

2142

ACTIONSECRET/NODIS (XGDS)

October 31, 1973

MEMORANDUM FOR: SECRETARY KISSINGER

FROM: HAROLD H. SAUNDERS

SUBJECT: Your Meeting with Prime Minister Meir--
8:00 a.m. Thursday, November 1

Mrs. Meir may seek very precise reassurances that the US will stick to previous understandings with Israel on the subject of peace negotiations. Therefore, I am attaching a detailed paper which provides for your reference the exchanges surrounding the August 4, 1970, ceasefire. Mrs. Meir alluded to that in her speech announcing acceptance of the present ceasefire. You may want to refresh your memory on those exchanges with a glance at the attachment. This memo puts those issues in the more general context.

Israeli Position

I assume that the first order of business will be to gain agreement on arrangements to stabilize the ceasefire. The Israelis will find it difficult to pull back, will make a major issue of the prisoner exchange and will probably want to give more precision to the general understanding you reached with Ismail Fahmi. For instance, she may insist on an understanding of exactly where the lines will be before any movement; she might insist on an Israeli right to inspect the convoys along with the UN; she might insist on an understanding about the movement of the members of the Third Army themselves.

Beyond the specifics of the package for stabilizing the ceasefire, she will seek reassurance on two general points:

1. She will want to be reassured that the US and the Soviet Union are not working out the terms of a final peace behind Israel's back. She will insist that the negotiations be a genuine exchange between Israel and the Arabs and that the Soviet role be minimal.

XGDS - 3

DECLAS - Date Impossible to Determine.

BYAUTH - Dr. Henry A. Kissinger

SECRET/NODIS (XGDS)

DORS

October 31 1979

Authority EO 12958
By CH NARA Date 2/14/06SECRET/NODIS (XGDS)

- 2 -

2. She will insist on a US promise that Israel will be allowed to negotiate for significant boundary changes.

It is possible that she will put these questions in terms of whether the US still stands by previous commitments such as those in the President's letter of July 23, 1976 (Tab 3 under attached memo). Crucial among those assurances is that "we will also adhere strictly and firmly to the fundamental principle that there must be a peace agreement in which each of the parties undertakes reciprocal obligations to the other and that no Israeli soldier should be withdrawn from the occupied territories until a binding contractual peace agreement satisfactory to you has been achieved." That letter also included promises that the US will not press Israel to accept a refugee solution which would alter fundamentally the Jewish character of the state of Israel or jeopardize Israel's security.

US Position

The following points are intended simply to provide a framework for the kind of position you might take:

1. I believe that, despite the trauma that Israel has suffered from being attacked, we are in as strong a position now as we have been or may be in the future to move toward the fundamental peace agreement that is crucial to Israel's survival.

--This war has demonstrated that the Arabs will not capitulate merely as a result of getting used to the 1967-73 situation. That situation is unstable. Israel cannot "go it alone." It is essential now to achieve peace through diplomacy from a position of Israeli strength.

--This crisis has also demonstrated that those who have called the Middle East situation dangerous to world peace were not wrong. The near confrontation between the US and the Soviet Union a week ago leaves no doubt about this. This is not just an issue for the US. It is an issue of vital importance to Israel which depends on US support.

SECRET/NODIS (XGDS)

October 31, 1973

DECLASSIFIED

Authority *EO 12958*

By *CH* NARA Date *2/1/05*

WISSINGER

SECRET/NODIS (XGDS)

- 3 -

2. It is important now that we shift focus to the right issue. The United States has unequivocally supported the survival and the well-being of Israel. It has not supported the right of Israel to hold occupied territory indefinitely. While we are prepared to allow Israel to negotiate for what it can get within reasonable limits, we have no interest in a confrontation where the major issue is Israel's right to expand.

3. It is vital for the sake of peace negotiations as well as for the sake of the US-USSR relationship that the terms of Resolution 338 be respected. It would not make sense for the US and USSR to have a confrontation or to lose the chance for serious peace negotiations for the sake of Israel's right to maintain a position surrounding Suez City. The time has now come when it is necessary to think less in terms of short term tactical military advantage and more in terms of building the strongest possible position for the negotiations ahead which are the real issue. We must not be diverted from that central issue.

4. We will consult very closely with Israel as the peace negotiations are arranged and as they proceed. At this point, there are some general comments that need to be made.

--We have already produced the face-to-face meeting between Egyptians and Israelis that Israel has for some years said is essential if peace is to be made. Our view is that the peace negotiations should be conducted in the same manner.

--We are prepared to allow Israel to bargain for whatever terms it can get. We do want to make clear that the US is not optimistic about Israel's success in trying to negotiate major border changes. We would urge that a great deal of attention be given to the main issue of how security can be achieved by means other than significant border changes.

--We have taken Israel's word that once there are face-to-face negotiations we will be surprised at how flexible Israel will be. These negotiations will succeed only if each side is prepared to put on the table positions that have some

SECRET/NODIS (XGDS)

October 31, 1973

DECLASSIFIED

Authority E012958
By CH NARA Date 2/1/05

... KISSINGER

SECRET/NODIS (XGDS)

- 4 -

chance of providing a base for eventual agreement. Having now produced the opportunity for face-to-face negotiations, we will not understand any effort to stalemate those negotiations by putting forward unrealistic propositions.

--It may be necessary in establishing some momentum for these negotiations to break the subject matter down into manageable units and steps. It may be necessary, for instance, to think in terms of a first phase in the implementation of a final agreement which could be carried out while longer term issues are being discussed. Israel may wish to give some thought to what it would want and what it would be prepared to give to produce such an agreement. For instance, although Israel's position is to seek boundary changes, it would seem essential that Israel be prepared to state that it will negotiate a final peace agreement without any preconditions or rigid preconceptions as to what the final outcome would be.

--The US has accepted a Soviet role in the formal negotiations to the extent we would provide the auspices for the peace conference and be available to help keep them going if necessary. I can assure you that we recognize that there will be a need for a more private negotiating track, and our strategy is that the US would conduct those negotiations with a minimum of Soviet involvement.

5. The purpose of my trip to the Middle East is to try to achieve an understanding with President Sadat and other Arab leaders on a set of general principles which would govern the process which we hope to begin. We will not be advancing an American plan for the final terms of a settlement.

SECRET/NODIS (XGDS)

HHSaunders:tmt 10/31/73