

MEMORANDUM

the President has seen

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

INFORMATION

May 1
'78

MEMORANDUM FOR: THE PRESIDENT

FROM: ZBIGNIEW BRZEZINSKI *ZB.*

SUBJECT: Your Meeting with Prime Minister Begin, May 1, 1978, 1:30 - 2:00 p.m.

In the brief time you will have with Prime Minister Begin, it will not be possible to cover much substantive ground. He will have spent the morning with Secretary Vance, who will call to brief you on those talks before Begin arrives for his meeting with you.

Although this meeting is primarily of symbolic importance, there are a number of points that you will want to emphasize. To review where we now stand, Sadat has most recently emphasized the need for a clear Israeli commitment to the principle of withdrawal from all occupied territories, with some minor modifications in the 1967 line on the West Bank, and provided that Israel's security needs are adequately met. This last point is potentially significant.

When Dayan was asked about withdrawal once Israel's security requirements were satisfied, he emphasized that the continuation of Israeli settlements was also essential and that these could not be withdrawn. He also stated that there was no chance of getting this Israeli government to commit itself to withdrawal from the West Bank under any conditions.

Dayan also said to Secretary Vance that after a five-year interim period, the only significant unresolved issue concerning the West Bank / Gaza would be sovereignty (or, more concretely, borders, withdrawal and security). He was unable to say anything about how this issue would be settled, but he emphatically rejected the idea of a referendum. At Vance's request, he said that he would seek a cabinet decision on how and whether the question of sovereignty would be decided after five years.

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With this background in mind, you might make the following substantive points after appropriate remarks about Israel's 30th anniversary and the deep friendship between our two countries:

- The US commitment to Israel's security is unwavering. We believe that practical security arrangements can be worked out in negotiations. Sadat has most recently conditioned his call for Israel's withdrawal on the willingness of the Arab parties to negotiate with Israel on satisfactory security arrangements.
- Sadat has told us that he remains committed to the search for peace, and that he is willing to help work out arrangements for an interim agreement for the West Bank/Gaza. But for further progress to be made, he feels that he needs an Israeli commitment to eventual withdrawal in exchange for peace, recognition and security.
- The idea of a five-year interim agreement concerning the West Bank/Gaza seems to be gaining acceptance, and many of the elements of the "self-rule" proposal could be incorporated into such an agreement.
- One question that requires some further clarification is the means by which the question of sovereignty will be resolved after the five-year period. Our idea of a limited-choice referendum has been criticized by Israel, but what does Begin have in mind as an alternative? It is not enough simply to say that the question can be raised. At a minimum, could Israel make a commitment to negotiate a final agreement for the West Bank/Gaza after a five-year interim agreement which would be based on the principle of 242, i.e., peace for withdrawal?

You should not expect answers on these questions from Begin, but it will be important for him and his colleagues to know that we think some clarifications along these lines will be needed. You will want to strike a balance between your remarks in support of Israel's security and the need for hard decisions concerning the West Bank if progress is to be made in negotiations with Egypt. This is no time to signal to Begin that we are pulling back from positions we have previously taken.