



DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Washington, D.C. 20520

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*I agree with Norman's recommendations on page 2.*  
*I also think this is right approach*  
*PKK*  
*November 6, 1973*  
*RPM*

Thoughts on our Negotiating Posture with the Syrians

Introduction

The following thoughts flow from my experience of nine years, 1963-72, on dealing with the Syrians; i.e., four years in Damascus and five years of dealing with Syrian affairs from Beirut.

Background

Since the break in relations between the two countries in June 1967, direct U.S.-Syrian contacts have been minimal. While we have twice come close to having American representation within USINT, the SARG has drawn back each time at the last minute.

Following the cease-fire, the SARG has gone so far as to designate its Deputy Foreign Minister Zakaria Ismail now at the UN as an acceptable channel. It has, however, refused to receive Dr. Kissinger or Mr. Sisco in Damascus.

However, since these recent Syrian decisions, Egypt has reestablished diplomatic relations with the U.S. and an Egyptian-Israeli agreement on the implementation of the cease-fire has been reached under U.S. auspices.

Outlook

One continuing thread since 1967 in Syrian foreign policy thinking has been a fear that it might become isolated should an Arab-Israeli settlement materialize under UN Resolution 242. Thus, despite its formal original rejection of 242 in 1967, the SARG has increasingly displayed an ambivalent attitude toward 242, ending with a crabwise crawl into its acceptance via UN Res 338.

A second factor has been its habit of taking its foreign policy lead from Egypt. Thus, our resumption of relations

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with Egypt presents the SARG with a new flexibility in dealing with the U.S. Its old argument - fear of hostile popular reaction to resumption of U.S. relations, always rather thin, becomes increasingly so in this circumstance.

The conclusion of the Egyptian-Israeli agreement announced today (November 9) thus doubtless leaves the SARG now wondering if it is going to be left out in the cold. It has watched the U.S. use its good offices between Israel and Egypt while it is left with similar but unresolved issues with Israel. Its old fears of being left out under a 242 settlement thus probably are being revived.

Strategically, I assume the U.S. continues to desire restoration of relations with all Arab States including Syria. On the tactical level, however, I see advantage in letting the next move be that of the Syrians toward the U.S. which appears probable as the result of these old fears. In these circumstances the SARG becomes the suitor opening the way for the U.S. to ask more perhaps full restoration of relations on at least a reasonably sized American staffed Insterstests Section with full guarantees of diplomatic immunity, direct access to Syrian officialdom, etc., all of which should be spelled out in advance.

This recommendation is predicated on my direct experience in the two abortive moves toward resumption of a U.S. presence. The first was for part-time consular representation which broke down on the Syrian reluctance to assure diplomatic immunity for the officer. The second would have provided for only one officer and a secretary.

Thus in any new discussions, the initiation of which should be left to the Syrians, should be around a larger package, recognizing that the Syrians' ingrained love of bargaining will seek to cut done the size of this package.

NEA:N.K. ~~SP~~

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