

PERSONAL REMARKS BY P. & K.

March 26, 1973

Personal comments made by P. and K., 26 March at the end of the so-called formal part of the talks.

P. said he would appreciate my personal reaction to the question what would be our attitude if they offered to send an official envoy to Israel for talks. The idea was to keep the mission secret. They had no particular difficulty in suggesting this.

I replied that we are a hospitable country and I'd be glad if I could tell him that we agreed but this is not so because of one principal difficulty: could he promise us that an Israeli personality of similar rank would be welcomed in Moscow? I remember that when years ago a former Israeli Prime Minister offered to go to Moscow, they didn't even bother to reply. It is impossible to go on with this asymmetrical type of relationship. In addition, our attitude depended very much on the matters that the visitor would wish to raise. If they want to discuss bilateral questions this is relatively simple. (P. interjected here and said I was probably thinking of the immigration issue). However, if the purpose was to discuss the Middle East this would be much more complicated.

P. then said that he remembered that during the talks in 1971 we discussed the possibility of a permanent Soviet representation in Israel in the framework of their religious mission, through a TASS bureau, a trade commission or some similar arrangement. It would, of course, be agreed between us that a certain person in the delegation would know of the special contact between us and he would therefore serve as a permanent and reliable channel of communication.

I replied that I saw a problem even there because such arrangements were out of the question if they lacked reciprocity. Was it conceivable that they would have a permanent TASS correspondent in Israel while we would not have a permanent Israeli correspondent in Moscow?

P. said that concerning the Israeli representation in Moscow (he was referring to an office displaying the Israeli flag) he thought this was difficult because such a representation would easily become a rallying point for the Jews in the Soviet Union. This would create a problem. He believes that the way to promote bilateral relations was through gradual and small steps. It depended upon many developments. For

example, there was the problem of Israeli anti-Soviet propoganda. I reacted that there was of course Soviet anti-Israeli propoganda. P. said that this was correct but that they were making such propoganda only because they had to react to our propoganda. Such propoganda could be stopped. It had happened in the case of Federal Republic of Germany and this although in their belief West Germany had remained an imperialist power.

After P. completed his remarks K. spoke at some length (this indicates that K. does have some special status).

He said that he agreed with my remark that the history of the Soviet-Israeli relationship was sad, bitter and occasionally even tragic. This was regrettable. It did not have to be so. The time for change for the better has come. The improved international atmosphere made it possible. They for their part were ready.

P. remarked jokingly that K. was a dove.

In my reply I welcomed K.'s remarks and said that we were interested in good relations with them. My ideas as to how to proceed were simple. One should separate between the Middle East context and the bilateral context. After all, the difference between Israel and Egypt concerned those two countries only. The day would come and hopefully this day was not far away, and a solution based on a compromise would be found. Why should the Soviet Union identify itself with the political aims of Egypt and postpone working for the promotion of her bilateral relations with Israel?

P. interjected and said you are obviously referring to immigration when you talk about bilateral relations. I replied that I was referring not only to immigration but to trade, scientific relations, etc. I went on to say that I noted that K. believed that the time had come to bring about improvement in our relations because the international atmosphere facilitated this. Israel was happy that this détente was taking place, she was happy as a member of the family of nations. The Jews as a people were happy too. We all stood to gain.

K. then went on to develop the theme that Israel was unwilling to make progress in the Middle East, that Israel behaved as if she wanted to perpetuate the status quo, that she avoided taking any constructive initiative.

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I repeated saying that I was sorry to hear his remarks, I had already told him that we did not want to perpetuate the situation, that we strove for peace, that we were ready for negotiations, on an overall as well as an interim agreement.

P. then said that they did not believe that the Israeli leadership really thought that the Soviet Union did lack importance or was unable to make any contribution towards solving the conflict. We were wrong if we believed that the key to a solution was in Washington.

K. then said that they knew we were afraid of an imposed settlement. He would want us to be sure that we did not need fear Soviet pressure and imposition. I said that I was taking note of what he said and was reminded that P. gave a similar assurance in 1971.

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