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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Washington, D.C. 20520

S/S 17561

December 29, 1970

SECRET/NODIS

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. HENRY A. KISSINGER
THE WHITE HOUSE

Subject: Israeli Agreement to Resume Talks
under Ambassador Jarring

The Israeli Cabinet has decided Israel will resume participation in talks under Ambassador Jarring. We can be virtually certain that the Knesset December 29 will give the necessary approval to this decision and that Ambassador Jarring, who plans to be back in New York from Moscow January 2, will not delay in calling in the Israeli, Egyptian and Jordanian representatives.

Israeli Internal Deliberations

Thus ends a most agonizing period of decision-making for Israel. While some of the ostentatious deliberation with which the Israeli Government considered its decision may be attributed to narrow tactical purposes (e.g., making the Arabs uneasy, extracting the maximum commitment of support from us), it must be recognized that the final decision is viewed as a major concession by Israel, made with great misgivings by the Israeli Government.

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Our own assurances played an important role in bringing this about but so too did the general pressure of world opinion and, perhaps most significantly, the expectations of the Israeli people. Israelis are enjoying a tranquility such as they have not had since the months immediately after the 1967 war. When Eban commented in London the other day that, if Israel decided not to return to talks, it would have to explain why, he most likely had his own people's hopes and fears foremost in his mind.

In spite of this popular support for a resumption of talks (or, rather, for the continued cease-fire which is its necessary concomitant), the final decision--even when there was wide agreement it had to be positive--came not without some cliff-hanging moments. The National Religious Party, which has strong maximalist elements, could have provoked a major crisis by withholding its support for the GOI decision. That it did not seems largely due to the direct appeals of Mrs. Meir and Dayan.

Next Steps

Under the terms of our initiative, Jarring has considerable latitude in setting the modalities for talks. We have been in touch with him through Ambassador Beam to encourage him to establish a distinctive negotiating situation by shifting the venue from New York to, say, Cyprus, and calling on the parties to designate delegations specifically for the purpose. In this way, there might be obviated the unfortunate effect of UN representatives serving also as negotiators, with consequent blurring and even confusion of roles, tending to diminish the importance of the negotiation. Jarring is cool about Cyprus--the security aspects bother him--but he seems to recognize the usefulness of putting the negotiating process in sharp and separate relief. The Israelis would probably prefer Cyprus. The Arabs could be expected to resist the move from New York, but might well have no choice but to go along if Jarring were firm.

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We have urged that Jarring, in drafting the Secretary General's report to the Security Council which is due January 4, avoid apportioning blame for the delay in the talks and seek to forestall any early move to the Security Council.

We are also recommending to Jarring that he try to avoid, as he resumes his mandate, evoking past events in his communications to the parties in a manner that might provoke contention. In this respect the Israeli Cabinet decision announcement is helpful; it is spare and straightforward without reference to standstill violations.

Beyond the next few days the outlook is highly uncertain. Each side evinces total skepticism of the intentions of the other. Neither side gives a hint of flexibility. We anticipate initial exchanges through Jarring will consist of re-statements of familiar positions. Although we believe real negotiations on central substantive issues to be the best assurance of a continuing cease-fire, it is likely that such progress will not be made in January and that fairly quickly the emphasis will shift to the cease-fire, which expires February 5, and the terms under which it might be extended. The Israelis insist they will not negotiate under fire, and the Egyptians insist they will fire if there are not concessions to their position from negotiations. Dayan's efforts to achieve a new "technical" cease-fire with the UAR foundered on UNTSO's unreadiness to become involved in an unpromising initiative that would have complicated its relations with the Egyptians. We have no reason to believe Dayan's own strong feelings, widely shared in Israel, on the essentiality of such an arrangement have diminished. It is quite possible the Israelis will make another try within the framework of negotiations.

Our Posture

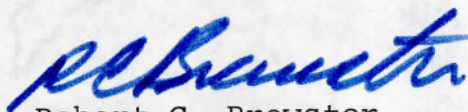
We will continue in the immediate future our efforts to stimulate Jarring to an energetic conception of his

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task. As for the parties, our intention is, as we have promised Israel, to let them take measure of each other in talks, without premature interference from us. It is just barely possible that, given the changes that have occurred in recent months, the parties may find they have something new to say to each other. We will soon know. In any event, we are giving priority attention to developing recommendations on alternative strategies we could follow to keep the negotiations going, including initiatives we might take on the question of peacekeeping and guarantees.



Robert C. Brewster
Acting Executive Secretary

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