

MEMORANDUM

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

OUTSIDE SYSTEM 16
Approved for Release
by the Central Intelligence Agency
Date: 11/18/13 AR 70-14
Historical collections

~~TOP SECRET ATTACHMENT~~
~~SECRET GDS~~

August 7, 1978

INFORMATION

MEMORANDUM FOR: DAVID AARON
FROM: NLC Review Completed. GARY SICK
SUBJECT: Discontent in Egypt and Syria

25X1 You asked this morning for the reports of discontent referred
25X1 to in State's intelligence summary of August 6 [redacted]
[redacted]
25X1 [redacted] citing unhappiness in Egypt over
25X1 Sadat's policies. Egypt's press is generally quiet or suppor-
25X1 tive of Sadat.
[redacted]
25X1 [redacted] military's unhappiness
25X1 with Egypt's "untenable" position in peace talks, and its
25X1 "depression and confusion" as a result of Sadat's recent state-
25X1 ment [redacted] 25X1
25X1 [redacted]. The military reportedly is also questioning the
25X1 wisdom of Egypt's break with the USSR in light of the U.S.
25X1 failure to supply needed armaments.
[redacted]
25X1 [redacted] educated Egyptians feel
"let down" and "disappointed" by the Egyptian-American relation-
ship. They do not understand U.S. reluctance to pressure Prime
Minister Begin, given the U.S. "investment" in Egypt and its
friendship with President Sadat. As a result, Egyptians are
questioning American motives toward Egypt.
[redacted]
25X1 [redacted] educated middle
and upper classes consider President Sadat's peace initiative
a failure, and are critical of Sadat for letting himself be
"duped" by the Israelis. These same Egyptians were described
as believing it shameful for Sadat to continue his pursuit of
his initiative in the face of Israel's intransigence.
[redacted]
25X1 [redacted] Sadat is under
pressure to produce some kind of concession or tangible evidence
that his initiative has yielded results. Those pressures are
mounting but are probably manageable at least for the moment.

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CIA and I both disagree with the suggestion in the State report that the continuation of the Sadat initiative will result in internal problems for the Syrians. [redacted]

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[redacted] the Syrian military is upset about what is going on in Lebanon and that the clandestine opposition to Alawite leadership in Syria itself is continuing. But neither of those is associated in any way with the Sadat initiative. In fact, my view would be that Sadat's "failure" has tended to vindicate Assad and lend some strength to him internally.

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Gary Smith

David Aaron
to Ames
8/7 1130

FOR AN ALTERNATIVE PALESTINIAN LEADERSHIP AND AT WORST MAY BE TRYING TO CIRCUMVENT THE PALESTINIAN ISSUE ALTOGETHER.

(6A)

2. THE SAUDI LEADERSHIP WAS NEVER VERY PLEASED WITH THE SADAT INITIATIVE. FROM THE START, INFLUENTIAL ELEMENTS WITHIN THE ROYAL FAMILY WANTED TO DISASSOCIATE PUBLICLY THE SAUDI REGIME FROM SADAT'S TRIP TO JERUSALEM. THOSE MEMBERS OF THE ROYAL FAMILY, WHO ARGUED THAT LONG-TERM INTEREST LAY WITH THE EGYPTIANS AND THE US AND THAT TO DISAVOW SADAT WOULD THREATEN THESE RELATIONS, PREVAILED, HOWEVER.

3. FROM THE SAUDI PERSPECTIVE, INITIAL MISGIVINGS ABOUT THE SADAT INITIATIVE HAVE FOR THE MOST PART BEEN PROVEN CORRECT. THE ISRAELIS HAVE GIVEN NOTHING, THUS, HUMILITATING SADAT. MOREOVER, THE NUMBER OF MODERATE ARABS WHO SUPPORTED SADAT, PUBLICLY OR EVEN PRIVATELY HAS DIMINISHED AS THE TALKS HAVE DRAGGED ON.

4. THE SAUDIS BELIEVE THAT THIS HUMILIATION OF SADAT, THE STANDARD BEARER OF THE MODERATE ARABS, REFLECTS POORLY ON ALL MODERATES. FURTHERMORE, THE COLLAPSE OF THE INITIATE WILL CAUSE DIFFICULTIES FOR THEM.

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[REDACTED] THE SAUDIS ARE AFRAID THAT, IF SADAT PRESSES ON WITH HIS UNILATERAL EFFORT, INTERNAL PROBLEMS WILL DEVELOP IN EGYPT AND SYRIA. [REDACTED] THE IMPRESSION THAT FAHD BELIEVES THAT IF THE SITUATION IS ALLOWED TO CONTINUE TO SLIDE, ASSAD AND SADAT COULD BE OUSTED. [REDACTED] WE HAVE HAD A GROWING NUMBER OF REPORTS OF DISCONTENT IN BOTH SYRIA AND EGYPT. [REDACTED] WHOEVER REPLACES ASSAD OR SADAT, IN THE SAUDI ANALYSIS, IS LIKELY TO BE MUCH MORE RADICAL.

Gary get me then separate

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5. THE SAUDIS ALSO PROBABLY SENSE A GROWING FRUSTRATION IN THE ARAB WORLD WHICH COULD BE AN EVEN MORE DIRECT THREAT TO THEM. FOR INSTANCE, [REDACTED] MANY WEST BANKERS, WHO WERE PREVIOUSLY MODERATE IN THEIR VIEWS, ARE NOW ADOPTING A MORE RADICAL ATTITUDE. SOME HAVE EVEN SAID THAT THERE IS A NEED FOR A CHANGE IN ARAB LEADERSHIP, PARTICULARLY IN SAUDI ARABIA AND JORDAN.

6. ANOTHER SAUDI CONCERN APPEARS TO BE THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE ISRAELIS MAY TAKE ADVANTAGE OF ARAB DISUNITY AND ATTACK EITHER SYRIA OR JORDAN. WHILE SUCH A PROPOSITION APPEARS UNLIKELY, MANY ARABS TAKE IT VERY

~~TOP SECRET~~