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DEPARTMENT OF STATE
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Memorandum of Conversation

DATE: 14 February 1978

SUBJECT: Middle East, Horn, Belgrade CSCE, SALT

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NR-72

PARTICIPANTS:

US

USSR

The Secretary
Marshall D. Shulman

Amb. Anatoliy Dobrynin

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Ambassador Dobrynin came in at our request February 14.
The discussion covered the following matters:

1. Middle East. The Secretary reported that the Sadat visit had been useful and that agreement had been reached to continue the negotiations, with an effort in the first instance to reach agreement on a statement of general principles, and then to bring others into the discussions.

In his meeting with Dayan on Thursday, the Secretary said, he proposed to review the statement of general principles, the question of Israeli settlements, and the West Bank/Gaza/Palestinian issues. On the latter cluster of issues, we would maintain our preference for a Palestinian homeland linked to Jordan, but a number of problems would need to be resolved beforehand, including Palestinian participation in the determination of their own future, and the conditions for an interim arrangement. Although the Israelis had manifested their unhappiness with some of our recent statements, the Secretary said it was evident that these statements were not new, and that the Israelis were prepared to have the US continue to perform a facilitating role. After the meeting with Dayan, he said, Atherton would be leaving for the Middle East, to move as necessary between the capitals to seek acceptance of the declaration of general principles as a first step in the process.

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The Secretary gave Dobrynin advance notice of an announcement to be made later in the day concerning the US intention to permit the sale of specified aircraft to Israel, Egypt and Saudi Arabia.

2. Horn. The Secretary spoke of the mounting US concern over the course of events, and the need for prompt movement toward a ceasefire and a negotiated settlement. He expressed the belief that the time had come to work through the UN Security Council, and reported that he had asked Andrew Young to talk about this with Ambassador Troyanovsky in New York. In response to a question from Dobrynin about the results expected from a Security Council discussion, the Secretary listed the following: ceasefire; recognition of international boundaries; withdrawal of the Somalis from the Ogaden; withdrawal of all foreign troops, including Soviet and Cuban, from Ethiopia and Somalia; and the beginning of steps leading toward a negotiated solution. Dobrynin expressed the view that there should be an immediate appeal for a Somali withdrawal, since this was, in the Soviet view, a precondition for the other steps. Dobrynin asked who should take the initiatives in calling for an SC meeting. The Secretary said it would be best if Nigeria or Gabon did so, since an African initiative would not make it appear that the UN was taking matters out of OAU hands, but that we would do so if necessary. Dobrynin said it should not appear to be a Soviet-American confrontation, and the Secretary agreed that an African initiative would be better from this point of view as well.

The Secretary emphasized the importance of a firm commitment that the Ethiopians and the Cubans would not cross into Somali territory, and the serious consequences that would follow if they did. Dobrynin repeated the assurances of the Ethiopians on this point, and added that Raul Castro had also made it clear during his visit to Moscow that the Cuban forces had no intention of moving into Somali territory. Dobrynin did not dispute the assertion that the Cubans were participating in the fighting, but insisted that Soviet personnel were not doing so.

Dobrynin said he would transmit the message to Moscow, and could not anticipate what its reaction would be to the Security Council move. He pointed out, however, that it had been negative up to this point and the USSR had insisted upon prior Somali withdrawal as a prerequisite to negotiations. He ventured his own opinion that a declaration of Somali intention to withdraw might suffice to start the process, if it were given without conditions, and if the withdrawal were to be completed within a definite time period, such as two weeks.