

DECLASSIFIED
Authority NND969000
By RIF NARA Date 1-31-06

THE SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON

S/S Pending

14242

September 18, 1969

TOP SECRET/NOFORN

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

Subject: Suggested Position To Take With
Israeli Prime Minister Meir During
Her Forthcoming Visit

At last week's NSC meeting on the Middle East, I undertook to give you at an early date our thoughts on what we expect Mrs. Meir to say in her talks with you next week and what position you might take with her. Attached are a) a Scope and Objectives Paper for her visit (Tab A) and b) suggested talking points (Tab B) on the principal issues: the Arab-Israeli settlement efforts; Israel's defense requirements and expected economic aid requests; and Israel's nuclear weapons program.

We anticipate that Mrs. Meir will reiterate Israel's strong opposition to our approach to a settlement, urging that we carry the major power efforts no further and in particular that we not move from our present positions on the substantive terms of a settlement which she will say already go beyond what is acceptable to Israel.

I will, of course, be reporting to you on my first Gromyko talk which will take place before your meeting with Mrs. Meir.

Mrs. Meir's visit offers an opportunity to get across clearly to her why we believe Israel's

3

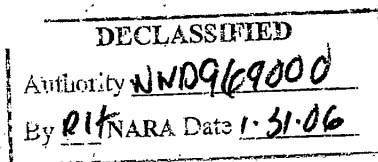
Pol 7 ISR
KA
Pol 27-14
HROO-
XX DEF-12-5-200

TOP SECRET/NOFORN

Group 3

Downgraded at 12-year intervals;
not automatically declassified.

NOFORN REVIEW	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cat. A	Caption removed; transferred to O/FADRC
<input type="checkbox"/> Cat. B	Transferred to O/FADRC with additional access controlled by S/S
<input type="checkbox"/> Cat. C	Caption and custody retained by S/S
Reviewed by: Ambassador W. Witman, II	
Date: <u>3/10</u>	19 <u>76</u>



TOP SECRET/NODIS

2

standpat policy is detrimental to both U.S. and Israeli interests and no longer tenable in the situation we now face both in the area and in the diplomatic field. In doing so we should, I believe, seek to prepare the Israelis for moves on our part designed to counter the growing impression in the world that we support territorial expansion as a legitimate Israeli peace aim.

We will at the same time need to do all we can to reassure Israel of our support for its basic security. Your comments to Mrs. Meir on Israel's request for 100 additional Skyhawks and 25 more Phantoms will be particularly relevant in this regard.

We have just this week received a full presentation by the Chief of the Israeli Air Force, General Hod, of the reasons supporting Israel's new aircraft request, including the Israeli estimate of Arab air strike and defense capabilities and Arab-Israeli aircraft ratios projected through 1970, as well as an exposition of Israel's concept of the role of air power in the Arab-Israeli context. With Defense, we are analyzing Israel's request in the light of General Hod's presentation and of our own political and intelligence estimates.

For now, Israel is in good shape militarily and, based on present known USSR-UAR arms deals, will be for at least a year or so. From the standpoint of Israel's security, there is no need for a decision on additional aircraft to be communicated to Mrs. Meir during her visit. Nevertheless, given the 18-month lead time on new aircraft procurement (Israel's new requirements look toward 1971-72), we should reach a decision no later than the end of this year, if not sooner. In the final analysis, political factors will, of course, weigh heavily in that decision.

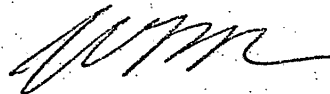
TOP SECRET/NODIS

DECLASSIFIED

Authority NWD969000
By RIF NARA Date 1-31-06TOP SECRET/NODIS

3

The immediate question is what to say to Mrs. Meir. To reflect a negative attitude toward Israel's request would only make the Israelis excessively nervous at a time when we need to retain their confidence in our basic intentions toward them. On the other hand, the Israelis know that such decisions take time and thus do not really expect an immediate answer even though they will press for one. I therefore believe that the line to take with Mrs. Meir is the following: We have just received the full rationale behind Israel's request and are actively studying it. The Israelis will understand that we could not be in a position to give them a reply so soon. We are conscious of the lead time factor and will take it into account as our examination of their request proceeds. We are as anxious as Israel to maintain its defense capability at a sufficiently high level, and Mrs. Meir can be assured that we will view Israel's request sympathetically in this light.



William P. Rogers

S/S cwm
A True CopyTOP SECRET/NODIS

DECLASSIFIED

Authority WND969000
By RLK NARA Date 1-31-06TOP SECRET/NODIS

- 29 -

loans poses particular difficulties for us in the current climate of limitations on A.I.D.'s resources. At this time we can hold out no prospect that development loans will be available.

- With regard to those major military items which we sell to Israel, we will continue to be as generous with credit as we can.
- We expect to respond in the near future to Israel's request for a 1970 P.L. 480 agreement.
- We have the question of cooperation in building a desalting plant under active study and expect to be in touch with Israeli representatives shortly on that.

IV. Israel's Nuclear Weapons and Missiles Programs

Summary (See separate Background Paper for full discussion)

Our intelligence indicates Israel is proceeding rapidly to develop a capability to produce a nuclear

TOP SECRET/NODIS

DECLASSIFIED

Authority WND969000By RIF NARA Date 1-31-06TOP SECRET/NODIS

- 30 -

weapon. A crude bomb may already have been completed. Israel has never taken us into its confidence concerning its intentions or the status of its program. Our visits to Dimona have been so circumscribed by Israel's insistence on brief perfunctory "visits" that they have produced no assurance concerning Israel's intentions. Under Secretary Richardson's two approaches to Ambassador Rabin about Israel's nuclear program have not elicited a substantive Israeli reply, and the Israelis have been advised that we will probably wish to raise this subject during Mrs. Meir's visit.

You may want to raise this matter with Mrs. Meir

along the following lines:

-- Israel's reticence to discuss its nuclear program in a meaningful dialogue with us gives us grave concern. While we can appreciate the reasons which may prompt Israel to work toward attainment of an

TOP SECRET/NODIS

DECLASSIFIED

Authority WMD9169000By RIF NARA Date 1-31-06TOP SECRET/NODIS

- 31 -

independent nuclear capability, Israel must understand and take into account that our special relationship involves us in that issue as well.

-- It is essential that there be no misunderstanding between us. Our willingness to assist in meeting Israel's defense requirements is a matter of record. But we cannot view those requirements outside the context of Israel's nuclear policy. There is an inherent relationship which we cannot ignore, given the extent to which our national interests are affected.

-- We are convinced, following a great deal of study and thought, that Israel's possession of nuclear weapons at the ready would neither provide Israel with the security it is intended to serve, nor would it in any way serve the interests of peace

TOP SECRET/NODIS

DECLASSIFIED

Authority WWD969000By R1K NARA Date 1-31-06TOP SECRET/NODIS

, - 32 -

in the area. Peace cannot be built on intimidation, nor does possession of the bomb solve security problems or lessen the need for conventional abilities. We can speak with some experience in these fields.

-- We have called on Israel (Richardson-Rabin July 29) to provide clear and firm assurances that Israel will not possess nuclear weapons. Knowing Israel's capabilities, we would not expect Israel to abandon its potential for putting together such a weapon at some future time if circumstances should demand it.

-- We again urge Israel to sign and ratify the NPT. We see no reason why this is not possible, and have been hoping for several years to have a meaningful and frank dialogue with Israel on the subject. Anything less would be completely out of

TOP SECRET/NODIS

DECLASSIFIED

Authority WWD969000
By 214 NARA Date 1-31-06TOP SECRET/NODIS

, - 33 -

character ~~in terms~~ of the relationship we and Israel value so highly.

-- We have also asked for assurances that Israel will not produce or deploy the "Jericho" missile. Any assurances Israel extends with respect to nuclear weapons would be seriously weakened by deployment of such strategic missiles, which only make sense to us as nuclear weapons carriers and will be seen as such in the eyes of the world.

-- We look forward to a full and frank discussion of these matters after Israel's elections and the formation of the new government.

-- We earnestly hope our point of view is understood: any further hesitation by Israel in this matter of vital concern to us cannot help but cast a shadow over our relations in general.

TOP SECRET/NODIS