

December 24, 1969
**Telegram from J. Sisco and A.L. Atherton to
Secretary of State**

Citation:

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Summary:

An outline of the Soviet response to the current situation between Israel and the United Arab Republic. Sisco believes their reply is not constructive and will not improve issues in the region.

Original Language:

English

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S/S-MR. BROWN

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 TO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
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*Att: Occidentals Thursday
 Briefing 12/24/69*

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EXDIS

1. DOBRYNIN CONVEYED SOVIET RESPONSE TO OCTOBER 28 MIDDLE EASTERN FORMULATIONS IN MEETING WITH SECRETARY TODAY AT WHICH SISCO ALSO PRESENT. RESPONSE WAS IN FORM OF ORAL COMMENTARY, TEXT OF WHICH DOBRYNIN THEN LEFT WITH US. ON BASIS PRELIMINARY STUDY, REPLY, WHILE INDICATING DESIRE TO CONTINUE BOTH BILATERAL AND QUADRILATERAL TALKS, IS NOT CONSTRUCTIVE, AND DOES NOT MOVE MATTERS FORWARD, AND IS RETROGRESSIVE IN SOME RESPECTS. IT ADHERES CLOSELY TO POSITIONS TAKEN IN THE SOVIET JUNE DOCUMENT AND IS PROPAGANDISTIC IN A NUMBER OF RESPECTS.

2. SECRETARY MADE CLEAR THAT US FEELS IT HAS GONE AS

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FAR AS IT CAN IN OCTOBER 28 UAR-ISRAELI DOCUMENT AND DECEMBER 18 JORDANIAN-ISRAELI DOCUMENT. WE INDICATED THAT CAREFUL STUDY WILL BE GIVEN TO SOVIET REPLY AND JUDGMENT WILL BE MADE WHETHER REPLY JUSTIFIES CONTINUATION OF MAJOR POWER TALKS. TEXT OF SOVIET REPLY WILL BE SENT SEPTTEL AS WELL AS FULL REPORT OF SECRETARY'S CONVERSATION WITH DOBRYNIN. SOVIET REPLY SHOULD BE TIGHTLY HELD, PENDING DETERMINATION OF HOW WE WISH TO PROCEED. IN REPLY TO PRESS QUERIES, WE ARE MERELY ACKNOWLEDGING THAT REPLY RECEIVED AND SAYING A) WE ARE GIVING IT CAREFUL STUDY AND B) PRELIMINARY REVIEW INDICATES IT IS NOT CONSTRUCTIVE.

3. PRINCIPAL POINTS OF SOVIET REPLY ARE AS FOLLOWS:

A. US OCTOBER 28 DOCUMENT IS ONE-SIDED AND PRO-ISRAELI AND QUOTE CANNOT FACILITATE FINDING WAYS OF SETTLEMENT IN THE MIDDLE EAST UNQUOTE.

B. SOVIETS HAVE BACKED OFF FROM RHODES FORMULA. STRESS IS ON MAJOR POWERS' WORKING OUT PRINCIPLES OF SETTLEMENT, AND THEN IN SOVIET VIEW QUOTE IT COULD BE POSSIBLE TO FIND A PROPER FORM OF INTERMEDIARY ACTIVITY FOR AMBASSADOR JARRING, PROVIDING HE WILL DISCUSS QUESTIONS OF SETTLEMENT SEPARATELY WITH EACH SIDE... UNQUOTE

C. COUPLED WITH DOBRYNIN'S SUPPLEMENTARY REMARKS, REPLY MAKES CLEAR SOVIETS FAVOR MORE DETAILED TREATMENT OF CERTAIN POINTS THOUGH AT SAME TIME DOBRYNIN INDICATED THEIR DESIRE TO FIND A QUOTE MORE NEUTRAL FORMULA UNQUOTE TO EXPRESS NEGOTIATING PROCEDURE UNDER JARRING.

D. IT CALLS FOR SPECIFIC STATEMENT ON WITHDRAWAL FROM GAZA AND SAYS THERE IS NO JUSTIFICATION FOR ISRAELI PARTICIPATION IN DETERMINING FUTURE OF GAZA.

E. IT IMPLIES THAT SYRIA MUST BE INCLUDED IN ANY MAJOR POWER AGREEMENT.

F. WHILE MENTIONING QUOTE A SETTLEMENT WHICH WOULD ENSURE A LASTING PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST RATHER THAN RESTORE THE SITUATION OF AN UNSTABLE ARMISTICE UNQUOTE, IT LINKS IN SEVERAL PLACES WITHDRAWAL OF TROOPS ONLY

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WITH QUOTE CESSATION OF STATE OF WAR UNQUOTE. NOWHERE DOES IT TALK IN TERMS OF ESTABLISHMENT OF A BINDING PEACE BETWEEN THE PARTIES AND NOWHERE IS THERE POSITIVE REACTION TO SPECIFIC ELEMENTS IN THE OCTOBER 28 FORMULATIONS DESIGNED TO GIVE CONTENT TO PEACE, WHICH ARE IN FACT IMPLICITLY REJECTED.

G. IT RETAINS PREVIOUS SOVIET CONCEPT OF DMZS ON BOTH SIDED OF THE BORDERS.

H. IT ONCE AGAIN STAYS WITH THE JUNE POSITION THAT ALL THAT IS REQUIRED TO SOLVE THE REFUGEE QUESTION IS FOR ISRAEL TO FULFULL PREVIOUS UN RESOLUTIONS. IT IS UNRESPONSIVE ON THE QUESTION OF SAFEGUARDS FOR ISRAEL RE THE NUMBER OF REFUGEES TO BE REPATRIATED.

I. SOVIETS CONTINUE TO INSIST THAT REFERENCE TO THE CONSTANTINOPLE CONVENTION OF 1888 MUST BE MADE IN CONNECTION WITH FREEDOM OF NAVIGATION IN THE SUEZ CANAL.

J. SOVIET REPLY DOES NOT, ON EITHER HAND, INCLUDE ANY REFERENCE TO UN PEACEKEEPING FORCES WHICH WERE PROMINENT FEATURES OF THEIR JUNE PLAN, THOUGH THIS CONCEPT SEEMS IMPLICIT IN REFERENCE TO NEED FOR MAJOR POWERS TO DEVELOPMENT DETAILED PROPOSALS IN LIEU OF NEUTRAL FORMULATIONS FOR PARTIES TO WORK OUT. IN GENERAL, SOVIET REPLY STRONGLY EMPHASIZES MAJOR POWER ROLE AND VIRTUALLY ELIMINATES ROLE OF PARTIES IN WORKING OUT SETTLEMENT.

K. ONLY BOW IN DIRECTION OF OCTOBER 28 FORMULATIONS IS STATEMENT THAT OUR LANGUAGE ON BOUNDARIES REPRESENTS "CERTAIN PROGRESS", COUPLED HOWEVER WITH CAVEAT THAT ANY JOINT US-SOVIET DOCUMENT MUST EXPLICITLY PROVIDE FOR UAR SOVEREIGNTY AT SHARM AL-SHAYKH.

L. FINALLY, SOVIET REPLY ASSERTS THAT OCTOBER 28 PROPOSAL DEPARTS FROM POSITIONS TAKEN EARLIER BY U.S., IGNORING FACT THAT THIS WAS DONE IN EFFORT DEVELOP NEUTRAL LANGUAGE TO OVERCOME IRRECONCILABLE DIFFERENCES IN OUR POSITIONS ON SUCH MATTERS AS DMZS.

CP-3. ROGERS

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