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THE SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON

by
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September 12, 1977

MEMORANDUM FOR: THE PRESIDENT

FROM: Cyrus Vance ✓

1. Palestinians - Phil Habib called in Ambassador Dinitz yesterday afternoon to give him the text of the statement we issued at the noon press briefing today on the Palestinian issue. Dinitz expressed concern that the statement would create the impression that the U. S. position on the PLO had changed because it did not expressly reaffirm our existing position. Phil assured him that our position had not changed. When Dinitz complained that the U. S. had no need to issue this clarification, Phil was firm in rejecting the charge. He pointed out that the Israeli Government had been leaking every day its negotiating strategy, which inevitably created pressures for us to clarify our views.

Ambassador Lewis talked today with Dayan on this matter. Dayan was personally upset that our statement was being issued so close to his departure for the U. S. He conceded Lewis' points that "Palestinian" neither precluded nor was identical with the PLO and that our statement said nothing new; but even this much consideration of a PLO role made him unhappy. He told Lewis his Foreign Ministry would issue a counter-statement rejecting a role for the PLO under any circumstances.

The Israeli Embassy issued a statement this afternoon which repeated the refusal of this Government of Israel to negotiate with members of the "so-called PLO." The statement noted that the Government of Israel had agreed to participation of Palestinian Arab representatives at Geneva in the Jordanian delegation so long as they were not members of the PLO.

At our noon briefing today, Hodding Carter told the press that all the original Geneva parties must agree before there can be any broadening of participation and that only if the PLO accepted 242

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The
statement
is
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would we be prepared to enter into a dialogue with it. The press so far has interpreted the statement variously as another "shift" in the U. S. position toward the Palestinians and as a strengthening of what you said in Plains on August 8.

2. AWACS - I have just learned that Hubert will not be returning to the Senate for 3-4 weeks because of his need to receive radiation treatments at the University of Minnesota. His absence will certainly hinder our AWACS fight in the Senate. I imagine that Frank Church will now chair the Foreign Relations Committee's hearings which are set to begin on September 19th.

On the House side the International Relations Committee is contemplating three hearings: two by subcommittees and one by the full committee. No dates have been set.

Our strategy continues to count on an early favorable vote by the House Committee. We will not, of course, ignore the Senate Committee. The vote in the Senate will be quite close. We will focus on Joe Biden, Paul Sarbanes and John Glenn whose advocacy we wish to strengthen. We are still in the process of contacting the membership of the House Committee. We will have covered all the members in the next day or so. I am enclosing a vote count which should give you an idea of where we stand in the House.

3. Interim Agreement - You have asked if we can submit to Congress our proposed statement of policy, and that of the Soviets, expressing the intention to continue to observe the Interim Agreement's limitations after the Agreement expires. We agree that we can and should give Congress the texts of these statements. However, if we were to submit them formally pursuant to the Case Act, we would be acknowledging that they constituted an international agreement. This, in turn, would raise questions as to whether we were violating 1961 arms control statute which prohibits actions that "obligate the United States... to limit [its] armaments" except pursuant to treaty or statutory authorizations. We have thought it best to try to confine our actions on the Interim Agreement to steps which will not be seen by most members of Congress as an agreement imposing a continuing legal obligation to observe the Interim Agreement. The approach about which we are consulting contemplates that there will be no obligation in effect after October 3.

I thought the only requirement was that we notify Congress

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4. Margaret Thatcher - I met this afternoon with Margaret Thatcher and her foreign policy advisor John Davies who you will be meeting with tomorrow morning. The principal subjects raised which I expect she may repeat with you tomorrow are: South Africa, Rhodesia and the Middle East.

South Africa - Mrs. Thatcher said the Conservative Party would never agree to sanctions against South Africa because South Africa provides the UK with vital raw materials -- without which they could not survive. However, she said the Tories have made it clear to the South Africans that no responsible British political leader supports the separate development of the races in South Africa.

Rhodesia - Mrs. Thatcher was skeptical that our joint efforts will be successful. She is opposed to including any black "terrorists" in the Rhodesian Army -- which she likened to the British Army accepting elements of the Irish Republican Army. She said the only way a new government could succeed in Rhodesia is if it can maintain internal security -- and only the present Rhodesian Army could do that.

Middle East - She strongly supports our efforts in the Middle East and especially noting our public support for a Palestinian homeland. However, she is concerned about the rigidity of the Israeli Government. She said that public support in the U.K. for Israel has significantly diminished.

5. Romanian Report of Israeli Visit - I met this afternoon with the Romanian Ambassador to hear his report on Mr. Begin's visit to Bucharest. Ambassador Nicolae first outlined the Romanian position on the Middle East settlement which is very close to our position. He then outlined the Israeli position as given to Mr. Ceausescu by Prime Minister Begin. There are no real differences in the Israeli position from that which they had presented to us. The only difference was that Mr. Begin apparently went into less detail with the Romanians than he did with us. Mr. Ceausescu urged Mr. Begin to take a more realistic view of the situation saying that it would be impossible to achieve a settlement if this were done. It is Ceausescu's belief that Begin is more flexible than his present position indicates. I probed to find out whether there was any specific basis for this conclusion. I was told that there was no specific indication which led to the conclusion but that it was an overall impression which Ceausescu drew from his discussions.

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I hope they are giving credit to Smith

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*Good
luck*

6. United Nations General Assembly - I will testify before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on September 26 on Panama and plan to leave almost immediately thereafter for New York for the United Nations General Assembly. I will be with you during your visit on October 4 and 5 and have sent separately to you my recommendations for your schedule. I plan to devote a large part of my time in New York to the Middle East and will meet with the Arab Foreign Ministers and Dayan on several occasions to continue the talks which we will have started in Washington. I will be in Washington on September 28 for the meetings with Syrians and Jordanians. My schedule also provides ample time to follow the Rhodesian and Namibian questions.

Good

7. Ambassadorial Goals - You recently asked about the specific goals and objectives of our ambassadors abroad. We have been working to update our lists of goals and objectives for every country in which we have diplomatic representation. These lists will be available for your review by the weekend.

8. Elections in Pakistan - You asked when the elections in Pakistan will be held. They are presently planned for October 18. However, as Pakistan's Acting Foreign Minister Agha Shahi told the French in Paris, the elections may not be held before November 18. We understand there are considerable pressures on Zia from his military colleagues to delay, but the reasons behind postponement are not clear. They may relate to the judicial proceedings currently being planned against Bhutto.

Enclosure:
Vote Count.

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