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National Security Council Meeting

September 1, 1978

Time and Place: 1:10 - 2:40 p.m., Cabinet Room

Subject: Middle East - Camp David Summit

Participants:

President Jimmy Carter  
Vice President Walter Mondale

White House  
Zbigniew Brzezinski  
Hamilton Jordan  
Jody Powell

State

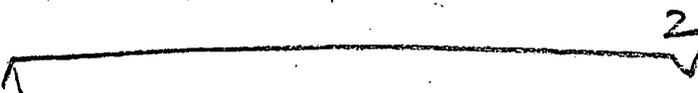
Cyrus Vance  
Hermann Eilts  
U.S. Ambassador to Egypt  
Samuel Lewis  
U.S. Ambassador to Israel

NSC  
William Quandt

Defense

Harold Brown

Joint Chiefs of Staff



CIA

Adm. Stansfield Turner

The President began the meeting by asking Ambassador Eilts and Ambassador Lewis to discuss briefly the personalities who would be with President Sadat and Prime Minister Begin at Camp David. Ambassador Eilts noted that Hassan Tuhamy would be there, but that he would not have much influence over Sadat. Foreign Minister Kamil is the next most important person, and he strongly believes in protecting Sadat from going too far. Ambassador Eilts concluded that none of the

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ministerial-level advisers would have much influence over Sadat. Under Secretary al-Baz is very able and will be the principal drafting officer, but he also has little direct influence over Sadat.

Ambassador Lewis then reviewed the Israeli personalities who would accompany Begin. He described greatest influence to Foreign Minister Dayan, and noted that the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister now work closely together. Ambassador Lewis suggested that Dayan should be included in small meetings with Begin. Both Dayan and Weizman see Camp David as more of a watershed than does Begin. Weizman has a better relationship now with Begin than he did some months ago, but his relationship is not as good as that of Dayan. Begin is more ideologically attached to the land, the West Bank and Gaza, than is Dayan. Dayan is more concerned with security. Dayan is also less concerned with words than is Begin. Dayan is the element of continuity with previous negotiations. He is also personally pessimistic about getting any agreement with Jordan. Weizman is more instinctual and less intellectual, but he is basically pragmatic and is very determined not to miss the chance for peace. He is more convinced of Sadat's sincerity than the others. The former Attorney General, Barak, is a very creative lawyer who will try to help solve problems. Begin has confidence in him. Barak should be included in any talks when four Israelis are present. The Vice President noted that Sadat does not seem to trust Dayan and that he prefers Weizman. Ambassador Eilts confirmed that this is the case.

Admiral Turner was then asked to brief on the regional consequences of a possible failure at Camp David. If the United States remains involved in working for a peace settlement, a failure at Camp David would not necessarily lead to dramatic consequences. The Saudis see themselves in a "no lose situation". If there is a success, they can live with it. If there is a failure, Saudi Arabia will work to bring Sadat back into the Arab fold. Saudi Arabia does not attribute the highest priority now to the Arab-Israeli conflict. They care more about cohesion of moderate Arab states, and they are concerned with the situation in South Yemen. They do not believe peace is possible with Israel under Begin's leadership. They also believe that the long-term trends in the area favor the Arab side. They assume that eventually the United States will use leverage over Israel. They already tend to discount Camp David however it comes out. They will

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try to consolidate the moderate forces in the Arab world. If Saudi Arabia concludes that we will never use our leverage with Israel, however, the Saudis may move toward a more anti-American posture. But the Saudis are not inclined to play a major geopolitical role. They are more interested in self-preservation than in peace.

Secretary Vance asked how the Saudis want us to apply leverage. Do they mean that we should cut military and economic aid to Israel? Admiral Turner replied that the Saudis may not have a clear definition in mind but they do believe we have leverage. They think of the 1968 experience in Sinai. The other moderate Arab states will go along with Saudi Arabia. If the summit fails, this will confirm Hussein in his beliefs. The rejectionists will make noise, and will wait and see. The PLO will see a failure as a success. Sadat's own reaction will be to shift tactics, but he will not give up. He will be pressed to reconcile himself with President Assad, and may try to do something dramatic such as ask for the removal of the UNEF forces.

Admiral Turner noted that Begin would be content with an unclear result. He does not want to take the blame for a failure with his own people who are generally ahead of him in their willingness to make a trade of territory for peace. The Soviets will try to blame a failure on U.S. policy and will try to get back into the peace process and to isolate Sadat. Concerning Lebanon, Admiral Turner did not think that Syria would want to fight Israel, but Syria does want to reduce the power of the Christian militias. The Soviets are not urging the Syrians to do too much there, and they do want to back the Syrians against Israel in a military conflict. The real question is whether the militant Christians will hold back. It is impossible to forecast what may happen between now and September 6. This will be a dangerous period. It depends most on the right-wing Christians and how hard they will push.

The President asked about Jordan and whether it looked to Saudi Arabia for guidance. He noted that there was a possibility that Hussein would be too timid to join the talks. He asked if Jordan could be persuaded by the Saudis to join the talks or whether the Syrians would also have to be brought in. Admiral Turner said Hussein would need Saudi support and an Israeli indication of a willingness to give up sovereignty

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in the West Bank. This will be more important than Syrian influence.

Dr. Brzezinski noted that he felt that the consequences of failure at Camp David could be more serious. The Arabs might conclude that the United States cannot lead the process for peace. They will draw conclusions of a far-reaching nature about the American role, which will cumulatively give them less of a sense of co-responsibility with us on matters of international economy and oil. Radical forces could be strengthened. Dr. Brzezinski also thought that Sadat might be less predictable than Admiral Turner had indicated. Sadat might be prepared to gamble on another war. He would not have to expect to win, just as in 1973 he went to war in order to force the United States to take action. The President said that he felt the Saudi attitude would depend heavily on what President Sadat says. Secretary Vance noted that Sadat had already said that if Camp David came to nothing, a strong statement by the United States would still help in the Arab world, and would have the effect of mobilizing world opinion to keep things moving. Dr. Brzezinski said that Sadat then defines success in terms of our taking a clear position. Secretary Vance agreed that if the United States did not take a position, then Sadat would feel that Camp David was a failure. Admiral Turner said that he thought it would be difficult for us to take a position which would satisfy Sadat without provoking a confrontation with Begin. The President remarked that he felt Sadat was considering a rather drastic move about a month ago.

Ambassador Eilts noted that there will be two critical dates coming up. In October there will be the renewal of UNEF, and then in November there will be the anniversary of his trip to Jerusalem. Sadat is turning over in his mind what he should do if there is no movement. He will find it difficult to acknowledge that his peace initiative has failed. He may grasp at anything to keep it alive. He has confidence in the President and he looks to him for guidance. He has said that he would not let him down. That will give us scope to work with to prevent a failure. If the results of Camp David are inadequate, then pressures will begin to build at home and from within the Arab world. The Saudis might want him to acknowledge the failure of his initiative, and then there would be pressures for reconciliation and an Arab summit. Sadat knows that the United States is the only country that can help achieve peace. The Saudis basically share the same goal of reaching peace. They have some influence in Egypt because of the aid they provide. If Sadat decides to go

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the route of Arab reconciliation, there could be a summit within a couple of months. He could keep the peace process alive by going to the United Nations and calling for a resumption of the Geneva Conference, but if that were to fail, Sadat would increasingly look to the option of war. Egypt is not now ready for this and it will take time. Israel is stronger than in October 1973. The step that would be taken prior to preparing for war would be reconciliation with the Arab world. Neither Sadat nor Gamasy wants war. The losses would be high. They might have to take the risks, but they do not want it.

Secretary Vance stated that if no agreement is reached on the deeply substantive problems, but if Sadat feels that the American position is fair, he might agree to a renewal of the no war pledge in return for a freeze on settlements. Ambassador Eilts agreed that a fair statement of the U.S. position might lead Sadat to reiterate his no war position. Ambassador Lewis felt that Begin would not agree to a freeze on settlements in return for a no war pledge, since Egypt was already committed to a peaceful resolution of differences in the 1975 Sinai II agreement. Israel will not pay twice for that pledge. Admiral Turner remarked that the CIA assessment is that the balance of forces is more favorable to Israel now than it was in 1973. DIR

Secretary Brown was then asked to review the number of security issues. He dealt first with the problem of conventional threats to Israeli security, noting that these were easier to deal with than the problem of terrorism. To deal with conventional threats, demilitarization is probably the most important concept. This provides time for Israel to react to any threat. For example, there might be arrangements which would prohibit Egyptian armor from going beyond the passes. A second means of providing Israel with security would be military enclaves in key areas. Three Israeli battalions in blocking positions along the roads from the Jordan Valley into the West Bank would provide good security for Israel. Access rights to these blocking positions would have to be worked out. In Sinai, Israel is particularly anxious to keep the airbase at Etzion. There is not enough airspace in Israel for training. Early warning sites might also be useful to detect any build-up on the Arab side. The United States can help improve the capabilities to detect movement of the forces. Third-party patrols offer another possibility. The United States could also assure Israel of stable levels of military assistance, and we could respond to a number of the outstanding requests under MATMON-C. For example, Israel might get more aircraft and access to advanced technology. 4

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Secretary Brown went on to review ways of defending against terrorism. While these threats are more difficult to deal with, they do not affect the security of the state as much as the conventional threats. Therefore, it might be reasonable to ask Israel to accept somewhat less assurance in dealing with these threats, even though politically they are just as difficult to deal with than the larger threats. The key to dealing with terrorism is to have an Arab political authority which is a party to the agreement which is committed to maintain order. If Israel does give up the West Bank, this would pose new problems, but if an Arab authority were present it would have an incentive to prevent terrorism. There would have to be some sharing of intelligence and some cooperation at the local level. There are some technological arrangements which could be developed to protect infiltration. Secretary Vance stated that Dayan had agreed that most internal security problems could be dealt with by a local Palestinian Arab government, and that Israel would not have to be involved in any significant way. Ambassador Lewis added that Dayan had sometimes thought of mobile patrols in the Jordan Valley in order to deal with the problem of terrorism.

Secretary Brown then turned to a possible American role in connection with security arrangements. He noted that military assistance would be one means of assuring the security of the parties. The United States could provide Israel with early warning technology, and accelerated delivery of equipment, as well as access to high technology. Consideration might be given to adding Israel to the list of countries exempt from the arms ceiling limitations. Dr. Brzezinski thought that this was not a good idea and Secretary Brown agreed that this would open the door to many other requests for exemptions. Discussion then turned to the possibility of a mutual security treaty between the United States and Israel, and it was generally felt that anything less than a NATO-type treaty would not be worth much to the Israelis. Secretary Vance and Ambassador Lewis agreed that a NATO-type treaty would be important to Israel. Ambassador Lewis also felt that some physical American presence would be welcome in the area, such as Haifa or in the Sinai but not in the West Bank.

Secretary Brown stated that an American presence in the Sinai would pose fewer risks than a presence in the West Bank or in Golan or at Haifa or Alexandria. A naval presence in the area is probably more of a problem than it is worth. In times of tension, we would want the ships to get out of the area. The base in Sinai would cause fewer problems. One might think

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of additional port visits and use of repair facilities in Haifa and Alexandria, although this would be less reassuring to the parties. The JCS has also developed the idea of an air training facility at Eitam air field. If this were useful, it should be raised with the Egyptians, not with the Israelis initially, since the base would be on Egyptian territory. Such an arrangement should only be considered as a cap to an agreement, otherwise it will look as if they are doing a favor to us. In fact there are problems in doing this and Americans could be held hostage and pressures would build on us to offer other quid pro quos. Therefore, Secretary Brown concluded, such arrangements should only be seen as as capstone to the peace agreements if it offers additional reassurances.

*mutual* The President asked if any consideration had been given to a U.S.-Egyptian ~~neutral~~ defense pact. Secretary Brown said that this was a possibility, but no specific thought had been given to it. The President added that Sadat had not been opposed to a US-Israeli treaty, and he had the impression that Egypt would also participate if it were essential to peace. Secretary Brown thought that a multi-lateral treaty might be of some benefit. Dr. Brzezinski added that the Saudis might want to be part of such an arrangement. Admiral Turner added that the Arabs are a bit squeamish about joining any pact to which Israel would be a part. They also view foreign bases as anathema. The Soviets might also react very negatively. Secretary Brown agreed that the Soviets might try to get bases in Iraq and Libya. *DIR*

Ambassador Eilts pointed out that the Saudis had not been enthusiastic about an American base in their territory and they were very sensitive about this issue, as much as they might like a strong American position in the area generally. The Egyptians are also sensitive about a highly visible American presence in Egypt.

The President concluded this part of the discussion by saying that no one favored an American military presence in the area unless Egypt and Israel both wanted it and feel that it is essential. It will not be an advantage to us. Dr. Brzezinski agreed, adding that it could be counter-productive. Secretary Brown agreed that the risks seem to outweigh the benefits. General Jones added that Israel will want some military presence in the West Bank and at the airfields in Sinai. While not advocating an American

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presence, the reason for suggesting the joint training facility was to deal with the problem of the bases in Sinai. While homeporting at Haifa does not seem desirable, more frequent visits in the area and use of repair facilities does make some sense. Secretary Brown felt that Alexandria was even a better facility than Haifa, but there were problems connected with use of either of these facilities.

The President concluded the meeting by discussing his plans for the first few days of Camp David. He thought that he would meet first with Begin alone and then with Sadat. They would then all get together. He would make an effort to reassure both leaders of our own good intentions, and would encourage them to deal with one another. He would offer our good offices and he would only put forward proposals after consultations. He would try to point out to both of them the benefits of a comprehensive agreement, and the dangers of failure. Begin should understand the risks of radicalization in the Arab world, and a return of negotiations to a U.N. or Geneva form. The President said that he would not try to rush the talks, but he did not want them to drag out too long either. He would try to get all of the concepts on the table before the end of Friday, then take a break on Saturday for a reflection. The Vice President would represent him in the White House during his absence, although he would also want the Vice President to come up for some of the discussions. He concluded by stating it was important to keep the number of people at Camp David as small as possible and to avoid contacts with the press during the talks.

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