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MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

PARTICIPANTS: President Anwar al Sadat
Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger
Foreign Minister Ismail Fahmy
Ambassador Hermann Frederick Eilts

HD 13
Date 3-8-1974

DATE AND PLACE: April 30, 1974, Alexandria, Egypt

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Summarized below are subjects discussed during an hour-and-a-half talk between President Sadat, Secretary Kissinger and the other participants held on the evening of April 30 at the President's home in Maamura, Alexandria, Egypt

Handling the Soviets

The Secretary said he had talked with Gromyko in Geneva. Even though he is humiliating himself in the process, Gromyko pushed hard for a participatory role. He wanted to meet the Secretary in Damascus, but the Secretary firmly refused to do so. Gromyko may nevertheless come to the Middle East area. The Secretary stressed that he would not meet with Gromyko in the area. He might, however, agree to meet him outside of the area, perhaps in Cyprus. The President endorsed this idea. The Secretary recalled that Fahmy had suggested Gromyko be informed in writing that, if he insists upon participating, the onus for failure will rest squarely upon him. The Secretary thought his own proposed procedure was very close to what the Foreign Minister had suggested. The President and Fahmy both agreed.

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The President recalled that he had recently sent a message to Brezhnev in reply to a letter from him. He jokingly commented that Brezhnev had warned the Egyptians about the Secretary. The President strongly opposed any Soviet participatory role in upcoming peace talks. The Secretary noted that at an appropriate time, when a settlement has been reached, it might be formally endorsed by the Geneva Conference. The President agreed.

Israel-Syria Disengagement

The Secretary stated that the upcoming disengagement talks between Israel and Syria will be difficult. He outlined the current political problem of the Israeli government. Rabin is seeking to form a government and has three weeks to do so. If he fails, he has another three weeks to make a second effort. If he fails again, there must be elections, which would not be conducted until October. The Secretary recalled that he knew Rabin well and thought that, if Rabin's domestic political problem can be resolved, he favored a settlement. The Secretary also spoke of Dayan's interest in a settlement, but observed that Rabin and Dayan have a strong dislike for each other.

Despite the difficulties, the Secretary thought that he could get some sort of disengagement agreement--if not on this trip, perhaps on the next one. Fahmy urged that he do so on this trip, noting that without this the Syrians might call for a Security Council meeting. In these circumstances, it would become increasingly difficult to manage the area situation. The President echoed the same theme.

The Secretary said he was confident that he can get something. He had studied the proposals of both Israel and Syria, including the maps each had presented, and the positions are still far apart. Syria is demanding about two-thirds of Golan. The Secretary pointed out that unlike Egypt, which had military successes in crossing the Suez Canal and holding positions in the East Bank, the Syrians held no such cards. Instead, the Israeli salient extended deeply into Syria. The President acknowledged the problem.

The Secretary said he had told the Israelis, however, that Qunaitra and a little more--perhaps two or three kilometers--would have to be given up. The Secretary recalled that he had earlier mentioned this to the President. Would such an arrangement be agreeable, the Secretary asked. Both the President and Fahmy responded in the affirmative. The Secretary pointed out that if this type of settlement is achieved, the evacuated zone will have to be demilitarized. There might be Syrian civil administration in Qunaitra, but the Israelis would probably not agree to having Syrian troops in the zone. What did the President think? Fahmy interjected

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the idea that perhaps this could be solved by broadening the UN zone between the two parties. He pointed out that such an arrangement would be to Israel's advantage, hence ought to be acceptable to the latter. The Secretary noted that Israel would doubtless accept such an arrangement, but the Syrians may balk.

In this connection, the Secretary pointed out that President Asad does not want UNEF to be positioned between the two sides. Instead, he wants only UNTSO observers. Fahmy commented that this is because the Soviets are in UNTSO and not in UNEF. The Secretary asked what kind of arrangements should exist in areas of Syria which may be evacuated by the Israelis. The President replied they should be "just like with Egypt." The Secretary asked that if President Asad gets Qunaitra and little more and thereafter insists that this is not enough and wants to go to war, will President Sadat support him? President Sadat responded, "No, definitely not."

The Secretary asked whether President Sadat would help if something seems possible, but Assad remains difficult. The President immediately replied that he would do so. He would send an envoy to Asad to lend a helping hand. He recalled that Marshal Ismail had already been there in the past two days. The Marshal had come back and reported his belief that the Syrians are interested in a settlement. The Secretary and the President agreed that this might be discussed further when he returns briefly to Alexandria next Saturday.

FRG Assistance

The Secretary mentioned the Brandt visit and German economic aid. He pointed out that he had been in touch with Brandt on the matter of economic aid for Egypt. The President said that he felt this had indeed been done. During Brandt's visit, it had been agreed to set up a bilateral committee to study the matter further. This committee, which will be chaired at the Foreign Minister level, will meet in Bonn next month. The President was hopeful that something would come out of this.

U.S.-Egyptian Committee

The Secretary indicated that if the President wished, he would be agreeable to a United States-Egyptian bilateral committee to consider subjects of possible cooperation. The President's initial response was that this might be a United States-Arab committee on the lines of the EC-Arab dialogue.

The Secretary said he had no objection to this, but thought initially a bilateral commission might be easier to organize. The President agreed

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that we should initially begin with a bilateral U.S.-Egyptian committee. It was agreed that we would look further into this matter after the Secretary's current trip to the Middle East.

DC-9's

Noting that he understood the Egyptians had asked for his approval in the proposed sale of some DC-9's to Egypt, the Secretary said that he approved such a transaction. The point was not pursued by either side.

Referring to the American helicopters now engaged in mine clearance operations, the President half jokingly said he wanted to keep these. The Sikorsky helicopter was the type he needed. The Secretary suggested that at the conclusion of the operation, one might be left behind.

North Korea

The President broached the subject of North Korea. He recalled that Kim Il Sung is a good friend and described him as "a good man." Kim Il Sung's brother had just been here. The latter had asked that the President raise with the Secretary the fact that no reply had yet been given to an earlier North Korean overture for a dialogue with the United States. The Secretary pointed out that there was a reason for this. Kim Il Sung had sent his message to the Congress, not to the Executive Branch. The Secretary said Kim Il Sung would not get a reply that way. Any overtures should be to the Executive Branch.

President Sadat specifically asked if the Secretary would agree to initiating a dialogue with North Korea. The Secretary responded affirmatively, but said it should be secret and conducted through President Sadat. The President indicated such an arrangement would be satisfactory to him.

Codels

There was brief discussion about the various Codels that have recently visited Egypt and have been received by the President. The Secretary noted that various members of Congress, including Senators Hatfield and Byrd, had returned from Egypt very favorably impressed.

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