

THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN

10/3/91 27495155

00074

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

October 1, 1991

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: MARLIN FITZWATER

SUBJECT: ZUCKERMAN PIECE ON ISRAEL

I have discussed the Mort Zuckerman piece on Israel with the NSC Staff. They recommend against a response, since there is no need to continue the debate on the loan guarantees. Furthermore, if the decision should be made to respond, they recommend against asking Brzezinski to respond. Richard Haass has offered to talk to Zuckerman about the article. They are personal friends.

We would then request a page in the magazine under the "Pro and Con" section for a formal response. We don't have a recommendation yet as to who is best to respond.

Copy given
to Marlin
10/3/91

At it -
Yours with a
cool-head
CW

Marlin
OK my sword
is now but a
plowshare

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

October 1, 1991

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM:

MARLIN FITZWATER

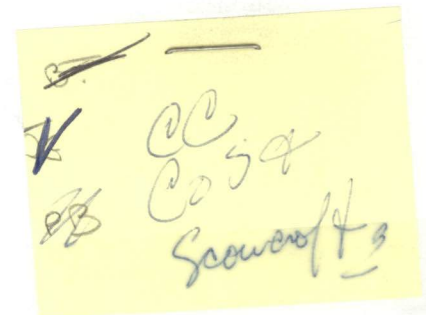


SUBJECT:

ZUCKERMAN PIECE ON ISRAEL

I have discussed the Mort Zuckerman piece on Israel with the NSC Staff. They recommend against a response, since there is no need to continue the debate on the loan guarantees. Furthermore, if the decision should be made to respond, they recommend against asking Brzezinski to respond. Richard Haass has offered to talk to Zuckerman about the article. They are personal friends.

We would then request a page in the magazine under the "Pro and Con" section for a formal response. We don't have a recommendation yet as to who is best to respond.



✓
PB
CC
COSA
Scowcroft

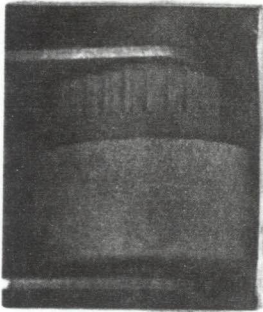
THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

DATE: 9/25/91

FROM THE PRESIDENT

TO: MARLIN FITZWATER

Do we need a rebuttal? What about
Zbigniew Brzezinski?



cc: John Sununu
Brent Scowcroft



THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

DATE: 9/25/91

FROM THE PRESIDENT

TO: MARLIN FITZWATER

Do we need a rebuttal? What about
Zbigniew Brzezinski?

cc: John Sununu
Brent Scowcroft

9/25
Copies
have been
distributed
FW
pending

PLAYING GAMES WITH ISRAEL

Think back to June 1981: Israel knocks out Iraq's Osirak atomic reactor, arguably preventing Saddam Hussein from having nuclear weapons for use in the gulf war a decade later. Leading the charge to punish Israel in the National Security Council for this prudent, pre-emptive peacekeeping: George Bush and James Baker.

To February 1991: Israel, its citizens under Scud attack, listens to U.S. pleas to restrain its legitimate right to defend itself. Israeli lives are sacrificed to confine the gulf war and defuse Saddam Hussein's diabolical policy to destroy the coalition.

To March 1991: At war's end, Bush asks Congress to join in public thanks—to everyone except Israel.

To July 1991: President Bush promises loan guarantees will not be used to bully Israel on the peace process. No "quid pro quo," he says.

To September 1991: In a bolt from the blue, President Bush declares that he will veto any congressional attempt to guarantee loans to Israel. (Adding insult to injury, he deprecates and distorts Israeli restraint during the war.) The reason, the administration says, is that the loans—needed to cope with the flood of Soviet immigrants—would interfere with the peace process.

This is patently ludicrous, since the peace process was moving along nicely without Arab states raising postponement of the loan guarantees as a condition for negotiations. Note that Bush's forgiveness of \$7 billion in Egyptian debts—his thank-you note from the American taxpayer to Cairo for its part in the gulf war—did not affect the peace process—nor did earlier loan guarantees to Israel.

Others argue that it's a financial issue—that American taxpayers would rather use the money elsewhere. This, too, is disingenuous. The U.S. government is merely being asked to guarantee bank loans, which Israel would be obliged to repay in full, plus interest. Since Israel has a perfect record of repaying such loans, the entire transaction would not cost U.S. taxpayers a cent.

What is really happening here? First the administration wants to postpone the loan guarantees 120 days

because of the delicacy of the peace talks. Then it changes its tune and asserts that the purpose is to make Israel freeze West Bank settlements. Yet all along, Secretary Baker stated that his achievement was specifically to get the Arabs to enter the talks without conditions. Who is fooling whom? Then Mr. Bush breaks his promise that loan guarantees would not be linked to politics, and does it by sabotaging a long-term U.S. policy to assist Soviet Jews to emigrate to Israel—the only country that will accept them.

Now it turns out that the Bush administration is diluting the commitments it made to the Israeli government to induce Israel to attend the peace conference—fudging on a pledge to support Israel in the event it withdraws because the Palestinian delegation to the peace conference associates itself with the Palestine Liberation Organization.

Even more fundamentally, the new Bush-Baker conditions amount to a betrayal of their own peace program. Think back to the endless peace initiatives in the Middle East. How many have been thwarted and destroyed by one side or another's insistence on conditions? The only breakthrough—the Sadat initiative that led to the Camp David Accords of 1979—came

precisely because there was no attempt by that wise man to bully Israel beforehand. He made a real offer of peace. The Israelis responded by yielding Sinai.

By stipulating the cessation of settlements, which is tantamount to Israel's abandoning its claim to the disputed territory, the administration has made a blunder: This effectively removes the main bargaining point—the future of the West Bank—from the peace table, before the negotiations begin. Even the Arabs understood that such unilateral concessions would never precede negotiations and were prepared to meet with the Israelis without such advance surrender. The U.S. objective is to force Israel back to pre-1967 borders, with minor adjustments. To force such a unilateral cessation abrogates United Nations Security Council Resolution 242, which calls for all states to negotiate "secure and recognized

*'Fundamentally,
the new
Bush-Baker
conditions amount
to a betrayal of
their own peace
program.'*



CONTINUED ON PAGE 109

EDITORIAL

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 110)

boundaries free from threats or acts of force." The record supports the Israeli view that it cannot concede any land without a real peace. Think what would have happened if Israel had yielded all of the West Bank territories before the gulf war. There is little doubt that Jordan and the new Palestinian entity would have joined Hussein. Instead of Scuds from 400 miles away, Israelis would have faced lethal mortar and artillery attacks launched near their main population centers.

As long as the region breeds Saddam Husseins, Hafez Assads, Muammar Qadhafis and Yassir Arafats with miserable regularity, no government in Jerusalem can forfeit control of the high ground of the West Bank. Virtually all Israeli settlements have been placed on this high ground to forestall the nightmare of Arab armies reaching the heart of Israel in a single night's movement. That is why both major political parties in Israel insist on retaining those parts of the West Bank essential for strategic security.

They are not alone in this judgment. The chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff in 1967 studied the situation on the ground and wrote that Israel requires far more than minor modifications to the pre-1967 boundaries to withstand aggression. Thus our most experienced military officers directly contradicted Mr. Bush's current position. The record also shows that Israel needs a buffer zone. Before 1967, Israel was constantly vulnerable to attacks from both armies and terrorists. Yes, its efficient Army has defeated the Arabs in each war between them. But times have changed. In the gulf war, America had to deploy a far larger and vastly stronger force than Israel possesses just to defeat Iraq. How much more power would have been needed if Iraq had been joined by Syria, Jordan, the Palestinians and Saudi Arabia—the coalition facing Israel?

Many in the Bush administration propose U.S. and Soviet guarantees of Israel's security in lieu of the land buffer. Yet Soviet guarantees are worthless and American guarantees difficult to enforce. America could not rescue Kuwait in time to avoid the rape, pillaging and murder of Arabs by Arabs. It would be far worse for Israel. As Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir once said of guarantees, "By the time you get here, we won't be here." The Israelis are to be forgiven for wondering how much faith they can put in a U.S. guarantee, when a change in political leadership, from Reagan to Bush,

has transformed a friendly administration into one that is deeply allergic to Israel. They see a double standard: For example, Israel is attacked for expelling four Arab terrorists with long records of murder and violence, but the administration remains silent in the face of a forced exodus of thousands of Palestinians from the gulf states, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait.

Are the Israelis blameless? Hardly. They have been provocative and difficult, particularly on settlement announcements that often came just as Baker was about to arrive for talks. But gestures and fine-tuning come hard to a country constantly struggling to survive. "We may have the same values," Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir told Bush, "but we don't live in the same neighborhood."

Is the situation so bad that a peace conference without conditions, now jeopardized, would be a waste of time? No again. There are various possibilities for ceding land consistent with Israeli security. Three or four large enclaves where the vast majority of Palestinians live could be returned to Jordan. Jewish settlements within these enclaves would have to be removed, but Israel would still retain settlements in those other areas essential to its security. With such an arrangement, the Palestinians would get most of the West Bank, extricate most of their people from Israeli control, participate in a Jordanian-Palestinian government and retain the Arab character of their environment. Alternatively, sovereignty could be divided between domestic matters under Arab control and security matters under Israeli control. But these things can be explored only in the context of direct negotiations between the parties without conditions.

None of these possibilities should be preordained by the forced cessation of Israeli settlements under American pressure. Real peace requires giving more than lip service to Resolution 242's clause on "secure and recognized" boundaries. The only secure peace in the region will be obtained by negotiating in good faith, not by Israel-bashing. The latter approach consolidates Israeli public opinion in the most defensive of postures. The former opens up negotiations with all kinds of hope. To seek a Middle East solution by pressuring only Israel and not the Arabs is like searching for a coin where there is light rather than where it was lost. That is why the series of violations of America's commitments, implicit or explicit, is so foolish—and so cruel. ■

'There are various possibilities for ceding West Bank land to the Palestinians consistent with Israeli security.'

