15s at Tabuk would be Eilat. Therefore Israel would have to be ready to destroy the Saudi planes before they got to Israeli territory. Dayan said he did not want to go into detail on this; Weizman would explain Israel's view. But clearly the arms question will affect Israel's total concept of defensive borders. The Secretary asked if Dayan was suggesting that if the F-15s are based somewhere other than Tabuk this would affect Israel's position on the sale? Dayan said he was not in a position to say that, but he noted that Weizman had told Lewis that if the Saudis are worried about Iraq, their planes should be stationed on the other side of the Peninsula. However, Dayan said, in case of war Saudis would move the planes wherever they wished, no matter where they were based. Dayan pointed out that the Saudis took part in the 1973 War along side the Syrians, and Saudi forces had recently held joint war games with the Syrians. The Secretary said he did not think the Saudis had made up their minds at all about the stationing of F-15s at Tabuk.

11. Concerning the question of Resolution 242 and the principle of withdrawal on all fronts, the Secretary noted that there has never been any reference to 242 in paragraph 4 of the draft declaration, the paragraph on the Palestinian issue. But he wanted to ask if it is the Israeli

position that the principle of withdrawal stated in Resolution 242 does not apply on all fronts? Dayan said he believed 242 does not call on Israel to go back all the way to the 1967 lines; the position should be different on each front. Israel's position regarding the West Bank is very clear. It will not make an agreement on the basis of withdrawal from the West Bank but on the basis of self-rule and the continued presence of Israeli forces. Israel recognizes the sovereignty of Egypt over the entire Sinai and is ready to withdraw fully from Sinai, but this is not because 242 requires it. Dayan said he preferred to leave the matter there and not argue legal positions. The Secretary replied that it is very important that we have a clear understanding of Israel's position on this point. We agree that Resolution 242 does not call for withdrawal from all the territories but speaks only of "territories." But it has always been our understanding that Resolution 242 does apply to territories on all three fronts. We had thought that was the Israeli position as well.

12. Dayan replied that he could speak only about the position of the present Israeli Government. The concept of the present Israeli Government is that the question of sovereignty on the West Bank, where Israel has a claim, should be left open and that Israeli forces and settlements should not be withdrawn from the West Bank. Whether this position is consistent or not with Resolution 242 Dayan could not say. The Secretary again said he thought this question must be clarified. Dayan suggested that discussion of the issue continue in Jerusalem with Atherton. The Secretary agreed but reiterated the U.S. view that Resolution 242 applies on all three fronts. The Secretary stressed that we do not believe that when we said this in our statement the other day we were saying anything new or making any changes in the USG position.⁷ The Secretary reiterated, however, that he was not sure that he had fully understood what Dayan was saying. Dayan replied that Israel would discuss any proposals regarding the West Bank made by the other parties but it would be unacceptable to Israel to say that Israel agrees to withdraw from the West Bank. Dayan pointed out that with Begin's approval he had said in the Knesset that if the Arabs come up with a plan for partition of the West Bank, the GOI will discuss it. But thus far none of the Arabs has made such a proposal. He did not rule out the right of the Arabs to propose partition or even full Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank but "I am sure that what we will not do is prior to any negotiation accept any language that would mean we agree to withdrawal of Israeli forces from the West Bank." Dayan added: "We can do it in negotiations but no one should expect us to come forward with such a declaration in advance."

⁷ Presumably a reference to the February 8 White House statement. See footnote 11, Document 211.

13. The Secretary asked Atherton to explain how he plans to proceed in his negotiations. Atherton recalled that he had told Dayan during their meeting in New York that he had gotten from Kamel in Cairo Egyptian comments on Israeli comments on the draft declaration.⁸ These have not yet been formally conveyed to Israel. Therefore as a first step he would lay out the Egyptian comments. Atherton noted that as he had told Dayan the Egyptian comments in many aspects go in a direction opposite from Israeli views. Atherton said beyond that he thought it would be useful to look ahead to the second point of the Political Committee agenda, concerning the West Bank and Gaza and the Palestinian problem, and begin to get some idea from the Egyptians about new arrangements they would like to see in that area. Atherton said he would want to see if the Egyptians would put forth their thoughts on the West Bank and Gaza. The Secretary said he had told Dayan that Atherton would plan to visit Amman. Atherton pointed out that it will be useful to get a feeling for what Hussein will need to enter the negotiations. He would not be negotiating a declaration of principles in Amman. The talks there would be simply to get a better feeling for Hussein's needs.

14. Dayan asked if Sadat had mentioned the question of a UN force at Sharm al-Sheikh. The Secretary said Sadat had, and we believe it is still his view that the UN should hold Sharm al-Sheikh. Dayan asked if this meant exclusively UN forces, no Egyptians? The Secretary said Sadat had spoken only of UN forces and had not mentioned Egyptians. However, the Secretary said, we can raise this question with Sadat if Dayan wishes.

15. As the meeting closed, Dayan reiterated his hope that a solution could be worked out soon regarding the problem of the current dissymmetry between the Military and Political Committee negotiations.

Vance

⁸ No memoranda of conversation have been found.

216. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, February 16, 1978, 1:40–2 p.m.

SUBJECT

Meeting Between President Carter and Foreign Minister Moshe Dayan of Israel

PARTICIPANTS

United States

The President

Secretary of State Cyrus Vance

Dr. Zbigniew Brzezinski

Assistant Secretary of State Alfred L. Atherton, Jr.

Israel

Foreign Minister Moshe Dayan

Ambassador Simcha Dinitz

The President asked Secretary Vance what had been covered in his meeting with Dayan,² and the Secretary said he had told Dayan about the Sadat visit. The President asked jokingly if Dayan had found all of Sadat's positions acceptable.

Dayan said "not all." Continuing, Dayan said Israel would like King Hussein and the Palestinian Arabs to join the negotiations since a peace agreement cannot be reached without them. It is unacceptable, however, to have preconditions for those negotiations. Israel could not commit itself to things it does not agree to. Jordan and the Palestinians can put forward their proposal in the negotiations, but Israel should not have to agree beforehand to withdrawal from the West Bank and to self-determination. Dayan added that he was not saying Israel would agree to these things in the negotiations.

The President asked whether Israel has direct contacts with King Hussein. *Dayan* said "not now." When he had last seen Hussein, the King had made clear he does not feel he can speak for the Palestinians.

The President continued that the principles Israel had described to us in general terms during Prime Minister Begin's December visit were reasonable as a beginning for negotiations. It has been our understanding that Israel objects to an independent Palestinian state or to actions which would lead to that result. In fact, the President said, we find no one who is proposing such an independent state—not even President Assad. Our view, the President continued, is that the Palestinians,

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Subject File, Box 1, Arab-Israeli Peace Negotiations 1978: Volume I [I]. Top Secret. The meeting took place in the Roosevelt Room at the White House.

² No memorandum of conversation has been found, but see Document 215.

including the residents of the West Bank, should have a voice in determining their future. We are seeking a general basis for negotiations without encroaching on Israel's historical positions.

Dayan said he felt we were close to agreement on this point in the Jerusalem talks, specifically to agreement on the right of the Palestinian Arabs to participate, together with Egypt, Israel and Jordan, in determining their future.

The President asked if Israel wanted Egypt to be involved. *Dayan* said he did not know, but the Egyptians had proposed this because of their former position in Gaza. *The Secretary* said we see four elements participating—Egypt, Israel, Jordan and Palestinian representatives.

The President said this was fine with him. In his view, we were now down to questions of semantics, although he recognized that certain words have particular connotations. He had tried in Aswan³ to find the words Israel wanted. *Dayan* interjected that this had given Israel "lots of work." *The President* said we felt that if we could get this language, it would help Hussein join the negotiations although we had no commitment from him. So far as Syria is concerned, Sadat had never mentioned the need for agreement on the Golan Heights. *Dayan* replied that the Golan had been mentioned in the first Egyptian draft, but said that perhaps they will drop this.

Secretary Vance said that Sadat had told him at the end of his visit he needed agreement on principles which Hussein would accept as a framework to join the talks. Then Sadat would be prepared to go ahead and negotiate on the Sinai and to participate in West Bank negotiations. Sadat said he cannot do this without Hussein.

With respect to Sinai, *the President* said, the problems for Sadat are the airdromes, the placement of Egyptian troops (Sadat had said he would not send his main forces east of the passes), and settlements. So far as he knew, the President said, there was close to agreement on the Sinai.

The other things Sadat wants, *the President* continued, are that the Palestinians should have a voice in the negotiations and that Resolution 242 should apply to the West Bank. Sadat wants to know that there will be withdrawal but is not insisting on complete withdrawal from the West Bank.

Dayan said "here there is a problem." "A problem?" *the President* asked. *Dayan* said Israel's position is that it does not want to rule the Palestinian Arabs but wants to keep its military installations and settlements. This is Israel's position; Jordan and the Palestinians can put forward their position. Israel is prepared to discuss these positions but

³ See footnote 5, Document 187.

not to commit itself to withdrawal as a precondition to get Hussein into the negotiations. Israel will not sign such a commitment before negotiations.

When Begin was here, *the President* said, we understood Israel was willing to withdraw its forces to cantonments. We had asked if this meant along the Jordan River, and Begin had said there were also some positions in the hills. It was not our interpretation that Israel was not willing to accept this as a basis for negotiations. *Dayan* replied “not as a precondition.”

The President asked what we can do now. We can talk about words and lose the chance for peace. The President asked what words bothered Dayan—was it “withdrawal?” *Dayan* said he had no mandate from the Cabinet to speak to this.

Dr. Brzezinski asked “you accept Resolution 242, don’t you?” *Dayan* replied yes, but we object to “on all fronts.”

Secretary Vance said he had discussed this point with Dayan and had made the point that we understand that historically Israel had accepted Resolution 242 as applying on all three fronts. *Dayan* said he can only speak for the present Government. We had agreed to discuss Resolution 242 and its history in Jerusalem.

The President said he had no preconceived view about where the final lines should be, how many cantonments there should be, or about the airdromes. We are seeking to find a basis for accommodation. The three versions of the declaration of principles are not too different. What we want is for Prime Minister Begin and President Sadat to be flexible, to agree on a set of principles, including those governing the West Bank and Gaza for three to five years. Then there could be negotiations. The Begin Plan could be a basis for negotiations though it is not enough as it stands. In five years there could be a referendum, with the four parties to the negotiations agreeing on the words of the referendum. There could be a link with Jordan, or a link with Israel, or perhaps the people would prefer to continue the interim arrangements. These were just ideas, and there might be others.

Dayan said there are two problems. First, Sadat wants Hussein in the negotiations. *Secretary Vance* commented that Sadat says Hussein must be in; it is conceivable he could change his mind, but he now says he needs a declaration which Hussein accepts. *The President* said this was a change from what Sadat told him in Aswan. In any case, one thing is clear; Sadat is flexible.

Dayan said what if Sadat insists on Hussein joining the negotiations and Hussein raises his price; it is hard for Hussein to speak for the Palestinians. The question, *Dayan* said, is whether Sadat will be satisfied with wording along the lines we have almost agreed upon or whether he will insist upon Hussein joining the negotiations.

The President said we should not permit Hussein to set the terms if he is not reasonable. It was his impression from his talks with Hussein in Tehran⁴ that Hussein and Sadat were in agreement. Roy Atherton had talked to Hussein more recently, however. *Secretary Vance* said Hussein changes his position from time to time and recently it has become tougher.

Dayan said Israel believes that all West Bank and Gaza questions should be negotiated without their accepting our plan or ourselves accepting theirs. There should be no precommitments. It is difficult, *Dayan* said, for Israel to accept a declaration saying there will be Israeli withdrawal on the West Bank; this may happen, but Israel will not say it in advance.

The President said you must admit that everyone has said they are committed to Resolutions 242 and 338. This was true before he was in office, he said, and had been confirmed to him by Israel.

Dayan said Israel objects to the phrase “on all fronts.” The present Israeli Government does not use this phrase.

The President asked if Israel will use the words of Resolution 242. *Secretary Vance* said those are the words of the declaration of principles; the problem underlying them is not raised by the present wording.

Dayan said that with respect to Item 2 of the Political Committee Agenda, Egypt has raised the question of whether they or the Jordanians should negotiate. There is almost agreement, however, on Resolution 242 language without the phrase “on all fronts.”

The President said we will seek clear answers from Sadat before the Begin visit. There is not much doubt that Sadat does not require Syria to join the negotiations. The more difficult question is his position about Hussein joining.

Secretary Vance said he had told *Dayan* it was his impression that the Aswan language may be acceptable to Sadat. *The President* said that if this were acceptable, this should be an adequate basis for peace between Egypt and Israel even if Hussein raises his demands. Agreement on basic principles, however, is essential for Sadat; he must have a framework for a comprehensive peace.

Dayan said he believed we were close to agreed language, referring to Resolution 242 without mentioning “on all fronts” and to the right of the Palestinian Arabs to participate in determining their future. The question is what will happen if Sadat insists on Hussein joining, and Hussein rejects the declaration.

⁴ See Document 182.

The President said Sadat has some influence on Hussein as do the Saudis; we also have some limited influence. In conclusion, the President said we will try to be prepared for Mr. Begin's visit.

217. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Egypt¹

Washington, February 18, 1978, 0115Z

43257. For the Ambassador from the Secretary. Subject: Message From President Carter to President Sadat.

1. Please convey the following letter from President Carter to President Sadat.

2. Begin text:

Dear Mr. President:

As we discussed during our talks at Camp David,² I have invited Prime Minister Begin to Washington and we have agreed on the dates of March 14 and 15 for a visit here.

I am beginning now to prepare myself for the crucial discussions I will have with Mr. Begin. As I reflect upon my talks with you, there are two points on which I will have to be absolutely clear in my own mind, both having to do with how you envisage proceeding in the negotiations once there is agreement on a declaration of principles.

The first point is the most difficult. I know the importance you attach, and which we share, to having King Hussein and if possible moderate Palestinian representatives join the negotiations. As you and I agreed, we should both make every effort to encourage their participation. Let us assume that we were able to achieve agreement between Egypt and Israel on the text of a declaration of principles along the lines of the draft Secretary Vance gave you when he visited Cairo on January 20³ including my Aswan formulation, and West Bank/Gaza transitional arrangements along the lines I discussed with you at Camp David. Let us also assume that King Hussein concluded even then that

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Subject File, Box 2, Arab-Israeli Peace Negotiations 1978: Volume I [I]. Secret; Immediate; Nodis; Cherokee. Drafted by Atherton, cleared by Brzezinski and Tarnoff, and approved by Secretary Vance.

² See Document 211.

³ See Document 205. The draft is quoted in Document 203.

he was not in a position to join the negotiating process. In these circumstances how far would you be prepared to go in negotiating your own peace treaty with Israel?

Second, it is my understanding that should agreement be reached on a declaration and on a West Bank/Gaza negotiating framework, as described above, you would proceed to negotiate a peace treaty with Israel even if these were not accepted by Syria as a basis for its own participation in negotiations. I would appreciate hearing from you whether my understanding in this respect is correct.

I recognize that these are extremely sensitive questions of central importance to your negotiating strategy. I am sure that you will understand, however, how important it is for me to have a clear understanding of your position if I am to be able to play the important role we both agree must be assumed by the U.S. in order for there to be tangible and early progress in the negotiating process. I would understand if you prefer to convey your comments on these two points orally to Ambassador Eilts for him to convey to me in absolute privacy.

Sincerely,
Jimmy Carter
End text.

3. This message is being given no distribution within Department, and should be treated by you as literally eyes only.

Vance

218. Telegram From the Embassy in Egypt to the Department of State¹

Cairo, February 18, 1978, 1342Z

5442. For the Secretary from Ambassador. Subject: Message From President Carter to President Sadat. Ref: State 43257.²

1. During my meeting with President Sadat this morning (at which VP Mubarak was also present), I read to him and gave him President

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Subject File, Box 2, Arab-Israeli Peace Negotiations 1978: Volume II [I]. Secret; Niact Immediate; Nodis; Cherokee. A handwritten note in the upper right corner of the page reads, "Still not clear—JC."

² See Document 217.

Carter's letter cited reftel. Sadat listened carefully and replied as follows:

2. On the first point, i.e. that despite a favorable declaration of principles and West Bank/Gaza transitional arrangements, King Hussein still does not consider himself in a position to join the negotiating process, he (Sadat) would be prepared to proceed with negotiations "to the end." Whenever a satisfactory and precise declaration of principles has been worked out, Sadat said, it makes no difference to him whether Hussein comes in or not; he will still proceed with the negotiations with a view to successfully concluding them. Sadat noted it would clearly be helpful if Hussein could be brought in, but the important element to him is a satisfactory declaration of principles.

3. On the second point, Sadat said that whenever a declaration of principles is agreed upon and the need to resolve the Palestinian question in all of its aspects is satisfactorily mentioned, he is prepared to proceed to negotiate a treaty with Israelis, even if Syria refuses to participate. In this connection, however, he made the point that his present thinking is that a satisfactory declaration of principles must indicate Israeli readiness to withdraw from territories occupied in 67 provided the parties are prepared to sit down with Israel and negotiate security arrangements and that West Bank, Gaza, Sinai, and Golan should be specified as territories from which withdrawal must take place. If this is done, Sadat noted, then it is completely up to the Syrians to decide whether or not to negotiate with Israelis.

4. In connection with the West Bank/Gaza aspect, however, Sadat had a slight caveat. He said that if there is a satisfactory declaration of principles and an Egyptian/Israeli agreement is thereafter worked out, he might go ahead with the first phase of Israeli withdrawal from Sinai, but postpone the second phase³ until the issue of the West Bank/Gaza is settled by the Israelis with the representatives of the Palestinians as well as Jordan (for the West Bank) and Egypt (for Gaza). In this connection he said that he had urged Peres in Salzburg⁴ that Israel should agree to have some moderate PLO elements represented in any West Bank/Gaza talks and had specifically mentioned Khalid el Hassan as a reasonable PLO rep. Peres had not reacted to this suggestion.

5. Sadat hoped that this clarifies his position.

6. Note: Both reftel and this message are being treated as literally eyes only Ambassador.

Eilts

³ A handwritten note in the margin by Carter reads, "What is second phase?"

⁴ Sadat met with Peres in Salzburg, Austria, on February 11.

219. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Israel¹

Washington, February 25, 1978, 0143Z

49516. For the Ambassador From the Secretary. Subject: Shiloh Settlement.

1. During your Sunday² meeting with Begin, you should tell Begin that the report of your February 14 discussion on Shiloh³ has been noted with concern in Washington. It appears that Begin has no intention of taking any action to remove settlers who, by his own admission, should not remain where they now are.

2. You should remind Begin that we take seriously the Israeli commitment given by Dayan last September⁴ that there would be no new civilian settlements for at least one year. Shiloh, whether authorized as a settlement or not, seems to be becoming a de facto permanent civilian settlement. We believe Begin will agree that this is inconsistent with Israel's commitment.

3. In addition to this demarch, you should, as you suggest, periodically raise Shiloh with Begin lest he interpret our silence as acquiescence in the de facto situation. We would also like to be kept informed of developments at the Shiloh site itself.

4. Your reporting on the debate over settlements within Israel has been helpful and we are looking forward to earliest possible report of Cabinet decision on Sunday.

Vance

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Subject File, Box 48, Israel: 1–2/78. Secret; Niact Immediate.

² February 26.

³ See Document 214.

⁴ See Document 106.

220. Summary of Conclusions of a Policy Review Committee Meeting¹

Washington, February 27, 1978, 3:30–5 p.m.

SUBJECT

Israeli Arms Requests—Matmon C

PARTICIPANTS

State

Under Secretary Philip Habib

Under Secretary Lucy Benson

Defense

Secretary Harold Brown

Deputy Secretary Charles Duncan

Assistant Secretary

David McGiffert

JCS

General David Jones

Lt. General William Smith

CIA

Admiral Stansfield Turner

[name not declassified]

OMB

Mr. W. Bowman Cutter

Mr. Randy Jayne

ACDA

Mr. Spurgeon Keeny

Dr. Barry Blechman

White House

Dr. Zbigniew Brzezinski

Mr. David Aaron

NSC

Mr. William B. Quandt

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

The Policy Review Committee met under Secretary Brown's chairmanship to discuss the Israeli Matmon C request.² Matmon C is a ten-year procurement program for modernization and expansion of all branches of the Israeli armed forces. It will cost approximately \$10 billion, and the Israelis are counting on us for \$1.5 billion of FMS financing per year. The program envisages expansion of Israeli ground forces by two additional divisions, heavy reliance on high technology, and is derived from an analysis of a maximum Arab military threat.

1. *General Response to Weizman.* During Weizman's March 7–10 visit, Secretary Brown will inform him that the United States cannot commit itself to Matmon C in its entirety. We need a clearer idea of Israel's planned force structure and the strategy that lies behind future force development. We also need a clearer sense of priorities among the

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Freedom of Information/Legal, Kimmit, Arms Transfer File, Box 22, Israel: 9/77–12/78. Top Secret; Sensitive. The meeting took place in the White House Situation Room.

² See footnote 5, Document 130. A February 1978 U.S. Government review of Israeli Defense Force requirements and Matmon C is in the Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Brzezinski Office File, Country Chron File, Box 22, Israel: 1–3/78.

various items requested. When we have that information in hand, we will be prepared to make decisions on a case-by-case basis, against the background of our long-standing commitment to maintain Israel's security and her ability to deter Arab military threats.

2. *Funding.* There was agreement that we should stick with \$1 billion in FMS for FY 1979. We should make no multi-year commitment, and we should make no commitment to fund everything that we agree to sell to Israel. As in the past, Israel will have to use some of her own resources to finance her military requirements.

3. *Level of Response.* Matmon C can be broken down into several categories for analytical purposes: follow-on support requirements; items for modernization of forces; high technology to enhance force efficiency; and force expansion. There was general agreement that we should be prepared to make positive decisions concerning follow-on support and should consider requests in the other categories on a case-by-case basis.

4. *Weizman Visit.* Weizman made it clear that he would like to be able to leave Washington with some positive decisions concerning Matmon C. Several possibilities were suggested. State is inclined to recommend positive decisions in the near future on an ammunition package and FLIRs. There was some discussion of the use of FMS financing for Kfirs and Chariot tanks, and most of the agencies were negative to this point. Nonetheless, the precedent already exists for using FMS funds in this way, and there are arguments in favor of a positive response. On the whole, it was felt that political considerations should guide any such decision.

5. *Co-production.* All of the agencies represented took a negative position on large-scale co-production projects with Israel. Defense suggested some possibilities for limited co-assembly, or for production in Israel of the avionics to be used on the F-16. This will require further consideration.

6. *Secretary Brown's Meeting with Weizman.* Defense, State, and NSC will prepare a basic strategy paper for Secretary Brown to use in his talks with Weizman.

It was the consensus of the PRC that decisions on Israeli military requests should be discussed further against the background of political developments in the Middle East and in U.S.-Israeli relations. On military grounds alone, there are no urgent decisions which need to be taken. The consensus of the intelligence community remains that Israel has a significant margin of military superiority over the Arabs and that this will continue through the early 1980's regardless of how we respond to Matmon C.

221. Telegram From the Embassy in Israel to the Department of State and the Embassy in Egypt¹

Tel Aviv, February 27, 1978, 2005Z

2633. Subj: Begin Clarifies Cabinet Decision on Settlements. Ref.: Tel Aviv 2624.²

1. During private meeting with Begin this evening, Feb 27, he explained to me the significance of Sunday's³ Cabinet decision on settlements. His explanation conformed to that we had previously obtained from Weizman and Tamir (reftel).

2. Decision means:

(A) No rpt no new settlements in Sinai, including not even going ahead with several settlement sites earlier approved by previous government.

(B) No more drilling towers, water tanks, new access roads, bulldozers, etc.

(C) Expansion of arable land and construction of houses in existing settlements will be permitted.

(D) On West Bank, only new settlements will be two remaining to do of three sites within military camps approved by Cabinet January 8. These two will not be established before April. (Implication was that this will be all while active negotiations in progress) (see septel re Shilo situation.)⁴

3. Begin gave me this in confidence, and did not rpt not want any publicity because of conflicting political pressures within Cabinet. (Obviously a vain hope in light of today's press). He said that Atherton could explain privately to Sadat that decision amounts to stopping all new settlement work in Sinai. Begin hopes this will be seen by Sadat as

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780090–0234. Confidential; Niact Immediate; Exdis. Sent immediate for information to Jerusalem and the White House.

² In telegram 2624 from Tel Aviv, February 27, Ambassador Lewis reported on an Israeli cabinet communiqué published on February 26 relating to settlement policy. The communiqué "reaffirmed prior resolutions," but noted that a private agreement was reached at a February 26 meeting "to freeze new settlement activity in Sinai as long as active negotiations continued." Additionally, the Cabinet "resolved to implement its January decision to build another two new settlements in army camps on the West Bank." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780089–0846)

³ February 26.

⁴ Apparently a reference to telegram 2700 from Tel Aviv, February 28. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy Archive, P840137–1950)

constructive step to improve negotiating atmosphere. But for domestic political reasons here, he cannot publicize it as such.

Lewis

222. Telegram From the Embassy in Jordan to the Department of State¹

Amman, March 5, 1978, 1118Z

2115. From Atherton U.S. Del. 56. Subject: Meeting With Hussein March 4.

1. Summary—Pickering and I met with Hussein Saturday afternoon, March 4, for about an hour. I made presentation along lines of talking points (Amman 2019)² stressing U.S. commitment to continue the peace effort and see it through to a successful conclusion. I emphasized that we are not asking Hussein for a decision at this stage to join the negotiations but said it would be useful for us to know, for our own confidential information only, what Hussein would need to be able to enter the negotiations. I indicated it would also be very helpful to have Jordanian ideas concerning interim arrangements for the West Bank and Gaza. Though quite cordial throughout the conversation, Hussein offered no encouragement and avoided direct response to my requests. He reiterated rather emphatically public Jordanian position that Israel would have to agree to full withdrawal and to self-determination for Palestinians. Evidently questioning our credibility, Hussein took no pains to disguise his skepticism regarding assurances of our determination to see the peace effort through to a successful conclusion; he smiled broadly when I spoke of this, and he later referred to assurances given him by Ambassador Goldberg and other USG officials in 1967, which he obviously felt had not been honored. I replied to this by pointing out that President Carter had spoken quite frankly both to the Arabs, on the need for normal peaceful relations, and to the Israelis, on settlements, on the need for withdrawal on all fronts and on the Palestinian issue, and that successful Middle East peace negotiations are es-

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P850103–1553. Secret; Immediate; Exdis Handle as Nodis. Sent immediate for information to Cairo, Jerusalem, Jidda, Tel Aviv, and Damascus.

² The talking points are in telegram 2019 from Amman, March 3. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, [no film number])

sential to our national interest. Hussein said frankly it would be suicide for him to enter negotiations without assurances that Israel is prepared for full withdrawal and self-determination for the Palestinians. He expressed concern that Sadat's aim in wanting Jordan as a partner to the negotiations is to improve his (Sadat's) position. Hussein added fatalistically that either we would succeed, in which case we could count on his participation, or we would fail. If we failed he believed Jordan could also help in trying to put back together a new consensus in the Arab world for peace. He nonetheless said he wished us well and looked forward to continuing dialogue with us. End summary.

2. Present on the Jordanian side in addition to the King were Crown Prince Hassan and Sharaf. Those on our side were Pickering, Sterner, Korn and myself.

3. I led off by conveying greetings from the Secretary and the President to the King. I said that I had been asked to stop in Amman to inform the King where we stood and where we think the negotiations are going, and to get his views about this process and what we should do. I then informed Hussein of my travel plans and said that I expected to be returning to the area, and Amman, at some point following Begin's visit to Washington. I said I thought the efforts that we have put into the declaration of principles had been useful. We have succeeded in narrowing the differences on language and understand more clearly now where the real problems lie.

4. I said that after Sadat recalled his delegation from the Jerusalem Political Committee meeting,³ there had been a period of disillusionment regarding the negotiations. When Sadat went to Washington he was clearly discouraged and there was a question whether he was prepared at all to continue with the peace process. However, as a result of his talks with President Carter, Sadat was encouraged and agreed that work on the declaration of principles should go forward and that the U.S. should play an intermediary role in achieving a declaration. I said we see the fact that Sadat has recently sent a message to Begin,⁴ and that Begin intends to reply thereto, as an encouraging sign that the negotiations are proceeding. Both Israel and Egypt want to complete work on the declaration. Neither they nor we see the declaration as an end in itself, but we all view it as an essential step toward creating a broader base for negotiation. I said negotiations on the declaration are now at stage where the main unresolved differences concern the Palestinian language. If the Palestinian language could be agreed, I thought other difficulties could be resolved too. I said it was clear that the declaration would not be the far reaching document that President Sadat had

³ See footnote 4, Document 198.

⁴ See footnote 5, Document 224.

hoped for, but it would be an important step beyond Resolution 242. It would add to the 242 negotiation base by recognizing that the Palestinian issue has to be dealt with as a territorial and political problem, not just as a refugee issue. I pointed out that that alone would be a step forward. I said that it seemed evident that the Palestinian paragraph of the declaration will have to be substantially that of the President's Aswan statement.⁵ Egypt would like a stronger Palestinian paragraph but in the end I thought Egypt would agree to the Aswan language. I said that the Israelis do not accept the Aswan language, but I had told them that in my judgment it would be necessary to agree to the Aswan language if a declaration of principles is to be achieved.

5. I said that I expected the Palestinian paragraph of the declaration to be one of the main issues to be discussed during Begin's visit. The other main issue will be Begin's interpretation that Resolution 242 does not apply to all fronts. I said we have made it clear that we totally disagree with Israel on this and that the principle of withdrawal on all fronts is universally accepted. There must be a change in the Israelis's position on this issue if there is to be an agreement on the declaration of principles and movement on the negotiations. I cautioned, however, against expectations that these issues would be resolved during the Begin visit. Begin would not be able to make decisions in Washington on his own: he would have to return to Israel and consult his colleagues. But we hoped that the talks in Washington would help move forward the decision process.

6. I said in addition to the above-mentioned issues we would also like to get into the questions of future interim arrangements for the West Bank and Gaza. I noted that it seems generally accepted that there will have to be interim arrangements. The final solution cannot be achieved in a single leap. So far there is only one proposal on the table: that is Begin's self-rule plan.⁶ We realize that Begin's proposal is not acceptable to the Arabs as it stands. We hope to get a dialogue going on interim arrangements. I noted that the Egyptians are reluctant to get into the issue by themselves. They feel they have no mandate for the West Bank and would like to get Jordan's views. The Egyptians would like discussions on the West Bank and Gaza to include Jordan and the Palestinian representatives. I said it would be very useful if Jordan could give us some of its ideas regarding possible interim arrangements.

7. I said another issue I had been instructed to raise was the very important question of Hussein's views regarding the circumstances in which he would ultimately be prepared to join the negotiating process.

⁵ See footnote 5, Document 187.

⁶ Attached to Document 177.

I said we know that ideally Jordan would like to get a commitment in advance from Israel to full withdrawal and self-determination for the Palestinians. We assume Jordan would want to put these positions forward in negotiations. But it is not realistic to think that commitments of this precision and importance could be obtained in advance of actual negotiations. I said it would be helpful for us to hear for our own confidential information only what Hussein's thoughts are on the sort of reasonable assurances that he would need to enter the negotiations. I asked if a declaration of principles would be sufficient in itself, and if not, would agreement by Israel to the principle of withdrawal from the West Bank be helpful? What kind of undertaking from the U.S. would Hussein see as desirable? In this connection, I stressed that the administration has made a firm commitment to stay with the negotiations until they reach a successful outcome.

8. Returning to the question of interim arrangements for the West Bank and Gaza, I said we have some ideas of our own on this subject but do not feel that we have sufficient understanding of those of the other parties. I said we think that several things are needed: a buffer of time, arrangements that would satisfy Israel's security needs so that Israelis could accept the idea that they could withdraw without endangering their security, and the emergence of a responsible Palestinian leadership. I said we do not agree with Begin's view that Israel has a claim to sovereignty over the West Bank, but we do think Israel has a right to assurances regarding its security, as does Jordan. I said Sadat feels it very important to find a basis which would make it possible for Jordan to join the negotiations. I said Sadat's insistence on this demonstrates his adherence to the cause of a comprehensive settlement. If he had other things in mind he would not need to seek Jordan's participation. I concluded my presentation with a renewed request for indications of Hussein's thinking about what would be required to facilitate Jordan's joining the negotiations when the right time comes and for Jordan's ideas on future interim arrangements for the West Bank and Gaza.

9. Hussein asked me to convey his warmest greetings to the President and to the Secretary and to express his admiration for the President's continuing efforts towards peace in the face of great difficulties. Hussein said he welcomed continuation of work on the declaration of principles and hoped that it would be successful. He was pleased that the declaration would go beyond Resolution 242 and contain a paragraph on the Palestinian issue. However, he said Jordan has only one position. That position continues to be that there must be total withdrawal and Palestinian self-determination. Hussein said nothing could make Jordan pull back from those two demands. Hussein said he supports President Sadat's effort; but he also stressed the importance of preventing division in the Arab world.

10. The King said he saw a problem in my reference to the role of the U.S. as “middleman” (actually I had used the term intermediary). For us, Hussein said, the U.S. must be more than the middleman. In view of Israel’s intransigence, he could not see how the U.S. could be effective if it tried to play the role of middleman. The U.S. should play an active and positive role in bringing agreement.

11. Hussein took no pains to hide his skepticism about our pledges of determination to see the peace effort through to a successful conclusion. He smiled broadly when I mentioned this subject, and in the course of the conversation referred pointedly to the assurances that had been given him in 1967 by Ambassador Goldberg and other senior USG officials concerning Jordan’s territorial integrity and the fact that the U.S. had told Jordan 242 meant Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank. Hussein said that in 1967 Jordan had accepted Resolution 242 and had committed itself to continuing to play a moderate role, but now the interpretations that he was hearing were “not as clear” as the ones we had given him in the fall of 1967. Hussein added that Jordan had tried with the Israelis, but to no avail. It had not even been possible to achieve a disengagement agreement between Jordan and Israel in 1974. Hussein said he was ready to shoulder his responsibilities, but “frankly it would be suicide for us to do so” without being sure that the Israelis are ready to withdraw. Commenting on my remark that Sadat very much wants Jordan to join the negotiations, Hussein expressed some concern that Sadat’s real aim in seeking Jordan’s partnership might be to improve his own position.

12. I thanked the King for his candor and for his expression of good wishes for the success of our efforts. I said I wanted to be sure that His Majesty understood that we were not asking him for a commitment now for joining the negotiations. Hussein said he understood this. I said we would, however, like to know that he was keeping an open mind concerning this possibility and, as I had said, it would be useful for our own private guidance to know what conditions and assurances might be necessary for him to make the decision to join. I reiterated that we are aware of Jordan’s position concerning total withdrawal and self-determination for the Palestinians, and we are not asking Jordan to abandon these claims in negotiations. I had to say, however, that we did not think Jordan could expect to get Israel to accept its position before negotiations, though we do think it realistic to expect agreement from Israel to negotiate concerning withdrawal and the participation of the Palestinians in the determination of their future.

13. I said that regarding Hussein’s remarks on the U.S. role as “middleman”, we see ourselves not as passive but as active intermediaries. When the time is right we will be prepared to put forward our ideas. I noted that the President had not hesitated to speak frankly to

both sides, to the Arabs concerning the need for true peace and to the Israelis concerning settlements, the Palestinian issue, and the need for withdrawal on all fronts. In regards to the settlement issue, I explained that the recent Israeli Cabinet decision signifies at least a partial freeze on new settlement activities.⁷ I said we of course would have preferred a total freeze but pointed out if the U.S. had not clearly stated its views on the settlement issue, the Israeli position would have been much worse. I noted in this connection that there is a process of rethinking going on in Israel today. Begin's Cabinet is clearly divided on the settlements issue and there is much criticism in the press of the Prime Minister's position.

14. I said to sum up there were a few points I would like to emphasize. The first was that we feel the peace process has begun and real negotiations are underway. Second, we are committed to remain engaged in this process. The President has given clear evidence of his commitment, and our national interest makes it essential that there be successful negotiations. I noted that we are fully aware of the implications of failure of the Sadat initiative. Third, we know where we are going. We will adjust our strategy when necessary, but our goals are clear. The Begin visit is part of that strategy, and it will be followed by further efforts. We will be working for a declaration of principles and also on interim arrangements for the West Bank and Gaza looking towards a final settlement and a solution of the Palestinian problem in all its aspects.

15. Hussein thanked me for my presentation. He said all he could say at the present time was that he thought Jordan would have to sit and wait to see what would happen. He added fatalistically that either we would succeed, and in that case we could count on Jordan's participation at the appropriate time, or we would fail and Jordan would then be ready to help to try to pick up the pieces. Pickering reminded Hussein that he had frequently said that he recognized that peace is a process into which the Middle East must enter but that there is no solution that is risk-free.

16. In closing Hussein again thanked me for coming and he said he agreed that we should continue the dialogue. He looked forward to seeing me when I next come to the area.

17. Before meeting with Hussein I had a brief talk with Crown Prince Hassan during which I went over in summary the main points of the presentation that I later made to Hussein. Hassan indicated a bit more flexibility than Hussein regarding Jordan's role in the peace process but said nothing specific on this. He pointed out that Jordan

⁷ See footnote 2, Document 221.

bears a heavy burden and is isolated in the Arab world as a result of its moderation but added that criticism for Jordan's entry into the peace process would depend on the extent to which the process itself looks credible. Everything would depend, Hassan reiterated, on how credible the US role and the process itself appears. Hassan noted that it would of course be very difficult for any Arab country to come forward on the basis of the Begin plan alone. He stressed the importance of getting a broad Arab consensus for the U.S. effort. In this connection, he indicated that Boumediene had told the Jordanians that he is keeping an open mind with regard to the peace negotiations. Boumediene had indicated that he would not reject a settlement based on Resolution 242 and would not oppose a solution solely on the grounds that it resulted from Sadat's initiative.

Pickering

223. Memorandum From Ed Sanders to President Carter and Vice President Mondale¹

Washington, March 6, 1978

Subsequent to the February 7 dinner with the President and the Vice President,² I have become deeply disturbed by what appears to be a pronounced drift in the Administration's Middle East policy which has resulted in the most widespread Jewish disenchantment that I can recall.

¹ Source: Carter Library, Brzezinski Collection, Geographic File, Box 12, Middle East—1/78–9/78. No classification marking. A typed note at the top of the page reads, "The President has seen." Carter initialed the memorandum and wrote, "Zbig." Ed Sanders was appointed a special adviser on Jewish affairs to Carter in July 1978. Previously, he had been President of the American-Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) from 1975 to 1976 and the Deputy National Campaign Director for Carter's 1976 Presidential campaign.

² Apparently a reference to February 8, when Carter hosted a private dinner from 7:28 to 10:23 p.m. in the White House family dining room for Jewish leaders. (Carter Library, Presidential Materials, President's Daily Diary) No memorandum of conversation has been found. According to Carter's diary, he met with Philip Klutznick, Sanders, Max Greenberg, Alex Schindler, Richard Maas, Frank Lautenberg, Ted Mann, Arnold Picker, and David Blumberg. Carter wrote that he "spelled out the relative flexibility of Sadat's position and the intransigence of Israel. With the exception of Schindler, who always acts like an ass, the rest of them were constructive." The group discussed "the illegal settlements, the short time frame in which to negotiate, and the need for Israel to recognize that UN 242 applies to the West Bank/Gaza Strip." (*White House Diary*, p. 171)

Present Situation

a) There is a widespread conviction that the Administration is deliberately provoking an open conflict with the American Jewish community evidenced by Dr. Brzezinski's appearances before the Council on Foreign Relations on February 22 and at the White House meeting of February 23 and by press reports such as James Reston's column of February 23.³

b) Spurred by the Administration's Middle East arms package,⁴ a deep cynicism is developing as is a potential enduring hostility concerning the Administration's intentions towards Israel. The present state of affairs is far worse than the emotional reaction to the joint United States-Soviet statement of October, 1977.⁵

c) The prospects for peace in the Middle East are adversely affected by the matters described in paragraphs "a" and "b" above.

Re the Arms Package

Personally, I am deeply disturbed and disheartened by each part of the Administration's arms package—the sales to Saudi Arabia and Egypt as well as the severe cut in arms sales to Israel. In my opinion, the Administration is engaged in a major arms deal which is bound to deflect attention from the peace process and to harden negotiating stands on both sides while involving the Administration in a heated debate at home. I fully understand that the White House took account of these deficits in arriving at its decision, but I still feel that the wrong conclusions were drawn. (Details of the grounds for my views are set forth in Appendix attached hereto.)

Re the Settlements

The Administration has also involved itself in a public debate with the Israeli government over settlements policy. While I do agree that Israeli policy on this issue, especially its public relations aspects, has been questionable, I believe that there were other means for the United States government to handle the problem.

When Secretary Vance suggested that the settlements "should not exist," he only made it more difficult for the Israelis to alter their policy and for the Egyptians to accept a compromise should they have been so

³ Apparently a reference to a James Reston editorial in the February 24 issue of the *New York Times*. In it, Reston states that Carter's closest advisers were urging him "to insist on his compromise policy in the Middle East, even at the risk of infuriating Israel and its supporters in Congress." (*New York Times*, February 24, 1978, p. A27)

⁴ See footnote 5, Document 215. The number of aircraft slated for sale to Israel was just over half the amount requested in Israel's Matmon C military modernization plan submitted in October 1977, which requested 150 F-16s and 25 F-15s. See Document 220.

⁵ See footnote 3, Document 165.

inclined. In any case, sale of the F-15s to Saudi Arabia provides the best argument yet available to the Begin government for remaining indefinitely in a portion of the Sinai and has clearly improved the receptivity to Israeli arguments here at home.

Re Apparent Administration Hostility

I have been dismayed that Dr. Brzezinski chose to express views which were discerned as openly hostile to Israel at the Council on Foreign Relations on the 22nd and at the White House meeting of Jewish leaders the next day. I was not present at either meeting, but I am mystified at the timing and content of these reported statements. Certainly, they will make the Administration's efforts at home more difficult and serve to heighten a confrontation atmosphere prior to Mr. Begin's arrival and increase the possibility of an unsuccessful meeting.

Alternate Arms Policy

First and most importantly, I would delay the whole arms package until the results of the current peace efforts are clearer. The Israeli portion of the package may be consummated at a later date. None of the three governments may be satisfied with this approach, but I believe that it would signal to all of them that our primary objective at the present time is to take advantage of the opportunities set in motion by President Sadat's trip to Jerusalem. I do not believe that this decision need create the appearance of Administration inconsistency or of a Saudi-American crisis. Since the package has not yet been sent to the Hill, it need only be delayed on the grounds that peace negotiations have become too delicate.

Normalization Plan

A United States-sponsored regional development plan, generally along the lines of the plan that Roger Lewis and I have previously recommended,⁶ should be announced. Such an announcement would make the concept of normalization much more meaningful, and both in the Sinai and the West Bank, normalization can be used as a means of guarantee and assurance for Israel.

In the Sinai, the settlements might well become less important to both sides if a high degree of Egyptian-Israeli normalization occurs. Prime Minister Begin has already conceded Egyptian sovereignty over the area; therefore, we should urge that the settlements should remain in place until a point in time (perhaps ten years hence) when a previously agreed level of normalization had been reached and had worked smoothly for several years. Both the Egyptian and the Israeli gov-

⁶ Not further identified.

ernments have been arguing about the future as if it will exist under current conditions. As demonstrated by the electrifying events between mid-November and mid-December, steps towards normalization have a way of altering the atmosphere and opening new psychological vistas. For the Israelis, a degree of security would be guaranteed by an agreement which spelled out specifically that they would not be forced to withdraw their settlements until a defined high degree of normalization had already been reached between the two countries. The Egyptians would not only be able to demonstrate the genuineness of their intentions, but they would know they would gain the return of their land.

I believe a similar formula could be applied on the West Bank. As self-rule for the West Bank similar to that envisioned by Prime Minister Begin was being instituted, a Jordanian presence could be recreated step by step while normalization was occurring in phases. For example, as telephone, telegraph and direct air service was begun between Tel Aviv and Amman, the Jordanians would conduct local elections. Only after full Jordanian-Israeli normalization would the final determination of the future of the West Bank and Gaza Strip occur.

I am not suggesting that the United States should be this specific in recommending detailed plans, but I am recommending that we should have this type of compromise for use at an appropriate time. Indeed, it is my view that public proposals by United States officials only interfere with the negotiations between the parties themselves.

Conclusion

I have discussed all of the foregoing with Roger Lewis, and he concurs completely. We believe that on both the level of obtaining peace in the Middle East and on the level of domestic political support for the Administration, steps of the nature outlined above should be taken promptly. A failure of action will be materially harmful to the chances for peace and for success of the Administration domestically. We feel that unless the situation is defused, the Administration may become involved in a potentially irreversible confrontation with the Jewish community (which, among other things, may hurt Democratic candidates in the November Congressional elections).

Roger and I, as people who are committed to helping the President and the Administration, ask you to consider taking these steps. We ask this as people who respect and appreciate the President's and the Vice President's dedication to all of the things which are important to us as Americans and as Jews.

Attachment**Appendix⁷**

Undated

Grounds for Views re Arms Package

First, it gives both sides a reason to harden their position. Since the military balance will now be less favorable towards Israel, Jerusalem can reasonably make the case that it requires larger amounts of territory for its security. Since the Arabs will be stronger by comparison, they have less incentive to compromise. Arguments that the Saudis will not transfer weapons to the Egyptians (e.g., their F-5Es) simply ignore past Arab practice and the high level of already existing Saudi-Egyptian military cooperation (e.g., the training of Egyptian pilots on Saudi F-5Es).

Second, the F-15s and F-16s were explicitly promised to Israel in return for her concessions in Sinai II. Why should Israel take any future guarantees from the United States seriously when we undercut a public promise?

Third, the package approach implies that all three claims are equal, which I would reject. Since 1955, the United States has wisely refrained from offering the sale of offensive weapons to Egypt. I see no reason why we should alter this policy now especially in the light of the French sale of jets to Cairo. It would have been more in keeping with our stated objectives to reward President Sadat with wheat instead of with weapons.

As far as Saudi Arabia is concerned, I wonder whether the full implications of the decision on F-15s have been sufficiently examined. By making Saudi Arabia into a confrontation state, the possibilities of Saudi involvement in any war in the area are intensely increased. By raising the possibility of such a Saudi-Israeli conflict, we escalate the risks and complications for our own decision making process and thereby increase the possibility of falling ourselves into the abyss. At a minimum, we increase the possibility of escalated United States involvement in a highly volatile area.

⁷ No classification marking.

224. Telegram From the Consulate in Jerusalem to the Department of State¹

Jerusalem, March 7, 1978, 0935Z

660. From Atherton. U.S. Del. No. 69. Subject: Meeting With President Sadat March 6.

1. Following is full report on conversation I had with Sadat evening of March 6 at his residence in Giza (Jerusalem 655).² Present on Egyptian side were Vice President Mubarak, Foreign Minister Kamel, Butros Ghali, Ahmed Maher; accompanying me were Ambassador Eilts and Sterner.

2. I first explained to Sadat reasons that had brought me back to Cairo 24 hours earlier than I had expected. We had originally thought we were going to Riyadh first but it turned out that Saud was not there, and it did not seem to me worthwhile making the trip unless I could see him.

3. I then summarized for Sadat the briefing I had given Kamel³ earlier in the day about my last visit to Israel and my stop in Jordan.⁴ I told Sadat I had delivered his letter to Begin,⁵ who had been pleased to receive it. Begin had read it in my presence but had made no comment about its contents. Although Begin obviously disagrees with many points, he did express pleasure in having the personal dialogue with Sadat resumed. I offered the personal comment to Sadat that I thought the fact that he had sent the letter had helped the Egyptian position as far as Israeli and world opinion are concerned. I wanted to make one point clear: the U.S. had not been involved in any way in the prepara-

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P850056–2741. Secret; Immediate; Exdis (Handle as Nodis). Sent immediate for information to Tev Aviv, Amman, Cairo, Jidda, and Damascus.

² Telegram 655 from Jerusalem, March 6, is in the National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, [no film number].

³ Atherton's meeting with Kamel is reported in telegram 659 from Jerusalem. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P850056–2724)

⁴ Atherton last met with the Israelis on March 2. A summary of his private meeting with Begin and Dayan is in telegram 619 from Jerusalem, March 2. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P850059–1744) Atherton met with King Hussein on March 4. See Document 222.

⁵ An incomplete text of Sadat's letter to Begin is in telegram 6642 from Cairo, March 1. In the letter, Sadat addressed Israeli security concerns and argued, "The entire problem can be solved in a few days if we agree on the elements of a settlement." He concluded by stating, "If you are ready for real peace, I am, as I have proved, ready too." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P850071–1509)

tion of Begin's response. As I handed him the letter⁶ I said I thought that he would find that it was written in Begin's usual blunt, direct style. Sadat laid it aside for the moment and asked me to continue my briefing.

4. I said I had had a good talk with King Hussein. He was still supportive of Sadat's initiative and hoped it would succeed. Sadat laughed and said, "But he doesn't want any part of the dirty work, right?" I told Sadat we had not really pressed him to join the negotiations at this stage. He was clearly very concerned about Jordan's position with respect to the rest of the Arabs. I had the impression that he was adopting a wait-and-see attitude about the negotiations. Sadat commented that this was exactly the report that the British had given him. I added that Hussein's position was that he wanted to know where the negotiations in broad terms would come out before he joined them. He was taking the position that Israel had to commit itself to total withdrawal and self-determination for the Palestinians. I told Sadat that I had tried to make two points with him. First I urged him to keep an open mind about the precise stage at which he might join the negotiations; second, that he should be realistic in his expectation of what Israel can agree to prior to negotiations. While it was reasonable to ask that the negotiations go forward on a good faith commitment to the principle of withdrawal, it was not realistic to expect Israel to spell these principles out in detailed terms before negotiations had even been joined. I told Sadat that I had suggested to the King that he try to maintain a more intensive dialogue with Egypt on the peace process. I said I was taking the liberty of making the same suggestion to him. Sadat did not offer any comment.

5. I said I would try to sum up this phase of my mission now that the time had come to head back to Washington. I would, of course, be reporting to the Secretary and to President Carter. I thought my mission had been useful in preparing the ground work for the Begin visit. On the declaration of principles the Palestinian paragraph was obviously the principal problem. This remained unresolved, but we had had an opportunity to make clear to the Israelis several basic points: that the Aswan formulation had emerged as the only feasible compromise in the declaration of principles; that we considered S.C. Resolution 242 principle of withdrawal to apply to all fronts; that we felt strongly that there should be a freeze on all future settlement activities so as to provide a good climate for negotiations. I said Begin at last

⁶ The text of Begin's letter to Sadat is in telegram 2941 from Tel Aviv, March 5. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840137–1969) In telegram 2976 from Tel Aviv, March 6, Ambassador Lewis described Begin's letter as "vintage Begin: argumentative, sanctimonious, insensitive, and plaintive—in short, Begin at his worst." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840137–1975)

knows what the issues are, and I thought that our mission had had the effect of stimulating public debate in Israel. I mentioned the increasing criticism Begin was receiving and cited as an example Abba Eban's recent article documenting the fact that previous Israeli governments had accepted the principle of withdrawal on the West Bank and Gaza as well as other fronts. Sadat said he had read it and had noted that it was indeed very critical of Begin. I said I thought a full scale debate in Israel on these issues was underway and that this was one reason why we needed a continuation of the negotiating process. This produced its own dynamic in terms of bringing about changes in public and governmental attitudes. During the Begin visit we would clearly want to make a major effort to resolve the declaration of principles, but realistically, even in the best of circumstances, this process could not be completed overnight since it would require extended Cabinet discussions. I said I thought at some point President Carter and Secretary Vance would ask me to return for another mission. Finally, I said that I knew that Sadat's calm and steady approach to the difficult problem he was facing had been admired and appreciated in Washington. It was very important not to provide any excuse for diversion from the main issues.

6. At this point Sadat picked up Begin's letter and read it through carefully. He put it down, took off his glasses, and after a long pause said, "Well, it's the same old argument." He said he thought Egypt should have its arguments ready on certain points since Begin could well raise these with President Carter in Washington. Begin would try to exploit this exchange while he was in Washington. The main points in Begin's letter must be answered. Turning to Kamel Sadat asked him to prepare a reply which could be ready for me to deliver the following day.⁷

7. Sadat said he noted Begin's "keen interest" in the negotiations being resumed in both the political and military committees. "I have no objection to this, none whatsoever." But, asked Sadat rhetorically, are we going to start these talks up from a vacuum and with no guidelines, just so we can say that the negotiations are underway? But in principle, said Sadat, he had no objection to resuming the talks.

8. I said I would be happy to convey to President Carter anything that Sadat wished me to say. Sadat said he would prepare an answer to

⁷ Sadat delayed his response by a few days. On March 10, he responded with a letter which is in telegram 7884 from Cairo, March 10. In his letter, Sadat complained to Begin about his "legalistic arguments that are not only easily refutable, but which also seem to indicate that the new spirit created by my peace initiative has not found its way to the decisions and attitudes of the Israeli Government." Sadat added that "we could endlessly engage in legalistic debates on all the matters you raised," but he concluded that "what I want to concentrate upon is the new spirit and facts that have been created by my peace initiative." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P850059-2157)

most of the important points in the Begin letter. One response would be sent to Begin; a second to President Carter.⁸ Sadat asked me, whether I absolutely had to leave Cairo that evening. I explained to him that I had to allow a day for the possibility of visiting Saudi Arabia, and therefore, had advanced my last stop in Israel and now had scheduled appointments with both Dayan and Begin the following day. If delivering the letter was the only problem, I thought this could equally well be sent to me by Flash telegram by Ambassador Eilts. Sadat indicated he understood and that there was no problem about my adhering to my original plan.

9. After another reflective pause, Sadat said he would be very patient. Begin was obviously playing for time. He was trying to adopt a hard-line to see if it would produce results. Sadat understood his tactics, and he would be patient. He would be preparing the response to Begin, he looked forward to receiving a report from us in due course on the Begin visit, and he said I would always be welcome whenever the President and Secretary asked me to come back out.

10. Speaking to Sadat, Foreign Minister Kamel said as he had explained to me earlier, he hoped the Begin visit would be the turning point in the peace process. "Begin must be brought back to earth." Kamel said that the US positions have now been well-defined on a number of issues. It was now vital for the US to hold firmly to these positions and to make them stick with Israel. Begin had introduced totally new elements in the peace process—such as that the principle of withdrawal would not apply to the West Bank and Gaza—which were very dangerous.

11. Sadat said the Foreign Minister was quite right. Even Mrs. Meir didn't go as far as Begin. He said he would recommend in his message to President Carter that he adopt the style of Eisenhower in 1956. Eisenhower had ordered not only Israel, but also the British and French to withdraw from Egypt and he had done this on the basis of armistice agreements and not real peace which was now being offered. Today President Carter could offer Israel the full peace that Egypt promised. This would be a strong peace because the commitments would be from Egypt, which was the main power in the region. Last April Sadat had told President Carter that he couldn't agree to full peace for Israel. "Now I have come much farther than Carter asked."

12. Sadat said he recalled the summer of 1976—"America's darkest hour" when the country was being wracked by Watergate and was still suffering from the Vietnam complex. Even Kissinger was being attacked viciously. Yet in spite of these circumstances Ford had achieved

⁸ No letter to Carter has been found.

the second disengagement agreement the terms of which gave Egypt the strategic passes and the oil fields in the Sinai. Sadat said he wanted President Carter to know this. When he had dined in the White House he had Congressman O'Neill to one side of him. O'Neill told him, referring to Carter, "This is the strongest President we have ever had." Sadat thus anticipated that President Carter would be very firm with Begin. Carter was on solid ground. He could appeal to the nation if necessary. Sadat said he would have no objection to the US concluding a defense pact with Israel in the context of a peace settlement.

13. Sadat then related how he had then met in Europe on his return from the US with the leading European Jewish financial supporters of Israel. Goldman had told him not to heed Begin since they were supporting Sadat. Goldman had said this even though Begin was in Europe at the time and had given these men strict instructions not to meet with Sadat. Goldman had said we must not lose this opportunity for peace. Rothschild had sent Sadat a secret message saying that he was the grandchild of the Rothschild who had built Israel, but that he wanted Sadat to know that he was completely behind him. Sadat said his friend the Austrian Prime Minister Kreisky had organized this meeting of European Jewish financiers. They had made it clear that they were committed to Israel but were also beginning to make Israel realize that it had to do its part for peace. He had had a similar meeting with influential American Jews while he was staying at Blair House.⁹ He had met Klutznik who had brought with him nine of the elite of Israel's backers. Sadat said, "They asked me what did I want? I told them nothing—just to tell Begin the same thing they were telling me." Sadat asked me to tell President Carter we should not lose this opportunity. He is the first President who can deliver real peace for Israel. It was an opportunity which would not repeat itself. As Sadat had said in his letter to Begin, he was ready to establish peace based on all the principles of good neighborliness. But such a peace must be also based on the principle that one side would not trespass on the other's land.

14. Sadat said the second point he wished to make to President Carter concerned the serious situation in Africa. Mengistu had now openly declared that he had Soviet and Cuban troops fighting for him. Sadat had wondered whether Washington fully realized what an unprecedented step this was for the Soviets to take and, therefore, how dangerous it was. In 1970, when Israeli war planes bombed a factory and killed 70 Egyptian workers, Nasser had asked the Soviets for SAM 3 missiles and for Soviet crews to operate the missile sites until Egyptian crews could be trained. The Soviets at first refused which had caused a great strain on Egyptian/Soviet relations at the time. The

⁹ This meeting occurred on February 6. (*Washington Post*, February 7, 1978, p. A9)

story indicated how reluctant the Soviets have been up to now to send Soviet troops outside the Warsaw Pact. Their presence in Ethiopia was a very dangerous development. Sadat said he wanted me to tell President Carter that his conflict with Israel was secondary to the danger presented by the growing Soviet presence in Africa. "Within a few months" said Sadat, "you will see the Sudan being attacked." Once the fighting in Ogaden was settled in Ethiopia's favor, next Eritrea would be pacified. Then the Soviets would launch an attack from two sides on the Sudan; from Chad on one side where they were enjoying the cooperation of Qaddafi, the other from Eritrea. Sadat said if this happened he would join battle with the Soviets whatever the consequences. He expected that within a few months he would be fighting the Soviets in the Sudan.

15. Sadat said he was not asking the US to send soldiers. He was only asking for a policy from Washington that would enable America's friends to fight the Soviets. He did not want to be like President Siad abusing the US for failure to send arms to support Somalia. He could understand the US position of not wishing to supply arms as long as Somalia was fighting beyond its borders. But Sadat wanted President Carter to make Begin understand that we must have peace in the Middle East so that this new danger could be confronted. Sadat said he was taking great risks but he would "never be a deserter."

16. I told Sadat that as I had once before remarked to him, I thought history would prove that he was right in his Middle East initiative. I then said that there was one other thing that I wanted to mention to him. On my previous visit I had mentioned that we would welcome Egyptian ideas on arrangements for the West Bank and Gaza. Sadat said he had a paper which he was ready to hand over to us with the understanding that it was strictly for our information alone.¹⁰ He then read the paper out loud, and then said he wanted to make two additional points. First, Egypt was ready during the interim period to have responsibility for security in the West Bank placed in the hands of Israel, Jordan, local Palestinians, and the UN; in the case of Gaza, in the hands of Israel, Egypt, local Palestinians and the UN. Second, he wished to confirm his assurance to President Carter when he was in Washington that he would be willing to see Israel maintain security positions of its own in these areas during the interim period. Sadat said his ideas had been cast in the form of a "general outline" because Egypt could not speak for the Palestinians in terms of detailed peace proposals. It could, however, speak within the context of the Arab summit strategy. Sadat said he felt his outline was consistent with this strategy. With it, "we have discharged our obligation to the Arabs." Sadat said

¹⁰ See Document 225.

Hussein had come to visit him after his trip to Jerusalem. He had told him then to take his time about getting into the negotiations. But he did not want Hussein to think he could not get anywhere without him. He understood Hussein perfectly. He was playing a double game between Syria and Egypt.

17. The meeting broke up with Sadat saying I would be warmly welcomed whenever I returned on my next mission.

Newlin

**225. Telegram From the Consulate in Jerusalem to the
Department of State¹**

Jerusalem, March 7, 1978, 1117Z

664. From Atherton. USDel No 72. Subj: Sadat's Paper on West Bank/Gaza.

1. Following is text of paper on West Bank/Gaza Sadat handed me in our meeting on March 6.² Paper has been given to us on the understanding that it was strictly for our eyes only and not for conveying to Israel.

2. Begin text:

Basic guidelines for the solution of the Palestinian question.

The establishment of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East necessitates a just solution of the Palestinian question, based on the following principles:

1. Withdrawal:

A. Israel shall withdraw from the West Bank, Jerusalem included, and from the Gaza Strip, occupied since June 1967, in accordance with the principle of the inadmissibility of acquisition of territories by war.

B. Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank shall be to the lines delineated by the Jordanian-Israeli Armistice Agreement of April 1949; Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip shall be to the lines delineated by the Egyptian-Israeli Armistice Agreement of February 1949.

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P850056–2755. Secret; Immediate; Exdis (Handle as Nodis). Sent immediate for information to Cairo and Tel Aviv.

² See Document 224.

C. Israeli withdrawal includes the settlements established by Israel in the occupied territories.

2. The legitimate rights of the Palestinian people:

A. The right to self-determination without external interference.

B. The right to return and, or, compensation to the Palestinian refugees of 1948 in accordance with General Assembly Resolution 194 of December 10, 1948.

C. The right of the displaced persons as a result of the 1967 war, to return, according to the Security Council Resolution No. 237 of 1967.³

3. Transitional arrangements:

A. There shall be a short transitional period leading to the exercise of the right of self-determination by the Palestinian people freely and without external interference.

B. During the transitional period, the United Nations will supervise the administration, with the participation of the representatives of the Palestinian people, and the representatives of Jordan with regard to the West Bank, and of Egypt with regard to the Gaza Strip.

C. The transitional period will end by a plebiscite under the United Nations supervision in which the Palestinian people shall determine its political future.

D. Egypt believes that a Palestinian state should have a link with Jordan.

4. Security arrangements and guarantees: Appropriate arrangements shall be established for the mutual guarantee of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of the states concerned.

End text.

Newlin

³ U.N. Security Resolution 237, adopted on June 14, 1967, called on the Israeli Government to ensure the safety and facilitate the return of residents who had fled the fighting during the war.

226. Telegram From the Consulate in Jerusalem to the Department of State¹

Jerusalem, March 8, 1978, 0902Z

692. From Atherton. U.S. Del No. 76. Subject: Meeting With Prime Minister Begin March 7.

1. Summary: My last meeting with the Prime Minister before heading home featured another long discussion of the applicability of the principles of withdrawal to the West Bank and Gaza. I had the feeling we were going through a dress rehearsal for Begin's visit to Washington. Begin, supported by his advisors, were at their legalistic best. They advanced a number of ingenious—if not particularly convincing—arguments in support of their thesis that Israel could both accept Resolution 242 and at the same time maintain that it did not require application of withdrawal to the West Bank/Gaza. The main argument put forward was that each side is entitled to its own interpretations of 242: the Arabs claim it requires total withdrawal; the Israelis claim it doesn't have to apply to all fronts. The U.S. might have its own interpretation too, but it was unfair, added Yadin, for the U.S. to admonish only Israel when it equally disagreed with the Arab interpretation. Dayan supplemented this with another thesis: it really wasn't a legal question at all and never has been. Under the former Israeli Government, there was the Allon Plan and now we had the Begin Plan.² They were quite different but either was consistent with 242 if the Arabs were to accept it.

2. This was a well-orchestrated performance with no discordant themes voiced by any of Begin's entourage. There was no visible sign of give in Begin's fundamental position on this issue. He said bluntly at one point in the conversation that Israel would not agree to a demand that it accept the applicability of withdrawal to all fronts. He said he sees his Washington visit as the opportunity to recapture the support from the U.S. for Israel's peace proposals he believes he had in December but lost as a result of Sadat's visit. He is coming armed to the teeth with legal and historical justifications. We can best meet him by coming back repeatedly to the simple theme that if Begin persists in his position on this issue it will bring the peace process to a halt, and since the U.S. cannot support Israel in such a course, it would pose a most serious issue in U.S.–Israeli relations. End summary.

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P850056–2661. Secret, Immediate; Nodis. Sent for information to Amman, Cairo, Damascus, Tel Aviv, and Jidda.

² For the Allon Plan, see footnote 2, Document 2. The Begin Plan is attached to Document 177.

3. I met with Prime Minister Begin for an hour and a half in his Knesset offices evening of March 7. Present on the Israeli side were Yadin, Dayan, Barak, Avner, and Rosenne. Accompanying me were Ambassador Lewis, Sterner, Korn, and Sherman.

4. I told the Prime Minister I did not have much to report on this occasion as nothing of great consequence had happened of a concrete nature on my recent stops in Amman and Cairo. I then proceeded to give him a somewhat abbreviated version of the briefing of my talks in Amman and Cairo that I had given the Foreign Minister in the morning (septel).³ Begin intervened only once during my presentation—to ask whether, when King Hussein specified total withdrawal, he was including Jerusalem. I said that although he had not specified this explicitly on this occasion, it was my impression that he would include East Jerusalem within the purview of his definition of total withdrawal. Begin also asked at the end of my presentation whether in my judgment there was still the possibility that after his visit to Washington the Egyptians would produce a counterproposal on the declaration of principles. I said it was my definite impression that they would, but possibly only after I returned to the area.

5. Begin said that he thought my mission had achieved definite results. Egypt and Israel were back in communication again. He, in fact, hoped that this renewed communication would lead to a personal meeting between himself and Sadat. There was much that a heart-to-heart personal talk could accomplish. He and Sadat needed to talk things over. Begin said that if letters were to remain the only form of communication between them, Sadat would continue to term all his explanations “the same old argument.” (I had described to the Prime Minister in my briefing that this was Sadat’s only comment after reading his letter.) Sometimes, said the Prime Minister, old arguments are more valid than new ones. Perhaps after his visit to Washington, there would be an opening for a personal meeting between him and Sadat.

6. Begin said that he was giving thought to conveying a message to Sadat after his Washington visit to let the two committees resume their work. The Prime Minister said it was possible for negotiations to be conducted in other forms, but it was much better to sit around the table and have direct communication.

7. Begin said that in summation, the results of the Atherton mission were not sensational but nevertheless important. A link had been restored which gave hope for the future. “We are grateful to you.” Begin said he was looking forward to his Washington visit. Maybe

³ See Documents 222 and 224.

there would be sensational results in this case. Anyway, the meeting would be between friends.

8. I told the Prime Minister I appreciated his comment, especially since the press seemed currently to be putting the interpretation on my mission that it had reached an impasse. I thought the mission had been useful in establishing the pattern of continuing negotiations even in circumstances when it was not possible to make significant progress.

9. Dayan said he wanted to make two points, both of them rather theoretical at this stage. Suppose the link that Israel had been asking for between the Political and Military Committees were dropped and Israel were to agree simply to continue the Military Committee meetings on the clear understanding that it was to get down to business? Was there any chance that Sadat could agree to this? The second point he wanted to raise was the question whether there was any chance of Israel concluding a separate peace agreement with Egypt, assuming all the bilateral issues were resolved. If Sadat says no to this proposition, then everyone knows where he stands. On the other hand, if it were possible for Sadat to proceed in this manner, then he was sure Israel and Egypt could find a way to solve all the intervening problems.

10. Without giving me a chance to respond to these remarks which had been framed in terms of questions, Begin said he had two remarks to make. Because of the impact of nomenclature, he would like to get away from the phrase "separate peace." If he recalled correctly, in 1949, when the general armistice agreements were being negotiated, the Arab parties signed sequentially and with quite a bit of time separating these agreements. Yadin confirmed this from personal experience, saying that Egypt had been the first to sign, then Jordan and Lebanon, and finally Syria eight months after the first agreement had been signed. Begin said that he thought this was an important and relevant precedent. These were serious agreements, with much of the undertakings in them that would eventually be in peace treaties. Syria, he recalled, had been very angry at Egypt for proceeding on its own. But ultimately Syria also signed the same agreement. Begin said he thought this precedent should be kept in mind in relation to present proceedings. Let's talk about a "first peace treaty" instead of "separate peace."

12. The second remark the Prime Minister wanted to make was that perhaps the two committees could be merged into one. Perhaps, using American parlance, we could call it a Political-Military Committee. Then it could hold alternate sessions in Cairo and Jerusalem. When it was judged that the subject to be taken up was primarily military, the Defense Ministers could preside. When the subject was political, the Foreign Ministers would take over.

13. With respect to the latter point, I commented that if and when the Prime Minister decided he wished to put this forward as a formal proposal, I would be happy to convey it. But I thought the present circumstances would make such a proposal premature.

14. Yadin said he wanted to talk about the argument that had opened up about the principle of withdrawal in Resolution 242. He wondered where this all really came from. It seemed to him to be a diversion from the real issues. Wasn't it getting into an argument about theoretical matters? Israel endorsed 242 as a basis for negotiations, but like the Arabs, it had its own interpretation of the provisions in that resolution. Begin said he fully agreed with these remarks.

15. I said I would try to recollect as well as I could how this matter had become an issue. Begin and Yadin would recall that when Secretary Vance was here in August he presented his proposal of five principles.⁴ One of those paragraphs included the phrase "withdrawal on all fronts," and the Prime Minister himself had indicated this paragraph could only be acceptable to Israel with the deletion of that phrase. This position, of course, had made the Arabs all the more determined to keep it in. At the time we felt inclusion of that phrase was entirely consistent not only with the position that we had held over the years, but also with our understanding of what Israel's interpretation had been during the same period. This was putting a different interpretation on this provision of the resolution. The problem faded away because the "five principles" didn't go anywhere and everybody turned to try to reach agreement on the Geneva working paper.

16. The next concern when this issue arose, as far as I could recollect, was when Sadat came to Washington and discussions took place about Israel's self-rule plan with its provision that Israel would put aside, but not relinquish, its claim to sovereignty in the West Bank and Gaza. This raised a question mark in Sadat's mind about a solution of the West Bank/Gaza problem on the basis of 242, and we included the phrase "withdrawal on all fronts" in the United States statement on Sadat's departure to make our position clear.⁵ The Prime Minister had subsequently taken issue with this formulation. Looking back on it, one could say that the issue had remained latent for many months but had now been brought to the surface because of its fundamental import in the background of negotiations on the declaration of principles and to the beginning of discussions on West Bank and Gaza arrangements.

17. Begin said he had only one correction to make. This question had its origin as early as July of last year when he had visited Wash-

⁴ The "Draft Principles for Agreement Prior to Geneva" are printed as an Attachment to Document 54. Vance presented it to Begin on August 9, 1977. See Document 80.

⁵ See footnote 11, Document 211.

ington and had conversations with both the President and Secretary. At that time, the Secretary outlined for him the five points and when the Secretary came to the phrase “withdrawal on all fronts,” Begin had said he would have to talk to the President about this. He in fact had that talk that evening, at which he outlined the Israeli position, as approved by the Cabinet, that Israel would not repeat not be willing to place these territories under foreign sovereignty.⁶ At this point, Begin read from his record of conversation of that meeting. Begin said the President neither accepted nor rejected this position but I (he Begin) told him that this was the position Israel had decided to take. Later in August, when Secretary Vance had come to Israel, he had told the Secretary that the U.S. could take the position that SC 242 withdrawal applied to all fronts but that this was not Israel’s position.

18. Begin said that Secretary Vance had acknowledged that it is not clear who has sovereignty in the West Bank and Gaza. If it is not clear, said Begin, anybody could make his claim. Begin said that during his forthcoming visit to Washington, he was going to try to renew the support for Israel’s position, which Israel once had, but which now seemed to have gone into abeyance ever since Sadat’s visit. Back in December, everybody in Washington—the President, Senators, and others in Washington—had given their support to Israel’s peace proposals.

19. Begin said he now had an important point to convey. We would recall that as originally discussed the Begin Plan included the provision that after five years the provisions of the plan “may be reviewed.” Secretary Vance had suggested that the word “may” be replaced with the word “will.” The Cabinet had authorized this change. He thought this was very important. Under the self-rule plan, there would be a local administrative council and with this change, the elected Palestinian representatives would be in a position to demand that anything and everything in the plan be changed at the end of five years.

20. Begin repeated that there were differing interpretations of the withdrawal provision of 242. The Arabs’ interpretation was that this meant total withdrawal. The U.S. never agreed to this interpretation, but it never insisted that the Arabs give it up. Begin said nobody in Israel would agree to the interpretation of total withdrawal. The Alignment government⁷ did not accept it any more than he did. He said Israel accepts 242 and would stick to that position. But Israel had a different interpretation and Israel believed it was entitled to that inter-

⁶ See footnote 3, Document 54.

⁷ The Alignment formed on January 28, 1969, when Israel’s Labor Party aligned with Mapam, the United Workers Party. It held the majority in the Knesset until the 1977 elections when Likud won 43 seats to the Alignment’s 32 seats.

pretation. Israel, for example, had never accepted the interpretation that 242 meant only minor modifications in the 1967 borders. Begin said I would recall that he had asked the President not to use this phrase because Israel could not accept it. When the Alignment was in power, it maintained an interpretation that would have partitioned the West Bank in such a way as to leave Israeli forces permanently along the Jordan River. This doesn't happen to be the present government's plan. Begin then read an extensive passage from the record of his December conversation with the President to show that he had spelled out the difference in Israel's approach on the question of withdrawal on the West Bank and Gaza as opposed to other fronts.⁸

21. I said I wished to make one principal comment to all of this. From the moment of its birth there had been an argument about whether the withdrawal provision of 242 meant that withdrawal had to be to the 1967 lines or not. We had made it clear time and again that we never accepted the Arab interpretation; that is, would require total withdrawal to the 1967 lines. But during the decade after the passing of Resolution 242 there was a common understanding that the principle of withdrawal applied to all fronts. The record showed clearly—and we had gone over this in some detail with the Attorney General the other day⁹—that not only the U.S., but the former government of Israel believed that the withdrawal provision applied to the West Bank and Gaza as well as other fronts.

22. Yadin said it seemed to him there was something unfair about the present U.S. position. Wouldn't it be more equitable and appropriate for the U.S. to make the point, at the same time it was asserting that withdrawal had to apply to all fronts, that it also did not believe this meant total withdrawal? "Why admonish just one side?" Yadin said if the Arabs were ever to agree that withdrawal might not have to be total, then Israel in turn would be prepared to indicate that its interpretation that it did not have to apply to all fronts would be open to negotiation.

23. Yadin said he thought the fact that we are concentrating on this question of withdrawal was detrimental to the whole peace process. If the point was to get into an argument about the theoretical history of Resolution 242, what are we all doing talking about paragraph three and four in the declaration of principles? Those paragraphs (dealing with the Palestinian/West Bank/Gaza issues clearly go way beyond what 242 has to say. So obviously, we were talking about a new framework for peace negotiations. Why then get bogged down with a debate about "original sins?" This could only be a distraction from what

⁸ For the U.S. record, see Document 177.

⁹ Not further identified.

present negotiations required. Begin nodded approvingly at the end of Yadin's comments and said no one can demand from Israel that it accept withdrawal on all three fronts. It was not mentioned in Resolution 242. It was not mentioned in any of the debates that took place about 242.

24. Ambassador Lewis asked Begin whether it wasn't true that when he left the government in 1970, his action had been caused by his conviction that the Israel Government at the time had accepted the application of 242 to Judea and Samaria? Begin said the fact of the matter was that for three years Israel didn't accept Resolution 242. Then, in August 1970, Israel had made a statement on behalf of the government which accepted it.¹⁰ Lewis said, but if you accepted that interpretation then, why was it different now? The Prime Minister said it had always been his interpretation that withdrawal should not apply to the West Bank and Gaza. He had left the government because he did not agree with the Labor Party's interpretation of 242. I asked whether Begin was not in effect acknowledging that the present Israel Government interpretation differed from that of its predecessors? Begin said yes, he supposed so.

25. Dayan said that both at that time and now the issue depended not on legal interpretation but rather political intentions. The question to ask was: What were the Israeli Cabinet's plans for the West Bank and Gaza in those days, and what was it now? In those days, it was the Allon Plan. Dayan asked, would the U.S. have accepted the Allon Plan as having been compatible with Resolution 242. He doubted it very much. Now the Begin government had a different plan for the West Bank and Gaza. It was consistent with Resolution 242 in Israel's opinion provided it would be based on agreement among the parties which was the main feature of Resolution 242. In Dayan's view, the Begin Plan was what present circumstances called for—it was "getting back to reality."

26. The meeting ended with the Prime Minister once again thanking me for my efforts and saying that he thought the mission had indeed served a useful purpose.

27. Comment: Extended and orchestrated Israeli presentation at this final meeting on the Resolution 242 withdrawal question contained suggestion of two possible Israeli lines we may hear more of: (A) That USG, not Israel, is responsible for making an issue of this; and (B) if USG persists in insisting Israel agree that principle of withdrawal applies to the West Bank and Gaza, Israel may insist on dropping Pales-

¹⁰ A reference to the August 4, 1970, Israeli response to a U.S. peace proposal. The text was published in the *New York Times*, August 5, 1970, p. 3.

tinian language from declaration of principles and limiting it only to points contained in Resolution 242.

Newlin

227. Record of Meeting¹

Washington, March 9, 1978, 11:50 a.m.–12:05 p.m.

The President, Mark Siegel, and Hamilton Jordan

Greeted with a handshake and warm smile.

The President—"I've read your letter.² It's a good letter and I understand. I accept your resignation, and I'm glad we have a chance to talk about it.

"You are a brilliant man, your knowledge and political judgment is extraordinary and has been vital to me. You have served me very well. The Middle East has been very difficult for me, and I know you have had a difficult role. But you have done your job very well, and you really have helped and contributed by your work.

"I understand that the decisions I have made are controversial, and that you disagree with some. I appreciate the sincerity of your views and conscience, and although I deeply regret your decision, I accept it and admire your courage and conviction.

"We have been friends for a long time, you mean alot to me."

Mark Siegel—"I appreciate everything you have said, and if you have a few more minutes, I would like to explain in greater detail why I have made the decision to resign. You must understand that you mean a great deal to me personally, that I genuinely care for you and about you. I think you know that. My problems with the Middle East are only partially related to the actual decisions you have made. Although I

¹ Source: Carter Library, Presidential Papers, Staff Offices, Special Advisor to the President—Moses, Box 13, Siegel, Mark, 8/28/77–3/17/78. No classification marking. The meeting took place in the Oval Office. Siegel was the President's Deputy Assistant for Policy Analysis.

² Siegel wrote Carter a resignation letter dated March 8 in which he stated his concerns regarding "certain aspects of U.S. policy toward the Middle East, and more importantly, by the decision-making process utilized by the Administration to formulate policy." Specifically, Siegel cited his "strong and personal reservations about the wisdom of your Arms Sales decision, the 'packaging' of that decision, and its timing." (Ibid.) Regarding the arms sale decision, see footnote 5, Docuemnt 215.

have policy disagreements, they are limited to particular areas, but I have a broader concern, and I think my talking to you might be useful not only for me, but for you. I really am most concerned about how policies are made. The information that you have, or more specifically don't have, when you make fundamental decisions. We owe it to you, it is our responsibility to you, to provide you with the broadest range of options and to predict for you the political and policy consequences of each course of action. I think you must have the fullest range of opinion, and all points of view must have access to you and to your decision-making process. That I think is the essential problem, and the one that caused me to resign. I don't think you have had that kind of judgment. I don't think you have had the benefit of political counsel on the consequences of actions. Specifically I want you to understand that my people, the Jewish people, are insecure, and we are insecure for very good and substantial reasons. If we are to make leaps of faith toward peace, if we are to be fully able to take quantum leaps of faith that may be necessary, we must proceed from a position of security. And in this regard, that is the fundamental problem with your arms sales decision. With respect to Sinai II, the people and government of Israel are generally wary, with good reason, of international guarantees and commitments. To retroactively alter the commitments made by the U.S. to Israel in Sinai II, and to link those commitments to other arms sales to other nations, just reinforces that very basic distrust of anyone's commitments to Israel. It reinforces the notion that Israel ultimately will stand by itself with respect to security, it makes compromise that much more difficult. And when you compound that insecurity, based on history, with arming nations that Israel still feels are adversaries, you take away military security. You make the peace process that much more difficult. When you took a clear position on Settlements, there was divided opinion in the Jewish community, there was an opportunity to engage in constructive dialogue and defend positions. And therefore I cautioned, in memo after memo, that the introduction of the arms sales would unite the Jewish community against the Administration, because American Jews will always unite and speak with one voice with respect to a security question for Israel, and that too would make the peace process that much more difficult for you.

"I tried to get all of these views into the decision-making process and failed. And it isn't all that important if you would have listened or acted upon what I was presenting, it's more important that these views should have been before you. You should have been aware of the potential negative consequences of your immediate action and the relationship of them to your goals for peace in the Middle East. That's where I think the process broke down. Of course I would have disagreed with the arms sales to Saudi Arabia in any case, but if I felt that my words, and thoughts and advice had been considered in some way,

I would have felt that I had been doing my job for you. I don't have any personal axe to grind, or let me correct that, at least not outside this office. When I speak, I speak for you, and try to serve you.

"To add to these problems, I have learned and you should know, if you have another few minutes, that some of the information that we, that is your staff who are trying to sell your policies and decisions, have been provided with is just inaccurate, we have been misinformed. I don't mind being hissed and booed,³ I don't like it but anyone who is in politics expects that. I've been hissed before and I expect I will be hissed again. But the groups I was speaking to are enlightened and intelligent and articulate, and they're terribly well informed. And in the case of the arms sales to Saudi Arabia, they often had better and more accurate information than I had. The NSC prepared a Q and A on the sales that was just incorrect, the information on Tabuk⁴ for instance was wrong, and they knew it and I didn't. The information on the F-15's capabilities was not correct. How can we sell your policies, how can we explain your positions to constituencies and to the Hill, when we don't know what we are talking about. This is something that you can act on and correct.

"I really appreciate this opportunity to talk to you and flesh out some of my points in my letter of resignation. God knows I didn't want it to be this way, I came here to serve you and I think I've served you well. But the problems were too great, especially with the process, on an issue of deep moral commitment. I'm genuinely sorry it didn't work out."

The President—"Mark, so am I. Just this talk has been constructive to me. You are a brilliant political adviser. I really value your wisdom and judgment, and I'm really going to miss you. But I understand your decision, and I understand your reasons, and I admire what you've done, although I regret it. I want you to know that you are my friend and will stay my friend, and that I need you and I need your advice, and I hope you will feel free to come to me, either in person or by writing a memo, to share your views and your judgments with me. I'm sorry if I've not been accessible, I've really tried to be, and I wish I had known that you wanted to see me and talk to me about these things. You would have gotten in without any trouble, but I guess you didn't know that. In any case I'm sorry, and I hope that we will maintain our close personal relationship. I wish you the best of luck. I want to be helpful to you in any way possible, if there's anything I can do to help,

³ Siegel was booed at a presentation he made to the United Jewish Appeal in Washington shortly before his resignation. (Robert Shogan, "Carter Jewish Liaison to Cut All Administration Ties," *Los Angeles Times*, March 9, 1978, p. B8)

⁴ See Document 215 and footnote 2 thereto.

please let me know. And keep in close touch, and please give my love to Judy.”

Mark Siegel—“Mr. President, I’m really sorry it didn’t work out, and I accept my own part of the responsibility for not presenting my views more directly. I really want you to know that you mean a lot to me, and not only will I not be an enemy on the outside, I will always be your friend and helpful in any ways that are appropriate. I’m sorry it’s ending like this. I feel closer to you now than I have in all of the time I have worked for you. And I want to thank you for giving me the opportunity to work for you in the White House . . . It was an honor and a privilege and I appreciate it.”

The President—“Mark, thank you. Good-bye and the best of luck. And please let me know if I can be helpful to you. Please call on me and don’t be shy.”

228. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Egypt¹

Washington, March 9, 1978, 2306Z

61231. For Ambassador Eilts. Subject: Presidential Message to Sadat.

1. Please deliver Presidential message to Sadat below and follow up with the additional remarks in guidance para 3. Our purposes are to reassure Sadat on eve of the Begin visit that we are sticking to the agreed strategy; to discourage him insofar as necessary, from any public reaction to Begin letter² that would hamper present critical stage of negotiation; and, ideally, to elicit some positive statement on his part, especially on Resolution 242, that would lend support to the President’s efforts with Begin. On this last objective, point is that commitment to Resolution 242 will be much discussed in American press, and reiteration of Sadat’s commitment would help keep the record straight.

2. Begin text of President’s message:

“I have followed closely your recent exchange of letters with Prime Minister Begin and the reports from Assistant Secretary Atherton and

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840176–1383. Secret; Nodis; Immediate. Drafted by Brubeck and Harold Saunders, cleared by Quandt and Richard Castrodale (S/S–O), and approved by Secretary Vance.

² See footnote 6, Document 224.

Ambassador Eilts of their detailed discussions with you. While, obviously, there are real and persisting differences, I think it was a constructive move on your part to reestablish direct communication. It will be recognized as a further demonstration of your sincerity and dedication in seeking to move the peace process forward. I understand from our talks the views which prompted you to send your message, and I share your desire to recapture the momentum generated by your trip to Jerusalem.

“As we agreed when you were here, we view Prime Minister Begin’s visit as providing an essential opportunity to discuss what must be done if progress in the negotiations is to accelerate. I will concentrate on two important issues—the need for withdrawal on all fronts as envisioned in Resolution 242 and the need for a just resolution of the Palestinian problem in all its aspects, allowing the Palestinians to participate in determining their own future. I want you to know that our conversations at Camp David are very much in my mind and that I will be pursuing, in my meetings with the Prime Minister, the objectives we discussed at that time. I will send you a report shortly after Prime Minister Begin’s visit is concluded.

“With warm regards, Jimmy Carter.” End text.

3. After delivering the President’s message, you should convey the President’s further views as follows. The President is deeply appreciative of the restraint and statesmanship President Sadat has shown in this delicate period as we approach a very important and difficult meeting with Begin. Sadat’s action in reopening direct communication has been helpful in bolstering awareness in the United States of Sadat’s dedication to a continued and successful negotiation. Sadat’s important interview with James Reston, published on page 1 of the March 9 *New York Times*, was a most noteworthy and impressive contribution at this juncture.³ In Sadat’s recognition of Israel’s security needs, in his references to the need for a genuine peace which would be eternal, and in his commitment to the ongoing peace process, he has reinforced at a timely moment his positive and constructive image with American public opinion. If he has an occasion in the next few days to make a public statement, it could be helpful to our common purposes if he reaffirmed his commitment to 242 as the basis for negotiation, stressing both the principle of withdrawal on all fronts and the concomitant commitment to peace and security for Israel that constitute essential elements of 242.

Vance

³ The interview was conducted in Cairo on March 8. See James Reston, “In Interview Egyptian Urges U.S. to Become a ‘Partner’ in Talks,” *New York Times*, March 9, 1978, p. A1.

229. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Israel¹

Washington, March 11, 1978, 2201Z

63426. Subject: Message of Condolence From President Carter for Prime Minister Begin.

1. Para 2 contains text of message from President Carter to Prime Minister Begin concerning terrorist attack.² Ambassador Lewis telephoned Begin at 2340 hours Tel Aviv time and read message to him on President's behalf. He was deeply grateful for it. Charge should deliver text to Begin Sunday morning³ before Cabinet meeting to confirm oral delivery.

2. Text of Presidential message follows: Quote:

Dear Mr. Prime Minister:

It was with a sense of deep personal shock and moral outrage that I learned of the cowardly and senseless attack today on a group of innocent civilians. This brutal act of terrorism will surely be met with universal revulsion by all men of conscience. I know the pain and distress which you must be experiencing at this tragic moment, and I offer you the condolences and deep sympathy of myself, and all of the American people, who share your sorrow. Please give my personal sympathy to the families of the many who died and to those who were wounded. I am particularly distressed that an event such as this should occur just as you were preparing to depart on your mission of peace. I continue to look forward to talking to you soon and relaying to you in person the deep emotions which this event has aroused in this country. In the meantime, please accept, Mr. Prime Minister, my deepest and most heartfelt condolences.

Jimmy Carter. End text.

3. White House plans to release message as soon as it has been delivered.⁴

Vance

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780110–0098. Limited Official Use; Flash. Drafted by Lewis and approved by Sick (NSC) and Glaspie (NEA). Ambassador Lewis was in Washington to prepare for Begin's visit.

² On March 11, PLO guerrillas attacked two buses along the Israeli Coastal Highway loaded with Israeli tourists and engaged in a gun battle with Israeli forces that attempted to stop them. The PLO attack and ensuing gun battle left 35 Israelis dead and 71 wounded.

³ March 12.

⁴ The White House released the text of Carter's letter to Prime Minister Begin on March 11. It is in *Public Papers: Carter, 1978*, Book I, p. 505. Vance also issued a statement on March 11. It is in the Department of State *Bulletin*, May 1978, p. 46.

230. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Israel¹

Washington, March 16, 1978, 0334Z

67617. For Charge from the Secretary. Subject: South Lebanon.

You should see Prime Minister Begin urgently to convey following to him:

—We have been giving urgent consideration to the situation resulting from Saturday's terrorist attack² and Israel's military operation in South Lebanon,³ and to broader implications for our common objectives. We have sought in our public and private statements to show understanding of security problem posed for Israel by presence of Palestinian armed forces in South Lebanon.

—We appreciated message from the Prime Minister conveyed by Ambassador Dinitz through Atherton this evening⁴ that Israel has no intention of staying in Southern Lebanon and will withdraw when it has an agreement and arrangement to ensure that terrorists will not return to that area.

—As a practical matter, we do not believe that the kind of iron-clad assurances Israel seeks as a condition for withdrawal are feasible, although we will make every effort to obtain the best arrangements possible.

—As we analyze matters, an early Security Council meeting is a near certainty, in which there will be strong pressures for a resolution condemning Israeli military action and calling for unconditional withdrawal.

—It is our intention to respond by introducing a resolution calling for withdrawal and the introduction of United Nations peace-keeping forces into the area from which Israel withdraws.

—While we will oppose unilateral condemnation of Israeli action, we cannot veto a resolution calling for Israeli withdrawal. For one thing, continued Israeli presence in Lebanon will put in great jeopardy

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Subject File, Box 49, Israel: 3–4/78. Secret; Immediate; Exdis. Sent immediate for information to Cairo, Damascus, Beirut, Amman, and USUN.

² See footnote 2, Document 229.

³ On March 14, Israel responded to the March 11 attack with Operation Litani. Israel sent over 25,000 soldiers into Southern Lebanon just south of the Litani River with the stated objective of pushing Palestinian militant groups further north from the Lebanese-Israeli border as well as strengthening the South Lebanese Army, which operated as an ally of Israel. Over 1,000 Lebanese and 20 Israelis were killed during the operation.

⁴ Not found.

Sadat's ability to continue the negotiating process and can only strengthen those forces in the area, backed by the Soviets, who oppose present negotiating process. In addition, we cannot be seen to be weakening in our commitment to sovereignty and territorial integrity of Lebanon even though Lebanese Government has been too weak to stabilize and exert its authority in the south. A final consideration is that we expect serious questions to be raised in Congress over the issue of Israeli use of U.S. arms on a protracted basis on Lebanese territory, and we will not be able to hold off long sending the required notification on this subject to the Congress.⁵

—For all these reasons, we must urge that Israel make a prompt decision to withdraw and announce this publicly. It would be far better, in our view, for Israel to do this before, rather than after a resolution calling for such withdrawal—a resolution which the United States will have to vote for.

—For our part, we intend to work vigorously for an outcome that can insulate the border on the Lebanese side against Palestinian armed groups through the introduction of an effective UN force which in turn can prepare the way for the gradual extension of Lebanese Government authority to that area.

—We have resisted urgings to issue public statement today about our position in order first to convey our views to Israel. We will need to say something tomorrow along following lines, "We trust Israel will be withdrawing in the very near future, and we are seeking arrangements that will ensure stability and security in the region following Israeli withdrawal."⁶

—The President looks forward to his talks next week with Prime Minister Begin but does not believe the South Lebanon situation, with its potentially adverse consequences for the peace process, can wait until then to begin a resolution of this problem.

Vance

⁵ Vance's letter to Speaker of the House O'Neill, April 5, reporting a violation of the 1952 U.S.-Israeli Mutual Defense Assistance Agreement is in the Department of State *Bulletin*, May 1978, pp. 46–47.

⁶ On March 16, State Department Spokesman Hodding Carter read a statement that expressed the U.S. Government's expectation that Israel would withdraw from Southern Lebanon and that it had communicated this to the Israeli Government. Additionally, the U.S. Government sought "possible arrangements, including the idea of a U.N. role" with regard to settling the Southern Lebanon issue. (Department of State *Bulletin*, May 1978, p. 46)

231. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Jordan¹

Washington, March 17, 1978, 2353Z

69649. Subject: Message From the President to King Hussein. Ref: Amman 2453.²

1. Please deliver the following message from President Carter to King Hussein.

2. Begin quote:

Your Majesty:

I have read with interest and care your message of March 14. It was helpful to have your thoughts in advance of my meetings with Prime Minister Begin.

I deeply appreciate your good wishes for the success of the efforts undertaken by the United States to bring about a peaceful settlement of the Middle East conflict, and am grateful to you for taking the time to set out your views for me in detail. Each day's events bring further proof—if any were needed—of the importance of moving quickly to end the conflict.

As you point out, Jordan has always been in the forefront of the quest for peace. It is Your Majesty's courage and foresight over the years in providing leadership toward peace and willingness to take great risks for it that won the admiration of the people of the United States and brought about the expansion and strengthening of relations between our two countries.

It is my hope that the process which we have begun will lead to broader negotiations which Jordan will be able to join. It is our view, Your Majesty, that the best way of arriving at a satisfactory final solution of the problem of the West Bank and Gaza is through an interim arrangement of limited duration during which the inhabitants of those

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840176-1260. Secret; Immediate; Nodis. Drafted by Korn; cleared by Quandt, Brubeck, Atherton, and Frank Wisner (S/S); and approved by Secretary Vance.

² Telegram 2453 from Amman, March 14, contains King Hussein's message in which he explained that Jordan's entry into negotiations with Israel necessitated "some concrete indication shown by Israel that the negotiations would ultimately result in Israeli withdrawal and a just settlement of the Palestinian question based on the right of self-determination." He continued that this did not constitute imposing "prior conditions," but "that the negotiations take place within a framework of recognized principles and goals." He concluded that the United States needed to play an active role as "the stakes are so high and the interest so vital that the United States needs to act decisively to break the stalemate and make it clearer that the road to peace is one and irreversible." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P850101-1524)

areas will be enabled to participate in the determination of their own future. Knowing the strength of the bonds between the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and the West Bank, it has always been our view that final arrangements should provide for the restoration of ties between the two, and for the inclusion of Gaza in this framework as well.

I agree, of course, that both withdrawal from occupied territories and establishment of peace are goals of the peace negotiations. They are principles of UN Resolution 242 on which negotiation must be based. The United States has, likewise, taken the position that the Palestinian people must participate in determination of their own future. I believe we can agree that the application of these principles in detail is, of course, to be worked out in negotiation.

I well understand the problems for Jordan in joining the negotiations. I want you to know that the United States will do its utmost to assure that they lead to a just and reasonable settlement, and that Jordan's interests are fully taken into account. I have personally committed myself to seeing the current peace effort through to a conclusion. This commitment reflects the fact that peace in the Middle East is vital to the interests and the security of the United States.

Before I close let me say a word about the tragic events that have occurred in the Middle East in recent days. The terrorist attack inside Israel,³ and Israel's military action in South Lebanon,⁴ are of deep concern to the United States.

We deplore, as we have said, this pattern of violence that takes innocent civilian lives. We have made clear that we expect Israeli withdrawal from Southern Lebanon. But we are convinced, also, that Southern Lebanon must no longer be a battleground of non-Lebanese forces, not only to provide Israel security against cross-border attacks, but equally to restore to Lebanon control and sovereignty over its own territory.

We are currently considering moves which we hope will stabilize the situation in Southern Lebanon, through the strengthening of the UN presence in that area, and I hope that Jordan will lend its support to our efforts. But difficult and involved as this particular problem may be, I want you to know that we shall not allow it to distract us from our major goal of moving forward to negotiations aimed at achieving a comprehensive settlement.

I want to thank Your Majesty again for writing. It is essential that we understand each other fully and therefore that we stay in close touch. Our greatest common task—the achievement of peace—lies

³ See footnote 2, Document 229.

⁴ See footnote 3, Document 230.

ahead of us. If our two countries work together I am confident that we shall succeed.

With very best personal good wishes,

Sincerely,

Jimmy Carter.

End quote.

3. If, in delivering above, you have occasion to discuss further the South Lebanese situation, in addition to guidance provided septel, you may draw on the following:

—We have informed the Israelis that we expect them to withdraw from Lebanon⁵ and we are presently in urgent consultation with them to achieve this.

—The Israelis have told us that they do not intend to remain in Lebanon but they insist that their withdrawal must be followed by arrangements which put an end to attacks against Israel from across the border.⁶

—We are considering, among other possibilities, a UN peace-keeping force to resolve this problem and to support and assist the Lebanese Government in restoring its authority and control in the south. We would expect that such a force would withdraw as soon as the Lebanese Army is again capable of assuming security responsibility in the south.

—We are presently engaged in discussions at the United Nations and with a number of governments. We hope to stay in close touch with Jordan and work together to help restore security and stability in Southern Lebanon.

4. FYI: As you will have seen, foregoing does not mention or allude to the possibility of visit by Hussein to the U.S. Our feeling is that this is a matter for the King to decide. Since Hussein did not raise the question in his message of March 14, and has stayed away from it in other contacts, believe most appropriate course is for President to do likewise in his response. End FYI.

Vance

⁵ See Document 230.

⁶ Telegram 3622 from Tel Aviv, March 16, reported Begin's statement of Israel's willingness to withdraw, but that he wanted "an arrangement by which the killers cannot return." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840157–1920)

232. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, March 21, 1978, 10:50 a.m.–12:55 p.m.

SUBJECT

President's Meeting with Prime Minister Begin

PARTICIPANTS

The President
The Vice President
Secretary of State Cyrus Vance
Dr. Zbigniew Brzezinski, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs
Hon. Samuel Lewis, U.S. Ambassador to Israel
Hon. Alfred L. Atherton, Ambassador-At-Large
Hon. Harold Saunders, Assistant Secretary of State, NEA
Robert Lipshutz, Counselor to the President
Hamilton Jordan, Assistant to the President
Rex Granum, Deputy Press Secretary
Jerrold Schechter, NSC Staff (Press)
William B. Quandt, NSC Staff

H.E. Menachem Begin, Prime Minister of Israel
H.E. Moshe Dayan, Minister for Foreign Affairs
H.E. Simcha Dinitz, Israeli Ambassador to U.S.
H.E. Aharon Barak, Attorney General of Israel
Mr. Meir Rosenne, Legal Adviser, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Mr. Yehiel Kadishai, Director, Prime Minister's Office
Mr. Yehuda Avner, Adviser to the Prime Minister
The Honorable Joseph Ciecchanover, Minister for Economic Affairs, Embassy of Israel
BGEN Ephraim Poran, Military Secretary to the Prime Minister
Mr. Dan Pattir, Public Affairs Adviser to PM

The President: I am delighted to have you here for close consultations. It is important that we try to stay in harmony as we develop plans for the future. I want to repeat to you the very deep regret that we all felt over the terrorists' attack. The purpose of that attack was to destroy the progress toward peace, and we must be determined to do everything possible to keep the momentum going forward in the peace initiative. I am grateful to you for coming and I hope that we will make real progress today and tomorrow.

I might begin by reviewing our own deep interest in the Middle East. Our overriding commitment is to guarantee the security of Israel, and we will do all in our power to prevent transient differences from

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Subject File, Box 1, Arab-Israeli Peace Negotiations 1978: Volume I [I]. Top Secret; Sensitive. The meeting took place in the White House Cabinet Room. Begin visited Washington from March 21 to March 23.

becoming serious. We've been successful, as were my predecessors, in keeping US-Israeli relations good. This has been to our mutual benefit. We also have a deep national interest in seeing progress toward peace, and in providing Israel with the strength to protect herself. We were optimistic at the time of President Sadat's visit to Jerusalem, and we were relieved to be out of the intermediary role, and to see direct discussions underway. I have been disturbed that momentum has been stopped. It is no one's fault.

When I met President Sadat one year ago, I told him that Israel, above all, wants to negotiate directly with her Arab neighbors and wants to be acknowledged by Egypt as a permanent nation, a nation which has a role in the Middle East, and which is accepted by the Arabs. I told him that Israel wants real peace, not just non-belligerency. Sadat said that was impossible in his life time. He said the Egyptian people would not accept Israel's right to exist. He said normal ties could not be developed. When I saw him at Aswan, he told me that he had been wrong. He had found that there was a deep desire for peace among his people, and for normal relationships. I believe that his commitment to peace still exists, as does yours.

We've seen recently, in talks with Sadat, with the Jordanians, with the Saudis, and even with the Shah, a willingness to modify previous views. The Arabs have dropped the idea of a fully independent Palestinian state, and they have abandoned the demand for full Israeli withdrawal from all of the territory occupied in 1967. The PLO, because of its opposition to peace, has excluded itself from the negotiations. We have recently seen a new disturbance to peace in the Middle East in the form of Palestinian terrorism and the Israeli response. After consulting with you, we sponsored a UN Resolution which was adopted unanimously,² and we are sure that it is acceptable to you. We hope for its rapid implementation.

In our December meeting, you put forward your self-rule proposal, and I viewed it then as a major step in the right direction.³ It was a major response to Sadat. I felt that it could be built upon in talks with Egypt and Jordan, and that it could lead to a comprehensive peace. Before I go on to make more specific points, you might want to assess the present prospects for the peace negotiations. We are eager to work closely with you, and we want to retain mutual respect and trust. It is rare that we have the opportunity to meet, and I hope we will use the time well. I hope for a completely successful meeting.

² U.N. Security Council Resolution 425, unanimously adopted on March 19, called for respect for the territorial integrity of Lebanon, the withdrawal of Israeli forces from Lebanon, and the establishment of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL).

³ Carter and Begin met on December 16 and 17, 1977. See Documents 177 and 178.

Prime Minister Begin: When President Sadat came to Jerusalem, and I went to Ismailia,⁴ there was a spirit of optimism and friendship. Sadat told me in Jerusalem “You are my friend,” and he agreed at that time to the demilitarization of Sinai beyond the Giddi and Mitla Passes up to the international border. Sadat at that time did not refer only to keeping his main forces behind the passes. He said the Egyptian army will not go beyond the passes. I reported this to my colleagues while it was still fresh in my mind, and we built our peace plan for Sinai on the premise. This would have provided a demilitarized zone of 180 to 200 kilometers in width. On that basis we elaborated our plan for Sinai, and it was more forthcoming than the plan of any previous Israeli government. It abolished the prior Israeli decision of 1968 to keep a strip of land from Elath to Sharm Al-Shaykh. We suggested that there be two UN zones, and in the Yamit-Rafah area we would retain settlements in the UN zone.

When I came with that plan to Ismailia, Sadat said that he could not agree on the UN zones including the settlements, but he summed up the meeting with praise for the spirit of the plan, and he said that we should negotiate. We agreed to establish political and military committees. We were very near agreement on a declaration of principles at Ismailia. We had actually agreed. The Foreign Minister and Attorney General Barak were there. Sadat was willing to accept our proposal, but we did not agree on the Palestinian question. President Sadat’s advisers used this as a reason for not publishing our agreement on the declaration of principles, although we had agreed on the spot. We suggested that each side use its own language, as had been done in the US-Chinese communique, and President Sadat therefore read out our respective positions in the joint statement.⁵ There was Egyptian language and Israeli language. The Egyptians called for a Palestinian state in the West Bank, and Israel said that the Palestinian Arabs in Judea, Samaria, and Gaza will enjoy self-rule. We had an agreement to differ on this. Then we presented our plan to the public and to the world. We left Ismailia in this spirit. President Sadat said that our autonomy proposal was a “step forward.”

What happened after Ismailia and up until today? I have an explanation. I saw the situation. Sadat was willing to agree earlier, but then his advisers persuaded him not to agree. Sadat does not show much attention to detail. For example, the Egyptians initially gave us a proposal calling for withdrawal from Sinai, the West Bank, Gaza and Golan. We said this was impossible. We said that 242 does not call for total withdrawal. Sadat agreed to drop this demand. On the Palestinian

⁴ See Documents 152 and 180.

⁵ See footnote 9, Document 180.

state, Sadat referred to it from time to time, but he also used the word “self-determination.” We told him that self-determination meant a state, and that Israel could not accept this.

After Ismailia, something happened. There were insults directed at us, but we can gloss over that. Again and again, in all the language that they use on the declaration of principles, the Egyptians return to their demand for total withdrawal and for self-determination for the Palestinians, which eventually will mean a state. We tried to explain to Sadat that these two demands are unacceptable, and Israel will not commit itself to them. Palestinian Arabs are not mentioned in Resolution 242 at all. On the question of withdrawal, we are completely prepared to use the language of 242, as it was adopted, but if Sadat asks for total withdrawal, we cannot accept it. We told Mr. Atherton that any language that does not include these two demands will be either acceptable or negotiable from our point of view.⁶ (Prime Minister Begin then reads from the text of Israel’s most recent proposals for a declaration of principles, concentrating on the paragraph dealing with acceptance of all the principles of Resolution 242, the paragraph on withdrawal and the establishment of secure and recognized borders, and noting that Israel’s suggested language incorporates precisely the language of Resolution 242.) If Egypt agrees, and it can, we can use the language of Resolution 242. Then there will be no difficulties on the declaration of principles.

Maybe there will be a problem on the question of the Palestinian Arabs. There has already been some progress. We have agreed to speak of their “right to participate in the determination of their own future.” Egypt was once agreeable to this. Mr. President, there are no insurmountable differences in the declaration of principles, unless Egypt demands a commitment to total withdrawal and the creation of a Palestinian state, however that may be phrased in the declaration. President Sadat has now put out these two demands, and this is now the obstacle to negotiations, no other. We accept Resolution 242 as written, completely. If Egypt also accepts, then Egypt’s interpretation of total withdrawal does not have our approval or that of the United States. The real hurdle in the declaration of principles is these Egyptian demands. Israel cannot give these two commitments, and so there is no progress. Also there was the unwarranted disruption of the talks in the Political Committee. We have no recriminations on our part. But the crux of the problem is this: We are asked to give two commitments that we are not obliged to give, and that touch on the vital interests of our people. In the framework of Resolution 242 we can reach agreement. If Egypt suggests amendments to our language, this will be all right, and we can ne-

⁶ See Document 226.

gotiate. We hope you will make clear to Sadat, perhaps directly or through Mr. Atherton, that he cannot put forward these two demands. Israel is entitled not to accept those demands.

The President: Let me respond. I can say unequivocally and accurately that President Sadat does not insist on complete withdrawal, and that he is prepared to see some modifications in the 1967 lines, on a negotiated basis. This could be done following a peace treaty between Egypt and Israel. Also he does not insist on an independent Palestinian state on the West Bank and Gaza. When I read the Egyptian language in the declaration, and your language, it is hard to see the differences. We've tried to suggest some language that would bridge the gap. On Resolution 242, you say that negotiations should be on the basis of 242, and Egypt says they should bring about the implementation of 242. I can't see a major difference. Our suggested compromise calls for the fulfillment of the principles of Resolution 242. I can't tell the difference. There are only slight nuances. We've tried to develop a compromise to bridge the gap. To hold up the chance for peace by arguing over these words which have no basic significance, and which can be interpreted in several ways, is incomprehensible. On the Palestinian issue, we've put forward some suggestions. Both governments agree that there should be a "just solution." You can define that how you wish, as can Sadat. These are innocuous words. We are trying to find a compromise. Atherton has been in the Middle East for weeks. We have now come down to the two basic questions of the Palestinians and withdrawal.

The question of Israeli withdrawal from any part of the West Bank and Gaza is now in doubt. We feel the need to clarify this point, and I would like you to tell me how you define Israel's security needs. I would also like you to show more flexibility on the political claims that you maintain under your self-rule proposal. We believe in the need for Israeli security. Maybe there will be a need for military encampments and their location and their function can be discussed. Perhaps the UN or the US could work out the type of presence that would be required. We are just trying to break a deadlock. We can see your maintenance of security forces for an interim period, or perhaps longer, and this should be kept distinct from your political claims. These issues are at the crux of the negotiations. We think that you should withdraw your political claims, and concentrate on your security needs. Then you and others can work out a resolution of the Palestinian question.

Secretary Vance: I want to clarify that President Sadat's willingness to see border changes is limited to the West Bank, not in Sinai.

The President: I think you understand that. Earlier, Foreign Minister Dayan raised the question of whether President Sadat requires Jordanian participation in the negotiations as a prerequisite for continuation of his own talks with Israel. I sent Sadat a message, and he said that

he wanted Jordan to join the talks, but that if Egypt and Israel could agree on the Sinai question—the settlements, the force levels, the airfields—and if agreement could be reached on a statement of principles, he would then move on to a peace agreement with Israel, even if Jordan stays out.⁷ If Jordan does not participate, this would not be an obstacle to a comprehensive settlement between Egypt and Israel. Now we see that Sadat is unwilling to talk because of the settlements in Sinai, and I deplore this attitude. I wish that he would go to Jerusalem, and that you could go to Cairo, and that you could reach an agreement. I think that Secretary Atherton, and your people, and you and I tonight, should try to get some language to reach agreement. Sadat is not demanding full withdrawal or an independent Palestinian state, or that Jordan must join the negotiations before a peace treaty with Israel can be reached. Within that framework, there should be a means to find solutions.

Secretary Vance: There has been a question raised in President Sadat's mind as to whether you believe that Resolution 242 applies to the West Bank. We need to get this question of withdrawal from the West Bank out on the table and to understand your position.

The President: This is of fundamental importance to us as well. For ten years, your acceptance of 242 has been the basis of many of our commitments to you and has been the basis of our discussions with other Arab leaders. This is a fundamental issue.

Foreign Minister Dayan: You have given us good news about Sadat's attitude. Some of what you say is familiar to us, but you have given us a good surprise about Jordan. But I want to understand that Sadat is not calling for total withdrawal to the old lines. When he says that, would he agree to changes in Sinai also?

The President: No. He doesn't see Israel occupying any part of Sinai. The proposal that you put forward of leaving the area from Elath to Sharm al-Shaykh under UN control, and of establishing demilitarized zones, seems to be acceptable to him. These demilitarized zones can be larger in Egypt than they would be in Israel. There is the question of the airfields, and I understand that these have been discussed between Weizman and Gamasy. Sadat tells me that he said that Egyptian main forces would not go beyond the passes, but he did not preclude some peacekeeping units to maintain security. This seems like an honest difference of interpretation. He feels he needs some security forces, and he also says that he is not prepared to give up any Sinai territory. I understood that withdrawal from all of Sinai was part of the Israeli proposal.

⁷ See Documents 217 and 218.

Foreign Minister Dayan: Our basic problem with Sadat over Sinai concerns the status of Sharm al-Shaykh, the Israeli settlements, the demilitarization arrangements, and the airfields. My personal view is that if he rejects the Israeli settlements remaining in place under Egyptian sovereignty, protected by some Israeli defense forces, and if his only alternative is that we clear out of the entire area, with our settlements and our airfields, and this is not required by Resolution 242, then we will go back to Resolution 242 and say that we have a right not to go all the way back to the international border. Then we will forget our proposal, because after three wars, we just can't leave Sharm al-Shaykh, El-Arish, and Gaza. This would mean that the Arab population in Sinai and in Gaza would be a continuous one. We also have the problem with the declaration of principles. If Hussein does not join the negotiations, but if there is a declaration of principles satisfactory to Sadat, I understand that Sadat will go forward in the negotiations. But his condition is that we reach agreement on a declaration of principles. What does he expect? One thing that you said, that there should be a "just solution for the Palestinians," is something that we suggested in Ismailia. His advisers rejected our proposal then. With your permission, we will go on to discuss Resolution 242. I suggest that Attorney General Barak read our definition of the meaning of Resolution 242.

Attorney General Barak: "The Government of Israel expresses its willingness to negotiate peace treaties on the basis of all of the principles of UN Security Council Resolution 242. As is known, there are different interpretations of this resolution. It is the view of the Israeli Government that nothing in the Israeli peace plan concerning Sinai and self-rule to the Palestinian Arabs as presented to President Sadat at Ismailia contradicts the terms of Resolution 242. Within the framework of peace negotiations, everything is negotiable without any preconditions. Resolution 242 envisages an agreed and acceptable peace settlement between the parties based upon such negotiations."

Prime Minister Begin: Sadat's view on almost total withdrawal, and on a Palestinian state, you have now told us are not his demands. Then why does he not accept proper language in the Egyptian proposals? In the second point of the declaration of principles, this is not a decisive question. We can find a way to get agreement. But the hurdle lies in Sadat's proposal. He wants a statement on Israeli withdrawal from occupied territory in accordance with the principle of the non-acquisition of territory by war. That is the Egyptian position. That means total withdrawal. We have analyzed this, and we have concluded that it is not proper to join the preambular language with the operational language of the UN Resolution. The preambular language only deals with offensive wars. We cannot take this language from the preamble. It would mean full withdrawal. This should be clarified. If Egypt is not

asking for full withdrawal, and if it is not asking for a Palestinian state, then Sadat should change the language of his proposals. This should be clarified with Sadat. The state of Israel has never been branded as an aggressor in the 1967 war. The Security Council never made such a determination. So changes in borders are permissible and should be agreed upon. Egypt says there can be no changes. If the Egyptian position is clear, they should use language which expresses that they are not asking for total withdrawal and that they are not asking for a Palestinian state. Our language is appropriate and they should reconsider our proposals. The United States suggested language on withdrawal and on the establishment of secure and recognized borders. We could agree with that language.

Foreign Minister Dayan: Maybe it would be advisable for Attorney General Barak to explain the elements of the concepts in our paper, because we believe that they contain all of the elements that Egypt needs.

The President: I believe that the question that is causing Sadat concern is the allegation by some, even the Prime Minister, that Resolution 242 does not apply to the West Bank and Gaza. Israel is seen as not being prepared to withdraw from the West Bank and Gaza. This has not yet been clarified. This has created a cloud over the language. Sadat feels that you only intend to withdraw from the Sinai and Golan. He believes that you think the withdrawal language of 242 does not apply to the West Bank.

Attorney General Barak: In our view Resolution 242 does apply to all of the occupied territories. The problem is with the language on withdrawal. We accept Resolution 242, but we have a question about withdrawal. We have a self-rule plan. Our self-rule plan is not in contradiction to Resolution 242. If others present plans, everything is negotiable. They can offer plans of their own. Our self-rule is not in contradiction to 242. Even your own view of Resolution 242 allows for options such as continuation of the self-rule administration or links to Israel. And you do not view those as being in conflict with 242. Those include no withdrawal. Our point is that our proposal is not in contradiction with Resolution 242. It is in conformity.

Foreign Minister Dayan: And we are prepared to discuss other plans. We are posing no preconditions, and we say that everything is negotiable. If they don't accept, they can present their own plan. We can't go into all the details, but we are prepared to abolish military rule there and we won't decide now on sovereignty. That question will stay open. We are not going to impose Israeli sovereignty, and we are proposing the abolition of military rule. The withdrawal of military forces is somewhat like the abolition of military rule. Israeli forces will stay there to defend Israel, but not to rule the Palestinians. This is equivalent

to withdrawal, not in a territorial sense, but in substance. They may reject this, and they can put forward their own proposal.

There is nothing in 242 that says it applies “on all three fronts.” Atherton has asked us about this, but nowhere does it say on all three fronts. We were not asked to include this in the declaration of principles. We were told that it was not necessary. It is our view that the abolition of military rule, and our willingness to discuss other plans, is a good concept. We accept 242 totally. We do accept it, but we want to just use the wording of 242. We do say that everything is negotiable. But we should be free to present our plans. For ten years we’ve negotiated with Jordan on the basis of the Allon Plan,⁸ which called for partition of the West Bank. That was rejected totally. The Arabs can bring us such a plan, but to ask us for such language is unfair, and we should be free not to do that.

The President: The reason for raising this is that the Israeli position in the past was that they would withdraw from the West Bank, and I believe that Prime Minister Begin left the Cabinet over this issue. Now for Israel to change her position makes an issue out of this.

Secretary Vance: The issue does exist. There is a lack of clarity. Has the position of this government changed compared to previous governments?

Prime Minister Begin: I have told you and the Secretary of State my views on this issue. We decided in July to talk frankly. You remember in July that you read five points to me.⁹ The fourth point included language about withdrawal “on all fronts.” I said that I would speak to the President privately about this. When I saw the President, I read to him a document, and later we sent this to you,¹⁰ and we said that we would not agree to your fourth and fifth points. These three words “on all fronts” could not be used on Israel’s behalf. In December, I said we had a claim and a right to sovereignty in Judea, Samaria, and Gaza, but that we would leave that claim open. We did two things to make agreement possible: First, we did not apply Israeli law to Judea, Samaria, and Gaza, and we suggested that the question of sovereignty be left open. We went as far as possible to make agreement reachable. We said that the self-rule proposal might be reviewed, and we changed that to “will” be reviewed at your suggestion. All questions will be open after five years. All parties can reserve their claims. For the time being, the question of sovereignty should be left open. The phrase “on all fronts” is not used in Resolution 242. We have a right not to add words to that

⁸ See footnote 2, Document 2.

⁹ See Document 54.

¹⁰ See Document 57 and footnote 8 thereto.

Resolution. We have worked out a plan that makes agreement possible. With the review clause, there is no contradiction between our proposal and Resolution 242. It is a far-reaching proposal. Dr. Brzezinski said that the question of sovereignty would be left open and would be subject to review when we met in December. If you want to add these three words about “on all fronts,” that is OK, but we won’t accept it.

The President: This is a change in the position of the Israeli Government.

Prime Minister Begin: Yes, but not completely. Under the previous government, the Jordan River was to be the security border. There would be no withdrawal from the river. They planned to evacuate part of the West Bank. There were differences internally within the previous government, but no one wanted to withdraw from the Jordan River. The Israeli army would remain on the river.

The President: Could you envisage, in order to break the deadlock, that Israeli security might be protected by military forces in the occupied territories for a period of five years, or perhaps longer, by maintaining some military positions on the river or in the hills around Jerusalem? You would withdraw into cantonments and that would satisfy Arab demands and would preserve your security. Is that a possibility?

Prime Minister Begin: I don’t know about the word cantonments. We could consider withdrawal into emplacements. But our forces must stay.

The President: But just in certain places.

Prime Minister Begin: We agreed in December that we can consider this. We can stand on that position.

The President: The political administration of the territories would be much as you’ve described it in your self-rule plan. I think there is some prospect for agreement between Egypt and Israel, and later between Jordan and Israel, if that could be the basis. This would provide an ultimate resolution, I think, for this present obstacle. You would have security outposts, and commitments from the United States to you, and the political administration of the territories would be distinct. This could meet Arab demands, and could provide you with the requirements you need for your own security. We are eager to find common ground and to find a solution.

Foreign Minister Dayan: I would like to speak about whether there has been a change in the present government. I was in the previous government.¹¹

¹¹ Dayan had been a member of the Alignment, serving as Defense Minister from 1967 to 1974. In 1977, after the Likud Party’s victory, Begin offered Dayan the position of Foreign Minister in Begin’s ruling coalition. Dayan accepted the position, even though the Alignment was not in Begin’s coalition, and Dayan was expelled from the Alignment.

The President: I've heard about that!

Foreign Minister Dayan: Not too much, I hope. For several months after the Six-Day War, the position of Israel was that it would return all of Sinai and Golan in return for some assurances, but we totally excluded the West Bank. This was before 242 was adopted. That was the Israeli concept. That was how we thought of Israel at the time, and we did not want to give up one inch of the West Bank. So there has not been such a sharp change of concept. Then the Allon Plan was considered, but it was never approved by the government. It was a kind of plan, and it was rather complicated. I said that it would never work, and that it would not be accepted. It provided a narrow corridor between Jordan and the West Bank. This government has a different plan. There are two different plans. If I were to say where there was more real self-expression for the Arabs, I would say it is in our plan for self-rule. It is better than the Allon Plan. You cannot say that this government has gone back on its commitments. The other plan did not work. On the security question, we have to start with the proposition that we don't want our forces there to rule the Arabs. We don't want that for them, and we don't want it for us. We don't want to impose ourselves. There are 400,000 Arabs in Gaza. We do not want to tell them how to run their business. But we must have a line to check movement of who comes into Israel. There are refugees and terrorists and Arab workers. As an ex-soldier, I want to ask who would take care of people crossing over from Jordan or Syria into the Palestinian-Israeli area. Who controls the crossing points? If our own soldiers are not there, then they can move freely into the Arab part. Should we then put up the barbed wire? It is inconceivable that we would put barbed wire up around Gaza and the West Bank. If there is no line between Gaza and Israel, and if there is no line between Gaza and El-Arish, where is our defense line? Then anyone can go all the way to Tel Aviv from the Sinai, and one has to ask where the Israeli soldiers will be. Who will guard the borders? Will there be a UN force? I don't know, but I would hate that after 30 years of experience with Swedes and Nepalese and so forth. We should live together, and not be isolated by policemen who come from somewhere else. I do not want an isolated Israel. This is complicated, but it can be worked out. This is not the most difficult problem, just like Jerusalem is not the most complicated problem. But there are practical requirements. We don't want to impose ourselves on the Arabs, and they should have freedom to run their own lives. We will only put our soldiers where we need them for our defense.

The President: Let me repeat one thing. I have no doubt that Sadat really wants a peace agreement with Israel, and that he is genuine in this attitude. I have had hours of private talks with him, and he is flexible on the issues. He has some obligations to the other Arabs, and he

acts as a spokesman for their interests. He is the best Arab leader with whom you can negotiate. You have some differences in Sinai, but when he was here he thought that Weizman and Gamasy had worked out most of the differences except for those on the settlements. On the West Bank and Gaza, Prime Minister Begin put forward a proposal which could be the core around which an agreement could be reached. I think those areas should be demilitarized, and that there should be local self-government. This should be worked out by Jordan, Israel, and the Palestinian Arabs. Israel should be able to keep military forces in that region, as you determined in negotiations. You can work out where you need outposts for your security, along the borders, or perhaps in the hills around Jerusalem. Then the administrative structure in the area could be based on Prime Minister Begin's proposals, with some slight flexibility needed in order to reach agreement.

Because of the pressure of the terrorists, and the pressures on Sadat, I am afraid that the chance for agreement will slip away. Eventually we will see that the prospects for peace are lost. We are eager to help, and if you permit, I would like to let our people work on this in the afternoon. Maybe before supper we can compare notes, and then we can talk over dinner. A settlement in Sinai is important and difficult. You have problems over the airfields and over the force levels. In the West Bank, we conceive of demilitarization, along with some Israeli outposts, and we believe this can meet your security needs. The political administration should be basically one of self-rule, and you are perhaps a bit more optimistic about Jerusalem than I am, but if we are not all brought together in a short time, we could lose the chance for peace.

Secretary Vance: I would like to make a point. Your idea of self-rule can be the core for an agreement. Sadat might see it as a positive step, if in the context of a declaration of principles it says 242 applies on all three fronts.

The President: I think that they could say that 242 applies on all three fronts. I was trying to resolve the withdrawal problem by saying that withdrawal to outposts would be adequate.

Prime Minister Begin: I said in December that I would not use that language, but that it could be used. If Sadat wants to add those words, he can, but we cannot. We will ponder on its merits, the issue, and if we can leave our forces in Judea, Samaria, and Gaza, with the man in charge of our security saying where those forces should be, it could be accepted by us.

The President: Do you see the possibility of Israeli armed forces withdrawing to outposts?

Prime Minister Begin: The language of withdrawal to encampments is not to my liking, but the plan itself is acceptable, if the Israeli armed

forces as established by the man in charge of our security can stay. You do agree that it is vital for us, and for our civilian population, to keep these security positions. Imagine what would have happened ten days ago if there had been thousands of terrorists in charge of Judea and Samaria. They came from the sea and they created a tragic event, and if the same people had been on the mountains, it would have been hell. In the last two years, this has happened only once, but if they were on the mountains, we could not stop them. We need security. If there can be agreement that Israeli military forces will stay, then the language is not decisive. Then the United States and Israel can agree.

The Vice President: The Foreign Minister made an unambiguous point about occupation forces and their effect on local populations. They obviously create resentment. The Prime Minister said that Israel needs security, and he argued this in compelling terms. Both points are powerful, and the question is how they can be resolved in negotiations.

It seems to me that the answer is to separate the issue of sovereignty and occupation from the question of security. This way you can avoid the problem referred to by the Prime Minister and you can make solid, clear, and I hope permanent arrangements for Israeli security in order to achieve the Prime Minister's objectives. If sovereignty and occupation are linked to Israeli security needs, and if they are seen as the same, then the chances for a breakthrough are slim. I am not an expert, but I have heard the views of the Arab leaders, and I have talked with them, and it seems to me that this is the sticking point. The meaning of 242 is crucial here. Our experts see 242 as consisting of an exchange of territory for non-belligerency and peace, and the establishment of secure and recognized borders. The Labor Government always saw withdrawal from part of the West Bank. The question was how much. This was vague, and there were no negotiations underway, but they always were prepared for withdrawal in return for non-belligerency and peace. If that principle is not recognized, this chance to move on the track for peace is slim. But the Attorney General's statement raises doubts about withdrawal, and this will be a sticky point, and it could imperil the chance for peace.

Prime Minister Begin: We can say that the plan you spoke of, the Allon Plan, was unacceptable to Jordan. King Hussein said that it was ...

Foreign Minister Dayan: Totally unacceptable.

Prime Minister Begin: This is conclusive. This theory has been tested.

The Vice President: I'm not pushing for the Allon Plan, but rather for the idea of territorial withdrawal.

Prime Minister Begin: We want peace, but that plan was tested, with Hussein and with Sadat, and they asked for total withdrawal. But Sadat is now only prepared to accept minor changes in the earlier line.

Dr. Brzezinski: As we try to advance toward a solution, it is important to note that your self-rule proposal can be seen in different ways. To put it bluntly, one way it can be seen is as a continuation of your military and political control over the West Bank and Gaza. This would make it clearly unacceptable. This would stem from ambiguity about the meaning of 242, an unwillingness of Israel to use the term withdrawal in connection with the West Bank and Gaza, these are the points that would give rise to that interpretation. But the same plan, with most of its elements intact, could be tied to Resolution 242, and to the principle of withdrawal, and to the principle of participation in the determination by the Palestinians of their own future, and if Israel were to speak of its forces being withdrawn from control of the West Bank and Gaza to agreed emplacements, and if authority were to devolve from Israel and Jordan, then your own plan could be the basis for a solution and could open the way to peace. Alternatively there could be strong suspicions that you intend to perpetuate your control, and that you intend to deal very differently with the Sinai and with the West Bank. We need a solution to make clear that your plan can be the basis for peace. Then Egypt, Jordan, and moderate Palestinians who want to coexist with Israel can move forward, and provisions can be made to keep an open relationship between Israel and the West Bank and Gaza.

The Middle East, in its larger dimensions, is an essential area of interest to us. It is vital that the Middle East be engaged with the West, be set on a course of moderation, and the opportunities for the Soviets and the radicals be minimized, so that the Middle East can move towards stability. This is in your interest, and it is in our interest. We need to consider how your plan can be used to move toward a stable and peaceful Middle East.

Prime Minister Begin: We all understand the need for agreement with the Arabs. But this should not weaken the meaning of agreement between our two governments. Since December we have had agreement on these points. If the plan we expounded in December was a positive plan, we should look at its elements. The Palestinian Arabs will elect their own administrative council to run their daily lives. There will be no interference. There will be eleven departments, dealing with all issues. We reserve security and public order. Everything depends upon the security. It can be understood why we are pre-occupied by security.

The President: Are you adding to security forces the need for police forces?

Prime Minister Begin: There will be a Department of Police which will be made up of local Arabs. There were other points of agreement. If there are other formulations, we will consider them. But we agree that our forces should stay on, and that their location should be decided by

the man in charge of security and through negotiations. We agree there should be a review after five years, and maybe they will propose changes, and maybe we will. This is not a plan to last forever. All of the parties can bring forward proposals for change after five years. So we have a measure of agreement.

The President: What happens in five years? Will they have the right to choose between a link to Israel, a continuation of the interim agreement, or a link to Jordan?

Prime Minister Begin: We have considered the question of plebiscite very seriously. If we give them three possibilities—the status quo, Jordan, or Israel—and no fourth choice, with the pistols of the PLO at their heads, and with the recent assassinations on the West Bank, and with all of the threats that they hear, the PLO will force them to boycott the plebiscite or to write in that they support a Palestinian state. There will be overwhelming pressure. With those pistols, a plebiscite would not lead to the results that you expect. Instead, a so-called decision would be made for a Palestinian state, under threat. We should let our proposal go for five years, and see how it works. They will elect the representatives, and the representatives can speak for them. We should let reality work, and we will cooperate, and we should not prejudice the outcome.

Dr. Brzezinski: Who will discuss with you after five years?

Prime Minister Begin: Israel, the Administrative Council, and Jordan. Jordan has been brought into the proposal. It will be in a position to say that it wants a change.

The President: It is my understanding that you made some slight modifications in your proposal. Israel, Jordan, and the local authorities will all have to agree before decisions can be made. This gives Israel a veto over future change. She even has a veto over administrative decisions. This is a profound point. It keeps Israel in control over the West Bank area. Without Israeli willingness to give the Palestinian Arabs in the West Bank and Gaza any voice in determining their own future, such as the three choices that I mentioned of a joint administration, a tie to Israel, or a tie to Jordan, there is no chance for a peace settlement. I know that Sadat won't agree to the perpetuation of Israeli control over the West Bank if the Palestinian Arabs are not given any chance to choose their future. If Israel insists that they have no voice, there will be no chance for a peace settlement. What Sadat and Hussein do is up to them, but this issue is crucial. There is no possibility of agreement, even between Israel and Egypt, if the prospect of choice is foreclosed.

Attorney General Barak: But the Palestinian Arabs will have the right to participate.

Secretary Vance: Not unless there is a real choice.

The President: And with the Israeli veto, and with no choice at the end, what is left for them? I wouldn't want that situation if Israel could veto everything.

Foreign Minister Dayan: I want to respond to Dr. Brzezinski.

The President: You get more and more demanding and you are closing the door.

Dr. Brzezinski: There have been some changes in the plan.

Prime Minister Begin: The veto right is mutual.

Foreign Minister Dayan: There is no word of veto. There will be a working group of Egypt, Jordan, Israel and the Palestinian Arabs. There can be no vote by majority in that group, because we know what the results would be in advance. Dr. Brzezinski's remarks asked us to distinguish between the withdrawal of our military forces from controlling the Arab population. There is no question of that. They will have their own local police. But we will not withdraw from all of the territories. If military forces should be on the Jordan River or on the ridge, from a military standpoint, even though there has been withdrawal from the Nablus and Gaza areas, we won't interfere with their lives. But this is not withdrawal from the territories. They will not just be totally free to do anything. We do intend to withdraw from control over their lives, but we are reluctant to say that we will withdraw our forces from the Jordan River, from the ridge, or from the sky. We are not withdrawing from control over the land.

The President: There is no dispute over that.

Foreign Minister Dayan: We need to look for words to find a solution.

Dr. Brzezinski: We want an agreement that is satisfactory to you on security grounds, but is politically realistic. If you want a Basutoland¹² for the Arabs, with your control, it won't work. If you want genuine security, with real self-rule, and identity, and with an affiliation between the Palestinians and Jordan, that can work. We look at your plan and see many good elements, but there are others that are restrictive, and which give you political control. We want you to get your security, but this can be separated from political control.

Prime Minister Begin: That is a hard word that you used—Basutoland. It was very blunt. No one can say that our plan is for a Basutoland. We give the Arabs the option of citizenship. We suggest the option, and they can even be our own citizens, and they can vote.

Dr. Brzezinski: But Israelis are allowed to buy land in the West Bank, but there is no reciprocity. There is an unequal status.

¹² See footnote 7, Document 177.

Prime Minister Begin: That is the right of our citizens.

Dr. Brzezinski: But Israelis are not citizens of the West Bank.

Prime Minister Begin: We give them an option. We were attacked in our Foreign Affairs Committee because our proposal was so generous. We are not talking of a Basutoland. This is a peace proposal.

Foreign Minister Dayan: Palestinian Arabs can have either Jordanian or Israeli citizenship, or they can keep their own local identity cards. The citizens of the Gaza Strip will have a way of showing how they feel by deciding to remain citizens of the Gaza Strip, or choosing Israeli or Jordanian citizenship. We will make no obstacle to their decision. If they are Jordanian citizens, they can send representatives to the Jordanian parliament. If not, they can stay Palestinians in Gaza, and they will just be citizens of Gaza.

Prime Minister Begin: Residents of Gaza.

Foreign Minister Dayan: They will have papers, and identity cards. If there is no change, OK. They can stay what they are. But there is no lack of choice for them to show how they feel. The main point about any referendum in the future is really to allow individuals to decide their citizenship, but not to decide what happens to the land in Judea, Samaria, and Gaza. The kind of plebiscite you are talking about will decide about territory, not about people. They will decide not only their future, but our future. If they have a right to decide whether Israel gets out of the territory, and if that area becomes part of their entity, then they are deciding our future.

The President: Not if you . . .

Foreign Minister Dayan: We distinguish between their right to decide their future, and their right to decide what happens west of the Jordan River. Labor had a view of a compromise on territory for peace. But they also had the idea of a functional compromise. The territory would not be divided, but the functions would be.

Secretary Vance: As several people have said, the question of security is paramount. But you say that if you rule out the determination of sovereignty for the future, the only solution is what you have today.

Prime Minister Begin: Nothing is excluded. There will be a review in five years. But we don't say now that there will be a referendum which will lead to a Palestinian state.

The President: How can there be a Palestinian state if you, and we, and Sadat agree to preclude it?

Prime Minister Begin: The referendum itself, under the prevailing situation, which is not peaceful, and in which there are threats to everyone, and in which there is a psychological threat . . .

The President: But the security force in the West Bank and Gaza would be Israeli.

Prime Minister Begin: But there are threats and murders, and we suggest that things be left open for review, but that we not say anything now about a plebiscite. There could be unpredictable results.

The President: But you retain the right to veto the referendum if you don't want one.

Prime Minister Begin: There are two or three committees which require unanimous decisions. The Administrative Council will also have a veto right.

The President: That has the effect of keeping the status quo.

Prime Minister Begin: It may, but not necessarily. We will listen. We will look at realities. If there is peace, and there are no incursions, there will be a chance for agreement. The same right will go to the others.

The President: Mr. Prime Minister, we'll talk at greater length tonight. And I will see you tomorrow. In my view, the obstacle to peace, to a peace treaty with Egypt, is Israel's determination to keep political control over the West Bank and Gaza, not just now, but to perpetuate it even after five years. This might cause us to lose the opportunity for peace that you want. My hope is still that you will exchange this political control for your right to keep adequate security forces in the West Bank area. We don't have a specific position as a nation to put forward. We are arbitrators and intermediaries and we carry messages, but I think that this is the best way for Israel to achieve its security. We have reached the point of possible success. But we are on the verge of seeing that lost. I hope that this afternoon and tomorrow, that we and you can back off and reassess positions and look for common ground. Then we will try to present your views to Sadat and Hussein. We have been close to agreement. There was a constructive attitude in your Sinai proposal, and in your ideas on self-rule. There has been some retrogression on the question of withdrawal and the West Bank. At the same time Sadat has been willing to recognize Israel and Israel's right to exist in peace, and to offer full peace. These few differences over what will happen in five years should be removed.

There are two points that you keep insisting on: That Sadat calls for full withdrawal; and that he calls for a Palestinian state. This is not true. Not one of the Arab leaders demands this. When you raise this it is not accurate. Neither Jordan nor Sadat want this, nor do we, nor do you. Syria is a question mark, and I am not sure. Saudi Arabia will accept a proposition of no independent Palestinian state. But when we get to discussions, you raise these as obstacles, and there is no basis in fact for what you say. We need to look forward to resolve these differences of opinion, and we hope to solve most of these problems. I want to ask you to be as flexible as possible and to try to probe the answers to resolve these differences. I don't know when I will see Sadat or you again,

but we need progress soon. I know that you are acting in good faith and that you want peace as does Sadat.

Prime Minister Begin: I want to respond that I will think about it and talk to you tonight.

The President: Your Attorney General and Secretary Vance and Foreign Minister Dayan can work further on this. But unless you distinguish your security forces from the need to relinquish political control, then there is no possibility for a peace agreement. This is my understanding of what Israel wanted from the past. I see a hardening of positions, and I find it discouraging.¹³

¹³ The White House issued a statement at the conclusion of this first meeting. See *Public Papers: Carter, 1978*, Book I, pp. 547–548.

233. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) to President Carter¹

Washington, March 21, 1978

SUBJECT

Secretary Vance's Meeting with Foreign Minister Dayan

Dayan broke no new ground in his discussions with Secretary Vance this afternoon,² although he did say that Israel would try to develop a clearer concept of what might happen under the self-rule proposal after five years. Apart from that one indication of a willingness to develop new ideas, Dayan stuck to familiar positions.

—In Sinai, there will be no new settlements, and there will be no substantial enlargement of existing settlements, although some minor construction will continue.

—On the West Bank, any new settlements there must be approved by the Cabinet, and the political situation will be taken into account in approving settlements. The idea of a moratorium on settlements has

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Trips/Visits File, Box 110, 3/21-22/78 Visit of Prime Minister Begin of Israel: 3/78. Secret. Outside the system. Sent for action. The date is handwritten.

² No memorandum of conversation was found.

not been accepted, and not everything will be done in military camps in the future.

—On 242, Dayan claimed that there had been no change in how the Israeli government interprets 242, but he did acknowledge that Israeli proposals for dealing with the West Bank had changed under the Begin government. He argued strongly that we should worry less about the legal interpretation of 242 and should think more about whether the proposals of either the previous Israeli government or this government would be adequate to advance the peace negotiations.

—Secretary Vance specifically asked Dayan whether Israel could make a statement that “all of the principles of 242 apply on all fronts.” Dayan said that Begin would not be able to make such a statement, but that Israel’s position would not preclude the Arab parties from raising the question of withdrawal. When pressed, he said that even if adequate security measures could be devised for the West Bank, Begin would not agree to these areas returning to Jordanian or Jordanian/Palestinian authority. He implied that he would be somewhat more open-minded on that question.

—Dayan explicitly said that Israel would not go beyond the language of 242, and would not use the words “on all fronts” in a Declaration of Principles. He implied that some type of clarifying statement, such as the one made this morning—Israeli peace proposals do not contradict 242—could be made public, but Secretary Vance told him that, in our judgment, that would not be sufficient to remove doubts about Israel’s interpretation of 242.

—Dayan would agree to develop some ideas on how the review process might be carried out after five years, including the questions that would be decided at that point.

—Dayan asked for our best judgment on what language would be necessary in a Declaration of Principles to get Sadat’s agreement. Secretary Vance agreed to provide our assessment of what Sadat needs.

In your own talks with Begin, I think you should be quite firm in insisting that an Israeli statement that “all of the principles of 242 apply on all fronts” is absolutely essential if we are to be able to convince Sadat and Hussein that Israel is prepared for serious peace negotiations.

234. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, March 22, 1978, 11:05 a.m.–12:25 p.m.

SUBJECT

President's Meeting with Prime Minister Begin

PARTICIPANTS

The President
The Vice President
Secretary of State Cyrus Vance
Dr. Zbigniew Brzezinski, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs
Hon. Samuel Lewis, U.S. Ambassador to Israel
Hon. Alfred L. Atherton, Ambassador-At-Large
Robert Lipshutz, Counselor to the President
Stuart Eizenstat, Assistant to the President for Domestic Affairs and Policy
Hamilton Jordan, Assistant to the President
Jody Powell, Press Secretary to the President
Jerrold Schechter, NSC Staff
William B. Quandt, NSC Staff

H.E. Menahem Begin, Prime Minister of Israel
H.E. Moshe Dayan, Minister for Foreign Affairs
H.E. Simcha Dinitz, Israeli Ambassador to U.S.
H.E. Aharon Barak, Attorney General of Israel
Mr. Meir Rosenne, Legal Adviser, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Mr. Yehiel Kadishai, Director, Prime Minister's Office
Mr. Yehuda Avner, Adviser to the Prime Minister
Hon. Joseph Ciecchanover, Minister for Economic Affairs, Embassy of Israel
BGEN Ephraim Poran, Military Secretary to the Prime Minister
Mr. Dan Pattir, Public Affairs Adviser to the Prime Minister
Mr. Hanan Bar-On, Minister, Embassy of Israel
Mr. Elyakim Rubinstein, Director, Foreign Minister's Bureau

The President: The Prime Minister and I had a delightful supper with our wives last night, and we spent about an hour and a half in private conversation.² We were able to clarify as well as possible the issues that have been addressed and still need to be addressed. I think we have a clear understanding of one another. My assessment of the situation is that we need to be completely honest and frank, and we need to be clear as we bring this meeting to a close. We will continue discus-

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Subject File, Box 1, Arab-Israeli Peace Negotiations 1978: Volume I [I]. Top Secret; Sensitive. The meeting took place in the White House Cabinet Room.

² According to the President's Daily Diary, Carter, Begin and their wives ate dinner from 7:19 to 8:07 p.m. in the second floor residence of the White House. Carter then spoke with Begin privately in the Oval Office from 8:07 to 9:38 p.m. (Carter Library, Presidential Materials, President's Daily Diary) No memorandum of conversation has been found.

sions, with the Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister, and through normal means of communication between our two governments.

When President Sadat was here, I had long talks with him, and I tried to get a clear understanding of his positions. After those talks, I put down his positions and ours in my own handwriting. I am now discouraged about the prospects for further progress. Up until now I have been hopeful. We will still make all possible efforts. And I still believe that a comprehensive settlement is preferable, but the first agreement will have to be between Israel and Egypt, and then with Jordan, and then with the others.

I'm going to have to report to Congress this afternoon, before I leave on my trip. I meet with the House International Relations Committee today, and I will see the Senate Foreign Relations Committee tomorrow. We will discuss a number of items, including the talks that have taken place here. Before I meet with them, I'll tell the group our positions and yours. If I am wrong about your positions, I would like you to correct me.

Our proposals, based on talks with President Sadat and other Arab leaders, and our consultations with Israel, are that peace agreements or peace treaties can be reached, and we understand that the main sensitivity on the Israeli side is that there not be total withdrawal from the West Bank. We think that this position is compatible with the views of Sadat and Jordan. We think there could be a number of security outposts that would be permitted, and we think there could be modifications in the boundaries of 1967, to be negotiated. I've told other Arab leaders, including Saudi Arabia, that we have these views. We don't agree that there must be full withdrawal on the West Bank. We think there can be some modifications. We also do not favor an independent Palestinian state. That is our position, and I think that responsible Arab leaders agree with it.

Concerning the self-rule arrangement, we think that substantially your proposal could be implemented for a five-year period, and then it could be reassessed. Authority for the self-rule administration should come from Israel and Jordan, and perhaps from Egypt as well in Gaza. The Palestinian Arabs living in these areas only would serve in the interim authority, and they would be freely elected. No claim of sovereignty would be made by either Israel or Jordan, nor would they disavow their right to sovereignty in the future. The area would be demilitarized, except for police forces to uphold the peace, and Israel would have some security encampments in outposts. Israel would withdraw military forces except those on the Jordan River and in key vantage points.

During the interim period, negotiations should take place on the final terms for self-rule for the area. On some issues, Israel would retain

a veto, such as security and in-migration. There should also be a regional economic plan, with international contributions for assistance. During the period of active negotiations there should be no new or expanded settlements. If negotiations bog down, that would change the situation. This is our concept of how to resolve existing differences. This is my best answer to the problems.

The Israeli position, as I understand, is that even if there were a clear statement by us, and if it were accepted by Egypt, against total withdrawal in the West Bank and against a Palestinian state, Israel would not stop new settlements, or the expansion of settlements; Israel would not give up the settlements in Sinai; Israel would not permit an Egyptian or UN protection over the Israeli settlements in Sinai; even with military outposts, Israel would not withdraw political authority from the West Bank and Gaza; Israel will not recognize that Resolution 242 applies on all fronts, including the principle of withdrawal; Israel will not give the Palestinian Arabs, at the end of the interim period, the right to choose whether they want to be affiliated with Israel, with Jordan, or to live under the interim arrangement. This is my understanding of the present situation. If I am correct, the likelihood that the talks can be resumed with Egypt is very remote. There are no immediate prospects of substantial movement toward a peace agreement. I would like to have you comment. I would like you to correct any mistaken impressions that I may have.

Prime Minister Begin: Thank you Mr. President. I would like to comment on your outline of Israeli policy. Your definitions are all negative. We have positive definitions. I would like to state them positively, and to remove any statement that Israel is not willing to take certain actions.

Stated in a positive way, our position is that we are resolved to negotiate peace treaties to get a comprehensive peace settlement with all of our neighbors. We have accepted Resolution 242 as the basis for negotiations with all of our neighbors, and we stand [on] that. We are determined that negotiations should be direct. We want secure and recognized borders as called for in Resolution 242, but that Resolution does not envisage total withdrawal on all fronts. The possibility for less than total withdrawal exists not just for Judea and Samaria, but also for Sinai and Golan. Israel is not committed to total withdrawal from any of the territories. Israel has made a two-part peace proposal which is positive and constructive. On the bilateral Egyptian-Israeli relationship, Israel has stated its willingness to withdraw to the international border, and has asked for the demilitarization of all of Sinai beyond the passes. We suggest in Sinai that there be two UN zones after Israeli withdrawal. Our settlements will continue in these zones, with protection by an Israeli contingent. This is our perception and our proposal for reaching a

comprehensive settlement. Withdrawal, although not total, is assured in Resolution 242. We could ask for border changes, but we did not, for the sake of reaching an agreement with Egypt. But the UN zones with settlements is our alternative to asking for rectifications in the international border. In positive terms, this is our plan, and I hope that you will explain it to Congress in these positive terms.

The second part of our proposal should also be described in positive terms. We suggest self-rule, or administrative autonomy, in Judea, Samaria, and Gaza, for the Palestinian Arabs. They should elect an Administrative Council which would deal with all issues of daily life, no interference from Israel. We have suggested eleven administrative departments. The source of authority for the Administrative Council is the Military Governor in Israel. You suggested the possibility in December of the devolution of authority from an agreement between Israel and Jordan, and we said that we would consider this.³ But there is only one authority now. That is the Military Administration, which we want to abolish. This is an open issue. For the time being, the source of competence for the Administrative Council will be the Military Governor.

Israel will reserve for itself the control over security and public order. This means that our army will be in camps in Judea, Samaria, and Gaza, and we will stay on to see that security prevails. We agree that the question of sovereignty is difficult because there are various claims. Sovereignty should remain open. We will not deal with the question of sovereignty over the territory, but rather with the human beings. The Palestinian Arabs should have self-rule and the Palestinian Jews should have security. We agreed that there will be a review after five years. We suggest that reality be allowed to work, and that people on both sides learn to live together. All of our suggestions are positive. Not everything is now possible. In the Israeli government's view, it is not now possible to envisage all of the changes which might come after five years. But everything is open for review. This is the meaning of the last article. A review "will" take place. This is the second part of our peace proposal stated in positive terms.

Concerning our policy of settlements, we would also like a positive assessment. Since July, we have had a difference on this issue. The United States Government position is clear, and ours is clear. We decided on no new settlements in Sinai. We will add to the existing settlements, if there is arable land, and some need for housing, and some people who want to go to settlements. But I want to stress this point—there will be no new settlements in Sinai.

³ See Documents 177 and 178.

In Judea and Samaria, we understand that the former arrangement that Foreign Minister Dayan discussed with you last September⁴ is not now envisaged as the basis for a mutual agreement. We say that the Jewish people have a perfect right to settle in Judea, Samaria, and Gaza. But the government will decide when and where, but we cannot make an unlimited commitment not to settle. We have to be faithful to our commitments to our own people. It is necessary to have settlers in Judea and Samaria in accord with government decisions. If we say no settlements during negotiations, we cannot say how long that might be. It might be very long. When would we be able to restart settlements? Only when the negotiations had failed? That would be very, very difficult. Therefore, we say that it is our right to settle, and this is part of our plan for autonomy. The Palestinian Arabs can also settle in Israel.

Mr. President, we proposed three documents, including the Declaration of Principles.⁵ In that document, we positively accepted Resolution 242 as the basis for negotiations. We have twice been asked to add the words “on all fronts.” This is not in the text of Resolution 242, and it should not be added. If the United States uses these words, that is your right. But the words do not appear in Resolution 242. You yourself told me that Resolution 242 is subject to many different interpretations. There is an Arab interpretation which calls for full withdrawal. Again I repeat, in our draft declaration we accept 242 as the basis for negotiations with all states. This is our document, and there may be a counter-proposal from the other parties.

I ask you to say in positive terms that we have produced three documents for peace. We are the only one in the Middle East to have done this. Egypt has some proposals, but really they only have one peace plan which calls for full withdrawal and the creation of a Palestinian state. That takes no intellectual effort. By contrast, we have produced three documents. You yourself should accept the fact that we produced three serious, important documents, and they should be the basis for negotiations. You should tell Egypt to negotiate. They should bring counterproposals. This is the essence of any attempt to get peace treaties after war. Summing up, I should say that we are grateful to you, and we have had a chance to present our point of view, and we would like you to explain our positions in a positive way.

Foreign Minister Dayan: I would like to add a short remark to clarify some points. As far as I know, there are no Israeli military camps inside

⁴ See Document 106.

⁵ The Israeli declaration of principles is printed in Document 197. The other two documents are presumably the framework for peace that Begin gave to Carter on July 19, 1977 (attached to Document 52), and his home rule proposal presented on December 16 (attached to Document 177).

populated Arab cities or built up areas. What we have is the headquarters of the military commander. But there are not military units in the populated areas. If our plan is accepted and military rule is abolished, and if the commander of the military regime moves out, and if no Israeli soldiers move in, that means that the Arab population is clear of any Israeli military forces. The camps are not in Nablus or in the towns or cities. When you said that Israel wants political control over the West Bank, over Judea and Samaria, if we abolish the military regime, and if we take away the commander there, then practically the Arab populated areas will have no Israeli military forces. This is the meaning of Resolution 242. We go very far in this direction.

When you speak of political control, we do not want any political control over the Arabs. What we, or I, don't want is their control over the Israeli population in Judea and Samaria, especially over the Israeli settlements. I don't support the removal of settlements from the West Bank. I think we can reach an agreement with those settlements staying where they are. We should not control the Arabs, but I won't agree to Israeli settlements being under an Arab-elected body. It would be wrong to say that we want political control during these five years over the Arab population. We want to end it. Maybe they will want us to stay, but if not, we will be relieved. We don't want political control. Public order has been mentioned before as a possible problem. On the face of it, we are responsible for public order. If terrorists start operating from Nablus to Hebron, then our police will have to deal with the problem if necessary. We hope we won't have to. We have no complaints now with how Jordan, Syria, and Egypt deal with terrorists. So we don't interfere. But take the situation in Lebanon, or in Gaza in the old days. Who would take care of those situations? If they can prevent terrorism, or if they at least make a good effort, then there is no problem. But with the PLO, and the hijackings, I think it would be irresponsible for the Israeli Government to say that Israel would not go into Judea, Samaria, and Gaza, when even now we have gone into Lebanon, in an extreme situation. We wish that it would not happen. But there is no alternative.

Concerning the right of Arabs to make their own choice to affiliate with Israel, Jordan, or to keep their own self-rule status, we have no objection in principle, but there is a problem with the method of a referendum. There is also the problem of Gaza. In Gaza there are 400,000 Arabs. We've asked Hussein to let them have Jordanian citizenship. All of those in Judea and Samaria, and in Jerusalem, about 800,000 Arabs, are Jordanian citizens. They are not refugees. We have proposed that some of them in Jerusalem also become Israeli citizens, but not even two people have given up their Jordanian citizenship to become Israelis. We are ready, and any Arab who wants to be an Israeli citizen

can get Israeli citizenship. What we don't agree to is the system of referendum. But they can choose Jordanian or Israeli citizenship. None of them will choose Israeli citizenship, or maybe only a few. There is a national feeling. Some may want to keep their local identity card instead of becoming Jordanian citizens. They can then dream of being Palestinians, and no one can force them to have a passport. But they do have Jordanian citizenship now. And we don't want to prevent them from choosing their citizenship.

There are now Arab refugees in Lebanon, and I don't believe that we can settle the whole conflict in the Middle East unless the problem of the refugees is solved. It just can't be done. Look at the history of 30 years. Look at Lebanon today, and Jordan in 1970, and everywhere. When we worked out our paper last October,⁶ we agreed that it should deal with questions of the Palestinian Arab refugees and the Jewish refugees, with both of them. We agreed that this should be discussed in a large group, and that we would have to deal with this soon. If Sadat really wants to pave the way to peace, he would add to his prestige if he pressed forward with this issue. Let's deal with it. Palestinian refugees could be asked if they wanted to stay in Lebanon, or if they wanted to go to Jordan or the West Bank. Some may be able to go to Israel, and we once agreed to something like 50,000 coming back. If we can manage in two or three years time to settle all of the Arab refugees, and this is feasible, it would be a great development. There are one-half million in Jordan who want to stay. Those in Kuwait will also want to stay. The problem is those in Lebanon. If you ask them what they want, to settle, or compensation, we can deal with this.

In Gaza, half the population consists of refugees. They will have to be settled. They want to stay there. What relationship will there be between them and the rest of the Arab-populated area in Judea and Samaria and Jordan? King Hussein once suggested that there be a corridor, a physical corridor, between the West Bank and Gaza. This is not the way to solve the problem. But there could be some arrangement based on free movement. Where will those in Gaza work? There are no jobs in Gaza, only refugee camps. We do want a settlement, and we don't want to control the population. We just want our defense forces there without interfering. After five years there will be a question, and we will have to go into this, but for the first five years, if we can solve the refugee problem in Lebanon, and if we are lucky to get Jordan and Syria to sign peace treaties with us, then we will face an entirely different situation in the Middle East, one which we can't even imagine. I think that Israeli settlements in Sinai would look different after a peace

⁶ A reference to the working paper agreed to by the United States and Israel in October 1977. The working paper is attached to Document 124.

agreement. I don't know about the Eitan airfield.⁷ All of these things will have an effect on Israeli settlements. If Sadat could agree to discuss the status of settlements, after the status of the military forces has been resolved, this might be one way. Listening to your view, I think you were too gloomy. Maybe because I am used to worse periods in the Middle East, and I don't think it is so bad now.

The President: When you speak, I can see the opportunity to get some language that would be satisfactory to Sadat. But there are some things that have to be addressed. To refuse to acknowledge the possibility that the withdrawal principle of Resolution 242 applies to the West Bank is an insurmountable problem. In our view, and in the Egyptian view, this is very important. To say that it will not prevail is difficult. All Sadat wants is for Israel to work to resolve the Palestinian question, and to give the Palestinian Arabs a voice in determining their own future. It doesn't hurt to give them a voice, and they can't overrun Israel. The only military and security forces in the area will be Israeli. You say that Sadat wants full withdrawal and a Palestinian state, but that is simply not true. We reach a stone wall when you say that. I don't know where to go. I want to discuss this with you frankly. You say that military camps are not in the populated areas. If this could be defined on a mutual basis with Egypt and Jordan, it might be a good starting point.

Foreign Minister Dayan: I was Minister of Defense. We just have a headquarters in Nablus and Gaza. We don't have military units. We don't have soldiers in the cities.

The President: You say you don't want political control. That is good. But what Prime Minister Begin's proposal gives them is only a limited voice. Why can't you accept it that the Palestinian Arabs have a right to participate in determining their own future? One point on which Sadat is very strong concerns settlements. He will not allow you to keep settlements in his territory protected by Israeli forces. Sadat sees a continued presence of Israeli forces to protect settlements as a violation of Israel's willingness to withdraw from Sinai. I asked him if the settlements could stay under the United Nations. Israel does not accept this point. But on that basis, Sadat said that he could not agree. So this issue is preventing Sadat from negotiating. I wish that Sadat would accept my suggestion. I'm just going back and forth between the parties. We have security interests, and we have friends on both sides. I'm almost desperate to get some common ground, and I am all in favor of the absolute security of Israel, including a US commitment, to be confirmed if necessary, to meet your needs and to help provide the basis

⁷ An airfield in Sinai.

for meeting President Sadat's minimum needs, which seem reasonable to me. There is a hard core beyond which we cannot make any progress. I've recently been disappointed to see that Israel says it will not withdraw from the West Bank. It is my impression that Israel has no intention of withdrawing from any part of the West Bank. Is Israel willing to withdraw, even partially, by dividing the area, or to specified encampments in the West Bank? The answer is no. Is Israel ready to have its settlement policy not become an obstacle to peace? It would be OK with me if Sadat would accept Israeli settlements under the UN, but he won't accept Israeli troops.

To see the prospects for peace with Egypt go down the drain on these two points, and this is how I see the present situation, is something I deplore. I want the advice of Congress. I don't want to hurt your security. We want to enhance your peaceful right to existence, and we want to prevent a subversive Palestinian state or entity between you and Jordan. Sadat is generally eager to find a basis for agreement with you. His position is reasonable, and our position would be acceptable to him, I think.

Secretary Vance: I do believe that the essential points that the President has outlined could be the basis for bringing Sadat to negotiating a peace treaty with Israel. I am totally convinced that you cannot get negotiations unless you solve these problems.

Prime Minister Begin: We did say that the Palestinians could participate in the determination of their own future.

The President: Under Israeli control?

Prime Minister Begin: Through talks. We have said that they can participate in determining their own future through talks involving Israel, Egypt, Jordan, and the Palestinian Arabs. This is covered in our formulation. Concerning the settlements in Sinai, Sadat never said he would offer a counterproposal that the settlements should be under UN control. He wants them taken away. He said they should be burned, and then he denied this and said that they should be dismantled, and that the bulldozer should come in. This is his position. He has made no counterproposal.

The President: That's correct.

Prime Minister Begin: We made a proposal, and after the talks that Foreign Minister Dayan had with Mr. Tuhami,⁸ we told him about our proposal for settlements, and he did not refuse. These ideas were conveyed to President Sadat even before he came to Jerusalem, and then he was told about them the second time after his visit. He knows our views. He has made no counterproposals, he has only offered an ulti-

⁸ See footnote 4, Document 155.

matum. He has called for total withdrawal and a Palestinian state. I assume that he may have told you something different, but we have documents from him that say exactly that. His text means total withdrawal, and it means a Palestinian state. At Ismailia, in the communique President Sadat called for a Palestinian state.⁹ Since then, the Egyptians have spoken of self-determination for the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza. We say that this will lead to a Palestinian state. In our time, self-determination means a state. Sadat now uses different words. I told you yesterday¹⁰ that I would like you to try to clarify where he really stands on these two points. I would like to ask you to do this. Perhaps he said something to you, but in his documents, it is clear.

The President: On the question of settlements, Sadat does not agree with you, despite my request that the settlements should be allowed to stay under the UN. Concerning the determination of their own future, the Israeli language says “through talks,” and the only way for them to participate is through talking with Israel, Egypt and Jordan.

Prime Minister Begin: The Egyptians themselves accepted that language. They called for self-determination through talks, but then they changed their minds.

The President: (Reads from the Egyptian draft)¹¹

Secretary Vance: The President is not asking Israel to accept Egypt’s language on self-determination. Rather we have put forward the Aswan language for your consideration.¹² On self-determination, it seems to me that it does not necessarily mean an independent state if you limit the choices that are put to the people to an affiliation with Israel, with Jordan, or continuation of the status quo. If those are the choices, there will be no independent state.

The President: If the only security forces in the area are Israelis, I don’t see the problem. I’m not trying to criticize your position, or the Israeli Government’s position, nor do I want to underestimate the tremendous effort and courage that you have shown in your proposals. They were notable and courageous. But in spite of Sadat’s recognition of Israel, his offer of peace, and his direct negotiations, and despite your courageous proposals on Sinai and on self-rule, the negotiations have broken down, and I’m trying to find a way to get the negotiations going again. We want to achieve peace. We’ve tried to identify the differences that exist, and to work out comprehensive language. We hope for a clear expression on the key points, and we think you might get

⁹ See footnote 9, Document 180.

¹⁰ See Document 232.

¹¹ No draft is attached. Possibly a reference to the Egyptian draft of the declaration of principles. See Document 197.

¹² See footnote 5, Document 187.

started by taking the American proposal. Maybe you could say in a preamble that there will not be full withdrawal and there will be no Palestinian state. With those as the premise, then we could discuss other issues, and we could even talk about greater US involvement in your security.

The best two months for me in the White House were those when you and President Sadat were talking directly. Now we just have to take bad news back and forth from one to the other. We don't want that role. We don't want to see the opportunity lost.

Prime Minister Begin: We are striving for direct negotiations. What you said about our peace plan you should say to Congress.

The President: I will.

Prime Minister Begin: The good words that you used, and which you had in your communique,¹³ when you spoke of our constructive attitude, when you used the word courage, makes me feel pain when I now sense that there is a view that my plans are inadequate. Recently an important Senator told me that Israel is giving too much away.

The President: I've never said that! I've called your plans a major step in the right direction.

Prime Minister Begin: When you put forward our view, please say it positively.

The President: I understand.

Foreign Minister Dayan: After the last meeting with the Secretary, we received a paper,¹⁴ and we tried to develop a better formula for withdrawal. We don't accept the phrase "on all three fronts." I believe that we have something now that Sadat should accept. I would like Attorney General Barak to read our suggestion.

Attorney General Barak: In the Declaration of Principles, Article I is OK. In Article II Israel is prepared to say that it accepts all of the principles of 242 as the basis for negotiations between Israel and all of the neighboring Arab states.

The President: Maybe it would be advisable for some of you to work on the language.

Attorney General Barak: On the basis of all of these principles, we would say in the next paragraph, that there will be withdrawal and that there will be secure and recognized borders, using the language of 242.

Prime Minister Begin: Just the language of 242.

¹³ Apparently a reference to the statement issued at the end of the December meetings. See footnote 12, Document 178.

¹⁴ Not further identified. Possibly a reference to the U.S. draft of the declaration of principles that Vance presented at the January Political Committee meeting. See Document 196.

Attorney General Barak: In Article IV, we accept the language on participation in the determination of their future, and that there should be a just resolution of the problem of the Palestinian Arabs. Those in Judea and Samaria and Gaza will have the right to participate in determining their own future through talks. In Ismailia, the Egyptians made no mention of legitimate rights of the Palestinian people. We will accept some of the Egyptian formula concerning talks, and we have taken some language from your Aswan formula. I don't know why that you think we want political control over the Palestinian Arabs. The administration will be theirs, they will have the police, the judiciary, and after five years, everything will be open for negotiations. We can agree on the process, and we can agree that they will participate in determining their own future. Why don't you see that this is not political control?

The President: I haven't followed the details on the Declaration. Secretary Vance and Roy have. It might be good to go into the exact language with them.

Secretary Vance: I might meet again with Foreign Minister Dayan and we will study what the Israelis have said.

The President: Roy might be able to give the Egyptian view, but I can't.

Secretary Vance: On another point, if you indeed do agree that 242 applies to the West Bank, and that 242 does not automatically mean the 1967 borders, then why can't you simply say that 242 applies on all three fronts?

Prime Minister Begin: We accepted 242 as it is written. Why should we add these three words to a Resolution that we accept? The question is about negotiations. We have to have secure and recognized boundaries. In negotiations, everyone can have an idea.

Foreign Minister Dayan: The only difference in your suggestion and ours is that we do not say "all three fronts." We say it is the basis for negotiations with all the neighboring states. Otherwise it is the same. We then go on to say withdrawal. The elements are there in these two paragraphs. (Dayan reads from the Israeli draft.) We don't want, and it is not the wording of 242, to say "on all three fronts." We want to say that 242 can be the basis for negotiations with all of the neighboring states.

The President: I have to leave now. Secretary Vance can work on this this afternoon.¹⁵ I am sure you can reach some resolution of these differences. Thank you.¹⁶

¹⁵ Vance met with Dayan at 2:30 p.m., when they discussed the Israeli draft of the declaration of principles. (Memorandum of conversation; National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P880102–0072)

¹⁶ For the text of Carter's and Begin's statements when Begin left the White House, see *Public Papers: Carter, 1978*, Book I, pp. 550–553.

235. Note From President Carter to Egyptian President Sadat¹

Washington, March 23, 1978

To President Sadat

My meeting with Prime Minister Begin² was successful in clearly delineating the differences which remain as an obstacle to a peace agreement. Secretary Vance will inform you more fully, but I wanted to urge you to have patience as we pursue the efforts you and I discussed toward reaching an eventual settlement. I'm beginning to see the bases on which real progress can be made.

Your friend,

Jimmy Carter

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinsky Material, President's Correspondence with Foreign Leaders, Box 5, Egypt: President Anwar al-Sadat, 1–12/78. No classification marking. Carter wrote the note by hand.

² See Documents 232 and 234.

236. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Egypt¹

Washington, March 24, 1978, 2150Z

77059. Deliver to Ambassador opening of business. Subject: Report to Sadat on President's Talks With Begin.

1. In an early meeting with Sadat, please convey to him, on behalf of President Carter, the following report on the Begin visit and appraisal of where we stand.

2. You should tell Sadat that the President wants to share with him a candid and very private assessment of the results of the Begin visit. The President did what he told Sadat he would do. Throughout the two days of the visit President Carter kept the conversation focused on the critical issues of withdrawal and the Palestinian question and left Begin

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840176–1314. Secret; Niact Immediate; Nodis; Cherokee. Drafted by Brubeck; cleared by Atherton, Saunders, Quandt, and Tarnoff; and approved by Secretary Vance. Sent immediate for information to Tel Aviv.

in no doubt of the critical decisions Israel must make to keep the peace process going. Begin in these talks did not go beyond present positions, but the President believes that Begin will go home deeply aware that these decisions are now before the Israeli Government and cannot be avoided. The public handling of the talks was such that the public here and in Israel knows that these were difficult meetings where the issues were squarely joined. The issues have been clearly identified and aired. The President believes the talks served the purpose we set for them and mark an important point in the peace process.

3. The President opened the meetings by stating forcefully that the United States itself has a deep national interest in achieving peace in the Middle East. He offered his flat commitment for U.S. support and help to the parties in every way possible to remove obstacles to progress in the negotiation. He stressed the need for early conclusion of a meaningful declaration of principles. He held firmly to the position that the declaration must deal with the withdrawal issue and the Palestinian question in terms that would provide a credible basis for broader negotiations. He spent a long evening alone with Begin going over the key requirements as he and Sadat discussed them,² for a true solution to the West Bank/Gaza problem including meaningful interim arrangements to give time to deal with Israel's serious security concerns. The President reiterated the U.S. position regarding Israeli settlements in the occupied territories. In a separate meeting, Foreign Minister Dayan told Secretary Vance that there will be no new settlements in Sinai while negotiations are underway and that each new settlement in the West Bank will require specific Cabinet approval. The Secretary repeated what the President had said and emphasized that we would view any new settlements with the utmost seriousness.³

4. The central focus throughout two days of conversation was on the necessity for Israel to accept unequivocally that all the principles of Resolution 242, including withdrawal, apply to all fronts. The President made clear that acceptance of withdrawal, including on the West Bank, is essential to progress in the peace negotiations.

5. Begin reiterated his views on these issues in terms with which Sadat is familiar. He argued that Egypt insists on total withdrawal from all of the occupied territories and on the creation of an independent Palestinian state as preconditions for negotiation, which Israel would never accept. He alleged there had been a hardening in the Egyptian position for example in Egypt's insistence on a security presence beyond the Sinai passes. President Carter responded with his own view that Sadat was not insisting on a fully independent Palestinian state

² See footnote 2, Document 234.

³ Vance met twice with Dayan. See Document 233 and footnote 15, Document 234.

and was prepared to work for a moderate outcome involving demilitarization and, following an interim period, Palestinian links to Jordan. He pointed out that Sadat does not oppose mutually accepted modifications in the armistice lines on the West Bank. He urged Begin to direct his attention to these facts. Begin repeatedly said that, if it is indeed Sadat's position that there should not be total withdrawal on the West Bank or an independent Palestinian state, Sadat should submit language for the declaration of principles which makes this clear. He asked the President to convey this to Sadat.

6. Begin argued that nothing in Israel's peace proposals is inconsistent with 242; that everything is negotiable; and that there should be no preconditions for negotiations. The President stated his view that the Israeli position avoids the basic issues of whether Israel will withdraw and allow the Palestinians a real voice in determining their own future. Begin continues to assert that his self-rule proposal for the West Bank/Gaza is a reasonable plan meeting the requirements of 242. The President, as he told Sadat he would, went over in detail the kind of changes in the Begin plan that would be required in order to provide a possible basis for West Bank/Gaza negotiations, along the lines he discussed with Sadat at Camp David.⁴ He made clear that we would start discussions from the self-rule plan but do not consider the plan, as it now stands, to offer adequate arrangements for the future of the West Bank/Gaza. Press reports Sadat may have been, that the President put certain ideas to Begin, refer to the ideas the President reviewed with Sadat at Camp David with respect to the future of the West Bank and Gaza and how to overcome the obstacles in the Sinai negotiations. We did not, as some reports allege, put forward a formal U.S. proposal to the Israelis.

7. While Begin showed little sign of movement, Dayan discussed the West Bank and Gaza in some detail, agreeing that Israel should be more explicit about what will happen after the five-year interim period, in two long, separate meetings with Secretary Vance, Dayan showed a genuine interest in exploring new ways of trying to achieve a satisfactory declaration and a satisfactory basis for West Bank/Gaza negotiations. He undertook to come up with some further ideas on both the declaration and the West Bank/Gaza.

8. The President believes these meetings went farther than we have ever been able to go before toward engaging the Israelis on the real issues and accomplished most of what he had thought would be possible in this session. He believes we are squarely on the course he and Sadat had envisaged. What is needed now is a short time for the effects

⁴ See Document 211.

of this visit to be digested in Israel, for Begin and his colleagues to rethink among themselves the difficult decisions ahead, and for them to work these decisions through the Israeli political process. The President believes that Dayan and Weizman, in particular, are genuinely seeking to avoid a breakdown in negotiations and a solution. We are seeing, as we are sure Sadat is, the signs in Israel of the profound reappraisal that is going on and will now accelerate. We intend to continue pressing our views both with Israel and in the public debate.

9. The President did not want this meeting to be diverted from the central issues, and Southern Lebanon was discussed only briefly. The Israeli Government had already agreed to comply with UN Resolutions 425 and 426⁵ and had declared a unilateral ceasefire, and the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister assured us that Israel will withdraw from Lebanon. The President wants Sadat to know that he appreciated Sadat's letter to him on the subject on March 17 and Sadat's generous message of March 22.⁶ As Sadat will have observed, they were thinking along the same lines. The President feels that the successful establishment of a UN force in South Lebanon will itself substantially improve the climate for peace negotiations. Difficulties lie ahead, but the President believes we are on the right course.

10. Sadat will have observed that there was no press statement at the end of the visit. We were unwilling to make an anodyne statement and chose to make the public aware of our positions in other ways, beginning with the President's remarks at the end of the second day's meeting.⁷ FYI: You should point out to Sadat that March 23 *Washington Post* carries four-column headline about "grim talks" and "sharp conflict on the issues," and featured President Carter's statement that "peace still seems far away." Atherton did backgrounder immediately after conclusion of meetings, sent septel,⁸ which clearly stated the U.S. position. The President met the same day with the HIRC and at breakfast Thursday morning with the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.⁹

⁵ For U.N. Security Council Resolution 425, see footnote 2, Document 232. U.N. Security Council Resolution 426 established that UNIFIL would stay in place for 6 months or longer if the Security Council deemed it necessary.

⁶ In the March 17 letter, transmitted in telegram 8652 from Cairo, Sadat urged Carter to "personally intervene" with Israel to immediately remove its troops from Lebanon. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P850071–1530) In the March 22 letter, transmitted in telegram 9076 from Cairo, Sadat referred to the U.S. effort in the passage of the U.N. resolutions calling for Israel's withdrawal from Lebanon and establishing UNIFIL as "timely, quick, and marvelous." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780126–0600)

⁷ See footnote 16, Document 234.

⁸ Not further identified.

⁹ Carter briefly described his March 23 meeting with the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in *White House Diary*, p. 180.

The Secretary also addressed these issues in his press conference Friday.¹⁰ End FYI. The President believes there is increasingly clear public and Congressional understanding of where we now stand. He has been gratified by the expressions of support from key members of Congress whom he has briefed.

11. The President feels that things are going according to the plan we outlined to President Sadat. He believes that the clear presentation to Israel of the U.S. position on the key issues during this visit should make obvious that the U.S. is determined to move the peace negotiations forward. It is essential now, as debate intensifies in Israel, that both we and Sadat do everything we can to hold out to those Israelis looking for serious compromise the prospect of realistic progress on grounds that promise security for Israel. The actions Sadat has taken and his statements over the past weeks have already contributed a great deal to this process, as well as enhancing understanding for his position, particularly in the United States. The issue now is what more can be done in the coming weeks to encourage the positive forces in Israel now working in the direction of constructive decisions.

12. FYI: You should draw on this paragraph as you think best to elaborate on the point just above. You should use your own judgment as to how far you can load the circuit. End FYI. We intend, as planned, to put forward in the near future our own proposals, at a time when we think this will be most effective, as the political debate within Israel develops. Sadat's continued demonstration of his commitment to the peace process and of his constructive approach to such issues as security and the need for interim arrangements in the West Bank will be of great help. It is important to convince the Israelis that they are not being asked to choose between two extremes for a Palestinian solution—between continued de facto occupation on the one hand; and, on the other hand, total withdrawal to the 1967 armistice lines on the West Bank, with a radical, independent PLO state. We recognize the difficulties for Sadat in stating his views publicly on this issue, but anything he can say showing his readiness to take leadership in developing a solution that does not threaten Israel would be most helpful.

13. FYI: It is equally important, in our view, that Sadat and those around him, as well as Egyptian press, avoid as far as possible statements that are unhelpful. Recent example is Boutros Ghali's 23 March

¹⁰ In his March 24 press conference, Vance described the talks as "difficult" and acknowledged the "differences of view between ourselves and the Israelis on certain issues." Vance also remarked though "that in no way was the atmosphere of the talks unfriendly or ugly—I want to make that very clear." He continued that the "frank exchanges" were between "allies and friends" and that the United States remained "fully and unequivocally committed to the security of Israel, and there should be no doubt about that." (Department of State *Bulletin*, May 1978, pp. 24–28)

statement as reported FBIS NC231038Y¹¹ that direct dialogue with Israel “will not be resumed unless Israel withdraws from all the occupied territories.” Similarly, tone of editorial comment by Sadat supporters reported Cairo 9161¹² is unhelpful, though we recognize political considerations involved. We leave to you how best to get the point across to Sadat but hope you can encourage him to be sensitive to effect in Israel of what Israelis hear coming out of Cairo. Egyptian image in Israel can be of critical importance in the internal debate there and we are sure Sadat will want to be helpful to his friends in Israel and not give ammunition to other side. End FYI.

14. In sum, we believe the Israelis will need the next week or so to sort out their response to the positions we have taken. What we both can do over the coming weeks that will be most helpful to the peace negotiations is to act in a way that helps the Israelis move to what are in Israel extremely controversial decisions. We ourselves do not yet have a clear view on when we should take our next step and will be in close consultation with Sadat during this crucial period.

Vance

¹¹ FBIS NC231038Y has not been found.

¹² Telegram 9161 from Cairo, March 23, analyzes editorials by the writer Ihsan Abdul Qaddous and the journalist Ahme Baha al-Din (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780129–0933)

237. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Syria¹

Washington, March 26, 1978, 1901Z

77945. Subject: Message From President Carter to Assad—The Begin Visit and South Lebanon.

1. We hope you will be able to deliver personally to Assad the following message from President Carter and can use the occasion to discuss with him more fully the Begin visit and the situation in South Lebanon. We want not only to keep the dialogue with Assad going on

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Subject File, Box 88, Syria: 9/77–3/78. Secret; Niact Immediate; Nodis. Also sent to the White House.

the peace process. We want to get the best possible sense of Assad's present thinking and of what cooperation we can hope for from him in South Lebanon where his role is obviously crucial.

2. Following is text of President Carter's message:

Begin text:

His Excellency

Lieutenant General Hafez Al-Assad,

President of the Syrian Arab Republic,

Damascus

Dear Mr. President: I consider it important at this critical point in the peace negotiating process to give you a report on Prime Minister Begin's visit and my assessment of the outlook for further progress. We had two days of very frank and detailed talks here. I believe Mr. Begin went home with a clear understanding of the U.S. position on the issues and of what is necessary to achieve a true and comprehensive peace settlement in the Middle East. These past months of negotiations have, I think, been very useful in clarifying positions and in bringing the discussion down to a real engagement with the basic problem that must be solved for a comprehensive peace. They made possible in this week's meetings with Mr. Begin the most thorough and candid analysis of the problem that I have yet had with him.

Mr. Begin now understands fully the U.S. commitment to the basic principles of a comprehensive peace settlement: that the principle of withdrawal from occupied territories applies to all fronts and that there must be a just solution to the Palestinian problem in all its aspects, including the right of the Palestinian people to participate in the determination of their own future. It was also made clear to him that there must be an end to Israeli settlement activities if negotiations are to be successful. I urged that Israel clearly accept these understandings in order to open the way to broad and detailed negotiations and a real resolution of the issues.

There were, I must tell you frankly, substantial differences between us on these fundamental matters. Mr. Begin continues to argue that Resolution 242 does not require withdrawal on all fronts; and he is deeply concerned by the prospect that withdrawal on the West Bank holds the threat of an independent, hostile state there. Nevertheless, I believe that he has gone home aware that Israel must re-examine its positions and address these basic issues if there is to be a peace settlement. This week's talks were a necessary and important step in the peace process.

There is now taking place in Israel a very serious and significant debate on these matters. The people of Israel, as never before, are going

through the political rethinking that is essential to clear the way for successful negotiations.

We will continue our effort to get agreement on the basic principles that must be the basis for negotiations. I believe it must be clear now to everyone that the process to which we are committed is addressed to a comprehensive peace and that among its central goals are a satisfactory resolution of the problems of the Palestinians and of the West Bank and Gaza. We will remain firm in our commitment to these goals. We will continue to do everything we can to help the parties to the Middle East conflict find a basis for resolving their differences. I am more than ever convinced, after the experience of these past few months, that the effort we are engaged in can lead to the kind of Middle East solution that you and I sought in our original efforts for a comprehensive negotiation at Geneva.

I should like to express also my personal admiration for the wisdom, restraint, and leadership you have contributed in the current efforts to resolve the crisis in South Lebanon. Your government's support and the activity of your Ambassador in New York were extremely helpful in the critical task of getting a satisfactory Security Council resolution. I believe now that with the establishment of the UN peace-keeping force we must now turn to creating conditions in which the Lebanese Government can restore its authority in the south. This will make possible the return of many thousands of people who had been forced to flee the fighting, not only in recent days, but over the months past. Syria has been playing a constructive role in support of these goals.

I understand that the Israeli forces have now begun their initial withdrawals. This is a step of great importance, but there will still remain a major task of establishing peace and stability in the south in which you and your government have a very important part to play. I want you to know that the United States will cooperate fully with the United Nations, with the Government of Lebanon and with your own efforts to restore peace and bring an end to the long suffering of the people of South Lebanon. With warm good wishes. Sincerely, Jimmy Carter. End text.

3. In delivering the above message you should draw on Atherton's backgrounder and Department's briefing guidance (septels)² as you see fit to give Assad further detail on the Begin visit.

4. You should use your own discretion as to how far you can go with Assad on South Lebanon both on drawing him out on his views

² Not further identified.

and Syrian intentions and in seeking Syrian cooperation. To the extent you can do so, we would like you to cover the following points:

—We were highly gratified with the March 24 communique issued by the Arab Deterrent Force making clear that reinforcements of men and military equipment would not be allowed into Lebanon.³ This was an essential step to prevent matters from becoming uncontrollable, but we admire Syrian decisiveness in taking this action so promptly in the teeth of expected sharp criticism from certain other Arab states and the Palestinians generally.

—It is important to our common goals in Lebanon that the Palestinians cooperate with and offer no resistance to UNIFIL in the exercise of its mandate, and will continue to observe the ceasefire. We assume that Syria will be making efforts to assure that this happens and we would be interested in what steps will be carried out.

—We presume in the first instance that control of reinforcements would apply to the movement of Iraqi “volunteers” and military supplies. Will this also apply to aircraft coming from Iraq or possibly Libya? Will they be allowed to unload? Will movements by sea be stopped in areas under ADF control?

—We remain concerned over the no man’s land between the positions occupied by Syrian ADF units and UNIFIL units. We hope it will not happen, but realistically we cannot rule out a situation in which UNIFIL controls all the area from the Litani to the Israeli border, but the Palestinians continue to fire artillery and launch rockets from this no man’s land into Israel or even into the UNIFIL-controlled areas, thereby once again inviting Israeli counter-battery fire or air strikes. We hope that Syria will give thought to how this area might be neutralized.

—We are also concerned about the large Palestinian armed presence in Tyre and would appreciate his ideas on how UNIFIL might deal with it.

—Ask in what way the United States could be helpful in moves to stabilize the situation throughout Lebanon. Describe the efforts Embassy Beirut has made, not only with the government leaders, but also with key personalities outside the government.

³ The Arab Deterrent Force (ADF) was created by the Arab League in October 1976 to act as intervention force in Lebanon. Syrians comprised the large majority of the soldiers in the ADF. In the March 24 communiqué, the ADF announced that “any military interference or escalation in the south (after UN intervention) constitutes a basic obstacle to the efforts aiming at expediting Israeli withdrawal from South Lebanon.” Accordingly, the communiqué continued, “No military capability (taqa), whether men or equipment, is to be allowed into Lebanon.” (Telegram 1617 from Beirut, March 24; National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780136–0779)

—Explain that we hope to continue a regular exchange on developments in Lebanon and in the Middle East generally.

Vance

238. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Cairo, April 22, 1978, 6:30 p.m.

SUBJECT

Declaration of Principles and West Bank/Gaza Guidelines

PARTICIPANTS

Egyptian Side

Mohammed Ibrahim Kamel, Egyptian Foreign Minister
Butros Ghali, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs
Ahmad Maher, Chef du Cabinet, Egyptian Foreign Ministry

American Side

Alfred L. Atherton, Jr., Ambassador at Large
Hermann F. Eilts, American Ambassador, Cairo
Michael Sterner, Deputy Assistant Secretary, NEA
William A. Kirby, Department of State, INR

Ambassador Atherton began by stating his understanding that Foreign Minister Kamel had expressed certain reservations to Ambassador Eilts about our “Nine Points” on West Bank/Gaza guidelines,² the substance of which had been conveyed to him by Ambassador Ghorbal. Atherton said he would nevertheless appreciate the opportunity to explain why we believe they can perform a necessary function and to elaborate on them in some detail. Atherton then described the background of Dayan’s visit to the United States beginning April 26, which might require that he spend fewer days in Egypt than he had originally planned.

Atherton assured Kamel that, with the Panama Canal treaties now successfully behind us,³ the Administration is anxious to move ahead

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Subject File, Box 10, Egypt: 4–5/78. Secret; Nodis. Drafted by Kirby. The meeting took place in the Foreign Minister’s office. Atherton visited Cairo from April 21 to April 25.

² The initial version of the Nine Points is printed as Document 210.

³ After much controversy, the Senate voted to ratify the first Panama Canal treaty on March 16 and the second on April 18.

with the Middle East peace process. It is for this reason that President Carter and Secretary Vance had asked him to review the current situation—and our strategy—with President Sadat to make sure we share a mutual understanding of what needs to be done next.

Atherton stressed that our overriding objective remains to assure the successful outcome of the negotiations begun by the Sadat initiative. To this end, we have agreed with Sadat on the need for a Declaration of Principles that will provide a realistic basis for further and broadened negotiations. Kamel interrupted to underscore the importance to Egypt of broadening the negotiations to include additional Arab parties.

Atherton explained that it is the U.S.'s judgment that it will not be possible to achieve agreement on principles that call for total withdrawal to the pre-1967 lines or for the unrestricted right of self-determination for the Palestinians, which the Israelis almost unanimously believe would lead inevitably to an independent state. Principles such as these, Atherton continued, when applied to the West Bank and Gaza, provoke security concerns in Israel with which the U.S. sympathizes. President Sadat is also clearly on the record as being aware of Israel's security needs.

Kamel asked for confirmation that the U.S. still held to its position of foreseeing only "minor modifications" and that this qualification applied only to the West Bank. Atherton assured him this was still our position. Atherton pointed out, however, that in the U.S. view, basic Israeli decisions on withdrawal and Palestinian rights can only be brought about through a steady and phased process of negotiations by which Israel is faced with concrete proposals of an operational nature. We see Israel reaching its most flexible terms on these issues only in the context of detailed negotiations through which it can understand that its basic security concerns can be met, not in a general statement of principles.

Kamel, somewhat exercised, said he didn't understand how the points Atherton was making fit in with a Declaration of Principles. Egypt thought the starting point of negotiations was the Declaration and that it should be precise. Atherton responded that an agreed Declaration at this point would necessarily have to be somewhat ambiguous and we, therefore, believe that something additional will be necessary to more clearly define the issues germane to the West Bank and Gaza. Kamel asserted that Sadat wants a clear Declaration with no ambiguity. What use would an ambiguous Declaration be for us, he asked? Egypt needs something much clearer than Resolution 242, as the basis on which other Arabs can feel free to join the negotiations. Kamel stressed in particular that the Declaration must be clear on the principle of withdrawal from all territories. In this regard, Kamel noted, he had ob-

served a change in some recent American statements, particularly in Secretary Vance's comments that there must be some withdrawal on all fronts and in the joint statement issued in connection with President Ceausescu's visit.⁴

Atherton assured him that there had been no change in the U.S. position on withdrawal and pointed out the distinction between what we feel might be achieved in a final settlement and what is possible in a Declaration. Mr. Vance's comments had been in the context of our difference with Israel over whether all the principles of Resolution 242, including withdrawal, applied wherever territory was occupied in 1967. The Ceausescu visit statement did not mean we were turning away from the Sadat initiative negotiations toward a return to Geneva, as some had claimed. The U.S. position and its contrast with Mr. Begin's views that no withdrawal is required on the West Bank had, in fact, provoked an internal policy debate in Israel, which is readily apparent. While this debate has not yet produced major decisions, it has had an impact. We now want to play our cards in such a way as to foster that debate and maximize its impact.

Atherton assured Kamel that President Carter remains committed to the strategy that he and Sadat previously agreed on. The United States plans to put forward its own proposals, and we are tentatively thinking of doing this about mid- or late May. Congressional consideration of the aircraft package will have a bearing on the exact timing.⁵ In any event, Atherton emphasized, it is crucial that there be full understanding between the U.S. and Egypt both on the Declaration and the West Bank Gaza Guidelines. He said he would like to elaborate a bit on the US view of the relationship between these two documents.

The United States understands that Sadat's original concept was that a Declaration of Principles should serve as the vehicle for major Israeli decisions on withdrawal and self-determination. Realistically, however, we are going to have to settle for a document that has some element of ambiguity on these issues.

⁴ A reference to a U.S.-Romanian joint declaration issued after an April 13 meeting between Romanian President Ceausescu and Carter at the White House. One paragraph of this joint declaration addressed the Middle East. The text reads, "To encourage efforts aimed at a just, comprehensive and lasting peaceful settlement in the Middle East, based on Israel's withdrawal from territories occupied as a result of the 1967 War, respect for legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, and insurance of the independence, territorial integrity and security of all states in the region. To this end, they expressed themselves in favor of negotiations among all the interested parties for solving the Middle East situation, with appropriate representation of the Palestinian people." (*Public Papers: Carter, 1978, Book I, p. 745*)

⁵ See footnote 5, Document 215. Vance announced on April 28 that the administration was sending Congress formal notification of its proposal to sell aircraft to Egypt, Israel, and Saudi Arabia. (*Public Papers: Carter, 1978, Book I, p. 801*)

Kamel broke in to reiterate rather strongly that Egypt cannot afford to come out with ambiguity on the issue of withdrawal. Atherton pointed out that Begin speaks in terms of *no* withdrawal on the West Bank, and the United States has accordingly had a major disagreement with Israel on that point. The principle of withdrawal, however, is different than the precise location of the final border, which can only be agreed to through the continuing process of negotiations.

Atherton reminded Kamel that the United States has held for more than ten years that Resolution 242 permits some modification in the 1949 Armistice Lines so far as the West Bank is concerned; it is this special situation of the West Bank and Gaza which we believe necessitates looking beyond the Declaration on issues such as withdrawal and self-determination. It becomes impossible, in fact, to discuss the Declaration divorced from an understanding of its practical implications on the ground. We therefore want to look closely at *both* a Declaration and what lies behind it—a set of principles governing negotiations on the West Bank/Gaza and Palestinian issues.

Atherton urged that Kamel consider the advantages of an interim arrangement which would introduce a buffer of time before the achievement of a final settlement. During that time, Israel would become more confident that its security concerns can be met and therefore more willing to be forthcoming in terms of withdrawal. That time would also allow a consensus on the future to develop among the Palestinians, who today express a multitude of different views.

Atherton continued by saying that the United States would like to begin showing a real prospect for change in the status quo in the West Bank and Gaza. Thus far, the only negotiating proposal that offers to do that is the Begin Plan.⁶

Atherton then described the vicious circle in which the negotiations are currently trapped: the Jordanians and Palestinians are unwilling to enter into the negotiations on the basis of what the Israelis have put forward so far; the Israelis see no need to modify their current position in the absence of any Arab counterproposal. To make any U.S. proposed compromise on Declaration language with respect to withdrawal and the Palestinian issue meaningful to all parties, we believe it will be necessary to elaborate on what will actually happen in the West Bank and Gaza. It is not very effective, however, for us to propose language on these issues with only the Israeli self-rule plan tabled; therefore, there is a real need for further Egyptian views, especially on interim arrangements.

⁶ See the Attachment to Document 177 and footnote 6, Document 180.

Stating that he sensed Kamel thinks that there is something new in what he has said, Atherton assured him this was not the case. Kamel said his only worry is Begin's new interpretation of 242 on withdrawal,⁷ because of which Egypt must now be very careful. Atherton responded that the U.S. shares Egypt's misgivings on this score, to the point that it was not even possible to agree on a statement at the end of Begin's visit to Washington last month.

Atherton then discussed the shortcomings of the Egyptian paper on the West Bank and Gaza which Sadat had given him on March 6,⁸ underscoring the fact that Sadat has asked that we keep it to ourselves and that we had done so. He made the following general observations:

—The emphasis in the March 6 paper is on the final settlement rather than on the provisions for an interim regime.

—Such a paper would not enhance the internal debate in Israel; on the contrary, it could well rally support around Begin.

Specifying certain portions of the Egyptian Plan, Atherton pointed out that para 1B (saying withdrawal must be to the 1949 Jordan-Israel Armistice Line) would appear to be a retrogression from Sadat's own statements that he would not rule out minor modifications in the West Bank border. Furthermore, para 2A (asserting the right to self-determination "without external interference") will be taken as a code-word by the Israelis for an independent Palestinian state. Moreover, there is no acknowledgment in the paper that either the terms of a final settlement or the arrangements during the interim period must take into account Israeli security concerns.

Picking up Ambassador Atherton's point about self-determination, Kamel reminded him that the Aswan language⁹ covering Palestinian participation was a U.S. proposal, not Egyptian. He asked Atherton to bear in mind that the Egyptian Plan was a counter to the Begin proposal. Kamel suggested that the U.S. take the Egyptian plan and modify it as it had done with the Begin Plan in the Nine Points. Atherton asserted that this would be easier to do if the Egyptian paper dealt more with transitional arrangements. Kamel responded by remarking that Egypt must speak in generalities concerning the West Bank.

Atherton reiterated that the U.S. believed that, before it could come forward with a position of its own, it would need an Egyptian proposal

⁷ On April 16, the Israeli Government issued a statement that Resolution 242 would serve as the basis for negotiations with Israel's Arab neighbors, Egypt, Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon. (William E. Farrell, "Israelis Attempt To Reduce Friction With U.S. on Talks," *New York Times*, April 17, 1978, p. A1)

⁸ See Document 225.

⁹ See footnote 5, Document 187.

for the West Bank and Gaza which is cast in as positive terms as possible in order for it to be regarded as a valid and serious negotiating document, while still maintaining Egypt's positions on the basic issues. Kamel wondered how much further Egypt could go, bearing in mind that it was not mandated to speak for the Palestinians. He referred to the Egyptian reference to the 1949 Armistice Line, and said that the U.S. might propose "minor modifications." He also read from the portion of the Egyptian draft dealing with transitional arrangements and said that Egypt could not be more specific on an interim period. Kamel wondered why Egypt should allow the existence of the Begin Plan to drag it into areas it can't go into.

Ambassador Eilts pointed out that the Israelis would consider the March 6 Egyptian plan a retrogression from what Sadat had already said to Weizman. Sadat, for example, had mentioned to Weizman the possibility of having a local council to decide on West Bank or Gazan affairs. Kamel asked if it would help if the Egyptian plan spoke of a council. Atherton affirmed that it would, observing that that was the sort of thing the Israelis would have to take seriously and react to. Eilts reminded Kamel that a council was Sadat's idea, not that of the United States.

Atherton told Kamel that the second thing he had been asked to obtain was as precise an understanding as possible of what Egypt would ultimately be able to accept regarding the West Bank and Gaza. This would be solely for the information of the President and the Secretary. Kamel suggested that the Egyptian bottom line on these issues would be conveyed by Sadat the following day.

Atherton said that, this being the case, it would be useful to go over the Nine Points drawn up by the United States, bearing in mind that these had already been discussed at Camp David by President Carter with President Sadat,¹⁰ who had indicated at that time that they were generally acceptable to him. (Atherton then went over the Nine Points together with the U.S. rationale for each—see attachment. Maher took detailed notes.)

In response to the first point, dealing with the establishment of self-rule for a transitional period, Ghali expressed his frank concern that, having agreed to an interim arrangement, Egypt would then be asked to forego a final settlement. Atherton subsequently pointed out that, in the U.S. view, "transitional" clearly implies a period leading to a qualitatively different situation.

¹⁰ See Document 211.

Concerning the second point, describing the Palestinians as participants in the negotiations but not signatories to an agreement for a interim arrangement, Ghali expressed some confusion about the Palestinian role. Atherton explained that authority for an agreement could not derive from the Palestinian representatives since they would not be representative of a state. Their involvement as negotiators, however, would involve them in the overall process of determining the future of the West Bank and Gaza at an early stage.

After hearing Atherton's explanation of the third point, dealing with the governing authority and its responsibilities during the transitional period, Kamel wondered why there is no mention of a role for the United Nations. Atherton expressed the belief that UN involvement would inevitably complicate the process from the outset, with the need for a Security Council resolution as only one example. Ambassador Eilts observed that there was no reason why an Egyptian proposal couldn't propose a role for the UN. On the same point, Maher asked who the U.S. foresaw as participating in the voting for the self-governing body, pointing out that the status of Israelis living in Jewish settlements on the West Bank should be clarified in this regard. Atherton accepted this as a valid point.

The fourth point, saying neither Israel or Jordan would assert any claims to sovereignty over the West Bank during the interim period, was especially vexing to Kamel, who asserted that there is no doubt that sovereignty resides in the Palestinians. Atherton responded that most people would agree that there is at least doubt on the sovereignty question. Legal studies by the U.S. indicate that the issue of sovereignty over the West Bank remains unresolved. Ghali pointed out that to deny Palestinian sovereignty over the West Bank is to fly in the face of Arab thinking over a thirty-year period. Kamel, observing that "the United States is too soft on this fellow Begin," said that he would "have to hide" if sovereignty were dealt with in this manner.

Kamel insisted that the withdrawal aspect of the sixth point is inconsistent with 242. Why, he asked, should there be negotiations over the issue of Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank? Such negotiations should be restricted to defining the "minor modifications." "We'll get nowhere with this," said Kamel. Atherton explained that negotiations would clearly be necessary to define the modalities of Israeli withdrawals. That is the intent of this language, and perhaps there is a semantic problem with the current wording. Atherton told Kamel that, in any case, this point would cause a major explosion in Israel if aired there today.

Maher also commented on the sixth point, asking what was meant by the long-term relationship of the West Bank to Jordan and Israel and making it clear that he was concerned primarily by the implication that

the U.S. might envisage a political relationship with Israel. Atherton explained that, although both Egypt and the U.S. had expressed a preference for a West Bank linked with Jordan, the dimensions of such linkage would have to be specified through negotiations. It also seemed logical that there be at least economic relationships with Israel. Kamel summed up his reaction to this point by describing it as “too far away from what I thought would be coming from you.”

Kamel reacted to point 8.d., regarding reciprocal rights of residence for Palestinians and Israelis, by saying, “If you didn’t tell me these were American ideas, I would have thought they are from Begin.”

Summing up his reaction to the Nine Points, Kamel observed that if such an American proposal is put forward “it’s the end of Sadat, it’s the end of Egypt.” If the problem is really that there is only one plan on the table, Kamel continued, Egypt will take another look at its proposal. He expressed his hope that, in that case, the U.S. would take an Egyptian revision as seriously as it does the Begin Plan.

Atherton pointed out that, in order to have an impact on the negotiations, an Egyptian proposal would have to be made available to Israel. There would be the obvious possibility that it would then become public. It would in any case be very helpful if, when the U.S. presented its own proposal, the Egyptian plan were in the public domain as the Israeli plan already is. Kamel readily indicated that he understood this. Atherton offered to make himself and his delegation available to work with the Egyptians to help them in trying to produce a revised proposal.

Kamel said that Egypt will ask the U.S. to convey its proposal to Israel after the Begin visit. All Egypt wants, he said, is that after the five-year period the Palestinians rid themselves of the Israelis in every way. He suggested that it would be a good idea, after they had seen President Sadat, to sit down together and work on an Egyptian proposal. In doing so, Kamel urged, the U.S. should bear in mind not only the effect on Israel but on the Arabs as well, especially the Palestinians.

Atherton then reviewed the status of negotiations on the Declaration of Principles, observing that, in contrast to the West Bank/Gaza Guidelines, considerable work has already been done on a Declaration. It is important to know as precisely as possible, however, what will ultimately be agreeable to Egypt. Kamel confirmed that Egypt had been made aware of the latest Israeli thinking on a Declaration, but volunteered no specific reactions.

Atherton said that the United States understands the importance that the Egyptians attach to the language in paragraph 4 of their February 23 draft regarding the inadmissibility of the acquisition of terri-

tory by war, but that the U.S. considers this unattainable.¹¹ The Israelis, he noted, see this phrase as prejudicing their ability to ask for modifications in the West Bank border through negotiations, and in this respect we think they have a good point. Kamel observed that “inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war” is one of the principles mentioned in 242. Atherton noted that it is mentioned only in the preamble and the U.S. cannot support lifting one principle from the preamble of 242 for enshrinement in the Declaration of Principles. Maher asked why citation of this principle would necessarily preclude agreement on minor modifications. Atherton responded that in theory it would not, but Israel is afraid that an Arab negotiator would use it to support the necessity for total withdrawal from the West Bank. He then read to Kamel some informal alternative formulations for withdrawal language, promising to provide them in solely “non-paper” form the following day for his staff to study more closely but emphasizing these were not proposals and had no official status within the USG.

Atherton then asked whether Egypt might agree to delete the word “legitimate” before “rights” in the Palestinian paragraph. He observed that, because of the way it has been used in the past, the phrase has become a red flag for Israel. Kamel rejoined that that flag has already been raised, citing the use of “legitimate rights” in both the U.S.-Soviet Joint Statement of last October¹² and the Aswan statement. Atherton pointed out that there is a difference between language that can be obtained in a negotiated agreement and that which can be used in a unilateral statement. Kamel confirmed that Egypt would adhere to the Aswan language as its ultimate position on the Palestinian paragraph, but inclusion of “legitimate” was essential.

Atherton reiterated that any U.S. proposal for a Declaration of Principles cannot be viewed in isolation, but rather as an integral part of our overall proposal which will also include the ideas we have talked about for interim arrangements on the West Bank and Gaza. He stressed that our consultations with Israel on the Declaration have not been completed, and that we would like to get as clear an idea as possible as to what will ultimately be acceptable to Egypt. Once we come out publicly with our proposal there will be little if any possibility of introducing changes, for if we were to make changes at the behest of one party the other would also insist on changes.

¹¹ No February 23 draft of a declaration of principles has been found. Telegram 5532 from Cairo, February 20, transmitted an Egyptian draft that includes the language “inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war and in full respect of the rights to sovereignty and territorial inviolability,” but it is in the first paragraph. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P850059–2018)

¹² See Document 120.

Atherton urged that Kamel bear in mind that it will be no easy task to bring Israel to agree to the text we have in mind. It includes certain language and concepts to which Israel takes strong exception, for example:

- the concept that there must be withdrawal wherever territory was occupied;
- the term “legitimate rights”;
- the term “Palestinian people,” instead of “Palestinian Arabs”;
- it does not explicitly limit participation in the determination of their future to residents of the West Bank and Gaza, as does the Israeli draft;
- it calls for fulfillment of Resolution 242 “in all its parts,” a phrase to which the Israelis have interposed objection and have not included in their draft.

Atherton noted that, if we are going to expend the effort necessary to get Israeli agreement to our text, it is important that we have some assurance that Egypt will be able to support it.

Ambassador Sterner summarized our approach by saying that it seems necessary to confront the reality that it is impossible to achieve a final agreement at this time. We are therefore thinking in terms of a process that begins with a Declaration that will inevitably be somewhat ambiguous on key issues. He urged that Egypt look, however, at the political dynamics that would be set in motion by our proposal. It is these dynamics which in time will make a final settlement easier to achieve, and they can best be activated by a realistic set of West Bank/Gaza Guidelines.

Atherton closed by stressing that our consultations on the Declaration and the West Bank/Gaza Guidelines must be kept absolutely secret. He pointed out that it would be extremely harmful to our efforts if it became known that the U.S. and Egypt were consulting with a view to coordinating positions to the extent possible.

Attachment

Paper¹³

Undated

THE NINE POINTS: AS PRESENTED IN EGYPT BY
AMBASSADOR ATHERTON APRIL 22–24, 1978

1. A self-rule arrangement would be established for a transitional five-year period.

—“Transitional” nature of five-year period clearly implies that it will be followed by a qualitatively different situation.

—During the transitional period, Palestinians will exercise a greater degree of autonomy than ever before.

—Five years is a reasonable period to allow Israel to acquire confidence in the new situation, including confidence in the elected West Bank/Gaza Palestinian leadership; to be persuaded that its security concerns can be met without its retaining permanent control; and to negotiate a final settlement.

2. Authority for this interim arrangement will derive from agreement among Israel, Jordan, and Egypt. The interim agreement will be negotiated among representatives of these states and of the Palestinians in the area.

—The authority for the interim arrangement, including for whatever governing body may be established, will derive from an agreement to which Egypt and Jordan are parties (as the pre-1967 governing authorities in Gaza and the West Bank) rather than from the will of the Israeli government.

—Representatives of the Palestinians will be involved in the process of determining the future of the West Bank and Gaza from an early stage of the process.

3. The interim agreement will provide for self-rule by an authority freely elected by the inhabitants of the West Bank and Gaza. The agreement would define the responsibilities of that authority.

—The fact that the governing authority will be composed of officials freely elected by the inhabitants, rather than selected by the military government, injects participation by Palestinians at an early stage of the process that will determine their future.

¹³ Secret; Nodis.

4. Neither Israel nor Jordan will assert their claims to sovereignty over the West Bank and Gaza during the five-year period.

—This will assure that Begin will not be tempted to succumb to pressure from his more fanatic supporters to assert the traditional Herut claim of Israeli sovereignty over the West Bank.

5. Israeli forces would withdraw to limited and specified encampments.

6. During the five-year period, in order to implement UN Resolution 242, negotiations will be conducted and agreement will be reached among the West Bank/Gaza authority, Israel, Jordan, and Egypt on Israeli withdrawal from territories occupied in 1967, on secure and recognized final boundaries, including possible modifications in the 1967 lines, on the security arrangements which will be part of the final settlement and on the long-term relationship of the West Bank and Gaza to Israel and Jordan.

—In order to forestall undue delay by any party in moving toward a final agreement, negotiations must take place in order that “agreement will be reached” within five years.

7. The agreement negotiated by the parties will come into effect by expressed consent of the governed to the substance of the agreement.

—This assures that no agreement can come into force in the absence of a positive expression of consent by those to be most affected by it.

8. During the interim period the negotiating parties will constitute a continuing committee to reach agreements on:

a. Issues arising under the agreement regarding the conduct of the interim regime, not resolvable by the West Bank/Gaza authority;

b. The introduction of UN or Jordanian military presence on the West Bank and Gaza;

c. Provision for an economically practicable level of resettlement in the West Bank and Gaza of Palestinian refugees;

d. Reciprocal rights of residence in Israel and the territories for Palestinian Arabs and Israelis, and for land purchases with Israeli citizens and West Bank/Gaza residents entitled to buy land either in the West Bank/Gaza or in Israel.

9. A regional economic development plan would be launched, including Jordan, the West Bank/Gaza authority, Israel and Egypt.

239. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Brzezinski) to President Carter¹

Washington, April 24, 1978

SUBJECT

Atherton's Meeting with Sadat

Ambassador Atherton reported by secure telephone from Cairo on his talks with Sadat and Kamel.² The main points are as follows:

—*Timing of a US proposal.* Sadat is not in a hurry. The arms package should be approved first.³ Egypt needs some time to get its relations with the Saudis in shape. Sadat also wants time to ensure full coordination with us. "No proposal would be better than a poor one."

—*Declaration.* The key is the language on withdrawal, which must make clear that Israel is prepared for full withdrawal in exchange for peace, with "minor modifications" only in the West Bank border.

—*West Bank/Gaza.* Sadat had some reservations about the nine points,⁴ but felt that the key problem was to be clear about the eventual terms of a settlement (e.g., withdrawal for peace). Sadat wants UN involvement from the beginning.

—*Egyptian Plan.* Within two weeks, we should receive an Egyptian plan for the West Bank/Gaza to transmit to the Israelis.

—*Kamel Visit.* Sadat suggested that Foreign Minister Kamel should visit Washington, perhaps during the upcoming UN session on disarmament.

—*Next Steps.* Sadat repeated his position that a "good declaration" would allow him to go forward in negotiations, with or without Hussein. He increasingly talks of a direct Egyptian role in negotiating the interim agreement for the West Bank/Gaza.

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Subject File, Box 10, Egypt: 4–5/78. Secret. Sent for information. Carter initialed at the top of the page.

² Atherton met with Sadat on April 23. No memorandum of conversation was found.

³ See footnote 5, Document 238.

⁴ The Nine Points are printed as an Attachment to Document 238.

240. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, April 26, 1978, 11:30 a.m.

SUBJECT

Meeting between the Secretary and Israeli Foreign Minister Dayan

PARTICIPANTS

Israel

Moshe Dayan, Minister for Foreign Affairs

Simcha Dinitz, Ambassador of Israel

Aharan Barak, Attorney General

Meir Rosenne, Legal Adviser, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Hanon-Bar-On, Minister, Embassy of Israel

Joseph Ciechanover, Minister for Economic Affairs (Procurement), Embassy of Israel

Elyakim Rubinstein, Director, Foreign Minister's Bureau, Adviser to the Minister for Foreign Affairs

United States

The Secretary of State

David D. Newsom, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs (luncheon only)

Alfred L. Atherton, Jr., Ambassador at Large

Harold H. Saunders, Assistant Secretary, NEA

Samuel W. Lewis, American Ambassador to Israel

Nicholas A. Veliotes, Deputy Assistant Secretary, NEA

Michael E. Sterner, Deputy Assistant Secretary, NEA

William B. Quandt, National Security Council

David A. Korn, Member, Policy Planning Staff

The Secretary welcomed Foreign Minister Dayan and said we look forward to useful discussions. He asked Dayan if he (Dayan) would like to lead off or if he would like to hear first from Ambassador Atherton about Atherton's recent talks in Cairo. Dayan thanked the Secretary and said he would like to hear from Atherton.

Ambassador Atherton said he had had many hours of talks in Egypt. On his first day there he had met with Foreign Minister Kamel, on the second day with President Sadat, and on the third day again with Kamel.² Atherton said the reason for his trip was to make sure that we have the best possible understanding of Egyptian thinking. Atherton noted that we had not had comprehensive talks with the Egyptians since early March. Another aim of the trip, Atherton said, was to

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Subject File, Box 49, Israel: 3–4/78. Secret; Nodis. Drafted by Korn. The meeting took place in the Secretary's Conference Room.

² See Documents 238 and 239. No memorandum of conversation has been found for Atherton's meeting with Sadat or the second meeting with Kamel.

reemphasize to the Egyptians that the United States continues to support Sadat's initiative and is trying to get negotiations going again. Atherton said he thought his talks in Cairo had been useful in encouraging Sadat to remain firm and to persevere in his peace initiative.

Atherton said he had tried to encourage the Egyptians to look positively on the proposals put forward by Israel. He had pointed out in some detail that it was not realistic for the Egyptians to say that the Declaration of Principles must call for total withdrawal or for self-determination without qualifications or restrictions. Atherton said he had sought to get Egypt's reaction to the formulation on Resolution 242 and withdrawal in the Declaration of Principles that the Israelis gave us during Begin's and Dayan's visit in March.³ Atherton said he had made clear Israel had not asked us to convey this formally, but he had felt it useful to raise since we understood Barak had discussed it in Cairo and it has subsequently been published in Israel. However, when he raised this subject he found the Egyptians somewhat puzzled. Although we knew that Attorney General Barak had discussed the March 22 text with the Egyptians, Atherton found that they did not seem to have the impression of having been seized of an Israeli proposal. They did not appear to have focused on it. Atherton said he had told the Egyptians that the March text was a serious effort by Israel to bridge the differences. If they did not like the Israeli proposal they should provide counterlanguage. Atherton noted however that the Egyptians had not come forward with counterlanguage. Atherton said Sadat had looked at the Israeli text and had said the main problem he had with it was subparagraph 3(a) which calls for "withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from territories occupied in the conflict of 1967". Sadat said he needed something going beyond the language of Resolution 242 on withdrawal.

Atherton said he also tried to get the Egyptians to respond to Israel's proposal regarding the West Bank and Gaza. The Egyptians up to now have only said they do not like it. However, they told Atherton this time that they will try to put together and give to us, to convey to Israel, a proposal on the West Bank and Gaza. Atherton said we expect to get something from the Egyptians on that, and possibly also on the Declaration of Principles.

As concerns general attitudes, Atherton said he found the Egyptian Foreign Ministry people nervous and concerned that time is running out for the Sadat initiative. However, Sadat himself did not give a sense of being under pressure. He wants to allow time for full consideration of the issues. Sadat was in a good, positive and relaxed frame of

³ See Document 234.

mind. Atherton said he had made the point to Sadat that the call for total Israeli withdrawal is not practical. Sadat said he agreed on the need for territorial modifications on the West Bank; he agreed that there will have to be “minor” modifications for security reasons. Nonetheless, however, the Egyptians want to reaffirm in the Declaration of Principles the preambular language of Resolution 242 on the inadmissibility of acquisition of territory by war. Atherton said he had found Sadat quite positive concerning the concept of interim arrangements for the West Bank and Gaza. He seemed to be open-minded about what would happen in the interim period but wants to know what will take place at the end of the five years. Sadat spoke of the possibility of a local government council, a concept quite like the administrative council in the Israeli proposal. He recognized the need for and says he has no problem with the idea of Israeli military presence during the interim period. He said that if a strong Declaration of Principles is achieved and if Hussein refuses to join the negotiations he (Sadat) would be willing to cooperate in working out with Israel arrangements for the West Bank and Gaza. Atherton noted that Sadat had introduced one new element; he now speaks of the concept of a United Nations presence as part of the West Bank/Gaza arrangement from the very beginning.

Dayan noted that Atherton had said that Sadat was concerned about what would happen after five years. Dayan asked what Sadat wanted. Atherton said Sadat thinks there should be a reversion of the West Bank and Gaza to Arab authority in the framework of an entity linked with Jordan. In other words, the sovereignty question should be resolved in an Arab framework, once security problems have been worked out. Atherton said Sadat sees security problems being dealt with during the five year period; then at the end of that time links should be established with Jordan. Dayan said in other words Sadat wants Israel to agree now to complete withdrawal from the West Bank and Gaza and a return of Arab sovereignty over the area. Israel should take away its troops and its settlements. The five years would be just to prepare this. Dayan repeated that if he understood correctly, Israel was being called upon to agree now to turn the West Bank and Gaza back to Arab sovereignty in five years. Atherton said the commitment that Sadat wants to withdrawal would be conditioned on Israel being satisfied during the five year period that security arrangements and border modifications are satisfactory. Atherton said his discussions with the Egyptians had not gotten into the question of a continued Israeli military role after the five year period, but that is not ruled out. Sadat is prepared to be one of the parties to the West Bank/Gaza agreement and he hopes that Jordan and the Palestinians will join in too. He thinks that during the five year period it should be possible to work out satisfactory security arrangements.

Barak asked what role Israel would have after the five year period. Atherton said only whatever is agreed upon as part of the settlement. Sadat does not envisage any Israeli governmental authority or anything other than what is worked out for security purposes.

The Secretary asked if Dayan would now like to put forward his views. The Secretary said he would be particularly interested in hearing anything Dayan would care to say about the new Israeli formulation on Resolution 242⁴ and in having Dayan's thoughts on interim arrangements for the West Bank and Gaza and on what would happen at the end of the five year period. Dayan said he would prefer to start with arrangements for the five year period and what would happen during the five years, and then go back to the wording of the Declaration of Principles. After all, Dayan said, the wording of the Declaration will have to reflect agreement that is reached on the substance of the matter. Dayan said there are two practical issues. The first is whether Israel can reach agreement with Egypt on the West Bank and Gaza or not. If so, then agreement can be reached on the wording of the Declaration of Principles. The second is if Israel and Egypt reach agreement and Jordan does not join in, will Sadat make a peace treaty with Israel on Sinai and how far will Israel have to go regarding the West Bank and Gaza? If there is no Jordanian partner what will happen next? Dayan said that before pursuing these questions he wanted to ask Attorney General Barak to report on the conversations that Weizman and Barak had had with Sadat earlier this month.⁵

Barak said Weizman and he had met for two hours with Sadat on the first day of their visit to Egypt and that same evening he had had a long discussion with General Gamasy. Then on the second day they had another meeting with Sadat. Barak said he would first summarize the end result of their talks. First of all, they found Sadat unwilling to have a separate peace agreement with Israel. Sadat clearly stated that a bilateral agreement is out of the question. However, Sadat is ready to sign a bilateral agreement with Israel if he can go to the Arab world and say he has gotten Israel to agree to full withdrawal. As far as the Declaration of Principles is concerned he needs two basic elements. One is the principle of full withdrawal which he emphasized is very important for Egypt. Barak said Sadat stressed, however, that withdrawal will be subject to taking care of Israel's security needs. In other words, Barak said, total withdrawal would be subject to negotiations on Israeli presence for military purposes. Sadat's second basic element was self-determination and a plebiscite which would lead to some kind of link between the West Bank/Gaza and Jordan. As concerns Sinai, Barak

⁴ See footnote 7, Document 238.

⁵ Weizman and Barak visited Cairo March 30-31.

said, Sadat does not care if Israeli settlements remain as long as there is no Israeli police force to protect them. The settlements can stay and the settlers can become Egyptian citizens. Barak said Sadat acknowledged he could not expect Israelis to stay under these conditions. Barak said he and Weizman had asked about the possibility of an exchange of territory. Sadat had rejected this outright, saying Egypt is not willing to exchange its territory. Gamasy had said the same thing. Barak said he had asked Gamasy about the possibility of linking the Rafah approaches area to Gaza. Gamasy replied that that was a very interesting idea but it would require consideration. The Secretary asked Barak what he had in mind. Barak said the idea was simply to let the Rafah area be a part of Gaza and whatever happens in the West Bank and Gaza would happen in Rafah.

Barak said the above summarized the overall two days of talks. Now he would focus on the first day. During the conversations on the first day Sadat said there should be a Declaration of Principles and then others will join in the negotiations on the West Bank and Gaza. But if Syria and Jordan decline to enter negotiations he will negotiate for Jordan on the West Bank and Gaza. The Secretary remarked that that is consistent with what Sadat had told Atherton. Barak said Sadat had described the West Bank/Gaza regime in the following terms. He spoke of elections to elect a legislative body and administrative body; Barak noted that Gamasy, however, had spoken only of an administrative body not a legislative one. The administrative council would have two elements. One would be the representatives of the Palestinian Arabs of the West Bank and Gaza and the other representatives of Israel to be appointed by the Israeli Government and representatives of Jordan to be appointed by Jordan, and if Jordan does not join in the arrangements Egypt would appoint these representatives. The Secretary asked if Sadat had spoken of representatives or a representative. Barak said Sadat did not go into the question of numbers. Continuing, Barak said this body would have both legislative and executive power. The Israelis had pointed out that they would be in the minority in it and Sadat had said that that problem would be taken care of. For matters of day-to-day living the council would act according to majority vote. However, for certain "vital matters" Israel would have a veto. Barak said during his talks with Gamasy he had tried to get more specifics on this. He had asked, for example, whether immigration would be a procedural or a vital matter. Gamasy had said immigration would be a vital matter. Barak said he and Weizman had raised the question of relations between the West Bank/Gaza council and Israel in regard to the movement of people and goods. Sadat had said he favored free movement of people and goods. He had been told by Gaza Arabs that they favor freedom of movement. The question of buying and selling of property was also raised, Barak said. Sadat said he had no problem with this; if

some Arab wants to sell his property, why not? However, Barak said, Gamasy did indicate that there would be a problem in this matter but he said an effort would be made to find a way to solve it. As regards Israeli military forces, Sadat had said they can stay but only in military bases and only as required for Israeli security. Sadat had said Israel can have military camps on the Jordan River.

Barak said Weizman and he had raised the question of what would happen if Arab terrorists organize in Hebron and Nablus and attack Israeli settlements. Gamasy had said this would be a problem for the police to handle. Sadat had spoken of the possibility of a combined Israeli-Arab police. Barak said they had asked what would happen in the case that the police do not act against terrorists. Would the Israeli Army have a role? Gamasy had said they would have to find a legal way of doing this. Barak said he had pointed out that Sadat's plan is entirely for the Palestinian Arabs. What about the Palestinian Jews? Sadat had replied that his plan would apply to all people living on the West Bank. Sadat and Gamasy has made clear that this plan would apply also to Gaza but they strongly insisted that no buffer be created between Gaza and Egypt. The Secretary asked what was meant by this. Dayan said Gamasy knows of Israel's concept of a buffer in the Rafah area between Gaza and Sinai aimed at preventing passage of Arab arms between the two areas. The Egyptians had said there could be Israeli military camps in Gaza but Israel cannot have a buffer between Gaza and Egypt. Gamasy wants Gaza and Egypt to have a direct connection. Ambassador Lewis asked if Gamasy had excluded immigration or border control between Egypt and Gaza? Barak said immigration would be a matter for the council to decide.

Barak said this in a nutshell is what was discussed during the first day of the Weizman visit. Barak said Sadat had not talked about a plebiscite or a referendum. The Secretary asked if Sadat had not been speaking of the foregoing in terms of interim arrangements. No, Barak replied, what Sadat had outlined was intended as the final settlement. Barak said the Egyptians envisaged secret negotiations between Israel and Egypt to work out the details of arrangements for Judea and Samaria. From this document the Declaration of Principles would emerge. In other words, the Declaration of Principles would be the outcome of an understanding on what would take place in regard to the West Bank and Gaza. Sadat had said the Declaration of Principles must say total withdrawal subject to provision for Israeli security. Mr. Sterner asked if anything had been said by the Egyptians about minor border modifications. Barak said the question of border modifications had not arisen. After a Declaration of Principles was agreed upon Egypt would invite the other Arabs to join. If they did not join then Sadat would go ahead and finalize with Israel the agreement. The Sec-

retary asked if it was Barak's understanding that if Jordan came into the negotiations it would be asked to review the agreement on the West Bank and Gaza and could suggest modifications therein. Barak said he had not raised this question.

Barak said the above covers the first day of discussions. At the close of the first day he (Barak) had been very happy. He had wondered what was really different in the Egyptian plan from the Israeli West Bank/Gaza plan. In some aspects, Barak said, he felt the Egyptian plan was even better than the Israeli plan. Then, however, came the second day of talks. At the beginning of the second day Sadat told the Israelis that after the meeting the previous day he had met with a delegation from Gaza. Barak said Sadat told them what he had told the Israelis, and "they did not accept it". Barak said Sadat said the Gazans rejected Sadat's West Bank/Gaza proposal because it was not satisfactory on the matter of self-determination. The Gazans had insisted on self-determination and therefore Sadat had said that self-determination must be a part of the five year arrangements. Barak said the Israelis had responded that it is better to agree now not to agree on what will happen after five years. They said Israel proposed that agreement be reached now on proposals for interim arrangements but that there be no agreement at this stage on what would happen after five years. Barak said Sadat had replied that he would be thinking about the Israeli proposal. Barak said the Israelis assume that they will get an answer from Sadat on this in their next meeting. The Secretary asked if Sadat had suggested that he had to withdraw what he proposed on the first day for both the interim period and for the post-interim period or was he saying only for the post-interim period? Did he say he could not stand by what he said on the first day because of the Gazans? Barak said that was not clear. Barak added that Sadat also seemed to withdraw during talks on the second day from his position that he would step in if Jordan did not accept a role on the West Bank. Atherton said that in his recent talks with Sadat, Sadat had been explicit in saying that if Jordan did not come in he would act in Jordan's place.

Barak said because of what happened on the second day the whole scenario became very uncertain. It became unclear to him what the procedure would be, whether the Declaration of Principles would come first or agreement on the West Bank and Gaza would be first. Barak remarked that in the discussions he had described the general comments came from Sadat and the more detailed ones from Gamasy. Gamasy's scenario on the first day was to sit down and discuss agreement on Sinai and on what would happen on the West Bank and to say from this would emerge the Declaration of Principles. Then the others come in, and if no one comes in Sadat will go ahead alone. Atherton asked if it was absolutely clear that when Sadat talked about the administrative

council he was talking about final arrangements and not about interim arrangements. Barak said that was clear to him. It was his (Barak's) understanding that Sadat was talking about final arrangements. The Secretary said that if that were the case representatives of Israel and Jordan would sit permanently on the administrative council. Ambassador Lewis asked if there was no discussion of review after five years. Barak said no, there was none, neither on the first day nor on the second day. Ambassador Atherton said that in his talks with Sadat, Sadat had seemed to be thinking of arrangements for the interim period along the lines that Barak had described in his report on the first day's conversation. But he was thinking of some act of self-determination at the end of the five year period. The Secretary said he thought the concept of developing the end results first and going on from there to drafting a text of the Declaration of Principles is a good one. Ambassador Atherton said that, with regard to his discussions with the Egyptians concerning the latest Israeli draft Declaration, it was clear to him that the Egyptians did not think they owed the Israelis further answers.

The conferees then adjourned to the 8th floor to lunch.

The following substantive points were touched on during luncheon conversation.

The Secretary told Dayan that his stopover in Cairo on his way back from Africa had been only a very brief one and took place late at night. He had told Foreign Minister Kamel that Kamel should not bother to come to the airport but Kamel had insisted on coming and they had had a forty-five minute talk.⁶

Dayan said that, with regard to Lebanon, Waldheim had been quite specific in assuring Israel that the order had been given to the UN troops not to allow the PLO to return to southern Lebanon. Not only were the UN forces to prevent hostile actions from southern Lebanon but they were also not to allow the PLO to come back. The Secretary said it was his understanding that the UN would have observers in two areas north of the Litani. Mr. Saunders noted that this would be largely a symbolic presence and the Secretary agreed. Dayan said the question is whether the UN troops, in particular the French, are there to fight or are "just there". Dayan noted that the Lebanese at first said that they wanted to send two battalions to the south and then reduced that to two companies. Later they said they couldn't send any forces because they could not control the roads between Beirut and the south. Dayan asked if the Syrians didn't control the roads between Beirut and the south. The Secretary said there is a small area north of the Litani that is not controlled by Syria. He asked Mr. Saunders exactly how large this

⁶ No memorandum of conversation has been found. Vance left Southern Rhodesia on April 17.

area was and Mr. Saunders replied ten or eleven kilometers. The Secretary noted that the problem with the Lebanese army is that there is no Lebanese army at this point. Dayan said if the Syrians wanted to be helpful they could solve the problem. The Secretary said thus far the Syrians have been unwilling to do so. Mr. Saunders said we have talked to the Syrians about moving their forces down to the Litani but they do not want to do it as long as Israel remains in occupation of southern Lebanon. The Syrians don't want to seem to be cooperating with Israeli occupation. Mr. Saunders noted also that Israel had earlier objected to Syria moving its troops all the way to the Litani. Dayan said he thought it very important that at least some Lebanese forces be in the south with the UN. As it is now, the Lebanese are not involved at all. Mr. Saunders said we agree entirely and Ambassador Parker has made every possible effort to persuade the Lebanese Government to send troops south.

The Secretary asked Dayan what Israel's time schedule is for withdrawal. Dayan said the Israelis have agreed to meet with Siilasvuo sometime this month or early next month to review the situation regarding UN forces and to discuss what would be the final phase of withdrawal. The Secretary said it was his understanding that 3,340 UN soldiers are in place now and the number will be moved up shortly to 4,000.

241. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, April 27, 1978

SUBJECT

Secretary's Meeting with Foreign Minister Dayan

PARTICIPANTS

Israel

Moshe Dayan, Foreign Minister

Simcha Dinitz, Israeli Ambassador

Hanan Bar-on, Israeli Deputy Chief of Mission

Joseph Ciechanover, Director of Military Mission

¹ Source: Department of State, Office of the Secretariat Staff, Records of Cyrus Vance, Secretary of State, 1977–1980, Executive Secretariat, Lot 84D241, Box 9, Vance Nodis Memcons, 1978. Secret; Nodis. Drafted by Veliotis. Sent to Cairo for Ambassador Eilts, Tel Aviv for Ambassador Lewis, and to Ambassador Atherton. The meeting took place in the Secretary's Conference Room.

L.E. Rubinstein, Assistant to the Foreign Minister
Aharon Barak, Attorney General

United States

The Secretary

Harold H. Saunders, Assistant Secretary, NEA

Alfred L. Atherton, Jr., S/AA

Samuel Lewis, Ambassador to Israel

Michael Sterner, Deputy Assistant Secretary, NEA

David Korn, S/P

William Quandt, NSC

Nicholas A. Veliotis, Deputy Assistant Secretary, NEA

Settlements

The Secretary asked Dayan to clarify the current Israeli settlements policy. Dayan replied that in the Sinai there would be no new settlements, but a “filling out of existing settlements” which were previously approved. He noted that nothing had changed in this respect since their last discussion. On the West Bank, he merely said that there was “nothing new.” (He obviously meant there was nothing new since the last time he discussed this with the Secretary.) The Secretary asked if the decisions had been made by a full Cabinet meeting. Dayan replied that each settlement would require a Cabinet decision—each decision would be taken by the Cabinet committee on behalf of the entire Cabinet. No longer would the decision be taken by the “Ministry.” (This was an obvious reference to the fact that Arik Sharon would no longer be able to make virtually unilateral decisions.) Dayan continued by recalling that he had previously told the Secretary that there would be a certain number of settlements established in military camps. So far, the GOI was implementing this previously approved plan. He then made some unclear statement about the possibilities of one or two settlements in military facilities being turned into civilian settlements at some point in the future.

The Secretary reiterated our great concern about all new settlement activity. He asked Ambassador Atherton to describe the Egyptian view on settlements. Ambassador Atherton said that the Egyptians made no distinction between new settlements and additional settlers in existing settlements. They are very much against any new settlement activity and wish to have all action concerning settlements frozen.

Dayan stated that he hopes there will be an Egyptian-Israeli negotiation on settlements. However, unless or until this happens, the GOI will only go so far as to not establish new settlements in the Sinai. He repeated that Israel wants to negotiate this issue with the Egyptians.

Next Steps with Egypt

The Secretary asked Ambassador Atherton to present his views on where we go from here with Egypt. Ambassador Atherton stated that

he could, of course, suggest to the Egyptians the Israeli proposal for direct bilateral negotiations on the West Bank and Gaza focusing on details (as previously explained by Barak). He was very pessimistic, however, that Sadat would accept such negotiations without knowing the answers to some key questions beforehand, especially as concerns the question of how the sovereignty issue would be handled after the five-year interim period. He believed Egypt would take the position that Israel must be prepared to say that, at the end of the five-year period, Israel would not assert a claim to sovereignty. He noted that Sadat recently said to him that the Israelis must agree in advance to remove any claims to sovereignty. Atherton recapitulated that he believes it would be worth making a pitch to Sadat on the Israeli proposals but that he really needed at least the answers to two questions we posed to Dayan in order to have something “new” with which to go back to Cairo. The Secretary endorsed Ambassador Atherton’s remarks noting that if we could get satisfactory answers to the two questions from the Israelis we would be prepared, at least initially, to put them forward as our proposals rather than as firm Israeli positions. Atherton added that, above all, we need something to reassure the Arabs about the future status of the West Bank and Gaza. In answer to a question from Attorney General Barak, he specified that this meant the sovereignty issue.

Dayan agreed to pose the two questions with the Cabinet and asked for precision about Sadat’s position on withdrawal and self-determination. Atherton replied that Sadat wanted total withdrawal with two very important qualifications:

- there could be minor modifications in the 1967 line,
- and Israel’s withdrawal would be contingent on agreement on such modifications and on the Arab parties agreeing to sit down with Israel to negotiate security arrangements satisfactory to Israel.

Complete self-determination is Sadat’s preference, but he has made clear that he would accept limited self-determination along the lines of the Aswan formula.² The Secretary continued that this is Sadat’s private position but in public he sticks with the total self-determination formula. Atherton cautioned the Israelis to hold this information closely so as not to embarrass Sadat. Dayan asked if total withdrawal also includes the Golan. Atherton replied in the affirmative, emphasizing that in Sadat’s view this would have to be within the context of Israeli security arrangements.

There was a brief discussion about the best arrangements for discussion with Prime Minister Begin. The Secretary outlined the pro-

² See footnote 5, Document 187.

posed schedule and Dayan said he would discuss it with the Prime Minister and then pass the Prime Minister's views to us through Ambassador Dinitz.

In answer to a question from Dayan, Atherton reiterated that having the answers to the two questions would make his next visit to Cairo much more useful. Dayan suggested that Atherton go to Cairo and take the line that Israel recognized that these two important questions must be answered. The Israelis, however, might need some time to consider them and suggest the answers could be the subject of direct negotiations with Egypt. In the meantime, Dayan continued, Israel would like to know the answer to the following: If the Israelis are forthcoming with "satisfactory" answers to the two questions, would Egypt be prepared to go forward with direct negotiations for a bilateral agreement and also be prepared to be Israel's negotiating partner for the West Bank and Gaza if Hussein refused to enter the negotiations? Dayan added that if Sadat was not prepared to go into both negotiations Israel would not think the answers to the questions were "so urgent."

The Secretary replied that we would reflect on the suggestion and we would also be prepared to discuss it and the two questions with the Prime Minister. Dayan noted that if Prime Minister Begin were more forthcoming than he has been concerning the answers to the two questions he would be delighted. He then said he wished to make the following statement to clarify his position:

—Affirmative answers from Sadat concerning his willingness to go ahead with bilateral negotiations and to be Israel's negotiating partner for Judea and Samaria would create a radically different position in Israel as concerns the answers to the two questions we pose.

—Without this affirmative answer Israel would find it difficult to answer the two questions satisfactorily.

Assistant Secretary Saunders noted it would help us in our reflections to have the Foreign Minister's views on the possibility of obtaining satisfactory answers to the two questions. Dayan replied that the Israeli Cabinet would have to review the situation, and make a decision. He would then communicate this decision to us through Ambassador Lewis.

The Secretary stated that it was his personal view and concurred in by Ambassador Atherton, that satisfactory answers to the two questions would open prospects for real progress with Egypt. Dayan noted that it would be useful for us to discuss the issues with Prime Minister Begin. He would be delighted if the Prime Minister would be in favor of satisfactory answers since then the Cabinet would approve also.

Dayan suggested that the United States explore with Sadat the idea of secret Israel-Egypt talks to discuss the outstanding issues (this

was an obvious reference to the ideas that Barak had discussed with Gamasy). The Secretary said that we would have to reflect on this. He also noted that it would be useful to discuss the sovereignty issue with Prime Minister Begin should he so desire. Ambassador Lewis asked if the Israelis contemplated the issue of Jewish settlements would also be discussed during the five-year period. On the assumption that everything is negotiable, Dayan said he would think the issues of sovereignty and of an Israeli security presence would be discussed. Dayan made clear he was not addressing the question of how the issues might be decided. He believed that Israeli security and settlements were prime candidates for discussion and “understandings.”

Palestinian Refugees

Dayan asked whether the Secretary agreed that the question of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon and elsewhere should be discussed during the interim period. The Secretary answered in the affirmative and agreed with Saunders that this would require a forum broader than that envisaged under the Begin Plan³ since it impacted on so many other players. Dayan noted there were two views on the Palestinian refugee problem. First, to postpone it or, second, address it in another forum. Dayan's preference was to find a mechanism for discussing the refugee issue as soon as possible “in all of its aspects” since it was a key factor (he noted that the Jewish refugees⁴ would also be discussed), and as far as Lebanon was concerned, it was the key factor. Dayan said he did not know what Sadat's views might be. Saunders expressed the view that the approach Dayan preferred was a good one but that we all had to recognize we had an uphill struggle in the Arab world in discussing the Palestinian refugee issue in rational terms. Dayan said he wasn't sure he could agree with Saunders. He cited the situation in Lebanon which was forcing the Lebanese to face the facts—noting that the GOL had expressed itself as in favor of abolishing the Shtaura and Cairo Agreements.⁵ He added that if you solve the Palestinian problem, you solve the Lebanese problem. He also pointed out that the Jordanians would want to settle the Palestinian issue since they had 500,000 refugees. He thought it was worth raising as soon as possible, as Lebanon and Jordan, and maybe even the Saudis, would have an interest.

³ See the Attachment to Document 177 and footnote 6, Document 180.

⁴ A reference to Jewish Arabs who had been expelled from their home countries after Israel's founding in 1948.

⁵ The Cairo Agreement was brokered by Egyptian President Nasser between Yassir Arafat and Lebanese General Emile Bustani on November 2, 1969. It established the boundaries by which Palestinian guerrillas in Southern Lebanon could operate under Lebanese authorities. For the Shtaura Agreement, see footnote 2, Document 76.

242. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Washington, May 1, 1978, 1:30–1:50 p.m.

SUBJECT

President's Meeting with Prime Minister Begin

PARTICIPANTS

President Jimmy Carter
Honorable Warren Christopher, Deputy Secretary of State
Dr. Zbigniew Brzezinski, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs
Honorable Samuel Lewis, U.S. Ambassador to Israel
Honorable Alfred L. Atherton, Jr., Ambassador-At-Large
Honorable Harold Saunders, Assistant Secretary of State (North East & South Asian Affairs)
Robert Lipshutz, Counsel to the President
Hamilton Jordan, Assistant to the President
William B. Quandt, National Security Council Staff
Jerrold Schechter, National Security Council Staff
H.E. Menahem Begin, Prime Minister
H.E. Simcha Dinitz, Israeli Ambassador to U.S.
H.E. Hanan Bar-On, Minister, Israeli Embassy, Washington
H.E. Aharon Barak, Attorney General of Israel
Mr. Yehiel Kadishai, Director, Prime Minister's Office
Mr. Joseph Ciechanover, Minister for Economic Affairs, Israeli Embassy, Washington
Gen. Ephraim Poran, Military Secretary to the Prime Minister
Mr. Dan Pattir, Public Affairs Adviser to the Prime Minister
Dr. Eytan Bentsur, Counselor, Israeli Embassy, Washington
Mr. Yehuda Avner, Adviser to the Prime Minister
Dr. Marvin Gottesman, Private Physician to the Prime Minister

The President: I want to extend my personal welcome to you and your colleagues. This is the anniversary of a great event.² The American people will be very receptive to what you have to say about Israel. We had good talks with Foreign Minister Dayan,³ and I have noticed that all of our news programs on Sunday⁴ concentrated on the Middle East. This shows how important peace in the Middle East is to the American

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Subject File, Box 36, Memcons: President: 5/78. Secret. The meeting took place in the White House Cabinet Room. The memorandum of conversation was drafted on May 3. Begin was in the United States from April 30 to May 7 on a private visit. This was his only meeting with Carter.

² A reference to the upcoming 30th anniversary of Israel's founding, which was on May 14.

³ See Documents 240 and 241.

⁴ April 30.

people. In my remarks later today, I will reconfirm our friendship for Israel, and our commitment to her security and peace for Israel.⁵

The last time we met⁶ we had frank and fruitful discussions which I believe helped in the search for peace in the Middle East. We had a clear delineation of differences on some matters of opinion. Since then I have had several communications from President Sadat, and Minister Weizman has been to Egypt. Perhaps you could outline some of the recent developments.

Prime Minister Begin: I was gratified to learn today that the Egyptians will be submitting counterproposals to us in the near future. We have a plan for peace which can serve as the basis for negotiations, as you yourself have said.

We have asked for counterproposals. I suggest that we ask the Egyptians to form a committee with us to study both our proposals. Perhaps we will have a positive reply. It is worth asking Sadat. This is good news to us.

Questions have been raised about the review after five years. This is a serious issue. I told Secretary Vance that I would have to refer it to my cabinet. In two or three weeks, we should be able to give you a discussion on this. I will notify you. I have to return to Israel, and then Foreign Minister Dayan must return from his trip to Scandinavia. It would be very gratifying if I could have the counterproposals from the Egyptians by then. We are all working for peace and we have to pave the way. There may be difficulties, that we will invest all of our thought in trying to think of ways to get agreement. This is a positive development.

The President: We will not be able to have complete discussions this afternoon, but I would like to comment briefly. President Sadat is remaining flexible and hopeful. We discussed with you last time the important issue of settlements, the issue of applicability of 242 to the West Bank which calls for withdrawal in exchange for security; and we discussed the question of dealing with the Palestinian issue and how they would have a right to participate in determining their own future. We discussed all these issues at length. I want to reconfirm our commitment to do what is necessary to insure that Israel's security and integrity are protected. I also believe that in order for the moderate Arab leaders to have confidence in us will be in Israel's best interest in the long run. There is no incompatibility between these two commitments—our commitment to Israel, and to those moderate Arab leaders who want peace.

⁵ Carter's remarks are in *Public Papers: Carter, 1978*, Book I, pp. 812–813.

⁶ See Documents 232 and 234.

We have been reticent in making public statements that might concern you. Our own influence is limited. There is some tendency for each party to exaggerate our influence over the other. We want to be able to offer our good offices, which will always be available. We want you to have direct talks, and we hope those will be recommenced. That is the surest avenue to agreement.

The obstacle to discussions on Sadat's part is his belief that there is not adequate flexibility in Israel, and that Israel does not contemplate any withdrawal from the West Bank even if there are negotiations. Egypt also fears that there will be no adequate voice for the Palestinians in the negotiations. These two concerns on Sadat's part are serious but we believe that the impasse can be resolved.

We expect Egypt to make proposals. I have no idea what their content will be. This is a necessary next step. We take you at your word that you will address those proposals with an open mind and that they can be used as an avenue to reopen direct negotiations. We are waiting with anticipation for the Egyptian ideas. We pray that they will lead to a reopening of the negotiations.

Prime Minister Begin: We shall consider the Egyptian counterproposals with all seriousness. They may be different from our own view. That is the nature of negotiations. It will be a real achievement to get two proposals. We made our proposals. We wanted to show our desire for peace. They were far-reaching proposals, as you said. We have problems, we have anxieties, and this is natural. One has only to look at the map. It will take time, but there are very positive developments. We will eventually come together. You do have great influence with Israel. And we have great respect for your opinion, for your goodwill, and we are grateful to you for your helpful attitude. This is a blessed day. We have rediscovered the good atmosphere of last July.⁷

The President: This is an historic occasion. As Israel began as a nation thirty years ago, we hope that 1978 can mean the beginning of peace for Israel. I think this is a shared desire by Israel and its neighbors. All of the leaders are reaching out their hands in friendship. They may have some doubts about you, but I see this as their common desire. If Sadat only spoke for Egypt, he could reach an agreement, but he also represents other Arab nations and peoples. He feels this responsibility very heavily. I believe that of all the Arab leaders he wants peace more than any other. I know him and I know you, and I have no doubt about the deep and genuine feelings on both sides, and the desire to break down barriers, and to forget past disasters, wars, and hatreds, and to look to the future with confidence in the possibility of peace.

⁷ A reference to Begin's first meetings with Carter, which took place on July 19 and 20. See Documents 52 and 57.

President Sadat has told me that his most vivid impression after his visit to Jerusalem was the reaction of the Israeli and Egyptian peoples. Sadat noted the depth of feeling on the part of your young people and your women. He was also shocked by the reception that his people gave to your representatives.⁸ The desire for peace goes deeper than just the leaders. We hope that in a legitimate way we can help bridge differences. If we can help, we are eager to do so.

I have observed that there have been differences of interpretation in the media over our attitudes. I hope you won't doubt our good intentions. I want you to be able to contact me directly if there are any matters that concern you. We had some problems in the debate over Panama. Sometimes the facts were distorted during the debate, and there were misunderstandings.

We won't back down from the pursuit of peace. We are not doing this as a favor to the countries in the area, but rather because this is in the best interest of the United States. We will stand with Israel forever.

Prime Minister Begin: We shall do our best and we shall hope for the best. Thank you for seeing me.

The President: Let's go to the Oval Office for a few minutes. (The President and Prime Minister Begin met alone for approximately ten minutes.)⁹

⁸ Apparently a reference to the Egyptian public response to Israeli officials who visited Egypt from December 25 to 26, 1977, to conduct direct negotiations.

⁹ No memorandum of conversation has been found.

243. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassies in Lebanon and Israel and the Mission to the United Nations¹

Washington, May 3, 1978, 0135Z

112330. Subject: Secretary's Meeting With Begin: Israeli Withdrawal From South Lebanon.

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780187–0878. Secret; Immediate; Exdis. Drafted by Korn; cleared by Veliotis, G. Helman (IO), and Frank Castrodale (S/S–O); and approved by Saunders. Sent immediate for information to Paris, Tehran, Dakar, Lagos, and Damascus.

1. During meeting with Prime Minister Begin morning May 1² Secretary raised the question of Israeli withdrawal from South Lebanon. The Secretary pointed out that there are now four thousand UN troops in South Lebanon and that UN force level could move up to the six thousand level provided question of full Israeli withdrawal can be resolved. Secretary said he had to be quite frank and say that unless a specific date for final Israeli withdrawal is set soon we will have problems. The French have indicated that their ability to keep their forces in Lebanon will be affected unless a withdrawal date is set soon, and others have expressed concern as well.

2. Begin replied that Israel has committed itself to withdraw completely from Lebanon and will do so. Prime Minister said he recognized the need to set a concrete date but stressed that Israeli withdrawal should not leave a "vacuum." The PLO is "all over the place" and is firing and trying to infiltrate. The problem is to get UN forces in and make them effective. Begin also expressed concern for future of Christians in South Lebanon, saying that if left to fend for themselves they would be overwhelmed by Palestinians. Israel has commitment to them, Begin said.

3. Begin said he would consult with the Defense Minister regarding setting a firm date for final withdrawal as soon as he returns to Israel. He said he "understood you need a concrete date". However, he again stressed that "there should not be a vacuum". In response to question from the Secretary regarding integration of Lebanese Christian forces in the south into the Lebanese army, Begin said Israel will do its best to help with reunification of the Lebanese army. Begin again expressed Israel's concern for protection of the Christian enclaves, but noted "this does not have impact on Israeli decision to withdraw".

4. Assistant Secretary Saunders noted our strategy in Southern Lebanon has operated on two tracks: introduction of UN troops and withdrawal of Israeli troops. We have been careful not to link the two. He added that firm withdrawal date would serve as added "inducement" for UN troop contributors to bring troop strength up to 6000. Begin said he "understood".

Vance

² No memorandum of conversation has been found.

244. Telegram From the Department of State to Selected Diplomatic Posts¹

Washington, May 5, 1978, 1656Z

114888. Subject: Briefing on Dayan and Begin Visits.

1. Following is for use at your discretion in briefing senior host government officials on our latest round of talks with Begin and Dayan.

2. The Secretary held two days of talks with Dayan April 26 and 27.² In all the discussions lasted some six hours. Our purpose is to help achieve enough agreement on a framework for a settlement so that other parties can become involved and negotiations can begin. Egypt and Israel have met in the context of the Military Committee of the Cairo Conference, so the objective in negotiating a declaration of principles is to provide guidelines for negotiations on other fronts as well. Discussion of the declaration has proceeded to a point where two main issues remain—the question of withdrawal and the shape of an approach to the Palestinian issue. In order to address these issues, it has been necessary to turn to the second item on the agenda of the Political Committee of the Cairo Conference—guidelines for negotiations on the issues relating to the West Bank and Gaza—to see whether discussion of practical solutions would produce understandings that might then be reflected in the declaration of principles. That is why the talk with Dayan focused almost exclusively on the West Bank and Gaza. From our talks with Dayan and earlier with the Egyptians we find parties in agreement on certain points, but there continue to be important differences. We are expecting further clarifications from the Israelis in regard to certain specific points. We feel the talks were useful, though in themselves they have not brought forward movement. FYI: You will have noted that word “progress” was not used to characterize talks in public statements by USG spokesman. End FYI.

3. Begin is in this country in response to invitations from American Jewish groups in connection with the celebration of Israel’s thirtieth anniversary. His visit to Washington was brief—he arrived in mid-morning and left in mid-afternoon May 1—and as much ceremonial as substantive, the high point being his attendance at a reception

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780192–0898. Secret; Priority; Exdis. Drafted by Sterner and Korn, cleared by Thomas Martin (S/S–O), and approved by Saunders. Sent to Beirut, Damascus, Jidda, Tehran, Kuwait, Manama, Doha, Abu Dhabi, Muscat, Sana, Tunis, Rabat, Khartoum, London, Paris, Bonn, Bucharest, Belgrade, the Mission to NATO, Brussels, Brasilia, Caracas, Madrid, and USUN. Sent for information Priority to Cairo, Tel Aviv, Amman, Tripoli, Algiers, Baghdad, and Moscow.

² See Documents 240 and 241.

given by the President for American Jewish leaders.³ Substantive conversations were brief and of general nature but we stressed the critical importance of moving forward quickly to resolve key problems in the negotiations.⁴

4. Of course Israeli thirtieth anniversary celebrations were the occasion for public reaffirmation of the close ties between Israel and the United States. Begin's visit to Washington provided the opportunity for us to reassure Israel that the U.S. remains committed to its security as an important element in the search for a just and lasting peace in the Middle East. These however are long standing USG policies and their reaffirmation does not in any way imply a change in our policies on a Middle East settlement or in positions we have taken on the issues involved.

5. For all action Arab post addressees plus Amman: You should take opportunity to express to host government officials importance USG continues to attach to support for Sadat's negotiating strategy. Exchanges between the two sides both directly and through us have laid bare the crucial issues and defined them in practical terms. These are not easy to resolve and it is not surprising that negotiations have reached point of temporary impasse. We are not discouraged, however. We are in active consultation with Sadat and Israelis on ways to break through and we believe we will succeed. In meantime intense debate is underway within Israel on Begin's policies extending even to peace demonstrations involving tens of thousands of citizens. This process of creating internal movement toward more accommodating policies on the issues is as much an essential part of peace process as is the reconciliation of viewpoints through negotiations between the parties. That process takes time, and as it challenges established positions it is only natural that negotiating progress will be subjected to ups and downs. We are fortunate in having in Sadat a leader capable not only of courageous decisions but one who has a profound understanding of how political changes are brought about and of time element in this process. We are now at delicate stage in negotiations and it is highly important that our friends in Arab world, who share with us objective of achieving Middle East peace, not waver in their support for leadership role Sadat is playing. United States commitment to see negotiations through to a successful conclusion remains as firm as ever.

Christopher

³ According to the President's Daily Diary, the reception took place from 2:02 to 3:48 p.m. on the South Grounds of the White House. (Carter Library, Presidential Materials, President's Daily Diary) Carter's and Begin's remarks at the reception are in *Public Papers: Carter, 1978, Book I*, pp. 812–814.

⁴ See Document 242.

245. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Israel¹

Washington, May 9, 1978, 1837Z

117795. For the Amb fm the Secretary. Subject: Approach to Dayan on Middle East Negotiations.

1. When Dayan gets back you should see him immediately and convey following to him as a message from me.

—Sam Lewis has informed me of his conversation with you² before your departure abroad. With respect to the questions on which you would like commitments from Sadat, let me first say that I believe we can provide answers to some of them on the basis of the conversations we have had with Sadat. Sadat has in all cases given us these indications of flexibility in terms of their conditionality on a “strong” declaration of principles, by which he means one that contains more explicit language on withdrawal than is contained in Resolution 242.

—Sadat has made it clear to us privately (he has now said the same thing publicly) that the Aswan formula would be acceptable to him.

—Sadat has told us privately that he can accept border modifications in the final settlement for the West Bank (always using the adjective “minor” to qualify these).

He has also now made a public statement along similar lines (*October* interview of April 2).³

—With respect to his assumption of responsibility for negotiations on the West Bank/Gaza, Sadat has told us that if he can get a “strong” declaration of principles, and if King Hussein refuses to join the negotiations on this basis, he would be prepared to assume responsibility with Israel to negotiate a West Bank/Gaza agreement.

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P850004–1547. Secret; Immediate; Nodis; Cherokee. Drafted by Sterner; cleared by Saunders, Quandt, and Frank Wisner (S/S); and approved by Secretary Vance. Sent immediate for information to Cairo.

² In telegram 5951 from Tel Aviv, May 6, Lewis reported on his May 5 meeting with Dayan in which Dayan informed Lewis that he needed answers from Sadat on four questions. First, would Sadat be prepared to “act as surrogate for the Arab parties in West Bank/Gaza negotiations if the Jordanians refuse to come in, and to conclude peace agreement covering the West Bank, Gaza and Sinai if negotiations are successful.” Second, would Sadat “drop insistence on total withdrawal from West Bank/Gaza and accept ‘minor modifications’ language.” Third, would Sadat “accept defense arrangements for West Bank/Gaza which include continuing presence of IDF forces in limited areas at strategic points.” Fourth, would Sadat “accept the Aswan formula in lieu of ‘self-determination’ or insistence on an independent Palestinian state.” (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840157–2255)

³ Sadat was interviewed in the Egyptian magazine *October*.

—On Israeli troop presence in West Bank, Sadat has indicated he could accept this during an interim period but has not said anything concrete to us about the period beyond.

—These are quite legitimate questions and I fully understand the importance you attach to getting firm answers from Sadat on them. At the same time I must tell you frankly that Sadat feels he has gone quite far in giving us important indications of flexibility on West Bank/Gaza issues and I believe the chances are exceedingly slim that he would go further along the lines you seek in the absence of more specific indication of what he would get in return.

—I believe, however, there is a chance that Sadat would be willing to give firm commitments on these points if we could inform him of Israel's intention to give positive responses to the questions we have put to you. In other words, I think Sadat would consider seriously an arrangement that involved a firm *quid pro quo*, but he will not be prepared to make further concessions on the basis of Dayan's "best effort" reassurances alone.

—We would be willing to seek these answers from Sadat, and in addition an assurance from him that he would meet with Dayan, if Dayan could tell him that if Sadat came forward Israel would be prepared to respond to our questions along the following lines:

(1) Israel undertakes to resolve definitively the question of sovereignty over the West Bank and Gaza at the end of a five-year transitional period.

(2) The mechanism by which this would be accomplished will be through (A) negotiations among the parties during the five-year transitional period leading to a final agreement based on all the principles of UN Resolution 242, with representatives of the Palestinians living in the territories participating in those negotiations; and (B) an appropriate expression of approval of the outcome of these negotiations by the people living in the territories.

—The understanding on each side would be that its commitment would be conditional on the other side coming forward in parallel and simultaneous fashion. It would also have to be understood that the exploration of this exchange would be kept secret until it is concluded and that if either side sought to portray publicly the other as having made unilateral commitments it would be denied by the other side.

—I would like to make one final comment. Although we have received indications of Sadat's flexibility on these various points as indicated above, most have been given to us in the context of Sadat's assumption that Israel will be able to make the necessary fundamental decisions to make a peace settlement possible. He will see it as a more far-reaching step for him to commit himself to these positions at this initial stage, and in taking them he will be concerned that he is placing

himself in an even more vulnerable position vis-a-vis the other Arabs. He will undoubtedly see himself as justified seeking, in return, a significant step from Israel to make these concessions plausible in the eyes of Egyptian and Arab public opinion.

2. On explaining to Begin why we are not delivering the Egyptian counterproposals on the West Bank and Gaza, you should say (but not go beyond this) that the Egyptians have decided to reflect further on their draft before giving it to us.

Vance

246. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Jordan¹

Washington, May 12, 1978, 1509Z

121415. Subject: Presidential Message to King Hussein.

1. Please deliver to King Hussein the following message from the President.

2. Begin text: Your Majesty:

I have read Ambassador Pickering's reports of his recent talks with you,² and I want you to know how important I consider it that we remain in touch on matters of deep concern to both of us. Ambassador Pickering has shared with you in more detail some of the results of our recent talks with Egyptian and Israeli leaders. I was glad to learn that President Sadat has also been keeping you informed.

I would like to emphasize that we are keeping to our course and there has been no change in our policy. The negotiations are not going forward as rapidly as I had hoped, but we will be doing our best in the weeks ahead to bridge some of the gaps.

In our most recent exchanges, we have focused almost exclusively on the arrangements for the West Bank and Gaza and the declaration of principles. As those discussions proceed, it will be of crucial importance that Jordan's voice be heard. I hope that you and President Sadat

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780202–0665. Secret; Immediate; Exdis. Drafted by Draper; cleared by Quandt, Saunders, Newsom, and Tarnoff; and approved by Secretary Vance.

² Pickering's talks with Hussein are described in telegram 4140 from Amman, May 8. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P850101–1451)

will coordinate your positions to the maximum degree so that early progress can be made in developing negotiating guidelines for the West Bank and Gaza. Once those negotiations begin in earnest, Jordan's role will be central.

The fact that the two of us could not meet during the visit you had been planning to make to the United States in late May and early June was a disappointment to me. Unfortunately, my schedule in this period is as full and crowded as at any time since I took office. However, I wish to assure you personally that our inability to meet at this time in no way reflects a lessening of my interest in the closest possible relations with Jordan. I attach special importance to the friendly ties between our two countries and to the periodic meetings which have become traditional between you and every other American President beginning with General Eisenhower.

I would like to give further thought while Middle East negotiations proceed as to when talks between the two of us might best take place. Clearly, a meeting would be of maximum utility and timeliness for both the United States and Jordan after we have made more progress in discussions with the Israelis and Egyptians. We will want to have the opportunity to clarify our own thinking on the West Bank and Gaza issues and where we should go next.

In any event, the two of us should remain in regular and close touch. I will continue to rely on you for your thoughts and advice on how we might pursue our course in the period ahead.

Your leadership will be vital in overcoming difficulties and in assuring the success of our common efforts to find peace in the Middle East.

With warmest regards. Sincerely, Jimmy Carter.

End text.

Vance

247. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Israel¹

Washington, May 17, 1978, 0127Z

125076. For the Ambassador. Subject: Letter From President Carter to Prime Minister Begin.

1. Please deliver the following letter from President Carter to Prime Minister Begin as soon as possible.

2. Begin text.

Dear Mr. Prime Minister:

I know that you and your people are concerned by the action taken by the Senate on Monday.² We have had our difficulties on this issue, as close friends often do, but these differences are minor indeed in comparison to the strong ties of friendship and common purpose that bind our two nations.

We have often spoken of our hopes for peace in the Middle East, a peace which will bring to Israel the security which your people so richly deserve. Our commitment to that goal, and to the enduring moral bonds between our countries, is unwavering.

Mr. Prime Minister, through your courageous leadership you have already advanced the cause of peace.

We are anxious to help in any way possible to bring about a resumption of negotiations and to encourage the process of reconciliation begun by you and President Sadat in Jerusalem.

As we move toward our common goal of peace, let me reassure you of my personal friendship and of the deep sense of pride all Americans feel in the accomplishments of Israel in its thirty years of independence. You know that our commitment to your security is permanent.

With my best personal wishes,

Sincerely, Jimmy Carter.

End text.

3. Signed original will be pouched.

Vance

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780207–0306. Confidential; Immediate. Drafted from text received from the White House, cleared by Saunders and Thomas Martin (S/S-O), and approved by Secretary Vance.

² A reference to the Senate's passage on May 15 by a 54 to 44 vote of a \$4.8 billion jet aircraft sales package for Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Israel. The package included 60 F–15s for Saudi Arabia, 50 F–5s for Egypt, and 75 F–16s as well as 15 F–15s for Israel. Additionally, Israel was also promised an additional 20 F–15s at a future date. (*Chicago Tribune*, May 16, 1978, p. 1)

248. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Israel¹

Washington, May 18, 1978, 2216Z

127246. For Ambassador from the Secretary. Subject: Further Instructions For Your Meeting With Dayan May 19.

1. We would agree with reftel that what we know of Begin's policy cannot make us optimistic about the prospect of receiving positive responses to the questions we posed to Dayan. There are nevertheless cogent reasons for proceeding as outlined in State 117795² (supplemented by additional comments authorized in this message) and it may perhaps be helpful if we go through our thinking about this at some length.

2. As you will recall when we originally put our two questions to Dayan³ he undertook to get us answers, and subsequently Begin confirmed that the GOI would do this. Neither Dayan nor Begin attached any conditions to this undertaking at the time. Subsequently Dayan asked us to try to get some assurances from Sadat to strengthen his hand in attempting to persuade the Cabinet to respond positively to our questions.⁴

3. We have no reason to doubt Dayan's personal sincerity when he says he wants to work for positive responses and that these prior assurances from Sadat would strengthen his hand. From Sadat's perspective, however, this looks like merely another effort by the Israelis to evade decisions and put the ball back in Egypt's court. This is a tactic that both sides resort to all the time and it is obviously part of the negotiating process. But it is also incumbent upon the U.S., to the extent we have a stake in moving matters forward, to see that the negotiating process involves something more as well.

4. In this respect the U.S. role is not limited to being a message-carrier but inevitably involves being something of an umpire as well. We asked the Egyptians to produce a counter-proposal to the Begin plan and when they did we in effect said, "It's not good enough, please

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840128–2291. Secret; Immediate; Nodis. Drafted by Sterner; cleared by Saunders, Quandt, and Stanislaus Valerga (S/S–O); and approved by Secretary Vance. Sent immediate for information to Cairo.

² See Document 245.

³ The questions related to how the West Bank and Gaza sovereignty issue would be handled after the 5-year interim period and the role Palestinians would play in their own future. These questions were put to Dayan in the meeting with Vance on April 27 in Washington. See Document 241.

⁴ See footnote 2, Document 245.

go back to the drawing board.” We must now do the same kind of thing with Dayan’s proposal. We are saying your questions are perfectly legitimate ones but for Sadat to give explicit commitments on them would constitute far-reaching concessions for him and it is just not reasonable to expect Sadat to give them without a firm indication of willingness by Israel to reach decisions of equal import. We are in any case giving Dayan a good reading on Sadat’s thinking on the points Dayan raises which, short of firm commitments, provides the Israelis with clear indication of the extent of his flexibility and willingness to negotiate.

5. With approach you are instructed to make we are thus trying to meet Dayan’s request part-way, and if there is any serious prospect of the Cabinet’s willingness to face up to the decisions we want, they should find it reasonable enough. If they really want negotiations to progress the Israelis cannot indefinitely put off decisions on their side on grounds they have not yet had all the answers from the other side. We would understand, however, if Dayan felt that the immediate aftermath of the Senate’s vote on the aircraft sales⁵ did not provide the best atmosphere for Cabinet discussion of our questions, and if he therefore wished to postpone consideration of them for a short time. FYI. Our own judgment is that it would be preferable if this subject was not discussed at May 21 Cabinet meeting. End FYI.

6. In conveying the message authorized State 117795 we would also like you to make clear to Dayan that our discussions with Sadat indicate that while he wants to make his replies conditional on an indication of Israel’s willingness to respond positively to our questions, he has given every indication that he understands the importance Dayan attaches to each of his questions and he is willing to address them seriously and constructively. He has also told us that he would be prepared to meet with Dayan, either in Egypt or a third country, but stresses that such a meeting must be well prepared. Our impression is that he is receptive to Dayan’s concept of moving from the specific to the general, but still feels some framework of basic principles is needed. He sees no point in a Dayan meeting unless adequate preliminary understandings can be reached that would hold promise that such a meeting could be productive. We have the strong impression that positive Israeli responses to the questions we have posed, together with Sadat’s answers to Dayan’s questions, would constitute the basis Sadat is looking for to enable him to meet with Dayan.

7. Please also use the occasion of your meeting with Dayan to say that Egyptians have apparently decided to give some further thought

⁵ See footnote 2, Document 247.

to counter-proposal on West Bank/Gaza, but we have impression they are definitely intending to have a proposal for us in due course.

8. We are repeating to you reports from Cairo on Eilts' meeting with Sadat May 17 and some new documents Egyptians have submitted to us.⁶ We will obviously have to do a good deal of thinking about Sadat's new ideas before deciding how to proceed. Accordingly we will wish to hold contents of these messages closely to ourselves for time being.

Vance

⁶ A report of Eilts's meeting with Sadat is in telegram 13091 from Cairo, May 17. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P850056-2294) The documents are not further identified.

249. Telegram From the Embassy in Israel to the Department of State¹

Tel Aviv, May 19, 1978, 1720Z

6541. Subj: Middle East Negotiations: Meeting With Dayan. Refs: (A) State 127246, (B) State 117795.²

Summary: In long session May 19 with Dayan, he accepted with minimum of argument the limited responses we had for him to his questions for Sadat, and did not react adversely to the "parallel, simultaneous conditionality" concept in our proposal. Begin has decided defer making decision on US questions for at least a week or two to allow political atmosphere here to cool. Dayan gave me the impression that he may decide to push hard for positive Cabinet responses, but he made no commitments. He now insists he never asked us to arrange for him alone to meet with Sadat, but that he would welcome a Sadat-Vance-Dayan (plus perhaps Weizman) meeting if one can be arranged. End summary

1. Met with Dayan at his Tel Aviv office on the morning of May 19 for one-and-a-half-hours, together with Evron, Rubinstein and PolOff Feifer. I explained to Dayan that we could provide answers to some of

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840137-1448. Secret; Niact Immediate; Nodis.

² Documents 248 and 245, respectively.

his questions based upon our discussions with Sadat. Stressed that in all cases Sadat's indications of flexibility were conditional on a strong declaration of principles, by which he meant more explicit language on withdrawal than contained in Resolution 242. I then gave detailed presentation of all points in para one, Ref B and para six and seven in Ref A, characterizing whole presentation as an oral message to him from the Secretary.

2. When I told Dayan that Sadat would be prepared to meet with him either in Egypt or a third country provided the meeting was well prepared, Dayan responded surprisingly that this had not been his idea (?). The Secretary had suggested this but Dayan had thought it preferable for the Secretary to meet with Sadat to get clear answers to Dayan's questions. I said I recalled that Dayan had brought up this idea in Washington, but Dayan contradicted me. He said he recalled having said in Washington that Sadat is the only one you could do serious business with, but insisted that at no time did he suggest he meet with Sadat alone. He said the Secretary had told him at the airport that he thought it would be helpful for the three of them to meet, and had said he would try to arrange it. A private Vance-Dayana-Sadat meeting could be useful, he said, perhaps with Weizman and Barak as well on the Israeli side, but he was not seeking a meeting just for himself and did not feel that would be useful. I asked in passing how he would feel about a meeting with Kamel. Dayan responded that there is no point in meeting with him and smilingly said that it would be a waste of Kamel's time. "There might be some use to a meeting if the Sinai were the only topic for discussion, but Kamel does not know a thing about the West Bank." (This was the most curious part of our conversation. It may be that Sadat has already rebuffed Dayan's request—which according to recent intelligence reports was put to him on Dayan's behalf by the Romanians. That would explain what otherwise seems to me to be his rewriting of recent history on this point.)

3. Dayan listened quietly and intently to the rest of my presentation. When I finished, he came directly to the point and asked whether Sadat would negotiate and conclude peace treaties on the Sinai and the West Bank if the outstanding problems could be worked out. Dayan asked whether Sadat saw negotiating a treaty as the same as concluding a treaty. I admitted that I could not clarify this point any more than in the past. Presumably, I said, when Sadat says he will negotiate, he means he would be ready also to conclude a treaty, but I could not go with any assurance beyond the word "negotiate" in the Secretary's message.

4. Dayan then asked if Sadat saw arrangements for the five-year transitional period being hammered out in direct meetings or with the US as an intermediary. I said I had the impression Sadat seemed gener-

ally favorable to the procedural approach Dayan had outlined in Washington. However, I stressed that Sadat had emphasized that there would have to be sufficient prior understandings. My impression was that negotiations would not be conducted indirectly through the US, although there might be Americans present as well as Israelis.

5. Dayan once again asked whether Sadat was really willing to sign an agreement regardless of what Hussein does. I noted that Sadat had just sent Mubarak to Amman to discuss Hussein's joining the negotiating process. Subsequently, Sadat appeared to be rather optimistic. However, other people who have recently spoken to Hussein find him more pessimistic. Dayan then made the point that the Israelis are not counting on Hussein; Sadat is now the key actor. Dayan stated that if Israel gives positive answers to the American questions,³ it will expect Sadat to agree to conclude and carry out a peace treaty based on normal relations. Unless there would be full normal relations, as President Carter has suggested, there is no reason to carry the negotiations any further. Dayan said the GOI still needs to know if Sadat can or cannot negotiate for the West Bank. "Unless Sadat can deliver the goods, there is no reason to negotiate." Dayan added that, of course, if agreement is reached on this question, there would also have to be a peace treaty on the Sinai. I noted that Sadat had said several times that if there is a satisfactory declaration of principles, and Hussein refuses to join the negotiating process, then Sadat would be prepared to negotiate on behalf of the West Bank. Dayan responded that Sadat has said many different things on this subject. He told Barak in Cairo that once a treaty were negotiated and initialled, the next step would be to take it to Geneva where it would be hostage to the other Arabs. Dayan stressed that he still needed a clear answer to this question.

6. Dayan then shifted to the question of the presence of Israeli troops in the West Bank and Gaza after the five-year transitional period. He noted that our assessment of Sadat's position did not mention any agreement to an IDF presence beyond five years. He recalled that the American position on this question as expressed in Washington was that Israeli forces could remain, not necessarily forever, but certainly more than five years. I said we agreed that an IDF security presence was certainly necessary during the five-year transitional period. Beyond that point, the Israeli security concerns will certainly have to be the subject of negotiations between the parties. Our private view is that Israeli forces may have to remain in some points for a long time.

7. We passed quickly over the question of border modifications—which Evron interjected that Sadat had said would have to be minor—

³ Both questions are in Document 241.

and I noted that Sadat had referred to West Bank border modifications in public as well as in private—though he was not prepared for any border modifications with respect to Sinai.

8. Dayan then asked if when Sadat speaks about the Aswan formula he is using the President's language.⁴ I replied that this was correct, and that Sadat was referring to the President's whole formula at Aswan, not just to the sentence about "participate in the determination . . ." Dayan asked whether Sadat might be referring to the Israeli version, which was that participation of the Palestinians in the determination of their future would be through talks. I said I was not sure, but recalled that the Egyptians had accepted this language in one of their drafts for the declaration of principles. However, I said we are referring to the President's statements at Aswan, although this would not necessarily rule out additions.

9. At this point Dayan said that he had heard something new in my presentation, an idea of a supervisory group of Egypt, Jordan, Israel and representatives of the Palestinians who would be in charge during the five-year transitional period. I said that although something similar may have been alluded to in a recent conversation with a journalist (Tony Lewis), nothing of this sort was mentioned in my message. (Evron then said to Dayan in Hebrew that this had been something he read in a note he had been given, and Dayan quickly dropped this subject.)

10. Dayan next said he was concerned about what we meant by sovereignty in our question number one and how this related to Resolution 242, since the word did not appear in 242. I reread to him the language of our suggested response to question number two: "Negotiations among the parties during the five-year transitional period leading to a final agreement based on all the principles of 242 . . ." I noted and Dayan agreed that some of this was language taken directly from an Israeli draft for the declaration of principles. Dayan noted without comment the US view that after negotiations, there would have to be confirmation by the populations of the West Bank and Gaza. I agreed that there would have to be an appropriate expression of approval by the residents. Dayan asked how we were preparing for a situation of no-agreement among the parties at the end of the five-year period. I said that when one agrees to negotiate in good faith, one tries to reach an agreement. However, obviously, it sometimes happens that you just can't succeed.

11. Dayan then noted that there are two ways of making decisions for the post-transitional period: (1) either most points are finally and

⁴ See footnote 5, Document 187.

immutably decided by the parties now, while some issues are left for negotiation after five years, or (2) everything is subject to review after the five-year period. If the second approach is taken, it is hard to expect the parties to implement the interim agreement seriously. They will consider it to be only temporary and plan to change it as soon as possible. Dayan thought that some things, such as the presence of Israeli forces, should not be subject to revision after five years. Speaking hypothetically, Dayan wondered whether the question of sovereignty could be decided then without affecting a right negotiated now for Israeli forces to remain after the transitional period. I replied that such a formulation would surely not be easy for anyone to accept. The concept of sovereignty was well understood. One could not preclude a sovereign power from insisting on renegotiating a military base agreement. Although a permanent foreign presence could hardly be compatible with sovereignty, a foreign military presence for a fixed term might, since there were many precedents.

12. Dayan wanted to pursue this point. He noted the President's suggestion in March that there would be a referendum by the West Bank/Gaza Arabs on whether to continue the autonomy regime or accept a link with Jordan.⁵ Dayan said he wanted to think out loud about the concept in order to clarify as many of its ramifications as possible. If after the five-year period the West Bank/Gaza Arabs decided on a link with Jordan, this presumably will mean that whatever specific arrangements they had under autonomy would be transferred to Jordan. However, if the sovereignty issue were decided, and the Arabs then insisted they would accept no Israeli presence in the territories, what happens? What if they want to change the whole system as agreed upon during the interim phase? Would this cancel Israel's rights?

13. Dayan then asked if one could replace the word sovereignty with another, more flexible term. I recalled some mention in Washington by the Secretary of the phrase "permanent status of the territory" as a possible alternative. In any case I said the essence of our first question is the need for a firm commitment to reach a final, decisive settlement after five years about the future of these areas, not any one specific word.

14. Summing up, Dayan asked if the issues were (1) a decision for the post-five-year transitional period which would be final and not transitional and (2) following the President's original approach, there would either be a decision to continue the autonomy regime after five years or its replacement permanently by a direct strong link with Jordan. I replied that what we were asking for at this point was not the

⁵ Carter and Begin discussed a referendum or plebiscite at their March 21 and 22 meetings. See Documents 232 and 234.

same question the President asked in March. Dayan recognized this. Dayan once again brought up the question of what would happen if there is no agreement at the end of the five year period. Were the Israelis simply being asked to agree that they would do their best to agree? I replied that there was no mention of what would happen if no agreement could be reached. One commits in good faith to reach agreement and one tries one's best. Dayan then asked, assuming the Cabinet's answer to the US's two questions were satisfactory, did we think Sadat would be willing to talk business (with or without Hussein)? I replied that there is a pretty good chance that if the Israelis answer our two questions positively, Sadat will similarly answer Dayan's four questions positively—and I restated our idea of parallel, simultaneous, and private commitments. I said again that our strong feeling is that Sadat may be attracted to the negotiating track Dayan outlined in Washington, if the GOI can give positive responses to our two questions. We had the impression that positive Israeli answers, plus Sadat's answers to Dayan, would provide the needed basis for a serious meeting to renew negotiations.

15. Finally I took the opportunity to clarify once again where we were on the formal Egyptian counterproposal to the Begin West Bank/Gaza plan. I noted that Begin had apparently misunderstood the message that I had passed to him through Evron.⁶ I said that Egypt had merely decided to give some further thought to their counterproposal; that they were working on it; and that although it would not arrive in the next few days, we had the impression they are definitely intending to have a proposal for us "in due course."

16. Comment: The meeting went better than I had expected. Dayan did not reject our proposal for a parallel and simultaneous exchange of answers with Sadat. He appears to have concluded that Hussein is unwilling to join the negotiating process and that dealing with Sadat is the only viable track at this point. However, he retains doubts that Sadat either is able or willing to act as interlocutor for the West Bank and to go the route and conclude peace treaties with Israel. Dayan made no commitments to me about where he would come down when the Cabinet discusses the Israeli responses to our questions. He obviously wants to think things out a bit more. However, my impression is that he is willing to advocate a positive response (conditional upon receiving suitable Egyptian responses) in order to put Sadat to the test. He made clear that we should not expect answers out of this Sunday's⁷ Cabinet meeting—he said Begin had decided to defer decision on this impor-

⁶ Not further identified.

⁷ May 21.

tant issue until “the atmosphere cools down a bit.” My guess is that it will be about two weeks before we have the Israeli response.

17. Department may wish repeat this message to Cairo.

Lewis

250. Telegram From the Embassy in Israel to the Department of State¹

Tel Aviv, May 23, 1978, 1509Z

6620. Subj: Secretary’s Message to Prime Minister Begin. Ref: State 130197.²

1. Per today’s (May 23) conversation with Saunders and Veliotis, the following is the amended version of the Secretary’s message, which was hand delivered to the Prime Minister this afternoon.

2. Begin text: Dear Mr. Prime Minister:

Your government’s decision yesterday to complete the withdrawal of Israeli forces from Lebanon by June 13 was undoubtedly a difficult one. I want to convey to you, Defense Minister Weizman and Foreign Minister Dayan my personal thanks for your taking up the issue promptly in the Cabinet following Moshe’s return from abroad, as you had indicated you would.

As you know, it is our belief that this decision, and the fact that it has been publicly announced, will strengthen the ability of the United Nations force to take firm control over the area for which it is responsible. For our part, we will continue to do everything we can to increase stability along Israel’s northern border.

With warm regards, Sincerely, (signed) Cyrus Vance.

End text.

Lewis

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780217–0664. Confidential; Immediate.

² Telegram 130197 to Tel Aviv, May 23, transmitted an earlier version of Vance’s message that did not include Weizman’s name. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780216–0162)

251. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Israel¹

Washington, June 1, 1978, 1414Z

3980. For Ambassador. Subject: Reply to May 22 Begin Letter.²

1. Please deliver ASAP following letter from the President to Prime Minister Begin.

2. Begin quote:

Dear Mr. Prime Minister:

Thank you for your letter of May 22 in which you express your continuing concern about our sale of certain aircraft to Egypt and Saudi Arabia.

Knowing how seriously you viewed this matter, I made my decision to send the proposals to the Congress only after I was personally convinced that this transfer of aircraft would not threaten Israel's security and was important to the broad national interests of the United States. The assurances in Secretary Brown's letter of May 9 to the Congress³ were specifically intended to help allay the anxieties and meet the concerns which you expressed in your letter. I can assure you, Mr. Prime Minister, that my government and I personally consider these assurances to be binding commitments of the Government of Saudi Arabia and of course we will firmly stand by all agreements which we reach in connection with the sale.

The entire thrust of U.S. policy toward Israel and the Middle East has been to find solutions to the problems of the area that would assure Israel's long-term security. While working towards the goal of peace, successive American administrations have ensured that the balance of military power in the area clearly is in Israel's favor. This has been dramatically demonstrated in the period since the October 1973 war. My

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Subject File, Box 49, Israel: 6-7/78. Secret; Immediate; Nodis.

² In his May 22 letter to Carter, Begin requested that the U.S. Government assure Israel that "under no circumstances" would jet fighters sold to Saudi Arabia and Egypt be allowed to "be transferred to a third party nor used against Israel." Additionally, Begin asserted that "in order to offset the possible danger to Israel in the future, a substantial increase of supply of arms to Israel is essential." (Letter from Dinitz to Carter; Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, President's Correspondence with Foreign Leaders, Box 9, Israel: Prime Minister Menachem Begin, 6-10/77)

³ Secretary Brown assured Congress in his May 9 letter that the 60 F-15s sold to Saudi Arabia would not be based at the Tabuk airbase, approximately 120 miles from Israel. Additionally, they would not be equipped with air-to-surface missiles or bomb racks, severely limiting Saudi Arabia's ability to use them for offensive purposes. (Karen Elliot House and Albert R. Hunt, "Carter Offers Face-Saving Compromises To Opponents of Mideast Arms Package," *Wall Street Journal*, May 10, 1978, p. 8)

administration is determined that this very favorable balance will continue to be maintained.

I was deeply touched by your eloquent words about the deep, unbreakable bonds which unite our two great countries. I share with you the conviction that it is precisely this relationship which will enable us to work together to advance the cause of peace in the coming weeks. End quote.

Vance

252. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Egypt¹

Washington, June 7, 1978, 2347Z

144829. For the Ambassador. Subject: Messages From Secretary to Sadat. Ref: Cairo 13839.²

1. Please convey following message from the Secretary to Sadat: Quote I read with satisfaction the text of your May 30 remarks to the press regarding your willingness to resume direct negotiations as soon as Israel introduces new elements into the process.³ I believe it will have a beneficial impact on U.S. public opinion and will serve to improve the climate for Israeli Cabinet discussion of the two questions we have posed to Israel.⁴ Both President Carter and I appreciated very much your prompt and helpful response to his message.⁵ Unquote.

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy Archive, P840128–2156. Secret; Immediate; Nodis. Drafted by C.E. Marthinsen (NEA/ÉGY) and Sterner; cleared by Saunders, Atherton, and Sydney Goldsmith (S/S–O); and approved by Secretary Vance. Sent immediate for information to the White House.

² Not found.

³ In his remarks to the press, Sadat stated that Israel's "position is still in stagnation like it was before." He continued, however, that if Israel "can give new elements from their side, for sure there will be new elements from our side." (Christopher Wren, "Sadat Ready To Talk With Israelis Again If They Ease Stand," *New York Times*, May 31, 1978, p. A5)

⁴ For the two questions, see footnote 3, Document 248.

⁵ Apparently a reference to a letter Carter sent to Sadat between June 5 and June 7. In a revised draft letter dated June 5, Carter addressed the issue of Egypt's withdrawal of its delegation to the Political Committee talks in January. He noted, "There are those who believe that the withdrawal of the Egyptian delegation at the time the political talks were just beginning is largely responsible for the subsequent impasse." Carter urged Sadat to "agree to a resumption of negotiations by receiving Foreign Minister Dayan in the near future." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Subject File, Box 11, Egypt 6/78) Sadat recalled the Egyptian delegation to the Political Committee on January 18. See Document 198.

2. If the opportunity presents itself when you next see Sadat we would also like you to make following oral comments to him, in manner you deem most effective:

A) We understand and indeed share Sadat's view that there must be real movement soon in the peace process. However, in our view Egyptian references to "expiration" of the Sinai II agreement create definite problems and are not the best way to get this message across.⁶

B) In the first place, according to its terms the Sinai II agreement expires only when it is replaced by another follow-on agreement. Reference to the "expiration" of Sinai II by a specific deadline provides Israel with an issue on which it can persuasively criticize the Egyptian position.

C) Beyond this, we wonder whether attempting to place a specific deadline on the peace process serves Egypt's purposes. Both the Israeli Government and public will tend to see such statements as pressure tactics and it is likely to have the effect of strengthening the hand of hardliners who are trying to depict Sadat as adopting inflexible positions.

D) We fully appreciate that Sadat has an Arab audience as well as Israel and the U.S. to think about when he makes public statements. However, we think there are other ways besides setting specific deadlines for Sadat to get across the message that time is not unlimited in the peace process.

E) We wanted to convey these thoughts to the President in the spirit of the close and candid consultation that we have been maintaining about how best to promote the peace process.

Vance

⁶ In his May 30 remarks, Sadat threatened to renounce the 1975 Sinai II agreement and claimed that it had to be renewed in October. In fact, the UNEF mandate in Sinai was due to expire in October.

253. Telegram From the Embassy in Egypt to the Department of State¹

Cairo, June 11, 1978, 1915Z

14781. Subject: Meeting With Sadat, June 11.

1. Met with Sadat today in Alexandria to discuss possibility of direct Egyptian/Israeli contacts and improving Egyptian West Bank/Gaza counterproposal along lines previously discussed with FonMin Kamel. VP Mubarak was present.

Sadat was an hour late in arriving, having just come from ten days in Suez Canal zone. He said he was exhausted after making six long speeches in as many days and looked it.

2. Direct contacts: On renewing direct Egyptian/Israeli contacts, Sadat said he cannot meet with Dayan in present circumstances. Any such meeting, he contended, will give Begin "breathing space" and enable the Israeli Prime Minister to claim everything is being discussed. This is especially undesirable when Dayan is unable to go beyond what Begin decides. For Sadat to receive Dayan now, the President insisted, will work against Egyptian interests. We went over this several times, but Sadat remained adamant.

3. Sadat was not rpt not averse to a meeting between Dayan and Egyptian FonMin Kamel. He suggested that President Carter might propose that the Egyptian and Israeli FonMins visit Washington to meet with Secretary Vance. Alternatively, they might meet at the United Nations or somewhere in Europe like Austria. Still another alternative venue might be in Al Arish as, Sadat recalled, he had on previous occasion suggested. (Sadat reference is to his earlier idea that Political Committee talks, if circumstances warranted their resumption, might meet alternatively in Al-Arish and Beersheva.) An Al-Arish locale, Sadat noted, would enable both Kamel and Dayan to report quickly to their superiors and obtain necessary instructions. Whatever the venue, Sadat said, the first two or three sessions could be between Kamel and Dayan alone and thereafter the two might meet with Secretary Vance.

4. Sadat stressed, however, the critical importance that he attaches to having USG "as a witness." He reiterated his fear that direct negotiations without the USG being "near or present" will not work. The Israelis, he charged, are "liars" and Begin, Dayan and others have regu-

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P850071-1573. Secret; Niact Immediate; Nodis; Cherokee.

larly distorted Egyptian positions. They will try to do so again unless there is an impartial “witness,” like the USG, present.

5. VP Mubarak interjected that since Weizman/Gamasy exchange (reported by Charge Matthews, but copy not immediately available to me), there has been a second message from Weizman. That message, sent in reply to Gamasy’s last message, indicated that Israeli Cabinet will shortly be discussing current Egyptian/Israeli impasse and that Weizman hoped further negotiations might be possible in near future. Message indicated Weizman will communicate again with GOE, hopefully this coming week.² Sadat viewed this as evidence of continuing Israeli desire for direct talks, but emphasized that for Egypt the issue now is whether or not the Israeli response to our two questions on the future of the West Bank/Gaza are in fact positive. If they are not, we face a new situation. If they are, then a Dayan/Kamel meeting could take place along the above lines or another Gamasy/Weizman meeting could take place.

6. Egyptian counterproposal: On the Egyptian counterproposal, Sadat indicated understanding of the problem. He agreed that Egyptian side will look at it again with a view to considering how it might be improved. He hopes to give me a revised counterproposal in a few days. He wants to talk tomorrow, Monday,³ to Mubarak and Kamel about possible revisions.

7. Other subjects discussed will be reported by septels. Leave to Dept’s discretion whether to repeat this message to Tel Aviv.

Eilts

² These messages have not been found. In telegram 148162 to Cairo, June 11, Vance reported on his meeting with Gamasy, which included discussion of Gamasy’s recent talks with Weizman, noting that “Sinai issues are more tractable than West Bank issues but cautioned that further progress re Sinai depends on Israeli movement on the West Bank.” (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840128–2179) Weizman and Gamasy led the Military Committee, which first met in January.

³ June 12.

254. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Egypt¹

Washington, June 15, 1978, 0056Z

151843. Subject: Message for Sadat.

1. Please convey following to Sadat as soon as possible:

—We appreciate very much his reaction to our suggestions about how we can best proceed in the effort to get a new more meaningful phase of negotiations started.²

—His willingness to reconsider Egyptian paper on West Bank/Gaza issues and his positive reaction to our specific comments as to how it might be made into more fully developed negotiating document are very helpful. We look forward to receiving revised Egyptian paper, and we are confident that if changes are made along lines we have suggested, Egypt's putting forward its proposal at appropriate time will serve as useful contribution to negotiations.³

—We also appreciate Sadat's willingness to consider resuming direct contact with Israelis in the form of meeting between Kamel and Dayan. We believe this will be discussed with him.

—We are still awaiting conclusion of Israeli Cabinet deliberations over our questions.⁴ Subject was raised but not resolved at meeting on June 12. We understand intensive private discussions are underway between Begin and his chief lieutenants in effort to hammer out agreement on replies in preparation for next formal Cabinet session.

—We cannot predict when process will be completed or what Israeli replies will be. But on assumption we will have them by early next week, and that they will give us something to work with (if not everything we would have wished) we would like to seek Sadat's preliminary reaction to following which flows from his suggestion.

—Assuming Israelis also agree (we have not yet broached matter with Israelis pending Sadat's reaction), White House would announce that President Carter had proposed that Foreign Ministers of Egypt and Israel meet in a convenient third country with Secretary Vance also at-

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780249–0479. Secret; Immediate; Nodis; Cherokee. Drafted by Sterner; cleared by Saunders, Atherton, Quandt, and David Anderson (S/S); and approved by Newsom.

² For Sadat's reaction, see Document 253.

³ Telegram 15183 from Cairo, June 15, transmitted a revised Egyptian West Bank/Gaza counterproposal. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P850071–1582)

⁴ For the two questions, see footnote 3, Document 248.

tending. Two sides had agreed to do so in London (this would be most convenient from our point of view) between June 25–28.

—Suggested dates are most convenient for Secretary (in fact it would be difficult because of important prior commitments for Secretary to schedule his presence at a time other than this) and we hope they are also convenient to GOE.

—Meeting at this time fits in with ensuing steps we have in mind. It is of course our hope that discussions between Foreign Ministers will prove fruitful and that both sides will see reason to continue them either in place or at some other venue. Roy Atherton will be available to stay on for as long as talks continue and US presence is desired. If talks end when Secretary departs, and if parties agree, Atherton would proceed to area for the further consultations which Sadat has indicated he desires. Atherton would also visit Israel. This could be preparatory to a visit to Israel, Egypt and probably Jordan and Saudi Arabia by Secretary Vance during July if developments warrant and schedule permits such a trip. Present thinking is that Secretary would then undertake consultations in effort to produce agreement on set of principles that would open way for resumed negotiations and renewal of invitation to other parties to join.

—We would appreciate any preliminary comments Sadat might have on this scenario and his specific reaction to suggestion of meeting of the Foreign Ministers in London June 25–28 to discuss Israeli responses to US questions, Egyptian counter-proposal, and any other subjects they wish to raise.

Christopher

255. Telegram From the Embassy in Israel to the Department of State¹

Tel Aviv, June 18, 1978, 1523Z

7675. Subject: Cabinet Reaches Decision on Answer to the “American Questions.”

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780257–0275. Confidential; Niact Immediate; Exdis. Also sent niact immediate to Jerusalem. Sent immediate for information to the White House and Cairo. Sent for information to Amman.

1. Foreign Minister Dayan telephoned me at 1530 June 18 with news of the statement just approved by the Israeli Cabinet in response to the two questions posed to him by Secretary Vance in Washington. Dayan said the approved formulation was that proposed by Begin; based closely on Dayan's earlier draft. The four DMC Ministers put forward their own proposal, similar according to Dayan to Weizman's earlier draft in its specific reference to a decision after five years on the permanent "status of the area". "Off the record" (please protect), Dayan said that all other Cabinet members except Weizman and the DMC supported Begin's proposal. Weizman, he said, was very angry and supported neither the Begin nor the DMC draft. (Two dyspeptic sentences in a subsequent phone call from Weizman amply confirmed Dayan's version.)

2. As will be apparent from text below, GOI statement is tortured linguistically. This obviously reflects Begin's refusal to make explicit reference to "status of the territory", *per se*. Dayan insists, however, that key phrase in para II: "the nature of the future relations between the parties will be considered and agreed upon at the suggestion of any of the parties.", is in fact functional equivalent for our suggested answer to question no. 1. Though words "permanent" or "definitive" do not appear, Dayan said that Cabinet decision means the "permanent nature of the relationship among Israel, the West Bank/Gaza, and Jordan" would be decided at the end of five years. He said the basic disagreement with our formulation, language aside, is that the GOI proposes that negotiations to that end begin only after five years has elapsed, not during the five year period.

3. Dayan also stressed that GOI reference in para II to "the parties" should be interpreted as follows: Egypt, Israel, Jordan, and Palestinian Arabs are the appropriate parties for the peace negotiations, or at minimum Egypt and Israel. However, Egypt would not rpt not be an appropriate party to "permanent relationship" governing West Bank and Gaza (i.e. no rpt no Egyptian long-term involvement in those areas).

4. I will see Dayan Monday morning, June 19, to obtain further interpretation of very carefully crafted Cabinet decision. We should be certain we have fuller understanding before making any public comments, since some of what Dayan told me remained obscure. Urge that Department await my fuller report on Monday meeting before responding to inevitable press questions.² Knesset will debate Cabinet decisions Monday evening, and Dayan will speak for the government.

5. Text of Cabinet decision, as relayed by Dayan follows:

² In telegram 7726 from Tel Aviv, June 19, Lewis reported Dayan's extensive interpretation of the Cabinet decision. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840157–2300)

Section I. The GOI considers it vital to continue the peace making process between Israel and its neighbors.

Section II. The GOI agrees that five years after the application of the administrative autonomy in Judea, Samaria, and the Gaza district, which will come into force upon the establishment of peace, the nature of the future relations between the parties will be considered and agreed upon at the suggestion of any of the parties.

Section III. For the purpose of reaching an agreement, the parties will conduct negotiations between them, with the participation of representatives of the residents of Judea, Samaria, and the Gaza district as elected in accordance with the administrative autonomy.

Lewis

256. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassies in Egypt and Israel¹

Washington, June 22, 1978, 1910Z

159176. Subject: Proposed Scenario for London Middle East Talks. Ref: (A) Tel Aviv 7713; (B) Cairo 15340.²

1. For Cairo: We have now reached the point where we need to begin to pin down the scenario we have been considering, and which we have explored in preliminary way with Egyptians, for getting Israelis and Egyptians engaged again in negotiations. You should therefore approach Sadat and/or Kamel along following lines:

—Egyptians will have seen our statement June 21 on Israeli response to our questions.³ We believe the time has now come to move

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Subject File, Box 11, Egypt: 6/78. Secret; Niact Immediate; Nodis; Cherokee.

² In telegram 7713 from Tel Aviv, June 19, Ambassador Lewis addressed scheduling conflicts for the Israelis relating to the coordination of the London Conference. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840157–2308) In telegram 15340 from Cairo, June 17, Ambassador Eilts reported on a discussion with Foreign Minister Kamel regarding the “optimum timing” for the United States to pass Egypt’s West Bank/Gaza Strip counterproposal to the Israelis. Eilts informed Kamel it was Egypt’s decision. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P850056–2302)

³ The State Department issued a statement on June 21 expressing “regret that the Israeli replies did not fully respond to our questions.” The statement also noted that “active consultations” would continue “as to the next steps which might be taken to help the parties resume negotiations.” (*Los Angeles Times*, June 22, 1978, p. A1)

forward along the lines already discussed with them, beginning with Foreign Minister level talks in London. The best dates for Secretary Vance would be to arrive in London July 10 for talks July 11-12, after which he would proceed directly to join President at Economic Summit in Germany which begins July 13. We are aware, however, that OAU Foreign Ministers' meeting is scheduled during this period. If for this reason these dates are not possible for Kamel, Secretary could make special trip to London July 6 for talks July 7-8, although he would strongly prefer July 11-12.

—Purpose of London talks as we see them would be to discuss Israeli position on West Bank/Gaza issues as well as Egyptian proposal on this subject, as part of continuing effort to reach agreement on declaration of principles as framework for broadening negotiations looking toward a comprehensive peace settlement. In this regard, we appreciate Egyptian willingness to revise their proposal with our comments in mind. In our opinion, it is improved in several respects from earlier versions and now constitutes more fully developed negotiating document. In order that it can be on the table for the London talks, we would like Kamel's agreement to transmit it to Israelis two or three days before London talks. (FYI. Given expected Israeli reaction to Egyptian proposal, we have concluded it is better to pass it to them after Vice President's visit to Israel so that it does not become diversionary issue during his talks there. End FYI.)

—We would also appreciate knowing if proposed dates for London talks—preferably July 11-12—are convenient for Kamel. We have not yet broached idea of London talks with Israelis and would like to do so in next day or so. We would therefore appreciate earliest possible reply. Once details have been pinned down and both Sadat and Begin have agreed, we would plan to have President Carter address letters to President Sadat and Prime Minister Begin formally extending invitation to send their Foreign Ministers to the London talks, with a view to announcing such talks early next week (i.e., week of June 26). We believe it important that announcement make clear that purpose of talks is to discuss Israeli position on West Bank/Gaza and Egyptian proposals on this same subject. We would need to state publicly at time of announcement, therefore, that Egypt has informed us its proposal will be conveyed to Israelis before London talks start.

—Except for somewhat later dates for London talks than we had originally suggested, our suggested strategy will remain the same—i.e., President Carter will invite President Sadat and Prime Minister Begin to send their Foreign Ministers to meet with Secretary Vance in London; following those talks and Economic Summit (which ends July 17), Secretary would be prepared to proceed to Middle East in accordance with strategy we have previously discussed. Even though actual

talks will not begin immediately, we believe early announcement will demonstrate clearly that U.S. is moving into a more active role as Egyptians have urged us to do.

—We ask that Egyptians hold idea of London meeting closely until we have chance to discuss it with Israelis and it has been agreed to all around and is publicly announced.

2. If Egyptians tend to take more negative stance about talks as result of their disappointment over Israeli replies to our questions, you should say President Carter believes renewed direct contact between parties remains highly important in terms of U.S. being able to play helpful role in negotiations we have discussed with Sadat. We are particularly anxious to show as soon as possible that the U.S. intends to act and is not prepared to allow impasse to develop in wake of Israeli replies. You should also tell Kamel that we understand his point about appearances as far as other Arabs are concerned. We want him and Sadat to know that, as soon as we have his and Dayan's confirmation, we will make urgent and firm approaches to both King Hussein and Prince Fahd to explain that meeting in London is our initiative. We will explain that U.S. role cannot be effective in negotiating vacuum and that this is opening step in scenario for more active U.S. role. Fact that talks are our initiative will also be made clear in our public announcement which will state explicitly invitation being extended by President Carter.

3. For Tel Aviv: We need to put idea of London talks to Israelis at early date. Our thinking, therefore, would be for you to take this up with Dayan as soon as we have report of Eilts' approach to Egyptians so we can be certain things are still on the rails at that end. Ideally, if Eilts can get response Friday,⁴ you could make your approach Saturday and our public announcement could be made early next week. You should therefore approach Dayan along following lines subject to final go-ahead from us and any adjustments that may be indicated in light of Egyptian reaction to Eilts' approach in paragraph 1, above:

—As Dayan knows, we agree with Israel on importance of a resumption of direct Egyptian-Israeli talks. In response to our representations on this point, Sadat has consistently taken position he would be ready for renewal of direct talks whenever Israel introduced "new elements" into the discussion.

—Egyptian public reaction to Israeli response to our two questions makes clear they are disappointed and do not see much new. From our soundings with Sadat, we conclude that he is not repeat not ready at this stage for formal resumption of direct bilateral negotiations in Polit-

⁴ June 23.

ical Committee or other forum in either Egypt or Israel. As a step in this direction, however, our soundings indicate Sadat will agree to a proposal by President Carter to have Foreign Minister Kamel meet with Dayan in a neutral capital if Secretary Vance were also present for at least some of their sessions, for the purpose of discussing Israeli position on West Bank/Gaza and any new ideas Israelis might wish to put forward, as well as the Egyptian West Bank/Gaza counterproposal which Egyptians have been working on. (If Dayan queries about a site nearer [garble] you may say we have specifically explored this with Sadat who prefers European capital; Sadat points out, in response to our query on this aspect, that Kamel could be in frequent telephonic contact with Sadat for instructions.)

—President Carter would, if both sides agree, be prepared to suggest to Prime Minister Begin and President Sadat that they send Foreign Ministers Dayan and Kamel to talks in which Secretary Vance would also be prepared to take part. London would be most convenient site for Secretary, and the best time for him would be to arrive in London July 10 for talks July 11–12 on route to join President Carter for Economic Summit in Germany which begins July 13.

—We have instructed Ambassador Eilts to sound out Kamel on these dates. We understand there will be an OAU Foreign Ministers meeting during this period and, if these dates are not possible for him we will suggest July 7–8 (with arrival in London July 6) as an alternative. If this idea commends itself to Israelis, we would appreciate knowing whether these dates are convenient for Dayan. (This paragraph can be modified in light of any information we receive from Eilts' talk with Kamel prior to your approach to Dayan.)

—Our thought is that London talks would take place in informal format with mix of trilateral and bilateral meetings. Hopefully exploration would prove fruitful enough to enable further direct contacts to be scheduled, perhaps at different venue. In addition, Secretary would be prepared to follow up through personal visit to Middle East after Summit, if this seemed necessary to keep negotiating process going.

—If GOI is agreeable to this proposal, President Carter would plan to address letters to Sadat and Begin formally extending invitation to send their Foreign Ministers to the talks, with a view to announcing such talks early in week of June 26.

—We will approach Egyptians about transmitting their West Bank/Gaza counterproposal to Israelis (presumably through us) prior to London talks so that Israelis will have opportunity to study it in advance and so that announcement of London talks can state that the purpose is to discuss (A) Israeli position on West Bank/Gaza issues and (B) Egyptian proposals on this same subject which will be made available to Israel before talks begin.

—Finally, we urge that Israelis hold idea of London meeting closely until it has been agreed all around and is publicly announced.

Vance

257. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Egypt¹

Washington, June 25, 1978, 1358Z

161699. Subject: Proposed London Foreign Ministers Meeting. Ref: Cairo 15733.²

1. You should inform Sadat that President Carter has asked you to convey the following to him in response to Sadat's comments to you in your Saturday³ meeting:

—The President has considered carefully President Sadat's suggestion that there be a meeting between him and President Sadat in Europe before announcement of decision to resume Egyptian-Israeli talks through a meeting of Foreign Ministers with Secretary Vance. The President appreciates President Sadat's basically positive attitude toward our proposed scenario which would begin with such a Foreign Ministers meeting, and he understands the concerns which led President Sadat to suggest that this be preceded by a meeting between them.

—President Carter is concerned, however, that so long a delay before anything further happens with respect to Middle East negotiations would lose valuable time, during which pressure would continue to build up against any resumption of Egyptian-Israeli negotiating process and active U.S. role in that process.

—President Carter would therefore like to stay with the scenario Ambassador Eilts has described to President Sadat, looking toward an

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840163–0118. Secret; Niact Immediate; Nodis; Cherokee. Drafted by Atherton; cleared by Quandt, Saunders, and Sydney Goldsmith (S/S–O); and approved by Secretary Vance. Sent immediate for information to Tel Aviv.

² In telegram 15733 from Cairo, June 24, Ambassador Eilts reported on his talk with Sadat regarding the U.S. scenario for the London Conference. Sadat suggested he and Carter meet in Europe before a London Conference and then announce a meeting of Foreign Ministers Kamel and Dayan in London. Eilts observed that Sadat was "clearly anxious" to meet with Carter. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P850071–1607)

³ June 24.

announcement this week of London talks at his (President Carter's) invitation on July 11–12.

—The President wants President Sadat to know that he is remaining personally involved in all the details of our Middle East strategy. He continues to have fully in mind and to stand by the understandings discussed with President Sadat at Camp David.⁴ He can understand the importance President Sadat attaches to having a full understanding of the U.S. position as we move into the forthcoming crucial phase in the weeks ahead. This would be a principal purpose of the contemplated visit to the area later in July of Secretary Vance and Ambassador Atherton, who are fully conversant with President Carter's thinking and will remain in constant touch with him.

2. FYI. There are additional considerations which lead us to conclude that we should not seek to arrange meeting between the two Presidents in Europe and which you should have in mind for use in your discretion in elaborating on above message which you are delivering in President Carter's name. If the President were to meet with Sadat, this would inevitably create public perception that we were not being evenhanded in our dealings with the two parties and that we were working closely with Sadat, to Israel's disadvantage, in developing and carrying out our Middle East peacemaking role. There would inevitably be pressures for a comparable meeting with Begin. Net result would be to engage the President personally and prematurely—an engagement which we believe it is better to keep in reserve for critical moments further down the road. There is the additional practical consideration that the President's schedule in Europe and his need to return immediately to Washington after the Summit would make it extremely difficult to make the time for the kind of meeting President Sadat has suggested. President Carter has already had to decline invitations for other meetings while he is in Europe. End FYI.

Vance

⁴ See Document 211.

258. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Jerusalem, June 30, 1978

PARTICIPANTS

U.S.
Vice President Mondale
Ambassador Lewis
Deputy Assistant to the President Aaron
Assistant Secretary Saunders

Israel
Deputy Prime Minister Yadin
Ambassador Dinitz

After an exchange of pleasantries during picture taking, *the Vice President* explained that he had come to Israel for two reasons:

1. He wanted to reaffirm the continuing U.S. commitment to the security of Israel—to a continuing supply of arms and economic assistance regardless of differences between us at any given moment. He wanted to put the question of fundamental trust behind us. He feels strongly that it is important to get this point across. That is the essential message of his visit.

2. He said he is also very interested in the possibilities of resuming negotiations. He fears that the present opportunity could be missed. He had come to Israel to explore privately what the U.S., Israel, and Egypt might be doing to resume the negotiations. He would welcome Yadin's observations on an appropriate U.S. role.

Yadin responded that he wanted to speak with candor. He felt he would be expressing the basic views of the government on those points and would put forward some views as he sees them. He pointed out that this is a coalition government in Israel; his party is the second in size. He acknowledged that there is not a full consensus on ultimate aims.

He recalled that after Sadat's visit to Jerusalem Begin came to him as a member of the Security Committee and as the leader of one of the parties in the coalition to discuss his peace proposals. Yadin said that he had told Begin they seemed reasonable but that they did not seem to "tally" with the final objectives of his party for two reasons:

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Trips/Visits File, Box 110, 6/30/78–7/3/78 Vice President Trip to Israel: 2/78–6/21/78. Secret; Nodis. Drafted by Saunders on July 5. The meeting took place in the Vice President's suite at the King David Hotel. Mondale visited Israel from June 29 to July 3 to represent the United States in ceremonies commemorating the 30th anniversary of Israel's creation.

1. He did not feel they matched Sadat's overall objective or approach. He said he knew from talking to Begin that there would be limits on how far Begin could go, and he did not feel those limits would permit Begin to go far enough with Sadat.

2. He felt there were faults in a proposal for the Sinai which called for a complete pullout and one for the West Bank which left sovereignty open.

Another problem was that the plan had not been adopted by the Cabinet until after the U.S. had seen it. This was cause for some criticism in the Cabinet.

Yadin felt that from that time on "something went wrong." There was no reaction to the plan from the other side, and there was sharp criticism from the opposition in Israel which claimed that Begin was a bad bargainer. Resentments were built which became obstacles to further progress. Then from the U.S. side, Israelis began to feel that they were "being courted to make further concessions before Egypt picked up the negotiations." Yadin pointed out that the U.S. role is not just that of a broker. The U.S. interest in progress is just as deep as that of the parties and the U.S. is therefore playing the role of an involved party, not just the role of a broker.

Yadin said he would have expected the U.S. to put pressure on Egypt privately and publicly, telling the Egyptians to put forward a plan if they had one. Israel was asked questions. Whatever Israel did, Israel was censured. Sadat called for total Israeli withdrawal and there was never a word from the U.S.

In Yadin's view, it became clear at that stage that the U.S. was not helping the negotiations. The U.S. is viewed by many in Israel as following a policy of "appeasement" of the Arabs.

Yadin acknowledged that perhaps the Israeli government's reaction to reports of the Egyptian counterproposals had been premature. Those Egyptian proposals were characterized as calling for Israeli turn-over of territory prior to negotiation. When there was no U.S. criticism, this encouraged the Egyptian impression that the U.S. would put pressure on Israel.

At this point in the conversation it became apparent that Yadin had organized his presentation under three headings. The first was the point just completed about the unhelpfulness of the U.S. role.

Yadin then identified his second point. He said his "second advice" is that the U.S. should encourage Egypt to pick up on the proposal for another Weizman-Gamasy meeting. He said he would be interested to hear what is to come of the meeting between Dayan and Kamel. He went on to say that there had been differences of view in the gov-

ernment on whether to reopen the Weizman-Gamasy channel.² Those in favor of doing everything possible to resume negotiations had prevailed. A message had gone to Gamasy. One had been received from Gamasy but it sounded as if it had been drafted by Sadat because it contained the words “for sure.”

After reiterating his advice that the U.S. should encourage Egypt to pick up the proposal for this meeting, he said he hoped that both this and the Dayan-Kamel channel³ would materialize. He repeated that Sadat should know that the U.S. favors such a meeting.

The *Vice President* said that he would make that point to Sadat when he saw him July 3. He said that we must get by the current situation in which each side is putting forward its maximal positions.

Yadin then went on to his “last personal advice.” (Comment: In retrospect, members of the American party felt that this was most important in *Yadin*’s mind, even though he came to it last.) He said that Begin has a feeling—“I see it every day”—that perhaps the U.S. feels Begin will never “be able to deliver the goods.” Begin also has a feeling that Sadat now feels it is “a hopeless case with Begin.”

Yadin continued that, in his opinion, if there is anyone who can do more than others to reach a peace agreement, Begin is the one. This may be a paradox. Begin is not of *Yadin*’s own party, but *Yadin* felt he had to say this because it is his view.

Yadin explained that, given these apparent feelings in the U.S. and Egypt, Begin had become passive or intransigent. He in effect tells Weizman and Dayan to go ahead and play the game their way.

Yadin then advised that if Begin were to get the impression from us that we feel he is the one to pick up the present opportunity, the “real power” that drove him after Sadat’s visit was the fact that he felt he had a mission, and this feeling could be revived. Now he is passive and entrenched. If he could have the feeling from the President that his mission is essential, that would be important.

Yadin cited a recent interview in *Haaretz*⁴ with former Prime Minister Rabin, in which Rabin stated the same view that it is Begin who has the best chance of putting through a peace agreement in Israel.

Yadin turned to *Dinitz* who agreed that *Yadin* had described the Israeli perception accurately.

² A reference to the Military Committee led by Weizman and Gamasy, which met last on March 31.

³ Atherton suggested a meeting between Dayan and Kamel to both Dayan and Sadat. See Documents 249 and 253. The two met previously in January when they led the Political Committee meetings in Jerusalem, which ended when Sadat withdrew the Egyptian delegation on January 18. See Document 198.

⁴ *Haaretz* is an Israeli daily newspaper.

The *Vice President* said he wished he could correct that impression. First of all, Begin is the Prime Minister of Israel. We have no right to deal with anyone else in a democracy. He is the elected head of government. We would resent it in the U.S. if someone came there and tried to deal with the Secretary of State or the Vice President to the exclusion of the President. We understand the Prime Minister's feelings. Personal relations between the President and Prime Minister Begin are good. They are both men of deep religious belief; they understand each other. In a democracy, we have a lot of people who talk and create wrong impressions.

The Vice President continued that we see Begin as a popular leader. We assume that he is a leader who can persuade his people to follow him.

Yadin said that what he meant is that Begin gets this impression not from official statements but from reports of conversations in the U.S. where American officials seem to express the view that the Begin government can not achieve peace.

The *Vice President* went back to *Yadin's* first point on the lack of fairness in the U.S. position.

He pointed out that President Carter had pressed Sadat very hard to accept a real peace and normalization of relations with Israel as the objective. At first, Sadat had said he could never do this. Then he had said perhaps this could be done after five years. Finally he agreed to that definition and said so during his visit to Jerusalem. "It is hard to beat up a guy who has agreed to what you have asked him to do."

We had also insisted to Sadat that there could be no agreement if he does not help find a way to protect Israeli security.

We had also pressed him with our view that Resolution 242 does not require total Israeli withdrawal. He has now said publicly that he could accept minor modifications in the border of the West Bank. He knows any agreement has to have Israeli approval.

The Vice President concluded by saying that he would talk to the President about calibrating our criticism. But he felt that there is a misconception of the American position.

Yadin simply mentioned the recent comment by President Carter in a press conference criticizing Israel's reaction to reports of Sadat's new counterproposals.⁵ He said that he was not charging the U.S. with unfairness. His point was simply that, for the purpose of negotiation, the U.S. has to deal with both sides.

⁵ At a June 26 press conference, Carter described the Israeli reaction to Sadat's counterproposals as "very disappointing." (*Public Papers: Carter, 1978, Book I, p. 1179*)

Yadin continued that in the Vice President's Sunday⁶ meeting with a Cabinet group, Israel might express its concern about recent Soviet activities in South Yemen and in Africa.⁷ There is an impression in Israel that the U.S. is not vigorous enough in responding. Israel sees Soviet encroachment as part of a global strategy. He also mentioned that the position of the Shah in Iran is weakening dangerously. He felt that the main target is Saudi Arabia.

In that connection, Yadin said he wanted to make a point that might be farfetched from a technical point of view: He felt Israel must find ways and means to be in touch with the Saudis on the real security situation in the area. He recognized this might not be possible under normal circumstances, but the threat was such that it might justify some sort of contact.

The *Vice President* said that the U.S. is very concerned about what has happened in Afghanistan⁸ and South Yemen.

Yadin said that the two sudden collapses had come very quickly. *Dinitz* said that the "unrelated circumstances are too related."

[2 paragraphs (4 lines) not declassified]

Yadin recalled Egyptian actions in Yemen in 1961⁹ and how they had led to an unraveling situation in the end. He felt the situation in the Middle East has all the "features of a kaleidoscope." A picture could seem fairly stable and then just one tilt caused it to change completely.

Yadin concluded by repeating, "We are very glad to have you here."

⁶ July 2.

⁷ In June 1978, a pro-Soviet militia led by Abdel Fattah Ismail seized power in Southern Yemen. The militia had apparently been trained by East German and Soviet military advisers. ("South Yemen Chief Reported Slain, But Pro-Red Group Stays in Power," *New York Times*, June 27, 1978, p. NJ17)

⁸ On April 27, a pro-Soviet military junta seized power in Afghanistan, proclaiming the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan.

⁹ A reference to the tense relations that developed between Yemen and Egypt after the United Arab Republic dissolved in September 1961, only 3 years after Egypt, Syria, and Yemen had created the union.

259. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Jerusalem, July 1, 1978

PARTICIPANTS

U.S.

Vice President Mondale
 Ambassador Lewis
 Deputy Assistant to the President Aaron
 Assistant Secretary Saunders

Israel

Minister of Defense Weizman
 Ambassador Dinitz
 Col. Tehilla

After a preliminary exchange during picture taking, the *Vice President* said that he would be going to see Sadat² and would urge him to “turn down the temperature” of public comment on Israel’s negotiating position. The Vice President said he would be interested to hear about Weizman’s meetings with Gamasy and Sadat.

Weizman said: “I like the man. Whatever he says publicly is correct, although he may not tell the whole story.”

The *Vice President* said he knows Sadat better than Gamasy because of the time they spent together in various meetings, including the meeting with the President at Camp David. He said he thought we would be getting an Egyptian counterproposal on the West Bank and Gaza soon. He had little hope that it would meet Israel’s needs, but he felt it could be useful to the negotiations.

The Vice President continued, saying that his visit is designed to accomplish two purposes:

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Trips/Visits File, Box 110, 6/30/78–7/3/78 Vice President Trip to Israel: 7/78. Secret; Sensitive; Nodis. Drafted by Saunders on July 10. The meeting took place in the Vice President’s suite at the King David Hotel.

² On July 3, Mondale left Israel and traveled to Cairo to meet with Sadat. No memorandum of conversation has been found of Mondale’s July 3 meeting with Sadat, but according to telegram 16388 from Cairo, July 5, Sadat gave Mondale Egypt’s peace proposal. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, 850056–2349) The proposal is in telegram 169126 to Tel Aviv, July 3. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840172–2714) The Egyptian Foreign Ministry released the details of the six-point proposal on July 5. It called for Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank and Gaza over 5 years, ceding transitional sovereignty to Jordan and Egypt. After the 5-year transition period, the Palestinian Arabs would be allowed to decide their future and would exercise direct authority in the area in cooperation with Jordan and Egypt. (Christopher S. Wren, “Egyptians Say Plan for Peace Contains Compromise Leeway,” *New York Times*, July 6, 1978, p. 19)

1. He is reaffirming the solid, unswerving U.S. commitment to Israeli security and trying to allay fear that aid would be held hostage to Israel's negotiating positions. Being a politician, he said he could feel the tenseness in Israel today.

2. He said he was here to see whether there are ways of getting negotiations started again. He said he would be interested to have Weizman explain his meetings with General Gamasy. He was interested in what prospect there was for another meeting. He explained that we are trying to arrange another meeting between Foreign Ministers Kamel and Dayan in July.

The Vice President commented that the Egyptian counterproposal would have some things in it that Israel would not like and some Israel could use. Whatever the case, he strongly urged that the Israelis keep the temperature down and emphasize a positive intention to develop the negotiations.

The Vice President said he is concerned about the passage of time. He said he is no Mid East expert. Nevertheless he thought Sadat might try to keep the negotiations going just a little longer and then he might move back into a more pan-Arab style. Walter Cronkite recently quoted Sadat as talking about two more months. Sadat will be in trouble if the perception gets out that he went to Jerusalem and then failed.

Weizman said he takes Sadat's October deadline seriously in the respect that he will do something about the Sinai II agreement.³ It is not that balloons will go up; it is simply that Sadat will have to take some step.

Weizman noted that he had met Sadat more than any other Israeli. He feels that mutual trust has developed between them—as much as is possible between states.

Weizman noted that Sadat has talked about an October deadline ever since they first met together.

The *Vice President* noted that we were concerned about whether Sadat might use the occasion of his July 23 speech⁴ to pull some sort of surprise.

Weizman suggested that this could be the recall of the Israeli team from Cairo (a team that has stayed in place to staff the Weizman-Gamasy talks).

He agreed that time is a major factor. Sadat is unpredictable. (Weizman then gave as an example Sadat's announcement of

³ See footnote 6, Document 252.

⁴ A reference to Sadat's upcoming speech to commemorate the 26th anniversary of the Free Officers' Movement's overthrow of King Farouk on July 23, 1952. For excerpts from this speech, see the *Los Angeles Times*, July 23, 1978, p. OC1.

Weizman's first visit to Egypt after having said that the visit should be kept secret. Weizman did not seem to take account of the fact that the news of the visit was made public in Israel and that was the cause of Sadat's making it public at the last minute.)

Weizman said that he had been interviewed a few days before on TV and had been asked whether he trusted Sadat. He said he does. He acknowledged that to trust completely would make him a fool, but he did consider Sadat worthy of his trust. Weizman continued that people in Israel had built up a distrust of Sadat and, conversely, he has built a distrust of Begin. Weizman felt it would be desirable for Begin and Sadat to meet again in order to repair some of the damage in their relationship. To be frank, he continued, Ismailia was a failure.⁵ "The twain did not meet." Weizman said he and Gamasy respected each other. But the two leaders bombard each other publicly with what they think of each other.

"Begin is hurt." Sadat believes that what he did was unbelievable. Weizman said he had told Sadat that Sadat was like the first man on the moon, but the first man on the moon is now back on earth.

The problem is not whether Gamasy and Weizman can meet. The question is what they talk about when they do meet.

Weizman said he reminds the Cabinet that U.S. aid to Israel since 1973 is more in terms of quantities of equipment than the whole Israeli army had in the 1967 war. Israel is the only military force in the world outside the U.S. with the F-15 aircraft. Security, though, is not just a matter of military equipment. In this case, it is more a political question. The problem that concerns him, he said, is not hardware but what will be the political situation in the Middle East.

The Egyptians and the Syrians have a case on return to the international border because there once was a recognized border. The situation on the West Bank is different. In 1967, Hussein stabbed Israel in the back.

But back to '67 lines with minor modifications will not hold water with anyone in Israel today. Each political party sees the Jordan River as Israel's security border; no one favors an independent Palestinian state.

Begin [*Weizman?*] said what worries him is that if Sadat did an unbelievable thing, so did Begin. Begin changed a great deal in putting forward his peace plan. The only ones who did not change their approach were the Americans who continue to stick with the formulation of the '67 borders with minor modifications. Weizman reiterated that

⁵ A reference to the direct talks between Begin and Sadat in Ismailia December 25 and 26, 1977. See Documents 180 and 181.

the problem is not where the borders are but what the political arrangements will be after withdrawal. The problem is what is the political solution when all parties say that Israeli settlements must stay and there must be no independent Palestinian state.

Ambassador Lewis asked: If a political solution could be roughed out for the West Bank and Gaza, you (Weizman) and Gamasy could hammer out a Sinai agreement, could you not?

Weizman replied: My problem is not Gamasy and Sadat but Begin, my party, and myself. He felt that the West Bank should really have autonomy.

The *Vice President* asked what would free Sadat to make that move now.

Weizman replied that had there been more direct negotiations between Israel and Egypt, new ideas might be produced.

Weizman said he had tried to convince Sadat that Israel has been isolated. Israel is closer to Paris and New York than to Nablus and Cairo. He said he told Sadat to open Egypt to Israeli tourists. That might help allay the basic mistrust in Israel if more Israelis could talk to Egyptians.

It had been very dangerous for Sadat to think his trip to Jerusalem would change a generation.

Aaron asked why it is good to get Begin and Sadat together now. What would make it work now when it had not before?

Weizman replied that it would get others together. He said, "Don't talk only to me. Dayan is available. Let Sadat invite Dayan to Egypt. Perhaps Sadat should invite Cabinet Ministers to Egypt from Israel. Then we will have hard bargaining."

The *Vice President* said, "Let me go back to the security points." The problem is we cannot have a political settlement on the West Bank until you have a security settlement.

On the security side, we are thinking of demilitarized zones, buffers, permanent IDF cantonments, a security treaty, and the possibility of a permanent U.S. base.

The *Vice President* said he did not believe withdrawal had to be total.

The *Vice President* asked how Weizman thought the Israeli answers to our questions could have been changed.

Weizman felt that if Egypt really wants full peace and security it would deal with Israel on these terms.

"If I have to come to grips with Gamasy again," Weizman continued, "it would break my heart."

The *Vice President* asked what we could do to be more helpful.

Weizman replied saying he wanted to try out one idea. From the Arab viewpoint, Sadat has misbehaved. He has prostituted himself to Israel. He needs to show something for the Palestinians. Let's assume that we came up with a statement that Egypt's agreement with Israel would not be a separate agreement but the "first one." Weizman still expressed the belief that the best way to pull the Arab world into a treaty is for Egypt to go ahead.

The *Vice President* agreed that what Sadat needs is generated by his own situation. He needs an umbrella under which to move to his own agreement with Israel.

Weizman complained that as long as the U.S. stand favors withdrawal to the 1967 borders, Sadat has no reason to negotiate.

The *Vice President* replied that he had taken the position that withdrawal would be negotiated.

Aaron asked: "Don't you really think the question of the lines is the key question?"

Weizman responded by asking whether it isn't contradictory to speak about withdrawal from the West Bank while at the same time making arrangements to leave Israeli forces there. The real question is what would be the status of the West Bank. The possibilities include a continuation of something like the present situation if an Israeli military presence is required. In any case, there should be no independent Palestinian state. There is ultimately the possibility of a federation with Jordan including Israel.

Weizman emphasized that it is important to bear in mind the differences between the Sinai and the Golan on the one hand and the West Bank/Gaza on the other.

He also noted in passing that it is an absurdity that the Begin Government is blamed for Israeli settlements in the West Bank and Gaza, when the previous Labor Government was responsible for initiating them.

The *Vice President* asked what Weizman wanted us to do.

Weizman replied along several lines. He felt that the U.S. takes Israeli settlements in the West Bank and Gaza too seriously. He wished we would not talk about complete withdrawal; Israel is talking about autonomy on the West Bank.

Weizman noted the importance to Sadat of ending the war with Israel in order to solve problems in his own country. He suggested that one of the solutions is for Egypt to take over Libya and to form a Sudan-Egypt-Libya association.

He commented that it is a shock to go back to Cairo after all of these years. It is so rundown.

He suggested that we might try to convince Sadat to see Yadin, Dayan, Sharon, or others. He concluded by asking the Vice President to give Sadat “my salaams.”

260. Editorial Note

On July 2, 1978, Vice President Walter F. Mondale gave a speech at a state dinner held at the Knesset. In the speech, Mondale remarked, “The people of Israel confront painful decisions in this process. They involve negotiating the future of territories which have been occupied for a decade and which, in the absence of peace have provided a sense of security. But no one of us can forget the history of the Middle East. For 6 years after the 1967 war, there was no progress toward peace. And another tragic war followed in 1973.”

Mondale continued that, “we are convinced that without eventual withdrawal on all fronts, to boundaries agreed upon in negotiations and safeguarded by effective security arrangements, there can be no lasting peace. Only Israel can be the final judge of its security needs. Only the parties can draw the final boundary lines. But if there is to be peace, the implicit bargain of U.N. Resolution 242 must be fulfilled.”

Mondale then discussed approaches to peace. He stated, “In the Sinai, Israel has proposed a peace treaty in which there would be negotiated withdrawal and security would be achieved while relinquishing claims to territory. This approach can be applied in the West Bank and Gaza as well.” He also noted, “Real peace will clearly serve Israel’s security interests. But both during the transition period, and after a peace settlement, Israel’s need for concrete security arrangements must be met. Any peace settlement must include continued, assured, permanent protection for Israel. The United States and Israel are completely united on this point.” (Department of State *Bulletin*, August 1978, pages 33–37)

261. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Egypt¹

Washington, July 10, 1978, 2313Z

173787. Subject: Preparation for London Talks.

1. Now that we have Israeli agreement to attend London talks,² we need to begin to get both Egyptians and Israelis aboard common concept of how talks should be run, and what should emerge from them. On Egyptian side we have two basic objectives. First, we want to persuade Sadat/Kamel that it is important to make London talks more than a pro forma exercise and that Kamel should prepare to keep his end of the dialogue going; second, we would like Egyptian agreement before the talks begin, with as much specificity as possible, to further direct contacts, presumably Dayan/Kamel, but perhaps Gamasy/Weizman or conceivably both.

2. Absence from Egypt of both Sadat and Kamel (according to our information until July 14) complicates consultations. We leave it to your judgment whether you think it would be useful to take this up with Mubarak in the first instance, or whether it is best to wait until Sadat and Kamel get back. It will be important, if Kamel seems unresponsive to our ideas, to plan to see Sadat so as to get Kamel properly instructed. Whatever approach you decide is best, your comments to Egyptians should be along following lines.

3. We understand reasons for Egyptian skepticism about utility of London talks. We ourselves do not expect it to provide major breakthrough in the negotiations. Nevertheless we are not regarding this as mere pro forma exercise, and we believe it would be mistake for Egyptians to dismiss it in this fashion. We see resumption and continuation of direct contacts between the parties as highly important. Negotiations involve tenacious probing of other side's position and tenacious search for areas of accommodation. From our own conversations with Dayan we know he has definite ideas about how to approach West Bank/Gaza negotiations. While these may not be the same as Egypt's approach,

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840172–2768. Secret; Immediate; Nodis; Cherokee. Drafted by Sterner; cleared by Saunders, Quandt, and Frank Wisner (S/S); and approved by Secretary Vance. Sent immediate for information to Tel Aviv.

² In telegram 8597 from Tel Aviv, Lewis reported that the Israeli Cabinet on July 9 had accepted Vance's invitation for Dayan to meet with Kamel and Vance in London. However, at the same meeting, the Cabinet rejected Egypt's peace proposal called "Proposals Relative to Withdrawal from the West Bank and Gaza Strip and Security Arrangements." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780281–0873) Regarding the Egyptian proposal, see footnote 2, Document 259.

they are worth exploring in depth and attempting to understand. That process in itself can lead to narrowing of gap.

4. It seems to us that London talks, first direct exchanges between two sides with U.S. present to take place since talks in Political Committee broke off in January, can serve this purpose. We are sure there is much in Israeli "self-rule" plan and in Israel's responses to our questions which GOE feels is unclear and ought to be explained. There is no reason not to zero in on what Egyptians regard as key point: What happens at end of five years; can Dayan say what determining "the future relations" at the end of this period means? Dayan will also no doubt have number of questions or comments about Egyptian proposal that has just been handed to Israel.

5. We believe two days in London can best be used in this fashion, with both sides commenting upon and seeking clarifications on what it regards as key issues in other side's proposals. We would therefore suggest that Kamel and his team come prepared with questions and comments addressed to Israeli position on West Bank/Gaza issues, and be prepared to answer questions and comments of similar nature from Israelis.

6. Our feeling is that format for these talks should be informal and that formal "conference" atmosphere should be avoided. We therefore propose that talks take place in various suites of delegations, with maximum of five on each side, so that even when all three Foreign Ministers are meeting overall group will still be small enough to preserve atmosphere of informality. With this kind of format in mind it seemed logical to house all three delegations in same hotel which also has advantages from security point of view.

7. We envisage mix of bilateral and trilateral meetings. On first day, the eighteenth, Secretary would propose to call on two Foreign Ministers separately in their suites. Following this, first trilateral session could open in Secretary's suite. After some introductory remarks by Secretary and any discussion that may be necessary of schedule or arrangements, Secretary would open substantive discussions by inviting Kamel to set forth and explain various features of Egyptian plan. Dayan might then make any observations he might wish or pose questions about Egyptian plan. Procedure would then be reversed in subsequent sessions, with Kamel addressing himself to Israeli proposal. Following trilateral session first morning, Secretary would like to invite Kamel and Dayan and their delegations to luncheon. Afternoon would be given over to bilateral meetings between Secretary and each of Foreign Ministers. No activities would be scheduled for evenings but they could be used for further sessions if needed.

8. We think it important to have at least one bilateral meeting between Kamel and Dayan during the two days. This might most log-

ically come morning of second day, prior to second trilateral session in Secretary's suite. Afternoon of second day might again be given to bilaterals between Secretary and Foreign Ministers with perhaps final brief trilateral session prior to press conferences and departure.

9. Schedule of meetings, beyond those of first morning, might best be kept somewhat flexible so as to adjust to requirements of discussions. We put foregoing forward for planning purposes and would welcome Egyptian comments or alternative ideas.

10. We also need to give some thought to results we would like to see emerge from meeting. We believe it highly important that talks end with agreement that further direct Egyptian-Israeli contacts shall take place. This will be important not only to demonstrate Egypt's continuing determination to pursue negotiated solution but also to enable U.S. to play more active role in the negotiations. Would Egyptians wish to propose venue and date for such meetings? Sadat has mentioned Al-Arish. This would probably be acceptable to Israelis, but if for some reason Egyptians have reservations about this, SFM could be alternative. (FYI. We leave to your judgment whether you see opportunity to sound out Egyptians about possibility of another round between Gamasy-Weizman, possibly at same time and location.)

11. We would like to have London talks conclude with joint statement that would have following elements: statement that talks were useful; that two sides plan to continue contacts with venue and dates specified for next round; Secretary affirming U.S. will be actively engaged; Secretary's intention to send Ambassador Atherton to area immediately after London talks to maintain continuity of discussions, and Secretary's willingness to make trip himself at later date.

12. Main purpose of Atherton mission would be to begin consultations with GOE on our concrete ideas for helping two sides reach agreement. Atherton would also go to Israel to continue consultations with GOI, and to Saudi Arabia and Jordan with purpose of building support for our ideas. Effort in Jordan would center on beginning to turn King Hussein around toward more positive attitude about eventually joining negotiations.

13. With respect to subsequent steps, it would seem to us to be best plan if next round of talks could be arranged at some site in area such as Al-Arish for late July or early August, to which Secretary might be invited to participate. Secretary could then continue participation in these talks with consultations in both Jerusalem and Cairo and at end of that round leave with both sides our suggestions for formulations that might bring two sides into agreement.

14. We would appreciate Egyptian reaction to these ideas. We will of course be in further contact with Egyptians between now and our ar-

rival in London to convey Israeli reaction to our suggestions for conduct of London talks.

15. FYI: As afterthought, if as we hear from Egyptian Embassy it is possible that Kamel will travel directly from Austria to London, we wonder if most sensible arrangement would not be for you to proceed to London via Austria in sufficient time to see both Sadat and Kamel there. If you decide this is best plan you have authorization to make this travel.

Vance

262. Telegram From the Department of State to Secretary of State Vance in Geneva and to the Embassy in Israel¹

Washington, July 13, 1978, 0102Z

176291/Tosec 80048. Subject: Message From the President to Begin.

1. Following is message from the President to Prime Minister Begin in response to Begin's message of July 10. (Text sent you by septel.)² Please deliver to Prime Minister.

2. Begin text.

Dear Mr. Prime Minister:

Thank you very much for your letter of July 10.

I appreciate your kind remarks concerning Vice President Mondale's visit. I fully share your view that it has strengthened the ties of friendship between our two countries.

I am glad that your government has accepted my proposal that Foreign Minister Dayan and the Foreign Minister of Egypt meet with Secretary Vance in London on July 18 and 19. We hope that the London

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840172–2802. Secret; Immediate; Nodis. Drafted by Korn and L. Willems (EUR/SOV); cleared by Sick, McCall (EUR/SOV), Kamman (S/MS), and Lowell Fleischer (S/S–O); and approved by Saunders. Sent immediate for information to Cairo and the White House. Vance visited Geneva from July 11 to July 13 to meet with Gromyko.

² Begin's message to Carter is contained in a July 10 letter from Dinitz to Carter. In the message, Begin referred to the Egyptian peace proposal as "utter negativism" and asserted that it "may endanger Israel's very existence." Begin also referred to the case of Anatoly Sharansky; see footnote 3, Document 49. Begin urged Carter to "intercede personally with Mr. Brezhnev for the release this innocent man." (Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East File, Subject File, Box 49, Israel: 6–7/78)

talks will lead to direct contacts that will help narrow the gap between the parties.

I know you share my conviction that the negotiating process must continue. With cooperation and goodwill on all sides, I am hopeful that our efforts will bring success.

The American people and I share your deep concern for Anatoly Shcharansky. Since his arrest on March 15, 1977, we have repeatedly conveyed our concern to President Brezhnev and urged that Mr. Shcharansky be released and permitted to resettle in Israel. I have instructed Secretary Vance to pursue this matter with Foreign Minister Gromyko in Geneva and to deliver from me another personal appeal to President Brezhnev on Mr. Shcharansky's behalf.

With warm personal regards,

Jimmy Carter.

End text.

Christopher

263. Telegram From the Embassy in Egypt to the Department of State¹

Cairo, July 14, 1978, 1032Z

17026. Subject: Change in Sadat's Tactics Toward Begin.

Summary. Sadat has apparently concluded no settlement possible with Begin and that he (Sadat) has nothing to lose by attempting to contribute to political ferment in Israel. Treating Begin with kid gloves seemed, in Sadat's perception, only to make him more intransigent. View that no settlement possible with Begin also widely shared by other observers. Meeting with Weizman and London talks primarily tactical because Sadat convinced only U.S. can break impasse by presenting equitable proposal. Although Sadat recognizes he must continue to deal with Begin's representatives, if not Begin personally, he remains exceedingly interested in personal characteristics and rivalries of Israeli leaders and is, perhaps wishfully, looking toward the day when Begin is replaced. End summary.

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840172-2802. Secret; Immediate; Exdis. Sent for information to Tel Aviv.

1. As Dept will have noted from Cairo press treatment of Vienna and London meetings, as well as earlier Sadat interviews, it is becoming increasingly apparent that Sadat has ruled out possibility of arriving at agreement with Begin. Earlier this year, largely at our urging, Sadat kept his misgivings about Begin largely under wraps in the belief that the political ferment within Israel should be given a chance. He still believes the latter is necessary, but has of late apparently decided that he has nothing to lose by attempting to contribute to it. Thus, his well-publicized meeting with Peres (admittedly at latter's request), Salzburg meeting with Weizman,² direct and indirect praise for Weizman and Peres, criticism of Begin and Dayan by name (particularly via Anis Mansour), and direct appeals to the Israeli people such as his *Yedi'ot* interview of July 11 (FBIS TA 111143Y).³ We believe Sadat recognizes that such tactics could backfire by strengthening Begin, but has concluded that this course of action worth a try, since previous kid-glove treatment of Begin, in Sadat's perception, did not lessen Begin's "intransigence."

2. The view that no settlement will be possible as long as Begin is Prime Minister is widely shared by knowledgeable Egyptians, foreign observers here and, we would note, American Jewish leaders, academics and other well-informed visitors who have passed through Cairo in recent weeks.

3. Sadat's acceptance of President Carter's invitation to send Kamel to London for talks with Dayan⁴ and his Salzburg meeting with Weizman are therefore primarily tactical. He does not expect any major breakthrough to emerge from the London talks, but is seeking to accommodate President Carter and assure him of his continuing commitment to a settlement. Sadat is convinced that the only way to break the impasse is for United States intervention in the form of presenting an equitable, disinterested proposal which, he hopes, even Begin would find difficult to reject.

4. In the meantime, through his talks with Peres and Weizman, he is hedging his bets for a possible future change of government in Israel, one which he hopes might be willing to pursue the peace process in less doctrinaire and biblical fashion. The Egyptians monitor the Israeli political scene closely and, while they like the Israelis see each other through somewhat fuzzy lenses, Sadat is moderately well informed on

² For a report on the Sadat-Peres meeting, see Document 264. For a report on the Sadat-Weizman meeting, see Document 265.

³ Not found. *Yediot* is an Israeli newspaper.

⁴ Vice President Mondale conveyed Carter's invitation to Sadat to send Kamel to the London talks during Mondale's July 3–4 visit to Cairo. (Telegram 168933 to Cairo, July 4; National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840172–2711)

what is going on inside Israel. He is, however, more interested in the personal characteristics of the leaders and their rivalries, which reflects his own style of government, than he is in institutions. Sadat recognizes that as long as Begin is in power he must continue dealing with Begin's representatives, if not Begin personally. However, there is little doubt that he is, perhaps wishfully, looking toward the day when Begin, either through health or internal pressures, leaves the scene.

Eilts

264. Telegram From the Embassy in Egypt to the Department of State¹

Cairo, July 15, 1978, 1813Z

17126. Subject: Sadat's Account of his Talks in Vienna and Related Matters.

Summary: Sadat related how Kreisky arranged for recent Sadat/Peres meeting.² Said his talks with Peres dealt with future of Jerusalem and West Bank borders. Claimed Peres proposed acceptable language on borders to satisfy both Palestinian aspirations and Israeli security, but this language not included in final SI document. Language which was included on borders not acceptable to GOE. Added that he also told Peres economic cooperation possible, but not as "condition" of peace. Sadat lauded Peres and claims "100 percent" agreement between them. In meeting with Goldmann, latter said he opposed Begin and Israeli settlement activities. Goldmann insisted Begin in bad health and that some constitutional way should be found to get rid of him. Goldmann quoted Ehrlich saying that if USG put pressure on Begin, anti-Begin forces could work to remove the PriMin. Austrian Jewish financier Kahan had taken generally similar line, claiming that not only Israel, but Jews everywhere are threatened by Begin's hard line policy. Goldmann and Kahan said Weizman is today most popular man in Israel. Sadat expressed hope that President Carter will soon begin to "pressure" Begin by presenting a U.S. proposal. End summary.

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P850070-2157. Secret; Niact Immediate; Nodis; Cherokee.

² Sadat and Peres met on July 9 in Vienna.

1. Met with Sadat for two hours today in Alexandria. Vice President Mubarak and FonMin Kamel were also present. Sadat looked tired and acknowledged that his Vienna talks had tired him. He was nevertheless in good form in relating his several meetings there, asking only that President Carter and the Secretary hold this information very closely. He then gave long, sometimes disjointed account of his several meetings. It was clear that Mubarak and Kamel, even though latter had been along, were hearing Sadat's comments for the first time.

Socialist International meeting with Kreisky, Brandt and Peres:

2. Sadat first recalled that it was Kreisky who had arranged for his contacts with Peres. He called Kreisky a "sincere friend." Kreisky had defied Begin last February, when Begin ordered European Jewish financiers not to meet with Sadat, by arranging a meeting in Paris with Israel's principal European Jewish financiers. Kreisky had informed him that Peres would like another meeting and had asked if Sadat would receive Peres in either Cairo or Alexandria. Sadat had welcomed the opportunity for another meeting with Peres and said he preferred to combine it with a brief visit to Tyrol, which is his favorite vacation area. Kreisky had also brought Brandt as the Chairman of the SI (Socialist International).

3. At his first meeting with Kreisky, Sadat noted, it was clear that their views on ME problem were similar. On following day, when quadrilateral meeting took place, they had come to an understanding on the SI paper. Kreisky and Brandt had indicated they would send the paper with Peres during first meeting between Sadat and Peres.

Meeting with Peres:

4. In his first meeting with Peres, Sadat had asked the question, "What do you want?" If it is peace, security and good neighborliness, with everything that the latter entails, Israel could have them. If it is land and sovereignty, this is unacceptable. It was clear from Begin's attitude that what Israel wants is land.

5. During a later 2-hour meeting with Peres, the latter had asked about two points. First, Sadat's view on the future of Jerusalem, and second, Sadat's views on West Bank borders. On Jerusalem, Sadat had told Peres that he believes the city should not again be divided. However, an approximately one square mile area of Old Jerusalem, Sadat had suggested, should be put under an Arab or Islamic flag and have an Arab administration. The Israelis could retain all of the rest of Jerusalem. A combined Arab/Israeli council could be established to assume responsibility for all of the city. The city should be free and have free access to all religions. Peres, according to Sadat, did not oppose this idea and even thought it might be feasible.

6. On the matter of borders, in response to a question by Sadat, Peres had affirmed that he was asking only about the West Bank. Peres had stated that in the case of Sinai, no one can deny the long-standing international border. Sadat said he reminded Peres that when U.N. Resolution 242 was adopted, all parties (including Arthur Goldberg) agreed to the possibility of minor rectifications on the West Bank. Peres, in discussing SI draft document with Sadat, had included a reference to “changes in the border.” Sadat told Peres that he did not like this language. It would simply give Begin room to maneuver. After further discussion between Peres and Sadat about what might be said, Peres had proposed the following language: “There will be changes on the borders between the West Bank and Israel which satisfy the aspirations of the Palestinians and satisfy the security of Israel.” Sadat had agreed to this Peres-proposed language, which Peres had indicated would help him in Israel. To Sadat’s surprise, however, when the SI paper was finally written, the border language was different and unacceptable to him. Sadat professed not to know why this change had been made after Peres had himself proposed substitute language, but he assumed that Kreisky and Brandt had agreed to the change for Peres’ sake. Since Peres had already by then departed, he had not been able to discuss the matter with Peres. Nor did he discuss it with Kreisky and Brandt. FonMin Kamel had made a statement, however, objecting to the “border language” in the SI.³

7. In his talk with Peres, Sadat said, he had also alluded to Weizman’s penultimate letter to Gamasy in which future Egyptian/Israeli economic cooperation was raised. He had told Peres that raising this issue now is “lunacy.” The parties have not even agreed on the lines of peace and Israel is already asking for economic cooperation. Such economic cooperation is possible, but must come in due course. He had given Peres the following example: He, Sadat, is prepared to send water from the Nile by pipeline to the Negev. He noted that he will in any case be sending water (through the Suez tunnels) to Sinai and that additional supplies could be sent to the Negev. This, Sadat envisaged as an alternative to the Israeli settlements in the West Bank. He would be ready to provide water to the Negev if the Israelis would get out of the West Bank settlements. Weizman had told him that Sharon has already begun to plan new settlements in the Negev. Sadat had cautioned Peres, however, that he was not prepared to do this kind of a thing as a “condition.” If such a thing were put in an agreement, the Egyptian people would refuse. But if, after peace, Israel asks and Al

³ Kreisky and Brandt released the plan on the Middle East on July 10 in Vienna. (“Sadat Disappointed at Israel’s Rejection of Peace Plan,” *New York Times*, July 11, 1978, p. A3)

Arish is the site of a joint Egyptian/Israeli commission, he could then say that since water is being piped to the Sinai, Egypt will also provide it to Negev in return for a charge.

8. According to Sadat, when Peres left there was “100 percent” agreement between them. Peres, Sadat noted with admiration, had spoken against the hard line of Begin, but had never betrayed Begin. Peres, like Weizman, is discreet and understanding. Begin and Dayan, regrettably, know nothing about discretion.

Meeting with Dr. Nahum Goldmann:

9. Sadat then turned to his meeting with Nahum Goldmann. Goldmann, he claimed, is also “100 percent” of his view. He is against Begin and against Israeli settlement activities. He had also told Sadat that Begin is indeed in bad health (Weizman had told Sadat the same thing). Goldman had said some way must be found to get rid of Begin, but in a constitutional manner. Goldmann had met with Ehrlich and had asked why Ehrlich had not begun steps to get rid of Begin. Ehrlich had reportedly said that the USG has not begun pressure for this purpose. If the USG did so, then all of the elements inside and outside the government who are concerned about Begin’s hard line attitude could work to get rid of him. Goldmann, according to Sadat, had praised President Carter and his reliability, but he had also expressed the hope that President Carter will before long begin to put pressure on Begin, especially since most prominent Israelis are waiting for this. Here Sadat interjected that Peres would also welcome pressure on Begin. Goldmann had made it clear that much of the Jewish community in Europe and the U.S. would also welcome such pressure on Begin.

Meeting with Austrian Jewish financier Kahan (FNU):

10. Sadat then recounted a meeting he had had with Austrian Jewish financier Kahan, who was among the Jewish financiers whom he had met last February in Paris. Kahan, according to Sadat, is a close friend of Weizman’s and in constant touch with the latter. According to Sadat, Kahan had called Begin a “lunatic who should be removed.” Kahan had emphasized his belief that the present opportunity for Middle East peace should not be lost. He had said that not only Israel, but Jews everywhere, are threatened by Begin’s hard line policy. Kahan had assured Sadat of his willingness to cooperate with the President. Both Kahan and Goldmann, Sadat noted, told him that Weizman is today the most popular man in Israel.

11. Comment: Sadat was pleased with his talks with Peres, Goldmann and Kahan. Their comments have strengthened his view that Begin is unpopular, even among many of the PriMin’s colleagues, and that his recently begun policy of trying to contribute to the internal ferment in Israel by criticizing Begin and working with anti-Begin ele-

ments is correct. Sadat expressed the hope that President Carter will soon begin to “pressure” Begin by presenting a U.S. proposal. Peres, Goldmann and Kahan, he claimed, had indicated they would welcome a more active USG role.

12. Account of Sadat’s meeting with Weizman being sent by septel.

13. In view of sensitivity of some of above comments and Sadat’s express request that this information be restricted to President Carter and the Secretary, I leave it to Department to decide whether this message should be repeated to Tel Aviv.

Eilts

265. Telegram From the Embassy in Egypt to the Department of State and the Embassy in Israel¹

Cairo, July 15, 1978, 2043Z

17127. Subject: Sadat on His Meeting With Weizman.²

1. Summary: Sadat says Kreisky and Kahan instrumental in persuading him to receive Weizman. (Frankly, he did not need much persuading, since he wants to boost Weizman.) Describes his talks with Weizman as “important” and frank. He again rejected Weizman’s suggestion of a separate Egyptian/Israeli agreement since it would not create peace in Middle East. Assured Weizman that earlier points agreed upon, even though not in Egyptian West Bank/Gaza counter-proposal³ remain valid. Reiterated his belief that Israeli declaration to evacuate West Bank and Gaza on understanding parties sit down with Israel to discuss security arrangements is still needed and outlined scenario which would follow such declaration. Told Weizman that if Hussein does not join negotiations, he, Sadat, ready to proceed to work out arrangements, including sending Egyptian forces to work with Israelis in West Bank. Informed Weizman of his refusal to meet with Dayan on grounds latter is a “maneuverer and showy politician”. He wished discuss all serious peace matters with Weizman, not Dayan. Begin should be told this. Told Weizman that if nothing has happened

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P850067–1905. Secret; Niact Immediate; Exdis Handle as Nodis.

² Weizman and Sadat met on July 13 in Salzburg.

³ See footnote 2, Document 259.

by October he cannot renew UNEF, but will not decide until September. Suggested Israelis consider evacuating area between Al-Arish and Ras Mohamed between now and then, but without expecting reciprocal concessions since he has given enough for now. Said he intends to pray next Bairam prayer⁴ on Mount Sinai. In response Weizman welcomed him come to Mount Sinai, but commented time too short between now and October to consider such an evacuation. Sadat suggested perhaps Al-Arish and Mount Sinai could be made Egyptian “enclave” until withdrawal from Sinai is completed. Sadat emphasized importance he attaches to American role, noting that had it not been for Carter’s initiative he would not have agreed to meet with Weizman. Objected to Weizman’s suggestion that UN involvement be dropped, but agreed UNEF could be dispensed with after last phase of Israeli withdrawal from Sinai. Expressed willingness give Israel two years for both settlements and airbases in Sinai, but agreed give Israel civil aircraft privileges at Naqb or plow up latter if Israelis prefer. Said London meeting not likely to succeed because of Dayan and reiterated his desire work only through Weizman. Insisted GOE will not be dragged into years of negotiations as Dayan wants. Sadat is thinking of Weizman coming to Alexandria immediately after London talks. Says Weizman was “relaxed” after their talk and that Weizman told him majority of Israelis are for “Peace Now” movement.⁵ Sadat is considerably elated about his talks with Weizman, Peres, and Jewish leaders, and reaffirmed his optimism. End summary.

2. During two hour talk today with Sadat in Alexandria (Mubarak and Kamel also present), he provided a long account of his recent meeting with Weizman in Salzburg. I have tried to put together his sometimes rambling comments as best as I can:

3. When Sadat arrived in Vienna, Kreisky told him that Weizman, following the announcement of an intended meeting with Peres, had asked the Austrian President, through Austrian Jewish financier Kahan, also to arrange a meeting between Sadat and Weizman. Kriesky had refused, saying Begin would react badly. Then, Sadat recounted, had come the latest Weizman message to Gamasy.⁶ When that message was passed to him in Vienna, he had considered the matter. He had recalled that Begin regularly charges Sadat with trying to divide the Jewish community. He had therefore sent Hassan Tuhamy to Kreisky and Kahan to ask for their views. Tuhamy had come back with two al-

⁴ Bairam refers to two different Muslim festivals. Greater Bairam is held at the end of the Islamic year and Lesser Bairam is held at the end of Ramadan.

⁵ The Peace Now movement formed in Israel after Israeli army officers published an open letter in March criticizing the Begin government’s conduct of the peace negotiations. By April, thousands of Israeli citizens were participating in rallies and marches.

⁶ See footnote 2, Document 253.

ternatives: first, Sadat might agree to receive Weizman in Salzburg; second, if Sadat decided against receiving Weizman at this time, a warm reply should be sent back which would give Weizman support on the Israeli domestic scene. The argument for the first option was that Weizman is a friend and Sadat “should not fail him”. Sadat’s agreement to receive him would boost Weizman’s standing in Israel. He, Sadat, had therefore decided to receive him.

4. Sadat described his long, private meeting with Weizman as “important”. He had asked Weizman the same question that he had put to Peres, namely, “What do you want?” If it is peace, security and good-neighborliness, fine; if it is land and sovereignty, this is unacceptable. He, Sadat, did not see any great differences between Egypt and Israel except that Begin insists upon wanting Arab land. Begin is a bitter man. On his part, Weizman had asked the same two questions that Peres had raised, i.e., Jerusalem and West Bank borders and Sadat had given the same replies. Weizman had then said that the Begin government is in a dilemma. It does not know what Sadat’s second step will be and is therefore unable to decide on how to answer Sadat’s initiative. Sadat replied that Begin has lost the initiative by failing to respond to Sadat’s initiative. Asked how Israel should have responded, Sadat told Weizman that Israel should have on its own evacuated the area from beyond Al-Arish to Ras Mohamed. Had Israel done this the whole world would have been with it and would have demanded that Sadat now do something.

5. Weizman had again asked about a separate Egyptian/Israeli agreement. Sadat had recalled this subject had come up before. He had reiterated his view that a separate agreement will not create peace. Weizman had then noted that in the last Egyptian West Bank/Gaza counterproposal the reference to normalization had been dropped. That counterproposal had even asked for complete Israeli withdrawal in the West Bank and Gaza without the proviso that the parties sit down to discuss security arrangements. Weizman had asked whether he and Sadat had not agreed earlier that during the interim period, both sides should sit down and work out security arrangements. Sadat said this was so and remained his view. The two sides should sit down during the interim period and work out security arrangements—Egypt for Gaza and Hussein for the West Bank. Weizman had noted that Israel needs military positions in the West Bank and perhaps 50 to 100 tanks stationed there. Sadat said he told Weizman he agrees with this, but it is something that President Carter “should force on us”. Sadat said he had assured Weizman that Egypt is ready to discuss all security issues.

6. Weizman had then asked Sadat for latter’s scenario. Sadat had replied that an Israeli declaration is needed to evacuate the West Bank

and Gaza, provided the parties sit down with Israel to discuss security arrangements. Whenever such a declaration is made, the parties can sit down to discuss details of the Israeli withdrawal and security. Once Israel is willing to make such a declaration, this would help Sadat in the Arab world. The concessions that Sadat would be making to the Israelis would be more acceptable in such a context. Weizman had also asked about police forces. Sadat said he had no objection, but something must also be given to the Arab world. There should be no more than one month between the time the Israeli military government ceases and an agreement is reached on the main issues. (Here Sadat recalled the withdrawal schedule set forth in Sinai I.) He had told Weizman that Egypt does not want Israel to drag it into a long discussion as Dayan would like to do. Immediately after signature of a West Bank/Gaza agreement, he would be ready to sign a Sinai agreement. Al-Arish should be the headquarters of an Egyptian/Israeli joint committee to supervise the implementation of any West Bank/Gaza agreement. He had reminded Weizman that it is not the signature of an agreement, but what comes after in terms of normalization that is important. There are PLO elements that are moderate, Sadat had noted, who could come to Al-Arish along with indigenous West Bank/Gaza Palestinians.

7. Weizman had asked what if Hussein does not join the negotiations. Sadat had told Weizman that in that case he would be prepared to proceed to work out a West Bank/Gaza arrangement with Israel, including sending Egyptian forces to work with Israeli forces in the West Bank. It might mean that some of his forces would be assassinated by the PLO, but he was not ready to put the destiny of Egypt in the hands of Syria, which had betrayed him, or the Palestinians, who are irresponsible.

8. He had reminded Weizman that “your man” (Begin) had “insulted” him by insistence on retaining the Israeli settlements in Sinai under IDF protection. Had it not been for President Carter, he, Sadat, would have broken off talks a long time ago. He had also told Weizman of his refusal to meet with Dayan. He did not want to deal with “maneuverers or showy politicians” such as Dayan. He wanted to discuss peace matters with Weizman, not Dayan. He had asked Weizman to tell Begin that these were his ideas. Whenever Begin is ready to do “big business”, he should let Sadat know. Begin should know that Sadat will never “cooperate” except through Weizman. Once agreement is reached, everything is possible, including petroleum sales, water deliveries, etc. Meetings could then take place at Al-Arish with Begin and with others.

9. Weizman had then asked about this coming October. What did Sadat intend to do? This was a subject which deeply concerned the Israeli Government. Sadat said he told Weizman that if nothing has hap-

pened by October, he cannot renew UNEF. He will not decide, however, until September. He had suggested to Weizman that Israel should consider evacuating the area between Al-Arish and Ras Mohamed between now and then. This should be “a silent withdrawal”. He, Sadat, will not give any concession for this. He had already given all the concessions. Recalling that during the last Bairam he had prayed at Jerusalem, Sadat had then told Weizman that he intends to pray next Bairam on Mount Sinai, where God spoke to Moses. If the Israelis try to shoot him, this was up to them. Weizman had assured him he will be welcome, but had argued that time is very short to consider such an evacuation. Sadat had thereupon told Weizman that if more time is needed, perhaps Al-Arish and Mount Sinai could be made an “enclave” (Egyptian) until the Israeli withdrawal from Sinai is completed. He had also noted that Yamit, the area which Israel is trying to “grab”, is beyond Al-Arish.

10. Weizman had then asked about the Melize airbase.⁷ Sadat had said this should be plowed up. Weizman had responded that this should not be done since the airbase might be important to Gamasy. Sadat said if this is the case, it did not matter to him. He repeated that he had told Weizman to go to Begin and tell the latter all that Sadat had said. He should emphasize to Begin that the latter’s hard line will bring nothing from Sadat. He had learned from Weizman’s messages and from comments made by General Tamir that the Israelis keep urging that the American involvement be dropped and that direct talks take place. He had emphasized to Weizman that the American role is very important. Had it not been for President Carter’s initiative, he would not have agreed to meet with Weizman. He knew that Begin is bitter about the United States, but even Israeli public opinion, which would resist U.S. pressure, still wants an American role. President Carter, Sadat had emphasized, is a friend and should be given full credit for any success. Weizman had finally agreed that the United States should remain actively involved. Sadat had also made clear to Weizman that he intended to tell us everything about the talks.

11. Weizman had then asked about the UN involvement. Why should this not be dropped? Sadat had replied that when the Israeli withdrawal reaches the international border in Sinai the possibility of dispensing with UNEF could be considered. In the meantime, UNEF is necessary. Weizman had then suggested dispensing with UNEF in the first phase of withdrawal from Sinai. Sadat had again insisted UNEF could only be dispensed with in the last phase, i.e. after combined Egyptian/Israeli supervisory committee is formed.

⁷ The Melize (or Meliz) airbase is located in the Sinai, about 56 miles east of the Suez Canal.

12. Weizman had asked about the settlements and the two remaining airbases in Sinai. Sadat said he was willing to give Israel two years for both the settlements and the airbases. This should be enough time to build new airbases in the Negev, but he would not cede one inch of Egyptian territory. He could give civil aircraft privileges for Israeli aircraft at Naqb or, if the Israelis prefer, Naqb could be plowed up. Sadat indicated full understanding of Israeli concern about Naqb and its relationship to Eilat.

13. Weizman had asked about the London meeting. Sadat says he told Weizman it will not succeed because Dayan will be going there to “maneuver”. Dayan will simply use it for “showmanship” and to try to improve his image. Asked what his attitude will be toward the London meeting, Sadat told Weizman to make it clear to Begin that he will not deal with anyone except Weizman. He did not want to deal with a “maneuverer” like Dayan. He, Sadat, was not a “traditional politician”. Dayan distorts everything and has no scruples. He would instruct Kamel to make the Egyptian position clear, but GOE will not be dragged into years of negotiations as Dayan wants. Kamel will not continue talks after London if Israelis do not introduce some new element. He had refused to give Weizman anything for Begin in the form of “further movement” (by that he meant new Egyptian concessions) as long as Begin continues to adopt his hard line attitude.

14. Weizman had urged that Sadat not break contacts with Israel. He had told Weizman that when he decided to receive the latter, it was to strengthen President Carter’s hand. The possibility of future meetings can be considered and GOE will be in constant contact with President Carter. Weizman had asked what should come next. Sadat had told him that if there are satisfactory answers to the points he had made to Weizman, Weizman should return with a combined team in order to work out arrangements. After the West Bank/Gaza settlement, he would sign a Sinai agreement. Weizman had assured him he would speak to Begin privately and it was Sadat’s understanding that Weizman did so yesterday. Sadat spoke of Weizman coming to Alexandria immediately after the London talks. Weizman had been “relaxed” after their talk. Weizman had also told him that the majority of Israelis are “for the Peace Now” movement.

15. Comment: Sadat, although tired, was clearly elated about his talks with Weizman, Peres, Goldman and Kahan. His distrust of Dayan (and Begin) is as deep as ever. He wants to work through Weizman, not Dayan, and believes this avenue is promising. He is talking about possibility of a Weizman-Peres-Ehrlich-Yadin alignment to replace Begin. Peres allegedly told him he would be willing serve under Weizman. He continues attach great importance to active USG role and still wants USG proposal as a means of pressing Begin. Despite what he told

Weizman about not renewing UNEF in October if nothing has happened by then, I believe this is still an open question for him. Much will depend upon what we are willing to do. He says that, admitting all of the difficulties (including Begin), he is convinced that something positive will come out of his initiative and remains an optimist. He will continue his contacts with Weizman, Peres, Goldmann and Jewish leaders abroad. He says Kahan told him in confidence that latter and Edmond Rothschild had recently told Begin that they refuse hypothecate a \$1 billion loan unless Begin shows more flexibility. I have not for some time seen Sadat as upbeat as he was today.

Eilts

266. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Kent, England, July 17, 1978, 9:15 p.m.

SUBJECT

Talks—Middle East Peace Negotiations

PARTICIPANTS

U.S.

Secretary of State Vance
Ambassador Lewis

Israel

Foreign Minister Dayan
Attorney General Barak

The Secretary began his first bilateral meeting with Foreign Minister Dayan by saying that he wishes to do everything possible to bring the parties together, help bridge gaps and so forth—but above all would prefer to be able to get the two parties to deal directly with each other. We hope after these meetings at Leeds to move on to other meetings in the Middle East, and we intend to continue to be active. But one of the problems here is to see how best we can play our role in the next phase. He then asked Dayan how best the time at Leeds Castle could be employed.

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East Subject File, Box 2, Arab-Israeli Peace Negotiations 1978 Volume II [III]. Secret; Nodis. Drafted by Lewis. The meeting took place at Leeds Castle. The talks were originally planned to be held in London, but were moved to Leeds Castle in Kent for security reasons.

Dayan then talked at some length about what he believes can be the solution to the problem, leaving aside for the moment negotiating modalities. He stressed that he had not talked to Begin, and that if the Egyptian Government were not interested in his approach he would make no effort to sell it to his own Prime Minister.

Dayan said he thought a five-year transitional agreement for the West Bank and Gaza can be achieved, but he did not know whether the Egyptians would be ready to sign a formal treaty for these territories if Hussein will not join. "Our two proposals meet at a number of points; for example, the Israeli plan specifies a five-year period during which the Palestinian Arabs take over authority. We propose abolishing the military government. We propose talks among four parties to reach agreement. We propose a full review after five years, while they say that the final stage for the Palestinians to take over the territories occurs after five years and so forth." Dayan admitted that there were a number of divergencies of a major sort. The most important one is that the Egyptians want a pre-commitment to withdrawal now; Israelis wish to have a permanent right to purchase land and to continue settling in areas of the West Bank, and they wish to leave the sovereignty question open to later review. This he said is the major difference: the concept of total withdrawal on the one hand vs. the concept of "living together" on the other. Dayan then stressed that with the present Israeli government there is no chance of obtaining a pre-commitment to withdrawal or a statement which clearly opens the way to eventual Jordanian sovereignty over the West Bank. The most that can be obtained from Begin is what has been achieved: a commitment to leave the sovereignty issue aside for at least the next five years.

Dayan then said he wanted to make one thing very clear so there would be no misunderstanding in the meetings. The Israeli government cannot accept the proposition that agreements on various kinds of security arrangements could make it possible to give the kind of withdrawal commitment the Arabs are asking. Security measures cannot substitute for some form of Israeli presence in the territories, at least for this government, and he believed the same would be true for any other government. If someone proposed a territorial compromise "he would want to see the precise lines they are proposing" but he didn't think any real territorial compromise is in the minds of the Egyptians, and "minor border modifications" plus security guarantees would not be sufficient to assure that the Israeli security problem had been met.

Dayan said that the Begin Government's proposal amounted to a five-year transitional period—with sovereignty left open and with agreement about decisions to be taken at the end of five years about a number of the relationships between the people of the territories and

their neighbors. If the Egyptian government would agree, he thought the meetings at Leeds Castle should concentrate on discussing the details of the regime during the five years. He said again that there was no way to convince the Begin Government to make a pre-commitment to withdrawal.

The Secretary said he appreciated this run-down on the Israeli position and that he saw the matter from a slightly different approach. He saw a number of common elements between the Egyptian and Israeli proposals: the five-year period, the need to establish real self-government, the need for territorial security arrangements, and although not explicitly in the proposal the Egyptian commitment to seeking agreement on a real presence and real relations, and the anticipated large role for Jordan. He said the key difference between the parties is obviously what happens after five years and, for the Egyptians, all the major issues come back to this point.

Dayan inquired whether there was even the slightest chance of leaving the question of what happens after five years to be decided after five years, not now. The Secretary said "I can't rule it out." Dayan said he did not think we were too far apart on the five-year period itself; if they would agree to leave the subsequent decisions to that point then there would be a chance for a real breakthrough. On the other hand if they wanted a pre-commitment now to the outcome, and the transition period is just a period of implementation of decisions "then," he said, "we're in trouble." The Secretary said he agreed and he had no adequate answer.

Dayan then restated the question he has stated frequently over the past months to us: whether if agreement could be reached on the West Bank and Gaza Sadat would go ahead and sign it, even if Hussein hangs back. The Secretary said he thought the answer was: that if agreement could be reached they would go ahead to settle without Jordan if necessary, including even the deployment of Egyptian forces to assist in the security role of the West Bank.

Dayan, commenting on a point by Attorney General Barak, said again that the present Israeli Government will never make a pre-commitment to the ultimate status to be decided after five years, but, he said, the Government could agree on the nature of the transitional regime for five years and there was a good chance to agree to the "Aswan Formula", so long as it is clear that a Palestinian state is excluded.² He again urged upon the Secretary the importance of trying to use the five-year period to "learn to live together" and to see what attitudes would be on both sides at the end of that period before making ultimate

² Carter's Aswan statement called for Palestinian participation in determining their future. See footnote 5, Document 187.

decisions. Moreover, if decisions are insisted on now, he saw no way to make such progress.

The Secretary went back to a point Dayan had made earlier to ask whether there was no way in which security arrangements could substitute for an Israeli presence on the West Bank, no matter how satisfactory they might be. Dayan said that was indeed the case. If one thought that a commitment to full withdrawal could be exchanged for a mix of concrete security arrangements, he was mistaken. Some form of Israeli presence as part of the security arrangements would be necessary.

Dayan then stressed the difficult position Begin faced in his own party for having left the sovereignty option open. To go beyond that politically was impossible for him if he wished to do so. Dayan suggested instead trying to leave agreement on the mechanisms for making a decision after five years. He said he honestly believed that the Palestinians would ask at that time for a much wider link with Jordan combined with some form of economic “common market relationship” with Israel. He could not say how Gaza could be split economically from Israel in any rational fashion. He then reviewed at length his concept of reviewing the relationship among the parties and deciding on them after five years, as distinct from deciding on the ultimate sovereignty of the land.

The Secretary asked whether it would make any difference if Israel had a security treaty of a NATO type, with regard to its ability to decide about the ultimate status. Dayan again said that even such a treaty, if coupled with withdrawal and only minor border modifications, would not be satisfactory. He said he would see great value in a security treaty, in particular if it involved physical presence or peace facilities, but it could not be substituted for near total withdrawal.

The Secretary then asked what would be the factors which could make Israel seriously consider withdrawal. Dayan replied that he could see it only happening if there were serious Arab proposals for territorial compromise in which some significant portion of the West Bank became part of Israel and directly defensible borders were established. He gave the example of Gush Etzion³ which could never be abandoned.

The Secretary asked whether the question is one of security or of philosophy and religious conviction. Dayan replied that he, for example, is not particularly religious, but that he cannot see a solution if Israelis are viewed as foreigners in Judea and Samaria. They must have a right to be able to go there and to stay there, so long as they do not

³ A reference to Jewish settlements south of Jerusalem in the West Bank. Jewish settlers had originally built villages there during the 1920s, but they were destroyed during the 1948 Arab-Israeli War. Jewish settlers returned after the 1967 Arab-Israeli War to re-establish the settlements.

infringe on the rights of the Arabs. It was not purely a religious or purely a security question.

The Secretary then asked “but what then is the yardstick for where the border should be?” Dayan replied that in his opinion there is no possible valid border line. “We can’t find it. I’ve tried too long.” What we need instead is a system which permits Jews and Arabs in the West Bank to live together and to move freely back and forth. Both he and former Foreign Minister Allon had tried to negotiate a dividing line without success. If someone wishes to propose one let him do so, but Dayan did not know how division could really be achieved.

There was then some brief discussion of proposals for the meeting the next morning.

At the end of this conversation Dayan said that he would like to review exactly what he believed to be the maximum extent of the Israeli position with regard particularly to the question of what happens after the five-year period. He made a number of statements, then asked Attorney General Barak whether he had exceeded the authority of the Cabinet’s decision. Barak did indeed tell him that he thought he had gone farther than he was authorized to do with regard to what might be decided after five years. He and Dayan recalled to each other some moments of unhappiness on the part of Prime Minister Begin with statements Dayan had made during his last Washington visit. The end result of this discussion was that overnight, Dayan and Barak put on paper a careful statement of Dayan’s position. This “non paper” was handed to Ambassador Lewis on the morning of July 18, strictly as a personal statement of the Foreign Minister. The text of this “non paper” follows:

“1. A proposal for a peace treaty which would be based upon the withdrawal of Israel to the pre-1967 demarcation lines (with minor modifications) and the establishment of Arab sovereignty on the areas will not be acceptable to Israel even if such a proposal is accompanied by a promise for security arrangements. Israel’s opposition to any such arrangement derives from reasons based on security, principle (national) and practical considerations.

“2. Should a proposal for a peace treaty based upon a concrete territorial compromise be submitted, Israel, in accordance with previous statements, would be ready to consider it.

“3. If the Israeli peace proposal (Self Rule) is accepted, Israel will be prepared, as provided in sections 24 and 26 of the proposal, to discuss after five years the question of sovereignty (or permanent status) of the areas. Although these provisions do not call for a decision on the subject, it is the personal view of the Foreign Minister that an agreement on this question is possible.”

267. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Kent, England, July 17, 1978

PARTICIPANTS

Egypt

Mohamed Ibrahim Kamel, Foreign Minister

Ahmed Maher, Foreign Minister's Chef du Cabinet

United States

The Secretary

Ambassador Eilts, Cairo

Foreign Minister Kamel first conveyed to the Secretary the warm greetings of President Sadat. The Secretary asked that his greetings and respects be passed to Sadat. Kamel spoke of the special feeling that Sadat has for the Secretary and President Carter and indicated that he shares these feelings. GOE places great hopes in the United States, President Carter and the Secretary. He noted that Egypt has entered a new and more active phase which, hopefully, will achieve something. He asked about the Secretary's talks with Dayan.²

The Secretary said that he had had good and serious talks with Dayan. He then asked how Kamel viewed the situation. He wanted Kamel's thoughts on how to proceed. There are now two West Bank/Gaza plans on the table.³ There are points of commonality in several areas, but also sharp differences. Both plans call for five-year transitional periods. Both speak about self-government, although they differ about what the future should be. Both speak of security arrangements for the transitional period and afterwards. Kamel noted that he had not seen the latter in the Israeli plan. The Secretary noted that the Israeli plan talks about a transitional period. Both sides also talk about Jordanian participation if King Hussein is willing to come in. Although not in the plan, behind each is the belief that a true peace should be achieved in terms of normal relations between the countries.

Points of difference include withdrawal and the participation of the Palestinians in the determination of their future. The Secretary's view, after talking with Dayan, was that the Aswan formula should resolve this last aspect. Thus the major difference is what happens after

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East Subject File, Box 2, Arab-Israeli Peace Negotiations 1978 Volume II [II]. Secret; Exdis. Drafted by Eilts. The meeting took place at Leeds Castle.

² See Document 266.

³ For the Israeli plan, see the Attachment to Document 177 and footnote 6, Document 180. For the Egyptian counterproposal, see footnote 2, Document 259.

the five-year transitional period. That is the big question in terms of sovereignty and related matters. Despite these differences, there appears to be more common ground than the Secretary had believed was the case before the two plans were put forward. He was seeking to be pragmatic, without expressing opinions on how to approach the problem.

The Secretary thought that it would be useful during the two days of the Leeds conference to explore the areas of commonality as well as the differences. Discussions on the common elements might be helpful to define more clearly and to identify differences. There might then be a discussion of the areas of disagreement. He had asked Dayan if the latter would be willing to go first, which the Secretary knew Kamel would prefer. Although Dayan would have preferred that the Egyptian plan be discussed first, he had agreed to proceeding as the Secretary had suggested.

The Secretary thought that, so far as procedure is concerned and provided the Egyptians are agreeable, he should first have a talk with Dayan and then with Kamel. Thereafter there should be a trilateral plenary session with the full delegations. At that session Dayan would explain the Israeli views and Kamel could put questions. This procedure could then be reversed. Thereafter, it might be useful if a meeting were held with delegations on each side reduced to three people. This would make the talks less inhibited. Kamel agreed. He again expressed appreciation for the United States' role. He doubted, however, that focussing on commonalities between the two plans would get us anywhere. The plans are based on different policies and objectives. The Israeli objective is annexation and staying on in the West Bank/Gaza. The Egyptian plan is based on withdrawal.

The Secretary noted that we must come to grips with this problem and proceed with the process he had outlined. Doing so will help the Administration. Kamel said he left it up to the Secretary, but reiterated his doubts that the procedure would lead anywhere so long as the Israelis deny the applicability of the withdrawal provision of 242 to the West Bank.

The Secretary emphasized that 242 must be the basis of any settlement. Kamel agreed, but noted that Sadat has no confidence in Begin or Dayan. Sadat is convinced that the Israeli objective is to drag the parties into details in order to buy time. The Israelis are likely to leak any points of agreement and suggest that those aspects of their plan have been accepted by Egypt. GOE has to bear in mind the situation in the Arab world. He hoped that the United States will come out with its proposal and asked whether this is still the U.S. objective. The Secretary assured him that it is and that the United States will do so.

Kamel noted that the Israeli answers to our two questions were not really answers.⁴ All of the Arabs believe this is the case. He alluded to the importance of bringing Jordan into the negotiations. Jordan, he noted, will be influenced by Saudi Arabia. The Saudis are telling the Egyptians that they had predicted nothing will come out of the Sadat initiative and that it is time to stop that initiative. They note that this does not mean the Arabs wish to give up the peace process; it simply means that the Arabs must get together again and begin planning for a united Arab approach in the hope that this might have better results. The Saudis had only reluctantly agreed that Egypt might continue for a while longer, but without conviction that anything will come of it. Then the Israeli answers had come and the GOE was at a loss how to answer its Arab friends.

The Egyptian understanding was that the Leeds meeting would enable the U.S. to position itself. For this reason, GOE had agreed to attend. But before talks had even taken place, we had asked GOE to agree to another meeting at al-Arish.⁵ Kamel asked rhetorically what the GOE is to say to the Arabs about this when the Leeds conference has not even begun. If something positive comes from the Leeds conference, he would be willing to have a second, third or even other meetings. If nothing positive results, how can Egypt explain to its Arab friends the present meeting, let alone proposed future meetings. He had briefed Saud Bin Faysal about the possibility of a London conference. Saud had been skeptical. Kamel had emphasized to Saud that the conference will take place on President Carter's initiative. Although Saud had accepted this, he remained skeptical. Kamel doubted that getting into too much detail at Leeds will help. This is what the Israelis want. It will drag Egypt into protracted talks and cause further divisions between Egypt and the Arabs.

The Secretary again recalled that we had agreed to provide suggestions and reaffirmed that we will do so at the appropriate time. He indicated that it would help us if, as a prelude, there were a direct discussion of the respective plans, their points of commonality and their differences. This would sharpen the differences and, hopefully, broaden the areas where the parties agree. The United States can then come in as an interested party, and as a friend of both parties, as it had done on previous occasions where an impasse had been reached. Such

⁴ See Document 255.

⁵ According to Ambassador Eilts in telegram 16355 from Cairo, July 5, it was Sadat's idea to hold Foreign Minister talks at Al Arish. Sadat believed "an Al Arish venue would demonstrate to Egyptians and other Arabs that Israel recognize Egyptian sovereignty over Sinai and are serious about negotiating withdrawal issues." Eilts noted, however, that Kamel found the idea "galling to go to Egyptian territory which the Israelis are occupying." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P850056-2344)

a procedure portrays the United States before its own people and the world as implementing what it said it would do. The United States is likely to have more support by following such a procedure than otherwise. Kamel responded that Egypt is most willing to help.

The Secretary emphasized that we do not want the talks to drag on. He planned to send Atherton to the area after the Leeds talks and would thereafter himself visit the area in early August. We could then see what the United States might put forward. Kamel endorsed the idea, provided that the United States consults fully with Egypt before it puts anything forward. Kamel observed that even if agreement is reached on 25 of the 29 points, it will not get us anywhere so long as withdrawal is refused. The Secretary noted this is very much in his mind. Kamel stressed that Egypt is prepared to provide security guarantees that go beyond 242. The Secretary noted that if Egypt did so and this could be put in our proposal, it would strengthen that proposal. Kamel qualified his comment by noting that when the West Bank/Gaza is being discussed, there is a limit to what Egypt can say about security. It is the Jordanians and the Palestinians who must eventually be involved. At such time as the Jordanians are engaged in the negotiations, elaboration of security measures can be attempted. But the initial effort ought to be to bring in the Jordanians.

The Secretary asked if this required a declaration of principles. Kamel responded that it requires an Israeli commitment to withdraw. Then security can be discussed and the Saudis can be asked to use their influence with the Jordanians. The Secretary noted that King Hussein had written to us about this.⁶ Kamel affirmed that the Jordanians have shown considerable interest. If the Israelis could be induced to agree to withdraw, the Jordanians would come “on the first plane” and broader security measures could be discussed.

The Secretary asked what can be done with the Saudis or through them. Kamel thought a great deal could be done. With Saudi support and participation, one could even think of radical changes in the Syrian position. The Secretary asked what the Jordanians could add in terms of security. Kamel recalled that the Egyptian idea is to link the West Bank/Gaza with Jordan. If the Jordanians are not present at the negotiations, it is difficult to discuss this. If they are there, the subject could be discussed along with other related security matters, i.e. border rectification, early warning station, demilitarization, UNEF, etc. But all of this, he emphasized, requires Jordanian and Palestinian participation.

⁶ The letter from King Hussein has not been found, but Warren Christopher met with Hussein on July 15 and described their meeting about the Middle East peace process in telegram 179560 to Amman. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, N780006–0287)

The Secretary asked whether Jordan is still needed if one is thinking about Israeli troops remaining (in the transition period). Kamel said yes. The Secretary noted that Sadat is considering the possibility that Jordan will not join. Kamel agreed, noting Sadat had said this to Weizman.⁷ If the President thinks Jordan will not join, he is agreeable to Egyptian military participation, but this is difficult. It will expose Sadat. We should not tell this to Dayan. The Secretary suggested that the Egyptian delegation should speak seriously about what it has in mind with respect to security. This might be in terms of withdrawal in return for security. An unwillingness to discuss this could suggest that the talks are not serious. Kamel noted there are two phases to security. Egypt can speak in general terms of what might be done. If other parties are also engaged, then matters like rectification could be discussed. The Secretary emphasized that Egypt should talk about the principle of withdrawal in return for security. Kamel again agreed, but indicated that some matters will have to wait until others join the negotiations. Egypt will influence them and he was sure they will not object to rectification.

The Secretary then asked how specific we might be in the coming two days on security matters. If, for example, he were to put a theoretical question, such as assuming that withdrawal takes place, what kind of security arrangements would be envisaged? What could Kamel say? Kamel noted that he could indicate the six points that Sadat had already mentioned.⁸ These could be applied to the West Bank. Later when Jordan and the Palestinians participate, these could be elaborated. But in order to get Jordan into the negotiations, the Israelis must first commit themselves to withdrawal in return for security.

The Secretary noted that there is no change in our positions. The timetable is roughly what we had earlier indicated. It is important to have serious talks at Leeds on both commonalities and differences in the context of the Secretary's coming to the area in a few weeks with the United States proposal. This would help us advance our proposal. The Secretary pointed out that he must have a reason to come out and table our ideas.

In terms of a possible statement, Kamel said he would rather not say that progress has been achieved unless this is the case. The Secretary noted that this need not be said. It should suffice to say that serious talks were held and that he planned to come to the area again to meet with the parties. In the meantime, Atherton would be sent to the area.

The Secretary indicated he would prefer to say we agreed on a subsequent meeting in which he would participate. He knew this presents

⁷ See Document 265.

⁸ See footnote 2, Document 259.

certain problems for the Egyptian side, but asked that they think about it. Such a meeting would give us a forum in which to table United States suggestions. Kamel agreed that the Egyptians would think about it. The Secretary emphasized that any U.S. proposal should not look like an imposed solution. It should be based on the differences that have arisen.

Maher said the Egyptian side will not say anything. There need be no joint communique. The Secretary agreed, indicating that he would make the statement. His position would be that serious discussions have taken place and that he planned to come to the area in a few weeks' time for a further meeting. At that meeting, the Secretary again told Kamel, our proposal will be put forward. Kamel again agreed to think about it, but contended that any further meeting should be the last. He would have to ask Sadat for instructions.

The Secretary again indicated that the Egyptian side should seek to explore areas of agreement. Kamel doubted that this would be useful. The Secretary urged that Egyptians be ready to talk, but should ask Israel for answers. Kamel said Egypt would put the American questions. Maher noted that the Egyptians could ask what security arrangements the Israelis have in mind. The Secretary reaffirmed that serious questions should be put, i.e. what do you want, why, how does this affect what you are ready to do, etc. He noted the Israelis have never spelled this out. The Egyptians should ask sharp questions and so would he.

Kamel noted that after the Israeli Cabinet meeting,⁹ Sadat had been irritated. The Israelis had spoken of a new Egyptian plan allegedly submitted to Weizman. Kamel and Sadat had had a general talk with Peres.¹⁰ But the Egyptian plan is what has been presented. GOE does not want to give the idea that it is going beyond what it has already presented.

Kamel asked whether the meetings would be informal. The Secretary answered in the affirmative. Eilts noted the difference between a joint statement as opposed to a statement by the Secretary, and the Secretary said he would like to speak to the press. Kamel again said he would not like to say the meeting has been useful if it has not been so. We could perhaps say the talks had been serious. The Secretary agreed that the talks could be described as serious, covering areas of agreement and disagreement. Use of the term "progress" could be avoided. He thought the Israelis would accept a statement along these lines. The talks had been serious, the differences and commonalities had been explained and willingness had been expressed to discuss the issues in the future.

⁹ A reference to the July 9 Cabinet meeting. See footnote 2, Document 261.

¹⁰ See Document 264.

Kamel asked whether, if the Secretary felt the following day and thereafter that the Israelis are not forthcoming in terms of answers, would another meeting still be needed. The Secretary replied in the affirmative, indicating he needs another meeting. Without it he would be accused in the United States of trying to ram United States ideas down the Israeli throats. Kamel noted that it might be possible to say nothing after the present meeting, but when the Secretary came to the area, he could suggest another meeting and the Egyptians would agree.

Maher observed that when points of agreement and disagreement are spoken of, the Egyptian side would add the reservation that withdrawal has not been agreed upon. The Secretary said this was agreeable. The results of the conference could be divided between the specifics of the five-year transitional period and the fundamental question of what happens afterwards. Eilts suggested that common points not be downgraded. Kamel expressed concern that agreement to another meeting would undermine Egyptian agreement with the Jordanians.

Eilts noted that Kamel should assume that Dayan knows what the President told Weizman. The Egyptian side should not say less than that. Kamel contended that he could not go that far. He could say that nothing specific could be agreed upon without the Jordanians or Palestinians present. Egypt could perhaps provide some security forces for Gaza, but not for the West Bank without Jordan and the Palestinians. The Secretary noted that the Israelis had asked about this many times. Kamel responded that, if the question is raised, he would argue that the Israelis should answer the American questions. Eilts suggested that Kamel could say what the President had told Weizman, coupling this with the need for withdrawal. Kamel expressed concern that the Israelis will distort this. He thought it was dangerous to couple the President's idea with withdrawal. He also expressed his personal concern about Sadat's meetings with Peres and Weizman. As Maher had pointed out, the Israelis had leaked what the President said to Weizman before the latter had even spoken to Begin. Kamel said the Egyptian side was willing to be helpful. This was the spirit in which it had been sent and these were his instructions. There were, however, some things he did not know about the American proposal.

Kamel indicated that he had told Sadat that he cannot go to al-Arish. Thereafter the President, after thinking about it, came up with the al-Arish/Mount Sinai enclave idea.¹¹

¹¹ In telegram 8967 from Tel Aviv, July 16, Ambassador Lewis relayed Weizman's description of the "enclave idea," which Sadat raised at their meeting on July 13. According to Weizman, Sadat suggested an Egyptian enclave at Al-Arish and Mount Sinai where Sadat would build a "peace center." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840157–2626)

Eilts asked Kamel about his latest thinking on a bilateral meeting with Dayan. The Secretary thought this would be useful. Kamel responded that he could not say the same things that Sadat had said to Weizman. Sometimes the President gets himself into an embarrassing situation. He wants to show his readiness to go a long way to make peace. The Secretary noted that Weizman had reported the results of Sadat's talks and that Dayan knows about them. Kamel reiterated that if the Israelis are willing to stipulate withdrawal, he could commit the GOE along the lines Sadat had suggested. Egypt is willing to take risks, but does not want to be indefinitely entangled in a problem. Peace would be possible in two years if the Israelis would implement 242.

Alluding to the Vienna statement,¹² Kamel said this had not been fairly handled. It had been distorted. Somewhat emotionally, he noted his concern for Sadat and charged that the Israeli method of proceeding is destroying the President. Kamel asked for the Secretary's reaction if Dayan turned out to be more procedural than substantive. The Secretary thought Dayan would be prepared to engage in substantive talks.

He might say, however, that he cannot commit the Israeli Government to withdrawal.

It was agreed to meet again the following day.

¹² See footnote 3, Document 264.

268. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Kent, England, July 18, 1978, 9:30 a.m.

SUBJECT

Talks—Middle East Peace Negotiations

PARTICIPANTS

U.S.

Secretary of State Vance

Ambassador Lewis

Israel

Foreign Minister Dayan

Attorney General Barak

The conversation opened with Dayan's handing to the Secretary the written clarification in the form of a talking paper which had been prepared overnight to make precise the statements Dayan had made at the bilateral meeting the evening of July 17 (see text of this "non paper" in final section of memcon on meeting for July 17).²

Dayan reiterated that if the Israeli peace proposal were accepted the Israeli government would be ready to discuss the sovereignty issue at the end of the five years, although in his personal opinion the chances for acceptance of the Israeli proposal were obviously very poor.

The Secretary said he had talked with Foreign Minister Kamel last night.³ Kamel, he said, recognized some areas of commonality between the two proposals but he kept returning to the fundamental point that 242 requires Israeli withdrawal and that peace and security can only be obtained by relinquishing territory. Kamel is prepared, he said, to discuss the details of the two plans, but this thorny question of principle remains at the center for him.

Dayan said he would like to make one further point. If anyone wished to make a proposal for territorial compromise it should and will be discussed by the Israeli government. But such a proposal should be specific, it should state where the dividing partition line would be, and obviously it could not be merely a matter of "10 inches or so." He does not personally believe partition is negotiable, but if the Arabs do be-

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East Subject File, Box 2, Arab-Israeli Peace Negotiations 1978: Volume II [III]. Secret; Nodis. Drafted by Lewis. The meeting took place at Leeds Castle.

² See Document 266.

³ See Document 267.

lieve it is, they should spell out their proposals so that it can be seriously discussed.

Finally, Dayan asked whether Kamel would agree to holding further meetings after the Leeds talks. The Secretary replied that he did not yet know what would be proposed, but that he intended to pursue this matter privately with Kamel during the talks rather than bringing it up in the plenary sessions.

269. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Kent, England, July 18, 1978, 10 a.m.

SUBJECT

Middle East Discussions at Leeds Castle

PARTICIPANTS

Secretary of State Cyrus Vance
Hon. Alfred L. Atherton, Ambassador-at-Large
Hon. Harold Saunders, Assistant Secretary of State for Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs
Hon. Samuel Lewis, U.S. Ambassador to Israel
Hon. Hermann Eilts, U.S. Ambassador to Egypt
Mr. William Quandt, NSC Staff Member
Mr. Michael Sterner, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State

H.E. Moshe Dayan, Minister of Foreign Affairs
H.E. Aharon Barak, Attorney General
H.E. Simcha Dinitz, Israeli Ambassador to U.S.
Mr. Meir Rosenne
Mr. Naphtali Lavie
Mr. Eli Rubenstein

H.E. Muhammad Ibrahim Kamel, Minister of Foreign Affairs
H.E. Usama al-Baz, Under Secretary
Mr. Abdalrauf al-Ridi
Mr. Nabil al-Arabi

Secretary Vance began with a review of the similarities that he detected in the Egyptian and the Israeli proposals. In response, Foreign Minister *Dayan* described the Israeli proposal as not being a “take it or leave” proposition. He stressed that the Hebrew word for “self-rule”

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East Subject File, Box 2, Arab-Israeli Peace Negotiations 1978: Volume II [II]. Secret; Nodis. The meeting, which took place at Leeds Castle, ended at 1:40 p.m.

was really closer in meaning to “self-governing”. This means that Israel does not want to interfere in the lives of the Palestinian Arabs. Rather, Israel wants to live alongside them. The Israeli proposal deals with the ending of the military regime. The Palestinian Arabs will be able to govern themselves. The situation will be ended where Israel controls the situation through the military regime. After five years, the situation will be reviewed. Minister *Dayan* said that he was not sure that everything could be foreseen now, but that a start should be made and that the situation should be reviewed later. *Dayan* went on to say that the Israelis make a distinction among the parties to the negotiations and the parties to an eventual agreement. The negotiations should take place among Egypt, Israel, Jordan, and the Palestinian Arabs, but an eventual agreement would deal with the relations only among Israel, Jordan, and the Palestinian Arabs. The four parties would make the decisions and would maybe review the situation, but the actual relations would only be among the three parties.

Attorney General Barak emphasized that the Israeli plan was *sui generis* and for a *sui generis* situation. Israel recognizes that there are different claims to sovereignty in Judaea and Samaria. Israel has a claim, but it recognizes that other claims exist. Therefore, the question of sovereignty over the territory should be left open. The Israeli plan deals with the problem of people. It deals with the Palestinian Arabs residing there. It also helps Israel solve its problems. The plan should provide a solution to the problems of the Palestinian Arabs in Judaea, Samaria, and Gaza. Israel does not want to rule them. They should rule themselves. But this should be done without solving the territorial question. The Israeli approach takes into account existing economic ties. There is also the problem of the Palestinian Arab refugees outside. Israel does recognize that some refugees may come back.

Dayan expanded on the question of refugees. Most of them are not originally from the West Bank and Gaza. Israel is willing to let the West Bank and Gaza absorb some of the refugees, but realistically one should recognize that people are already leaving these areas. Israel has no objection if they can come back and make a living. But Israel does not want to simply see the refugee camps transferred from one area to the West Bank and Gaza.

Attorney General Barak explained that there would be a relationship between the administrative council and Jordan. In addition, the Palestinian Jews would remain responsible for questions of security and public order. These would be Israel’s responsibilities. If there are riots that threaten the security of Israel, then Israel should be able to act. This is a flexible concept, and it would require more careful definition, particularly concerning the concept of public order. For Israelis it is important to be able to go to the West Bank and not feel like they are going to

a foreign country. Israelis should be able to buy land freely. They will not expropriate land. State-owned land should be left open. Foreign Minister *Kamel* asked to which state Barak was referring. *Barak* said that the land belonged to Jordan before and was now under the authority of the military governor. Minister *Kamel* asked if this meant that Israel is occupying the land now that it controls these state lands. *Barak* replied that under international law the occupying authority assumed that responsibility. *Kamel* said that there was a difference between administration and ownership. *Barak* explained that Israel did not want it to be forbidden for Israelis to buy land from private owners or to buy land in the public domain. Secretary *Vance* asked in whom the title of the government land would be vested during the five-year transitional period. *Barak* replied that there were several possible legal solutions. The land could belong to the military governor or to the administrative council. This would be a political decision. If the land belonged to the administrative council, one would have to answer the question of what would happen if the administrative council refused to sell land to an Israeli? Israel would object to any such prohibition. There cannot be a taboo on selling to Israelis. But the actual ownership of the land can be discussed.

Minister *Dayan* described the present situation as one in which the occupying authority has taken over the land from Jordan. But the military regime will be abolished, so state-owned lands can then be dealt with through several means. It still needs to be agreed upon. But Israelis should have the right to buy land and to sell and to not be foreigners. But Israel will not use force to get land. The Israelis want to have the same rights as any citizen of Nablus. Attorney General *Barak* explained that the military governor would delegate his authority to the administrative council. The United States had asked about the evolution of authority as coming from a peace agreement. This is not foreclosed. Minister *Kamel* said that there were too many open questions. *Barak* said that this was the reason the parties should sit down and talk.

Barak explained that the Israeli self-rule plan is not meant to be transitory, but at the same time it is not fixed forever. Rather it is a plan which includes a provision for reviewing all elements after five years. If the question of sovereignty should be discussed, that would be all right. Everything can be reviewed. The plan says that it is open for review, but in this respect it can be viewed as transitional. Security, public order, and other issues can be raised after five years by each party. Israel does not know if the problems raised after five years will be solved. That depends, but everything can be reviewed. Much is left open. There may be defects in the plan as it stands, but these can all be reviewed. The parties should sit down and discuss options. And they should look for political solutions.

Dayan added several additional points. The provisions in the Israeli plan are in the nature of suggestions. For example, Israel has made suggestions on how the administrative council should be elected. But if the Palestinian Arabs don't want this, that is up to them. That is not an essential point. The essential question that should remain open is the status of Israel in the territories. This involves the right to settle and to buy land, not just for the five years, but beyond. Israel wants to be able to live there. These are the essential questions and the most difficult. Israel is saying let's have five years, by agreement. Everything will then be subject to review. There are parallels in the Egyptian and Israeli proposals. For example, both agree that it is up to the Palestinian Arabs to assume responsibility in the area and that the military government should be abolished. The same wording is almost used. We also say that it will be some time before the Palestinians can take over entirely, and we both mentioned five years or so. We don't have the same idea, but we both say that the Palestinian Arabs should run their own lives and that it will take some time to be able to do so. We also agree that some questions should be put off until after five years. We should not have too many open questions. The technical questions are not so important. But there are a few important questions, namely sovereignty and Israeli rights in the areas. Israel does not want to answer all of these questions now, but would like to leave some of them until after five years.

Foreign Minister *Kamel* expressed his pleasure at being invited to these talks. Egypt willingly came with an open mind and an open heart. He thanked Attorney General Barak for explaining the Israeli position, but noted that all of this had been covered seven months ago. Talks should not take place in a vacuum. The parties are here to implement Resolution 242. The Israeli proposal is not based on Resolution 242 at all. It is completely ignored. This is the main point. Israel's concern should be security and Egypt's concern is with Israeli withdrawal. We welcomed talks on the basis of the implementation of Resolution 242. But Israel has made no mention of 242 and its answers to the American questions were not satisfactory. The Minister said that he would ask Under Secretary al-Baz to explain the Egyptian views on the Israeli proposal and to set forward the Egyptian plan based on Resolution 242. The Minister said that he had his reservations about what Attorney General Barak said about sovereignty and Israel's plans. This is land that is inhabited by the Palestinian people and the right to sovereignty is inherent in the people who live there.

Under Secretary al-Baz then gave an overview of the Egyptian proposal. He expressed a willingness to explore all issues with the Israelis. He noted that the Egyptian proposal starts with the centrality of the Palestinian question. The dispute cannot be solved without solving this

question. It must be addressed honestly and squarely. The Israelis seem to recognize this point. If an effort is made to solve part of the problem without the Palestinians, the rest will be vulnerable. The Israeli self-rule proposal is not a valid basis for an agreement. Egypt's position is not one of absolute rejection. Egypt has tried to study the Israeli proposal, but there are two points that bother Egypt. First, it ignores the territorial question. This is glossed over. The Israelis only deal with the problems of the people, even referring to them as residents only. Minister *Dayan* said that this use of words had no special meaning. Israel simply wanted to deal with the people whose homeland is the West Bank and Gaza. *Al-Baz* said this use of words had made the Palestinians very angry. They seem to be only treated as temporary residents. *Barak* said that the word in Hebrew could be translated as inhabitants. *Al-Baz* said that this would be a better formulation. In any case, the question had to do with the Palestinian people.

The basic premises of the Israeli approach are not acceptable to the Palestinian people. Egypt wants a solution that can be sold to the Palestinians. Egypt is not going to have to live with Israel in the West Bank and Gaza. And Egypt cannot be the one to impose a solution on the Palestinians. But Egypt can try to help make any solutions attractive to the Palestinians. No Palestinian yet has accepted the idea of self-rule. It is seen as a sham, a hoax. This view is shared by all Arabs. This is seen as a way of avoiding the question of self-determination, a concept that has had legal and political importance since World War II. There seems to be a contradiction in the Israeli approach. They talk of ending their control over the lives of the residents of Judaea and Samaria, but they want to keep the occupation. Israel says it wants to abolish the military government, but it also wants to keep the military occupation. They want to ignore the day-to-day affairs of the people, but they want to control their existence. They want to have a super-imposed presence.

Al-Baz said that on these two points, the territory and the lack of self-determination, the Israeli proposal is not valid as a basis for negotiation to solve the problem. There is a third point. Egypt has hoped that it could help solve the problem, by putting forward a proposal of its own. It has tried to build on the positive ideas in the Israeli proposal. Egypt has put forward its proposal in the knowledge that the authority to sign an agreement rests with the Palestinian people, but Egypt wants to help overcome the dilemma that exists. The Arab/Israeli conflict cannot be solved unless the Palestinian problem is solved. But the Palestinians are not yet present. So Egypt must address the problem and take responsibility. It is very hard to get support for the Egyptian ideas, but it is in Egypt's interests to encourage Palestinian moderates. Egypt wants to encourage Palestinians who will be prepared to co-exist with Israel. Egypt hopes that Palestinians will support the Egyptian ap-

proach. Once the Palestinians join the negotiations, it will be easier to get into detailed questions. Now it is important to get the settlement process started. The Egyptian proposals had been made in the spirit of compromise with the objective of finding a settlement. All of the general principles concerning the framework should apply. Egypt is not talking about a separate peace agreement. This is one aspect of a comprehensive agreement. Egypt will not negotiate a separate agreement on the West Bank and Gaza or on the Sinai. This must be an integral part of a comprehensive settlement.

Dayan asked if by comprehensive the Egyptians meant that a settlement must include the Syrians as well. *Al-Baz* said that the general principles had to apply to that front as well. *Al-Baz* went on to state that Resolution 242 is already an accepted framework. It exists and it can be used. This should be kept intact, and added to if necessary and improved, but we should start from some common ground. 242 has been accepted by Israel, Egypt, Syria, Jordan, and many Palestinians. If we drop 242, there will be a vacuum; and the parties will not meet. Each side has its objections, but the elements of 242, particularly withdrawal and security, must be kept in balance. The Egyptian proposal is based on this balance of 242. It does not try to deal with tangential questions, such as the self-rule proposal does, but only focuses on the essential points. The details should come up after the Palestinians and the Jordanians have joined the negotiations. The focus should be on the essential elements, not on theoretical questions. We should discuss matters in political terms, not from a legal standpoint. The political picture is based on our wanting to reach a solution, not on writing a document which can be defended in a court of law. Egypt wants a real agreement, and not just some publicity in the United Nations or Geneva. There has to be a balance of withdrawal from the West Bank and Gaza and commitments to meet Israel's security needs. Your needs are no greater for security than ours, since the Arabs also feel threatened. But with Israel's history and her militaristic attitude, and the type of society Israel has, Sadat has recognized that for psychological reasons your need for security is greater than ours. So we do try to reassure. We have talked about six points of security: we have suggested demilitarized zones, limited force zones, United Nations forces, early warning systems, such as those in Sinai, a guarantee of innocent passage in the Gulf of Aqaba, and, most important, the normalization of relations and open borders and peaceful coexistence. It is important to eliminate hostilities. (A coffee break of approximately twenty minutes followed. The talks resumed at 11:45 a.m.)

Minister Kamel stated forcefully that the main problem can be solved quickly if Israel commits herself to withdrawal. Then everything else can be worked out. *Dayan* replied that the problem was not so

simple. We are dealing with human beings. He referred to a recent interview by the Iraqi vice president. In that interview, Saddam Hussein said that even if there were peace, Iraq would not accept Israel. There would always be war. So the Israeli leaders cannot tell their people that they can take risks when this is still the concept of the Iraqis. Israelis believe in the honesty of the Egyptians, but they also think that Iraq means what it says. The Syrians have also been reluctant in their acceptance of 242. There are different schools of thought in the Arab world. Maybe the best would be to make a clear decision now, but *Dayan* stated his belief that it would be better to live together for a few years, and let things change. He mentioned that he had recently met the British general who had been involved in the Suez campaign. He had asked him whether the British would ever go to war over Suez now. The General said that he could not explain today why Britain had gone to war in 1956. So in a little more than twenty years everything had changed. This is the reality of life. It is not practical to try to make a decision in five minutes. The Israeli people won't agree right now to pack up and leave the West Bank and Gaza while they still read of Arab hostility and hatred. Israelis can't yet imagine a French-German type of relationship. They have to get used to peace. And they have to change their concept of what is important. Maybe it would be easiest to solve problems quickly, but it is just not feasible. We should remember the British general. He now thinks the whole concept of Suez was wrong.²

Minister Kamel said that the Israelis should listen to radio Cairo not radio Baghdad. Perhaps decisions could not be made overnight, but an agreement could be reached. If the parties simply kept talking about their fears, they would never get anywhere. The Iraqis would continue with their line. *Mr. al-Baz* said that the Israeli people could be convinced that the Egyptians are prepared to accept them wholeheartedly. This can only be done, however, if there is a fair deal with no grudges remaining. If Egypt were neutralized in this sense, then the conflict would essentially end. The Palestinians and the Jordanians would also end their hostility, and even Syria some day. We could ultimately get them involved, even if not now and not here. *Mr. al-Baz* said that the Israelis should understand the domestic situation in Syria. Much of the Syrian public opinion supports Sadat, and this will make it easy eventually for the Syrians to join. Egypt has presented valid elements to deal with security. Egypt wants to hear Israel's reactions to these, and any additions that they might want to make. Egypt is bothered by the lack of any concepts for security other than the occupation of land and territory.

² Not further identified.

Mr. *al-Baz* invited Israeli comments on these points. In the Egyptian proposal, Egypt is expressing a readiness to assume its obligations. Will Israel accept her obligations and withdraw? Does Israel envisage an eventual withdrawal, even if not now? When would this happen? There is an obligation stemming from Resolution 242 and from international law for Israel to withdraw from the West Bank and Gaza. Israel has the rights of an occupying power, and we want now to end that occupation. Occupation is the highest form of violence, because it is collective violence; and it creates tension. It is therefore very costly, and Egypt wants to end this form of violence. This will provide an incentive for the Palestinians to change their resistance from a violent means to a political means. The extremists will lose support. Israel is going too far in its interpretation of its legal rights as an occupying power. Israel has administrative control over the occupied territory so that it can eventually turn that territory over to others intact. There have been many resolutions protesting any demographic changes. Israel is in these territories temporarily, not in perpetuity. If Israel is to stay in perpetuity, then it is annexation. The Palestinians will not accept coexistence with Israel if there is annexation, nor will the other Arabs. One element of the Egyptian draft involves the idea that there should not be an abrupt or chaotic transfer of authority. Egypt is not seeking a sudden change or a violent change. Egypt has accepted the idea of gradual transformation. Most Arabs were surprised that Egypt would accept a five-year transitional period, but Israel wants an orderly change which will eliminate the prospects of chaos. If Israel has ideas on how to make the transfer more orderly, Egypt is willing to listen. But there is one overriding factor. This temporary arrangement during the five-year period must be replaced by a final agreement which is acceptable to the Arabs and Palestinians. The Israeli occupation must end and there must be withdrawal. Matters would evolve gradually and we could get things to work simultaneously. But we must see the end of the tunnel. Incentives must be provided to the moderate elements to be cooperative. The third point in the Egyptian proposal refers to enlarged talks, which would include Jordan and representatives of the Palestinians. There are a number of points on which these talks would concentrate. Egypt wants the cooperation of the Palestinians in these talks.

Dayan asked if Mr. *al-Baz* was referring to the inhabitants of the area or not necessarily so. *Al-Baz* replied that the Israelis have said that there is room for the Palestinians to be absorbed in the West Bank and Gaza. It is immaterial to speak now of which Palestinians would negotiate. The West Bank and Gaza would be represented by people who opt to go back to that area. Egypt is speaking of those Palestinians who accept to be part of the peace process. They either now live in the West Bank and Gaza or they plan to do so in the future. They should have a role. Some issues cannot be dealt with in their absence. They will be

needed for the implementation of any agreement. Egypt would like to know if there are other issues in addition to those mentioned in the third point of the Egyptian proposal that should be dealt with in the enlarged negotiations.

It is also envisaged in the Egyptian proposal that both Egypt and Jordan would continue to assume certain responsibilities—Egypt in the Gaza Strip, and Jordan in the West Bank—along with the Palestinians. This is meant to facilitate the transition. The last paragraph also says that Egypt and Jordan will guarantee security arrangements. These would be continuing arrangements. This goes beyond Egypt's commitment to help with the interim administration. As a guarantor, Egypt would be legally bound to uphold the agreement. If Israel has a guarantee from the Arab states most directly involved, this should provide an element of reassurance. So this is seen by us as an added element of security. Egypt and Jordan can keep the Palestinians from violating the agreement.

Mr. al-Baz suggested that the two proposals be examined. There are some areas of agreement. In order to narrow the gap further, the essential aspects will have to be dealt with first. This involves providing security for Israel and withdrawal for the Arabs. If there is such an agreement, then it will be easier to narrow the gap on the other details. The parties should not beat around the bush on minor details. The Egyptian proposal focuses on ending the occupation and providing security for Israel which will lead to real peace. Egypt is convinced that the continuation of the occupation is a threat to peace. The occupation now stands in the way of peace. It is a continued source of insecurity. The recurring theme in the self-rule proposal is the continuation of Israeli control. There is no assurance that the situation will ever change. Israel is committed to a review, but this does not rule out an Israeli veto. So Israel can perpetuate the status quo if she wants. When Israel talked about future relations in its answers to the Americans, what does this mean? Is this only the status of the people, or is it the territory, or is it a combination?

Foreign Minister Dayan congratulated *Mr. al-Baz* for the clarity of his presentation. He then asked a question based on the assumption that Egypt and Israel might reach agreement on the Palestinian issue whether it took five minutes or five days. Would Egypt be prepared to sign a peace treaty with Israel concerning Sinai and the West Bank and Gaza, or just Gaza, even if Jordan does not join the negotiations? Is Egypt ready to make two peace treaties, one for Sinai and one for the West Bank and Gaza, or just Gaza? *Foreign Minister Dayan* also asked if the Egyptians are ready to accept Israel's proposal on the Sinai as a basis for negotiation, or is it absolutely unacceptable?

Dayan said that the two parties had been in contact for months. Israel had thought that her proposal on Sinai would be acceptable to Egypt as a fair basis for negotiation.³ If not, Israel is prepared to withdraw its proposal and to start again. If Egypt does not accept the proposal, Egypt should tell Israel so and they can start fresh without this proposal. Minister *Kamel* replied that the parties were tackling the Palestinian question, the West Bank and Gaza, and that it was therefore not appropriate to talk about the Sinai. He requested that the discussion continue to focus on the West Bank and Gaza.

Dayan returned to his first question. If Jordan does not join the negotiations, but Egypt and Israel have reached agreement, will Egypt make a peace treaty with Israel concerning the West Bank and Gaza? Mr. *al-Baz* replied that we should cross that bridge when we come to it. It is a hypothetical question. Diplomats must work with possibilities. Everything is possible. But we should work on the assumption that Jordan and the Palestinians, and ultimately the Syrians, will be joined in the negotiations if we establish a framework that will be attractive to them. Egypt will sign an agreement at some point, a peace treaty, and we are still talking now of future negotiations among the four parties. If we get there and Jordan does not cooperate, then we will have to consider our course of action. This also applies to the Palestinians, but there is no reason for them to refuse to join. Jordan's goal is to get security also. Jordan will be under a moral obligation to help facilitate the achievement of peace in the West Bank. King Hussein is favorable to this. There is no reason now to think that Jordan will be uncooperative, nor will the Palestinians. They both aim to end the conflict. Egypt's obligations will not end with the signing of an agreement. If Egypt and Israel can reach preliminary agreement, then Egypt will work to bring in the others. Minister *Kamel* said that the only thing that prevents Jordan from joining the negotiations would be a lack of Israeli commitment to withdrawal. If Israel gives such a commitment, Egypt can guarantee that Jordan will be there. This will be very important. Israel should not worry about their joining the negotiations.

Attorney General Barak noted that when he had last seen Sadat and Gamasy, he had gained the impression that Egypt was prepared to sign an agreement on the Palestinian issue, and that then would make it possible to sign an agreement on Sinai as well. *Barak* said that he had the impression that *al-Baz* was saying that Egypt's position had changed. He asked for clarification. *Al-Baz* said that agreements could be signed more or less simultaneously. The time of signature was not so important. If an agreement could be reached on the West Bank and Gaza, an agreement on Sinai would not take long to negotiate. In

³ Regarding the Israeli proposal on the Sinai, see footnote 6, Document 180.

Egypt's proposal, Egypt will be involved in talks among the four parties on the West Bank and Gaza, while simultaneously being involved in negotiations on the Sinai front. There doesn't have to be any rigid link between the signing of the documents. Secretary *Vance* tried to clarify the area of discussion by saying that he had the impression that if there were an agreement on the West Bank and Gaza, Egypt would contemporaneously negotiate and sign an agreement on the Sinai. Minister *Kamel* said that after the Jordanians and the Palestinians join the talks, then Egypt will proceed with the Sinai negotiations. *Al-Baz* said that a Sinai agreement might be ahead of the other agreement, but in any case this would not be a problem.

Dayan said that it was possible that Jordan might not want to sign until Syria signs. Jordan would not want to betray Syria. The situation might develop where agreement is reached, but Jordan is not ready to sign a peace treaty because of Syria. Then Israel would ask if everything depends on reaching a peace treaty with Syria. This is different from agreeing that the principles would apply to the Syrian front. Israel is worried that Egypt would then say that there could be no agreement on the Sinai without the Palestinians, there can be no agreement with the Palestinians without Jordan, and there can be no agreement with Jordan without Syria. *Kamel* replied that Jordan will join the negotiations if Israel commits itself to withdraw. Jordan is not tied to Syria.

Dayan asked about the stages of negotiations on the Palestinian question. Egypt seems to want an agreement in principle first, then discussion on details. At the outset, after the first stage of agreement, the Israeli military regime is to be abolished. Does Egypt envisage two different kinds of agreements between Egypt and Israel after the principles have been worked out? Will the final details only be worked out in a peace treaty, or is it enough to have agreement on principles first and on the mechanism by which further negotiations will proceed? *Dayan* also noted that in the six points of security for Israel, there was no provision for Israeli forces in the West Bank. Suppose Israel says that she wants some Israeli forces in the Jordan Valley and in Gaza, under Israeli command. Then we may not reach agreement, but we should have some mechanism for eventually agreeing. But you see these troops as a form of occupation. If we can't reach agreement because of differences such as these, will this block a peace treaty? Would the peace treaty be the final stage in the negotiations? When will the Palestinians be committed to a peace treaty? We are not talking about a state or a government, so what is their signature worth, and who will they be? Who will represent the Palestinians? After five years, Egypt will leave and Jordan will give the West Bank to the Palestinians. The Palestinians will be the neighboring state in the Egyptian concept. Maybe you see the Palestinian Arabs as the party for making peace

with Israel. At what stage does that happen? Can security be discussed during the five years? What kind of agreement will be reached at the end of the five years? Should a peace treaty be signed with Palestinian Arabs at the end of this period? Now Israel is negotiating with Egypt, not with the Palestinians.

Minister Kamel said that the Palestinians should be part of the negotiations from the beginning, after the abolition of the military government, and after the Palestinian council is formed. The Palestinian authority will have two roles. They will administer the West Bank and Gaza, and they will delegate representatives from the council to represent them in negotiations. They will participate in the negotiations working on the time table of withdrawal. By then adequate security measures should also be in effect. The Palestinians should be in the negotiations along with Egypt. *Dayan* asked if there would be any agreement reached before the abolition of the military regime. Minister *Kamel* said that we should get Jordan involved first, and then the Palestinians later. He replied positively to Minister *Dayan*'s question concerning whether this would take place before the abolition of the military government. *Dayan* summarized by saying that he understood first there would be agreement between Israel, on the one hand, and Egypt, the Jordanians, and the Palestinians. Then there would be negotiations which would then lead to abolition of the military regime. But he did not know what kind of peace agreement there would be. Would there be an agreement first, or just a set of principles? Would the military government be abolished first, before a peace agreement, or later? How many agreements does Egypt envisage?

In reply, Mr. *al-Arabi* put forward Egypt's ideas on how to carry forward the negotiations. Egypt has presented its plan as a basis for initial agreement. Then Jordan should join the negotiations. This would provide the basis for a preparatory meeting to agree on certain kinds of arrangements. The transitional period would not start immediately, but rather there would be a preparatory phase involving only Israel, Egypt, and Jordan. During this phase, the parties would decide on when the transitional period would begin; when the military government would be abolished; a UN role in the election of the Palestinian authorities; and an introduction of UN forces. All this should be discussed before the transitional period begins. In the next phase, there would be the transitional period, the elections, and the Palestinians would send their representatives to a meeting of the four parties—Egypt, Israel, Jordan, and the Palestinians. That would be the sequence of the negotiations. Minister *Dayan* asked whether the first stage was to get an agreement on general principles. Is Israel correct in assuming that until general agreement is reached, there would be no abolition of the military government?

Mr. *al-Arabi* explained that the first step was to reach general agreement on principles. Then Jordan would join the negotiations for a preparatory phase. The Palestinians would not be part of these discussions. They would try to reach agreement on when the transitional regime should begin, how elections should be carried out, and what the UN role would be, and how to end the military rule. After agreement had been reached among these three parties, then the Palestinians would join the talks. Minister *Dayan* asked a further clarifying question as to whether the negotiations on security would take place after the election of a Palestinian authority and the abolition of military rule. Will there be a peace treaty among Egypt, Israel, and Jordan after the abolition of the military regime? Mr. *al-Arabi* asked whether Israel would want to sign a final peace treaty before knowing what the security arrangements were. Mr. *Kamel* said that he envisaged an agreement among the three parties which would lead to negotiations on a final peace treaty. *Dayan* said that in his view Israel would be prepared to sign a peace treaty as long as Israeli forces still remained in control. Israel could sign a peace treaty as long as it was understood that no withdrawal would take place until Israel agreed.

Mr. *al-Arabi* said the end of the military rule must be the end of military occupation. During the preparatory phase, decisions should be made on what happens to Israeli military forces in the next stage.

Dayan asked whether the end of the military regime also means withdrawal, with only security arrangements for Israel to be agreed upon later. He tried to summarize his understanding that there would be three agreements. First an agreement in principle just with Egypt, then an agreement which would include Jordan on how to begin the transitional regime, but this would not include full peace treaties. Then there would be a final peace agreement including arrangements for security, the time table for withdrawal, and so forth. Mr. *al-Arabi* confirmed that this sequence is what Egypt has in mind.

Dayan asked about the reference to UN General Assembly Resolutions concerning the refugees in the Egyptian proposal. Israel also has claims for its refugees. Israel does agree that representatives of the Palestinian refugees should be involved in talks concerning the refugee problem. But for the first time Egypt is referring specifically to UN Resolutions. How does Egypt see the refugee problem being solved? Israel will not be bound by UN Resolutions on refugees. Israel only accepts Resolution 242 which refers to the refugee problem. Why is it necessary to refer to the UN Resolutions which Israel will not support? Minister *Kamel* asked why Israel refused to be bound by UN Resolutions on the refugees. *Dayan* replied that there were many resolutions of the UN which Israel did not accept. *Kamel* said that he assumed that the problem for Israel was only one of security. *Dayan* said that this was not

true. Arafat has his own plan that all the refugees should go back. He wants one state for everyone. The Palestinians would be a majority under his concept, and this would mean the end of the state of Israel. Israel does not reject the idea of some kind of compensation, although it should be for Jewish and Arab refugees, and Israel does not reject the idea of repatriation of some individual Palestinian Arab refugees. Israel assumes that if many Palestinians wanted to return to Israel that this would change the nature of the state and Israel would become a bi-national state. Dayan personally favors solving the refugee problem. There cannot be a solution of the Arab-Israeli conflict without solving the refugee problem. But this cannot be done at the expense of Israel. Most of the refugees should be resettled in Arab countries, such as Jordan. And they should not go back to Israel. If this is an essential point of the Egyptian proposal, it would add a new dimension.

Mr. *al-Baz* termed this a very useful exchange. He said that Egypt sees the UN Resolutions as a valid basis for a solution. Egypt can discuss modalities for implementing these UN Resolutions, including numbers, procedures, and any restrictions. But if these resolutions are not valid, Israel has a duty to explain why. The United States has submitted ideas of its own concerning refugees. This was even part of the Rogers' proposal of December 1969,⁴ where both parties were urged to accept that the refugees from the 1967 War would have the choice of repatriation or compensation. Both parties should agree on mutually acceptable means and on numbers who should be returned. This is an example of how the refugee problem could be agreed upon between Egypt and Israel. *Dayan* reminded Mr. *al-Baz* that Israel had rejected that approach at the time. Israel does not want to accept it now either. Israel does accept 242, including a just settlement of the refugee problem. But Israel does not want to accept any other UN Resolutions.

Mr. *al-Arabi* said that there was a question of both refugees and some displaced persons who had left the West Bank and Gaza in 1967. They should be allowed to go back. Egypt is referring to UN Resolution 194 which talks about repatriation and compensation. What can be discussed are the modalities and the numbers, but not the principle. The Palestinians' own representatives should participate in these discussions. *Dayan* said that he agreed that displaced persons from the West Bank and Gaza might be allowed to return to the West Bank and Gaza as individuals. Many of them still have relatives. But those who came from refugee camps in Jericho should not simply be returned to their refugee camps. What is the purpose of moving people from one refugee camp to another? If people can be absorbed, that is one thing. But if one is speaking of moving refugee camps that is another. If Palestinians live

⁴ See footnote 9, Document 21.

in Jordan now, it would make more sense to help them resettle in Jordan and to stop being refugees, rather than to bring them back as refugees to Jericho.

Dayan then explained Israel's view on the nature of future relations after the initial five-year period. The relations among Jordan, the Palestinian Arabs, and Israel will have to be decided. Israel has proposed an autonomy plan. If after five years they say they want a tighter relationship to Jordan, and they don't want to have their own ministry of education, and they want to be tied to the Jordanian ministry of education, Israel would have no objection. That is the nature of relations that can be decided. Theoretically they can do this with Israel as well, or they can keep things as they are. In some areas, Israel, Jordan, and the Palestinians should try to work together, such as in agriculture. Negotiations should be worked out among the four parties but the nature of relations only deals with Israel, Jordan, and the Palestinian Arabs. This is on the assumption that the Palestinian Arabs will accept Jordanian citizenship to the Palestinians in Gaza. Israel assumes that the Gaza Palestinians will also be linked to Jordan. It will be up to the three parties to decide the nature of the relations. Maybe there will be something like a common market. Maybe they will prefer some ties to Israel, or will want to keep their autonomy.

Mr. al-Baz noted that the Israeli approach does not cover the question of ending the Israeli occupation. This is one form of relationships. Israel is now occupying the West Bank and Gaza. The Israeli concept presupposes the continuation of the occupation and precludes any form of self-determination. It seems to emphasize the continuation of the status quo. It deals with only some kinds of transactions. Does Israel see its relationship to the West Bank and Gaza as that of a neighbor or as an occupier?

Minister Dayan said that the Israeli proposal does not imply the perpetuation of the status quo. But self-determination is excluded if it involves the establishment of an independent Palestinian state. This is not one of the forms of relations they can choose. *Mr. al-Baz* asked whether this was simply the present Israeli position, or whether Israel would always exclude an independent Palestinian state. *Dayan* said that Israel would give an answer after five years. At the end of five years, an independent Palestinian state should be excluded, but other kinds of relations between Israel and Jordan and the self-governing authority could be considered. *Mr. al-Baz* asked whether a state federated to Jordan was also excluded, and *Minister Dayan* said it would be excluded if it were really a state. *Mr. al-Baz* asked whether this meant it would be excluded even if it were not a fully independent state. *Dayan* said that Israel had not looked at all possibilities, but self-determination should not lead to an independent state. Instead, the parties should

deal with the kinds of relations between the West Bank and Gaza, and Israel and Jordan. Secretary *Vance* asked a clarifying question, saying that he did see that a confederal or a federal solution was the same thing as an independent state.

Dayan said that he could repeat what Israel's answers to the American questions had been. Israel could talk about relations with Jordan and Israel and the autonomy. But a Palestinian state could not be accepted. Concerning the occupation, *Dayan* said that if Israel were to withdraw from all of the Arab inhabited centers, and if Israel did not interfere in the daily lives of the Palestinians, but if there were some Israeli soldiers who stayed behind and there were no other forces and if these forces were just there to protect Israel, and to man watch stations, but not to enter Nablus, this would mean an end to occupation.

Mr. *al-Baz* asked whether Israel had in mind technicians, or actual military forces. *Dayan* said that for the early warning stations, technicians would be enough, but along the Jordan River, Israel would need to have some forces. Israel has to have some place where it can control the movement of people. This can either be on Israel's boundary between the West Bank and Gaza, or Israel can check movements beyond those lines. If there is going to be free movement between the West Bank and Gaza and Israel, there must be a checkpoint somewhere beyond the green line. Mr. *al-Baz* asked whether only Israel could perform that function. *Dayan* said that he could see no other solution. Foreign soldiers and the UN could not provide a solution. Maybe there could be mixed groups, but Israel should not count on Norwegians to protect her security. At some point, Israel has to protect her own borders, otherwise she would have to put up barbed wire and check everyone who came across her borders. Or there can be free movement and checks could be instituted further out. Minister *Kamel* said that this could only be done during the transitional period. *Dayan* said that this was not what Israel had in mind. He did say that this was not a take it or leave approach. It is Israel's best understanding of what is required. Egyptians could make other suggestions, however. Israel feels that if her forces withdraw from the inhabited Arab population areas and if the military regime is abolished, this is a proper interpretation of 242 and it involves withdrawal.

Mr. *al-Baz* said that the Israeli proposal did not contemplate withdrawal in the West Bank and Gaza. *Dayan* said that it was correct that Israel makes a distinction between the population and the land. Israeli Jews must have the right to settle. They should not be considered foreigners and Israeli forces should be able to protect them. They should not come under the authority of the administrative council. Mr. *al-Arabi* said that Israel was asking for extraterritorial rights. *Dayan* replied that this was not the Israeli idea. He reviewed areas in the West Bank and

Gaza where Jewish claims went back well beyond 1948. He noted that Jordan had seized the West Bank by force, and that Israel had taken it back again in 1967. That does not mean that Israel has to give it all back to Jordan. Israelis lived in the Gush Etzion area before 1948, and then Israelis had to leave. Now they have returned. The same is true in the Jewish quarter in Jerusalem. The Israelis lost it, then they recovered it. *Dayan* said that Jews living in Hebron should not be under the authority of the Palestinian council or under Jordan. He also noted that Gaza has no corridor to Hebron, that the people from Gaza should be able to go freely to Hebron and elsewhere. What sense did it make to link Gaza to Jordan and not to allow Israeli settlers to be linked to Israel. Both peoples will have to go through each other's territory freely. Israeli forces should be there to protect Israelis, not to interfere in the lives of the Palestinian Arabs and Israeli citizens should not be under the authority of administrative autonomy. The Arabs should have their own educational system. The Jews won't want their education controlled by the Jordanian minister of education. They will be linked to Israel. *Dayan* does not believe that having settlements linked to Israel is the most difficult of the problems. Nor does he believe that Jerusalem is the most difficult problem. The real question is whether Israel will have some rights in the West Bank and Gaza. Minister *Kamel* asked whether these were rights to occupy the area? *Dayan* said that Israel did not want to occupy the area, but Israelis should be able to buy land and to live there. Israeli settlers and soldiers should have a right to be there. This is not in order to rule the Arabs, but just to be there. Mr. *al-Arabi* asked if Israel would accept the Palestinians to go back to their homes in Israel.

Dayan said that there are two sovereign states in the area, Israel and Jordan. East of the green line and west of the river is an in-between area. It is a very complicated situation there. Israel and Jordan can be compared in terms of their rights in this area. But there should not be a third state. If there is not going to be a Palestinian state, then for the first few years Jordan and Israel should both deal with this area in between them. There have been four wars in thirty years. A line cannot be drawn to divide this area between Israel and Jordan. There is no line which can easily divide the area. What Israel proposes to do is to find a modality whereby Arabs and Jews can live together. Israel doesn't want to interfere in the lives of the Arabs, but it does want to keep its soldiers there. Then after five years all options can be reviewed.

Mr. *Kamel* said that all of these Israeli ideas preceded Egypt's balanced proposal based on Resolution 242. This is what ought to be accepted now. This would allow for the security needs of both sides to be met and some progress could be made. Secretary *Vance* suggested that the meeting adjourn for now and that the talks be resumed later in the afternoon. (The talks ended at 1:40 p.m.)

270. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Kent, England, July 18, 1978, 8 p.m.

PARTICIPANTS

Egypt

Mohamed Ibrahim Kamel, Foreign Minister

Ahmed Maher

United States

The Secretary

Ambassador Eilts, Cairo

The Secretary said he wished to discuss with Kamel how we might proceed. Instead of a large meeting, he thought there should be a bilateral meeting with Kamel and then with Dayan. Early in the afternoon there might be a trilateral meeting with three on each side. Kamel was agreeable.

The Secretary noted that we are moving down the track we had agreed upon. We should not allow ourselves to be diverted. He would come to the area in a few weeks. Kamel said this was agreeable, but then raised the idea of a Foreign/Defense Ministers meeting. He was doubtful about this.

The Secretary indicated his view that such a joint meeting was desirable. He noted that the parties are getting into technical security questions. Kamel wondered whether the joint presence of Dayan and Weizman might not complicate the talks. If technical aspects of security need be discussed, the Egyptian side could include military experts. If the Secretary believes that it should be at the minister level, he would ask Sadat. But, Kamel emphasized, GOE does not want to give the impression that the talks are shifting from the West Bank to Sinai.

Kamel said he would rather postpone any announcement of another meeting until the Secretary comes to the area. In this connection, he had just received new instructions from Sadat not to fix a date or place for another meeting unless the Leeds talks have a positive outcome. Kamel noted that this does not exclude another meeting, since the Secretary believes it will be helpful. He reiterated that it could be announced when the Secretary comes to the area. The Secretary said he also hopes to visit Saudi Arabia and Jordan.

The Secretary said that at such a meeting he would table the US proposal. Kamel suggested that just before the Secretary's arrival or

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East Subject File, Box 2, Arab-Israeli Peace Negotiations 1978: Volume II [III]. Secret; Exdis. The meeting took place at Leeds Castle.

after he arrives, he might ask the parties to have another meeting. The Secretary noted that if it looks as though no negotiating process is coming out of the Leeds talks, this could give us some difficulties with American public opinion. We will go forward with the mutually agreed upon strategy. It would be helpful if it could be announced at the end of the meeting that he planned to visit the area in two weeks and expects that the parties will meet again. Kamel said that if such an announcement comes from the Secretary, this is agreeable. The Secretary thought he should meet the press for the record and answer questions rather than having a statement. Each delegation could then deal with its national press.

Kamel noted that Egypt has had ample experience with Dayan. Within two weeks, the Israelis will have leaked all kinds of stories. This is embarrassing for Egypt. He promised the Secretary that when the USG invites Egypt, it will attend. In the meantime, however, he asked, “let us save our face”. The Secretary noted that a cable could be sent to President Sadat.

Kamel asked whether, when Atherton comes to the area, he will be talking about the US proposal. He hoped that it would be close to the Egyptian views. The Secretary said it will be close, but there will also be some differences.

Kamel then asked what happens if the Israelis refuse the American proposal once it is tabled. The Secretary said that President Carter intends to make a speech to the nation explaining the proposal. We will also have briefed the Congress. The objective will be to get congressional and American public support, including from leading members of the American Jewish Community. Conceivably, however, the Israelis will still not respond. If that happens, we are thinking of taking the matter to the UNSC. He hoped, however, that a strong USG position might make this unnecessary. Kamel expressed agreement.

The Secretary noted that there will for a time be a counterreaction in Israel. The immediate reaction will be negative. But if there is a strong body of support in the United States for the US proposal, he hoped that the Israelis will eventually come around.

Eilts pointed out to Kamel that we will need Egyptian support in this effort. Kamel assured the Secretary this will be forthcoming. He expressed concern, however, about Egypt’s isolation and the efforts of the Rejectionist Front.² The Secretary asked about the strength of the latter. Kamel observed that Egypt cares a bit for Syria, but is not concerned about the others. In the Arab world, Egypt cares most for the Saudis and Jordan. If they will support Egypt, the others will follow suit.

² See footnote 3, Document 78.

The Secretary asked whether Numayri is supportive. Kamel said Numayri is still with Egypt. He then spoke about his talks with Saud bin Faysal. The latter had argued that Begin will not show any more flexibility and that the Sadat initiative should be ended. The Secretary observed that the Saudis have no comprehension of American Congressional requirements. Kamel agreed and recalled he had told Saud bin Faysal that Egypt would attend the conference not for Begin, but for the United States. GOE must help the United States to consolidate its public opinion. After the Israeli replies to the American questions had been received, Saud bin Faysal had noted, "you see what has happened". Kamel had insisted that the Saudis give the Egyptians opportunity for another round of talks. Saud bin Faysal had not commented on this.

The Secretary described Saud bin Faysal as important and able. But Saud does not understand how to mold US public opinion or deal with Congress. Kamel agreed. Saud bin Faysal, he observed, had said that if the Sadat initiative is jettisoned, this is not the end of everything. The Arabs could collectively, and in accordance with the Rabat Conference, go to Geneva.

Speaking personally, Kamel said that he feels humiliated. He described himself as a proud man. The Egyptian people had placed all their hopes in the United States. If something is not achieved in a reasonable period, Egyptian relations with the Saudis and other moderate Arabs will suffer. Egyptian relations with the Soviets, Kamel said, are "zero". Hence the United States is the only one left to whom the Egyptians can look for help.

The Secretary assured Kamel that we will help. He had told Saud bin Faysal that we have never failed the Saudis, we will never fail Egypt. On timing, we have worked this out with Sadat and are on schedule. The Saudis should not tell us what the timetable should be.

Kamel referred to Sadat's idea of sending Egyptian troops to the West Bank. (He did not like the idea.) He contended that the Israelis wished to isolate Egypt and eventually get the United States out of the negotiating process. Kamel said he was tough and could endure anything if there is prospect of success. He cared for his country and for Sadat. If anything happened to Sadat, Egypt is in trouble. The Secretary again assured him that we are on the time schedule which had previously been discussed.

Kamel referred to Dayan's statements earlier in the day. Dayan had not hidden the fact that Israel wants to keep the West Bank or divide it with the Palestinians. The Secretary said it was important that the Egyptian position had been tabled. Dayan had heard it from us, but not directly. Kamel called Israel "expansionist" and "racist". He likened Begin to Hitler. As with Hitler, appeasement of Begin is bad.

The Secretary noted that Senators Ribicoff and Javits had stressed the need to get talks started again. Kamel observed that if nothing happens, the Soviets will be strengthened in the area. He also expressed his concern that a “group of officers” might stage something in Egypt. The Soviets, he noted, are after Sadat. They are working with Qadhafi and others to this end. If Sadat is strongly backed by the United States, Kamel thought the President would be able to carry the day. The Secretary assured Kamel that we strongly support Sadat.

271. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Kent, England, July 19, 1978, 9:20 a.m.

SUBJECT

Talks—Middle East Peace Negotiations

PARTICIPANTS

U.S.:

Secretary of State Vance
Ambassador Lewis

Israel:

Foreign Minister Dayan
Attorney General Barak

The Secretary opened the discussion by making a few introductory comments about the progress of the first day’s meetings, stressing that he thought that they had been useful although by no means represented any breakthroughs. He asked Dayan what he thought would be the most useful way to approach the next phase of discussions.

Dayan said he did not know whether the Egyptians would agree to any further meetings. The Secretary said that Kamel is not authorized at present to do so, but that he would push him further. He intended to say he would come to the area in about two weeks, and he would press Sadat to agree that a meeting be held during that period. Dayan said that any place convenient to the Secretary is all right with the Israelis. The Secretary said the same was true for the United States, but that it

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East Subject File, Box 2, Arab-Israeli Peace Negotiations 1978: Volume II [II]. Secret; Nodis. Drafted by Lewis. The meeting took place at Leeds Castle.

would be best to be an expanded format with defense ministers and foreign ministers both participating.

Dayan then went through a long series of comments about how he saw the present state of negotiations. First, he said, it's clear there is no chance to get the Israeli government to commit itself in advance to full withdrawal from the West Bank and Gaza. "I've explained what is feasible. Had I been the Egyptians, I would have compromised, taken at this point what they can get from the Israeli cabinet for the Palestinians, that is, a great degree of self rule. And, ultimately they would, therefore, be able to show the Palestinians that they had achieved a great deal of progress for them, on the way toward independence. They won't get a precommitment from this government for total withdrawal, and I'm afraid that Jordan won't come into the negotiations". The Secretary agreed with Dayan's observation about Jordan.

Dayan went on to say that he doubted very much whether Egypt will be able to sign any peace treaty for the West Bank, even with some Palestinians sitting with them, since Jordan will hang back. At present, he said, Egypt could make some sort of agreement but not a full peace treaty. And in any case, they would do it in stages, even if Jordan were participating. So, therefore, the Israelis would have to live with this kind of procedure "if we can't get anything better."

Dayan then said he would like to outline his assessment of what he thought might be done. He stressed that the ideas were extremely sensitive and should have no further distribution "beyond the four of us." He recalled that in Sadat's recent meeting with Weizman² he had brought up the idea of a unilateral Israeli withdrawal in Sinai to the line connecting Al-Arish and Ras Mohammed. "If we can't get a full agreement, maybe this is a possibility, but not as a unilateral gesture by Israel. Rather it would have to be the result of a real negotiation." It might be easier for Sadat to make such an agreement than full peace, since he would have most of the real assets in Sinai (the Gulf of Suez, the oil fields, Al-Arish, the major Israeli air bases, Rafadim, and so forth), but could still say credibly to the other Arabs that he had not gotten all of his land back nor made a "separate peace."

Dayan stressed that the Israeli cabinet has not agreed to any such ideas, and would not propose itself such a negotiation for a partial withdrawal. However, he said, if Sadat proposes that, it is a real possibility and Gamasy would see real military advantages in it. "We shall certainly ask for quid pro quos, such as something with respect to pledges of no more war and some of the elements of full peace." Obvi-

² For a report on Sadat's meeting with Weizman, see Document 265.

ously, he said, he would prefer total peace, but something is better than nothing.

Dayan then continued: "So if we combine the two conclusions that Jordan is not likely to join, and yet Egypt wants to go ahead, then perhaps Egypt would wish to go ahead on such a partial step." He would not rule out the possibility that Sadat might make full peace just over Gaza, but he doubted it.

The Secretary responded that these ideas of Dayan's were well worth thinking further about, but that he would like to come back for a moment to the larger issue. If, he said, Sadat could achieve a broad commitment on principle, then the Secretary thought he would sign an agreement on the West Bank and Gaza without Hussein. "He's said as much to me. That then takes us back to what happens after the first five year period. You said yesterday with regard to your security requirements on the West Bank that they did depend in part upon the territory—that security cannot be separated from land and borders. But what about substituting well-defined rights and land, for example, the right to maintain your security forces indefinitely in the West Bank as required and agreed upon?"

Dayan responded that if the sovereignty lodges elsewhere, the government could throw out Israeli forces at any time.

The Secretary argued that with a binding agreement, and the forces themselves present to protect that agreement, there would be no danger.

Dayan said that unfortunately it is in the essence of the concept of sovereignty that any sovereign power can abrogate an agreement if it chooses to do so, and "there are many precedents." Dayan said he knows his position was not the one which the Secretary wanted to hear; therefore, why not check it with the Israeli cabinet when the Secretary came to the area? "Maybe I'm wrong." The Secretary said he would do so.

Dayan then described a conversation he had had with Bill Quandt at dinner about an idea concerning the Israeli right to purchase land.³ He said he knew that a dinner conversation had no official status, but he would be interested in discussing Quandt's idea further. The idea would be, he said, that Israelis would have permanent rights to purchase land in the West Bank and Gaza from private individuals, while all of the state-owned lands would be under control of the Arab administrative authorities who might refuse to sell any of it to Israelis. If this concept were combined with free access for the Palestinian residents to both Jordan and Israel, it could be an important concept. "And if we

³ No record of this discussion was found.

could overcome the key obstacles of security arrangements and the rights for Israelis to purchase land there to settle, we would be going a long way toward a solution.”

Dayan said he thought that the real obstacle now is not “in the actual concept but in the Egyptian demand for a precommitment about the ultimate outcome.”

The Secretary replied that Sadat has to be able to say convincingly to his Arab brethren that the Israeli occupancy is ended. “Yet he knows that your security must be protected, and that the problem of protecting it is different in the West Bank than in Sinai. How can you help to put him in the position to deal with both these requirements?”

Dayan said that hearing this point, he felt a little better about the possibility of finding a relative formula to achieve Sadat’s goal. “Let’s define what the Israeli occupation really consists of. Let’s see what has to be done to put an end to it, in particular to the various elements of it. You agree that we need some Israeli forces at particular points for our security—this is not the same as an occupation force. For Israelis to purchase land from an individual in the West Bank just as they can purchase land from individuals in the United States or in Europe is surely not occupation.” I agree personally, he said, that the formula should be that we have no occupation forces in the territories, and then we must agree exactly on what is needed to end that occupation as it has been more precisely defined.

The Secretary said that this was why we had posed the first question to the Israelis about making a definite decision on sovereignty in the way we had framed it. “The way things look at present, with your answer to our question about what happens after five years, the Arabs believe that not only are you an occupying power but that the occupancy will be permanent since you have no idea of ever relinquishing your sovereignty claim.”

Dayan said, “Without the sovereignty, we’re in trouble with Begin. If we were to give up our claim to sovereignty, that inevitably means that eventually there will be some form of Arab sovereignty. Then the issue will become how binding any agreements might be if an Arab sovereign government will be able to repudiate them. Any sovereign state can abolish an agreement, just look at the Constantinople agreement concerning the Suez Canal⁴ as only one of many examples.”

The Secretary said that he could, however, conceive of an agreement involving Israel, Jordan, and the Palestinians which included an

⁴ A reference to the Constantinople Convention of 1888, which declared the free navigation of the Suez Canal at all times and defined the regulations related to its security and neutrality.

Israeli renunciation of its sovereign claim in exchange for perpetual rights to have security forces in the West Bank, guaranteed free access and open borders, rights for Israelis to purchase lands in the West Bank, and so forth—all ratified in some fashion by the Palestinian residents of the territories. He said such an agreement would indeed be binding.

Dayan said, “I don’t think Begin would agree.”

The Secretary said he understood, but that if only the Israelis’ answer to our first question had been positive, the Egyptians, the Saudis, the Jordanians, and all of the moderate Arabs would have seen the situation totally differently.

Dayan then returned to his basic thesis: that for the Egyptians the best thing is to get Begin and the Israeli cabinet to go as far on the West Bank as is possible now. He said that the United States could assure the Arabs that a great deal more would be possible after five years, obviously our influence with Israel would continue to be very great. “If I were an Arab, I would think that gives us a very good chance.” But in any event, that’s all you can get from a Begin government. If you press Begin for more, you won’t get it. But if you want to try for more with him, you should certainly do so. “Realistically, however, the best thing to do is to convince Sadat that he can’t get everything he wants now; he can get some now, more later during the five years, and a good chance for a decision about ultimate sovereignty after five years. But he can get no commitment on that point at this stage. And I don’t exclude the idea of some sharing of sovereignty after five years, beginning with Jerusalem. When Sadat told Weizman in talking about Jerusalem that he would not care which faction was over the city, so long as it was an Islamic flag, that was what I had proposed unsuccessfully in 1967—though Begin opposed me.”

Dayan insisted that what the Palestinians want is some form of autonomy and independence within the Arab world, but a way to maintain contacts with Israel. “Let’s work it out that way.” But if you ask Begin today for a commitment to a discussion about sovereignty in the future, he won’t give it—he knows that there is no realistic possibility of Israeli sovereignty’s being chosen—and that means that in practice he is committing himself to turn over sovereignty to the Arabs.

The Secretary then said he would like to ask about the idea about a limited right of self-determination excluding independence as an option. “What’s wrong with that from the Israeli standpoint?”

Dayan responded that what bothered him is not a question of options, but rather that the suggested system of a referendum or plebiscite would subject the process to intolerable PLO intimidation. He reminded the Secretary that the Israelis try to distinguish between the people in the territories and the territories themselves. “I have no

problem with the Palestinians' deciding what relationship they want individually or collectively with Jordan or other neighbors. But they cannot make alone the decision about the land, where some Israelis will also be living. If the Palestinian Arabs determine themselves alone the future of the land, then whoever holds sovereignty could restrict the rights and security of the Israelis resident in the land." Now in some areas, he said, particularly in Gaza, the Arab population is such that there is no practical possibility for Israeli settlement. In such areas, the practical distinction between decisions about the population's relationship with others and decisions about the land would be practically meaningless, but where there is a possibility of future Israeli settlement, as in much of the West Bank, the distinction is important.

Dayan pointed out that if the phraseology about self-determination contained in the Egyptian proposals were augmented by a phrase "through talks among . . ." then you would have a very similar concept, so long as it is clear that the Palestinians involved in the discussion were the people living there rather than all Palestinians in other parts of the Arab world.

The Secretary then pointed out that there was one positive area in the discussions the day before: you reached general agreement on how to deal with the terrorist problem.

Dayan agreed though he said it would be difficult to reach an understanding on how to handle "public order." The definition of roles between local police and the Israeli security forces would have to be carefully hammered out, and it would be difficult. However, this kind of detailed discussion is covered in the Egyptian proposal and he liked that aspect of it.

The Secretary again returned to the problem of "withdrawal". He said that the biggest problem for the Egyptians and the Arabs are these two concepts: "sovereignty" and "withdrawal".

Dayan said he saw three sticking points: sovereignty, withdrawal, and occupation. With respect to these three concepts: "Maybe we could reach agreement, as we discussed earlier, on how to deal with the problem of Israeli occupation; on sovereignty, the most we can do is to agree to discuss the subject after five years, as we have done; and as to withdrawal, perhaps we could agree on your formula under which Israeli security forces would stay but Israeli occupation forces would be withdrawn, clearly distinguishing between the two kinds of forces.

The Secretary said that Sadat understands this latter distinction with regard to types of forces, and is prepared to have forces for security purposes remain in the West Bank, certainly for five years, "and, I believe, for beyond five years as well." He said that the Egyptians stress the need to abolish the military government and to allow the Palestinians to take over responsibility for their own self-government. He

said he saw a number of parallels in some of the phrases in the Egyptian plan to the comments Dayan had just made.

Dayan agreed, read some sections from the Israeli base plan and stressed the Israeli intention to abolish the military government. Both he and Barak mentioned the fact that he had not succeeded the previous day in getting clearly across to Kamel this distinction between occupying forces and security forces.

The conversation concluded with some discussion about how to deal with the press after the conference ended.

272. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Kent, England, July 19, 1978, noon

PARTICIPANTS

Egypt

Mohamed Ibrahim Kamel, Foreign Minister

Ahmed Maher, Foreign Minister's Chef du Cabinet

United States

The Secretary

Ambassador Eilts, Cairo

The Secretary, who had just come from meeting with Dayan,² told Kamel that he had had a long talk with the Israeli Foreign Minister. The Secretary had told Dayan that the Israelis must face up to the sovereignty and status issues. No solution can be reached until these are resolved. Dayan had to try to put himself in Sadat's shoes. How could Sadat accept a situation in which it appears that the Israeli occupation continues? This would be unacceptable politically to the Arab world. Dayan, the Secretary said, indicated that he understood the situation. He had acknowledged that the point, when put that way, becomes clearer. Dayan had indicated he would think about it. He would talk to his government. Dayan doubted that there would be any early change in Israel's views on the status of the territories, but as he had previously indicated, there should at the end of the five-year period be a determi-

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Middle East Subject File, Box 2, Arab-Israeli Peace Negotiations 1978: Volume II [II]. Secret; Nodis. Drafted by Eilts on July 27. The meeting took place at Leeds Castle.

² See Document 271.

nation of the status. This, the Secretary noted, was also the thrust of the first question he had asked the Israelis.

Kamel said this was a little more encouraging. He expressed concern, however, that the Israelis will in the transitional period seek to effect a *fait accompli* by covering the West Bank with settlements. This, Kamel thought, is the Israeli plan. At the end of five years the whole place will be “infested” with Israeli settlements.

Kamel said that he had just received word from Sadat that nothing should be said about further meetings unless something positive comes out of the Leeds meetings. Sadat’s concern coincides with Kamel’s worries. Kamel also expressed concern on Egypt’s image with the non-aligned states if a new meeting is announced in the absence of any progress at Leeds.

The Secretary suggested that, at the conclusion of the meetings, the parties might say that they will report to their governments. Afterwards the Secretary would come to the Middle East in about two weeks’ time. On his part, the Secretary would say that after other parties have reported to their governments, he (the Secretary) expects that they might meet again. Kamel agreed.

Kamel said he thought it was good that the Secretary had told Dayan that the Israelis must confront the status and sovereignty questions. The Secretary noted that Dayan had said this is a matter that should be raised with Begin and the Israeli Cabinet. The Secretary had agreed, indicating these are fundamental issues.

The Secretary noted that Dayan had found the presentation of the Egyptian position lucid and articulate, although Dayan disagreed with some of it. Dayan had described the Egyptian presentation as candid and clear. Kamel noted that the Egyptian delegation is defending a good cause.

The Secretary noted that another point that he had made to Dayan was the distinction between territory and the right to have a limited number of troops on the territory under someone else’s sovereignty. One is a right given by mutual agreement, but the territory belongs to someone else. Kamel asked whether the Secretary was referring to the post-transitional period. The Secretary said both during and after the transitional period. Kamel said GOE had no objection to such an arrangement during the transitional period. What happens afterwards must be left for negotiation. The Secretary said that it is fundamental that there must be withdrawal in terms of sovereignty. This does not mean that the parties cannot have an agreement concerning troop presence. Kamel noted that Dayan had the previous day indicated that the situation should not be like American troops in Germany. He was glad that this distinction had been drawn.

The Secretary thought that Begin's intentions are quite clear. Maher interjected to say that for Begin the religious and historical argument is the more important. The Secretary agreed, but noted other Israelis are concerned about security. Kamel responded that the GOE accepts this concern and is willing to do its utmost to meet it. GOE believes the Jordanians will be as keen as Egypt about this matter. Even the Palestinians will have an interest in security considerations. The Israeli ambition, Kamel contended, is simple expansion. The Israelis undermine Sadat's position in Egypt and the Arab world.

The Secretary then reiterated his intention to send Atherton to the area. Kamel said this was agreeable and indicated he would not go to the Belgrade non-aligned conference.³ The Secretary reiterated that, while there had been painful aspects of the meeting, it had been useful. Kamel said he, too, had found it so. He believed the Israelis shared the view. The Secretary noted that questions of the type that had been posed must be put on the table. Kamel agreed that all three parties should do so. The Secretary said this helps him in completing the work according to the strategy that had earlier been discussed with the Egyptians.

The Secretary said he also planned to speak to Dayan about Lebanon prior to the Israeli Foreign Minister's departure. He would make the point to Dayan that the Israelis should warn the Lebanese Christians not to count on Israeli intervention. Kamel agreed that this was very important. He noted that the situation could explode and engulf the whole area. He wondered whether Begin might be thinking of starting something in Lebanon. The Secretary doubted this. He thought Begin recognizes that if the Lebanese situation explodes, no one can be sure where it will end.

Kamel said that Egyptian delegation might want to sum up its position at the final meeting. The Secretary agreed that this would be useful.

[Omitted here is material unrelated to the Middle East.]

³ The Conference of Foreign Ministers of non-aligned countries met in Belgrade July 25–30. During the conference, the Arab League Foreign Ministers met for the first time since Sadat's visit to Jerusalem.

273. Telegram From Secretary of State Vance to the Department of State and the White House¹

London, July 19, 1978, 1740Z

Secto 8070. White House for the President and Dr. Brzezinski only.
Subject: Leeds Castle Talks.

1. The first full day of talks at Leeds Castle was considerably more serious and useful than I had anticipated, but it is clear that wide gaps remain. If anything, the candor of the discussion served to illuminate the width of the gaps between them. The setting was particularly conducive to informality, and the talk was as frank and open on the key issues as any I have heard between these parties. I had several chances to meet with both Dayan and Kamel before the talks really began. By then, both sides were prepared to make a serious effort to explain their approaches to the West Bank/Gaza problem.

2. During six hours of talks on Tuesday,² the Egyptian and Israeli delegations went into substantial detail, with only occasional interventions by me, concerning their proposals. Dayan led off with a clear statement that the Israeli plan was not a “take it or leave it” proposition. He emphasized Israel’s readiness to negotiate. He then talked realistically about the basic approach of his government, breaking no new ground, but indicating a willingness to explore many ideas at great length. His bottom line, however, remains that Israel must maintain a security presence in the West Bank/Gaza and that Israelis must have the right to settle and acquire land there. When Kamel asked him, Dayan said he did not believe the Israeli Government could separate security in the West Bank and Gaza from retention of territory. On the right to settle in those areas, he said they must not be treated as foreigners in their historic homeland. At the same time, he insisted that Israel does not want to run the lives of the Palestinian Arabs and went so far as to say that he was prepared to recommend abolishing the military government even if there were no agreement. As usual, Dayan tried hard to find out if Egypt would sign an agreement concerning Sinai and the West Bank/Gaza if Jordan did not join the negotiations. He did not get a clear answer. Kamel simply said that Jordan would join the negotiations once Israel agreed to withdraw.

3. The Egyptian side performed remarkably well, largely due to the efforts of Under Secretary El-Baz, who made a thorough presenta-

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840153–1656. Secret; Immediate; Nodis; Cherokee.

² Tuesday was July 18. See Documents 268, 269, and 270.

tion of the thinking behind the Egyptian proposal. By contrast, Kamel spoke only rarely, and as the day wore on he became increasingly exasperated with Dayan's positions when it became clear that the present Israeli Government does not contemplate giving up a claim to these territories. On the whole, the Egyptians indicated a forthcoming attitude on security arrangements, and presented their concept of a three-stage series of negotiations dealing with the West Bank. These would begin with Egypt and Israel working out broad guidelines. In a second stage, Jordan would join the negotiations to establish the transitional regime, and finally, after the election of a Palestinian council, Palestinian representatives would be included to negotiate the details of a final peace treaty. The Egyptians talk of negotiations on (A) abolition of the military government and election of the Palestinian council, and (B) withdrawal and security arrangements going in parallel. The Egyptians are particularly sensitive to seeing the military occupation ended because they see Begin's self-rule plan as a means of perpetuating the occupation under another guise.

4. The Israelis were generally impressed with the degree of seriousness demonstrated by the Egyptian delegation. Several of them termed the talks the best that had taken place to date. Both sides have put on the table the hard issues on which they disagree—primarily withdrawal and settlements. However, neither side was in a position to negotiate on them, and the Egyptians felt frustrated that they found no give in the Israeli position. Kamel himself became very emotional toward the end. Kamel basically feels that continuing negotiations of this kind will not produce a change in the Israeli position. Nonetheless, I feel that a useful step has been taken in getting each side to explain in depth its fundamental positions. The quality of the dialogue was surprisingly high and, with one exception, the talks were conducted with tact and restraint on both sides.

5. Wednesday morning I met separately with Dayan and Kamel,³ and we held a summing-up session together this afternoon.⁴ I arranged with them arrangements on follow-on contacts. They will do what is necessary to enable us to come forward with ideas to help break the deadlock. We agreed to say publicly that the Foreign Ministers will report to their governments and that I anticipate there will be further meetings when I go to the area in about two weeks.⁵ Atherton will precede me to help prepare for the next round of talks.

³ Wednesday was July 19. For Vance's meeting with Dayan, see Document 271. For Vance's meeting with Kamel, see Document 272.

⁴ No memorandum of conversation has been found.

⁵ A full transcript of Vance's July 19 press conference is printed in the Department of State *Bulletin*, September 1978, pp. 39–41.

6. In sum, these talks have been substantively useful, but the gaps remain wide. In my statement to the press I will draw a distinction between the quality of the exchanges and the fact that negotiations will continue, on the one hand, and the fact that no progress was made in narrowing the gap between them, on the other. However, I will note that the holding of these serious talks is in a sense progress and that we will have to wait until the next meeting to see whether there has been progress. By that time the parties will have been able to reflect on what has been said and make modification in their proposals. Dayan said at our wrap up session that he expected they would have changes to meet some of the concerns raised by the Egyptians.

7. Since our purpose was to achieve this kind of exchange rather than to conduct hard negotiations in which Sadat and Begin would have to be involved, I believe we achieved what we set out to do. For the Egyptians, withdrawal, the end of occupation, and settlements are central preoccupations. For the Israelis, peace, security and an acknowledgement of special rights for Israelis and for security in the West Bank/Gaza are the key. There are common elements in their approaches to an initial five-year period, but they differ fundamentally on what comes thereafter. We have a lot of hard work ahead.

Vance

274. Telegram From the Embassy in Jordan to the Department of State¹

Amman, July 24, 1978, 1814Z

6146. U.S. Del No. 10. Subject: Atherton Meeting with Prince Saud.

1. During Ambassador West's and my hour-and-half meeting with Foreign Minister Prince Saud Sunday morning,² I carefully went through my talking points as approved by Secretary³ and made a strong pitch for Saudi understanding of and support for continued di-

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P850093–2523. Secret; Immediate; Nodis.

² July 23. No memorandum of conversation has been found.

³ The initial draft of the talking points for Atherton's talks with Prince Saud and King Hussein have not been found, but Secretary Vance's revisions to the original talking points are in telegram 185501 to USUN, July 21. (National Archives, RG 59 Central Foreign Policy File, P8401014–2013)

rect Egyptian-Israeli negotiations. I also urged that Saudis weigh in with Hussein. It is clear Saud remains skeptical of the utility of further talks and worried about their adverse impact on Saudi objective of forging consensus of Arab moderates. While Saud has undoubtedly not been persuaded to our viewpoint, however, I believe from the questions he asked that the points we discussed have given him food for thought.

2. At a couple of points during my presentation Saud seemed concerned that we appeared to be backing off the approach you had discussed with him during his last visit to Washington.⁴ His basic thesis was that both Egypt and Israel had now put forward proposals, another round of talks had taken place and demonstrated that the two sides could not make progress on their own, and it was therefore time to terminate direct negotiations and for the U.S. to state its position. I stressed that we were still prepared to play an active role but that how it was done was also extremely important. We could not effectively play such a role in a vacuum or in circumstances which made it appear we were injecting ourselves as a substitute for the efforts of the parties. A continuing process of direct negotiations was essential, but the point was that we would also be there and helping that process move forward rather than in circles as he feared. I went over again with him, as David Newsom had,⁵ all the reasons why continuing Egyptian-Israeli talks are important.

3. Saud listened carefully but also went through his own argumentation at some length. He made the point that, while there may be good U.S. and Israeli reasons for continuing direct talks (though he clearly remains skeptical), we failed to take into account the Arab reasons against them—in particular the harm they cause to Sadat and to efforts to build a moderate Arab consensus. “Our visualization,” he said several times, is different from yours. He also said repeatedly he did not think there was any substantial difference among the Israelis; they were all hardliners; Peres and Dayan were simply smoother politicians than Begin (I told him I differed on this point: there were substantial policy differences among Israeli leaders). He said earlier he had accepted our analysis that internal debate touched off by Sadat initiative and our statements of support had been healthy, “but this too has a culminating point.” Every opportunity had been given Israel to change its views but clearly it had not done so and, in his view, would not do so.

⁴ Prince Saud met with Vance in Washington on May 17 to discuss the Arab-Israeli peace process. No memorandum of conversation has been found, but a briefing memorandum for their meeting is in the National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P860067–0283.

⁵ No memorandum of conversation of a meeting between Newsom and Prince Saud has been found.

He had thought once we got Israel's answers to our questions we would be ready to move. Now we were talking about more meetings.

4. Saud repeatedly stated his conviction that the only thing that would ever get Israel to change its position was a U.S. proposal; when we had taken a forthright position on various issues in the past (e.g., settlements in occupied territory), Israel had sooner or later come around to them.

5. Saud stressed several times that our asking Sadat to continue meeting with the Israelis "without knowing where these meetings are heading" was causing Sadat serious injury. The cost was not only in terms of his relations with other Arabs but also internally because key people within his own government opposed him. I told him we did "know where we were going"—that was precisely the point. But we had to do it in a way which made our role as effective as possible. We were interested in making progress, not just making points. I told him of our expectation of another meeting and your intention to be present.

6. Saud asked some clarifying questions but made no substantive comment on our ideas for bridging differences, which I outlined to him, reading verbatim from the talking points. Since his notetaker did not appear up to getting my presentation in full detail, and since I thought it very important that there be no misunderstandings about it, I took Saud aside at the end of the meeting and left him a copy of my talking points, stressing this was sensitive and for his information only. It was a non-paper and not to be shared with other governments. He readily agreed.

7. We spent some time talking about inter-Arab relations as they bear on the peace process. Saud said our objective should be to move the negotiations to a broader forum involving the other parties as soon as possible. "Egypt is bearing too much of a load." He urged *inter alia* that we work on Boumediene to soften his attitude and that we also not give up on the Syrians. Since he had just seen King Hussein I asked him what the King's present attitude is. Saud said Hussein wants to know "where you are headed," and added he doubted that Hussein would agree to join the negotiations unless he has answers to this, "with or without Saudi plotting." Saud said "now is the time for Sadat to build bridges to the other Arabs and you should be helping him." He said Saudi Arabia would continue to stand by Sadat but made no commitment to support publicly further Egyptian-Israeli talks or to press Hussein to do so. His attitude in latter respect was, in effect, that key to Hussein's position is in U.S., not Saudi hands.

8. Meeting ended with Saud saying he looked forward to your visit to the area and to the U.S. putting forward a proposal at that time.

9. Comment: Saud was relaxed and thoughtful throughout our meeting. His views came as no surprise, but I was impressed with the

depth of concern with which he argued them. Despite my efforts to reassure him, he clearly remains worried that we are having second thoughts about being able to move matters forward along the lines previously discussed with Saudis, and suspicions that we are seeking to substitute further Egyptian-Israeli negotiations for U.S. action. He was at the same time pleased that Secretary had considered it important to give Saudis so full and early a report on the Leeds talks. If nothing more, I believe this meeting has contributed to our effort to persuade Saudis to give some more time to Sadat—probably not because I convinced him he was wrong in his flat assertion that “Sadat initiative is dead,” but rather because we have asked for more time.

10. Department please repeat to Cairo, Jidda and Tel Aviv.

Suddarth

275. Telegram From the Embassy in Jordan to the Department of State¹

Amman, July 26, 1978, 0918Z

6186. U.S. Del No. 12. For the Secretary from Atherton. Subject: Atherton Meeting With King Hussein—July 26.

1. I came away feeling somewhat encouraged by my meeting with King Hussein Tuesday.² He listened more seriously and addressed the issues more thoughtfully than during my last meeting with him in March.³ This time I only detected once the “I’ve heard this all before” smile on his face. His reply to our key question as to what circumstances the King required to feel justified in bringing Jordan into the negotiations did not go beyond what he has told us before, but he did agree to reflect further on the question. In addition, I believe our willingness to foreshadow the main elements of our ideas for bridging differences had effect of strengthening credibility in U.S. strategy and has assured some more time for the Sadat initiative as far as Jordan’s attitude is concerned. The King initially expressed some objections to our ideas but in the end, after I repeated once again what was at stake in

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P850093–2575. Secret; Immediate; Nodis.

² July 25. No memorandum of conversation has been found.

³ Atherton’s previous meeting with Hussein took place on March 4. See Document 222.

Washington's eyes in having a more precise reading of what he needed to join the negotiations, he said he would reflect on our ideas and try to have Jordan's views ready by the time you came to the area. In a subsequent meeting with Chief of Royal Court⁴ (who also attended the meeting with the King), we were able to explain more fully several points of our ideas. I left with Sharaf a copy of our talking points stressing, as I had with Saud, the sensitivity of the document and that this was for their information only.⁵ I believe he and King will reflect on our ideas.

2. I went through our talking points carefully with King. He paid close attention and interrupted only once to ask if Jerusalem had been discussed at Leeds (I confirmed it had and told him the context in which it had come up). At the end of the talking points I said I had a few further comments to make. We recognized that he as well as other Arabs were skeptical of the utility of continuing the present negotiating process. Some indeed were saying the Sadat initiative was dead. There was a concept that the American purpose in stressing the need for direct negotiations had been to demonstrate that no further progress was possible, whereupon everybody would go home and the U.S. would step in with a proposal. I said that on the contrary we saw our role very much in the context of the Sadat initiative. It was indeed the Sadat initiative which made the kind of U.S. role we were discussing possible.

3. I told the King that I also wanted to say a word about the question of where Jordan fits into the picture. We could not imagine a solution to the Arab-Israel problem without Jordan. Throughout its history the King had supported moderation and had been courageous in his advocacy of moderation when others in the Arab world were not. I told him we also recognize the difficulties he faces but there was frankly some uncertainty in Washington about Jordan's position with respect to the peace process and in particular about the circumstances in which he could join the negotiations. We were seeking his continued understanding and support for further Egyptian-Israeli talks. It would also help us very much if he could tell us what he would consider an adequate basis for taking the step of joining negotiations. I knew this involved considerable risks for him, but we were approaching the point where it would be necessary to begin to crystallize the issues and introduce greater precision into the negotiations. The Secretary's next visit would be of crucial importance in this respect, and it was necessary to know Jordan's position as precisely as possible.

4. After expressing appreciation for my presentation and the Secretary's concern to keep him informed, the King said the records show

⁴ No memorandum of conversation has been found.

⁵ See footnote 3, Document 274.

that Jordan had always pursued the goal of peace in the area. There was no question that Israel should be part of the area and be able to live in peace with its neighbors, but the question of reciprocal rights had to be recognized. A solution could not be at the expense of one side or the other. He was not sure he understood why there was uncertainty in Washington about Jordan's policy. Jordan had all along been very clear about the basis which it required to enter negotiations. Israel had to commit itself to a solution based on Resolution 242; there had to be withdrawal, with the possibility of minor and reciprocal modifications; Arab sovereignty had to be restored in the former Arab sector of Jerusalem; and there had to be self-determination for the Palestinians.

5. The King said that if these principles could be established then anything else could be discussed. He said that for Jordan a radically different situation had emerged after the 73 war during the Arab summit⁶ which came right after the failure to get a disengagement agreement on the Jordanian front. Even so, Jordan today would have no hesitation in approaching other Arab governments to get them to change their minds about the Jordanian role in a solution of the Palestinian problem if the above principles could be established.

6. The King said he was concerned about getting involved in something that was unclear in its objective. Prior to the Sadat visit to Jerusalem he had thought that everybody was on the road to Geneva. There seemed to be a hope for a breakthrough with the Syrians on how the Palestinians should be represented. Suddenly everything changed and for a time Jordan was caught unaware but in spite of this Jordan was trying to make the best of the new situation, trying to draw positive elements out of the Sadat initiative.

7. The King said he thought Jordan's role had been entirely positive. What he frankly found a little "distressing" is that he keeps getting messages from Washington reflecting doubts about Jordan's role and suggesting that Jordan was not doing enough to support Sadat. The King (a trace of emotion appearing for the first and only time for the day) said that Jordan's attachment to peace and to the proposition that there ought to be good relations between the Arabs and the U.S. had been constant since the 1950's and long antedated anyone else in the Arab world. "You don't need to remind us constantly of what we should and should not do." The King said he was a little puzzled about what Washington wanted him to do. Jordan could not enter into an unclear situation.

8. Turning to the ideas that we had presented, the King said he wondered how we could be thinking of a five-year transition period?

⁶ A reference to the Rabat Summit of October 1974. See footnote 8, Document 6.

The U.S. efforts to stop Israel from building settlements had only succeeded for a time. What would be the situation we all faced after five years in this respect?

9. The King said he also didn't much like the concept of Jordan having a "special role" on the West Bank in the circumstances we had outlined. He did not wish Jordan to be used as a "cover" for continuing Israeli control of the area.

10. The King said Jordan was prepared to take full risks and make a major sacrifice if necessary. But it wanted to see clearly what the sacrifice would be for. As he saw it, Israel's motive was simply to play for time and try to change facts on the ground as much in its favor as possible. This was unacceptable. If we continued on this path there would be a real growth of radical forces in the area. This would not just be the Arabs trying to change things but would involve Soviet encroachments as well. We had seen what had happened in Afghanistan; Iran was under pressure;⁷ there were the Ethiopian and South Yemen situations; it was clear that the Soviets were still attempting to gain control of the resources of the Middle East. Israel had always wanted to change the Arab-Israeli struggle into an East-West dispute so that the pressure would be less on Israel. We could not afford to allow this strategy to work.

11. I had earlier asked the King for any comments he might wish to make regarding contacts he had with the other Arabs recently, and he turned briefly to this. His remarks followed closely the information about his views which have been transmitted in another channel. He said Syria was still not happy about the Sadat initiative (or Jordan's unwillingness to attack it) but they were not as "uptight" about it as they had been previously. The King thought the Syrians would readily go to Geneva if there were a renewed opportunity for this. Jordan-Syrian relations were much better as a result of the visit. He had found the Syrians deeply worried about their dilemma in Lebanon. He had relatively little to say about his meetings in Saudi Arabia. He had made a pitch to the Saudis that Saudi Arabia and Jordan should think of their combined resources as one in terms of meeting the increased security threat in the area. He said the Saudis had reacted positively to this idea. He was frankly a little confused about the Saudi attitude toward the peace process saying that he had gotten a different impression from the one that Vice President Mubarak had gotten in his recent trip as to the Saudi attitude about an independent Palestinian state or about Saudi support for a Jordanian as opposed to a PLO role in the West Bank.

⁷ In Iran, several months of large-scale protests during the summer of 1978 threatened the Shah's regime.

12. After this rather extended monologue by the King in reply to mine, I told him I wanted to make a few comments. We deeply regretted it if our messages had conveyed any doubts about our relationship with Jordan. This had certainly not been our intention. We do have a deep understanding of the difficulties that Jordan faces. If there had been such a note in our message it may have been a reflection of a feeling of impatience in Washington. We did find we were at a crucial point, that the task we were called upon to perform was difficult and that we needed as much help as possible from all our friends in the area.

13. Returning to the Jordanian position on the negotiations, I said that we understood his reluctance to enter negotiations on the basis of the present nebulous situation. We don't expect Jordan to enter the negotiations—nor indeed would we expect Sadat to continue his initiative—on the basis of a request to continue negotiating and nothing further. On the other hand, I had to be frank in saying that in our judgment it was simply not in the cards to get a final resolution of the West Bank/Gaza/Palestinian problem now. What we were in effect asking was whether there was something in between these two points that would be seen by the King as a starting point for negotiations involving Jordan. I said that even if all the answers could not be provided at the present time, we agreed with him that the direction in which we were going had to be clear, and the U.S. commitment to see negotiations through had to be equally clear.

14. I said this was the question the Secretary asked me to leave with the King because, as he would appreciate, it was highly important for the Secretary to know what Jordan's position is with considerable precision as he goes into the next crucial round of talks.

15. Afterwards, in a private talk with Sharaf, I had the opportunity to comment about the King's concern about Israel continuing its settlement activity during the transition period. I said that under our concept this would be a subject that would have to be dealt with in the negotiations for the transitional regime—in other words, we were not saying the Arabs had to accept what is now the Israeli position on the matter; they would be a party to those negotiations.

16. Sharaf also asked whether he took our ideas to mean that we envisaged agreement being reached in two phases. I said I thought it was more like three phases: (1) agreement between Egypt and Israel on a set of broad principles which would enable Jordan to enter the negotiations; (2) Jordanian-Israeli-Egyptian agreement on the more detailed terms for a transitional regime including the manner in which Palestinian representatives would be elected; and (3) the negotiations between Israel, Jordan, Egypt and the Palestinian representatives for a final peace treaty. We also clarified for Sharaf that, in our thinking, Is-

raelis and Arabs would undertake prior to five-year transition period to determine ultimate question of status of West Bank at the end of the period in accordance with Resolution 242 and that therefore commitment to determine ultimate status of West Bank/Gaza would not be left dangling. Sharaf asked how PLO and non-West Bank Palestinians could join process and whether the last might be at Geneva and whether Syria would join the negotiations at that point, which Jordan thought would be very desirable. On latter point I said this indeed might happen and we would of course welcome it as we had, as he knew, always supported a fully comprehensive peace as the ultimate objective. So far as participation of non-West Bank Palestinians was concerned, I said we recognized this question would arise at some point and have to be dealt with in negotiations, but in our view it was best to limit Palestinian representation at outset to West Bank/Gaza representatives. Question of what expatriate Palestinians should return under what circumstances could be considered by negotiating parties at later date. As for PLO, its position toward Israel remained an insurmountable obstacle. If individual members later indicated desire to join negotiations on basis Resolution 242 and break with extremists, this would create new situation. Sharaf said this question could not be avoided since otherwise it could blow up entire effort.

17. Finally, I went over at some length with Sharaf all the reasons why we believe continuation of direct Egyptian-Israeli negotiations is essential.

18. Department please pass Tel Aviv, Cairo and Jidda.

Suddarth

276. Telegram From the Embassy in Egypt to the Department of State¹

Cairo, July 26, 1978, 2228Z

17776. Subject: Sadat Letter to President Carter. Ref: Cairo 17589.²

1. FonMin Kamel called me late this afternoon from Alexandria immediately after Egyptian NSC meeting and before his departure for Amman in order to say he was sending a letter from President Sadat to President Carter for immediate forwarding. The letter was received 2130 tonight. Text follows:

2. Quote: My dear friend President Carter,

In the light of the latest developments in the Middle East, I wish to exchange my views with you, as has become the regular practice between us, in order to assess the situation and consider what steps can and should be taken to bring us nearer to our common aim: a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the area.

I think that we have now reached important and crucial cross-roads, and that it would be useful at this juncture, to ponder over what has happened since my visit to Jerusalem.

The objective of my peace initiative, as I stated in my speech before the Knesset on November 20, 1977,³ was, and still is, to achieve peace. In that speech, I said "I have come to you to build a new life and to establish peace . . . In the history of nations and peoples, there come moments when it becomes imperative for those endowed with wisdom and clear vision, to overcome the past with all its complications and residues, to move towards new horizons. We must all rise above every form of fanaticism, above self deception and above theories of superiority". I added: "The Arab world is not seeking a durable and just peace from a position of weakness or instability. Rather, it possesses all potentialities of power and stability. Hence, its position stems from a genuine will to achieve peace, from a civilized awareness that in order to avert a definite catastrophe (for all) we have no other alternative but to establish a durable and just peace, a peace that cannot be shaken by storms, or tampered through doubts, or shaken by ill intentions".

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P850067–1948. Secret; Niact Immediate; Nodis; Cherokee.

² In telegram 17589 from Cairo, July 24, Ambassador Eilts reported Sadat's frustration with the Israelis. On July 23, the Israeli Cabinet had rejected Sadat's request for the return of Al Arish and Mount Sinai as a good-will gesture, but proposed more talks. Sadat told Eilts that there was no point to additional meetings unless Israel introduced a "new element." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P850067–1919)

³ See Document 152.

In that same speech, I stated that peace is possible provided that the Arab territories occupied in 1967 be restituted, and the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people be recognized. This has been my constant attitude, which I repeated over and over again: yes to peace, to security, to normal and good neighbourly relations, but land and sovereignty we cannot and will not concede. All my actions have proceeded from my, and my people's deep and sincere dedication to peace.

Unfortunately, this spirit has not been reciprocated. From the very first moment, it became clear that Prime Minister Begin was unable to overcome his dangerous illusions, and was not ready to face realities and engage sincerely in the peace process. Throughout all the meetings which followed my visit to Jerusalem: at the Cairo preparatory meeting, in Ismailia, in the Political and Military Committees, the attitude of Mr. Begin's government has been to cling to obsolete conceptions. However, since peace is a cherished goal, we have, at each and every time, overcome our growing doubts as to the real intentions of the Israeli Government, in the hope that they would come to understand that peace is worth giving up ambitions of annexation and expansion. This is, Mr. President, the only obligation we ask of them, and this is what they refuse to commit themselves to. And yet, when you thought that another round of direct negotiations was necessary in order to allow the United States to position themselves, and prepare for playing the active role on which we agreed at Camp David, I agreed to a meeting of the three Foreign Ministers in London, despite my doubts and reservations. I thought it was also a good opportunity to explain directly to the Israelis our plan which deals with the core and crux of the conflict: the Palestinian problem.

This plan, as you know, is based on a true interpretation of Resolution 242, and of the obligations of all the parties as spelled out in that Resolution. It is a translation into the fact of the equation: withdrawal plus security equals peace, good neighbourly relations. This was so clearly obvious that the Foreign Minister of Israel could not, in the presence of Secretary Vance, say that he rejects our plan. But, on the other hand, he clearly stated, also in the presence of Mr. Vance, that Israel does not want to restitute the land, that it wants to continue military occupation, to annex Arab territories, that it wants to deny the national rights of the Palestinian people, and refuses to abide by U.N. Resolutions pertaining to the Palestinian refugees.

Dear Mr. President,

If the aim of the Leeds Castle meeting was to clarify the positions of the parties in order for the U.S. to be able to assume the responsibilities they have agreed to shoulder as a full partner, then I believe that this has been achieved. It would not, in my judgement, be useful to hold a new meeting while the Israeli position remains as it is. The

parties would only repeat their positions, perhaps hardening them in the process, and we would be faced with an even more complicated situation. This is why I feel that, unless Israel shows its sincere readiness for adopting attitudes and policies which can help the peace process a new meeting cannot be justified. All the more so, as Israeli declarations and attitudes have, since, shown that they are decided to continue on this dangerous course. They try to mix the issues, and divert us to side issues. I even sometimes feel that Mr. Begin wants to treat the peace process as a commercial transaction and solve it by barter. This is a distortion of the spirit of my initiative, and will lead us nowhere. We ask for no concessions, the land is ours and we cannot concede it. Peace will not be built on "barter basis" . . . it can only be durable if it is just, and if it creates conditions for good neighbourly relations. Otherwise any agreement would bear the seeds of further strife and conflict. Unfortunately, Israeli statements show that they have not yet come to this logical conclusion, and they adopt attitudes similar to those which make it necessary to withdraw the Egyptian delegation from Jerusalem, in order to deprive Mr. Begin of the opportunity to completely destroy the peace process.⁴

Mr. President,

Secretary Vance will be coming soon to the area. I will be discussing all these issues with him. But I wanted to acquaint you, in advance, with my present thinking in all frankness and sincerity. I think the peace process can be saved, provided that the Israeli Government can be made to understand that it will not be allowed to continue to exploit the process as a veil for its illegal aims and ambitions. Otherwise, we will all be faced with a situation fraught with great dangers.

It is peace that you and I, Mr. President, are seeking and working for. We are working for the future. If Mr. Begin agrees to look with us in the same direction, we will be very near our goal. If, on the contrary, he chooses to remain prisoner of old ambitions, conceptions and misconceptions, he will bear, before the world and his people, the terrible responsibility of letting a unique chance fade away.

Yours truly

Mohamed Anwar el Sadat.

Unquote.

3. This is the letter that Sadat mentioned to me July 24, that he planned to send to President Carter (reftel). It is self-explanatory.

Eilts

⁴ On July 26, Egypt ordered the expulsion of the Israeli military mission of technical and communications personnel who had been supporting the Military Committee talks since January. (William E. Farrell, "Egyptians Order Israel's Mission To Leave Today," *New York Times*, July 27, 1978, p. A1)

277. Telegram From the Consulate in Jerusalem to the Department of State¹

Jerusalem, July 28, 1978, 1040Z

2049. U.S. Del. No. 19. For the Secretary from Atherton. Subject: Atherton Meeting With Begin—July 27.² Ref: Amman 6189 (U.S. Del. No. 13).³

Summary: My meeting with Begin on July 27 was a serious, thorough review of current status of negotiating process. In addition, Israelis agreed to reflect on a number of questions I posed and to give us their views before or during Secretary's visit. I described the continuing gap between the parties on the fundamental issue of what can be agreed now about what happens at the end of the five-year period, and I suggested a way of describing where the middle ground on this might lie. I drew directly from the talking points I submitted per ref tel to (A) sketch out areas of commonality in the two sides' positions; (B) discuss the "end of occupation" concept; and (C) review the Egyptian three-stage approach to negotiations. I was able to foreshadow some of our own ideas in a natural manner by interspersing them among a series of questions designed to stimulate further Israeli thinking on the five-year period. For his part, Begin argued that under international law Israel is not in "occupation" of West Bank/Gaza territory and therefore objected to the "end of occupation" concept. Lewis and I tried with no apparent success to get him to see political and psychological advantages of this approach. Begin also declared that the Egyptian proposal, even with the three-state procedural elaboration, is less precise than the Israeli plan in depicting a time sequence for events. Begin also expressed his concern over whether there would be a tripartite meeting in the Sinai next month, and repeated the pitch he had made earlier to Lewis for the conclusion of a "partial agreement" with Egypt unlimited in time, if efforts to agree on basis for a comprehensive settlement bog down.⁴ He asked that I explore this concept with Sadat. He seemed distressed that Sadat took as an insult his letter rejecting a unilateral gesture,⁵ and asked that I convey his good intentions in this

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P850033–0344. Secret; Niact Immediate; Exdis (Handle as Nodis). Sent immediate for information to Cairo and Tel Aviv.

² No memorandum of conversation has been found.

³ Not found.

⁴ Not further identified.

⁵ The text of Begin's July 23 letter to Sadat rejecting his request for Israeli return of Al Arish and Mount Sinai is in telegram 9325 from Jerusalem, July 24. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840157–2644)

regard to Sadat when I am in Egypt. Begin took issue with our concept that the authority of a new regime for the West Bank and Gaza should derive from an agreement among the parties, stating that it should instead derive from the military governor in order for it to be instituted “as soon as possible.” He said that in the Israeli view the military governor would remain in place, but would “disappear as an active official.” Dayan was concerned with the two questions: (A) would Sadat negotiate a Sinai and a West Bank agreement if Hussein refused to join the negotiations? and (B) if we refer to the end of occupation, what would be the effect on land acquisition by Israelis on the West Bank and on their settlements there? I did not go into question of how to reconcile Israelis not being “foreigners” in West Bank but will do so at lunch meeting with Dayan Friday.⁶ Finally, Begin and his colleagues professed considerable confusion about differences between what Kamel said at Leeds about Israeli military presence after five-year period, and what they had heard from Sadat and us in this respect. End summary.

1. I had what I felt was a very good 90-minute meeting with Begin late afternoon of July 27. Begin was flanked by Yadin, Dayan, Weizman, Evron, Dinitz, Rosenne and Rubenstein. With me were Lewis, Sterner, Kirby, Sherman and Blackwill.

2. I began by reviewing our perception of the Leeds Castle talks, emphasizing their usefulness in terms of the depth in which each side had the opportunity to explore the ideas of the other. I made a point of congratulating Dayan on the clear and precise description he gave in the Knesset July 24 of the positions adopted by the Egyptian delegation at Leeds.

3. At this point, Begin broke in to underscore the fact that on the matter of Israeli willingness to discuss West Bank sovereignty after five years, Dayan had spoken to the Secretary at Leeds on his own behalf. The Foreign Minister of Israel cannot speak on a personal basis, Begin added, so the government gave its approval to Dayan’s three points and they now constitute the Israeli position.⁷ The question now, said Begin, is whether there will be a tripartite meeting next month; Israel is prepared to go.

⁶ July 28. No memorandum of conversation has been found.

⁷ Dayan presented his three-points to Vance on July 17 in the form of a “non-paper.” See Document 266. The most significant change was the Israeli offer to discuss sovereignty of the West Bank and Gaza after five years if Egypt accepted the Israeli plan for partial autonomy for the Palestinians. The Knesset approved Dayan’s three-point formulation by a vote of 68 to 37 on July 24. It also approved the government’s conduct of negotiations, despite intense attacks from the Labor Party opposition, which had questioned Begin’s health and mental capacity to handle negotiations with Egypt during the preceding days. (*Los Angeles Times*, July 25, 1978, p. C1)

4. Begin then turned to the subject of unilateral gestures. He described how Weizman had brought to him from Salzburg a personal message from Sadat suggesting that Israel make a unilateral gesture, which might include the return to Egyptian control of El Arish and Mt. Sinai. After the government considered and rejected this proposal, Begin said he wrote a “kind letter” to Sadat pointing out that Israel was unable to agree to a unilateral step but would be prepared to meet to negotiate mutual gestures. Later on in the meeting Begin was at great pains to explain that he did not intend for his letter to insult Sadat.⁸ He described it as a serious letter designed solely to explain the Israeli position on Sadat’s suggestion. He asked me to convey this fact to Sadat in Cairo, and reiterated the request in a private aside following the meeting.

5. Begin continued by stressing that Israel still desires a comprehensive agreement embodied in peace treaties. If, however, this proves to be too difficult, he said, we may have to move “in steps”, concluding partial agreements unlimited in time. Begin explained that he does not have in mind another Sinai II, in which the U.S. made recompense to Israel but in which there was no reciprocity from Egypt. If Sadat wants El Arish, Begin said, we will consider it, but there must be a quid pro quo over Israeli settlements in the Sinai.

6. Begin asked me to explain the Israeli rejection of a unilateral gesture to Sadat in this fashion, emphasizing that the type of partial agreement that he had described is a concept which should not be discarded even while retaining the hope for a comprehensive agreement. “If we have the chance for something less, we should grasp it.” He then returned to the question of whether Egypt would be willing to attend tri-lateral talks next month.

7. I replied that Sadat had as yet taken no firm decision to agree to the meeting. His latest word left the subject open, and this is something I will be pursuing in Cairo. Meanwhile, I said, the U.S. is proceeding on the assumption that these meetings will take place.

8. I returned to the results of the Leeds talks by saying that we had discovered quite a lot of common ground between the parties concerning the 5-year interim period, but that first I would like to discuss the more difficult question of what happens after the five years. I described the nub of the issue as being Egypt’s desire for agreement now that the final status of the West Bank and Gaza will be settled in accordance with its interpretation of Resolution 242, whereas Israel would like to defer any decision on this for at least five years while instituting

⁸ An Egyptian Government spokesman announced on July 25 that Egypt rejected Begin’s Message. (Marvine Howe, “Egypt Dismisses Israel’s Proposal on West Bank Talks After 5 Years,” *New York Times*, July 26, 1978, p. A3)

a regime of self-rule for the inhabitants of the area. In other words, Egypt would like to have all the answers wrapped up now whereas Israel would like to keep its options fully open. Begin indicated agreement with this.

9. I described the gap between these positions as wide and said it is highly doubtful that it will be possible to go beyond a certain point in negotiating questions concerning the five-year period until there is some meeting of the minds on this core issue. I wondered if it might be possible to find a middle ground on this fundamental issue in the following proposition: The Egyptians would need to settle for a formula that does not provide all the final answers in advance, while Israel would have to be willing to say that at a certain point it will negotiate the final answers in accordance with Resolution 242, the objective being a peace treaty that would encompass all the elements of that resolution. I added that Israel's latest position as read by Dayan in the Knesset on Monday⁹ seemed to open up possibilities in the regard.

10. I described as a related issue how to provide for some expression of the consent of the governed to the final settlement without opening up all the risks that Israel sees in self-determination.

11. I then described the areas of commonality in the approaches of the two parties to the five-year period as set forth in reftel. I also described certain areas of further commonality which emerged at Leeds, also as listed in reftel. When I referred to the need for a solution to the problem of the Palestinian refugees, Begin reminded me that Israel has always spoken of Jewish refugees as well.

12. I then turned to an exploration of Israeli thinking regarding practical arrangements on the ground during the five-year period. (After receiving State 18489,¹⁰ I had decided that this would be the most appropriate way to weave some of our own ideas naturally into my presentation.) I said that you had asked me to raise certain questions in order to make certain that we understood Israeli thinking on issues regarding the five-year period. I made it clear that I was not seeking off-the-cuff replies, but hoped that it would be possible to discuss Israeli responses to these questions at a later time. I also stressed that this was not another U.S. "questionnaire," but rather an attempt to clarify certain points in our own minds.

13. Concerning the ending of the military government, I asked if the abolition of "the administration of the military government," as cited in the Israeli plan, is different than would be the abolition of "the military government." I asked more specifically if the military gov-

⁹ July 24. See footnote 7 above.

¹⁰ Not found.

ernor would remain in place according to the Israeli concept and, if so, what his function would be in relation to the administrative council. I said that this seems to us an important question in view of the need for any agreement to give due consideration both to the principle of self-government by the inhabitants of the territories and to the continuing security of Israel. I added that this question also affects the source of authority for any new regime which, as we suggested as long ago as last December and most recently at Leeds, might best derive from the agreement itself.

14. I next asked for a description of the Israeli concept of the process by which the administrative council will be elected and installed. I also asked how the candidates for election would be nominated, and who would oversee the conduct of the election and verify the results. I pointed out that we have been interested in the Egyptian concept of a supervisory role for Egypt and Jordan in connection with the elected council, and asked if Israel saw any way in which this concept might be incorporated into its plan.

15. Turning to security, I asked if Israel could envisage any change in the size of IDF forces in the territories or in their deployment pattern that might be seen by the local inhabitants as a reduction in the Israeli military presence. I said that, in our view, designating areas wherein the IDF may deploy and designating the size of the forces involved may be important in gaining broad acceptance of any agreement. I also asked if Israel could see a possible role for Egypt and Jordan in the security area.

16. I then recalled our agreement at Leeds that the allocation of responsibility for public order as between the local police and Israeli forces could become a complex issue. I stated my assumption that public order would be the responsibility of the local authorities except in cases of acts or threats against the security of Israel. I asked if Israeli thinking on this problem had developed any further since our discussions at Leeds.

17. Finally, referring to the Israeli willingness to have discussions regarding sovereignty of the West Bank, I inquired if there were any reasons why such discussions could not at least begin during the five-year period—at least during its latter part—rather than wait until the five years have elapsed.

18. In reply, Begin described the points I had made as “very cogent” and said he might appoint a Cabinet committee to deal specifically with these issues. On the particular point concerning the derivation of authority for a new regime, Begin promised to consider our concept that such authority might best derive from an agreement among the parties. He said, however, that Israel wanted autonomy to begin as soon as possible, and that he did not consider it healthy to wait

for this until an agreement was concluded. In order for what he termed the devolution to take place as soon as possible, therefore, it would be necessary for authority to derive from the military governor who is already in place. Begin added that, in his view, the governor would remain as the conveyor of authority but that Israel—as it has maintained from the beginning—has no intention of revoking the abolition of the administration of the military government. As he sees it, the military governor would still be in office but would “disappear as an active official.”

19. Begin obviously had some problems as well with my point concerning responsibility for public order, describing this suggestion as “a matter of life and death” for Israel. Weizman interjected to point out that in his conversation with Sadat on March [July] 13, the idea of a joint Egyptian-Israeli police force came up and was not rejected.¹¹

20. I then presented our thinking about the “end of occupation” concept as set forth in the talking points contained reftel. Begin expressed the traditional Israeli view that Israel is not in occupation of West Bank/Gaza territories in the generally accepted sense of the word. Dayan said that when Secretary Vance came to him with this idea (sic), Dayan had reacted by observing that if occupation is to end, it would be important to agree that Israeli settlements would not be illegal and the acquisition of land by Israelis would be acceptable. Dayan put the question to me that if the occupation is to end, what effect would this have on the subject of land purchase and settlement. I expressed my personal opinion that these are two separate questions, each of which would have to be negotiated separately.

21. Begin at this point offered his explanation of the difference between an occupation regime and the administration of territories. He made it clear that he did not accept the assertion that there has been an Israeli occupation regime in the territories and that he would be unwilling to accept this description *ex post facto*. He emphasized that Israel cannot accept the term “occupation” and that he prefers to “speak the truth,” which is that the military government and its administration will end. Ambassador Lewis observed that what we were referring to is not a legal distinction, but rather a psychological and symbolic matter having possible political weight in the negotiations. I asked Begin to reflect on our concept as something which might help overcome the problem of Arab insistence on resolving the sovereignty issue at the outset.

22. Begin next raised the fact that Kamel at Leeds had rejected completely the idea of any Israeli soldier remaining on the West Bank. Am-

¹¹ See Document 265.

bassador Lewis admitted that Kamel's treatment of this subject at that time had been confusing. But he suggested that a look at the Egyptian sequence of negotiating events shows that it envisages a gradual reduction of Israeli forces on the West Bank, with admittedly none remaining after five years. Begin said this was inconsistent with what Weizman had heard from Sadat and what Israelis had heard from us. I said that Sadat has privately left open at least the possibility of some Israeli forces remaining even after the five-year period.

23. Dayan then addressed the subject of Sadat's willingness to negotiate over the West Bank if Hussein refused to enter the negotiations. Dayan said that when he, at one point at Leeds, asked you if Sadat would be willing to do so, you said that that was your assumption. Dayan stressed that he was raising this subject only to distinguish between what Kamel had said at Leeds and what you had conveyed as your assumptions. Also, Dayan observed, the Egyptian position on Israeli forces as stated by Kamel is that no forces will remain after five years. I said that our exchange bears out the apparent fact that positions which Kamel expresses with a sense of finality may not in fact be final Egyptian positions.

24. I next reviewed the Egyptian three-stage approach to negotiations as set forth in reftel. Begin objected to the Egyptian sequence, describing it as a requirement to agree "within one month" to something designed to begin at an unspecified time. He contrasted this with the Israeli plan which he said spells out exactly when self-rule would start and the five-year period thus begin. Begin then made a series of only vaguely related points (the elected Arab council constitutes a revolution; over a 60-month period human relations would evolve and improve; the 1947 partition plan spoke of an economic union.) Begin said that Israel is prepared to discuss the question of the sovereignty of the West Bank and Gaza five years after the institution of self-rule. The Egyptian proposal, on the other hand, turns this upside down and specifies no precise dates.

25. I responded by suggesting that one might usefully separate substance from procedure in the Egyptian thinking. I observed that a major element in their concept was that the interim regime should not begin until there has been an agreement to which Jordan is a party.

26. Dayan returned to the subject of Sadat's willingness to negotiate and sign treaties alone if Jordan refused to join the negotiations. He quoted extensively from the Hebrew minutes of the US-Israeli bilateral meeting of July 17¹² and (strangely) asked if, on the basis of my latest discussions with King Hussein, I still agreed with your assump-

¹² See Document 266.

tion that Sadat would be willing to act alone. I pointed out that your comments were based on our contacts with Sadat up to that time and that I could have nothing to add to that until I spoke to Sadat in Egypt.

27. Ambassador Lewis very helpfully reminded the meeting that we were at a very delicate moment in the negotiations and that the question of whether or not Sadat is willing to negotiate over the West Bank lies at the heart of intra-Arab politics. Lewis expressed his concern should this aspect of what was said at Leeds inadvertently become public and said he hoped very much that this discussion of what Sadat might or might not agree to do would not leave the meeting room.

28. I closed the meeting by briefing Begin on my talks in Saudi Arabia and Jordan.¹³ In so doing, I said that Prince Saud is very skeptical about the possibility of Sadat's initiative succeeding and seems more concerned about reconstituting an Arab consensus. I made clear that Saud does not object to the idea of direct talks by the Egyptians and Israelis however, but only to direct talks which appear to be leading nowhere.

29. I told Begin that King Hussein had shown no real change in Jordan's requirements for entering the negotiations. I said that I had told him frankly that we did not think that it was possible to get at this time a final settlement on the West Bank/Palestinian issue, and that I had asked him if there might not be some mid-point that he could consider as the basis for joining. I told Begin that the King had said he would reflect on this.

Newlin

¹³ See Documents 274 and 275.

278. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Egypt¹

Washington, July 29, 1978, 1956Z

192124. Subject: President's Reply to Sadat's Letter. Ref: Cairo 17776.²

1. Please deliver following letter from the President for President Sadat.

2. Begin text:

Dear Mr. President:

Your letter of July 26 reached me at a time when my colleagues and I are in the process of preparing for a serious further initiative to help achieve peace in the Middle East.

I deeply appreciate having your candid thoughts at this important moment. If we are to be able to reach our common goals, we must know each other's views. As we work together closely in the days ahead, I know that we will continue to communicate with one another in the spirit of our meetings at Camp David.³

Mr. President, I can well understand and sympathize with the concern that you must feel over the slowness of progress in the negotiations. Your efforts for peace have been unprecedented in the history of the Middle East conflict. They have won you the respect and admiration of peace-loving people around the globe.

Mr. President, I know you share my view that we must persevere together despite the slow pace of progress to this point. Unless we do, we will be playing directly into the hands of those who want to see us fail.

From our perspective, the talks at Leeds Castle were a useful step, even though they did not reflect a change in positions on the most difficult issues. Negotiations moved beyond general principles to explore some of the concrete issues involved in bringing the Israeli military occupation to an end and establishing reliable security arrangements that will help move the situation in the West Bank and Gaza toward peace. Differences clearly remain on important points, but we will not be able to resolve these differences unless we can continue the negotiating

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840140–2103. Secret; Niac Immediate; Nodis; Cherokee. Drafted from a text received from the White House; cleared by David Anderson (S/S), Saunders, and Sydney Goldsmith (S/S–O); and approved by Secretary Vance.

² See Document 276.

³ See Document 211.

process. Once we have clearly isolated through the next negotiation those issues on which Egypt and Israel can and cannot agree, we will proceed as we have discussed.

As you know, I have committed the United States to an active and effective role in the Middle East peace process. As I write these words, I have our meeting of last February at Camp David clearly in mind. I want to assure you that it remains my firm determination to continue on the course discussed at that time, and that I remain steadfast and unchanged in my views on the nature of a Middle East settlement. It is essential that your willingness to negotiate be obvious in order for me to fulfill this commitment with any hope of success. For us to proceed in a vacuum could result in our failure, and I know that neither you nor we want that result. Therefore, if I am to be able to follow the approach I have outlined, I need your commitment to continuing negotiations. At least one substantive sequel to the discussions at Leeds Castle is of highest importance.

I therefore hope you will agree to have Foreign Minister Kamel and General Gamasy join Secretary Vance and Foreign Minister Dayan and Defense Minister Weizman for another round of talks during which it is the intention of the United States to begin to put forward its own ideas. Secretary Vance will be coming to Cairo shortly to discuss with you in detail our strategy, and he will carry with him an important personal message from me to you. However, before I ask him to make final plans for his trip, I hope I can be assured that you will agree to another round of trilateral talks. I understand, Mr. President, the difficulty you have in justifying these meetings and your concern that there be new elements if negotiations are to succeed. I can assure you that we will make every effort to see that new elements are introduced and to help resolve the differences that now exist on several key issues. Our determination is to bring these negotiations to an early and successful conclusion.

I know that you want to give every chance of success to your historic initiative to bring peace to the Middle East. I share the hope that progress toward that goal can soon be made and I hope that we will stay in very close touch in the days ahead. As you so rightly observe, none of us can assume the terrible responsibility of letting this unique chance for peace fade away. I am confident that, working hand in hand, we can reach the goals that have so far eluded us.

Sincerely. End text.

3. After discussing this text with the President, the Secretary asks that you underscore the President's need for at least one more substantive session such as we are proposing, as the text itself states.

4. In delivering above, you should also find a way to pass to Sadat judgment at high levels here that Sadat's attacks on Begin, his moves

such as expelling Israeli communications team,⁴ and other statements giving impression Sadat is closing door to negotiations are having the effect in Israel of strengthening Begin's support and the effect here of tarnishing Sadat's previously very bright image. Realize Eilts has already made this point but as new statements are made in Cairo, you should know for your own background that disillusionment with Sadat is mounting here at high levels and in the Congress. In this connection, call your attention to sentence in text saying it is essential that Sadat's willingness to negotiate be obvious.

Vance

⁴ See footnote 4, Document 276.

279. Telegram From the Embassy in Egypt to the Department of State¹

Cairo, July 31, 1978, 0004Z

17988. For Secretary From Atherton. U.S. Del No. 26. Subj: Meeting With President Sadat at Mamoura—July 30.² Ref: Cairo 17984.³

Summary: (see Cairo 17984).

1. Eilts and I met for two and one-half hours with President Sadat mid-day July 30 at Mamoura Palace in Alexandria. On the Egyptian side were VP Mubarak, PM Salem, Kamel, Maher and El-Baz. With me were Ambassador Eilts, Sterner and Kirby.

2. I began by extending to Sadat the best wishes of President Carter and handed him the letter from the President contained in State 192124.⁴ Ambassador Eilts read the letter aloud to Sadat. Sadat listened carefully but made no comment.

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P850067–1981. Secret; Niact Immediate; Nodis.

² No memorandum of conversation has been found.

³ In telegram 17984 from Cairo, July 30, Ambassador Eilts summarized the meeting with Sadat, which Eilts described as "cordial, but tough." He noted that Sadat "was very forceful in expounding his position" and that he insisted that Egypt would "not attend another conference with Israelis at any level until and unless they forego in advance claims to Arab land or sovereignty." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P850067–1976)

⁴ See Document 278.

3. I told Sadat that I had had two lengthy and useful meetings with Foreign Minister Kamel⁵ and that in our second meeting I had reviewed with him the general direction of our thinking about the ways in which we believe the differences between the Egyptian and Israeli positions might be bridged. I stressed that what I had conveyed to Kamel was not the full picture, however, since the details of what the Secretary will bring with him to the area and inject into the negotiations are still being discussed at the highest levels in Washington.

4. I said I would want to make sure that one point which we consider especially important had been clearly understood. The point concerns our view of the need for agreement at the outset on what will be said concerning the end of a five-year period. We believe that at the beginning of the five-year period, there must be agreement that a final settlement will be firmly based on Resolution 242, including commitments to the principle of withdrawal, and to true peace and security. Israel, of course, would prefer to leave questions relating to the final status of these territories open for discussion until the end of the five years.

5. I explained that our ideas derive from several sources: (A) the Israeli plan presented last December; (B) the nine points I presented to Sadat in April which have since been modified to take into account his comments at that time and (C) the Egyptian plan.⁶ We are constructing our proposal on the basis of these building blocks, taking into account Sadat's concerns.

6. I also pointed out that in our view agreement on West Bank and Gaza issues is not a substitute for a declaration of principles. We see it rather as a supplement to a declaration. I said that we really must deal with both simultaneously; we cannot focus on a declaration without understanding what will unfold on the ground, and we can't divorce West Bank and Gaza issues from the conceptual framework provided by a declaration.

7. I stressed that we are convinced that the process of turning over authority to the inhabitants of the West Bank will bring about fundamental changes in the political dynamics of the area, and particularly in Israeli views. I added that we had always said that a settlement must be based on 242, including Israeli withdrawal and a solution to the Pales-

⁵ Atherton and Eilts first met with Kamel on the evening of July 28; a summary is in telegram 17968 from Cairo, July 29. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P850067–1956) Atherton and Eilts met again with Kamel on the afternoon of July 29; a summary is in telegram 17973 from Cairo, July 29. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P850067–1964)

⁶ For the Israeli plan, see the Attachment to Document 177 and footnote 6, Document 180. For the U.S. nine points, see the Attachment to Document 238. The Egyptian plan refers to Sadat's six-point proposal. See footnote 2, Document 259.

tinian problem in all its aspects. It is on this basis that Secretary Vance is prepared to come to the area and participate with the parties in further talks.

8. At this point Sadat said he would like to have from me a report of my talks in Israel and in Saudi Arabia and Jordan.⁷ He made a passing reference in the process to his refusal to receive Begin's message concerning the El-Arish proposal after it had been previously made public.⁸

9. I told Sadat that I had found the internal debate in Israel very much alive, not only between the opposition and the government but within the government as well. I said that many people there were embarrassed and unhappy about the way his talks in Salzburg with Weizman⁹ had been handled by their government. I also referred to last week's Knesset debate, in which the opposition charged that the government was missing a real opportunity for peace. I cautioned, however, that Begin's parliamentary majority remains as strong as ever, and that there is no sign of a fundamental change in this respect in the near future.

10. I told Sadat that, during my own meeting with Begin, I made suggestions of ways in which Israel might move closer to the Egyptian position, not only as regards the transitional period, but also concerning the more fundamental issues. I said I was struck by the fact that Begin just listened for the most part rather than interjecting his objections on every point as he has done in the past. I pointed out that some people close to Begin were saying that he seems these days to be in a more reflective mood; one associate even described him as "flexible".

11. I pointed to the three-point formulation approved by the Knesset last Monday¹⁰ as an indication of what I was referring to. I reviewed with Sadat how we had described the initial Israeli response to our questions as disappointing, and how Dayan, after discussing with the Secretary at Leeds a new formulation, had received Begin's approval to refer to "sovereignty," something which Begin had never before agreed to do.¹¹ I said I understood that this remained insufficient from the Egyptian point of view, but that it seemed to me to indicate some advance in Israeli thinking and could open up some possibilities. I told Sadat that many people in Israel are interpreting this new formulation to mean that for the first time the Begin government is acknowl-

⁷ For Atherton's meetings in Saudi Arabia and Jordan, see Documents 274 and 275. For his meeting in Israel, see Document 277.

⁸ See footnotes 5 and 8, Document 277.

⁹ See Document 265.

¹⁰ See footnote 7, Document 277.

¹¹ See footnote 8, Document 277.

edging that Arab sovereignty over the West Bank is a possible outcome. Furthermore, this interpretation has been made public and has not been denied by the government. I said that I felt this must be recognized as more than just a semantic change, but rather an effort to Begin to evolve the Israeli position.

12. I told Sadat that I had to report to him in the frankness which has characterized our relationship that many Israelis refer often to the criticism of Begin which they are hearing from Egyptian sources and they are resentful. Israelis believe that they can criticize their own government “within the family” but that this is something not accepted from outsiders. I cautioned that these attacks are causing people to rally around Begin and his government and are causing embarrassment to his domestic critics. I told him that I expect to be returning to Israel to see if they have reflected further on the points I raised with them, but that I expect they may prefer to wait for Secretary Vance.

13. I then reviewed for Sadat my talks in Saudi Arabia and Jordan. I said I had two primary purposes in each country: to provide our assessment of the Leeds talks and to give them a better understanding of our strategy. I said I also tried to elicit their understanding and support for the events flowing from Sadat’s initiative, making clear that it is not at Israel’s request that we are encouraging the parties to hold further talks. I explained in some detail our reasons for considering these talks essential to the role we have said we will play.

14. I admitted that I did not think I had convinced Foreign Minister Saud to lend public support to our efforts, but stated that he did say that Saudi Arabia would not criticize them publicly. I described much the same reaction from Hussein, who said that although he was not prepared to join the negotiations, he would not criticize our efforts either. I told Sadat that I had explained to King Hussein the important role that we envisage Jordan playing in the negotiations, and that I had urged him to consider what he really needs as a basis for joining.

15. I emphasized to Sadat that the role we intend to play remains consistent with what we have told him in the past. The question now is not what to do but how to do it, and this question assumes great importance in terms of maintaining public support for our course in the United States and of Israeli reactions. I said there must be seen to be a true impasse in the negotiations, something which is not yet perceived by many Americans because there have been so few meetings between the parties.

16. At this point Sadat asked Kamel for his view of our approach. Kamel said that Egypt and the U.S. had a basic difference concerning a US proposal. He described the preliminary ideas that I had given him in our two meetings as, in his view, “a replica of the Israeli self-rule proposal”. He asserted that the US was proposing that the Israelis only

commit themselves to negotiate, not to withdraw. He described, as he had with me, his view of the two possible American approaches, i.e., a middle ground proposal presented on a take-it or leave-it basis or a proposal fully acceptable to Egypt presented for further negotiations. Kamel insisted that Egypt cannot go further unless there is an Israeli commitment to withdraw from the West Bank as required by 242, describing this as necessary to bring Jordan into the talks and to acquire the active support of Saudi Arabia.

17. Kamel told Sadat that the US had been trying to attribute importance to the new Israeli formulation. He, however, could see no real change between “sovereignty in abeyance” and “sovereignty discussed after five years”. He described for Sadat how we had reviewed together the Egyptian proposal and he told Sadat that, except for a very few sentences, the US had said it was very good, its only problem being that it is an Egyptian proposal. Kamel stressed that if Egypt got further into the process without a US commitment that Israel will withdraw after five years, negotiations will lead nowhere. I interjected to say that Kamel’s description of the US proposal as one which only asked Israel to negotiate represents an apparent misunderstanding. In our view, I explained, the Israeli commitment must be that negotiations on the West Bank and Gaza will be on the basis of 242, including its withdrawal provision. Kamel replied that Egypt wants to implement 242, not negotiate on its basis, and that the time for implementation is now. I attempted to underscore our commitment to the principle of Israeli withdrawal by reading pertinent portions of the Secretary’s “Issues and Answers” interview of July 23.¹²

18. President Sadat then began what turned out to be a long and clearly rehearsed monologue. He said that prior to Leeds he had said he could not agree to another meeting unless there were new elements from the Israeli side. Now in the letter received today from President Carter he could see very clearly the US desire that another round of talks take place.

19. Sadat said that unfortunately there has arisen in the last week a very dangerous situation. He said that he had thought with his visit in November complexes had been overcome. The Israelis, however, put difficulties in the way, both in the political talks in Jerusalem and in the Military Committee. In all of these meetings, he said, he always tried to make the Israelis put their “real cards on the table”, but they managed to avoid doing so. Sadat said he knew that the main Israeli aim is expansionism and that they will try to use every pretext to achieve this, whether security concerns or whatever. The Israelis desire new borders

¹² The transcript of Secretary Vance’s July 23 interview on the ABC News program “Issues and Answers” is in the Department of State *Bulletin*, September 1978, pp. 13–16.

which can satisfy their old dreams. However, Egypt felt it should push ahead with the peace process despite Israel and its dreams.

20. At Leeds, Sadat continued, there came the moment he had been anticipating. The Israelis laid their dreams on the table instead of beating around the bush. They said they want the land.

21. Sadat reminded me that the Israelis had told President Carter that they wanted recognition, normalization of relations, secure borders and so forth. This was emphasized by President Carter as important in April 1977 during their first meeting. In November, said Sadat, obviously warming to the subject, "I jumped over all of this. I gave them acceptance in the area, the promise of normal relations, direct negotiations, recognition, security measures, open borders and co-operation. They never dreamt of one-third of what I offered, but they took all that and put it in their pocket (gesturing to emphasize his point). They are always doing that—putting what we offer in their pocket and then asking for more."

22. Sadat continued: "At Leeds Dayan said there is no substitute for territorial compromise to assure security. To this I say 'No'! This is the main essence of Israeli intentions which they have tried to hide ever since my initiative. Meanwhile, I have put forward my six points concerning security.¹³ I don't even exclude the possibility of the US concluding a military pact with Israel. Now I have given everything."

23. Sadat continued by saying that he was now making his "second initiative". He said he would never again sit together with Israel at ministerial or any level unless the question of land is declared "beyond compromise."

24. Sadat referred to Begin's coming out of the Knesset and saying that Israel will never give Egypt any grain of sand without a price.¹⁴ "So impertinent!" Sadat explained that he ordered the Israeli military group to leave because "I am not ready to have a group here in order to bring such impertinence".

25. Sadat said "It is my Sinai and I will take it sooner or later. Such arrogance! How can the US allow Israel to use you like this. Before agreeing to anything like security arrangements, I want to be aware of all the arms and security assistance that the Pentagon is giving to Israel." He recalled here the statements he had made in his July 27

¹³ Of the six points, three specifically address security concerns.

¹⁴ Begin made the statement on July 24 commenting on the Cabinet's rejection the previous day of Sadat's request that Israel return Al Arish and Mount Sinai. ("Israel Says It Would Discuss Status Of West Bank and Gaza in 5 Years," *New York Times*, July 25, 1978, p. A1)

speech¹⁵ about US still providing (twice a day) satellite intelligence to the Israelis.

26. Sadat repeated that he is embarking on his “second initiative”, i.e., to remove the subject of territory from any negotiation. “I will go to the end of the road in terms of meeting Israeli security concerns, but keep the land out of the compromise.” Sadat said he might be able to understand not “giving anything for free” if they were on their own land and he on his, but he said angrily that Begin wants Israel to be a super-state in the area. He referred again to “the Pentagon”, saying that it is providing Israel with security information twice a day, and reiterated his conviction that we are sharing satellite photography with Israel.

27. He underscored his “second initiative” by saying he was willing to give Israel “anything under the sun except land”. He said that for every settlement Israel withdraws from the West Bank, he would provide water for a new one in the Negev from his plans for developing the Sinai. Sadat did affirm that, in accordance with what he termed the interpretation of 242 by all parties, a West Bank settlement could incorporate “minor rectifications”. He also assured me that his second initiative “doesn’t mean that I have cut my ties with Israel, despite urging from the other Arabs”.

28. Sadat was at great pains to explain that he did not want to embarrass President Carter in any way. He recalled that he sent a record of his Salzburg talks with Weizman to the Secretary shortly after his return and said the record would show that Israel is insisting that he agree to end the involvement of the US in the negotiations. He said he might be able to agree to this if Israel were willing to live as a state in the area, but not as a super-state with expansionist designs.

29. Sadat asked that I tell the President to “try to save the image of your country”. He referred again to arms provided to Israel by “the Pentagon”, and to the “many US citizens” who are part of the Israeli defense forces. He said “Try to correct your image and you will find me a friend”.

30. Sadat said that he was not interested in “harassing” President Carter, but that he doesn’t want to see the day when a US plan emerges based on the Israeli proposal.

31. He said (as he did again several times) “This is my last word”. He continued: “I am not thinking of embarrassing my friend, President Carter. Weizman said I should take the credit for a peace settlement,

¹⁵ On July 27, Sadat gave a speech at Alexandria University. Ambassador Eilts provided an analysis of the speech in telegram 17913 from Cairo, July 28. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780310–0318)

but I said no, I want to pass it on to President Carter. If my decision embarrasses him tell him I have no other choice, and let American public opinion note what the US is doing militarily for Israel."

32. At one point Sadat said "I might at some point have to tell the Israelis to go to hell. You must ask them if they are ready to drop this land issue."

33. I assured Sadat that I would report his remarks fully but that I would like to make a few personal comments. I first of all assured him that President Carter fully reciprocates his friendship. I added that I appreciated his frustration at the slowness of negotiations but that I was convinced that they would be even slower if the US were not involved. Sadat picked this up immediately and said, "Yes, the US does have a role, and it should play it now."

34. I asked to make another personal point. I had said at the beginning of our meeting that I was hopeful, but I don't see how I can remain hopeful if we can't together figure out how to keep the peace process alive. I reminded him that President Carter, in the letter I had just delivered, reiterated the commitment he had given at Camp David, but that I did not see how we could play our promised role in a vacuum.

35. Sadat responded by saying this was very logical, but that the Arab-Israeli conflict is different from any other problem in the world because Israel is occupying Arab land and intends to keep much of it, which is not acceptable in today's world. Referring to a subject obviously very much on his mind, he asked that we not put him in the position of receiving letters stating that Israel is not prepared to give something for nothing. He is obviously deeply offended by implication that what he has offered with respect to peace and security is "nothing".¹⁶

36. Sadat described his frustration with first the Leeds talks, then the Israeli Knesset debate involving the new three-point formulation, and finally and most importantly the Cabinet decision on the El-Arish idea and the manner in which it was made public and then conveyed to him by subsequent letter. He described the current moment as "the final touch of my November initiative."

37. I told Sadat that I thought he would see that our ideas are close to the Egyptian position in many respects. I said it would be a shame to break off now after coming this close. I meant coming close to presenting our ideas, but he interpreted my statement as meaning coming close to agreement, and dismissed what I said by insisting that the two

¹⁶ A reference to Begin's comments following the Cabinet's July 23 rejection of Sadat's request that Israel return Al Arish and Mount Sinai. Begin ruled out unilateral moves and said, "Nobody can get anything for nothing and this is going to be the policy of Israel." (William E. Farrell, "Israel Turns Down Appeal From Egypt For Friendly Move," *New York Times*, July 24, 1978, p. A1)

proposals were never close. He referred to the Israeli strategy as a “cat and mouse game” and said he wondered when they would finally admit it.

38. Ambassador Eilts asked Sadat if it would not be possible for him to say in reply to the Israeli message that Egypt had already offered its *quid pro quo* in the form of normalizing relations, and to make good use of it in the current context. Eilts said that Sadat could point out that Israel had been offered everything it had asked and that this would be a very strong card to play at this time. Sadat replied that if the parties were to meet now, their positions would be unbalanced, since Begin has stated that he could not give anything for nothing.

39. I pointed out that President Carter feels that he has a very firm commitment to Sadat but that he also feels that if he is to carry out that commitment he needs a negotiating context in which to do so. I added that there may be a serious problem before us. I said that as I read President Carter’s letter, a final decision on attendance at the next round of talks is desired from Egypt before final plans can be made for the Secretary’s travel. I also asked, as I had previously of Kamel, if it might not be possible for Sadat to state that the U.S. sees new elements in the Israeli position and that, on that basis, Egypt would attend further talks.

40. Kamel tried to state that the President had made it clear that either the U.S. make a compromise proposal on a take-it-or-leave-it basis or propose what amounts to the Egyptian position for further negotiations. Sadat, however, cut him off in mid-sentence and said “No! We are dropping the issues of land and sovereignty from the negotiations.”

41. Sadat said gravely that we have reached a “very decisive moment.” He agreed that there was indeed a new development, but that it was a negative one, and referred again to Begin’s sending the Cabinet decision rejecting “something for nothing” through the U.S.

42. Sadat said “We have reached a climax.” He asked that I inform President Carter of his judgment that Begin will never make peace. He added, “When they have the freedom to take decisions like this (referring again to the “something for nothing” letter), I also have the freedom to take decisions.”

43. He said that Israel is like a “spoiled child, wanting to have its own way whatever the consequences for those around it.” He said, however, that he is still optimistic, since the day will come when Israel will realize what it has lost. “I feel from God that in the end I shall win the battle.”

44. Ambassador Eilts asked Sadat to clarify his present thinking on an American proposal. Sadat suggested in response that President Carter would be well advised not to have the U.S. indulge in details. He suggested rather that we switch to broad outlines and ask the parties to negotiate the details.

45. Sadat then suggested what these broad outlines might include at this juncture, citing (A) no acquisition of territory by force; (B) no settlements (reminding us that this has been our position) and (C) security arrangements.

46. I asked Sadat again how we could make our proposal when there is no negotiating context in which to make it; when we had proposed Leeds talks we had said we anticipated a further round in the area as well as a visit by the Secretary. Kamel broke in to mention that his instructions for Leeds said that, if nothing positive came out of the talks in England, he should not agree to another meeting. If the U.S. has ideas, Kamel asked, why can't it make them without another meeting.

47. Sadat again said "This is the climax." He added "Take your time in this climax, but don't do anything that would distort your image here in the area."

48. Eilts then reviewed the strategy that we have had in mind from the beginning: Leeds, my visit, the Secretary's trip and another meeting. Hermann¹⁷ said that we have had no illusion that Egypt and Israel alone can make much progress. Without another meeting, however, the U.S. will be seen to be imposing a blueprint in no context. This is why we have concluded that another meeting is necessary. Hermann referred to Sadat's statement that he is now thinking in broader terms and asked, if there were such a statement based on broader terms, could Egypt agree to attend another meeting?

49. Sadat replied that we both have been waiting for new elements. He said that if this happened, "we will study it." He reminded us that at one point he had alluded to new Israeli elements only because the Secretary asked him to. He then repeated that in the last ten days there have indeed been new elements, but negative ones. First the Leeds talks, with Dayan's insistence on territorial compromise, and then the Israeli Cabinet's "something for nothing" decision conveyed through the U.S.

50. Sadat seemed to sum up his current thinking by saying that all he is asking for is a statement to the effect that, in accordance with international legal principles, there should be a balance in the negotiations. Land occupied after 1967 should be dropped from the negotiating context and the parties should sit together in the presence of the U.S. to discuss peace and security measures that will satisfy both sides. Regarding security measures, Sadat said "Things which today seem impossible could become possible." He also said that, in making such a statement, the U.S. can feel free to insist on any conditions relating to security assurances and normalization of relations. Sadat reiterated

¹⁷ Hermann Eilts.

that he would advise the U.S. not to indulge itself in details but to deal in broad outlines.

51. Ambassador Eilts observed that it was obvious that Begin's letter concerning the El-Arish/St. Catherine proposal had upset Sadat.¹⁸ Eilts said he was surprised at this, since that letter reflected an attitude which Sadat had continually been attributing to Israel. Sadat replied that the difference is that "we are now at a turning point."

52. I said at the end that I agreed with Sadat we were at a decisive moment. I hoped Sadat would reflect on what he planned "to declare," as he had said, at his press conference after our meeting, and not close the door to further talks. Eilts expressed the hope that Sadat would not say anything that would adversely affect the excellent image he has developed among the American people. Sadat replied that he had in effect already declared his position; "This involves the destiny of the Egyptian people."

53. In concluding, Sadat told me I would be welcome anytime in Egypt or in his house—whatever happens. He added that he would continue to cherish the close relationship that he has with his dear friend, President Carter, and the American people.

54. Department repeat at its discretion to Embassy Tel Aviv and other posts.

Eilts

¹⁸ St. Catherine's Monastery is located at the foot of Mount Sinai.

280. Telegram From the Embassy in Egypt to the Department of State¹

Cairo, July 31, 1978, 1643Z

18056. For the Secretary and Saunders from Atherton. USDel No. 28. Subject: Where Do We Go From Here in Light of Sadat's Decision.

1. We must now give some thought to how we want to proceed in the light of the new situation created by what Sadat said to us privately

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P850067–2009. Secret; Immediate; Nodis; Cherokee.

yesterday and his public comments afterwards.² First observation is that while this is obviously a disappointing development for us in the sense that it makes arranging a next round of talks in the near future much more difficult and perhaps impossible, it is important to recognize that Sadat has not changed his position in any fundamental way on the issues themselves. In his comments to us yesterday he made it clear, for example, that while there could be “no bargaining” over territory or sovereignty, he was still willing to agree there could be “minor rectifications” on the West Bank (he made it plain this was the only front where this could be contemplated) if we proposed this. This has really been Sadat’s position all along. He also reiterated at length his willingness to “go to the end of the road” with respect to security arrangements and the nature of peace, and to continue direct contacts with Israel—but only if it is clear that territorial changes (other than minor West Bank modifications) will not be a subject for negotiation.

2. Clearly in yesterday’s meeting the elements of anger and exasperation at recent Israeli actions—particularly the way they handled the Al-Arish enclave business—was apparent in Sadat’s presentation. But Hermann and I both feel it would be an error to conclude from this that there is a good chance Sadat could be persuaded to change his position on the talks once he “simmer down”. Things have probably gone too far for this. As was the case in Jerusalem last winter when he pulled his delegation out of the Political Committee talks, there was a triggering mechanism but more importantly the decision reflected an accumulating sense of frustration arising from Sadat’s perception of Israel’s tactics and its failure to respond “in the same spirit” to his bold and sweeping approach to peace-making. Although we are dealing with a man who was angered at a recent development, we are also dealing with one who, we are increasingly inclined to believe, has reluctantly come to the conclusion that the Sadat initiative has not paid off and that he must now begin to rebuild his bridges to the Arab world. With his action yesterday, however, he is thus far doing so, it seems to us, in a manner that does not slam the door in any final sense. But it is clear he has charted a different path to that door in the sense that he is no longer prepared to settle for a set of principles that retain any significant element of ambiguity on the territorial question. Put another way, he has returned four square to what the Egyptians (and Jor-

² Sadat met privately with Atherton on July 30. See Document 279. In statements to reporters after the meeting, Sadat criticized the most recent Israeli offer on the West Bank and Gaza as “negative and backward” and said that he did not favor direct meetings with the Israelis at that time. He noted that he was ready to accept peace but only if there was a prior agreement not to discuss Arab land or sovereignty. (Marvine Howe, “Sadat Bars Meeting With Israelis Now; Condemns Position,” *New York Times*, July 31, 1978, p. A1)

danians) claim we told them Resolution 242 meant when we were pressing them to accept it in 1967—i.e., no changes in international borders, and the return of most of the West Bank to Jordan, in exchange for peace, recognition and security. The Egyptians have correctly reminded us that we agreed to include the language about “the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war” as the price for their acceptance of 242. The Saudis are obviously also at present seeking to move Sadat in this direction.

3. The second question we might ask is to what extent our own ideas, as I conveyed them to Kamel,³ played a role in Sadat’s decision. We have the impression that this was a relatively minor factor. Sadat hardly commented on our ideas beyond making the general observation that President Carter should concentrate on the “broad principles” rather than “the details” of a peace settlement. Sadat gave every evidence of having made up his mind about what he had to do before he even learned of our ideas. When they were reported to him they probably struck him as being too little too late and we imagine it had the effect of confirming him in the course he had earlier determined upon.

4. The first judgment we must make is whether we think we have a chance of persuading Sadat to change his mind about further talks, either by my having more sessions with him, or by having you come to the area as planned in the hopes of arranging tripartite talks for sometime in September. In our judgment, we cannot have any assurance that we stand a reasonable chance of succeeding in such an effort. A trip by you, then, if it is conceived and put out as having as its objective changing Sadat’s mind about the talks, runs a strong risk of ending in failure. We think it would be a mistake for you to come out with this as the announced objective.

5. A more plausible option would be for you to proceed with your trip within the framework of a broader objective. This would be to proceed along the lines we had previously planned, treating the Sadat decision as an adverse development, but not something that would justify derailing us from the overall strategy we have so carefully built up over the past months. Your trip would be projected as having the objective of discussing our ideas for breaking the impasse in negotiations, now made more obvious by Sadat’s latest move. During your trip, you would, of course, seek to persuade Sadat to change his mind about further talks, giving him the basis for this by enabling him to say that you had explained to him the full thrust of the US approach. But Sadat would still want to see the US “take a position”—by which he of course means a public position—on the issues. We would be left with the diffi-

³ See Document 279.

cult decision of whether you would then leave with the parties' written formulations (which would quickly become public).

6. If we were to proceed to do so, it would certainly trigger a strong negative reaction from the Begin government on the grounds that we were seeking to impose a "US plan" in the absence of negotiations. We would be vulnerable to Israeli charges that we were doing this, moreover, after Sadat had broken off negotiations and in the face of new "preconditions" that Sadat had imposed for resuming them. On the other hand, if we do not put forward our ideas in written form as something we support and are prepared to stand by, we are not likely to arrest the trend toward disillusionment with us either on the part of Sadat, or in a broader context throughout the Arab world. In reflecting on yesterday's meeting with Sadat, I am struck by the number of times he referred to the need to "protect the US image" in the Arab world. At one point he said that, although he did not intend to do so, it would be easy to make political capital by attacking the US for its military and economic aid to Israel. And he has, of course, gone public with the charge that we provide Israel with satellite photography on Egypt. I was also struck by the language in Prince Saud's letter to you (Jidda 5595)⁴ warning of the danger of "frustration" in the Arab world when it "realizes that the United States will not take an independent stance toward the Middle East issue in all its aspects and will not endeavor to bring pressure to bear on Israel for the enforcement of such (US) stance . . .". These may be faint and veiled signals, and it is admittedly difficult to know how much they represent a gathering storm and how much they are simply pressure tactics on us without portending anything more ominous in the way of Arab actions. Having experienced the veiled signals in late 1972 and early 1973 which we tended to discount at the time, however, I do not think we can afford to ignore them totally today.

7. Another option we might consider is for us to do nothing for awhile. We could say without beating around the bush that we had been unable to arrange talks and that we were waiting for the parties to propose an alternative. This might have the merit of causing some sober second thoughts on both sides of the fence. But we can have no confidence that even this would induce either side to change the policies that are now the fundamental impediment to negotiations. For the Egyptians, moreover, it would appear to be a reneging on our commitment at Camp David. What we said then was that we needed an Egyp-

⁴ Dated July 30. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P850033-0004)

tian counterproposal to the Begin plan before we could move to break the impasse, but we said nothing so far as I can recall about needing a resumption of direct negotiations. Such a policy would also project the image of US inaction in the face of a gathering crisis. We do not see it as a tenable option.

8. Another possibility would be for the US to decide that this is the time to put forward its own views in the form of a major Presidential address or “report to the nation”. This is presumably the kind of “forthright” position-taking that Sadat is expecting from us. To the extent, however, that we attempted to work in positions or phraseology that satisfied Sadat—such as “inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war”—it would only make getting the Israelis to the table more difficult. A Presidential address could also, however, be considered in conjunction with our putting forward our ideas for the basis of negotiations—that is to say, as an essential way of mobilizing both US domestic and international support for our views on the elements of a reasonable peace settlement.

9. I am left with the overall belief, at least at this preliminary stage of our deliberations, that while Sadat has indeed thrown us a difficult curve ball, we should not treat it as sufficient reason to abandon a strategy to which we have given the most careful thought, and toward which we have been building, these many months. My recommendation would be that we proceed, in spite of the difficulties, along the lines of paragraph 5, i.e., that you make your trip as planned, that you discuss with the Israelis and Sadat (in that order) our ideas in their full form, that you attempt to persuade the two sides to agree to talks at some later date on the basis of these ideas, but that failing this, we be prepared to leave our ideas with the parties in written form and mount a sustained public effort to justify them as the only possible basis for a first stage agreement. The last step will obviously cause us trouble with the Israelis (and our position may also now be seen as inadequate by Sadat), but to both sides we would have to be prepared to be tough and take the position that we will neither back off those formulations nor go beyond them. If we do this—and above all we do it promptly—we stand an outside chance of ultimately getting the two sides back into a negotiating posture. In my estimation this course is the only one that offers such an outside chance. If we are to move along this course, however, we need to begin quickly preparing the ground publicly and with Congress for support of our judgment that the direct Egyptian-Israeli negotiations have gone as far as they can and have reached a genuine impasse now. This will not be easy in the face of the perception of many that Sadat has again broken off negotiations and set forth preconditions, without giving those negotiations a fair chance—even though we all know they were not going to go anywhere on their own in any case.

We will certainly need to say that both sides share the blame for the impasse—Israel because of its West Bank/Gaza position and Sadat for not agreeing to further talks.

10. Finally, I think it is important that you as well as the other policy leaders in Washington have a clear picture of what I see as the essence of the issue the United States faces. It is really the issue that all along has been at the heart of our policy on the Arab-Israel problem, with the difference that Sadat is now moving in such a way to make us face up to it. He is in effect saying that he has given us nine months to try to ease the two sides into negotiations but because of the Israeli position on the West Bank territorial question and our inability to do anything about it, this has not worked. He is in the process of abandoning negotiations as a means of getting us to help him solve his problems and reverting to a policy that seeks to bring his broader strategic equation into play: i.e., that by having the US “declare its position” he will produce more clearcut daylight between the US and Israel with an eventual cost to Israel in terms of the resultant strain in US-Israeli relations. In this—his reversion to the earlier strategy—he will have full support of the other Arab states. If we are to have any hope of avoiding the unpalatable choice this forces upon us, we will need to bring our strategy into play promptly and decisively, with somewhat less concern, it seems to me, for attempting to fine-tune it so that it makes no waves in any direction—an objective that is unattainable in any case in my judgment.

11. I recognize that under this option, the odds are we will not be able to avoid this unpalatable choice, since a likely outcome (depending on the precise contents of our final ideas) is that Sadat will let us “impose” our views on him and Israel will not. The fact that I have not addressed the question of what we do when we face this dilemma does not mean that I underestimate its importance and the difficult decisions it poses for the President. I am acutely conscious of them, as I have been for the many years I have been working on this problem. I do want to underscore my belief, however, that the course of action we have so painstakingly hammered out in recent months is about as close as we can get to the essential compromise we must work out between “imposing” our views on the one hand, and on the other, abandoning the process to the stalemate that will inevitably ensue if we do not take action along these lines, with serious consequences for US interests in the area. Our approach still makes negotiations between the parties the focus of the peace process. I believe it will be seen as reasonable to a broad spectrum of US public opinion, and ultimately to a significant body of Israeli opinion as well.

12. One final thought that occurs to us is that if we do decide to put forward our ideas as a formal proposal, it might be worth attempting to

get European support by briefing the Europeans about our approach generally, thereby laying the groundwork for a later effort to get more specific endorsement of what we were putting forward.

13. Ambassador Eilts concurs in the above.

Eilts

281. Editorial Note

According to President Jimmy Carter's diary, Carter decided at the meeting of his weekly foreign affairs breakfast group on July 31, 1978, to send Secretary of State Vance to Israel and Egypt and offer invitations for President Sadat and Prime Minister Begin to meet directly with Carter at Camp David. Carter wrote that "the situation is getting into an extreme state and I'm concerned that Sadat might precipitate a conflict in October, as he has hinted several times." This was apparently a reference to Sadat's frequent reminders in 1978 that the 1975 Sinai II agreement would expire in October 1978 and that without an agreement, hostilities between Egypt and Israel could occur. (Jimmy Carter, *White House Diary*, page 210)

282. Telegram From the Consulate in Jerusalem to the Department of State¹

Jerusalem, August 3, 1978, 1605Z

2129. Subj: August 2 Meeting With Begin.² Ref: Jerusalem 2107.³ From Atherton. US Del No. 38.

1. Following is more detailed report of my August 2 meeting with Begin at the Knesset. With Begin were: Yadin, Dayan, Weizman, Evron,

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P850033-0269. Secret; Immediate; Exdis (Treat as Nodis). Sent immediate for information to Cairo and Tel Aviv.

² No memorandum of conversation has been found.

³ Atherton's first report of the meeting is in telegram 2107 from Jerusalem, August 2. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P850033-0266)

Rosenne, Dinitz, Ben-Elissar, Evner, Horowitz, Rubenstein, and Colonel Tehila. With me were Sam Lewis, Sterner, Blackwill, Sherman and Feifer.

2. Begin led off meeting by welcoming me and my colleagues. He noted that we had quite an eventful time in Cairo and asked me to describe my talks with Sadat and Kamel.⁴

3. I said there had been two meetings with Kamel before I saw Sadat. In the talks with Kamel, I had reviewed the Leeds Conference, especially the common ground which we believed could be identified between the Israeli and Egyptian proposals. We also discussed the importance of following up the Leeds talks with a tripartite conference while the Secretary was in the area. We also explained to the Egyptians the latest Israeli formulations on the sovereignty issue which Dayan had presented before the Knesset.⁵ We gave the Egyptians our judgment that these formulations were new and something that they should reflect on. We also explored with Kamel in general whether there were ways in which Egypt's proposal could be modified, especially its formulation relating to a final solution.

4. I then explained to Begin the general reaction of Kamel to these points. Kamel had not agreed with the US assessment of the Leeds conference. Although he admitted there were some areas of commonality, he dismissed them as unimportant unless there were agreement on a commitment to withdrawal. This would be followed by negotiations on security and peace which could include minor border modifications. Kamel made clear Egyptians know that agreement on these issues would have to be reached before withdrawal could take place. Kamel stressed, however, that agreement on a commitment to withdraw was fundamental. Unless this was achieved, the Egyptians were not interested in exploring areas of commonality. Kamel was also very negative regarding a follow-on trilateral conference. He was annoyed that Egyptian acceptance of such talks was taken for granted in Israeli and US statements. We had discussed this issue at some length. Kamel made the point that there would have to be new elements in the Israeli position before direct talks could be resumed. Unfortunately he considered all the new elements bad. He noted that Egypt is under great pressure from the other Arab states. Public Israeli statements were also making it difficult for Egypt to resume the talks. We reminded Kamel that the statement by the Secretary at the end of the Leeds Conference had been made after consultations with both Dayan and Kamel.⁶ Although Egypt had not formally committed itself to another round, it had left us

⁴ See footnote 5, Document 279.

⁵ See footnote 7, Document 277.

⁶ See footnote 5, Document 273.

with the impression that it was positively disposed to another meeting. Despite this, Kamel remained negative on further trilateral talks. I had tried to explain Dayan's statement as movement in the Israeli position. But Kamel professed to see no difference between "discussing sovereignty" and the earlier Israeli formulation that "the nature of the future relations will be considered." There should be no discussion of sovereignty because Israel had no valid claim of sovereignty on the West Bank. Kamel said Egypt would have to stay with the language it had put forward in its proposal. If the Israelis were to put forward language such as minor modifications or a unified Jerusalem, he indicated the Egyptians could probably accept such an addition.

5. I noted that at my meeting with Sadat,⁷ as Sadat later announced, I had delivered to him a response from the President to his earlier letter.⁸ I had then reviewed with Sadat the highlights of my meetings with Kamel. I discussed the US assessment of the Leeds Conference, the need for further direct negotiations and reasons why Egypt should take a closer look at the most recent Israeli formulations on sovereignty. In this context, I described my talks in Israel. However, I did not in any way discuss the questions for clarification on certain points that I had raised with the GOI on the Israeli proposal. We considered this a private matter between Israel and ourselves. I also mentioned to Sadat the negative effect Egyptian public statements directed against Begin were having. I noted that Eilts had made much the same point with Sadat on several earlier occasions. I also briefed Sadat on my talks in Taif and Amman.⁹

6. I continued that Sadat heard me out and then went into a long, somber, sometimes emotional, monologue parts of which he repeated to the press later. Sadat stressed that Israel did not understand the meaning of his initiative. According to him, he had offered everything to Israel and had no commensurate response. He explained how Egypt had wanted to see new Israeli positions at Leeds but had only received negative proposals such as equating the retention of territory with security. Sadat said that he would give everything under the sun except land, including full peace and even acceptance of a U.S.–Israel military alliance. At the end of his presentation, Sadat stated there would be no further direct contacts until Israel agrees not to negotiate over land and sovereignty. He excepted from this discussion minor modifications on the West Bank. However, Sadat reiterated he was not cutting his ties with Israel despite heavy Arab pressure to do so. But, the principle of

⁷ See Document 279.

⁸ The text of Sadat's letter to Carter is in Document 276. The text of Carter's letter to Sadat is in Document 278.

⁹ See Documents 274 and 275.

no negotiations over territory would have to be established as a basis for a resumption of talks. I explained to Begin how Eilts and I had urged Sadat not to make this statement and to let the next round of talks take place. I stressed that right from the beginning of the Leeds talks, we had envisaged a follow-on meeting. At Leeds, Kamel had clearly left the impression there would be such a conference. However, our efforts with Sadat were to no avail.

7. I then summed up for Begin my assessment and impressions of Sadat's position based upon what he had said in public and private. I said I did not think that Sadat has either abandoned his initiative nor said no to more direct talks. Sadat continues to want peace, and he is not back-tracking on issues of normal relations and security. As to why Sadat has taken his present course of action, I attributed this first and foremost to his view that Israel has not fully responded to his initiative. He feels that Israel has discounted and understated its importance. In addition, as in his trip to Jerusalem, Sadat had felt the need to make a sudden move in order to persuade the world that negotiations cannot succeed until certain basic principles are understood, the most important of which from his standpoint is the inadmissibility of acquiring territory by war as per UNSC Resolution 242. Also, there is increasing support in the Arab world for the view that the Sadat initiative was a mistake because it did not produce a change in the Israeli position on withdrawal from the West Bank and Gaza Strip. In the absence of progress, it is necessary for Sadat to pay attention to the views of other Arabs, especially the Saudis. In addition, the assessment that Sadat's initiative was a mistake is gaining increasing currency in broad sectors of Egyptian society.

8. I explained that we were still analyzing the situation in the aftermath of Sadat's decision. My personal preliminary view is that his action is not just tactical. He appears to feel the need to position himself to resist Arab—and especially Saudi—pressures while trying to preserve the negotiating track with Israel opened up by his initiative. But in the process, he has inevitably moved a step closer to their views. I also mentioned to Begin my wrap-up session with Kamel on August 1.¹⁰ I explained that we had reviewed our earlier talks and the message that Sadat was conveying. Kamel broke no new ground or showed any second thoughts. The Egyptians were waiting for the Secretary's visit as the next negotiating event. I then gave the floor to the Prime Minister.

9. Begin began by saying he had some remarks to make for the record. He noted that the Israelis had some experience with Egyptian

¹⁰ The wrap-up session with Kamel is described in telegram 18176 from Cairo, August 2. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P850067–2029)

negotiating behavior. In the middle of the Jerusalem Political Committee, Sadat decided to call the Egyptian delegation home.¹¹ Various explanations of Sadat's behavior were presented. One was that Sadat had felt insulted by Begin's reference to Kamel as a young man.¹² However, Sadat stated just a few weeks ago that the reason he had pulled out the delegation was that at the first session Dayan had said that he "hoped that we shall meet half way." Begin said he was making this point because we finally had an explanation by Sadat. Nobody—neither the Secretary nor the President—had any idea why he had disrupted the talks. Now we learn why, because Israel's Foreign Minister said the parties should meet halfway; "but isn't this the nature of negotiations?"

10. Begin then gave his side of the El Arish affair, saying he would like to present some information for the record. Weizman had met Sadat in Salzburg, and the two of them had talked privately without notetakers. Afterwards, they had dictated the substance of the talks and the minutes were brought to Jerusalem. Begin said he had read them closely and Weizman had reported on his talks to the Cabinet. The proposal was this: Israel should make a unilateral gesture on its own initiative, and place El Arish under Egyptian civil administration. Following this, El Arish would be the site of the next stage of the negotiations. As for Santa Katerina, Sadat also wanted a unilateral gesture. The truth is that two days later, the proposal leaked to the press. Begin admitted this should not have happened. In reaction, Gamasy sent an angry cable to Weizman. The latter's response was a conciliatory message using the words, "I apologize." Begin emphasized that in relations between states, the use of this phrase is very important. Begin admitted that the leak was a mishap but in democracy these things happen. Since the leak occurred five days before the Cabinet session, it was known in advance that the meeting would deal with this issue. Begin noted that the decision taken by the Cabinet was unanimous approval of his letter to Sadat, except for one Minister. The letter was then transmitted to Gamasy for Sadat.¹³ Begin said that he did not give the letter to the press following the Cabinet session but only the decision made by the Cabinet, "the press asked for the decision, and I gave it to them." Begin had stated that Israel could not accept a unilateral step, but was ready for negotiations based upon reciprocity. He had also used a phrase common among American children, "you can't get something for nothing." Begin then explained that the Egyptian military had refused to receive the Israeli message because they said it dealt with politics.

¹¹ See Document 198.

¹² See footnote 3, Document 198.

¹³ See footnote 5, Document 277.

The letter was then transmitted via the U.S.' good offices, but when Eilts brought the letter, Sadat refused to open it and gave it back. Begin explained that it had been a fair letter. In it Israel emphasized that, although it was unwilling to take any unilateral steps, it was prepared to negotiate on the basis of reciprocity.

11. Begin termed Sadat's fury astonishing. "Israel has done nothing wrong." Sadat had made a suggestion which Israel had not agreed to. Begin stressed that the GOI was willing to negotiate and say what it wanted. However, Sadat was insulted because Israel was suggesting negotiations. Begin made the point that he had not reacted to Sadat's insulting comparison of him to a thief who steals a cow and then asks for ransom. Begin said that Israel was willing to negotiate over El Arish. But, although Sadat may be able to dictate in Egypt, he cannot do so to Israel. Israel is prepared to negotiate, but will not accept ultimatums. "If Sadat doesn't agree to negotiations, where is the progress?" Begin said he was prepared to tell this to the world. Begin said that Sadat claimed to have been insulted by Dayan talking about "compromise." Sadat, therefore, demands that Israel not mention compromise or else Egypt would not resume talks. Begin noted that in Israel the Labor Party was always saying that if the government had only proposed territorial compromise, there could be an agreement with Egypt. But, Begin continued, we see that the mere mention of this phrase makes Sadat furious. But, everything Israel has done has been a compromise: its proposal on Sinai is a far-reaching compromise, its autonomy plan is a compromise, and leaving the sovereignty of Judea and Samaria open is a compromise. "What could be better?" Begin then noted that "everybody makes compromises, but for Sadat, you must make a commitment not to mention compromise." Begin said that Sadat wants to dictate to Israel. Begin said that even Yadin's party, the DMC, would not accept this. Nobody in Israel, except for the Communists, would accept such Egyptian terms. On the other hand, Israel wants to engage in negotiations.

12. Begin said it should be made clear to Sadat that his word may be sacred in Egypt, but it is not in Israel. It was preposterous for Sadat to think that either his government or any Israeli government would agree to exclude territory from negotiations.¹⁴ The territorial question of Judea and Samaria was a matter of "life and death" for Israelis. Begin said that Sadat's fiat is not the Ten Commandments nor the teachings from Mount Sinai. Begin termed Sadat's whole position "curious." "It is not negotiations." In order to talk with Egypt and to have the honor of sitting with an Egyptian representative, Israel has to give up talking about compromises on territory and sovereignty. Begin termed this

¹⁴ See footnote 2, Document 280.

“absolutely irrational and unacceptable” and that “this would have to be made clear to Sadat.” He told how he had been silent about Sadat’s insults and explained that Israel had all the good will in the world. Begin claimed not to feel Sadat’s insults even when he is called a thief who demands compensation from his victim. Begin noted that Sadat was not presenting a pretty picture of him to the Egyptian people. In addition, Begin recollected a recent Egyptian cartoon in which he had been pictured taking LSD.

13. Moving to policy, Begin stressed that Israel welcomes the Secretary and would like to see a trilateral conference take place at Um Khushaiba (the SFM). If the Secretary can succeed in getting Israel and Egypt together, Israel would be glad. However, Begin stressed that he refused to give up the essence of negotiations, i.e. the principle of compromise. Israel would accept no preconditions for negotiations.

14. Weizman then asked, “as a practical man,” whether the date of October for the renewal of UNEF had been mentioned by Sadat. I explained that Sadat has often made clear he feels that October is an important date by which he must make important decisions. However, this was not a central issue in our discussions. Sterner noted that the subject had just come up once in the course of the talks in Cairo. Begin interjected that October is very clear in Israeli minds. The Sinai Agreements were to continue in force until superseded by another agreement. I agreed with Begin on this point and stated that the language in the Sinai Agreement was very clear. On the other hand, Begin noted that Sadat can say he doesn’t agree to a renewal of the UN forces in the Sinai. Rosenne then stated that there was a commitment by Egypt if UNEF were withdrawn as a result of a Soviet veto in the Security Council, that it would agree to an enlarged UNTSO to fulfill the functions of UNEF. He also noted the agreement between Israel and the US which stated that, unless there was agreement by both sides on the withdrawal of UNEF, the US view was that the agreement should remain binding on all parties.¹⁵ I then stated that we had already told Sadat that the US does not agree with his interpretation of the Sinai Agreement. I said there was no doubt in our mind on this question. Begin then asked Dayan if he had anything to add.

15. Dayan jokingly said that one doesn’t argue over information. He then recollected that at Leeds, there had been two proposals on the agenda. Each party could ask for any clarifications it desired. Dayan’s comments on territorial compromise were in response to questions. But, as a point of fact, Dayan had not proposed territorial compromise.

¹⁵ This was expressed in a letter from President Ford to Israeli Prime Minister Rabin. See *Foreign Relations, 1969–1976*, vol. XXVI, Arab-Israeli Dispute, 1974–1976, Document 231.

The only official Israeli proposal was the self-rule plan. For Kamel to say that Dayan had proposed territorial compromise was inaccurate. Dayan had proposed that the question of sovereignty remain open. The Egyptians had wanted this issue decided now, but Dayan said Israel had not claimed that the West Bank and Gaza were under Israeli sovereignty. He merely said that Israel had a right to claim this. Israel did not submit a proposal on sovereignty. It simply said that the question should remain open. If Sadat wanted to discuss sovereignty, as far as Israel is concerned, "it is open to discussion." Dayan understood the Egyptians had decided against going on with the trilateral talks. Whatever their reasons, Israel cannot impose its will on them. Dayan felt that the Saudis were behind Sadat's decision. The Saudis believed that Sadat should not continue with his initiative. Sadat's current position has nothing to do with what Dayan had said at Leeds or Israel's treatment of the El Arish issue. The Saudis are trying to unify and reconcile the Arab world. This is what they had told Atherton in Taif. The Saudis have their influence on Sadat and had a say in his decision. I explained to Dayan that I had told the Egyptians that I thought they had misinterpreted his position on territorial compromise. As for the Saudis, they had told me they would not disagree with Sadat's continuing direct talks or a trilateral discussion if progress were being made. Also, the Saudis would not be opposed if talks were held based upon the understanding that land was not the basis for negotiation.

16. Yadin then suggested we take a look at Sadat's statement. He proposed that we take Sadat at his word that he does not want to negotiate over land and sovereignty. Yadin inquired whether the question was put to Sadat that this is precisely the spirit of the Israeli proposal. The essence of the autonomy plan was deferring negotiations over sovereignty and land. I explained that we have tried very hard over the past few months to get the Egyptians to take a good look at the self-rule plan. Yadin reiterated that the Israeli proposal falls within Sadat's formula. He suggested that the Israeli proposal could enable Sadat to resume talks, "unless his formula is a dictate." Yadin argued that the self-rule plan could allow Sadat to claim that he is not negotiating over these issues. I explained that this is not how the Egyptians see the Israeli proposal. Begin interjected that the Egyptians call the Israeli plan camouflage for its conquests. Yadin then asked how Sadat can retreat from the corner he's backed himself into. I replied that Sadat would say that we have to go back to 242 and the principle of withdrawal.

17. Begin inquired what is there to negotiate about when Sadat says we should make a commitment not to discuss land and sovereignty. There could still be a discussion of security, but this would be determined by the demand of the Egyptian President. Begin said this is unreasonable. When Sadat was in Jerusalem, he said let's put our cards

on the table, but Sadat is not willing to let us lay our cards down. Talks at Um Khushaiba are important to Israel, “but not at Sadat’s price.” Begin said he would not exacerbate the situation. For the present, he would not trade insult for insult. He then adjourned the meeting as scheduled in order to hold a Ministerial Security Committee session on developments in Lebanon.

Newlin

283. Letter From President Carter to Israeli Prime Minister Begin¹

Washington, August 3, 1978

To Prime Minister Begin,

This is a private and personal letter, and I would appreciate your honoring its confidentiality. I want to express myself frankly and directly to you personally.

During the past year under your leadership of Israel we have made remarkable progress toward peace. The boldness and leadership qualities exhibited by you and President Sadat have contributed to a new and better relationship between Israel and Egypt which was not anticipated by the rest of the world. In my opinion you are the leader who, in the foreseeable future, can and must continue this progress. You have a strong hold on the government, loyalty among your associates, and the well deserved confidence of the people of your country.

It is imperative that every effort be made to capitalize on this unprecedented opportunity to consummate a definitive peace treaty between Israel and Egypt and then to match this achievement with other agreements between your nation and your other neighbors.

Although the recent discussions have produced minimal progress, broad areas of agreement do exist, providing a basis for sustained hope. Unless we take advantage of this opportunity now, however, those of us who presently serve as leaders of our respective nations may not again have such a chance to advance the cause of peace in the Middle East.

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Office, Outside the System File, Box 50, Chron: 8/78. No classification marking. Carter wrote the letter by hand.

After hours of detailed discussions on several occasions with both you and President Sadat, in private and in group sessions, I am convinced of your mutual desire for peace. That desire is obviously shared by the people of both nations. Nevertheless, the high hopes of last winter have now been dissipated, with potentially serious consequences.

It is time, therefore, for a renewed effort at the highest level. My hope is that during this visit by Secretary Vance to the Middle East progress and harmony will be indicated by positive statements and the avoidance of public disputes.

Then, as soon as is convenient, I would like to meet personally with you and President Sadat to search for additional avenues toward peace.

Secretary Vance can discuss with you the arrangements for a time and place. Unnecessary delay would be a mistake. I have no strong preference about the location, but Camp David is available. My hope is that the three of us, along with our top advisors, can work together in relative seclusion. Maximum direct contact between you and President Sadat is very important.

To create the best climate for our meeting, public statements should be constructive and positive, expectations should not be raised too high, and quiet and mutual preparation should lay a foundation for optimum progress.

It is important that this proposal be kept completely confidential. President Sadat is being similarly approached. A time for announcement can be mutually set after we have fixed the date. Secretary Vance is familiar with my schedule, and I hope that through him you will send to me your ideas and advice.

I look forward to an early opportunity to consider with you again one of the most important and challenging issues ever decided by political leaders.

Please remember that you have my continuing friendship and personal best wishes as we work together as partners in a common search for peace.

Sincerely,

Jimmy Carter

284. Letter From President Carter to Egyptian President Sadat¹

Washington, August 3, 1978

To President Sadat,

I would appreciate your honoring the confidentiality of this letter, which is private and personal. I want to express myself frankly and directly.

Because of your dramatic and courageous visit to Jerusalem and its accompanying actions and statements, remarkable progress has been made toward peace in the Middle East. The strong leadership qualities exhibited by you and Prime Minister Begin contributed to a better understanding between Egypt and Israel, and opened up the prospect for success in the peace negotiations. In my opinion, you are the leader who, in the foreseeable future, can and must continue this progress. You have a strong hold on the government, loyalty among your associates, the well deserved confidence of the people of your country, and the admiration of the world.

It is imperative that every effort be made to capitalize on this unprecedented opportunity—to conclude a peace treaty between Egypt and Israel and to lay the groundwork for a comprehensive and permanent peace agreement for the entire region. The consequences of failure may be very serious.

During recent weeks little progress has been made and the relationships have deteriorated. A total stalemate is in prospect. Unless we act boldly and constructively now, those of us who now serve as leaders may not again have such a chance to bring peace to the people of your region.

After long discussions with both you and Prime Minister Begin, there is no doubt in my mind that both of you genuinely want peace and have the courage to reach agreement. It is time, therefore, for us to make a renewed effort at the highest level and with the greatest determination.

My hope is that, during this visit by Secretary Vance to the Middle East, progress and harmony will be indicated through positive statements and the avoidance of public disputes. Then, as soon as possible, I would like to meet personally with you and Prime Minister Begin to search for additional avenues for peace as we planned at Camp David.

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, Office, Outside the System File, Box 50, Chron: 8/78. No classification marking. Carter wrote the letter by hand.

It is important that this proposal be kept completely confidential, that public expectations not be raised too high, and that quiet and mutual preparation lay the foundation for a successful meeting.

Secretary Vance can discuss with you the details of time and place. Unnecessary delay would be a mistake. I have no strong preference about the location, but Camp David is available. My hope is that the three of us, along with our top advisors, can work together in relative seclusion. Any public announcement of our plans for the meeting can be coordinated among us. Secretary Vance is familiar with my schedule, and I hope that through him you will send me your ideas and advice.

I look forward to an early opportunity to consider with you again one of the most important and challenging issues ever to be decided by political leaders.

Please remember that you have my continuing friendship and personal best wishes as we work together as partners in a common search for peace.

Sincerely,

Jimmy Carter

285. Telegram From Secretary of State Vance to the Department of State¹

Jerusalem, August 6, 1978, 1920Z

Secto 9016. Pass White House for Dr. Brzezinski. Department for Tarnoff. Subj: Report for the President.

1. I met this morning for two and one-half hours with Begin and the entire Security and Defense Committee of the Cabinet plus their senior aides, and for another two hours this afternoon with a smaller group consisting of Begin, Yadin, Weizman and Dayan plus several aides.² I took the occasion of the larger meeting to convey our sense of urgency about getting negotiations moving, our desire to work closely with Israel on this, the importance we attach to face-to-face negotia-

¹ Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P840153–1641. Secret; Niact Immediate; Nodis. Vance was in Jerusalem from August 5 to August 7.

² A summary of the meeting with the Security Committee is in Document 286. No memoranda of conversation have been found of either meeting.

tions, and the risks we see if pressures to divert the negotiations to another forum succeed. I also stressed both our commitment to achieving arrangements that would protect Israel's security and our judgment that it will be necessary to find a resolution of the territorial issue that is consistent with Resolution 242 and reaffirms the principle of withdrawal on all fronts.

2. Starting with Begin, most of the Ministers present stressed in one way or another the theme that Israeli security on the West Bank and Gaza must have a territorial dimension, pointing out that much has happened in the eleven years since Resolution 242 was passed, that Sinai, the West Bank and Gaza have become linked to Israel, and that we should be seeking a solution somewhere between the 1967 borders and the Likud Party's platform which calls for permanent Israeli retention of all of the West Bank and Gaza. During both this meeting and the smaller afternoon meeting, the Israelis expressed their concern about what Sadat might do in October. We also went over again and again the basic question of whether the hardening of Sadat's position is only a tactical device to put pressure on us or whether he is less able to be flexible today than he was several months ago. It is clear that there are differences within the Israeli Government about Sadat's motives and real position, with Weizman tending more toward giving Sadat the benefit of the doubt than do the others. All the Israelis remain unanimous, however, that there can be no agreement to Sadat's preconditions, prior to negotiations, that territory be excluded from negotiations.

3. I probed for a clearer statement of Israel's position on the discussion of sovereignty after five years and, at one point, Begin seemed to agree that this meant not only that a solution was possible but that a decision would be reached. In the end, however, he returned to and stuck with the less clear formulation approved by the Cabinet although Yadin and Weizman continued to press for a broader interpretation. Overall, I would say there is genuine concern and uncertainty about what Sadat's intentions are and a desire to see negotiations resumed, but no visible inclination to modify further, before negotiations at least, their position on the fundamental territorial question.

4. We also discussed the Lebanese situation in both the large and the smaller meeting.

5. I used the occasion to restate firmly our view that, in South Lebanon, one way or another, Lebanese Government forces must be able to establish themselves in the south if severe repercussions for the Sarkis regime and Israel's international position are to be avoided. Following the morning meeting, the Prime Minister sent word to me it looked as though a solution was being worked out with Major Haddad, the Christian militia leader in the south, which holds out hope of defusing this issue.

6. In northern Lebanon, the Israelis said they had received reports that an all-out Syrian attack is planned August 8–10 against some Christian elements. I agreed to send a telegram to Damascus asking the Syrian Government what the factual basis for these reports is.³

7. In our smaller meeting, Begin made a strong pitch for an early decision on Israel's Matmon C arms request.⁴ He proposed an early visit by Weizman to Washington to discuss both hardware and payments problems including Israel's request for an additional \$500 million in military aid. I said I would be in touch with Harold Brown and would inform Begin by the end of this week whether our staff work has progressed to the point where it makes sense for Weizman to visit Washington now. On the additional \$500 million, I discouraged Begin from any expectation that this would be possible.

8. I am sending separate telegrams on my private talks with Begin and my separate luncheon with Dayan on aspects of the West Bank problem.⁵

Vance

³ In telegram Secto 9014, August 6, Vance instructed the Chargé in Damascus to make an approach at the highest level to find out if there was any validity to reports of a large-scale military action planned for August 8 to August 10 in Lebanon. Vance stated "that renewal of fighting would raise unacceptable risks," and he asked "that Syrian influence be used to this end." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780322–0426)

⁴ See footnote 5, Document 130.

⁵ In telegram Secto 2170 from Jerusalem, August 6, Vance briefly described a private morning meeting with Begin and a private afternoon meeting with Begin. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, P85033–0292) No telegram summarizing the luncheon with Dayan has been found. Presumably it was during one of the private meetings with Begin that Vance delivered Carter's invitation to meet with him and Sadat at Camp David. According to Carter's August 6 diary entry, "In the evening we got word from Vance that Begin had responded enthusiastically, almost emotionally, in favor of the summit meeting at Camp David." (*White House Diary*, p. 212)

286. Telegram From Secretary of State Vance to the Department of State and the White House¹

Jerusalem, August 7, 1978, 0131Z

Secto 9021. White House for Brzezinski. Subj: August 6 Meeting With Ministerial Security Committee: The Peace Process.

1. The Secretary met for three hours on the morning of August 6 with the Ministerial Security Committee.² Begin stated that we are at a crucial moment and expressed hope that the peacemaking process would be resumed. He wished me success with my efforts and stressed that Israel would do its best to help. The Secretary agreed that we are at a crucial point in the peace process. He then stated that he was in the Middle East on behalf of the President to work with Israel and Egypt to see what the U.S. can do to contribute to regaining the momentum in the peace process. He stressed that no subject is more important to the U.S. than this one. The Secretary explained that the U.S. shared the Israeli view that negotiations are important. If we can move forward, we can keep the Soviets out of this stage of the peace process. Likewise, we will also be able to keep out the PLO. However, if we fail, we might well find discussions moving to a larger forum in which the Soviets and PLO will be involved. The U.S. is doing everything possible to make progress. The Secretary stressed to Begin that the U.S. understands the need for arrangements to protect Israeli security. However, in order for the Arabs to be able to negotiate peace, there will have to be some resolution of the territorial issue consistent with UN Security Council Resolution 242. This means acceptance of the principle of withdrawal on all fronts in return for peace and security. The Secretary then emphasized that we cannot let matters drift. If we miss this opportunity, Egypt may slip back into a confrontationist posture, opening the way for a Soviet return to the area. The Secretary added that he will be consulting with Sadat and trying to convince him to resume direct talks.

2. The Secretary then added a few words on the Leeds Castle Conference. Although the Arab media had claimed that no progress had been made at Leeds, he did not share that assessment. He stated his belief that the talks were useful. Furthermore, it is important that the process begun at Leeds be resumed. Discussions should take place again so that this direct exchange can continue.

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Cables File, Middle East, Box 45, 8/1–9/78. Secret; Sensitive; Immediate; Nodis. Sent immediate for information to Cairo and Tel Aviv.

² No memorandum of conversation has been found.

3. Begin responded that he wanted to make several remarks on the preconditions Egypt is setting for the resumption of direct negotiations. He agreed with the Secretary that the Leeds Conference had been useful. Begin noted that Dayan had said at Leeds that the territorial issue was an intrinsic part of Israel's security problem. He stated that he emphatically agreed with Dayan's comment and said that this was especially true since the 1967 border was only nine miles from the sea. "Every house in Tel Aviv could be within the range of mortars and conventional artillery," Begin said. This would be just like Beirut, where the Christians today are being shelled in their homes. He stressed that discussion of the issues is the substance of negotiating. Secure and recognized boundaries must be determined in the course of negotiating peace treaties.

4. Begin noted that Egypt had demanded that Israel give a prior commitment to withdrawal to the 1967 borders. "This would make negotiations valueless. No one ever asked us to give such a commitment in the past and no one will ever get such a commitment." He emphasized that there would have to be negotiations. He also noted that Israel has exercised restraint and not answered in kind to Egyptian insults. Begin said that whoever follows Israel's debates in the Knesset knows Israel has the ability to respond, but the issue of peace is too serious for this. Nonetheless, Israelis are being called "racist dictators." What the Egyptians say is a disservice to their country. The Israeli people are not impressed by Sadat's efforts to divide them. Name calling does not serve the peace process. I broke in to say that I planned to speak on this subject to Sadat in Alexandria.

5. Begin explained that he wanted to make very clear what had been involved in Sadat's demand for an El Arish gesture.³ Israel did not have a negative attitude towards this proposal. But, as happens in democracies, there was a leak. The press knew that the Cabinet was discussing this issue and Begin recounted how he had to announce the government's position. He had tried to send a reply, but Sadat had refused to accept one. While it did not accept Sadat's proposal, Israel was ready to negotiate over El Arish. Israel did not reject Sadat's proposal but suggested that it be the subject of negotiations. Begin said he wanted Sadat to list what he had to propose regarding such a deal. He asked that the Secretary convey to Sadat the fact that the Israeli letter was written in a positive spirit. Israel is prepared to discuss such a gesture. "Israel is prepared to discuss everything with Egypt." If on the road to peace there can be "a certain arrangement, why not?"

³ A reference to Sadat's request that Israel offer a unilateral gesture by withdrawing from Al Arish and Mount Sinai. Begin rejected the request in a letter to Sadat, see footnote 2, Document 276 and footnote 5, Document 277.

6. Begin said Israel did not favor an interim arrangement for a limited period of time because such things cause problems. We should be following the path to a peace treaty. However, why shouldn't Sadat be willing to discuss a partial agreement based on reciprocity? Begin also noted that Israel would certainly go to a conference at the Sinai Field Mission. He also asked that I dispel one particular misunderstanding Sadat may have. "President Sadat should know he cannot order us around. We will not accept prior conditions to negotiations. We will not recognize this. He cannot order Israel around." Begin contemptuously referred to Sadat's surprises. "We have had enough of shocks. Shocks are for medicine, not policy, let us deal with the issues around the table." Begin then asked Dayan to present his views.

7. Dayan stated that at Leeds, discussion of the Palestinian issue had been imprecise. He noted that the Palestinian issue included territorial and security issues, as well as the refugee problem. However, the Egyptian delegation was not sufficiently knowledgeable of the situation on the West Bank and in Gaza to speak about territory, the inhabitants or the actual measures that could be taken with regard to them. "It is so theoretical with them." The Egyptians only speak in terms of academic principles. It is difficult for them to get down to concrete issues. Dayan explained that focusing on the situation in Judea, Samaria and in the Gaza Strip is much more promising than the theoretical approach taken by Egypt. Dayan asked if it would be possible to have on the Arab side people who really knew what they were talking about in discussing the Palestinian problems in all its aspects.

8. Weizman said he believed Sadat wants peace. But what he wants now is a peace on terms which are unacceptable to Israel. He speculated that Sadat feels that his trip to Jerusalem had been something "so stupendous" that everything should be subservient to his initiative. Weizman stressed that we are at a crossroads. Both sides want peace. There are great possibilities for the region to flourish with peace. Alas, the consequences of war are also well known. Weizman said he had been trying to think of a solution between complete withdrawal to the 1967 boundaries—which was totally unacceptable to Israel—and the Likud Party platform which called for the West Bank and Gaza to become part and parcel of Israel.

9. Weizman noted that everyone was talking about what can be done for the security of Israel. But, more than anything else, on top of such military measures, a correct political solution is important. Israel can have excellent military measures, but the question is what will be the interrelationship between Israel and the West Bank and Gaza. On March 30, Sadat had said very positive things about a joint police force, joint control of security and a veto on political decisions taken by an administrative council. But, Sadat changed his mind overnight and

placed limits on what he had suggested.⁴ Weizman was concerned that these discussions had taken place months ago and he did not know if Sadat was still in the mood to talk about these things today. Weizman emphasized, "If we talk about going back to the 1967 boundaries, then peace moves are in trouble." Unless Sadat has completely changed his mind, which he did not rule out, Weizman believed that with a little discussion and understanding, the parties could achieve common ground. When they were in Salzburg, Weizman noted that he and Sadat had discussed the month of October. Weizman said, "Sadat is in a shock treatment mood." If nothing happens between now and then, "something will happen." Weizman said he would recommend that if anything happens, Israel take precautionary measures. "But, this is how brawls begin." This is what happened in 1967. Weizman asked that I pay serious attention to this problem.

10. Yadin stated that he considered the immediate weeks ahead in August and September to be crucial. The maximum must be done to get the peace process resumed. Yadin said that Sadat's current position simply made no sense to him. How could Sadat say that Israel would have to commit itself to withdraw to the 1967 boundaries or there would be no negotiations? Yadin said this was a non-starter. The three main points made by Dayan at Leeds and before the Knesset were serious and should be sufficient to advance the negotiations.⁵ However, Sadat and the U.S. should realize that no solution requiring a prior commitment to go back to the 1967 borders was acceptable. Alluding to the point made by Dayan, Yadin stated that if the other party makes a proposal on territorial compromise, Israel would negotiate over such a proposal. In addition, Yadin noted that the Foreign Minister had said that if another party wants to discuss sovereignty in five years, Israel would be prepared to do so. "We agree that in five years sovereignty will be resolved."

11. The Secretary then tried to clarify the statements the Israelis had been making. He noted that they had said that the 1967 boundaries were not a basis for negotiation. They had also stated that if a proposal for territorial compromise were put on the table, this would be a subject for negotiation and considered by Israel. If this were not done, a modified self-rule plan would be put into effect. The Secretary then asked if the GOI would be prepared to discuss and "come to a decision" on sovereignty after five years. Begin immediately said yes. Regarding the phrase "territorial compromise," Dayan referred to his Knesset formulation and stressed that he was being very careful in making this point. If a "concrete" suggestion of territorial compromise is put forward, Is-

⁴ Presumably during Weizman's visit to Cairo March 30–31.

⁵ See footnote 7, Document 277.

rael would not hesitate to discuss it. If someone had ideas, let them show on the map what they have in mind.

12. Reintroducing the third point made by Dayan in the Knesset, Begin noted that after five years "Israel would be prepared to discuss sovereignty" and that "a solution is possible." (Begin had been passed a note by Legal Adviser Rosenne after his earlier response to my question and was clearly backtracking.) The Secretary said he was still uncertain and asked whether "it is possible" to find a solution for "sovereignty will be decided," in response, Begin then had Rosenne read verbatim the statement Dayan had made at Leeds and before the Knesset. When the Secretary said he was still confused, Begin replied that the formulation meant what it said.

13. Begin then stated that he had closely scrutinized all the documents dealing with this coming October. He stressed that there was no basis for Sadat's assumption that after October the Sinai Agreement could be terminated. As the U.S. knew, the Sinai Agreement would continue until superseded by another agreement. Sadat cannot claim the contrary. "This would be a breach of the agreement."

14. Comment: Begin was in vital and confident form. He was obviously in upbeat mood because Sadat's obdurateness has, at least for time being, ended extended period of Israel being on the spot. In this discussion, the Prime Minister was the paragon of reasonableness and flexibility, and only stumbled on discussion of sovereignty issue. His discomfiture was caused by presence in the room of right-wing Cabinet colleagues who were listening as carefully as our side for any sign of change on Begin's part. His final answer in this meeting on this issue was aimed as much at them as at us.

15. Detailed memcon of this meeting is being returned to Department with Secretary's party.

Vance

287. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Alexandria, August 7, 1978, 4:10–5:45 p.m.

SUBJECT

Summary of Meeting with Secretary Vance and Foreign Minister Kamil

PARTICIPANTS

Hon. Cyrus Vance, Secretary of State
 Hon. Hermann Eilts, U.S. Ambassador to Egypt
 Hon. Alfred Atherton, Ambassador-at-Large
 Hon. Harold Saunders, Assistant Secretary of State
 Hon. Hodding Carter, Assistant Secretary of State
 Mr. William Quandt, NSC Staff Member
 H.E. Muhammad Ibrahim Kamil, Minister of Foreign Affairs
 H.E. Butrus Butrus Gahil, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs
 H.E. Ashraf Ghorbal, Egyptian Ambassador to U.S.
 H.E. Usama Al-Baz, Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs
 Mr. Ahmed Maher, Director of the Foreign Minister's Office

Foreign Minister Kamil welcomed Secretary Vance and emphasized how much Egypt counts on its relations and its friendship with the United States. Both for internal progress and for progress toward peace in the Middle East, Egypt relies on the United States. The *Foreign Minister* asked about the Secretary's visit to Israel.

Secretary Vance expressed his pleasure in being back in Egypt and agreed that the future of our two countries is bound together and will remain so. We share the same objectives of a just, lasting, and comprehensive settlement. We cannot let this opportunity slip away. There have been some misunderstandings in recent weeks, and we must put these behind us. There has been no change in the American position. There is apparently some feeling in Egypt that the United States is wavering on the "peace for withdrawal" formula, but our views have not changed. Our view on Resolution 242 has been consistent; it requires withdrawal on all fronts. We were getting ready to move as we had agreed to do, and we were disappointed that our plan was disrupted. This apparently grew out of a misunderstanding.

Secretary Vance emphasized that the United States wants to be a full partner in the peace process, and he will tell that to President Sadat.² He also has a message for President Sadat from President

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Brzezinski Office File, Country Chron File, Egypt: 1–8/78. Secret. The meeting took place at the Palestine Hotel. Vance visited Egypt from August 7 to August 9.

² No memorandum of this conversation has been found.

Carter, a handwritten note in which the President expresses his views.³ We want to make it clear that we stand behind what we have said, and we will proceed as we have agreed. Time is short, and we should move rapidly. We hope to reach agreement on how to proceed. Any doubts that Egypt may have concerning our wavering, are wrong.

Minister Kamil said that the misunderstanding had been unfortunate. At Leeds the Egyptians had discussed a second round of talks, but had said that as long as no positive elements were forthcoming it would be hard to justify a meeting. If nothing came out of the talks at Leeds, there would then be the possibility of agreeing to a new meeting when Secretary Vance came to the area. If the Secretary had something positive to report, then Egypt would be willing to go on short notice. But at Leeds, the Israeli position was stated clearly and bluntly by Dayan when he said there could be no substitute for acquisition of territory. This is followed by the decision of the Israeli Cabinet and by the declaration of Begin in which he said that he would never give something for nothing, and that he would negotiate for every grain of sand in Sinai. Then he sent a letter to Sadat which was leaked in advance. Dayan tried later to deny that he said that there was no substitute for territory, and that Israel had agreed to discuss the question of sovereignty, but Egypt considers that to be the case. It will take years if that is the spirit of the negotiations. We think that Israel's objective is to gain time for themselves, so that they can establish the status quo in the West Bank and Gaza and consolidate their occupation. We cannot be dragged through this kind of negotiation without having the right frame of reference.

The *Foreign Minister* added that Israel had aggravated the small misunderstanding that existed between Egypt and the United States, and Israeli leaks had tried to embarrass Egypt. When Atherton came to Egypt, he gave us some ideas. We were unhappy with the tendency and the occupation behind these ideas. We explained that these were not the kind of proposals that we had envisaged. They were based on trying to find common ground between two proposals which differ completely in philosophies. This will get nowhere. The basic point in a U.S. proposal should be a clear American position. Egypt expected at least the points contained in the White House statement after the Sadat visit: the applicability of 242 on all fronts, the illegality of settlements and their obstruction of the peace effort, and the Aswan language.⁴ These should be stated clearly. An idea of an American plan based on the two proposals will lead nowhere. In substance, the American and

³ See Document 284.

⁴ Reference is presumably to the President's statement at his November 30, 1977, press conference. See footnote 2, Document 162.

Egyptian positions have been close. *Secretary Vance* said that they had been very close. *Kamil* continued that Israel is trying to widen the gap between Egypt and the United States.

Kamil said that since Sadat went to Jerusalem, the negotiations had never stopped. There had been meetings in Jerusalem, Cairo, Ismailia, meetings of the political committee, meetings with Weizman, visits by Secretary Vance and Ambassador Atherton, and the conference at Leeds. Israel replied negatively to the American questions. Nonetheless, Sadat agreed to send a delegation to Leeds. The Egyptians had been reluctant to propose anything for the West Bank and Gaza, but on American advice Egypt did present a proposal. Negotiations have been continuing, directly or indirectly. *Minister Kamil* said that the Egyptians' decision had been made in Egypt, and not because of Saudi influence. Saudi Arabia had nothing to do with it. The *Secretary* said that he accepted that. *Kamil* said that Fahd did come to Egypt after Atherton's visit and Sadat informed him of his decision. Israel has proposed a pre-condition that there must be bargaining on land. Egypt cannot accept this. A continuation of the talks requires the right framework. *Kamil* said he had spoken to King Hussein as well as the Saudis. If the right framework is set, we can bring in these other parties with Saudi support. The Israelis are trying to make it difficult for Jordan. The Egyptian proposal for the West Bank and Gaza is based on the need for Jordanian and Palestinian participation. If Israel prevents Jordan from coming in, then the Egyptian proposal will not work. That would leave us only with the Israeli proposal.

Kamil said that President Sadat is concerned with the American image in the Arab world and in Egypt. Egypt has put all its hopes in the United States. If there is no progress, the American image will be hurt. We don't want to see chaos or an opening for Soviet or Communist influence in this area. The *Minister* said that he trusted what Secretary Vance said 100% and that the American commitment is not in doubt. But there is some worry about the domestic scene in the United States. If the United States would stick to its declared positions, no one could blame you. The American proposal should not be detailed. That will get nowhere. Egypt is thinking of a general outline based on withdrawal and the non-acquisition of territory, the need for peaceful relations, and for security measures. If you invite the parties to resume negotiations on that basis, it will be okay. But there can be no meeting without that basis or on Israeli terms. Egypt cannot agree to the idea of territorial compromise.

Secretary Vance said that we were thinking of two aspects. One would involve a declaration of principles, which would be combined with more specific views on how to deal with the West Bank and Gaza issues. The United States is prepared to help work for a declaration of

principles. But we thought that at least one more meeting would be required to establish such a framework. At the next meeting we would put forward our declaration of principles. Roy Atherton was unable to go into more detail, because the President and the Secretary were still considering what our proposals would be. This did not mean, however, that we had changed any of our positions. The United States is prepared to make a statement of its own. We will also be prepared to put forward ideas on how to deal with the West Bank and Gaza. The question is now how to proceed with the present circumstances so that we can surface our own ideas.

Minister Kamil said that this sounded encouraging, but that we should understand that a declaration of principles should be clear and that there should be no ambiguity on withdrawal nor should there be anything less than the Aswan formula as a minimum. *Secretary Vance* said that we say withdrawal on all fronts and there is no question about our position on that. *Kamil* replied that our position of withdrawal on all fronts is known. That means that on the Egyptian and Syrian fronts there will not be rectifications in the borders, and we understand your position that there can be minor rectifications on the West Bank. When you come out with something, it should repeat this position. If you only say 242, or only “on all fronts”, they will not be convincing. At a minimum, the United States should refer to only minor rectifications in borders. *Secretary Vance* noted that the Minister himself had suggested using the phrase concerning the non-acquisition of territory by war. *Kamil* said that that was very good and we should stick to it 100%. This should be combined with the statement on minor modifications in the West Bank. The Minister suggested the use of the phrase withdrawal according to the principle of the non-acquisition of territory by war, with only minor modifications in the 1967 lines. The *Secretary* noted that the Minister had also referred to language on the Palestinian question and on settlements, and *Kamil* added that there should also be a reference to peace and security. The *Secretary* agreed that there must be some language on peace and security. He wondered how much detail should be included on security. To what extent would it be desirable to say more than just the word security. This is central to Israel, and without this there can be no real progress. President Sadat has already given six points on security.⁵ *Minister Kamil* said that the six points could deal with security and that President Sadat had told Roy Atherton that Egypt will accept any international guarantees.⁶ *Secretary Vance* said that he had not thought of international guarantees at this stage, but he had said that they would be essential at the end of the

⁵ See footnote 2, Document 259.

⁶ See Document 279.

process. But they would be too early at this stage. *Kamil* said that Egypt will not insist on them at this stage, but it would be worth considering what could be done beyond Sadat's six points. *Secretary Vance* said he will think about how much could be considered. *Kamil* said that Egypt could elaborate on the six points and may think of others, such as making the Middle East a free zone for nuclear weapons, reducing forces on both sides, and other possibilities.

Secretary Vance asked if it would be possible to bring in others if a declaration were achieved. Could this be done soon? *Kamil* replied that with the right declaration, it could be done soon. Jordan insists on an Israeli commitment that 242 be implemented and that withdrawal be carried out. An American assurance that this will be done should be adequate. Jordan does not want to get in before knowing the outline of the results. The *Secretary* said that he understood.

Kamil said that he had seen reports in the American press that spoke of Arab solidarity as an alternative. But we should remember that at Rabat the Arabs did commit themselves to a peaceful settlement. Arab solidarity is not an alternative, because some of them excluded themselves. That is their business. Egypt would have been happy to have them involved. *Secretary Vance* said that we like to see an Arab consensus, but not at the expense of Sadat's initiative. *Kamil* said that the President would stick with his initiative, and that others will join on Egypt's terms, not on their own.

The *Secretary* asked about Fahd's trip and whether it had been helpful. *Kamil* said the Saudis had informed the Jordanians that it would be wrong to break off all contacts. In Syria, the Saudis have helped soften Assad's position, but doubts continue there. Everyone is now waiting for the United States. *Butrus Ghali* said that at Belgrade it had not been so difficult to get a consensus among the Arabs.⁷ They did not condemn Sadat's initiative. It is not so difficult to get support if there are things to offer. A new consensus would be difficult if something could be offered. Arabs are concerned about the Soviets in Africa and Afghanistan. Minister *Kamil* said that there is no need for a consensus of all the Arabs, just the main countries. *Secretary Vance* said that this was encouraging. If things remain in Egypt's hands, he feels confident. *Kamil* said that they will stay in Egypt's hands and that Sadat is very firm. Then Minister *Kamil* asked about the Secretary's talks in Israel.⁸ The Secretary provided a brief summary, saying that the Israeli position remains totally opposed to the 1967 borders with only minor

⁷ See footnote 3, Document 272. Telegram 5558 from Belgrade, July 29, contains the Arab caucus's draft language on the Middle East. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D780312–0238)

⁸ See Documents 285 and 286.

modifications, but there has been some movement since Leeds. Now they accept at least the principle of negotiated settlement in which territory in the West Bank would be given up. There has also been some movement on the question of sovereignty. They have stated that they will discuss the question and it will be possible to get a decision on sovereignty. This is not enough, but it represents some movement. Mr. *Atherton* added that some members of the cabinet would go further than this.

Minister *Kamil* said that Egypt wanted to be firm on 242, its implementation, and especially withdrawal. Egypt believes that Israel has no right to discuss sovereignty at all. Egypt sees the offer of peace and security for Israel and the offer of withdrawal for the Arabs. Referring to the points that Mr. *Atherton* had made on the West Bank at an earlier meeting, *Kamil* said that the United States should deal only with principles. The language that he presented was contradictory to the Aswan formula. The United States should stick with Aswan. Mr. *Atherton* reminded him that what we had reviewed with him on the West Bank and Gaza was not a declaration. Mr. *Kamil* said that he understood it was a supplement, but that the second document should also represent the general principles.

Mr. *Saunders* said that he was uncertain of the function that the declaration was supposed to perform. If the United States issues such a declaration how would it help the negotiations? The *Secretary* said that we would put forward a declaration of principles; Mr. *Saunders* said that we would still have to consider how to make it work. Minister *Kamil* said that if we were to come out with a proposal for a declaration of principles dealing with withdrawal, the non-acquisition of territory by force, some reference to minor border adjustments, then there can be negotiations and we will be joined by others. Secretary *Vance* said what would happen if Israel were to say no. *Kamil* said that if Israel says no, then the moment of truth has arrived. If Israel refuses, then we can go to the UN or Geneva. Israel must be confronted by these facts. If Israel is offered peace, good relations, security, and all the principles of peace, she should withdraw. Israel will raise hell, but this will have to happen. We can't allow moderate governments to be undermined.

Secretary *Vance* said that the United States might make a statement and then Israel would say it would negotiate, even if it did not accept all of the points. Minister *Kamil* asked what they would negotiate about. It should be about 242 and its implementation. Egypt disagrees that the negotiations should be based on 242. That approach will never get anywhere. When asked about the possibilities of Israeli refusal, the *Minister* again said that if an American position is declared and clear, the Israelis should not be allowed to oppose it. They would risk an erosion of their position in the United States. Israel has to see the final U.S.

position, then there would be a real change toward moderation in Israel. Mr. *Saunders* referred to the fate of the Rogers Plan,⁹ when a U.S. position was put forward and nothing happened. There was no context. If we play this card, we want results. The *Minister* said that there could be no comparison to the Rogers proposal after the Sadat initiative. Mr. *Saunders* said there was still the problem of getting real negotiations going. *Kamil* said that he did not see this problem. If Israel refuses, they will accept their responsibilities, and we go to the Secretary of the Security Council [*sic*] or Geneva. But this would be the beginning of a change in Israel's move toward moderation. Israel should be put in a position where they see they are challenging everybody in the world. A confrontation with the facts should take place. If the only way to get peace is through withdrawal, then this is what the Sadat initiative will have produced. Begin should not be able to feel that he can impose his terms by being militarily strong.

Secretary Vance said that when Begin was attacked personally, this solidifies his support and it is a tremendous mistake for the Egyptians to do this. *Kamil* agreed. He said that Egypt was trying to restrain these attacks. The real question, however, is the American position. If it is clear, people will start to know that Israel is intransigent. International public opinion in the West is prepared. Time is very important. We can't let Israel change public opinion against Egypt. They are starting to do that now. The *Secretary* said that the attacks on Begin were hurting Sadat's reputation in the United States. Mr. *Kamil* said that Secretary Vance might mention this to the President.

Mr. *Al-Baz* said that after the Americans put forward their position, there will be a possibility for negotiations resuming on a new plane. If Israel rejects the position, however, Egypt cannot go back into the negotiations. After the initial shock of an American proposal, there will be changes in Israel. Minister *Kamil* said that the real danger is that Israel will become desperate and will want to set off a war. Secretary *Vance* said that he did not believe that to be the case. Minister *Kamil* said that in that case, Israel would shout and then would have to think it over. Israel cannot challenge the entire world and the American position. Israel cannot ask the United States to help her secure the occupation of others' territories. Ambassador *Ghorbal* asked why the United States was prepared to put forward its own ideas. What was the objective of doing this? Secretary *Vance* said that our purpose was two-fold. First, we wanted to help establish the proper framework. Secondly, we wanted to carry on what was agreed on at Camp David. Ambassador *Ghorbal* said that Israel would refuse a declaration with a facade of only

⁹ See footnote 9, Document 21.

generalities. But if the whole weight of the United States is behind it, Israel cannot object for very long. The United States should not just be interested in getting negotiations going for their own sake. Secretary *Vance* said no one wants negotiations for their own sake. We want a solution. Ambassador *Atherton* said that the Egyptian view seems to be that we should let some time pass, and perhaps consider other forums for negotiation. If Israel does not accept the U.S. position, pressures would build on Israel. This will take a great deal of patience and would be very frustrating. The Israelis, by comparison, believe that the process of negotiations is more important than you do. Minister *Kamil* said that the present Israeli position is impossible and unacceptable. Israel needs shock treatment from you. Let it happen. It may take some months, but if the American position is refused, why should we go into negotiations. We will get nowhere. It will be a waste of time. Ambassador *Atherton* said this approach does not include the concept that the process itself will require some decisions. Ambassador *Ghorbal* said that it might be useful if the United States would state a position without necessarily asking either side to accept or reject it. *Kamil* said this would get us nowhere. We need to get them to accept or reject. We anticipate that Israel will refuse. These people want our territory. Their biggest friends will now tell them that they can't have peace and territory. But you should not be ambiguous. That would lose time. Secretary *Vance* reminded Minister *Kamil* that the format in which we put forward our proposals has to be our own decision. Minister *Kamil* agreed, with prior consultations. Mr. *Al-Baz* said that a clear U.S. position would have a favorable impact in the Arab world. The impact in Israel will only be quantitative at first, but eventually there will be a qualitative change. Israel needs to know that peace cannot be achieved on Begin's terms. There has to be a debate within Israel. After a while, objective forces could go into motion. This will allow for negotiations at a later stage. Egypt still wants a settlement. Secretary *Vance* agreed that a statement by the United States on principles was still essential to establish a framework. It will have an impact, but there will be no monolithic [*monolithic?*] reaction. The goal is still a negotiated solution, not a statement of principles.

Minister *Kamil* said that a statement of principles might include an invitation to both parties to negotiate. You could invite the parties to come together on the basis of these principles: the principles of withdrawal, the non-acquisition of territory by force, and maybe minor border rectifications. Egypt would be willing. Mr. *Al-Baz* said that the real dilemma would arise if the American proposals are much different from these principles. Then both sides might reject them. This could happen if the withdrawal concept is not spelled out clearly. Secretary

Vance said that you know our basic proposal. We will show them to you before they are issued. Minister *Kamil* said that was fair.¹⁰

¹⁰ Vance met with Sadat later in the evening on August 7 and delivered Carter's invitation to meet with him and Begin at Camp David. According to Carter's August 7 diary entry, "During supper Brzezinski called to tell me that Sadat accepted the invitation to the summit meeting, and September fifth was the date he suggested." (*White House Diary*, p. 212) For the transcript of the joint press conference Vance and Sadat held in Alexandria on August 8, which summarized their discussions, see the Department of State *Bulletin*, September 1978, pp. 43–45.

288. Memorandum of Conversation¹

Alexandria, August 8, 1978, 11:15 a.m.–12:30 p.m.

SUBJECT

Summary of Meeting between Secretary Vance and
Egyptian Foreign Minister Kamil

PARTICIPANTS

Hon. Cyrus Vance, Secretary of State
Hon. Alfred Atherton, Ambassador-at-Large
Hon. Hermann Eilts, U.S. Ambassador to Egypt
Hon. Harold Saunders, Assistant Secretary of State
Mr. William Quandt, NSC Staff Member

H.E. Muhammad Ibrahim Kamil, Minister of Foreign Affairs
H.E. Ashraf Ghorbal, Ambassador to U.S.
Mr. Ahmed Maher, Chef de Cabinet, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

[Omitted here is discussion of the situation in Lebanon.]

Secretary *Vance* then turned to the question of the announcement of the Camp David meetings. The President will make the announcement at 11:30 a.m., Washington time, which will be 5:30 p.m. in Egypt. The statement will be forwarded ahead of time for the Egyptians to see. The President will also be meeting with Congressional leaders today and with some press representatives. Egypt can say that they have accepted the President's invitation and that they are going to Camp David to establish a framework to bring peace to the Middle East. Min-

¹ Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Brzezinski Material, Brzezinski Office File, Country Chron File, Box 10, Egypt: 1–8/78. Secret; Nodis. The meeting took place in Secretary Vance's suite at the Palestine Hotel.

ister *Kamil* asked if he could say that there would be a U.S. proposal if nothing comes out of the meeting. Secretary *Vance* said that we will be prepared to make our suggestions, and we will do this at Camp David. The *Minister* said that he would be asked why Egypt has agreed to go. How can this be explained? Secretary *Vance* said that Ambassador Atherton will tell the Saudis privately that the United States would be making its suggestions. The President is clearly putting his prestige on the line.

The *Secretary* said that he had already spoken with President Sadat on what some of the essential elements of an agreement should be and that he feels there is considerable similarity in our approaches. Minister *Kamil* said that we should be aware that President Sadat speaks in generalities. He asked the Secretary if he could be assured that there would be consultations with him before any American proposals were made. The Egyptian Foreign Ministry experts must see any proposals before President Sadat agrees to them. The *Secretary* said that he had promised President Sadat that the President himself would see any proposals we intended to make. The *Minister* said that it could be too late if we did not first review them with the Foreign Ministry staff. This is a unique chance to settle the problem, but we should be aware that President Sadat is very general in his approach. If there is no understanding before the meetings at Camp David, then there could be problems. President Sadat is willing to expose himself, and we have to protect him. The *Minister* asked to have a chance to advise President Sadat on the nature of any American proposals. Otherwise Prime Minister Begin will “nickel and dime him to death”. This meeting at Camp David will not help the situation unless President Sadat sees clearly what the issues are. Therefore, we must stay in touch before the meeting takes place.

Secretary Vance said that he does not want to surprise anyone at Camp David and that he has already discussed with President Sadat his views and these will be taken into consideration. *Ambassador Eilts* noted that the meetings at Camp David would be open-ended and that President Sadat would have his advisers with him there so that any proposals could be studied on the spot.

Mr. Maher asked if the Israelis were aware that the United States intended to put forward its own ideas. Secretary *Vance* said that they were and that he had never avoided this issue. *Mr. Maher* asked if the Egyptians could say that they expected American ideas at Camp David, and the *Secretary* said yes, if it is in the context of the Secretary's frequent statements about putting forward ideas and suggestions of our own and not a blueprint or overall plan. *Mr. Maher* also asked if Egypt could describe the United States as a “full partner”, and the *Secretary* again responded positively, noting that he had used this phrase

yesterday.² In closing, Secretary Vance noted that President Sadat had told him that he wanted Begin to have the people with him who would help to make decisions. Prime Minister Begin will probably have Yadin, Dayan, Weizman, and Barak with him. President Sadat wants to be able to reach decisions at the head of government level.

² A reference to Vance's August 8 press conference with Sadat in Alexandria. See footnote 10, Document 287.

289. Editorial Note

On August 8, 1978, at 11:33 a.m., White House Press Secretary Jody Powell read a statement to reporters in the White House Briefing Room that reads, "The President is pleased to announce that President Sadat and Prime Minister Begin have accepted an invitation to come to Camp David on September 5 for a meeting with the President to seek a framework for peace in the Middle East.

"All three leaders agree that there is no task more important than this search for peace. Secretary Vance has informed the President that both Prime Minister Begin and President Sadat have welcomed this meeting, and the President is gratified by their response.

"Each of the three leaders will be accompanied by a small number of their principal advisers and no specific time has been set for the duration of the meeting." (*Public Papers: Carter, 1978, Book II*, page 1393)

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