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MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

~~SECRET~~/NODIS/XGDS

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

PARTICIPANTS: President Gerald R. Ford
Golda Meir
Brent Scowcroft, Assistant to the President
for National Security Affairs
Simcha Dinitz, Ambassador of Israel

DATE AND TIME: Wednesday, May 19, 1976
2:05 - 3:04 p. m.

PLACE: The Oval Office

[The press came in. There was small talk about Golda's travels, etc. The press then left.]

The President: The press has been good to me even though they don't always agree. That psychological attitude is important.

Dinitz: The press really likes you, Mr. President.

Meir: On my first trip to the United States as Prime Minister, I really felt like I had come home. The press remembered and I had a warm feeling.

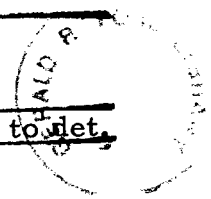
The President: A lot has happened since we met. Our working relations with your Government have improved. The Sinai Agreement has gone well, as far as I know.

Meir: The Egyptians aren't behaving well on the West Bank, but that is different. The Prime Minister asked me to send his regards.

The President: There are, of course, some issues ahead -- UNDOF, for example. We hope the momentum can be continued. I spoke to the Prime Minister about some ways to move things forward. There has as yet been no action. Lebanon is a dreadful situation, with one ceasefire after another.

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E.O. 12958, SEC. 3.5
NSC MEMO, 11/10/80, STATE DEPT. GUIDELINES, STATE DEPT. REV. 5/12/04
BY [initials], NARA, DATE 7/26/04

Meir: Isn't it awful. Over 20,000 killed.

The President: Your Government has acted with great restraint. We think the only answer is to solve it internally rather than through Syrian intervention. We would understand your attitude toward that. But Frangi is or isn't resigning, etc.

Meir: I don't know if that will really do it. It is all so mixed up and senseless.

The President: It is very confusing, especially as to who is supporting whom.

What is your evaluation of West Bank developments?

Meir: Maybe we made a mistake. I didn't want elections, but they said Jordanian law required it and we shouldn't be breaking that law. The elections were held and went off flawlessly. But I think some elements -- the Communists -- decided to take advantage of the situation.

Despite what is happening in the West Bank, the majority is going about its business. The press doesn't report that. When our soldiers find themselves in a position where stones are thrown and their hair burned, something has to happen. These are large groups and they let the children out of school. Our soldiers just can't let people throw stones at them. It is deplorable, but what can we do about it? And the UN, which complains here, says not a word about Lebanon. There are PLO and Communists working there, but I think it will calm down.

The President: The Arabs have their own police and security forces?

Meir: We changed nothing. Our troops are never in evidence. We want to have industrial development there, but what would happen if we advocated sending Israeli business men in there. So we are trying to get them to do it themselves with our investment support.

It is discouraging, but I read your American Jewish Committee speech. It gives us strength and we really appreciate your words.

What is the reaction of the Arabs to the non-belligerency.

The President: I would say, while I haven't talked with them directly, that Hussein might be interested but he won't move ahead of the others.

Scowcroft: We have had no official response, but each is sort of waiting for the other. There is no enthusiasm evident.

Meir: We are disappointed. We had hoped there would be progress. We were happy with your speech saying the parties themselves to negotiate peace. That is the important element. What is the good of this continued conflict?

The President: I noted in my speech some hope on Soviet emigration, but we have had no response. Has Scoop Jackson said anything?

Scowcroft: Not a word, or from anyone else.

The President: How many would leave under free emigration?

Meir: We estimate about 140-150,000. They are fine people and the things done to them are really dreadful.

The President: How long does it take for their readjustment in Israel?

Meir: First they get assimilated into our society. It is not a difficult problem.

May I say a couple of things the Prime Minister asked? I needn't dwell on what you have done for us -- we appreciate that. We are in bad domestic straits. We want to stand on our own feet and we will add more taxes but it is a problem.

The President: I have spoken to several people about it. The veto of the Security Assistance Authorization bill had no connection with aid to you.

Meir: We understand that.

The President: I had major problems with that bill. Right now we are looking at figures for the Transition Quarter. It is not finalized yet so I have no figures. The door is not closed and we will try to work things out. We may need help from your Ambassador.

Meir: The last time we sat here was during Angola.

The President: The Congress didn't understand the implications.

Meir: The Russians did.

The President: They certainly did. Tell the Prime Minister we will work something out on the Transition Quarter. It may not be everything, but it should help.

Meir: We hope you will come see us.

The President: I would like to. It looks better after yesterday.

Meir: I hope you know of our sincere desire for peace. Our dedication is complete and we want to work with you to that end.

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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

~~SECRET~~ (XGDS)

MEETING WITH GOLDA MEIR

Wednesday, May 19, 1976
2:00 p.m. (30 minutes)
The Oval Office

From: Brent Scowcroft *BS*

I. PURPOSE

To exchange views on the Middle East situation.

II. BACKGROUND, PARTICIPANTS & PRESS ARRANGEMENTS

A. Background: Mrs. Meir is making this private visit to receive a major award from the AFL-CIO at a dinner May 20 and to receive an honorary degree from Wellesley College. Her full itinerary is at Tab A.

Since you last met with her on December 19, she has joined a newly formed Labor Party Steering Forum, thus formalizing her role as a senior advisor. The Steering Forum was created as a prop to the Government in the face of Rabin's declining popularity and disarray with the leadership. This meeting is an opportunity for you to express concern over the direction of Israeli policy and the growing public ^{impatience} ~~importance~~ in this country with some aspects of it. US press comment on Israeli policy on settlements in the occupied areas has been almost unanimously critical.

Other additional topics which have come up since you last met Mrs. Meir include US aid to Israel, Lebanon, and UNDOF.

B. Participants: Mrs. Meir; Ambassador Dinitz; Brent Scowcroft.

C. Press Coverage: Meeting to be announced; press photo session.

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E.O. 12958, SEC. 3.5

NSC MEMO, 11/24/00, STATE DEPT. GUIDELINES: state review 3/12/04

BY WJ, NARA. DATE 7/26/04



III. TALKING POINTS

General Policy

-- The character and tone of communication between our two governments has improved since I last saw you. At that time I was very concerned about the adversary note that had crept into the discourse between us. Prime Minister Rabin's visit helped a good deal in this respect.

-- I am still very concerned, however, about Israeli policy, both in the short term and over the longer run. We agree entirely on fundamentals, and I sympathize deeply with Israel's problems. Nevertheless, I continue to have no clear picture at all of the direction in which Israel wants to move in the coming years.

-- Israeli policy still seems to be essentially a policy of hanging on and hoping for the best. Not only is this not a policy with which we can effectively cooperate, it is also not one that is likely to produce peace in the Middle East.

-- Not only is there no credible agreed strategy, but the day-to-day actions of the Israeli Government are in important ways more conducive to stalemate than to political progress. We welcome constructive moves such as the February 22 Cabinet decision for negotiation of an end to the state of war. This forthcoming position is then contradicted, however, by concrete actions like the continued establishment of settlements in occupied territory, which create a widespread impression that Israel does not genuinely desire peace.

-- I have been struck with the almost universal reaction in this country against the Israeli settlements policy in recent weeks. I understand the political situation with which Prime Minister Rabin has to work, but we must regard the issues of peace and war as overriding.

-- For the first time, there are Arab leaders who say they are prepared for peace, but this situation may not last indefinitely. We know Israel is skeptical about their real intentions, and we can understand that. But Arab statements about peace should be tested in negotiations, and that cannot happen so long as Israel takes positions-- such as establishing settlements and saying it must retain some Arab territory even in a peace settlement--which inhibit the negotiating process.

-- I would like to hear your thoughts on the points I have raised, particularly on the question of where the Israeli Government sees itself as heading. What policy will the Labor Party go to the country with in the next election?

U.S. Assistance for Israel

-- I have asked the Congress for over 4 billion dollars for FY 1976 and 1977, much more than any previous two-year period. I am determined to see that Israel continues to obtain the support it needs in arms and money to meet its essential security requirements.

-- My veto of the Foreign Assistance Bill was directed at restrictive amendments which tie my hands in foreign policy. I hope we can achieve a compromise on the Transition Quarter funding.

UNDOF

-- We have no clear reading of how Syria intends to handle the problem of renewal, although we have several reports that President Asad does wish to renew.

-- We have made clear to the Syrians that we are not prepared to pay any political price for renewal.

Lebanon

-- We appreciate the restraint showed by Israel in the face of Syrian military movements in Lebanon.

-- We are doing what we can to encourage a lasting ceasefire and a political settlement but the present prospects are not good. We hope that Israel will use its influence with the Lebanese Christians to promote a political compromise and an end to the fighting.

ITINERARY OF GOLDA MEIR

May 18 Arrive Washington

May 19 Washington -- Meeting with the President
Washington -- Dinner hosted by Ambassador Dinitz

May 20 Washington -- Meeting with Mr. George Meany, AFL-CIO
Washington -- Dinner Honoring Mrs. Meir, AFL-CIO

May 21 Washington -- Israeli Bonds dinner
Depart for New York City

May 22 Connecticut -- Dinner by United Jewish Appeal
Depart for New York City

May 23 New York City

May 24 Philadelphia -- Israeli Bonds Dinner

May 25 Chicago -- Israeli Bonds Dinner

May 26 Chicago -- United Jewish Appeal Luncheon
Depart for New York City

May 27 Boston -- Dinner hosted by the President of Wellesley
College

May 28 Boston -- Honorary Degree from Wellesley College
Depart for New York City

May 29-31 New York City

June 1 Boston -- Israeli Bonds Reception

June 2 New York -- United Jewish Appeal event

P/Golda Meir ✓
17 May 76

Press in

Small talk about Golda Meir, etc

Press out

P The press has been good to me even tho they don't always agree. That says attitude is important

D The press ^{really} likes you Mr P.

M On my first trip to US as PM I really felt like I had come home. The press remembered & I had a warm feeling.

P A lot has happened since we met. Our working relations w/c got them improved. Sinai has gone well, as far as I know

M The E aren't behaving well on W Bank, but that is diff. PM asked me to send his regards.

P There are of course some issues ahead - UNDOZ for example. We hope movement can be continued. Report to PM about some way to work - that has not yet been reaction. Lebanon is a chaotic situation, w/one E after another.

M I sent it awful. Over 2000 killed

P Your govt has a real w/c govt restraint. We think the only answer is to solve it internally rather than thru Syrian enthusiasms. We would understand your attitude toward that. But France is a bit unhappy, etc.

M I don't know if that will really do it. It is also unhelpful & senseless

P It is very confusing, esp as to who is fighting whom.

What is your deal on W Bank deployment

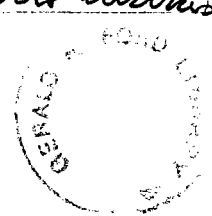
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NSC MEMO, 11/24/98, STATE DEPT. GUIDELINES, state doc no 3/12/04

BY NARA DATE 7/26/04



but they said Jordanian law required it & we should
be breaking that law. The elections were held &
went off flawlessly. But I think some elements -
Crusts - decided to take advantage of a set.

Despite what is happening in W Bank, a majority
is going about its business. The press doesn't
report that, when our soldiers find themselves
in position where stones are thrown & trees
burned, something has to happen. There are
large groups and they let a children out school.
Our soldiers just can't let people throw stones
at them. It is deplorable, but what can we
do about it? And the UN, which explains
him, say not a word about Lebanon.

There are 160 + Crusts working there, but I think
it will calm down ~~soon~~

P The Arabs have their own police
& security forces?

M We changed nothing. Our troops are never in
evidence.

We want to have established departments but
what would happen if we admitted sending

I mean men in there. So we're trying to
get them to do it themselves w/ our investment
support.

It's discouraging but I read your ABC
speech. It gives us strength and we really
appreciate your words.

M What is a reaction of Arabs to a non-belligerent

P I would say that, while I haven't talked w/ them directly
that it seems they might be interested but won't
move ahead.

S We have had no official response, but there is
not of writing for action. There is no enthusiasm
evident.

M We are also disappointed. We had hoped. We were
hoping w/ your speech saying certain controls
& regulations. That is a important element.
What is the good of this continued effort.

P I wanted ~~to~~ in my speech hope on San Francisco,
but we have had no response. Has George Jackson
said anything.

S There would be from anyone else.

P How many would have ended ~~for~~ free
emigration

M We est. ~~about 100,000~~ ^{140,000-150,000}. They are fine
people & the things done to them are really dreadful.

P How long does it take to be self-sufficient.

M First you get ~~an~~ assimilated into our
society. It is a long job.

May I say a couple of things & I'll ask?
I've not dwell on what you have said for
us - we appreciate that.

We are in bad domestic straits. We
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The losses not used and we will try to

work thing out. We may need help from
your bank.

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P The Cong didn't understand a negotiation

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M We hope you will come see us

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for peace. Our dedication is complete
& we want to work w/you to that end.