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CDA 180/1:

27 February 1979

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Possible Arab Acceptance of an Egyptian-Israeli Treaty [redacted]

The White House suggestion that the Arabs would accept a treaty if presented with a fait accompli may have been prompted by two statements made during Secretary Brown's recent visit to the Middle East. [redacted]

2 --The Secretary told Sadat that he had found the Saudis less critical of the Camp David Accords in private than in public, and that King Husayn was "less intent" on pursuing the issue at the UN or Geneva. [redacted]

--Sadat, during his conversation with Brown, said that all Arabs but the "rejectionists" (presumably Syria, Iraq, Algeria, Libya, and South Yemen) and Kuwait (because of its large Palestinian population) would accept a treaty. [redacted]

We do not believe that either statement should be interpreted as indicating that Syria, Jordan or Saudi Arabia would "accept" a treaty based on the Camp David Accords. Syria, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia would "accept" the "present draft" treaty only in the sense that there is little they could do to prevent it. Our reporting [redacted] is nearly unanimous in its rejection of the CDA as not sufficient from the Arab point of view. That view, if anything, has hardened. [redacted]

It is, of course, theoretically possible to devise terms and linkages that would satisfy most Arabs. Broad Arab support could be secured by a treaty that provides for specific time-tables making performance on Egyptian-Israeli issues dependent on progress on Palestinian issues. That would enable Sadat

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and potential supporters to argue that Egypt's military and diplomatic leverage was being applied on behalf of the Arab cause. Israel, however, is not likely to accept such linkage. Almost any treaty, therefore, will provoke Arab criticism. [redacted]

In the Arab view, an Egyptian-Israeli treaty must contain some Israeli commitment to withdrawal, and it must, at minimum, not foreclose the possibility of an independent Palestinian state. More specific Arab demands revolve around two issues; Israeli withdrawal from Arab territory--including East Jerusalem--captured in the 1967 war; and Palestinian self-determination. NFAC has no reporting to indicate a significant softening of these terms. [redacted]

If a treaty does not make some allowance for such views, the Saudis probably would feel compelled to reaffirm the sanctions voted against Egypt at Baghdad though they might seek to delay implementation. They would be under great pressure to align themselves more closely to hard-line Arab states such as Iraq and Syria. Syria, the toughest on terms, would quicken its efforts to form a new Arab consensus around its leadership. King Husayn would initially equivocate if confronted with a treaty, but because of Jordan's contiguous border with Syria and Iraq and its heavy dependence on external financing, he would follow the lead of Damascus, Baghdad and Riyadh. He would not isolate himself with President Sadat. [redacted]

Insofar as a treaty would require the early participation of other Arabs in negotiations, we do not believe that Jordan, Syria and Saudi Arabia would "accept" the treaty and participate. Their willingness over time to adjust to the situation and allow Egypt to return to the Arab fold would depend on several developments, including the attitudes of the Palestinians and President Sadat, and on Israeli policies. [redacted]

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