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U.S. POLICY TOWARD THE ISRAELI-EGYPTIAN
CONFLICT SEPTEMBER 1970-FEBRUARY 1972:
THE ANALYSIS OF A FAILURE OF
AMERICAN DIPLOMACY

by

Joseph Thomas Stanik

December 1983

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20. ABSTRACT (Continued)

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U.S. Policy Toward the Israeli-Egyptian Conflict
September 1970-February 1972:
The Analysis of a Failure of American Diplomacy

by

Joseph Thomas Stanik
Lieutenant, United States Navy
B.S., United States Naval Academy, 1978

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
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ABSTRACT

Between September 1970 and February 1972, a unique opportunity existed in the Middle East for the conclusion of an interim settlement in the dispute between Egypt and Israel. Egyptian President Anwar el-Sadat declared his willingness to enter into a peace agreement with Israel and demonstrated his sincerity by renewing the Rogers cease-fire plan, proposing an interim Suez Canal agreement with Israel, and opening a dialogue with the United States. Unfortunately, the American foreign policy establishment failed to take full advantage of the positive political developments in the Middle East, and a rare opportunity to move this troubled region closer to peace was lost. This failure of American diplomacy can be traced to the uncoordinated and ineffective Middle East policy pursued in the three years separating the Jordanian civil war of 1970 and the October 1973 Arab-Israeli war. During this crucial period, U.S. Middle East policy was formulated without an accurate understanding of regional developments, was not impartial, was preoccupied with the global ramifications of the Arab-Israeli conflict, was not effectively conducted, was not coordinated between the White House and the State Department, and, most important, did not enjoy the full support and complete commitment of the President of the United States.

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I. INTRODUCTION

On February 4, 1971, Egyptian President Anwar el-Sadat proposed an interim agreement between Egypt and Israel whereby Israel would pull back its forces from the Suez Canal and in return Egypt would clear and reopen the canal. Sadat's proposal was the most significant diplomatic development in the conflict between Egypt and Israel during the period September 1970 to February 1972. Other developments included the prolonged cease-fire along the Suez Canal, Sadat's expressed desire to make peace with Israel, his growing suspicion of the Soviet Union, and his cautious approach to the United States. In spite of these remarkable circumstances, American diplomacy failed to achieve either an interim agreement between Egypt and Israel or the establishment of a serious negotiating framework between the two countries. This failure of U.S. Middle East policy can be explained using the following nine reasons:

- 1) After their successful handling of the Jordanian crisis in September 1970, President Richard M. Nixon and his Assistant for National Security Affairs, Dr. Henry A. Kissinger, continued to view, as they had since taking office in 1969, the Middle East situation as primarily a global, instead of a regional, conflict. Israel was regarded as a strategic U.S. asset in the region, and it was

believed that maintaining the military balance in Israel's favor would deter the Egyptians from attacking Israel and would convince the Egyptians that the large Soviet presence in their country was of no political or military benefit. Throughout 1971, the White House was consistently more concerned with removing the Soviets from Egypt than with launching a peace initiative.

(2) By concentrating on the global ramifications of the Israeli-Egyptian conflict, the White House ignored several regional developments, such as growing Arab frustrations, especially among the Egyptians, Syrians, and Palestinians, and increasing Arab political strength due largely to their vast petroleum resources.

(3) Having controlled U.S. Middle East policy during the Jordanian crisis, the White House was reluctant to see the State Department pursue an activist's role in the Middle East. The White House gave the State Department very little support for its initiatives during this period. The result was that the State Department launched a series of ineffective, half-hearted initiatives that simply increased Arab frustrations and reinforced Israeli intransigence.

(4) During the period under examination, crucial actions were carried out by members of the American foreign policy establishment's "second team," namely Secretary of State William P. Rogers, Assistant Secretary of State Joseph Sisco,

the chief U.S. diplomat in Cairo, Donald Bergus,* and the State Department's Egyptian-desk officer, Michael Sterner. The abdication by Nixon and Kissinger of the leading role in the search for a settlement was perhaps the major factor behind the inability of American diplomacy to secure an agreement, interim or otherwise. The White House was far more concerned with the war in Vietnam, détente with the Soviet Union, and normalizing relations with China. It simply viewed the Middle East as a distraction and annoyance. Furthermore, Kissinger was reluctant to become directly involved in the Middle East because he feared that he would not be successful. Kissinger was content to wait until Moscow favored a compromise solution or until the moderate Arabs realized that the best route to a settlement was through Washington.

(5) The United States misread Sadat's attitude toward the Soviet Union. Whereas American policy makers feared stronger political and military ties between the Soviet Union and Egypt, especially in wake of the Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation signed in May 1971, Sadat was very suspicious of the Soviets and was less committed to them than Nasser had been. Nevertheless, the Soviet presence in Egypt prevented Nixon and Kissinger from seriously

*Since Egypt severed diplomatic relations with the U.S. following the June 1967 war, Bergus headed the U.S. Interest Section located in the Spanish Embassy.

considering the significance of Sadat's proposal for an interim agreement.

(6) The diplomacy carried out by the State Department and, to a lesser extent, the White House was, in several instances, very unprofessional. For example, notes and messages from Sadat frequently went unanswered, Bergus drafted a set of proposals by his own volition, and, worst of all, Rogers and Sisco severely damaged their credibility with both Egypt and Israel when they distorted Israeli and Egyptian positions in order to make them appear more attractive to the opposite party. This shoddy diplomacy generated suspicion on behalf of both local parties and resulted in a serious loss of confidence in the capabilities of the United States.

(7) By the fall of 1971, Nixon was already concerned with his reelection the following November. Therefore, any serious U.S. peace initiative would be delayed for at least another year. This circumstance greatly contributed to the growing frustrations of the Arabs, especially Sadat.

(8) By early 1972, the United States had destroyed its image as an impartial mediator to the Israeli-Egyptian dispute. Rogers's October 1971 proposal for an interim agreement was soundly rejected by Israel as being pro-Arab. Conversely, Egypt cited the memoranda of understanding and the arms agreements between the U.S. and Israel as proof that the U.S. position was aligned almost completely with that of Israel's.

(9) Throughout this period, the United States refused to withhold military supplies from Israel as a means of forcing the Israelis to make concessions. Furthermore, U.S. arms sales increased dramatically and Israel obtained several political understandings with the U.S. on Middle East policy. Sadat had hoped that the U.S. would exploit its unique relationship with Israel in the interest of achieving an interim settlement. The closer U.S.-Israeli bond only served to drive Sadat further away from a peaceful course.

The explanations described above can be summarized in the following statement, which serves as the premise of this thesis: Since U.S. policy toward the Israeli-Egyptian dispute during the period September 1970 to February 1972 was formulated without an accurate understanding of regional developments, was not impartial, was preoccupied with the global ramifications of the conflict, was not effectively conducted, and did not enjoy the full support and complete commitment of the President of the United States, an interim agreement or at least a serious negotiating framework between Egypt and Israel was not achieved and the October 1973 Middle East war was not prevented.

This thesis will take the form of an historical case study which will examine and analyze a very crucial period in the history of American policy toward the Arab-Israeli conflict. As a case study, the historical evidence, which

has been obtained from speeches, public documents, newspaper articles, interviews, memoirs, and first hand accounts, will be presented in a detailed chronological description. It must be emphasized, however, that the main focus of this study will be on the causes behind the failure of American diplomacy. The events and circumstances, which relate to the causes, will serve as the explanatory tools of this thesis.

II. BACKGROUND: THE AFTERMATH OF THE JORDANIAN CRISIS

In September 1970, a full scale civil war erupted in Jordan. King Hussein, a moderate Arab and close friend of the United States, came under attack by the militant Palestinian fedayeen, who believed that Hussein was prepared to join President Nasser of Egypt in the latest Rogers initiative,* which the Palestinians believed betrayed their struggle against Israel. William B. Quandt points out

*On June 25, 1970, Rogers announced a new "political initiative, the objective of which is to encourage the parties to stop shooting and start talking under the auspices of Ambassador Jarring in accordance with the resolution of the Security Council." [Ref. 1: p. 26] Specifically, the plan called for a ninety day cease-fire between Egypt and Israel, who had been engaged in the so-called "war of attrition" since March 1969, and renewed discussions under Jarring's auspices. Egypt accepted the plan on July 22; Israel accepted on August 6. The cease-fire along the Suez Canal went into effect on August 7.

Dr. Gunnar Jarring of Sweden was appointed by U.N. Secretary-General U Thant to work with the local parties to implement the provisions of U.N. Security Council Resolution 242, passed November 22, 1967. Since 1968, Ambassador Jarring's mission had met with virtually no success. Furthermore, discussions under his auspices between the Arabs and Israelis had not yet taken place.

Resolution 242 (see Appendix A), a purposely ambiguous document, called for the "withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from territories occupied in the recent conflict" and "termination of all claims of belligerency and respect for and acknowledgement of the sovereignty, territorial integrity, and political independence of every state in the area and their right to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries free from threats or acts of force."

that by the time the fighting in Jordan ended on September 27, it was apparent that the common strategy, worked out between the United States and Israel, had scored a series of major political and military victories: King Hussein was firmly in power; the fedayeen were routed; and "the Soviet Union was forced to back down, reining in its Syrian clients under U.S.-Israeli pressure." [Ref. 2: p. 106] Although neither the United States nor Israel became militarily involved in the Jordanian civil war, it was widely believed in American policy making circles, especially at the White House, that Israel's threat of intervention on behalf of King Hussein and the strong American-Israeli support for Hussein's counterattacks against the fedayeen and Syrians were the key elements behind the successful outcome of the crisis.

It will be shown in the following paragraphs that American Middle East policy suffered in the long run as a result of its outward success in the Jordanian civil war. Out of the crisis of September 1970 would emerge several misperceptions of the Arab-Israeli conflict. These misperceptions and the resulting policies would hamper American efforts to deal effectively and realistically with the crisis for the next three years.

A. THE WHITE HOUSE VIEW OF THE MIDDLE EAST CONFLICT

A principal component of Nixon's foreign policy was his concern over the maintenance of the global balance of

power between the United States and the Soviet Union. Nixon and Kissinger viewed developments in the Middle East almost exclusively in terms of their relationship to the competition between the two superpowers. This preoccupation with the international ramifications of the Arab-Israeli conflict was enhanced by the belief that American resolve and visible strength had forced the Soviets to restrain the actions of the Syrians during the Jordanian civil war. In the three years separating the Jordanian crisis and the October 1973 war, American Middle East policy would become obsessed with the removal of the Soviets from Egypt and with the notion that a strong and secure Israel would promote regional stability and deter hostilities.

Quandt contends that Nixon and Kissinger virtually abandoned all interest in understanding the significance of local developments in the Middle East. [Ref. 2: pp. 126-27] Quandt states:

Too little attention was paid (by the White House) to political developments in the region, to the mounting frustrations in Egypt and Syria and among the Palestinians, and to the growing activism of the Arabs, who had begun to recognize the potential power they possessed because of their petroleum resources....The global dimension of the conflict was virtually all that Nixon and Kissinger seemed to care about. By ignoring regional trends, they misjudged the very forces that would lead within three years to a much more dangerous outbreak of war in October 1973. [Ref. 2: pp. 126-27]

B. THE JORDANIAN CRISIS AND U.S.-ISRAELI RELATIONS

Bernard Reich [Ref. 3: pp. 214-15 (note 50)] contends that during the Jordanian civil war Israel was prepared,

with the full backing of the United States, to launch air and ground attacks against the Syrian armored columns, which had entered Jordan, in order to save the moderate regime of King Hussein. This close cooperation between the United States and Israel during the crisis demonstrated to Nixon and Kissinger the apparent value of Israel as both a partner and a strategic asset in the region.

Although relations between the United States and Israel had become extremely bitter due to disagreements over alleged Egyptian violations of the August cease-fire agreement, the ties between the two countries reached an unprecedented apogee following the Jordanian crisis. According to Quandt, the White House subscribed to the view that a well armed Israel would deter an Egyptian attack in the Sinai and thus contribute to both the decline of Soviet influence in Egypt and the protection of American interests in the region. Increased arms sales to Israel were justified by utilizing the strategic ally argument. [Ref. 2: pp. 121-22]

The State Department's view of the Arab-Israeli conflict was not altered by the recent crisis in Jordan. Quandt points out that the policy makers at Foggy Bottom continued to advocate an "evenhanded" Middle East policy as the best means of protecting American interests in the area. [Ref. 2: p. 120] Furthermore, the State Department warned that a strategic relationship between the U.S. and Israel, which

would include vast amounts of economic and military aid, would further damage U.S.-Arab relations, would not reduce the likelihood of renewed hostilities, and would provide the Soviets with an obvious incentive for increasing their influence in the region.

C. THE WHITE HOUSE TAKES CONTROL OF MIDDLE EAST POLICY

During the first eighteen months of the Nixon Administration, the State Department was charged with the primary responsibility for the development and implementation of U.S. policy in the Middle East. During the Jordanian civil war, the management of the crisis was assumed almost completely by Nixon and Kissinger. Following the resolution of the crisis, the White House was ready to return its attention to the following foreign policy issues: the Vietnam war, détente with the Soviet Union, and the secret negotiations with China. However, having gained control of U.S. Middle East policy as a result of the crisis, the White House was reluctant to give it up.

According to Quandt, the Nixon-Kissinger perspective of the Middle East situation would become a more dominant factor in the development and conduct of American policy toward the Arab-Israeli conflict. The global aspects of the conflict and the strategic relationship with Israel would be emphasized. Of great significance to this study is the fact that the White House charged the State Department with the daily supervision of Middle East diplomacy yet was

determined to prevent the latter from exercising "excessive activism" in this area. [Ref. 2: p. 128] Nixon and Kissinger dreaded either an outbreak of hostilities or their involvement with a protracted diplomatic initiative. Either situation would distract them from the pursuit of their primary foreign policy concerns. It will be seen that during 1971, Sadat's "year of decision," the State Department's efforts at achieving an interim settlement were doomed to fail because of the lack of support and the absence of commitment on the part of the White House.

D. SHAPING A POST-CRISIS MIDDLE EAST STRATEGY

Although Kissinger was determined to avoid direct involvement in the conduct of Middle East policy, he did possess a clear set of ideas on America's diplomatic role in the region. Writing in the second volume of his memoirs, Years of Upheaval, Kissinger outlined the following set of guidelines. First, the United States should not impose a settlement on Israel. An imposed settlement would be interpreted as a victory for the Soviets and the maximum Arab program and would indicate that the United States was susceptible to extortion. Second, a principal goal of American Middle East policy should be to strengthen the position of the moderate Arabs as against the radicals* who are

*Mark W. Zacher in his authoritative work, International Conflicts and Collective Security, 1946-77 (Praeger, 1977,

supported by the Soviet Union. Third, the United States should not cooperate with the Soviet Union on the pursuit of a settlement so long as their policy was aligned with the position of the radical Arabs. [Ref. 4: pp. 201-03]

In Years of Upheaval, Kissinger summarizes his Middle East strategy:

Sooner or later, I was convinced, either Egypt or some other (Arab) state would recognize that reliance on Soviet support and radical rhetoric guaranteed the frustration of its aspirations. At that point, it might be willing to eliminate the Soviet military presence...and to consider attainable rather than utopian goals. Then (sic) would come the moment for a major American initiative, if necessary using new approaches on our Israeli friends. [Ref. 4: p. 202]

Writing in the first volume of his memoirs, White House Years, Kissinger adds:

My aim was to produce a (diplomatic) stalemate until Moscow urged compromise or until, even better, some moderate Arab regime decided that the route to progress was through Washington. [Ref. 5: p. 1279]

At the urging of State Department officials, a more immediate and pragmatic Middle East policy was adopted. According to Quandt, it was decided that Secretary of

p. 169), assigns the nations of the Arab world to one of the following two categories for the period 1971-72:

Rejectionists (Radicals): Algeria, Iraq, Libya, South Yemen, and Syria.

Accommodationists (Moderates): Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Tunisia, U.A.E., and Yemen.

Furthermore, the P.L.O. can be considered a member of the radical camp.

State Rogers with Nixon's limited endorsement would pursue a two-stage policy. First, the United States would reach an understanding with Israel on such matters as American military sales and the terms of reference for Arab-Israeli negotiations under U.N. representative Dr. Gunnar Jarring. Second, the United States would encourage Jarring to vigorously pursue all possible efforts to obtain from the local parties a set of principles for a peace settlement. To assist Jarring, the U.S. would conduct bilateral talks with Israel, Egypt, and Jordan. Rogers and other American policy makers hoped that Jarring would be able to obtain agreement on the principle of an Israeli withdrawal from the occupied Arab territories in return for Arab commitments to peace. [Ref. 2: p. 131]

E. SUMMARY

The apparent success of U.S. and Israeli policies during the Jordanian civil war served in effect to freeze the diplomatic situation in the Middle East. For the next three years Nixon and Kissinger gave lip service to the idea of a settlement between Egypt and Israel but they were far more concerned with the maintenance of the status quo in the region. Furthermore, they firmly believed that the outbreak of hostilities was remote so long as Israel retained control of vast tracts of Arab land and was kept well supplied with modern military equipment, principally from the United States.

In order to maintain the status quo, it was essential that the White House retain ultimate control over Middle East policy. In large part, this meant preventing the State Department from advancing too far toward a settlement. Success by the State Department was precluded by the fact that only the White House could exert pressure on Israel to make concessions and this it was unwilling to do. Therefore, the efforts of Rogers and Sisco were not only bound to fail but were guaranteed to generate Arab frustration and Israeli intransigence.

With regard to post-crisis American Middle East policy, the most significant consequence of the Jordanian civil war was that it reaffirmed the White House view of the Arab-Israeli conflict in international, instead of regional, terms. For instance, Kissinger was content to wait for an indefinite period for the removal of the Soviets from Egypt. Only then would he try his hand at Middle East diplomacy. Such an outlook ignored current regional developments, such as Arab talk of the oil weapon and Arab determination to recover their lost territories and to obtain the recognition of Palestinian national rights. If this outlook did not ignore them, then it regarded them as unimportant. Contrary to the White House view of the Middle East situation, the region was indeed in ferment in the three years between the Jordanian civil war and the October war. A concerted American Middle East policy, which enjoyed the backing of the White

House and made a serious attempt to deal with the powerful forces in the Arab world, may have prevented the disastrous war of October 1973. Unfortunately, no American policy of this kind was forthcoming.

III. THE UNITED STATES, THE LOCAL PARTIES, AND THE JARRING TALKS

The last three months of 1970 comprise the first section of this case study. During this period, the United States was largely preoccupied with finding a means to convince Israel to join the Jarring talks in light of the serious Egyptian violations of the August cease-fire agreement. The necessary formula turned out to be a series of agreements between the United States and Israel concerning arms sales and diplomatic commitments.

Adding to the already complex situation in the Middle East was the death of Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt and the emergence of his successor, Anwar el-Sadat, a political unknown. Whereas Sadat's initial contacts with the U.S. revealed an earnest desire for peace, American policy makers were content to take their time sizing him up before making any formal commitments to him. Nevertheless, Sadat surprised observers in the U.S. and Israel when he renewed the August cease-fire agreement for another three months.

A. THE DEATH OF NASSER

On September 28, the day after he successfully negotiated the cease-fire which ended the Jordanian civil war, President Nasser died of a massive heart attack. Reich points out that:

His death reopened such issues as the Soviet role in Egypt and in the Middle East, the status of the Arab-Israeli conflict and the June initiative, and the future of U.S. Middle East policy based on Nasser's special position in Egypt and the Arab world. [Ref. 3: p. 172].

American officials were especially concerned with the future of Egypt's participation in the latest Rogers initiative which Nasser had accepted. In an interview on October 11, Secretary Rogers expressed the hope that Nasser's successor, Anwar el-Sadat, "would follow the same policy and seek a peaceful settlement." [Ref. 6: p. 546]

To American policy makers, Reich adds, Sadat was an unknown political entity. Although his views toward the peace process and the Soviet Union were not completely known, it was assumed that he would continue Nasser's policies for the most part and would not undermine either the cease-fire or the Jarring mission. [Ref. 3: p. 172] In his autobiography, Sadat states that he favored Rogers's June 1970 initiative and, by the time Nasser died, was dedicated to the pursuit of peace. [Ref. 7: p. 276] He recalls the conversation he had with Under Secretary of State Elliot Richardson following Nasser's funeral:

I'd like you to know this...and to convey it to the American President: I was against the Rogers Plan and had in fact rejected it. I accepted it only after Abdel Nasser...explained...the circumstances....All I want is peace. Let us work together for peace. I am today committed to the Rogers Plan....Once again let me call on you to work for peace. I am prepared to go to any lengths to achieve it. [Ref. 7: p. 276]

Sadat's avowal of peace and his appeal for diplomatic support from the United States apparently fell on deaf ears. The Americans did not respond.

B. THE OCTOBER 1970 U.S.-ISRAELI ARMS DEAL

The first problem facing American Middle East policy makers in the wake of the Jordanian crisis and the death of Nasser was finding a formula whereby Israel could participate confidently in the Jarring talks. Israel had refused to meet with Jarring since August 25 because it contended that Egypt had blatantly violated the August 7 cease-fire agreement by moving Soviet SA-2 and SA-3 surface to air missiles into the standstill zone (within fifty kilometers of the Suez Canal). [Ref. 8: p. 457] According to then Israeli Foreign Minister Abba Eban, the Israelis soon realized that a pull back of the Soviet missiles, which they initially demanded, would be virtually impossible to obtain. In light of this, Eban adds, the United States attempted to restore Israel's confidence in both the cease-fire and the Jarring talks by rectifying the military imbalance along the canal. [Ref. 9: p. 474] According to Quandt, Nixon approved on October 15 an arms sale worth ninety million dollars [Ref. 2: p. 131] According to The New York Times, the package included modern tanks, reconnaissance aircraft, long-range artillery, ECM equipment, air-to-ground missiles, and miscellaneous minor equipment.

Furthermore, Nixon announced he would seek from Congress a \$500 million military credit for Israel. [Ref. 10: p. 1]

In a speech before the Knesset on November 16, Mrs. Meir conceded that it would be very difficult to achieve a roll back of the missiles to their pre-August 7 position. Furthermore, she left no doubt that Israel would return to the Jarring talks, provided it was under the proper conditions. [Ref. 11: pp. 1,8] According to Reich, it was apparent during the fall of 1970 that Israel gradually altered the conditions necessary for its participation in the Jarring talks. Israel soon dropped its demand for a removal of the missiles and concentrated its efforts on obtaining American political assurances and arms agreements which would keep the military balance along the Suez Canal in its favor. [Ref. 3: p. 174]

C. SADAT EXTENDS THE CEASE-FIRE AGREEMENT

Undaunted by the recent American decision to sell arms to Israel, Sadat announced in early November that he would extend the cease-fire for another three months. During the next ninety day period, Sadat was hopeful that Israel would join the Jarring talks and substantial progress would be made toward a settlement. [Ref. 7: p. 277]

D. ISRAEL SEEKS ASSURANCES FROM THE UNITED STATES

In a letter to President Nixon on December 1, Prime Minister Meir requested a series of diplomatic and military

assurances from the United States as a precondition for its participation in the Jarring talks. According to The New York Times, Mrs. Meir sought the following commitments from the U.S.: that the United States would seek an extension of the 90 day cease-fire even if the Jarring talks collapse; that the U.S. would not withhold arms shipments as a means of pressuring Israel into making concessions; that the U.S. would drop its call for a complete Israeli withdrawal from occupied territories as part of a Middle East agreement; that the U.S. would veto any U.N. Security Council resolution which is anti-Israeli; and that the U.S. would conclude a long-term arms agreement with Israel. [Ref. 12 and Ref. 13]

On December 3, Nixon responded to Mrs. Meir's request with general assurances of military and diplomatic support. Nixon promised that the United States would not allow Israel to be placed in a position of disadvantage during the Jarring talks. He did not respond, however, to the proposal for a long-term arms agreement. [Ref. 13]

On December 6, Mrs. Meir informed her Cabinet that she was not satisfied with Nixon's assurances of December 3. She added that further clarifications regarding American commitments would be required before Israel would consent to the Jarring talks. [Ref. 13] Furthermore, that same day, the Israeli Cabinet decided to call upon the United States

to modify or abandon the December 1969 Rogers Plan* which called on Israel to withdraw from all but "insubstantial" portions of the occupied Arab territories. [Ref. 14]

As part of the clarification process mentioned by Mrs. Meir, Israeli Defense Minister Moshe Dayan arrived in Washington in mid-December for a series of meetings with senior U.S. officials. According to Reich, the American officials, which included Nixon, Rogers, and Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird, pressed Israel to join the Jarring negotiations as soon as possible. Dayan was reportedly satisfied with the U.S. pledge that the current arms shipments to Israel would continue and that future shipments would not be dependent upon a favorable Israeli attitude toward the Jarring talks. [Ref. 3: p. 175]

On December 17, in a letter to Mrs. Meir, Nixon attempted to address the Israeli Prime Minister's plea for further clarifications. According to Tad Szulc, Nixon reportedly stated that the U.S. could not make a formal pledge concerning the use of its veto in the Security Council. [Ref. 15] According to Quandt, he did promise, however, that Israel's national security would not be allowed to reach a dangerous state. As a sign that his pledge was genuine, Nixon promised to deliver twelve F-4 Phantoms and twenty A-4

*See Appendix B.

Skyhawks during the first half of 1971. [Ref. 2: p. 132] According to The Washington Post, Nixon indicated that the Rogers Plan of December 1969 "is not a rigid framework and that the United States does not intend to impose it on either side in the Jarring talks." [Ref. 16: p. A13] Finally, Szulc reports that Nixon reaffirmed American support for a contractual settlement agreed to by the local parties themselves. [Ref. 15]

It must be noted that Nixon's assurances of December 17 stopped short of an open-ended U.S. commitment to a steady flow of military and economic aid to Israel. The United States retained the right to make decisions concerning military sales on an individual case basis.

E. ISRAEL AGREES TO JOIN JARRING TALKS

1. Mrs. Meir's December 29 Knesset Speech

Nixon's letter apparently satisfied the Israeli demand for clarification of American diplomatic and military commitments. On December 28, the Israeli cabinet decided to return to the negotiations with Egypt and Jordan under the auspices of Ambassador Jarring. [Ref. 3: p. 177] In a speech before the Knesset the following day, Mrs. Meir emphasized her strong belief that Israel would be able to negotiate without pressure or interference from the United States. She stated:

We have grounds for assuming that the United States Government will not be a party to the determination,

by the Security Council, of solutions pertaining to territorial issues, the refugee problem and other subjects, the solution to which are a matter for negotiation and agreement between the parties. [Ref. 15]

2. Sadat's Reaction to Mrs. Meir's Speech

Sadat revealed in his autobiography that he was extremely disappointed by the content of Mrs. Meir's December 29 Knesset speech. He believed that Israeli influence had forced the United States to retreat from its earlier position on Israeli withdrawal which had been outlined by Rogers in December 1969. [Ref. 7: p. 286] At this very early stage in his Presidency, Sadat realized perhaps that if there was to be significant movement toward peace he would have to cause it himself.

F. NIXON-SADAT CORRESPONDENCE

While Nixon and the State Department were dealing with the problem of Israel's participation in the Jarring negotiations, a series of letters and messages was exchanged between Nixon and Sadat. According to Quandt, Nixon received on December 14 a letter from Sadat dated November 23. In the letter, Sadat confirmed Egypt's desire to participate in the Jarring talks. [Ref. 2: p. 133] On December 22, Nixon responded through Egyptian Prime Minister Mahmoud Fawzi. All that is known about Nixon's message is that it contained his sincere thanks to Egypt for sending a representative to President Eisenhower's funeral, an event which had occurred twenty-one months earlier. [Ref. 7: p. 277]

On December 24, Sadat wrote Nixon a letter in which he reviewed U.S.-Egyptian relations since October 1970 and emphasized his nation's independence vis-á-vis the Soviet Union. The Egyptian President wrote:

To begin with, I had sent you a message with Ambassador (Elliot) Richardson who visited Egypt to offer condolences on Nasser's death, but you never replied to it. You have, meanwhile, supported Israel's claim that Egypt violated the terms of the (June 1970) Rogers Plan although you know very well that the territory east and west of the Canal is Egyptian.

Now...I am writing to you to confirm the contents of the message I sent you with Ambassador Richardson and to add a few things. You would be mistaken to think that we are in the sphere of Soviet influence: we are not within the Soviet sphere of influence nor, for that matter, anybody's sphere of influence. I'd like you to know, furthermore, that nobody could claim to be Egypt's tutelar power. So, if you wish to talk about anything concerning Egypt, the venue will be Cairo and the talks will be with me, not with any other party. [Ref. 7: p. 278]

Two days later, Sadat received Nixon's reply. Nixon affirmed his desire to maintain a cordial relationship between the two countries. Furthermore, he acknowledged Sadat's assertion that his will was independent and free from foreign influences. [Ref. 7: p. 278]

Sadat's firm statement outlining his relationship with the Soviet Union caused policy makers in Washington to hold Sadat in a more favorable light. Although it was unclear at the end of 1970 what future Egyptian politics would hold for Anwar el-Sadat, it was clear that a new political entity or, possibly, era was emerging in Cairo. Writing about Sadat at this stage in his Presidency, the famed Egyptian journalist

Mohammad Heikal asserts that Sadat enjoyed a great deal more freedom than Nasser with regard to the Soviet Union.

According to Heikal,

Sadat was an unknown quantity: he did...have a greater freedom to look to the West. The Russians knew this and so they knew that they would have to work to build a new relationship with Nasser's successor while at the same time harbouring deep uncertainties about him. [Ref. 17: p. 118]

G. SUMMARY

Some of the actions taken and attitudes adopted by the United States during this period served as a precursor of similar American policies and decisions which would emerge in the succeeding fourteen months. For instance, although Nixon's decision to increase arms shipments and make political commitments to Israel could be justified in view of the placement of modern Soviet missiles near the Suez Canal, it established a significant precedent for relations between the U.S. and Israel. Henceforth, in order to bring Israel into negotiations, the United States would have to react favorably to Israel's assertion that its military posture had deteriorated and that it did not feel confident enough to undertake discussions with its neighbors. By redressing the military balance along the Suez Canal, which was already overwhelmingly in Israel's favor, the United States further alienated several Arab nations, particularly the confrontation states, and left Israel in a position where it was more independent of directives from the U.S. and even less willing

to negotiate with the aim of reaching a settlement. The idea of withholding arms from Israel as a means to force it to the negotiating table was out of the question in the aftermath of the successful handling by the U.S. and Israel of the Jordanian crisis.

Concerning its initial relations with Sadat, the United States adopted an incredibly low-key approach, perhaps because several American officials, including Kissinger, regarded Sadat as an interim president until Nasser's actual successor emerged. By assuming that Sadat's term in office would be brief, American policy makers ignored the significance of his decision to renew the cease-fire and made very little effort to ascertain his views toward such issues as peace with Israel and relations with the super-powers. Furthermore, there was no logical excuse for the failure of the United States to respond to Sadat's verbal message conveyed through Under Secretary Richardson. In the year to follow, more appeals from Sadat would go unacknowledged.

IV. SADAT'S SUEZ CANAL PROPOSAL AND THE COLLAPSE OF THE JARRING TALKS

The first two months of 1971 witnessed a remarkable burst of diplomatic activity on the part of Israel, Egypt, and U.N. representative Jarring. Egypt and Israel appeared eager to work with Ambassador Jarring and even exchanged position papers related to a Middle East settlement on two separate occasions. Jarring was unable, however, to bridge their differences on two critical issues: the location of the final borders and the nature of the peace agreement. Jarring's mission soon collapsed, perhaps too easily, after three years of frustrating effort that produced no tangible progress toward the implementation of any portion of U.N. Security Council Resolution 242.

In early February, Sadat unveiled a new strategy which he hoped would generate significant progress toward a comprehensive settlement with Israel and would demonstrate to the world community his sincere desire for peace. Sadat called for a partial withdrawal of Israeli forces from the east bank of the Suez Canal followed by the clearing and reopening of the canal by the Egyptians. Furthermore, Sadat stipulated that this interim-agreement must be firmly linked to the full implementation of Resolution 242. Although Sadat's initiative generated little interest at the White House and limited enthusiasm in Jerusalem, it

immediately eclipsed the Jarring mission in importance and soon led to the State Department's direct involvement in the search for a settlement between Egypt and Israel.

A. JARRING RESUMES HIS MIDDLE EAST MISSION

1. Jarring Receives an Israeli Proposal

On January 5, 1971, Ambassador Jarring resumed at the U.N. his discussions on the Middle East. Responding to an invitation from the Meir government, Jarring visited Jerusalem from 8 to 10 January. While in Israel he met with Mrs. Meir and Foreign Minister Abba Eban. [Ref. 3: p. 177] The Israeli officials presented Jarring with a detailed memorandum, which outlined their positions concerning a settlement with Egypt. According to the Paris weekly Jeune Afrique, which had obtained a copy of the memorandum, the Israeli paper contained the following twelve points:

1. A proclaimed and explicit decision to consider the conflict as finally terminated,

2. Respect and recognition by each of the parties concerned, in explicit terms, of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of the other,

3. Establishment of secure, recognized and agreed frontiers,

4. Other additional arrangements to insure security,

5. Withdrawal of military forces from territories lying beyond positions agreed in the peace treaty,

6. An end of the state of war and of hostilities,

7. Responsibility assumed by each of the parties to ensure that no act of war or violence is perpetrated from or on its territory by any group, organization or individual against the population, citizens or property of the other party,

8. Ending of economic warfare in all its manifestations, including boycotting,

9. Clauses detailing the undertakings entered into by the parties to the agreement for the settlement of the refugee problem, ...

10. Non-participation in hostile alliances and each of the parties to be prohibited from stationing troops in third countries or maintaining a state of belligerence with the other parties,

11. Non-intervention in internal affairs and normal external relations,

12. Peace must be established in a treaty binding the parties in accordance with normal legislation and custom. [Ref. 18: p. 75]

2. The Egyptian Response to the Israeli Memorandum

Back at the U.N., Jarring received on January 15 a six-point memorandum from Egyptian Ambassador Mohammad Hassan el-Zayyat. The memorandum, which contained the official Egyptian counterproposal for a Middle East settlement, was made public by Zayyat on January 20. [Ref. 18: p. 75] The following is the text of the Egyptian memorandum:

In order that the United Nations 22 November 1967 Security Council resolution be fully implemented, it is necessary that:

1. The Israeli aggression be terminated and the Israeli armed forces be withdrawn beyond the June 5, 1967, lines, as provided for in Security Council resolution 242....

2. Israel declare its repudiation of the policy of territorial expansion which it has pursued at the expense of the neighbouring Arab states.

3. A just settlement of the Palestine refugees must be reached. This can only be realized through Israel's respect for the rights of the Palestinian people in accordance with the UN resolutions.

4. The termination of all claims or states of belligerency and guaranteeing freedom of navigation in waterways.

5. Respect for and acknowledgement of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of every state in the area and their right to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries free from threats or acts of force.

6. Guaranteeing of peace and the territorial inviolability and political independence of every state in the area.

The Security Council may decide upon the necessary arrangements which would provide security to all states in the area. These arrangements may, inter alia, include:

A. The establishment of a UN peacekeeping force in which the four permanent members of the Security Council would participate.

B. The establishment of demilitarized zones astride the borders. [Ref. 18: p. 75]

According to the Los Angeles Times, the contents of the memorandum were softened by Jarring prior to its release. Sources at the U.N. also confirmed that Egypt was "talking to Israel more quietly in private than in public." Throughout January, an air of optimism swirled through the United Nations. [Ref. 18: p. 75] Many diplomats, including U.N. Secretary-General U Thant, believed that a Middle East settlement was no longer a remote possibility. [Ref. 3: p. 177] Ambassador Jarring was scheduled to make a tour of Middle East capitals the following month. He would

have to work quickly because the first extension of the cease-fire was due to expire on February 5.

B. THE ROGERS-RIAD CORRESPONDENCE

In early January, Egyptian Foreign Minister Mahmoud Riad contacted Secretary Rogers and requested information concerning the nature of the U.S. involvement, if any, in the intensified Jarring negotiations. According to Quandt, Riad was curious to know "what role the United States was prepared to play and what type of settlement it envisaged." [Ref. 2: p. 134] The Egyptians hoped that the United States would play a more active part in the settlement process and would exert pressure on Israel to withdraw from the occupied territories.

During the course of January, Rogers dispatched three messages to Riad. In the first message, Rogers appealed to Cairo to extend the cease-fire and avoid a confrontation in the Security Council, which would inevitably destroy the cordiality which surrounded the Jarring talks during most of the month. In the second note, Rogers emphasized his belief that the positions of Egypt and Israel had narrowed sufficiently to make progress in the negotiations possible. [Ref. 19] Furthermore, according to Newsweek, Rogers reiterated his view, outlined publicly in December 1969, "that Israel should withdraw from all but 'insubstantial' portions of the occupied territory." Rogers also promised "an all-out effort to help the parties reach a settlement this year."

[Ref. 20: p. 37] In the final note, Newsweek reports, Rogers indicated that Israel would offer new "substantive ideas" as soon as the cease-fire is extended along the Suez Canal. [Ref. 20: p. 37]

C. SADAT'S SUEZ CANAL INITIATIVE

1. The Jarring Talks Deadlock

By the end of January, the negotiations under Jarring's auspices at the U.N. unfortunately reached a state of total impasse. The Egyptians insisted that the Israelis give concrete examples of what they meant by agreed upon final borders. On the other hand, the Israelis demanded that the Egyptians specify the kind of peace agreement they would be willing to sign. [Ref. 19]

In the Egyptian view, the negotiations were hopelessly deadlocked. They threatened publicly to liberate the Sinai by force when the cease-fire expired unless Israel immediately declared its intention to withdraw from all occupied territories. For a few days at the beginning of February, the Middle East appeared on the brink of war. [Ref. 20: p. 37] The tense situation was soon defused, however, by an unexpected initiative put forward by President Sadat.

2. Details of the Canal Proposal

In early 1971, Anwar el-Sadat was trapped in a very frustrating dilemma. He realized that his armed forces were not yet ready to attack Israel, but his adherence to an

indefinite cease-fire would severely weaken his standing both at home and in the Arab world. To buy time for his armed forces and strengthen his political base, Sadat designed a strategy, as Newsweek puts it, whereby he "softened his stand and began demanding only 'substantial progress' from the (Jarring) talks as a prize for keeping his hand off the trigger." [Ref. 20: p. 37]

In a speech before the Egyptian National Assembly on February 4, Sadat outlined his peace initiative. His proposal contained the following points:

(a) The UAR considers itself bound by one commitment for which there can be no alternative: the liberation of all territories occupied during the 1967 aggression....

(b) Despite this primary major commitment, we accept the appeal of the U.N. Secretary-General and decide to refrain from opening fire for a period which we cannot extend beyond 30 days ending on March 7. During this period, the Secretary-General and the entire world community must ensure that there is genuine progress regarding the heart of the problem and not in its outward manifestation....

(c) ...We demand that during the period when we refrain from opening fire that a partial withdrawal of the Israeli forces on the east bank of the Suez Canal be achieved as the first stage of a timetable which will be prepared later to implement the other provisions of the Security Council resolution. If it is to be achieved within this period, we shall be prepared to begin immediately to clear the Suez Canal and reopen it to international navigation to serve the world economy. [Ref. 21: p. 34]

In his autobiography, Sadat pointed out that a major goal of his initiative was to prove to President Nixon and the world community that he was sincere in his

desire for a peaceful settlement. Furthermore, Sadat emphasized that he was ready "to conclude a peace agreement with Israel...and give Israel all the guarantees she asked for." He also indicated that he would restore diplomatic relations with the United States as soon as Israel withdrew its forces east of the Sinai passes.

[Ref. 7: p. 279]

3. The Israeli Reaction to Sadat's Proposal

According to Quandt, U.S. officials urged Israel to consider Sadat's February 4 proposal very seriously. Furthermore, the Egyptians were pressing the United States to obtain from Israel a quick response. [Ref. 2: p. 137] In a speech before the Knesset on February 9, Mrs. Meir reaffirmed the now familiar Israeli formula: secure and agreed upon borders and peace treaties with its neighbors, achieved through direct negotiations. On the subject of withdrawal, her speech was devoid of any hints of flexibility.

[Ref. 21: p. 35] She stated:

In the absence of peace Israel will continue to maintain the situation as fixed at the time of the ceasefire and will strengthen her position in keeping with the vital needs of her security and development.... Israel will, therefore, never return to the borders of June 4, 1967, which heightened the temptation for aggression against our country. [Ref. 21: p. 35]

A few days after her speech, Mrs. Meir nearly rejected Sadat's initiative outright during an interview in Jerusalem. Quoted in Newsweek, Mrs. Meir stated: "All (Sadat) wants is for us to begin to pull back..."

without even a peace agreement.... He didn't even say the canal would be open (to Israeli shipping)." [Ref. 20: pp. 37-38] The Israelis kept the door open just a crack when they asked the U.S. on February 12 to convey to Sadat their interest in discussing the opening of the Suez Canal. The United States relayed their message on February 14. [Ref. 2: p. 137]

4. The American Reaction

At the State Department, many policy makers regarded the period immediately following the announcement of the Egyptian initiative as "the best opportunity we have had for working out a peaceful settlement." [Ref. 20: p. 38] Meanwhile, at the White House, Sadat's proposal had absolutely no affect on the prevailing view of the nature of the conflict in the Middle East. In his February 25 foreign policy report to Congress, Nixon not only failed to mention Sadat's February 4 speech but reemphasized his concern that a local conflict could ultimately lead to a confrontation, possibly nuclear, between the superpowers. Nixon did, however, call for direct negotiations between the local parties. [Ref. 22: pp. 388, 390] In his memoirs, White House Years, Kissinger explained the incredible lack of interest at the White House for Sadat's proposal: "Our perception of the significance of Sadat's moves then was unfortunately still beclouded by the presence of over 15,000 Soviet troops in Egypt...." [Ref. 5: p. 1280]

Sadat was not discouraged by Nixon's silence on his Suez Canal proposal. According to Quandt, Sadat wrote Nixon on March 5 and appealed for an American initiative to achieve a settlement based on the points of his February 4 speech. Nixon responded favorably to Sadat's request and directed the State Department to begin studying the feasibility of an interim Suez Canal agreement. [Ref. 2: p. 138] As will be shown in the following section, Sadat's letter and Nixon's response was preceded by the demise of Jarring's mediation efforts.

D. COLLAPSE OF THE JARRING MISSION

1. Jarring's February 8 Letter to Israel and Egypt

Still harboring cautious optimism over the prospect of making progress in negotiations with Israel and Egypt, Ambassador Jarring launched his renewed peace mission in early February. Searching for a means to prevent an imminent deadlock between the different positions of Israel and Egypt, Jarring sent both governments on February 8 identical letters* which sought from them "parallel and simultaneous commitments which seem to be inevitable prerequisites of an eventual peace settlement." [Ref. 23: p. 158] Specifically, Jarring requested that the governments of Israel and Egypt make the following prior

*See Appendix C for entire text of Jarring's letter.

commitments which would be "subject to the eventual satisfactory determination of all other aspects of a peace settlement":

Israel would give a commitment to withdraw its forces from occupied U.A.R. territory to the former international boundary between Egypt and the British Mandate of Palestine on the understanding that satisfactory arrangements are made for:

- a. Establishing demilitarized zones;
- b. Practical security arrangements in the Sharm el-Sheikh area for guaranteeing freedom of navigation through the Straits of Tiran; and
- c. Freedom of navigation through the Suez Canal.

The U.A.R. would give a commitment to enter into a peace agreement with Israel and to make explicit therein to Israel--on a reciprocal basis--undertakings and acknowledgements covering the following subjects:

- a. Termination of all claims or states of belligerency;
- b. Respect for and acknowledgement of each other's independence;
- c. Respect for and acknowledgement of each other's right to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries.
- d. Responsibility to do all in their power to ensure that acts of belligerency or hostility do not originate from or are not committed from within the respective territories against the population, citizens or property of the other party; and
- e. Non-interference in each other's domestic affairs.
[Ref. 23: p. 158]

In summary, Ambassador Jarring sought to improve his chances for achieving a peaceful and agreed upon settlement by putting forward his own views on the nature of that settlement. The commitments, which he sought, were largely

in accordance with the provisions of U.N. Security Council Resolution 242. By calling for the withdrawal of Israeli forces to the former international border between Egypt and the Palestine Mandate, Jarring was taking a stand which collided with Israel's refusal to return to the pre-June 5, 1967 cease-fire lines. The Israeli response to his memorandum would certainly not produce any surprises.

2. Egypt's Response

On February 15, Jarring received Egypt's formal reply* to his letter of February 8. By and large, the Egyptian government accepted the various points of Jarring's memorandum and stated that it would "be willing to enter into a peace agreement with Israel," provided Israel accepted the obligations contained in Resolution 242 and withdrew from all occupied territories. Egypt went beyond Jarring's points by calling for the withdrawal of Israeli forces from the Gaza strip and "the establishment of a United Nations peace-keeping force in which the four permanent members of the Security Council would participate." [Ref. 33: pp. 158-59]

3. The Israeli Response

On February 26, Ambassador Jarring received the Israeli response** to both his memorandum and the Egyptian

*See Appendix D for the Egyptian paper.

**See Appendix E for the Israeli document.

position of February 15. The Israelis were pleased by Egypt's expressed desire to conclude a peace agreement and reaffirmed their call for direct and meaningful negotiations between the two parties. On the crucial matter of withdrawal, the Israelis agreed to consider the "withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from the Israel-U.A.R. cease-fire line to the secure, recognized and agreed boundaries to be established in the peace agreement." Under no circumstances, however, would Israel "withdraw to the pre-June 5, 1967, lines."

[Ref. 23: p. 159]

In the final paragraph of its February 26 statement, the Israeli government appealed for constructive negotiations between the two local parties without prior commitments. The Israelis stated:

The Government of Israel believes that now that the U.A.R. has through Ambassador Jarring expressed its willingness to enter into a peace agreement with Israel, and both parties have presented their basic positions, they should now pursue their negotiations in a detailed and concrete manner without prior conditions so as to cover all the points listed in their respective documents with a view to concluding a peace agreement.

[Ref. 23: p. 159]

4. The Demise of the Jarring Mission

The Jarring Mission quickly reached a deadlock over the matter of withdrawal from the occupied territories. According to Reich, the Egyptians contended that the Israeli response to Jarring's February 8 memorandum was diplomatically evasive and did not provide a prior commitment on withdrawal, which was the most crucial issue to the Egyptians. [Ref. 3: p. 179]

On the other hand, the Israelis were adamant that final borders could only be determined through direct negotiations between the Israelis and their Arab neighbors. Furthermore, they refused to make any commitment, prior to negotiations, as to the nature of the final borders. In an interview with Arnaud de Borchgrave of Newsweek in early March, Mrs. Meir discussed her government's view of Sadat's initiative, Jarring's memorandum, and Egypt's apparent willingness to sign a peace treaty with Israel:

We haven't lost sight of the fact that something (the recent Egyptian statements) important has happened. If both sides are prepared to go on from there, something of greater importance may take place. But there is one stumbling block left which we hope will also be removed--namely that Egypt is asking us to make prior commitments before any negotiations can take place on outstanding issues. If we are prepared to agree to their program, then, and only then, are they prepared to enter into a peace agreement. We don't set any preconditions and we ask them not to set any either. We cannot accept any preconditions....

We have said we are ready for meaningful negotiations on all subjects and that we are prepared to withdraw to borders that are secure, agreed and recognized.
[Ref. 24: p. 66]

Jarring was never able to reduce the enormous differences between the two sides on the crucial questions of withdrawal from the Sinai Peninsula and the nature of the ultimate peace agreement. After three years of extraordinary frustration, it was quite possible that he finally recognized the futility of further effort. In his autobiography, Israeli Foreign Minister Abba Eban criticizes Jarring for the finality with which he regarded the Israeli

and Egyptian positions. Furthermore, Eban places part of the blame for the collapse of the Jarring mission squarely on the United States. He writes:

The fact is that in their replies, the Egyptians made more progress toward the idea of a peace agreement, and the Israelis made more progress toward the concept of withdrawal, than at any other previous stage. The wise reaction would have been for Jarring to stress not the gap that still remained, but the distance that had already been bridged. He should have tried to elicit the range and motive of Israel's reservation on full withdrawal. He should also have explored the prospect of bringing Egypt's declaration on peace closer to what Israel would accept. He chose to regard the first replies of each party as final answers and failed to notice our offer to negotiate. The United States was fully behind this erroneous reaction and must share responsibility for it. [Ref. 9: pp. 473-74]

By the end of February 1971, the Jarring mission was moribund and would never again be seriously considered as a means to obtain a settlement in the Middle East. At this critical juncture, the search for an interim agreement in the Israeli-Egyptian dispute was taken up by the United States. The effort would be spearheaded by Secretary of State William P. Rogers.

E. SUMMARY

During the first two months of 1971, a great deal was said by the leaders of Egypt and Israel that indicated that serious negotiations might be possible despite the existence of several significant differences between them. Unfortunately, Ambassador Jarring seemingly ignored these encouraging signs and was consumed instead by the magnitude

and insurmountability of the gaps that separated the parties. With the positions of Israel and Egypt clearly delineated and at their closest point of agreement since the June war, Jarring suddenly brought his three year mission to an inglorious end largely because of his own pessimism.

In the United States, the events of January and February had very little impact on Middle East policy. At the White House, Nixon and Kissinger were still bound up with great power politics and were not at all distracted by Sadat's proposal of February 4. As long as 10-15,000 Soviet military personnel were in Egypt, the White House would not force Israel to make any concessions irregardless of the protestations of peace emanating from Cairo. It was not improbable, however, that secret negotiations carried out by Kissinger or another high ranking emissary with Nixon's full backing could have persuaded Egypt to abandon its demand for prior Israeli commitments and Israel to be more forthright with regard to the location of the final borders. Furthermore, with "significant progress" toward an interim settlement achieved, Sadat might have been inclined to scale down the Soviet presence in Egypt. Unfortunately, the United States did not take advantage of the developments of early 1971 by launching a top level initiative. Instead, William P. Rogers set out for the Middle East with nominal backing from his President and with his chances seriously

undermined by the fact that he had promised Egypt, through
Riad, more than he could possibly deliver.

V. THE ROGERS INITIATIVE AND THE SEARCH
FOR AN INTERIM SUEZ CANAL AGREEMENT

Between March and September 1971, the State Department undertook with limited backing from the White House the difficult and unenviable task of trying to achieve an interim Suez Canal agreement between Egypt and Israel. During this period, senior officials from the State Department met frequently with the leaders of Egypt and Israel in attempt to narrow the differences between them. In the end, however, the Americans were unable to bring the local parties nearer to agreement. Furthermore, the unskillful diplomacy practiced by Rogers and his lieutenants nearly destroyed the highly coveted image of the United States as a competent and impartial mediator.

A. ISRAELI APPREHENSIONS OVER AN AMERICAN INITIATIVE

In a press conference on March 16, Secretary Rogers acknowledged the fact that the Jarring Mission had reached a hopeless deadlock. He was confident, however, that the impasse could be overcome and pledged that the United States was "going to see that it is overcome." [Ref. 25: p. 478] Unfortunately, Rogers's optimism and his new commitment to resolving the Israeli-Egyptian dispute generated about as much enthusiasm in Jerusalem as they did at the White House.

Since early March, when Nixon directed Rogers to begin working on an interim Suez Canal agreement, the Israelis had exhibited significant nervousness over the growing American involvement in Middle East peace efforts. According to Quandt, the Israelis were distrustful of Rogers whom they believed would support the Egyptian proposals and pressure them for concessions. Furthermore, they were concerned that Nixon and Kissinger might be abandoning the close working relationship of the previous September and were preparing to join Rogers in exerting pressure on them. [Ref. 2: p. 138] According to The New York Times, the Israelis charged that the United States was already applying pressure in the form of delayed arms shipments. [Ref. 26: pp. 1, 8]

Responding to what she perceived as mounting pressure from several quarters, Mrs. Meir outlined on March 12 the Israeli position regarding secure and defensible borders. Mrs. Meir stated that Israel must retain Sharm el-Sheikh with an access road to it, the Gaza strip, the Golan Heights, and West Jerusalem. She indicated that the final boundaries in the Sinai and West Bank were negotiable but that the Sinai Peninsula must be demilitarized. [Ref. 27: p. 1] According to Quandt, a few days after Mrs. Meir's remarks, Rogers urged Eban to consider the concept of great power guarantees in place of territory as a means of maintaining national security. [Ref. 2: p. 139]

On March 22, the Israeli cabinet considered the idea of a partial withdrawal in the Sinai in return for a pledge from Egypt of something less than full peace. This principle was vigorously advocated by Moshe Dayan, who had long preferred a more defensible cease-fire line some ten to thirty kilometers back from the canal. Eban outlines the points made by Dayan at the meeting:

Dayan suggested...a limited withdrawal from the Canal in return for something less than peace. He proposed that in return for a limited pullback, enabling Egypt to open the Canal, Israel should ask for undertakings that the state of war be ended, that future withdrawals would be subject to negotiation, and that a normal civilian situation would be created in the Canal area.... Another condition was that the United States should make binding engagements on long-term military support of Israel, and should supervise the demilitarized character of the territory we evacuated. Dayan's idea was that Israeli forces be withdrawn some thirty kilometers from the Canal up to the western edge of the Gidi and Mitla passes. [Ref. 9: p. 474]

At the same meeting the Israeli cabinet accepted Dayan's idea of a partial withdrawal for less than full peace.

[Ref. 9: p. 474]

Meeting with Rogers and Kissinger in Washington at the time of the Israeli Cabinet's decision, Eban encouraged the United States to take up the partial withdrawal initiative and establish immediate diplomatic contact with Egypt. Eban emphasized that Israel would prefer the "good offices" of the United States in place of Jarring or any other U.N. mediator. [Ref. 9: pp. 474-75]

B. THE U.S.-EGYPTIAN DIPLOMATIC CONTACT

According to Quandt, Nixon sent Sadat a letter on March 31 which lauded the Egyptian President for his February 4 proposal. [Ref. 2: p. 139] The next day, Sadat contacted Donald Bergus, the diplomat in charge of the American interests section in Cairo, and outlined the latest Egyptian terms for a settlement with Israel. As reported by the Middle East News Agency, Sadat made the following points to Bergus:

1. Egypt would agree to a formal cease-fire of limited duration if Israel would agree to a partial withdrawal of forces from the Sinai Peninsula.
2. The opening of the Suez Canal would follow the partial Israeli withdrawal.
3. Egyptian troops would cross to the east bank of the Canal but would be separated from Israeli forces by a "neutral zone."
4. Egypt demands the ultimate withdrawal of all Israeli forces from the occupied territories and rejects any Israeli presence at Sharm el-Skeikh.
5. Egypt rejects the idea of a completely demilitarized Sinai but would agree to demilitarized zones "of equal width on both sides of the (Israeli-Egyptian) frontier." [Ref. 28: pp. 1, 12]

Back in Washington, Nixon Administration officials immediately welcomed Sadat's April 1 proposal and referred to it as a "strong reaffirmation" of the Egyptian President's desire to achieve a partial Israeli withdrawal and the reopening of the Suez Canal. American policy makers, especially at the State Department, viewed a partial withdrawal agreement as a means of breaking the diplomatic

stalemate after the demise of the Jarring mission and generating momentum toward a broader Middle East settlement. [Ref. 29] On April 2, a State Department official made the following comment: "Both sides seem genuinely interested in finding a way to get the canal back in operation. With any luck we may get them talking on this in the next several weeks." [Ref. 30]

C. ISRAEL DECLARES ITS POSITION

For several weeks the United States had been urging Israel to make an official response to Sadat's February 4 speech calling for an interim agreement between Egypt and Israel which would permit the reopening of the Suez Canal. Perhaps as an inducement to Israel, the Nixon Administration unexpectedly announced on April 19 that it was delivering 12 more F-4's to Israel and was considering further Israeli arms requests as a means to offset large scale Soviet military deliveries to Egypt. [Ref. 31: p. 1] With her confidence certainly bolstered by the American announcement, Mrs. Meir outlined Israel's official position regarding an interim settlement during a meeting that same day with Foreign Minister Eban, Defense Minister Dayan, and U.S. Ambassador Walworth Barbour.

As reported by The New York Times, the Israelis were willing to discuss a partial withdrawal from the Suez Canal under the following three conditions:

-Egypt must declare that the state of belligerency with Israel...is at an end, though such declaration could fall short of a formal peace agreement.

-Concrete guarantees and sanctions must be defined in advance in case there is any Egyptian or Soviet attempt to cross the canal in force, following an Israeli withdrawal, or otherwise to seize strategic advantage from an arrangement to reopen the canal....

-Israel will not accept any commitment, explicit or implied, to further withdrawal from the occupied Sinai Peninsula until a comprehensive peace agreement has been reached. [Ref. 32]

In short, the Israeli terms of an interim agreement contained an end to Egyptian belligerency toward Israel, a refusal to allow Egyptian or Soviet forces into the evacuated areas of the Sinai Peninsula, and an adamant refusal to link the interim accord to any subsequent agreement. As will be seen, the Israeli position outlined on April 19 represented Israel's maximum concessions and left very little room for compromise with Egypt.

As if their strict position was not enough, Israel, according to Quandt, requested "full United States support for its position and a reaffirmation of the assurances" conveyed in Nixon's letter of December 3, 1970. On April 21, Nixon reconfirmed his earlier assurances but withheld full and complete diplomatic support for the Israeli position. [Ref. 2: p. 139] The United States was clearly hoping to keep its position as an impartial mediator alive.

On April 20, the United States transmitted the Israeli memorandum to Egypt. [Ref. 3: p. 180] According to an April 22 article in the authoritative Cairo daily, Al Ahram, the Egyptian government "categorically rejected" the conditions for an interim withdrawal agreement put forth by Israel on April 19. [Ref. 33]

D. STERNER MEETS SADAT

On April 23, Secretary Rogers publicly announced his plans to visit several Middle East capitals, including Cairo and Jerusalem, during the first week in May. Rogers clearly hoped that his tour would produce moderation in the Israeli and Egyptian positions and would "maintain and, hopefully, accelerate the momentum toward peace." Referring to Sadat's Suez Canal proposal, Rogers added: "We believe there is an exceptional opportunity--and an opportunity that must not be missed--to build on the progress that already has been made." [Ref. 34: p. 593]

On the day before Rogers's announcement, Michael Sterner, the desk officer for Egyptian affairs at the State Department, held a lengthy exploratory meeting with President Sadat. During the meeting, Sadat extended his official invitation to Rogers and gave his reaction to the Israeli counterproposal of April 19. [Ref. 33]

According to Quandt, Sadat outlined the following points, which he considered essential for Egypt's acceptance of an interim agreement:

Egyptian forces...must be allowed to cross the canal; Egypt must control the strategically important Mitla and Giddi passes; demilitarized zones could be established; Israel could retain Sharm al-Shaykh (sic) in the first stage, but within six months a full settlement must be reached. If Israel were not prepared to give up the passes...then the United States should end its initiative. [Ref. 2: p. 140]

Rogers did not take Sadat's final point at face value, despite the obvious fact that Israel would never accept Sadat's terms for an interim agreement, particularly the demand for a full settlement within six months. Undaunted by the dim prospects for agreement and, as Quandt [Ref. 2: p. 140] points out, the nearly complete lack of support from the White House, Rogers launched his mission to achieve an interim agreement between Egypt and Israel. His principle objective was to sound out the Egyptian and Israeli leadership and hopefully moderate their positions.

E. THE ROGERS-SISCO TOUR OF THE MIDDLE EAST

In May 1971, William P. Rogers became the first American Secretary of State since John Foster Dulles in 1953 to visit the Middle East. On May 4, Rogers and Assistant Secretary of State Joseph Sisco arrived in Cairo and for the next two days held a series of meetings with Egyptian government officials, including Sadat. They would follow their visit to Cairo with a trip to Jerusalem.

1. Rogers Meets Sadat

In his arrival statement, delivered in Cairo on May 4, Rogers made the following comments, which represented

his sincere hope of making significant progress toward an interim settlement:

I look forward to detailed discussions with President Sadat and members of his Government. The United Arab Republic and the United States share the goal of a just and lasting peace agreement between Arabs and Israelis, based squarely on the provisions of the Security Council resolution of November 22, 1967, in all its parts. We believe there is now an opportunity to make progress toward that goal--an opportunity which may not soon come again....

We are also prepared to explore with Egypt and Israel, in a concrete way, the possibility of an interim agreement on opening the Suez Canal, which we hope would contribute to a final settlement. [Ref. 35: p. 696]

In his meeting with Sadat later that day, Rogers, according to Quandt, was impressed by Sadat's politeness, charm, and willingness to be flexible. [Ref. 2: p. 140]

In an interview with Newsweek's Arnaud de Borchgrave, Sadat described the atmosphere of this meeting, his first with a high ranking American official since becoming President: "We talked for two and a half hours. We felt at ease in each other's company." [Ref. 36: p. 43]

According to journalist Mohammad Heikal, who was present at the meeting, Rogers carried with him no new proposals but simply outlined his understanding of the principal components of a "partial solution": an indefinite cease-fire along the Suez Canal, an Egyptian agreement to reopen the canal, and a partial Israeli withdrawal. Furthermore, Rogers pointed out that the extent of Israel's pull back in the Sinai must be balanced by the strength of Egypt's commitment to peace. [Ref. 17: p. 132]

The major portion of the meeting between Rogers and Sadat concerned Sadat's interim Suez Canal proposal of February 4. Sadat remained adamant that a partial Israeli pull back must be linked to a commitment from Israel to withdraw completely from the occupied Sinai. Furthermore, he insisted that Egyptian forces must be allowed to return to the east bank of the canal and that any reinstated cease-fire must be for a limited, not indefinite, duration. [Ref. 37] Sadat recounts his conversation with Rogers on the subject of an interim settlement:

Mr. Rogers told me that the Israelis had contended all along that we would never agree to a final peace agreement and that I had now refuted Israel's basic premise. Mr. Rogers...said he had nothing more to ask of me. 'You have done your utmost,' he said.... Bill (Rogers) said he was going to tell Mrs. Meir that President Sadat had taken up her challenge and had agreed to a permanent peace agreement. Because, don't forget, Mrs. Meir had said over and over again that if Egypt was willing to sign a peace agreement--as I told you last February we would--then she would put all her cards on the table. Rogers said he was going to ask Mrs. Meir to do just that. [Ref. 36: p. 43]

During the meeting of May 4, an interesting exchange took place between Rogers and Egyptian Foreign Minister Mahmoud Riad. According to Heikal, Riad complained that, whereas Israel had yet to make any kind of commitment to withdraw completely from the Sinai, the United States continued to supply Israel with large quantities of modern arms. Rogers supposedly responded by stating that the United States was unable to apply pressure on Israel. At this point, Riad exploded: "Is there no difference between the

United States and Upper Volta...? You say you were trying to put pressure on (Israel), but she rejects your pressure. How do you explain this?" Riad ended his critical attack by urging the United States to halt arms deliveries to Israel as an effective means of pressure. [Ref. 17: p. 132] Rogers responded that such a course was not a realistic option so long as the Soviet Union was supplying arms to Egypt, Syria, and Iraq in massive quantities and maintaining a force of at least 10,000 troops in Egypt. In response to this, Sadat made it clear that the Soviet military personnel would leave immediately following the first phase of an Israeli withdrawal. [Ref. 36: p. 43]

At the conclusion of the talks between Rogers and Sadat, it was apparent that Rogers would be advocating an interim agreement, loosely based on Sadat's February 4 proposal, during his upcoming discussions in Jerusalem. It was also evident that Rogers would not be empowered to exert pressure on Israel. By appearing to advocate Sadat's proposal and swearing off the use of any forceful persuasion in his dealings with the Israelis, Rogers was for all practical purposes stifling his own initiative just as it was starting. Nevertheless, Rogers was encouraged by his meetings with the Egyptian leadership. In his departure statement on May 6, Rogers stated:

It is apparent from our talks here that there are several elements which will require further explorations and discussion. We also believe the parties hold

parallel views on a number of principles which offer opportunity for further fruitful explorations....I intend to go into the matter in some detail and specificity in Israel....I can report to President Nixon on my return that our efforts...have not been without result and that I found in Cairo a determination--a firm determination--which we share, to continue working for a just and lasting peace settlement based on Security Council Resolution 242 in all its parts. [Ref. 35: p. 697]

2. Rogers in Israel

The Israeli attitude toward the Rogers mission could best be described as very suspicious. Rogers contributed to this situation by making several blunt comments during his arrival statement on May 6. He stated:

In a letter which I will deliver to the Prime Minister, our President states his conviction that Israel's security in the long run can only come from a final binding peace settlement with its Arab neighbors....

This is an unusual time in our history. The nations in this area have the opportunity to take wise and decisive action. There are risks in agreeing to peace; there are greater risks in failing to do so.

Israel has experienced and met the challenge and agony of waging war. I am confident that Israel will equally meet the challenge, and indeed the agony, of making peace. [Ref. 35: pp. 697-98]

How could Rogers honestly expect Israel to show interest in an interim-agreement with Egypt, if peace was pictured as being just as dangerous as war? Rogers's arrival statement was the first of several blunders which would hamper efforts by the State Department to achieve an interim agreement for the rest of the year.

During extensive meetings with Mrs. Meir, Dayan, and Eban, Rogers was presented the points which would guide Israel's consideration of a limited withdrawal agreement. The principles, given to Rogers in Jerusalem, were later outlined by Mrs. Meir in a speech before the Knesset on June 9:

The fighting would not be resumed. Egypt would clear and operate the Suez Canal. No Egyptian and or other armed forces would cross to the eastern side of the canal. There would be free passage for shipping in the canal, including Israeli ships and cargoes. Effective and agreed supervision procedures would be established. Means of deterrence against the danger of violation of the agreement would be assured. Removal of Israeli defense forces from the water line would not be a stage leading to a further withdrawal before peace.

Maintenance of the arrangement would not be dependent upon the Jarring talks, but it would also not be incompatible with the holding, furtherance and aim of these talks. The new line to be held by the Israeli defense forces will not be considered the permanent boundary. The permanent boundary between Israel and Egypt would be determined in the peace treaty to be concluded between us and Egypt, and Israel would withdraw to it. [Ref. 38]

Rogers quickly realized that the positions held by Israel and Egypt on the specific issues were now "light-years" apart.

Following his meetings with Mrs. Meir and Eban, Rogers met with Dayan, who put forward a five-stage plan designed to prevent a deadlock from crippling Rogers's mission. Although Dayan's proposal did not reflect Meir's stubborn rhetoric, it did constitute an official Israeli position. As reported by The New York Times, Dayan's plan called for

Cairo to promise to allow ships of all nations, including Israel, to use the (Suez Canal) waterway; a thinning of

Israeli forces along the canal, a crossing to the eastern shore by Egyptian technicians and civilian police but with Israeli troops holding fortifications along the waterways, and then a reopening of the canal to be followed by talks on an Israeli pullback. [Ref. 37]

The Israelis hoped that their guarantee of withdrawal negotiations and the concession permitting Egyptian police and technicians on the east bank of the canal would encourage flexibility on the part of Sadat.

On May 8, Sisco was dispatched to Cairo where he would discuss Dayan's proposal with Sadat. Following his meeting with the Egyptian President, he would report immediately to Rogers. [Ref. 37]

3. Sisco Meets with Sadat

On May 9, Sisco conferred for four hours with President Sadat. [Ref. 37] Sadat was briefed on the recent discussions between Rogers and the Israeli government and was presented Dayan's proposal.

According to Sadat, Sisco told him that the Israelis rejected his February 4 proposal for three major reasons: "First, the Israelis didn't want (Egyptian) forces to cross the canal. Second, they wanted an unlimited cease-fire and, third, they wanted no mention of the international borders of June 5, 1967." [Ref. 36: p. 43]. After Sisco pointed out that the Israelis would be willing to allow the stationing of Egyptian civilian police and technicians on the east bank, Sadat countered by stating that he would be willing to discuss a limited Egyptian military force on

the east bank but indicated that he could not abandon the principle that Egyptian forces have the right to occupy their own territory. [Ref. 36: p. 43] "After all," Sadat emphasized, "It's my country we're talking about." [Ref. 36: p. 43]

Sadat was extremely eager to negotiate a withdrawal agreement with Israel. He recalls the following exchange with Sisco over the positioning of Israeli and Egyptian forces in the Sinai Peninsula:

'How are you going to be flexible?' Joe (Sisco) asked. I said I was ready to compromise. So Joe drew two theoretical lines--Egyptian forces, he said, would be on line A to B on the eastern side of the canal and Israeli forces on line X to Y also on the eastern side....I said I was perfectly willing to accept that armaments should be equal on both sides....More than that, I said I was ready to agree that between these two lines U.N. forces or troops from the four powers*... should take up position. Sisco said: 'I think we can work something out on this basis. It sounds reasonable to me.' [Ref. 36: p. 43]

According to Quandt, Sadat asked Sisco if it was possible that Israel might agree to withdraw to a line east of the Sinai passes. Sisco indicated that he would discuss this with Rogers and the Israelis. [Ref. 2: p. 141]

On the question of the duration of the cease-fire, Sadat stated that he would agree to an extension beyond six months only if Ambassador Jarring was making progress and required more time to conclude an agreement. [Ref. 36:

*The United States, the Soviet Union, Great Britain, and France.

p. 44] Sadat still believed that Jarring's mission could be revived and would be capable of making significant progress.

On the point of the pre-June 5, 1967 cease-fire lines, Sadat demanded that either the Security Council or the four powers make a formal declaration stating that these lines are the recognized final boundaries between Egypt and Israel. In essence, Sadat was calling on the great powers to impose a set of borders on Israel. Incredibly, Sisco led Sadat to believe that his position on the borders was reasonable and that the United States would support him!

According to Quandt, Sadat's hopes were raised even further when Sisco contacted him on May 18 and stated that the Israelis would not rule out a pullback to a line east of the passes. Sisco emphasized that the Israelis were remaining flexible on the whole matter of withdrawal.

[Ref. 2: p. 141]

4. The Effect of Rogers's Tour

In a press conference in Rome on May 8, Rogers exhibited optimism that progress would be forthcoming and that Egypt and Israel had agreed on the following principles:

(1) That the Suez should be opened; (2) that if opened that it will be run by Egypt; (3) that there will be some withdrawal under conditions that will be acceptable to both sides; (4) that the fighting will not be resumed; and (5) that (an interim Suez Canal agreement) is not an end in itself, that it will be a step forward in the hope that we can implement Security Council Resolution 242. [Ref. 35: p. 702]

Rogers also noted that several major areas of disagreement remained between the two sides. According to Reich, these areas included "the scope of the Israeli withdrawal, supervision of the evacuated area, the extent of Egyptian crossing of the canal..., and the Egyptian insistence that this be only a first step toward total withdrawal...."

[Ref. 3: p. 181]

Without question the Rogers-Sisco tour of the Middle East severely damaged prospects for an interim agreement between Egypt and Israel. Unwittingly perhaps, Rogers and Sisco practiced a very subtle form of deception with Egypt and Israel in order to reduce the differences between them and bring them closer to agreement. In Israel, Rogers presented the Egyptian positions as being rational and moderate. Conversely, Sisco raised Sadat's hopes to an unreasonable level by intimating that Israel might actually accept some of Egypt's extreme positions. Needless to say, the damage was done and its effect on future U.S. Middle East diplomacy was staggering. Quandt comments on the net effect of the Rogers trip to the Middle East:

Instead of succeeding in convincing either party of the other's good intentions, Rogers and Sisco seemed instead to lose credibility, especially with the Israelis. With the Egyptians it took a bit longer, but ultimately the sense of deception was equally great. At the White House, meanwhile, support for Rogers and Sisco was quickly fading. [Ref. 2: p. 141]

F. THE BERGUS MEMORANDUM

On May 20, Donald Bergus, the head of the American interests section in Cairo, met with Foreign Minister Mahmoud Riad and received the official Egyptian response to the Israeli proposal presented by Sisco on May 9. According to Quandt, Bergus regarded the Egyptian paper as so negative that it would only hasten the collapse of the American initiative. [Ref. 2: p. 141] On May 23, Bergus returned to the Foreign Ministry and presented Riad's deputy with a redraft of the Egyptian paper. According to Heikal, Bergus insisted that he was acting on his own initiative and that he was attempting to help Egypt eliminate the "failures in presentation" which had always hampered its diplomatic efforts in the past. [Ref. 17: p. 146] Heikal points out that Egyptian officials were highly suspicious of Bergus's motives and doubted that the redraft had been his own idea. For the most part, the Egyptians viewed the Bergus memorandum as an American initiative under the guise of Egyptian authorship. [Ref. 17: p. 141]

G. THE SOVIET-EGYPTIAN FRIENDSHIP TREATY

On May 2, two days before Rogers's arrival in Cairo, Sadat dismissed the powerful secretary-general of the Arab Socialist Union, Ali Sabri. Sabri, who was well known for his advocacy of stronger political ties between Egypt and the Soviet Union, was suspected by Sadat of plotting his forceful removal from power. Fearing that

their relationship with Egypt had been severely damaged by the dismissal of their leading supporter, the Soviets sought a treaty of friendship with Sadat as a means of consolidating their position in the country. Soviet President Nikolai Podgorny arrived in Cairo on May 25 and, after two days of discussion, he and Sadat signed on May 27 a fifteen-year Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation. [Ref. 3: p. 183]

1. Sadat's Attitude Toward the Soviet Union

Although American policy makers were surprised by the Soviet-Egyptian treaty, few believed that it would eliminate all chances for an interim agreement. [Ref. 39: p. 6] To Americans, the Soviet-Egyptian treaty merely served to formalize an already very extensive relationship. The treaty did prevent, however, observers in the West from appreciating Anwar el-Sadat's true feelings toward the Soviet Union.

Few observers realized that the treaty meant very little politically and personally to Sadat. In his autobiography, Sadat points out that he warned the Soviets on the negative political ramifications of signing such a treaty immediately following the dismissal of their principal ally, Ali Sabri. Furthermore, Sadat gives as his primary reason for concluding the treaty the fact that Nasser had vigorously sought one since the June war. [Ref. 7: pp. 283-84] Sadat may have been trying to placate the Soviets on their apparent loss in order to maintain the flow of arms to Egypt.

In his autobiography, Sadat reveals that his suspicions toward the Soviet Union started in the dark days immediately following the June 1967 war. He recalls the following incident:

The War Minister returned from the Soviet Union, having concluded an arms deal--with no delivery times specified, which was normal for the Soviet Union. As always, the Russian leadership wanted to complicate the situation but, more important, they wanted to fix the times themselves and so secure their control of the situation. [Ref. 7: p. 173]

Reflecting on the nature of this relationship in 1967, Sadat comments:

This was...why I took my later decision to expel the Soviet military experts from Egypt....I know my country's interests better than the Soviet Union, and I cannot accept that a guardian power should manage our own affairs. [Ref. 7: p. 173]

After assuming the Presidency, Sadat continued Nasser's delicate policy toward the Soviet Union.

According to Heikal, this policy was tantamount to a balancing act: maintain close political and military ties with the Soviets but do not let them dominate your domestic affairs; at the same time, keep the door open to the United States. [Ref. 17: pp. 165-66]

Throughout his first year in office, Sadat pursued this policy toward the Soviet Union. He sought expanded arms shipments from the Soviets and a diplomatic initiative from the Americans. By the late summer and fall of 1971, however, Sadat's patience with the Soviet leadership began to wear thin. Reflecting in his autobiography on a promise

made by Podgorny in May that Soviet arms would be arriving within four days, Sadat makes the following comment after waiting four months without word from Moscow:

The Soviet leaders were in the habit of falling silent, as silent as the grave, for long periods of time--which annoyed me, I suppose, more than anything else. I often summoned the Soviet ambassador, I wrote to them frequently, but the answer was invariably silence. It was as though one was communicating with imaginary people. [Ref. 7: pp. 225-26]

2. U.S. Reaction to the Egyptian-Soviet Treaty

At the State Department, the Friendship Treaty was seen as a surprise development that would certainly complicate American efforts to bring about agreement between Israel and Egypt. Policy makers realized that a formal relationship between Egypt and the Soviet Union would make Israel extremely reluctant to discuss even a partial withdrawal from the Sinai. The fears of American officials were realized when Mrs. Meir made the following statement during her June 9 speech in the Knesset:

The Soviet-Egyptian treaty possesses a significance extending beyond the sphere of Israeli-Egyptian relations. Egypt has undertaken to coordinate with the Soviet Union her moves and positions in the world political arena. The Soviet Union has gained control of Egypt's policy. [Ref. 38]

At another point in her speech, Mrs. Meir referred to Egypt's "colonial servitude" to the Soviet Union. [Ref. 38]

In a memorandum to Nixon, Kissinger argued that the treaty could give the Soviets a veto over Egyptian foreign policy decisions, especially concerning negotiations with

Israel. Furthermore, Kissinger warned that the treaty could indicate a Soviet commitment "to engage themselves as never before in case of resumption of hostilities."

[Ref. 5: p. 1284]

In his memoirs, White House Years, Kissinger points out that the Soviet-Egyptian Friendship Treaty served to strengthen the resolve at the White House to maintain Israel's military strength and to limit U.S. efforts to assist Sadat in achieving his diplomatic goals. Kissinger summarizes the effects of the treaty from the perspective of the White House:

Our strategy had to be to frustrate any Egyptian policy based on military threats and collusion with the Soviet Union. Therefore, Sadat's Friendship Treaty with the Soviets, whatever its motives did not galvanize us to help him as he might have hoped. On the contrary, it reinforced my determination to slow down the process even further to demonstrate that Soviet threats and treaties could not be decisive. [Ref. 5: p. 1285]

In spite of the recent Soviet-Egyptian Friendship Treaty and lukewarm support for its initiative at the White House, the State Department, under the dauntless leadership of William P. Rogers, pressed on with its efforts to achieve an interim Suez Canal agreement between Egypt and Israel.

H. SADAT'S CONTACTS WITH THE U.S.

1. Furor Over the Bergus Memorandum

In the days immediately following the conclusion of the Soviet-Egyptian Friendship Treaty, Bergus met

several times with Sadat and other high ranking Egyptian officials. In a meeting on May 30, Sadat told Bergus that the treaty with the Soviet Union did not diminish in any way his strong desire for an interim-agreement with Israel. [Ref. 2: p. 142] On June 4, Bergus received from Sadat the official Egyptian response to the Israeli proposal of early May. Sadat points out in his December 1971 Newsweek interview that the Egyptian paper was nearly identical to Bergus's memorandum of May 23 and contained all the points discussed with Sisco on May 9. [Ref. 36: p. 44] Furthermore, according to The New York Times, the Egyptians were firmly convinced that Bergus's memorandum represented official American and Israeli policies. [Ref. 40] Bergus delivered the latest Egyptian paper to Rogers on June 6. [Ref. 41]

Sadat's optimism was quickly dashed when word of the Bergus memorandum was leaked by the Egyptian Foreign Ministry on June 26. The State Department quickly disavowed the memorandum, emphasizing that it did not reflect official U.S. policy. [Ref. 40] The effect of the Bergus memorandum fiasco on both the Egyptians and the Israelis was profound. Kissinger comments on this incredible episode in American diplomatic history:

The Egyptians were now doubly angry, stung by our disavowal and bitter that we could not deliver on what they had assumed represented our own idea. The Israelis were enraged that we were encouraging Egypt to put forward terms which they had told us they would never

accept. I was annoyed...that none of these moves had been disclosed to the President of the United States. [Ref. 5: p. 1284]

2. Bergus and Sterner Meet with Sadat

By the start of July, it appeared that the chances for an interim Suez Canal agreement were virtually non-existent. Secretary Rogers acknowledged that several areas of major differences still existed between the two sides. [Ref. 39: p. 6] Furthermore, the parties were rapidly losing their confidence in the United States, especially in the wake of the Bergus affair. According to Reich, the Egyptians expressed doubt that the United States was capable of negotiating a Middle East settlement and warned of renewed hostilities. The Egyptian press went so far as to label the U.S. initiative a trick, designed to freeze the Middle East situation in Israel's favor. [Ref. 3: p. 184-85] On the other hand, the Israelis were profoundly suspicious of U.S. motives with regard to the negotiations. The Bergus memorandum did little to dispell the belief held by many Israelis that the United States, especially the State Department, was becoming increasingly more pro-Arab.

In an attempt to keep the Suez Canal initiative alive, Rogers dispatched Sterner to Cairo to hold consultations with Egyptian officials and to convey to them the State Department's "latest thinking" regarding the interim settlement concept. [Ref. 42: p. A2] The visit was designed in large part to repair the damage of the Bergus memorandum.

On July 6, Sterner and Bergus met with Sadat and requested his response to a series of questions regarding his position toward an interim agreement. In the December 1971 Newsweek interview, Sadat recalls this discussion with the two American diplomats:

Nixon wanted to know if the treaty...between us and the Soviet Union had changed anything in our position since I last talked with Bill Rogers. No, I replied, the treaty was only a new frame for already existing relations....The President's second question...was whether I would...restore diplomatic relations with the U.S. after the first phase of an Israeli withdrawal. Yes, I said. Perhaps even before that phase is actually completed. And the third question was whether I...intended to send Soviet personnel home at the end of phase one. I said yes, because...I'm the one who has the financial difficulties (a shortage of hard currency). [Ref. 36: p. 44]

Apparently satisfied with Sadat's answers, Sterner surprised him with the following announcement: "According to my instructions, I would like to tell you that now I have received your reply, the U.S. President, as from midnight...will personally intervene to start the ball rolling for a peaceful solution to be reached." [Ref. 7: p. 285] With his optimism buoyed and his confidence in the United States restored, Sadat responded: "Give me a piece of paper with reasonable terms on it, and I'm ready to sign it here and now, under this (old ficus) tree." [Ref. 17: p. 141]

Sadat fully expected that close and steady consultations with the United States would follow. As it turned out, Sadat would not hear again from the United States until mid-October, three months after Sterner's visit to Cairo.

I. SISCO'S VISIT TO ISRAEL

Sterner's statement that Nixon was prepared to devote his energies to the achievement of a settlement to the Egyptian-Israeli dispute was perhaps another deceptive ploy by the State Department to keep Sadat's interest alive in working toward a settlement. According to Quandt, a deep personal involvement in the affairs of the Middle East was probably the last thing Nixon wanted in the summer of 1971. He actually discouraged Rogers from making another trip to the Middle East believing that insufficient grounds for agreement existed between Egypt and Israel. Foremost on Nixon's foreign policy agenda were two crucial projects undertaken by Kissinger in strictest secrecy: cease-fire talks with the North Vietnamese in Paris and the initial contacts with officials of the People's Republic of China. [Ref. 2: pp. 142-43] Nixon perceived the Middle East situation as a dangerous distraction that would have to wait until more crucial issues, such as Vietnam, détente, and China, were thoroughly addressed. Furthermore, Nixon believed that a serious diplomatic setback in the Middle East would significantly erode his domestic base at a time when he needed strong popular support to deal effectively with the other issues.

Following the return of Kissinger from his successful trip to China in mid-July, Rogers and Sisco met with Nixon and Kissinger at San Clemente to discuss the situation in

the Middle East. According to Quandt, Rogers pointed out that Sadat was still very interested in obtaining an interim agreement with Israel but was becoming increasingly impatient to see some sign of progress. Nixon reluctantly consented to allow Sisco to return to Israel for consultations with the Meir government. Nixon hoped that Sisco could convince the Israelis to allow a small Egyptian armed force east of the canal but made it clear that under no circumstances would the U.S. government pressure the Israelis to make any concessions. [Ref. 2: p. 142] In other words, Sisco would be completely on his own.

Sisco met with senior Israeli officials, including Mrs. Meir, on July 30 and August 2 and 4. [Ref. 3: p. 224 (note 131)] As could be expected, Sisco's visit yielded absolutely nothing. [Ref. 17: p. 141] In his departure statement in Tel Aviv on August 5, Sisco admitted that he "expected no decisive breakthroughs (and) none were achieved." [Ref. 43: p. 259] Sisco was so disappointed by his mission to Israel that he did not even stop in Cairo to brief Sadat. In fact, Sadat heard nothing more from the United States for more than two months. [Ref. 36: p. 44] Sisco's mission to Israel marked the end of the American initiative which had begun in late March.

J. SADAT LOSES CONFIDENCE IN THE UNITED STATES

Sadat's disenchantment with American diplomacy steadily increased during the latter half of the summer of 1971.

On July 23, during his speech commemorating the anniversary of the Egyptian Revolution, Sadat proclaimed 1971 as the "year of decision." He emphasized that the year would witness the final resolution, whether by peaceful means or by war, of the conflict between Egypt and Israel. He affirmed that Egypt was prepared to meet every sacrifice, including the loss of a million men, to recover its lost territory. [Ref. 3: p. 186] The "year of decision" quickly became a familiar rhetorical theme used frequently by Sadat in public speeches during the remainder of the year.

In a nationally televised speech on September 16, Sadat severely criticized the efforts of the United States to achieve an interim agreement between Egypt and Israel. He accused the U.S. of procrastination and deception. [Ref. 3: p.186] Furthermore, he complained that, whereas Sterner had promised him on July 6 a renewed American initiative to achieve an interim Suez Canal agreement, no American official had contacted him since that date, not even to brief him on Sisco's recent trip to Israel. [Ref. 36: p. 44] Sadat soon realized that Sisco's mission must have been a dismal failure.

K. SUMMARY

In retrospect, both the Rogers initiative and the State Department's conduct of Middle East diplomacy contributed significantly to the disappointment and frustration

of Egyptian officials after having raised their hopes and expectations to an unprecedented level. The image of American fairness was severely tarnished in the eyes of the leadership of the Arab world's most powerful and populous country. By the fall of 1971, it was apparent that it would take a monumental effort on the part of the United States to improve its standing among the revolutionary republics of the Arab core. Unfortunately, such an effort would not come until after the disastrous events of October 1973. Following that conflict, the United States finally committed its full diplomatic resources to the problems of the Middle East.

The demise of the Rogers initiative was certainly not mourned in Jerusalem. The Israelis had been extremely critical of Rogers ever since December 1969 when he unveiled the plan that would bear his name. The Israelis were hopeful that the collapse of his mission would spell the end of the State Department's efforts to obtain a settlement in the Israeli-Egyptian dispute. Furthermore, with the White House preoccupied with problems outside the Middle East and with the belief that Nixon was firmly on their side, the Israelis were confident that they could continue their occupation of the conquered Arab territories--thus maintaining the status quo--free from American pressures for an indefinite period.

A particularly serious mistake by American policy makers at both the White House and the State Department during this period was the immediate and unanimous conclusion that the Soviet-Egyptian Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation represented a strong and durable relationship between the two countries. An attempt by the United States to determine Sadat's actual motives with regard to the treaty might have prevented Nixon and Kissinger from hardening their views concerning an Israeli pullback from the Suez Canal. Without an accurate appreciation of the origins of the Soviet-Egyptian treaty, the White House was determined to keep Israel strong and free from pressure and to withhold its full support for Rogers and his now hopeless initiative. With the treaty freshly signed and with over 10,000 Soviet troops stationed in Egypt, the White House considered it highly dangerous and illogical for the Israelis to agree to a partial withdrawal from the Sinai. Therefore, Nixon and Kissinger were committed to inaction on the Israeli-Egyptian diplomatic front until the Soviets departed. It will be seen in the following chapter that this policy did indeed prevail under Kissinger's careful direction.

VI. A "YEAR OF DECISION" AND FRUSTRATION

This final section of the case study, covering the period September 1971 to February 1972, was largely anti-climatic following in the wake of the failure of the Rogers Suez Canal initiative. However, several developments during this period were significant and served to remove effectively any reasonable hope that the United States was truly capable of securing an agreement of any kind between Egypt and Israel.

In the fall of 1971, Kissinger took charge of Middle East policy and designed a negotiating strategy which featured an interim agreement, unlinked to a final settlement, between Egypt and Israel. Unfortunately, he was not planning to take up the problems of the Middle East until after the elections in November 1972. Furthermore, his efforts would be restrained until the Soviets departed from Egypt.

It will be shown that the image of the United States as an impartial mediator was virtually destroyed during this period. First, the Israelis condemned Rogers's six-point plan for a Suez Canal agreement for its pro-Egyptian appearance. Second, Sadat lost all confidence in the good offices of the United States following the conclusion of two

memoranda of understanding and a major arms agreement between the U.S. and Israel.

By the beginning of March 1972, Israel was enjoying extremely close relations with the U.S. and was reasonably confident that it would not be pressured into making an agreement with Egypt. Sadat, on the other hand, reaffirmed his support for the maximum Arab program and turned to the Soviet Union for increased military and diplomatic support. Thus, without realizing it the United States allowed the best chance to achieve a Middle East settlement--of any kind--between 1967 and 1973 to slip irrecoverably from its grasp.

A. KISSINGER TAKES COMPLETE CHARGE OF MIDDLE EAST POLICY

The failure of the Suez Canal initiative effectively ended the dominance of the State Department over the day to day management of U.S. Middle East policy. According to Quandt, the demise of the Rogers initiative satisfied policy makers at the White House, especially Henry A. Kissinger, who had long been very critical of Rogers's abilities and his handling of Middle East diplomacy. [Ref. 2: pp. 143-44] He was undoubtedly pleased by the shift of responsibility over Middle East policy from the State Department to the White House. This development would give him undisputed control over all facets of American foreign policy.

1. "Keeping Things Quiet"

In White House Years, Kissinger points out that the major factor leading to his more active involvement in Middle East policy was Nixon's serious concern for "keeping things quiet until after the 1972 election." Nixon dreaded the thought of the eruption of a series of crises in the Middle East during the upcoming election year. [Ref. 5: pp. 1285, 1287] Furthermore, he believed that another American initiative, undertaken without the existence of some significant areas of agreement between the local parties, would be doomed to fail and would only contribute to an increase of tensions in the region.

2. Meetings with Gromyko

Charged by Nixon to keep the lid on the Middle East situation in addition to his other monumental foreign policy tasks, Kissinger met with Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko in Washington on two occasions in September 1971 to determine if the Soviets and their Arab clients were willing to moderate their extreme positions in order to achieve a Middle East settlement, interim or otherwise. Kissinger made it clear to Gromyko that he preferred exploratory talks first because he was extremely reluctant to commit his energies to a major diplomatic effort unless

he was fairly certain that progress toward a settlement was possible.* [Ref. 5: p. 1287]

Kissinger argued for an interim agreement unlinked to a final settlement. He believed that the major significance of such an agreement was the tremendous symbolic value to the Arabs of a partial Israeli pullback in the Sinai. In his view, it was immaterial "whether the Israelis withdrew forty kilometers or twenty kilometers from the Canal." [Ref. 5: pp. 1287-88] On the other hand, Gromyko's remarks left little doubt that the Soviet Union was still staunchly supporting the maximum Arab position. According to Kissinger,

He insisted that an interim agreement be linked specifically and in detail to a final settlement. He argued that there could be no first stage until a final settlement had been worked out and a precise timetable had been established: The final settlement in the Soviet view should occur no later than a year after the interim agreement....He maintained that a final settlement had to involve total Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories of all Arab states. [Ref. 5: p. 1288]

Kissinger was convinced by his meetings with Gromyko that the Soviet Union would only serve as a hindrance to American efforts to achieve a settlement to the Israeli-Egyptian dispute. Realizing that the Soviets would not pressure their Arab friends to adopt a more flexible

*Kissinger once responded to Egyptian diplomat Ashraf Ghorbal's plea for his involvement in Middle East diplomacy with this statement: "I will never get involved in anything unless I'm sure of success. And if I do get involved, it means I'm going to succeed. I hate failure. (The Middle East) isn't ready for me." [Ref. 44: p. 17]

position, Kissinger set out to design a Middle East negotiating strategy which he would implement, if given the opportunity, after the elections the following November.

3. Shaping a Strategy

Following the collapse of the Rogers initiative, Kissinger reviewed many of the factors which contributed to its failure. According to Quandt, Kissinger drew a number of lessons from the Rogers-Sisco experience that would guide his future dealings with the problems of the Middle East. First, Rogers had involved the U.S. too quickly in substantive negotiations between the local parties. Kissinger would withhold significant involvement until the parties were near agreement. Second, Rogers and Sisco had not been completely honest in their dealings with Egypt and Israel. Kissinger planned to represent accurately each party's position and thus prevent the raising of false hopes and expectations. Third, Kissinger would not repeat the mistake of Rogers and Sisco of negotiating "in the glare of publicity." Henceforth, all substantive negotiations would be conducted in secret. Fourth, Kissinger would not threaten to withhold arms shipments to Israel as a means of persuading it to modify its positions. He realized that the Israelis would refuse to make concessions from a perceived position of weakness. Furthermore, as long as the Soviets were present in huge numbers in Egypt, it was completely illogical to pursue a program of threats directed against

Israel. Finally and perhaps most important, Kissinger strongly advocated the concept of an interim agreement unlinked to a final settlement. He envisioned an agreement worked out largely by the U.S. that would generate momentum toward a final settlement and would contribute to the removal of the Soviet advisers from Egypt. [Ref. 2: pp. 144-45] In White House Years, Kissinger describes the significance of an interim agreement:

Disengagement had no chance of success as long as it had to be negotiated together with an overall settlement....To succeed, an interim agreement therefore had to be separated from the comprehensive settlement; if they were linked, we would merely dissipate our influence by chasing a mirage that had all the difficulties of the comprehensive schemes it purported to replace and that we were no more able to produce than Moscow....At various times each side was led to believe that we sympathized with its version of the interim concept; disillusionment, frustration, and stalemate were the inevitable result.

My idea was to use an interim agreement to break the impasse. Once achieved, such a step would ease the way to further advances. [Ref. 5: p. 1281]

B. ROGER'S LAST TRY AT AN INTERIM AGREEMENT

1. Rogers Meets with Riad

Despite the growing dominance of the White House over Middle East diplomacy, Rogers attempted to revive his moribund initiative in late September. During a meeting with Egyptian Foreign Minister Mahmoud Riad at the State Department on 29 September, Rogers pointed out that the United States would not force Israel to make a commitment to withdraw from all occupied territories; however, he assured Riad that the U.S. regarded an interim agreement as a

positive indication of progress toward an overall settlement. Therefore, under no circumstances would the United States, in the words of Mohammad Heikal, "make the interim-agreement an end in itself." [Ref. 17: pp. 153-54]

2. Rogers's October 4 Speech at the U.N.

In a speech before the U.N. General Assembly on October 4, Rogers outlined the U.S. position regarding a settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict. He stressed the vital importance of a lasting peace in the region but called on Israel and Egypt to conclude an interim Suez Canal agreement as the next step* toward the complete implementation of Resolution 242. [Ref. 45: pp. 442-43] Rogers then outlined six points which he hoped would provide the necessary "breakthrough" in the negotiation of an interim agreement: (1) the recognition of an interim agreement as merely a step toward an overall settlement; (2) a cease-fire of more than a "short duration"; (3) a zone of withdrawal that addressed "the principal concerns of both sides;" (4) adequate "supervisory mechanisms" to ensure that both parties maintain confidence in the agreement; (5) the existence of Egyptian civilian personnel east of the canal with the question of military personnel left for further discussion; and (6) the use of the reopened Suez Canal by all nations, including Israel. [Ref. 45: p. 443]

*According to Rogers, the first step was Resolution 242 and the second was the August 7, 1970 Suez Canal cease-fire. [Ref. 45: p. 442]

Furthermore, Rogers argued "that the logic for such an agreement is overwhelming." [Ref. 45: p. 444] He cited the following advantages of an interim Suez Canal agreement:

It would restore the use of the Suez Canal as a waterway for international shipping.

It would reestablish Egypt's authority over a major national asset.

It would separate the combatants.

It would produce the first Israeli withdrawal.

It would extend the cease-fire.

It would diminish the risk of major-power involvement.

It would be an important step toward the implementation of Security Council Resolution 242. [Ref. 45: p. 444]

Rogers confirmed that the United States was committed to playing "a constructive role in the process of arriving at an agreement." In closing, Rogers emphasized that "the United States pledges anew its best efforts." [Ref. 45: pp. 443-44]

3. Israeli Reaction to Rogers's Speech

Rogers's six-point proposal was not well received in Jerusalem. Mrs. Meir and other Israeli officials were concerned because it appeared that the official U.S. position had moved very close to that held by Egypt. In an interview shortly after Rogers's speech, Mrs. Meir commented that "to my mind this speech--most regrettably--did not

contribute to the promotion of the special settlement for the opening of the Suez Canal." [Ref. 3: p. 188]

In a speech before the Knesset on 26 October, Mrs. Meir articulated the official Israeli response to Rogers's latest proposal, which was viewed by many in Israel as the third Rogers Plan.* She objected to the idea of independent proposals put forward by the United States and reaffirmed her strong willingness to hold direct negotiations with the Egyptians. More importantly, she pointed out that "there have been disturbing changes in the approach of the United States to several items of the canal settlement." [Ref. 3: pp. 188-89] Reich outlines the differences between the Israeli and U.S. positions concerning an interim settlement:

While Israel sought an unlimited cease-fire, the United States had begun to talk of a cease-fire of a specified duration. Israel opposed the crossing of the canal by any Egyptian forces, while the United States had begun to talk about some Egyptian troops crossing the canal, thus acquiescing in principle that Egyptian military forces should cross the canal. Israel had opposed the linking of this agreement with an overall agreement and now Rogers suggested that this would be linked to the full implementation of 242. [Ref. 3: p. 189]

Mrs. Meir went on to reaffirm Israel's official position on an interim canal agreement. Concerning the areas of difference with the United States, she made the following points:

*The first Rogers Plan was made public on December 9 and 18, 1969; the second on June 25, 1970.

Israel and Egypt will observe an unlimited ceasefire....

Egyptian Armed Forces...will not cross the canal and will not be introduced into the area east of the canal from which Israeli forces will withdraw....

The (interim) agreement will not prevent the parties from continuing negotiations between them... with a view to progress toward a just and lasting peace. [Ref. 3: p. 189]

4. Rogers Proposes Proximity Talks

Toward the end of October, Rogers proposed to Egypt and Israel that they send high ranking emissaries to New York to engage in indirect negotiations on the reopening of the Suez Canal. [Ref. 46: p. 8] These negotiations were referred to as "proximity talks" because the representatives of the two countries would be located in nearby hotels and would meet separately with Assistant Secretary Sisco, who would act as the intermediary and attempt to keep the "diplomatic process alive." [Ref. 47: p. 698]

Still hoping for a major breakthrough before the "year of decision" came to a close, Sadat unenthusiastically accepted Rogers's invitation. Furthermore, he told Donald Bergus that his emissary, Minister of State Murad Ghaleb, would be given a "broad mandate." According to Bergus, this would enable the U.S. to make "an intensive effort to reach a solution by the end of the year." [Ref. 36: pp. 44, 47] Sadat was still skeptical when Bergus informed him that Sisco would be an active participant in

the talks, not just "a passive mailman." Sadat described this new promise of American activity as "a rather thin reed." [Ref. 36: pp. 44, 47] Despite his doubts, Sadat indicated that he would participate in the U.S. sponsored talks. He probably realized that they represented his best hope of achieving even a modicum of success before the end of the year.

On the other hand, the Israelis refused to participate in the proximity talks unless the Nixon Administration agreed to resume the supply of Phantom jets to Israel which had ended during the past summer. The New York Times reported that, without additional modern aircraft, such as the F-4, Israeli officials were convinced that "the country would be at a severe psychological and political disadvantage as it went into negotiations with Egypt, which...is assured of constant supplies of Soviet war matériel." [Ref. 46: p. 8] Furthermore, the Israelis were reportedly reluctant to enter into the indirect negotiations until the United States clearly indicated what its role would be. Unlike Sadat, the Israelis preferred Sisco to take up the role of an impartial mediator who would not advance his own ideas. [Ref. 46: p. 8]

5. The November 1 Memorandum of Understanding

In an attempt to encourage Israel to join the proximity talks, the Nixon Administration subscribed on November 1 to a memorandum of understanding with Israel which would

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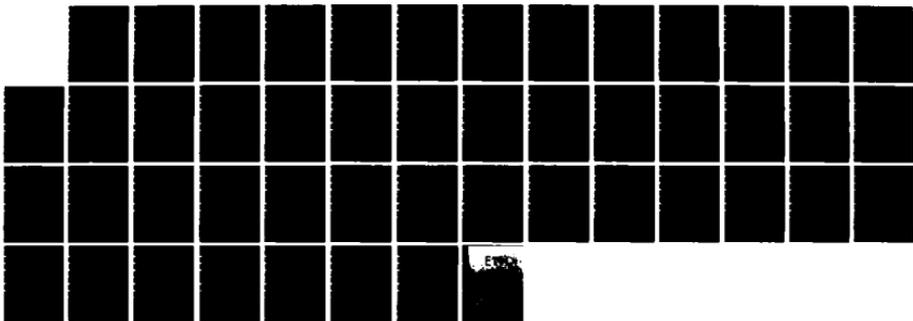
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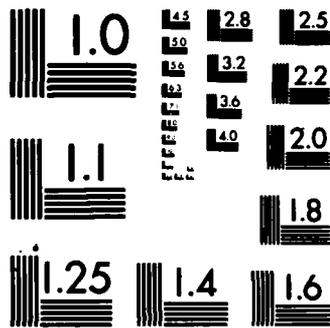
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permit the Israelis to acquire a greater degree of self-sufficiency in the manufacture of major weapons systems. The New York Times reported that the memorandum included provisions whereby "the United States agreed to provide technical and manufacturing assistance" and the procedures for the handling of future Israeli arms requests were "streamlined." [Ref. 48: p. 1] Some officials at the State Department and Pentagon argued that the memorandum represented a loss of American diplomatic leverage over Israel. Other officials argued that this leverage had never been effective and that American influence in Israel could be increased by friendlier ties between the two countries. [Ref. 48: p. 7] Putting the debate aside, it is clear that American policy makers, especially at the White House, did in fact make a major concession in Israel's favor and received nothing in return. After the signing of the memorandum of understanding, Israel still refused to agree to the proximity talks. By late 1971, it was clearly apparent that the tail was in fact wagging the dog. Israel could name its price and the U.S. would have to meet it in order to obtain Israel's participation in the talks.

6. Mrs. Meir Visits Washington

Throughout November, the United States was still attempting to obtain Israel's participation in the proximity talks without agreeing to a new major arms package. Most American officials believed that the military situation

between Egypt and Israel was unquestionably in Israel's favor. During an interview in mid-November, Secretary Rogers reflected this view and added that Israel's position had been enhanced by Soviet moderation in recent shipments to Egypt. Rogers stated:

Up to now the military balance has not shifted.... President Nixon has made it quite clear that he's going to be sure that the military balance is continued. And I think Israeli spokesmen have indicated in the last three or four months that they do recognize that the U.S. has done a great deal for them over the months and years.

Now, the Soviet Union in the last four or five months has operated with some restraint as far as shipments are concerned....

In the last four months,...their shipments have been very moderate. [Ref. 49: p. 34]

In early December, Prime Minister Meir arrived in Washington for discussions with top U.S. officials on the subjects of Israel's participation in the proximity talks and a new U.S.-Israeli arms agreement. Preeminent in Mrs. Meir's mind was her desire to strike a deal for more F-4 Phantom aircraft. Not merely satisfied with a single agreement covering F-4's, Mrs. Meir sought, according to Quandt, a long-term arms agreement. Mrs. Meir pointed out that such an agreement would serve the following purposes: it would convince the Soviet Union and Egypt that they cannot drive a wedge between the U.S. and Israel; it would show them that a military solution to the Middle East conflict was impossible; and, most important, it would

prevent "periodic squabbles" between the U.S. and Israel over future arms requests. [Ref. 2: pp. 146-47]

Ignoring Rogers's view of the military situation in the Middle East, Nixon agreed, according to Quandt, to a new Israeli arms deal which included the delivery of F-4's. However, Nixon refused to agree to Mrs. Meir's proposal of a long-term arms agreement because of the negative impact that such an agreement would have on American-Arab relations. [Ref. 2: pp. 146-47] Encouraged, but far from completely satisfied, Mrs. Meir made the following comment at a news conference prior to her departure:

Some of the misunderstandings have been cleared away.... I went away (from the meeting with Nixon) with the feeling that there is definitely an understanding of the problems in our area and the Israeli way of looking at them. I guess that's the most one can ask of a friendly government. [Ref. 50]

Neither Mrs. Meir nor American officials would announce publicly Nixon's decision to sell more Phantoms to Israel. Administration officials feared that an announcement of the sale would prompt Egypt to abandon the proximity talks. Incredibly, despite the new arms deal, Mrs. Meir still withheld her agreement to join the talks.

7. Sadat's January 13, 1972 Speech

In a nationally broadcast speech on January 13, Sadat explained to the Egyptian people why the "year of decision" had passed quietly without decisive action taken toward either war or peace. Sadat stated that the Indo-Pakistani war of the previous month caused him to

cancel his plans to attack Israel set for the same period. With treaty commitments to India, Sadat explained, the Soviet Union was preoccupied with the conflict on the Indian subcontinent and was thus unable to lend its full support to Egypt. [Ref. 51: p. 1]

Turning quickly to the United States, Sadat condemned the Nixon Administration over unconfirmed reports that it had sold additional Phantom fighter-bombers to Israel. Furthermore, he called the U.S. Israel's "mentor" and accused it of supporting Israel's ambition to control Arab land "from the Nile to the Euphrates." Finally, he criticized American diplomatic efforts to achieve an interim Suez Canal agreement by referring to them as a game of "hide-and-seek." [Ref. 51: p. 1]

Sadat indicated that he trusted the capabilities of Ambassador Jarring and was prepared for further contacts with him. He made it clear that any solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict must be based squarely on two principles: "No surrender of one inch of Arab land. No bargain on the rights of the Palestinians." [Ref. 51: p. 6]

8. Israel Consents to the Proximity Talks

As reported by The New York Times, during most of January, Sisco met with Israel's Ambassador to the U.S. Yitzhak Rabin to resolve the remaining issues which prevented Israel from joining the proximity talks. The Sisco-Rabin discussions focussed on the details of the U.S.-Israeli

arms agreement of December 2 and on the role the U.S. intended to play in the talks. Concerning the American role, the two sides agreed that the U.S. would promote agreement between Israel and Egypt but would not put forward its own positions. Furthermore, the United States promised that it would hold "very thorough discussions" with Israel prior to making a proposal to break any eventual deadlock. [Ref. 52: p. 14]

Regarding the details of the December arms agreement, The New York Times reported that the U.S. agreed to sell Israel 42 F-4 Phantoms and 90 A-4 Skyhawks. Furthermore, delivery of the aircraft would begin immediately. [Ref. 53: p. 1] According to Quandt, the various points of agreement between the U.S. and Israel on the arms package and on the U.S. role in the proximity talks culminated in another memorandum of understanding which was signed on February 2. [Ref. 2: p. 147] That same day, the Israeli Cabinet decided to accept the proximity talks, three months after they were proposed by Secretary Rogers. [Ref. 53: p. 1]

9. Egypt Rejects the Proximity Talks

Judging from the harsh public, comments made by Sadat in late 1971 and early 1972,* it was plain to see that

*In an interview by Newsweek's de Borchgrave in early December 1971, Sadat stated: "When I visited my troops last week, I said quite frankly that I had lost confidence in the U.S. We are now back to square one." [Ref. 36: p. 47] In an interview by C. L. Sulzberger of The New York Times on

the Egyptian President had lost all confidence in the ability of the United States to work seriously for an interim agreement between Egypt and Israel. He was convinced that the United States was firmly in agreement with Israel's position concerning an interim settlement and would therefore be unwilling and unable to negotiate impartially. Sadat's view of the relationship between the United States and Israel was validated when it was made public on February 5 that the U.S. had agreed to sell Israel 42 Phantoms and 90 Skyhawks. [Ref. 53: p. 1]

Outraged by the American decision to provide Israel with more sophisticated aircraft, Sadat declared that Egypt

December 10, Sadat made the following comments concerning U.S. diplomacy:

In the last eight months we have had contacts with the United States and my conclusion is this: I and your State Department and your Administration were playing hide-and-seeK. They told me in the first place, please put confidence in us. I said very well, I am quite ready to put confidence in you.

Ultimately, we started. I took my initiative...upon the fourth of February, and they said very well this is a marvelous thing, we shall be working on it and so on. Then it ended....

The U.S. wants Israel to use the occupation of my land and Arab land as an instrument of pressure to impose all that she wants. It ended like this. I am awfully sorry to say that I lost confidence completely in your Administration. [Ref. 54]

In his national speech of January 13, Sadat referred to the United States as the "mentor" of Israel and accused the U.S. again of playing diplomatic "hide-and-seeK" throughout 1971. [Ref. 51: p. 6]

would not participate in the proximity talks under the current circumstances. In an interview in late February by Newsweek's de Borchgrave, Sadat called the American sponsored talks "a dead horse" and emphasized that "an American solution is clearly unacceptable to us." He did indicate, however, that he would be willing to resume negotiations under Ambassador Jarring's auspices. [Ref. 55: pp. 42, 47]

Enraged with bitterness, Sadat made the following verbal attack against the U.S. during this same interview:

I simply cannot understand why--despite the fact that your government said only a few weeks before* that the balance of power was overwhelmingly in Israel's favor--you went ahead and suddenly increased Israel's air force by one-third. It is this escalation that wrecked the political solution....The U.S. has now swung all its weight behind Israel. You are trying to compensate for your setback on the (Indian) subcontinent....America has become a hopeless case, especially in an election year with so many candidates dependent as they are on Jewish financing. [Ref. 55: p. 47]

With those vitriolic words, the proposals for an interim Suez Canal agreement and proximity talks were officially pronounced dead. Furthermore, a visit by Jarring to Cairo, Amman, and Jerusalem in late February failed to raise enough interest, especially among the Israelis, to justify reactivating his mission, essentially defunct since the previous February. [Ref. 55: p. 47] The conflict between Egypt and Israel now entered into a period of

*See Rogers interview by USN&WP which was cited on page 97. [Ref. 49: p. 34]

diplomatic stalemate which would persist for nineteen months until shattered by Sadat's bold strike across the Suez Canal.

C. THE AFTERMATH OF THE "YEAR OF DECISION"

1. Egyptian Frustration and Israeli Intransigence

In early 1972, the prevailing mood of the Egyptian leadership was characterized by frustration and humiliation. Sadat had taken unprecedented steps during the course of the previous year to improve his image in the eyes of the United States. He had hoped that the U.S. would fully appreciate the significance of his interim-agreement proposal and would, in the words of Dr. Malcolm Kerr, "decide to lay down the law to Israel." [Ref. 56: p. 20] His hopes were exploded, however, when the United States made several political and military agreements with Israel in December and January. The agreements, which culminated in the February 2 memorandum of understanding, indicated to Sadat that the American and Israeli positions on the interim-settlement were nearly identical and that the U.S. had absolutely no intention of exerting pressure on Israel to make concessions.

With little to expect from the United States, Sadat visited Moscow on February 1 and 2 with the ostensible goal of obtaining more Soviet military equipment as a counter-balance to the then unconfirmed sale of more American

Phantoms to the Israelis. In their joint communiqué, the Soviet and Egyptian leaders stated that they had "considered measures" for "further strengthening" of Egypt's military capabilities in light of the growing military strength of Israel. Thus, feeling deceived and humiliated by the Americans, Sadat turned to the Soviets who had supported the Egyptians during their "black days" of 1967 and immediately afterwards. Furthermore, Sadat hoped that the Soviets would make a strong statement on behalf of the Arab cause during the Nixon-Breznev summit meeting scheduled for May in Moscow.

In February 1972, U.S.-Israeli relations were stronger than ever. The February 2 memorandum of understanding more than made up for the brief deterioration of relations stemming from Rogers's Suez Canal initiative, his October 4 U.N. speech, and the protracted discussions surrounding a new Phantoms deal. As a result of its renewed feelings of confidence and security, Israel became extremely intransigent and obstinate in its dealings with the United States and in its policies concerning a Middle East settlement. Although vitally dependent upon the United States for diplomatic and military support, it appeared by this time that Israel could influence the policies of its powerful friend at will. Gil Carl AlRoy comments on this unique phenomenon:

By 1971,...students of international relations were for the first time contemplating seriously a substantial Israeli capacity to ignore dictation from the United States. They spoke of a new era in international politics, in which clients manipulated patrons, rather than the other way around....[Ref. 57: p. 95]

2. U.S. Middle East Policy: A Stalemate Achieved

Kissinger's goal of a diplomatic stalemate was achieved with the collapse of the proximity talks proposal. Kissinger would now wait for the Egyptians to come to the realization that their Soviet supporters could not recover their territory for them. As soon as this happened and the Soviets were removed from Egypt, then he would go to work on the problems of the Middle East. Kissinger was in no hurry because he believed that he had plenty of time.

The stalemate suited Nixon also. With no new Middle East peace initiatives to worry about for a while, he could rest on his other foreign policy triumphs while concentrating on his reelection. The problems of the Middle East would just have to wait.

VII. EPILOGUE

In the twenty months between February 1972 and October 1973, the world witnessed negligible progress toward a settlement in either the Israeli-Egyptian dispute or in the broader Arab-Israeli conflict. While the United States and Israel were content to keep the situation along the Suez Canal static, Sadat carefully and painstakingly charted his course for the eventual armed showdown with Israel.

In July 1972, Sadat shocked Israel, the United States, and most of the world when he ordered the Soviet military personnel out of his country. He felt betrayed by Soviet statements at the recent U.S.-U.S.S.R. summit that seemed to indicate that the Soviets favored along with the U.S. a freeze in the situation in the Middle East. Furthermore, he could no longer tolerate the incessant delays in the shipment of promised Soviet military equipment. Perhaps the most important reason for Sadat's sudden dismissal of the Soviets was the enhanced military and diplomatic freedom that such a move would give Egypt. Sadat apparently realized that the Soviet presence precluded the full diplomatic involvement of the United States and served as a brake on his military options with regard to Israel.

The United States was caught completely off guard by this momentous event. The White House promised only that it would undertake a diplomatic initiative, but not until after the November election.

Disappointed by the tepid reaction of the United States and convinced that the superpowers had assigned a very low priority to the problems of the Middle East, Sadat made his decision to attack Israel in the fall of 1972. Throughout the next year, he thoroughly prepared himself for the impending struggle. He lined up his supporters, such as Syrian President Hafez al-Assad, the wealthy Arab oil producers, and the nations of black Africa, and patched up his differences with other Arab leaders, such as King Hussein of Jordan. Furthermore, Sadat crafted his rhetoric so carefully that his adversaries were completely deceived as to his real intentions. By repeatedly threatening to initiate hostilities, Sadat purposely "cried wolf" enough so that Israel and the United States would not take his threats seriously. Besides, the United States believed that Sadat could not seriously challenge Israel's overwhelming superiority and that any Egyptian attack would result in another rout at the hands of the Israelis.

Meanwhile, during the first half of 1973, talks between Kissinger and Sadat's National Security Adviser, Hafez Ismail, generated little hope for a settlement. Ismail put forward an inflexible Egyptian program which called for

a comprehensive settlement before the end of the year, a prior Israeli agreement to withdraw to its 1967 borders, and a resolution of the Palestinian question. Whereas Kissinger had hoped that a meaningful dialogue could be established between the U.S. and Egypt, Ismail merely echoed the uncompromising attitude emanating from Cairo. Unbeknownst to the Americans, the time for compromise had long since passed.

In August 1973, Kissinger was named to succeed William P. Rogers as Secretary of State. His appointment brought little change and few surprises to the diplomatic situation in the Middle East. In the last week of September, less than two weeks before the outbreak of war in the Middle East, Kissinger met with Arab and Israeli representatives at the U.N. in an earnest attempt to establish his credentials as an honest and trustworthy mediator who promised to represent the interests of both sides fairly. He suggested that the local parties participate in proximity talks under American auspices starting in November. This proposal, which in effect resurrected Rogers's idea of two years earlier, convinced Sadat that no bold initiative would be forthcoming from the United States. Kissinger's uninspiring program served to vindicate Sadat's decision to attack Israel. By such an act, Sadat hoped to shatter the diplomatic stalemate and destroy the twin myths of Israeli invincibility and Arab ineptness.

VIII. CONCLUSION

In his first news conference as President, Richard M. Nixon referred to the situation in the Middle East as a "powder keg" that could explode at any given moment. Little did he realize at that time, however, that his own policies toward and perception of the region over the next four and a half years would help ignite the ever explosive forces of the Arab-Israeli dispute.

Throughout the three year period that separated the Jordanian civil war and the October 1973 war, American diplomacy toward the Middle East was largely influenced by a number of attitudes and perceptions that were forged in the apparent victory of American policies and actions during the Jordanian crisis. Nixon and Kissinger emerged from the episode with a firm belief that a strong and secure Israel would protect American interests in the Middle East, would deter an Arab attack, and would curb and perhaps even reduce Soviet influence in the region. The White House seemingly equated the maintenance of the status quo between Israel and the Arabs--and the resulting absence of hostilities--with some measure of peace and stability in this vitally strategic region. By increasing arms shipments to Israel and promising it diplomatic support, the United States chose a course of action that disregarded

crucial political developments in the Arab world, alienated the leaders of both the radical and moderate Arab blocs, and encouraged closer political and military ties between the Arabs and the Soviet Union.

Committed to the maintenance of the status quo, the White House was content to pursue a very limited role in the search for a Middle East peace settlement during the period under examination in this thesis. The State Department, under the leadership of William P. Rogers, explored without success the possibility of achieving an interim agreement between Egypt and Israel that would have resulted in the reopening of the Suez Canal. Rogers's efforts were seriously hampered by a narrow mandate from President Nixon who preferred not to get involved in a laborious negotiating process and refused to consider the idea of pressuring Israel to make concessions.

A strong assertive U.S. Middle East policy, conducted through secret negotiations, might have succeeded in softening the extreme positions held by Egypt and Israel and in bringing the two sides together in an interim agreement. Furthermore, along the way to an agreement, American negotiators might have struck a deal with Sadat to reduce the number of Soviet military personnel in Egypt in return for an American pledge to commit its political influence and diplomatic resources to the search for an interim agreement between Egypt and Israel. However, with U.S.-Israeli

relations at their closest point in history and with the Nixon Administration fearing a closer relationship between Sadat and the Soviets, there was virtually no chance that the United States would embark on a serious diplomatic initiative that would eventually require Israel to make concessions that under the existing circumstances would clearly appear as victories for the Soviets and their radical Arab clients. On the other hand, a more perceptive appreciation of Sadat's true feelings regarding peace with Israel and relations with the Soviet Union might have convinced American policy makers, especially at the White House, that a high level peace initiative was well worth the effort.

The most important factor behind the failure of U.S. Middle East policy during the period September 1970 to February 1972 was the incredibly low priority assigned to the problems of the region by Nixon and Kissinger. Pre-occupied with Vietnam, détente, and China, the White House relegated the daily management of Middle East affairs to the State Department but retained the veto over all policy decisions concerning the area. Nixon frequently stressed the need for serious negotiations between the local parties but offered very little support and encouragement when Rogers and Sisco attempted to mediate the differences between Egypt and Israel. Following the collapse of the Rogers initiative in September 1971, Nixon directed Kissinger to assume

operational control of Middle East policy and halt all further American initiatives until after the November 1972 election. Ironically, at this critical juncture, Kissinger designed a Middle East strategy that called for an interim settlement between Egypt and Israel. Such an agreement, he believed, would serve two purposes: it would spur the local parties toward a comprehensive settlement and would hasten the departure of the Soviets from Egypt. Unfortunately, Kissinger's plan was as untimely as it was uninspired. It came too late to buttress Rogers and would not be pursued until after Sadat's decision to go to war.

Nixon's renunciation of the central position in the formulation and conduct of U.S. Middle East policy in the years immediately preceding the October 1973 Arab-Israeli war is integral to the understanding of the causes of that event. A top level initiative, coordinated from the White House and drawing upon the finest talents of the Executive Branch, could have taken full advantage of the unique regional developments of late 1970 and early 1971 and achieved a major diplomatic breakthrough in the Israeli-Egyptian dispute, thus preventing the 1973 war. It must be emphasized that, during the past decade and a half, the major achievements* of American foreign policy have been

*Such accomplishments include the Vietnam cease-fire, détente with the Soviets, the SALT agreements, the Arab-Israeli disengagement agreements, normalization with China, the Camp David accords, and the Panama Canal treaty.

characterized by the total commitment and dedicated involvement of both the President of the United States and a nucleus of talented assistants, who shared his earnest desire to achieve the preferred policy outcome. Unfortunately, William P. Rogers neither enjoyed the full support of the President nor was regarded as a member of the latter's inner circle.

In his critical account of Kissinger's tenure as Nixon's national security advisor, The Price of Power, journalist Seymour M. Hersh contends that between 1969 and 1972 Nixon and Kissinger consistently sabotaged Rogers's chances of negotiating first a comprehensive settlement then later an interim agreement in the Arab-Israeli conflict. [Ref. 58: p. 217] Hersh cites the following three examples of efforts by the White House to undermine the effectiveness of Rogers and the State Department. First, Nixon revealed in his memoirs that he approved the Rogers Plan of December 1969 only because it "had absolutely no chance of being accepted by Israel" and "could never be implemented." [Ref. 58: pp. 220-21 and Ref. 59: pp. 592-93] Second, in May 1971 Kissinger warned Nixon that a reopened Suez Canal would significantly aid the Soviet naval build up in the Indian Ocean. [Ref. 58: p. 407] With this warning, Kissinger was in effect offering a strategic argument against any initiative that proposed the clearing and

reopening of the Suez Canal. Finally, in wake of the Soviet-Egyptian Friendship Treaty, Kissinger ignored "a steady stream of reports in 1971" from American diplomats in Cairo that would have challenged his views that the Soviets enjoyed a secure position in Egypt and that Sadat was a dedicated pro-Communist. [Ref. 58: p. 408]

According to Hersh, Kissinger was determined to wrest control of Middle East diplomacy from Rogers and to force a showdown with the Soviets in the Middle East. [Ref. 58: pp. 226-27] On this latter issue, Hersh is in complete agreement with Quandt. Hersh argues that Kissinger was far more concerned with discrediting the Soviets in the eyes of their Arab clients and thus sharply reducing their influence in the region than with working toward a settlement between the local parties to the Arab-Israeli dispute. [Ref. 58: p. 232]

Despite the special significance that Kissinger placed on the growing Soviet presence in the Middle East, especially Egypt, Hersh contends that the personal enmity between Nixon's national security advisor and Rogers was the single most important factor that prevented the former from joining the search for a diplomatic breakthrough in the Middle East. Hersh quotes from one of Kissinger's former NSC aides on this bureaucratic conflict and its tragic consequences:

I have a hard time believing that the balance (between the White House and the State Department) wasn't tilted by personal feelings....It's such an unflattering thing to say, but I think there was a lot of not wanting State

to do it--rationalized, to be sure, by Henry. If Henry would have had a shot at it, he might have attempted it. It was the one genuine missed opportunity in that period. It was a step that would have prevented the '73 war from taking place. [Ref. 58: p. 407]

Writing of the period 1969-1972 in his memoirs, White House Years, Kissinger consistently and steadfastly defended the patient, noncommittal, and, at times, drifting White House policy toward the Arab-Israeli conflict. In late 1969, with the "war of attrition" intensifying, Kissinger reflects on his evolving Middle East strategy:

But through this turmoil the inherent strength of the American position in the Middle East also gradually emerged. Nobody could make peace without us. Only we, not the Soviet Union, could exert influence on Israel. Israel was too strong to succumb to Arab military pressure, and we could block all diplomatic activity until the Arabs showed their (sic) willingness to reciprocate Israeli concessions. If we remained steady and refused to be stampeded, the pivotal nature of our position would become more and more evident. Nixon equivocated, believing in my strategy but authorizing (and then aborting) State's tactics. In the process, partly by default, we began to follow my preferred course. The bureaucratic stalemate achieved what I favored as a matter of policy: an inconclusive course that over time was bound to induce at least some Arab leaders to reconsider the utility of relying on Soviet arms and radical posturing to achieve their ends. Once it became clear--for whatever reason--that a settlement could not be extorted from us, Arab leaders would gradually learn that Soviet pressures on us and their own intransigence only produced stagnation. They would, I thought, have to come to us in the end. [Ref. 5: pp. 378-79]

Writing on the events of early 1970, Kissinger comments on the hoped for impact of this strategy on the moderate Arabs:

We should not yield to (radical Arab) blackmail; we should not be panicked by radical rhetoric; patience could be our weapon. By the same token, once the breakthrough had occurred and the moderate Arabs had turned to us, we had to move decisively to produce diplomatic results. [Ref. 5: p. 559]

Finally, following the collapse of the proximity talks initiative in March 1972, Kissinger still stood by his Middle East strategy. He writes:

My strategy had not changed. Until some Arab state showed a willingness to separate from the Soviets, or the Soviets were prepared to dissociate from the maximum Arab program, we had no reason to modify our policy. [Ref. 5: p. 1291]

Unfortunately, the White House did not "move decisively to produce diplomatic results" after Sadat ordered the Soviets out of his country in July 1972. As was shown earlier, the restrained American diplomatic efforts of late 1972 and 1973 increased Arab frustrations and encouraged Sadat to launch his attack against Israel. Kissinger's Middle East strategy eventually produced the reversal of alliances that he had long hoped for. However, as he states in his memoirs, "it took a long time, further crises, and an anguishing war to complete it." [Ref. 5: p. 379]

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APPENDIX A

U.N. SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION 242*

(Passed Unanimously, November 22, 1967)

The Security Council,

Expressing its continuing concern with the grave situation in the Middle East,

Emphasizing the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war and the need to work for a just and lasting peace in which every State in the area can live in security,

Emphasizing further that all Member States in their acceptance of the Charter of the United Nations have undertaken a commitment to act in accordance with Article 2 of the Charter,

1. Affirms that the fulfillment of Charter principles requires the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East which should include the application of both the following principles:

(i) Withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from territories occupied in the recent conflict;

(ii) Termination of all claims or states of belligerency and respect for and acknowledgement of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of every State in the area and their right to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries free from threats or acts of force;

2. Affirms further the necessity

(a) For guaranteeing freedom of navigation through international waterways in the area;

(b) For achieving a just settlement of the refugee problem;

*From Magnus, R. H., ed., Documents on the Middle East, American Enterprise Institute, 1969, pp. 205-06.

(c) For guaranteeing the territorial inviolability and political independence of every State in the area, through measures including the establishment of demilitarized zones;

3. Requests the Secretary-General to designate a Special Representative to proceed to the Middle East to establish and maintain contacts with the States concerned in order to promote agreement and assist efforts to achieve a peaceful and accepted settlement in accordance with the provisions and principles in this resolution;

4. Requests the Secretary-General to report to the Security Council on the progress of the efforts of the Special Representative as soon as possible.

APPENDIX B

THE ROGERS PLAN OF DECEMBER 9, 1969*

Secretary Rogers outlined the new U.S. peace proposal during a Washington speech on December 9, 1969. According to the Beirut daily An-Nahar, the Rogers Plan contained the following ten points:

1. The UAR and Israel would agree on a timetable for withdrawal of Israeli forces from UAR territory occupied during the war.

2. The state of war between the UAR and Israel would end officially, and both sides would abstain from any activity that would be inconsistent with the state of peace between them. This would involve refraining from any acts of aggression and insuring that such acts by private organizations would not be carried out from their territory. The two sides would refrain from interfering in the internal affairs of the other and would agree that their mutual relationship would be governed by provisions 3 and 4 of Article 2 of the UN Charter.

3. Both sides would agree to establishing secure and recognized borders specified on maps, which would become part of the final agreement. The agreement would also include establishment of demilitarized zones and taking effective measures in the Sharm el-Sheikh area to guarantee freedom of navigation in the Straits of Tiran. Within this framework secure borders would be established at the international frontier that existed between Egypt and Palestine at the time of the British mandate.

4. The two sides through 'Rhodes-type' indirect talks would formulate agreement on areas to be demilitarized, measures to guarantee freedom of passage through the Tiran Straits, and effective security measures and a final settlement in the Gaza Strip.

*From Arab Report and Record, issue no. 23, 1-15 December 1969, pp. 521-22.

5. The two sides would agree that the Straits of Tiran are an international waterway, and the principle of free navigation would apply to all states, including Israel.

6. In exercising sovereignty over the Suez Canal, the UAR would emphasize the right of ships of all nations, including Israel, to pass freely through the canal without discrimination or interference.

7. The two sides would agree to submit to conditions for a fair settlement to the refugee problem 'similar to the final agreement between Jordan and Israel'.

8. The UAR and Israel would agree to recognize each other's sovereignty, political independence and the right to live in peace within secure boundaries.

9. The final agreement would be included in a document signed by the two sides and filed with the UN, the agreement going into effect once the document had been deposited with the Secretary-General. The final agreement would provide that any major violation of the agreement by either side would give the other the right to suspend implementation of the agreement either partially or totally, until the violation had been ended.

10. The two sides would agree to submit the final agreement to the UN Security Council for ratification. The USA, the USSR, Britain and France would promise to exercise their efforts to help the two sides adhere to the provisions of the agreement.

APPENDIX C

JARRING'S LETTER OF FEBRUARY 8, 1971*

(Delivered Simultaneously to Egypt and Israel)

I have been following with a mixture of restrained optimism and growing concern the resumed discussion under my auspices for the purpose of arriving at a peaceful settlement of the Middle East question.

My restrained optimism arises from the fact that in my view the parties are seriously defining their positions and wish to move forward to a permanent peace.

My growing concern is that each side unyieldingly insists that the other make certain commitments before being ready to proceed to the stage of formulating the provisions to be included in final peace agreement. There is--as I see it--a serious risk that we shall find ourselves in the same deadlock as existed during the first three years of my mission.

I, therefore, feel that I should at this stage make clear my views on what I believe to be the necessary steps to be taken in order to achieve a peaceful and accepted settlement in accordance with the provisions and principles of Security Council Resolution W242/67, which the parties have agreed to carry out in all its parts.

I have come to the conclusion that the only possibility to break the imminent deadlock arising from the differing views (of) Israel and the United Arab Republic as to the priority to be given to commitments and undertakings--which seems to me to be the real cause for the present immobility--is for me to seek from each side the parallel and simultaneous commitments which seem to be inevitable prerequisites of an eventual peace settlement between them.

It should thereafter be possible to proceed at once to formulate the provisions and terms of a peace agreement not only for those topics covered by the commitments but with

*From Arab Report and Record, issue no. 5, 1-15 March 1971, p. 158.

equal priority for other topics and in particular the refugee question.

Specifically, I wish to request the Governments of Israel and the U.A.R. to make to me at this stage the following prior commitments simultaneously and on condition that the other party makes its commitments, and subject to the eventual satisfactory determination of all other aspects of a peace settlement, including in particular a just settlement of the refugee problem:

Israel would give a commitment to withdraw its forces from occupied U.A.R. territory to the former international boundary between Egypt and the British Mandate of Palestine on the understanding that satisfactory arrangements are made for:

- a. Establishing demilitarized zones.
- b. Practical security arrangements in the Sharm el Sheikh area for guaranteeing freedom of navigation through the Straits of Tiran; and
- c. Freedom of navigation through the Suez Canal.

The U.A.R. would give a commitment to enter into a peace agreement with Israel and to make explicit therein to Israel--on a reciprocal basis--undertakings and acknowledgements covering the following subjects:

- a. Termination of all claims or states of belligerency;
- b. Respect for and acknowledgement of each other's independence;
- c. Respect for and acknowledgement of each other right to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries;
- d. Responsibility to do all in their power to ensure that acts of belligerency or hostility do not originate from or are not committed from within the respective territories against the population, citizens or property of the other party; and
- e. Non-interference in each other's domestic affairs.

In making the above-mentioned suggestion I am conscious that I am requesting both sides to make serious commitments but I am convinced that the present situation requires me to take this step.

APPENDIX D

EGYPT'S RESPONSE TO JARRING'S LETTER*

(Submitted February 15, 1971)

The U.A.R. has informed your Excellency that it accepts to carry out on a reciprocal basis all its obligations as provided for in Security Council Resolution 242/1967 with a view to achieving a peaceful settlement in the Middle East.

On the same basis, Israel should carry out all its obligations contained in this resolution. Referring to your aide-memoire of February, 1971, the U.A.R. would give a commitment covering the following:

1. Termination of all claims or states of belligerency;
2. Respect for and acknowledgement of each other's sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence;
3. Respect for and acknowledgement of each other's right to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries;
4. Responsibility to do all in their power to ensure that acts committed from within the respective territories against the population, citizens or property of the other party; and
5. Non-interference in each other's domestic affairs.

The U.A.R. would also give a commitment that:

6. It ensures the freedom of navigation in the Suez Canal in accordance with the 1888 Constantinople Convention;
7. It ensures the freedom of navigation in the Straits of Tiran in accordance with the principles of international law;
8. It accepts the stationing of a United Nations peace-keeping force in Sharm el-Sheikh.

*From Arab Report and Record, issue no. 5, 1-15 March 1971, pp. 158-59.

To guarantee the peaceful settlement and the territorial inviolability of every state in the area, the U.A.R. would accept:

a. The establishment of demilitarized zones astride the borders in equal distances; and

b. The establishment of a United Nations peace-keeping force in which the four permanent members of the Security Council would participate.

Israel should, likewise, give a commitment to implement all the provisions of the Security Council's Resolution 242 of 1967. Israel should give a commitment covering the following:

1. Withdrawal of its armed forces from Sinai and the Gaza strip;

2. Achievement of a just settlement for the refugees' problem in accordance with United Nations resolutions;

3. Termination of all claims or states of belligerency;

4. Respect for and acknowledgement of each other's sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence;

5. Respect for and acknowledgement of each other's right to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries;

6. Responsibility to do all in their power to ensure that acts of belligerency or hostility do not originate from or are committed from within the respective territories against the population, citizens or property of the other party;

7. Non-interference in each other's domestic affairs.

To guarantee the peaceful settlement and the territorial inviolability of every state in the area, Israel would accept:

a. The establishment of demilitarized zones astride the borders in equal distances; and

b. The establishment of a United Nations peace-keeping force in which the four permanent members of the Security Council would participate.

When Israel gives the commitments, the U.A.R. will be ready to enter into a peace agreement with Israel containing

all the aforementioned obligations as provided for in Security Council Resolution 242.

The U.A.R. considers that just and lasting peace cannot be realized without the full and scrupulous implementation of Security Council Resolution 242 of 1967 and the withdrawal of the Israeli armed forces from all the territories occupied since June 5, 1967.

APPENDIX E

ISRAEL'S REPOSE TO JARRING'S LETTER*

(Delivered February 26, 1971)

Israel views favourably the expression by the U.A.R. of its readiness to enter into peace agreement with Israel, and reiterates that it is prepared for meaningful negotiations on all subjects relevant to a peace agreement between the two countries.

The Government of Israel wishes to state that the peace agreement to be conducted between Israel and the U.A.R. should inter alia include the provisions set out below.

A. Israel would give undertakings covering the following:

1. Declared and explicit decision to regard the conflict between Israel and the U.A.R. as finally ended, and termination of all claims and states of war and acts of hostility or belligerency between Israel and the U.A.R.;

2. Respect for and acknowledgement of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of the U.A.R.;

3. Respect for and acknowledgement of the right of the U.A.R. to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries;

4. Withdrawal of Israel armed forces from the Israel-U.A.R. cease-fire line to the secure, recognized and agreed boundaries to be established in the peace agreement. Israel will not withdraw to the pre-June 5, 1967 lines;

5. In the matter of the refugees and the claims of both parties in this connection, Israel is prepared to negotiate with the governments directly involved on:

a. The payment of compensation for abandoned lands and property; and

*From Arab Report and Record, issue no. 5, 1-15 March 1971, p. 159.

b. Participation in the planning of the rehabilitation of the refugees in the region.

Once the obligations of the parties towards the settlement of the refugee issue have been agreed neither party shall be under claims from the other inconsistent with its sovereignty;

6. The responsibility for ensuring that no warlike act, or act of violence, by any organization, group or individual originates from or is committed in the territory of Israel against the population, armed forces or property of the U.A.R.;

7. Non-interference in the domestic affairs of the U.A.R.;

8. Non-participation by Israel in hostile alliance against the U.A.R. and the prohibition of stationing of troops of other parties which maintain a state of belligerency against the U.A.R.

B. The U.A.R. undertakings in the peace agreement with Israel would include:

1. Declared and explicit decision to regard the conflict between the U.A.R. and Israel as finally ended and termination of all claims and states of war and acts of hostility or belligerency between the U.A.R. and Israel;

2. Respect for and acknowledgement of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of Israel;

3. Respect for and acknowledgement of the right of Israel to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries to be determined in the peace agreement.

4. The responsibility for ensuring that no war-like act, or act of violence, by any organization, group or individual originates from or is committed in the territory of the U.A.R. against the population, armed forces or property of Israel;

5. Non-interference in the domestic affairs of Israel;

6. An explicit undertaking to guarantee free passage for Israel ships and cargoes through the Suez Canal;

7. Termination of economic warfare in all its manifestations, including boycott, and of interference in the normal international relations of Israel; and

8. Non-participation by the U.A.R. in hostile alliances against Israel and the prohibition of stationing of troops of other parties which maintain a state of belligerency against Israel.

The U.A.R. and Israel should enter into a peace agreement with each other to be expressed in a binding treaty in accordance with normal international law and precedent, and containing the above undertakings.

The Government of Israel believes that now that the U.A.R. has through Ambassador Jarring expressed its willingness to enter into a peace agreement with Israel, and both parties have presented their basic positions, they should now pursue their negotiations in a detailed and concrete manner without prior conditions so as to cover all the points listed in their respective documents with a view to concluding a peace agreement.

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