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<p>#20a- meeting notes</p>	<p>meeting of President, Abba Eban, others Secret sanitized 8-9-85 per NLS 84-324 more info released 2-10-93 5 p. NLS 91-200 Open 3/31/00 NLS 00-38</p>	<p>10/24/67</p>	<p>A</p>

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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

22

October 25, 1967
6:45 p.m.

TO THE PRESIDENT

Tom

FROM: Tom Johnson

Attached are George Christian's
notes of last night's meeting.

Attachment

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NOTES ON THE PRESIDENT'S MEETING WITH THE FOLLOWING:

Members of the Israeli Group

Abba Eban, Foreign Minister
Avraham Harmon, Ambassador
Ephraim Evron, Minister

Members of the American Group

The President
Lucius D. Battle
Walt W. Rostow
George Christian

The President advised Mr. Eban that he had been brought up to date by Walt Rostow on the discussions with Secretary Rusk and others.

Mr. Eban said he was instructed by Prime Minister Eshkol to discuss with the President the larger issues, rather than the more immediate problems. Eban said the events of the last three days made it all the more urgent to get away from the situation of cease-fires and truce lines and settle for nothing less than peace. He said there is evidence of movement among the Arabs toward some sort of settlement. While hotheads might think of war, war has been tried three times without success, he said, so it is the Israeli position to try for peace. He said it is impossible to go on with jerry-built structures. The countries in the Middle East must have:

1. Peace treaties, not an armistice, he defined this as a "live and let live" peace, not necessarily a peace where neighbors love each other.
2. Permanent, accepted and respected frontiers. He said the President's "lucid and precise" points in his June 19 speech were very close to the Israeli position.

Mr. Eban said one prerequisite to peace is that the Arabs do not use their numerous votes in the United Nations to put across a negative plan which leaves many problems unsolved. "If we withdraw to our positions on June 4 without peace, this would be irrational and irresponsible," he said. "We cannot do this twice in a decade. We would just have to say no. National suicide is not an international obligation."

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Mr. Eban said Israel does not want the United Nations to endorse their position but wants it to state that it wants Israel and the Arab States to negotiate their differences with United Nations assistance. He said Israel has been cooperative with Ambassador Goldberg on his plans and tactics to achieve a means of reaching negotiations.

He stated that Israel wants to explore peace ideas with the UAR and Jordan. He was less optimistic about approaching Syria. "Even the Russians say the Syrians are wild men," he said. Mr. Eban made these points:

1. Egypt can get its territory back. All they give in return is peace, which includes access to the Suez and the Gulf of Aqaba.
2. There should be space between the opposing forces. The Sinai by nature is a desert and a barrier; it should not be full of troops.
3. Gaza is a finger in the stomach of Israel and there should be a more rational frontier.
4. As for Jordan, Israel wants peace so much that "we'll stretch our imagination" and try to work out territorial problems.
5. We must get away from backward looking problems. You can't get an agreement from people who won't meet with each other. Israel will not be rigid about techniques but it will not go away from the cease-fire lines and remain in doubt and danger as to the future.
6. He has studied the June 19 speech carefully and on the problems of settlement "we are very close together."

Mr. Eban said Mr. Eskhol had also asked him to take up the matter of a balance of strength. He pointed out that Egypt did not lose many pilots in the war, since the planes were caught on the ground, and the air reinforcements furnished Egypt by the USSR were imposing. He said 150 Israeli planes were the difference between life and death for Israel during the war, and compared this to the British situation in 1940. He said he was glad Israel could reach an agreement with Secretary McNamara. He said Israel hoped to get 77 aircraft from the United States and France by next year. Securing the Israeli air arm is essential to balance of strength and survival, he said.

Mr. Eban returned in his discussion to the question of peace, declaring that "Israel does not want to sit in its chairs and wait for the Arabs... we

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will be active and try to accelerate the process," he said. "They and we have ways of exchanging signals."

He noted that King Hussein is coming to the United States again. He related that on May 1 Israel thought Jordan would try to keep out of the war, but instead Hussein signed an agreement with Egypt on May 30 and opened up on June 5. He said this was a tragic decision on the part of Hussein and Israel does not hold him in much esteem, but if he asks for peace, we'll try to reach a settlement. He started a war then lost it, so he is not in a very good position. We have not worked out detailed maps as these are subject to negotiation, but you could say to him "he can get a good deal. He ought to make a decision soon. The Palestinian Arabs might want a separate state...we haven't encouraged them because we still want peace with Jordan."

The President responded that he could not add to what Secretary Rusk and Secretary McNamara had told him. "You know our problems and we understand yours. Our objectives are about the same."

The President made these points:

--- We share your feelings that we must fashion a peace structure in that part of the world. We'll do all we can to contribute our part, but peace can best be achieved by your dealing with each other.

--- Israel disregarded my counsel last May and while in the short run the decision to fight looks good, we may all regret it in the long run.

--- The most awesome decision he has made during his Presidency was made following the Israeli attack in his hotline conversations with Kosygin.

--- He understands Israel's reluctance to counsel with the United States on military actions and it is probably good that it doesn't.

--- The President has strong convictions about our responsibilities in the Middle East, especially toward the people of Israel.

--- There is a growing sentiment in this country to "come home" and it is contagious. I do not treat lightly the fact that the AID bill will be cut from \$3.2 billion to \$2.2 billion. The voices of the Mid-West and the rural farmers are manifested in the Congress with increasing effectiveness.

--- The President is more handicapped today than ever because of the shortsightedness of our friends. He shudders to think of the repercussions when Congress gets into the arms sales. "However, I have commitments

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and I intend to honor and uphold them." The Congress is becoming increasingly independent and isolationist.

--- The Russians think the United States has influence with Israel. I don't think that is the case.

--- Israel thinks we have influence with the Russians and that is not the case.

--- We want to preserve Israel independence and nationhood.

--- The President is more alarmed than anyone here about Soviet arms build-up. "We must not overlook their humiliation. It constantly prods them to recoup in some way. I am fearful of the ultimate outcome with all of the price they paid. This is the most difficult and dangerous problem now facing us. They want what you have in the Middle East and they are going to get it if they can. We must maintain policies that will keep the USSR from fastening its tentacles on the countries in the Middle East."

--- The United States will do everything it can to pursue the development of a peace structure in that area. The only sensible and just course is a cease-fire until we can bring the nations together. "I feel that the further away from June 5 you get, the further you are getting away from peace."

--- He appreciates the moderate philosophy Eban has expounded.

--- But we are almost back to the Gerald Nye days when the monstrous munitions maker was on every school child's tongue.

--- On arms, we have made commitments, and we'll try to keep them. "I do not need to convince you of my friendship. I didn't double the amount that came to me for the purpose of liquidating Israel."

The President said there is in this country an atmosphere against foreign commitments, reflected in the attitudes of some Senators. These men are certainly not for protecting Israel, and do not feel we should carry out our treaties elsewhere. He said that one told him that "we should abandon Southeast Asia because they are not our kind of people." The President said if that's the basis of our foreign policy "you've done had it." He said he was going to do the best he could, but the situation was more serious than the last time he and Eban talked.

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The President said in Southeast Asia he had the Tonkin Gulf Resolution with the instruction to deter aggression. "In the case of Israel about all I have is a toast."

The President said he obtains much comfort from Jewish people in this country, noting that a recent New York poll showed Jewish voters favoring him by 81 to 7. "That proves you are still the smartest people in the world," he said.

The President said the United States is going to do its best to exercise power in that part of the world; that it will be a just policy as far as Israel is concerned.

Mr. Eban said the President had already helped immensely at Glassboro by keeping the USSR from being entirely negative on a peace settlement in the area.

The President repeated again that he was disappointed in the attack on June 5 after his entreaties to Mr. Eban not to commence hostilities. "But I must say, that you did what you did do very well."

Mr. Eban replied that he and the President had talked on May 26. Were it not for that conversation, he said, Israel would have gone to war on May 27. The ultimate decision was made after the situation deteriorated to the point there was no other course of action, he said.


George Christian

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