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by the Central Intelligence Agency  
Date: Nov 13, 2005 HQ  
AK 7014

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

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Aug. 31  
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ACTION

MEMORANDUM FOR: THE PRESIDENT  
FROM: ZBIGNIEW BRZEZINSKI  
SUBJECT: Strategy for Camp David

For the talks at Camp David to succeed, you will have to control the proceedings from the outset and thereafter pursue a deliberate political strategy designed to bring about significant changes in both the Egyptian and Israeli substantive positions. I strongly suggest that you bear the following points in mind: 2

1. Sadat cannot afford a failure and he knows it; both Sadat and Begin think that you cannot afford failure; but Begin probably believes that a failure at Camp David will hurt you and Sadat, but not him. He may even want to see Sadat discredited and you weakened, thus leaving him with the tolerable status quo instead of pressures to change his life-long beliefs concerning "Judea and Samaria".
2. You will have to convince both leaders, but especially Begin, that failure at Camp David will have directly adverse consequences for our bilateral relations and in terms of Soviet influence in the region. 3
3. Sadat will define success in terms of substance, and in particular an Israeli commitment to the principle of withdrawal on all fronts. Begin will define success largely in terms of procedural arrangements and will be very resistant to pressures for substantive concessions.
4. You will have to persuade Begin to make some substantive concessions, while convincing Sadat to settle for less than an explicit Israeli commitment to full withdrawal and Palestinian self-determination.
5. Your most important meetings will be with each leader individually, not with both together. You cannot expect Sadat and Begin to reveal their fall-back positions in front of each other, but in private you may be able to move them toward greater flexibility.

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6. During the first round of meetings, you will want to re-establish a personal relationship with each leader, expressing your understanding of their concerns and appealing to their statesmanship. During the second and third days, you will want to be frank and direct in discussing substantive points. Begin in particular will need time to reflect on what you say. There will be a natural break in the talks on Saturday, and Begin should understand that you will be pressing for decisions on Sunday.

7. Both Sadat and Begin must starkly see the consequences of success and failure if they are to make hard choices.

-- Failure brought on by Sadat's intransigence would bring to an end the special US-Egyptian relationship. Even if Sadat is not held responsible for the collapse of negotiations, we would find it increasingly difficult to maintain the close ties of the past few years and the Soviet Union would find opportunities to strengthen its position in the area at Sadat's expense as well as our own. Sadat must be told that we cannot afford more surprise moves by him if we are to work together effectively for a peace agreement. We expect to be consulted before Sadat takes new initiatives.

-- Begin must see that US-Israeli relations are based on reciprocity. Our commitment to Israel's security and well-being must be met by an Israeli understanding of our national interests. If Israel is responsible for blocking progress toward peace in the Middle East, Begin should be told clearly that you will have to take the following steps, which could affect the US-Israeli relationship:

-- Go to the American public with a full explanation of US national interests in the Middle East (strategic relations with Soviets, economic interests, oil, cooperation with moderate regimes).

-- Explain the scale of US aid to Israel (\$10 billion since 1973, or nearly \$4000 for each Israeli citizen). Despite this, Israel is unwilling to reciprocate by showing flexibility in negotiations.

-- We will be prepared to spell out publicly our views on a fair settlement.

-- We will be unable to defend Israel's position if the negotiations shift to the UN or Geneva.

-- Both Sadat and Begin can be assured that progress toward peace will mean a strong relationship with the United States, including in the economic and security areas, and enhanced ability to control developments in the region in ways that will serve our mutual interests.

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by the Central Intelligence Agency  
Date: 11/12/2013  
HEP AR-70-14

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8. The absolute minimum you want from each leader is the following:

-- From Sadat:

-- Acceptance of a long-term Israeli security presence in the West Bank/Gaza.

-- A five-year interim regime for the West Bank/Gaza; no independent Palestinian state; deferral of negotiations on borders and sovereignty until end of five-year period.

-- Acceptance of less than an Israeli commitment to full withdrawal and Palestinian self-determination as guidelines for negotiations.

-- Willingness to negotiate guidelines for West Bank/Gaza even if Hussein does not come in.

-- Repetition of "no more war" pledge; willingness to renew UNEF in October; honoring terms of Sinai II, including commitment to peaceful resolution of differences.

-- A willingness to negotiate seriously if an agreement on principles is reached.

-- From Begin:

-- Acceptance of all the principles of 242, including withdrawal and the "inadmissibility of acquisition of territory by war," as applicable on all fronts.

-- Modifications in "self-rule" proposal in order to make it sufficiently attractive to moderate Palestinians to bring them in as participants and to increase prospects of their accepting its main features (open borders, some Israeli security presence, some Israeli rights to live in West Bank, self-government) beyond five years. These modifications require an Israeli acceptance of the principle of withdrawal; a moratorium on organized settlement activity, in contrast to the rights of individuals to acquire land on a reciprocal basis; a visible termination of the military occupation at the outset of the five-year period; devolution of authority for the new regime from an agreement among Israel, Egypt, and Jordan; and genuine self-government for the Palestinians.

-- Flexibility on the remaining issues of settlements and air bases in Sinai.

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9. Begin and Sadat are likely to try to shift the discussions to new proposals of their own. Begin may concentrate on details as a diversion from the larger issues. Sadat may try to enlist your support for a bold move on his part which will put Begin in the corner. The risk is that you could lose control of the talks and be diverted from the central issues either by Begin's legalisms or Sadat's imprecision. You should keep the focus on the large picture, and strategic choices, and refer new proposals or suggestions for textual language to the Foreign Ministers and Secretary Vance. With Sadat, you will have to hear him out on his new strategy without appearing to collude with him against Begin.
10. Both leaders will constantly be trying to get you to side with them on specific points. They will not hesitate to remind you of what we have said to them in the past. Begin will remember that we called his "self-rule" plan a "fair basis for negotiations," and Sadat will have very much in mind the promises made at Camp David. Your best defense against these efforts to manipulate you will be to concentrate on the future choices, on the strategic consequences of success or failure, and on the need for each side to transcend past positions.
11. Sadat is very likely to want to explore the possibility of reaching secret understandings with you and Begin on some elements of a settlement. This is apparently more important to him than a declaration of principles. There are clearly risks in relying on secret agreements, but Sadat's willingness to be forthcoming on some issues may well depend upon our ability, as well as Begin's, to assure him that he will not be embarrassed by leaks.
12. If Sadat shows more flexibility than Begin, we may be perceived by the Israelis and their supporters as colluding with the Egyptians. This could be politically awkward, and you may want to suggest discreetly to Sadat that he not rush to accept any suggestions we put forward publicly. It will help our credibility if we are seen to be pressing both sides for concessions. While we do want Sadat to accept our ideas, the timing and circumstances in which he does so should be very carefully coordinated.
13. (The number may be symbolic.) If the meetings end in disagreement, we should not attempt to paper over the differences. The reasons and consequences of a failure will be publicly explained by you, and Sadat and Begin should understand from the outset that this will be the case, including the specifics in #7 above.

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Finally, I summarize below what I consider to be the acceptable minimum that we must aim for on the central issues:

1. Withdrawal/Security on the West Bank/Gaza

Sadat should agree to an Israeli security presence during the five-year interim period and for an indefinite time beyond; he should agree to defer decisions on the precise location of borders and on sovereignty until the end of the transitional period. In return, he should be able to claim credit for ending the military occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, and for establishing that the principle of withdrawal will be applied in the final peace settlement dealing with these areas.

Begin should agree that the principle of withdrawal does apply on all fronts, including the West Bank and Gaza, provided that its application takes into account Israel's long-term security needs in the area; sovereignty will remain in abeyance until a final peace agreement is reached at the end of the five-year period. This will allow Begin to take credit for protecting Israel's fundamental security interests, while not requiring that he explicitly abandon Israel's claim to sovereignty over these areas.

2. Settlements

There should be a moratorium on organized settlement activities, but both parties should agree that provisions should be made for individual Israelis and Palestinians to do business and to live in Israel and the West Bank/Gaza in the spirit of open borders, free movement of peoples, and normal peaceful relations.

3. Negotiations

Both parties should commit themselves to continuing negotiations on both the Sinai and the West Bank/Gaza issues.

4. Resolution 242

Both parties should reiterate their commitment to all of the principles of Resolution 242 as the basis for peace treaties on all fronts. In addition, they should agree on the Aswan language on Palestinian rights, and should commit themselves to the concept of full peace and normal relations. Sadat should repeat his commitment to "no more war" and agree to the renewal of UNEF in October.

Attached at Tab A is a memorandum of Ambassador Eilts' last conversation with President Sadat. It is well worth reading. Sadat seems to be preparing more surprises.

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