

deal with Kissinger. A Sadat appearance today rallied his chief Cabinet officers behind him to back the Israeli trip.

The primary motivation behind the Arab side of the trip came, it is believed, from Saudi Arabia, whose interest in the Middle East is stability. The Saudis, who are known to support the Sadat trip to Israel, also worked behind the scenes at the Nov. 12-13 Arab League meetings of foreign ministers to ensure that the Arabs did not take any action that could upset the Sadat trip.

On Nov. 17, Sadat paid a one-day visit to Syria to consult with Syrian President Hafez Assad. The outcome of the meeting was an open disagreement between Assad and Sadat, the former fearing that Sadat might, under pressure, abandon the Arab cause and strike a separate

deal with Israel that would leave Syria isolated and vulnerable. But although the disagreement between Syria and Egypt did become public, there was no sign that Syria was prepared to launch a mobilization to sabotage the Sadat trip. In fact, one day before the Sadat visit to Syria, Assad ordered the Iraq-Syria border closed to forestall any violence or opposition to Syria's weak denunciation of Sadat. All informed observers in the U.S. agreed that Syria was not in fact strongly opposed to Sadat's move.

From the PLO, despite anti-Sadat statements from Fatah and Saiqa, the two largest guerrilla groups, it is widely known that PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat is quietly supporting Sadat.

—Bob Dreyfuss

EXCLUSIVE

Sadat Visit Reveals Geneva Policy Split

Egyptian President Anwar Sadat's planned visit to Israel has pulled the lid off an intense factional split between those who favor a "Kissingerian" separate peace between Egypt and Israel and those who advocate an overall Mideast settlement. Reprinted here are excerpts of conversations with leading Mideast policymakers and press accounts reflecting both points of view.

Best Bet Is Separate Peace

Joseph Churba, former head of Airforce Mideast Intelligence:

Q: Would you comment on Sadat's upcoming trip to Israel?

A: Let me explain how the goddamn thing works. In September, Sadat offered Vance a separate peace deal with Israel. So what happened next? The State Department exhumes the PLO — a move which outflanked Sadat. Now, at State, it's the same shit. A comprehensive settlement! The people who are fucking it up are god-damned State people. State will kill any Egypt-Israel separate deal! They will insist on exhuming the PLO — at a time when Sadat is open to dealing with the Israelis on a different basis.

A National Security Advisor during the Kennedy and Johnson Administrations:

Q: What is your opinion of the upcoming Sadat-Begin meeting?

A: Everything going on now is delightful, entertaining. He's telling the PLO to go to hell; he's saying that Egypt is the biggest Mideast state and if it wants to, it can make a deal. He's saying that it's not up to the Saudis or anybody else to legitimize the PLO. The Egyptians were appalled by our legitimizing the PLO; the Jordanians were appalled by the U.S.-Soviet joint statement. After all, the Jordanians had just agreed to all Saudi money to the Palestinians would come through Jordan, and so they were horrified by the statement. Sadat will now go to

Israel and say he wants Geneva, but he'll threaten to have a separate deal. It's easy to do that. He can get the deal we offered him in 1968: the whole Sinai will be demilitarized according to a timetable, and Israel will release Sharm el-Sheikh. That is the place where Israel's General Gur is warning about new maneuvers and violations of the second disengagement. Sadat's deal would then be a clear way for Hussein to do the same. He's always wanted to sign a separate deal. This would then isolate Assad who could do absolutely nothing about it.

Washington Post, editorial, Nov. 16: "Washington's Mideast Response":

Now, however, a way (Sadat's overture to Israel — ed.) to resume the easier step-by-step approach is in sight. Egypt has stepped outside the American-directed Geneva process and made its own bid to Israel. Obviously, Mr. Sadat will present all the Arabs' aims. No less obviously, he will emphasize Egypt's particular aims. Being primarily territorial, these are substantially easier for Israel to meet. So prospects of a separate Israeli-Egyptian peace, presented no doubt as a way station to a larger settlement, are greatly enhanced.

New York Times, op-editorial, Nov. 1, by William Safire:

The reason Mr. Sadat broke away from the Carter approach will be vigorously denied by our red-faced State Department: The Carter Middle East plan, with its "comprehensive demands keyed to a quick Geneva showdown, was as bad for moderate Arabs as it was for Israel. . . .

Beneath the hard-line words will be the contrary basic interests. Egypt's national interest is to get back the Sinai, get on an even economic keel, and get away from using its soldiers as cannon fodder in wars started by Arab radicals with Soviet arms. . . .

What should the U.S. do? Restrain Zbigniew Butinski. . . . Israel and Egypt were wise not to panic in the face of the Carter rush to Geneva. When it comes to accepting

the good offices of an inexperienced President or an experienced journalist, they're better off with Cronkite diplomacy.

A Rand Corporation strategist on Mideast affairs:

Q: Is there a growing possibility from the past week's events that Foreign Minister Dayan is counting on a separate deal between Israel and Egypt?

A: Dayan's emphasis is on an Israel-Egypt agreement which will be short of peace and short of Egypt's insistence on getting back territories and supporting Palestinian rights. Dayan is ready to exempt them from the pursuit of these latter goals by offering them an end of war and a withdrawal from the conflict. For the present, Dayan has his working papers, which puts the situation on track for Geneva, but Dayan has all along conceived of Geneva as just a framework to achieve a bilateral agreement with Egypt.

A Georgetown University colleague of Henry Kissinger:

Q: What do you make of the recent Henry Kissinger revival?

A: Kissinger is not coming back into prominence. He's been up front all along. As for the Mideast, it's simple. If they want to get things done, Kissinger's way is the only way. Geneva is a silly idea. What do you do when you get there? The only way is step by step.

For a Comprehensive Regional Settlement

New York Times op-ed, Nov. 17, by Anthony Lewis:

President Sadat, knowing the delicacy of his position, must hope that by accelerating the momentum for peace he can bring other Arab countries along. But that hope necessarily depends on his remaining true to the Arab position on essentials The harder question is whether Prime Minister Begin will seize the opportunity to think of peace in larger terms. That would require him to give up his own claim to permanent Israeli possession of the West Bank. Some have seen him as a potential de Gaulle: a politician who takes office on an unyielding platform and then yields for higher ends of peace and security. This occasion may tell whether he is.

New York Times editorial, Nov. 16, "Momentum in the Middle East":

There is no reason to doubt the Egyptians' strong denials that they seek a separate peace. If they did, it probably could not be stable. Without progress toward a general settlement in the area, Mr. Sadat would remain vulnerable to allegations that he had sold out his allies, and he would therefore be a shaky partner in peace. Separate peace with Egypt might also tempt hawkish Israelis to move toward annexation of much of the West Bank, with its large Arab population. That might temporarily enhance Israel's sense of security, but it would create even greater problems and dangers for the long run.

New York Times op-ed, Nov. 16, by Harvard Professor and Brzenski associate, Nadav Safran:

Sadat may well point out that though he decided to go to Jerusalem on his own, he is certain that he reflects the wishes of the great majority of the Arab countries, and he may warn the Israelis not to take his move as an indication of Egyptian willingness to make a separate peace...

He is sure to remind the Israelis that the Palestinian problem is at the root of the entire conflict and that a final, durable settlement cannot be conceived without taking due account of Palestinian rights.

A Foreign Policy advisor to a leading Republican Senator:

Here's the Sadat gameplan. He is going to Israel, and he will get an agreement on an Israeli withdrawal from Sinai, linked to withdrawals elsewhere and talks on the West Bank. Then Sadat will be on record as having championed the cause of the Arabs. His Knesset speech will be almost entirely devoted to the Palestinians; he wants to be known in the Arab world as having told the Israelis to recognize the Palestinians. Then he will draw some flack from Syria — but he won't go so far as to pass the limit that the Saudis consider tolerable; the Saudis will not accept a big Egypt-Syria separation. So Sadat will go back to Egypt having made a pro-Palestinian speech, and will go right to Geneva.