

May 12, 1970

**Memorandum for the President, "Sisco Reflections
after Mid-east Trip"**

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<https://wilson-center-digital-archive.dvincitest.com/document/240286>

Summary:

A review of Secretary Sisco's trip to the Middle East, in which he inuits that neither Egypt nor Israel believe peace is possible with the other at the current time.

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English

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Original Scan

MEMORANDUM
THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

INFORMATION 9788
May 12, 1970

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: Henry A. Kissinger *HK*
SUBJECT: Sisco Reflections After Mid-East Trip

Secretary Rogers personally asked that you receive Assistant Secretary Sisco's characterization of the situation in the Near East as he saw it during his recent trip and his reflections on some of the basic assumptions we have been working from.

In short: Nasser believes he can outwait the Israelis, and Mrs. Meir believes no peace is possible with Nasser. Neither side believes the other has in good faith accepted the UN resolution as the basis for a settlement.

Mr. Sisco in stating his conclusions suggests that it is time to review certain of our working premises:

1. Whereas we have assumed that major power talks might break the impasse between the parties, they have not brought any of the parties to modify their positions in any significant way.
2. Whereas we have assumed that the Soviets, in order to defuse the situation and limit Soviet involvement in the UAR, might have an interest in pressing Nasser to adopt a more positive attitude toward negotiation, the Soviets to the contrary have deepened their military commitment to him.
3. Whereas we have assumed Israel might in the end go along with a properly guarded U.S. position, the Israelis have flatly rejected our position while asking us to support theirs militarily and economically.

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- 2 -

4. Whereas we have assumed that the Palestimians can be dealt with in a settlement purely as a refugee problem, they have become a quasi-independent force with a veto over policy in Jordan and, soon, in Lebanon.

Conclusion: Perhaps it is time to shift our attention from the two-power and four-power exercises to direct action vis-a-vis the principal actors--Israel, the Palestinians and the UAR. An options paper is being prepared.

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