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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Memorandum of Conversation

NODIS REVIEW

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Reviewed by: Elijah Kelly Jr. *mq*

Date: 7/20 19 88

DATE: September 28, 1978

TIME: 10:10 - 12:20 PM

PLACE: US Mission, New York

SUBJECT: Vance-Gromyko Plenary Meeting on SALT

PARTICIPANTS:

U.S.

U.S.S.R.

Secretary Cyrus R. Vance  
 Ambassador Warnke  
 Ambassador Toon  
 Ambassador Shulman  
 Ambassador Earle  
 Mr. Reginald Bartholomew  
 Mr. Leslie H. Gelb  
 DAS of Defense Slocombe  
 Lt. Gen. Rowny  
 Mr. William T. Shinn, Jr.  
 Mr. William D. Krimer,  
 Interpreter

Foreign Minister A.A. Gromyko  
 First Deputy Foreign Minister  
 G. M. Korniyenko  
 Ambassador A. F. Dobrynin  
 Mr. V. G. Makarov  
 Mr. V. G. Komplektov  
 Mr. A. A. Bessmertnykh  
 Mr. N. N. Detinov  
 Mr. V. M. Sukhodrev, Interpreter

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Secretary Vance said that if it was agreeable to Gromyko he proposed to respond to statements Gromyko had made yesterday in his presentation. He said he believed that they were both in agreement that the time had come to complete their lengthy negotiations and sign a SALT II Agreement. It was important now that they both deal constructively with the remaining issues.

In the package that Paul Warnke had presented to Gromyko in Moscow, we showed that we were trying to reach a realistic compromise between the conflicting positions on each of the remaining issues. We did so against the background of the discussions that took place when the two sides met in Geneva last July. The Secretary believed it useful to review each of these outstanding issues and to set forth the differences that have existed, together with the individual solutions that are contained in the overall US package:

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OPR/LS:WDKrimer  
(Drafting Office and Officer)

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Gromyko noted that the Secretary was talking only about the level of floating naval vessels, but he knew that one huge stationary vessel, i.e. Diego Garcia, must also be taken into account. Thus, if anyone had grounds to break off the talks, it was the Soviet Union. The reasons cited here were artificial and contrived. Of course, there was no obligation to disclose the real reasons, but what the US side had offered appeared to have been done for the sake of appearance. No objective person could agree with them. He would ask the Secretary to inform him whenever the US was ready to take a more reasonable stand. Of course, he was in no position to compel the US to resume the talks. Perhaps the talks had been rather confining for the United States. On the whole, that would be up to the US side.

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The Secretary wanted to say that we would soon be in touch with the Soviets with a view to setting a new date for Indian Ocean talks. Such talks were not at all confining for us. As for bases, he would only mention Berbera, the installations in Ethiopia and the PDRY. In any case, we would get in touch soon, because our objective continued to be to reduce the arms competition between us.

Gromyko did not believe that the Secretary was so uninformed as not to know that the Soviet Union had no bases in that area. It did have naval vessels which called at various ports. The Secretary had started naming countries by initials; if Gromyko were to do so, there might not be enough letters in the alphabet to cover them all. He suggested they go on to other subjects.

Middle East

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Turning to the Middle East, the Secretary wanted to express his regret over the unfortunate delay in the delivery of the message President Carter had sent to President Brezhnev at the conclusion of the Camp David talks, which reported the events at Camp David. Unfortunately that message had not reached President Brezhnev until Monday afternoon, and we regretted the fact that he did not have it available to him early Monday morning, as we had hoped. In that message the President had tried to describe the events at Camp David and the results of those meetings. Since that time the Secretary had not had an opportunity of filling in Gromyko, but surely Gromyko was familiar with the documents resulting from those discussions. The Secretary would be happy to answer any questions Gromyko

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had with respect to those documents, or to comment on his recent trip to the Middle East, if Gromyko thought this desirable or useful.

Gromyko wanted to ask one question: what attitude to the Camp David "deal" had the Secretary encountered on the part of Syria, Saudi Arabia and Jordan? Gromyko would like to hear this from the Secretary personally.

The Secretary said that the reaction to the Camp David discussions and the results in all three countries was that they wished to study the results of the meetings further, and to consult with each other before reaching a final conclusion regarding their attitude. Three subjects had been of principle concern to them:

1. Failure to include any section on Jerusalem;
2. The question of the 1948 refugees, the so-called diaspora refugees; and
3. The question of whether the mechanism envisioned in the General Framework would be sufficient to ensure self-determination for the people in the West Bank and Gaza.

In addition, President Asad had pressed the Secretary at some length regarding the intent of the General Framework. He had wanted to know whether the objective of the General Framework was to arrive at a comprehensive settlement. The Secretary had answered him in the affirmative, and had taken him through the documents, pointing out that the first paragraph of the substantive section of the General Framework said in unequivocal terms that the goal was a settlement in accord with all the principles of Resolution 242 and the legitimate interests of the Arab people. In addition, President Asad had made it very clear that he believed that President Sadat had made a separate peace which was harmful to the cause of Arab solidarity. That statement had repeated the statement Asad had made at the meeting of the Steadfastness Front just a few hours before the Secretary's arrival.

The initial draft had contained a section on Jerusalem. The Secretary pointed out that agreement had been reached on a number of items, such as that Jerusalem was not to be a divided

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city again, that there would be free access to the holy places of each religion, and that representatives of each respective religion would have full authority and control of their respective holy places, etc. On the question of sovereignty we had run into a stone wall. It had proved impossible to resolve their differences, and as a result the parties had decided not to include a section on Jerusalem in the General Framework. Instead, the views of the parties and the United States had been stated in separate letters which had been made public. In all frankness, the Secretary could not say that he was happy with this omission of Jerusalem from the General Framework.

On the question of the 1948 refugees the agreements merely provided in general terms that the parties would work together to bring about a just solution to the refugee problem. We in the United States did not believe this to be sufficient, and President Carter had emphasized this as a problem in his speech to Congress. The Secretary said that he would probably comment on this matter, which was important and needed to be resolved promptly, in what he would say in the General Assembly tomorrow.

Finally, on the third question: as Gromyko knew, the documents provided for setting up a mechanism to determine the final status of the West Bank and its relationship to its neighbors. There would also be a mechanism for negotiating the outstanding issues, to be resolved in a peace treaty between Jordan and Israel. These two questions were intertwined, and therefore the document envisaged a single set of negotiations with two committees working in parallel. The mechanism also provided that this process was to be completed by the end of the transitional period of five years. Further, it was envisaged that representatives of the Palestinians would work in these two committees. This same section of the General Framework provided that as soon as possible (in the Secretary's judgement in a few months, perhaps three or four) there would be established for the interim period a Self-Governing Authority with full autonomy to govern the West Bank. The people that would be elected to that Self-Governing Authority would be residents of the West Bank, and that meant anyone, regardless of his political affiliation, could put his name forward to be elected. People affiliated with the PLO would be as free to put their names forward as any other resident of the West Bank. At the time that the Self-Governing Authority takes over, the Israeli Military Government in all its aspects would be withdrawn.

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The Secretary noted that he had provided a long answer to Gromyko's question.

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Gromyko said that he appreciated the information the Secretary had given him. As for the substance of the Camp David agreement, he had to say at the very outset that the Soviet Union was vigorous in its disapproval of the agreement and, even more, condemned it. The Soviets did not believe that this was a step toward peace in the Middle East. They were convinced that considerations of a temporary nature had gained the upper hand as far as the United States was concerned. As for Sadat, he had proved long ago that he had a weak political backbone. Here he had capitulated. As for Israel, it had really obtained something that did not belong to it. Israel had committed aggression, and justice demanded that it evacuate all the lands it had occupied. Only on the basis of restitution of all the territories taken away from the Arabs, along with arrangements to ensure the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, could a just settlement of the problem be obtained and a just and lasting peace be established in the Middle East. A just settlement would be equally advantageous for all the parties in the Middle East, the Arabs as well as the Israelis. For its part, the Soviet Union had always stood up for Israel's right to exist as an independent state, and the Israeli leaders knew this full well. As for the Arab world, it was divided, but, Gromyko would ask, in what way? It had turned out that it was Egypt that found itself in total isolation as a result of its policy of capitulation. Of course, there were some other states that were undecided or hesitant, but as a whole the Arab world could be said to be against Arab territories belonging to someone else. The Arab world was also united in favor of protecting the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, in favor of a genuine, and not an illusory, peace. The Soviets believed that in the end the Arab people, the Arab world, will win. Of course, at this point, no one could predict the timing or the specific form in which this will happen. But, surely the Arabs will not reconcile themselves to losing their territories as a result of an imposed and one-sided settlement. The present settlement could not be considered as leading to peace in that area.

This, in general, was the view of the Soviet Union, and this is what Gromyko had wanted to bring to the Secretary's attention. President Brezhnev had set this forth in his speech and had considered it necessary for Gromyko to set forth the Soviet position during this private meeting with the Secretary.

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The Secretary wanted to comment briefly. He had read Gromyko's speech, and also knew what President Brezhnev had said. He would like to comment as follows:

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First, regarding withdrawal from occupied territory. Under the Sinai Accord, Israel will withdraw from all occupied territories in the Sinai up to the international boundary. Secondly, the principle of withdrawal in accordance with Resolution 242 applies on all fronts. The documents make mention of Resolution 242 in all its parts, and speak of non-acquisition of territory by war. The question of Palestinian legitimate rights is dealt with in the document, in the section dealing with the West Bank and Gaza. It states that the solution must recognize the legitimate rights and requirements of the Palestinian people. Further, a process is initiated to determine the final status of the West Bank and Gaza, and, finally, the Secretary would stress again that what is contemplated is a comprehensive settlement that would provide for all the parties eventually to resolve their differences in negotiations in accordance with the provisions of Resolution 242.

The Secretary said he was not suggesting that the Camp David agreements were perfect, or that they included everything we would have liked to see them include. He did believe, however that they were a major step on the road toward peaceful resolution of the Middle East problems and recognition of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people.

Gromyko said that, as for Sinai, the Soviets had their own understanding of the situation. He could not agree with what the Secretary had said regarding Sinai. Sadat had not achieved any kind of sovereignty over the Sinai. Sovereignty meant the right to dispose fully over one's own territory, but Sadat had not achieved that. As for references to Resolution 242, they had no meaning, because each party had its own interpretation of what 242 meant. The US had its own interpretation, Israel had its own and Egypt and the others had their own. He had to note that there was not much difference between the interpretation of the US and that of Israel. Israel had always proceeded from the premise that 242 does not mean that it must give up all occupied Arab territories. In fact, after Camp David Begin had said as much. The United States appeared to take the same position. As for Sadat, he had well demonstrated what he had done by his conduct after the Camp David meeting.

Gromyko thought that they could end their discussions at this point.

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The Secretary noted that Gromyko had not recalled the US position correctly. The US position has always been and remains that Resolution 242 means withdrawal to the 1947 borders with minor rectifications.

Gromyko noted that Israel had always understood the word "minor" in its own way. One only needed to take a look to see what Camp David did to the West Bank.

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