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FM THE SITUATION ROOM TOHAK 181

TO LARRY EAGLEBURGER FOR SECRETARY KISSINGER
UNCLAS VIA AIRCRAFT WH37755

TOHAK 181

FOLLOWING ARTICLE FROM TODAY'S WASHINGTON POST.

GENEVA'S IMPACT ON DETENTE
SUPERPOWERS HAVE A STAKE IN MIDEAST PEACE TALKS
BY MURREY MARDER

THE UNITED STATES AND THE SOVIET UNION GO INTO THE MIDDLE EAST
TALKS IN GENEVA AS COCHAIRMEN WITH THEIR OWN STAKE IN GLOBAL
DETENTE ENTRAPPED IN THE OUTCOME.

BECAUSE THE SUBJECT IS SUCH A SENSITIVE ONE, NEITHER OF THE TWO
SUPERPOWERS WANTS TO FOCUS PUBLIC ATTENTION ON THE CONSEQUENCES
OF DEADLOCK OR FAILURE OF THIS MAJOR ATTEMPT TO RESOLVE THE ARAB-
ISRAELI CONFLICT.

IN WASHINGTON AND IN MOSCOW, HOWEVER, STRATEGISTS RECOGNIZE THAT
IT CAN BE A COLD WINTER FOR DETENTE IF THE GENEVA TALKS FOUNDER.

THE RISK OF U.S.-SOVIET CONFRONTATION AT THE HEIGHT OF THE ARAB-
ISRAELI WAR AND ESPECIALLY THE ACCOMPANYING OIL SQUEEZE ON THE
WEST, UNDERScoreD THE LIMITATIONS OF DETENTE. PUBLIC, AS WELL AS
PROFESSIONAL, ARDOR FOR EXUBERANT PURSUIT OF DETENTE HAS COOLED IN
THE UNITED STATES, ALTHOUGH BOTH THE AMERICAN AND SOVIET GOVERNMENTS
CONTINUE TO ACCENTUATE THE POSITIVE.

SUCCESS IN GENEVA WOULD RECOUP AND REINFORCE THE OFFICIAL U.S.-
SOVIET DRIVE FOR REDUCING TENSION, AS FAILURE WOULD ERODE IT. BOTH
THE UNITED STATES AND THE SOVIET UNION, THEREFORE, ARE SUSCEPTIBLE
TO HAVING THEIR GLOBAL RELATIONSHIPS ENHANCED OR STRAINED BY
ACTIONS OF THEIR ARAB-ISRAELI CLIENT STATES, WHICH NEITHER
SUPERPOWER CAN TOTALLY CONTROL.

ON THE SURFACE, THERE MAY APPEAR TO BE LITTLE CONNECTION
BETWEEN THE MIDDLE EAST CONFERENCE AND OTHER NEGOTIATIONS, SUCH
AS U.S.-SOVIET NUCLEAR STRATEGIC ARMS LIMITATION TALKS, EAST-WEST
NEGOTIATIONS ON TRADE, THE REDUCTION OF TROOP LEVELS IN EUROPE,
OR OTHER SUBJECTS.

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BUT THE NETWORK OF TIES THAT THE UNITED STATES AND THE SOVIET UNION CREATED TO REINFORCE DETENTE ALSO WORKS IN REVERSE: A STRAIN ON ONE LINK CAN REBOUND ACROSS THE WEB. THAT WAS UNDERSCORED BY THE NIXON ADMINISTRATION'S EARLIER CONCERN ABOUT MOVING TRADE LEGISLATION TO A VOTE IN THE HOUSE WHILE THE MIDDLE EAST CRISIS WAS MOST ACUTE. THOSE SAME SENSITIVITIES CAN APPLY IN THE SENATE NEXT YEAR, WHERE THE ADMINISTRATION HOPES TO WIN EXPORTS CREDITS AND NONDISCRIMINATORY TARIFFS FOR THE SOVIET UNION, WHICH THE HOUSE HAS BLOCKED.

THROUGHOUT THE COMPLEX DIPLOMATIC MANEUVERING IN WHICH SECRETARY OF STATE HENRY A. KISSINGER ENGAGED TO OPEN THE MIDDLE EAST CONFERENCE, THE NIXON ADMINISTRATION HAS LEANED OVER BACKWARD TO AVOID ACTIONS THAT COULD JEOPARDIZE THE GENEVA TALKS.

IN PUBLIC, THE NIXON ADMINISTRATION HAS UTTERED NOT A WORD OF REPROACH OR COMPLAINT, FOR EXAMPLE, ABOUT THE APPROVAL AND ENCOURAGEMENT PUBLICLY EXPRESSED BY THE SOVIET UNION FOR THE ARAB OIL EMBARGO AGAINST THE UNITED STATES.

ON THE CONTRARY, TWO SENIOR STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIALS TOLD THE SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE LAST MONDAY THAT THEY HAVE SEEN "NO EVIDENCE" OF DIRECT "SOVIET INCITEMENT OR COLLUSION" IN THE BOYCOTT.

IN OTHER DAYS, BEFORE THE "ERA OF DETENTE" THE U.S. GOVERNMENT WOULD HAVE DISPLAYED OPEN FURY TOWARD AND NATION THAT GAVE SIMILAR ENCOURAGEMENT TO ACTIONS THAT HAVE SO DISRUPTED THE U.S. ECONOMY, AND CAUSED SO MUCH HAVOC FOR ALLIED NATIONS.

IT CAN BE ARGUED THAT THE ARAB ACTION HAS CAUSED GREATER DAMAGE TO THE WESTERN POWERS ALREADY THAN ANY PRESSURE EVER BROUGHT TO BEAR DIRECTLY BY THE SOVIET UNION IN CLASSIC EAST-WEST STRUGGLE.

FOR THIS, SOVIET DIPLOMATS SMILINGLY DISCLAIM ANY RESPONSIBILITY WHATEVER: SAUDI ARABIA, THE WORLD'S LEADING OIL EXPORTER, THEY WRYLY NOTE, TRADITIONALLY HAS BEEN THE CLOSE FRIEND OF THE UNITED STATES, NOT THE SOVIET UNION, AND AMERICAN COMPLAINTS ABOUT OIL SUPPLIES SHOULD BE ADDRESSED TO ARAB CAPITALS, NOT TO MOSCOW.

NIXON ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALS RECOGNIZE THAT THEY MAY HAVE TO STRUGGLE TO SUSTAIN PUBLIC AND CONGRESSIONAL SUPPORT FOR DETENTE THROUGH THE COMING WINTER MONTHS, IF THE MIDDLE EAST CONFERENCE AND THE ARAB OIL SQUEEZE DRAG ON UNREMITTINGLY.

FOR THE NIXON ADMINISTRATION, SURROUNDED BY DOMESTIC CHALLENGES, EAST-WEST DETENTE IS ITS MOST-FLOURISHED PRIZE OF ACCOMPLISHMENT.

SERIOUS DAMAGE TO THIS GOAL WOULD LEAVE A BARREN RECORD. THE THEME OFFICIALS ARE ECHOING MORE DETERMINEDLY THAN EVER THESE DAYS IS THAT THERE IS "NO ALTERNATIVE" TO DETENTE.

KENNETH RUSH, DEPUTY SECRETARY OF STATE, GAVE A CHICAGO AUDIENCE, LAST WEEK WHAT AMOUNTS TO A DEFENSIVE PLEA FOR CONTINUED SUPPORT OF DETENTE.

IF NOT FOR "THE VERY CONSIDERABLE PROGRESS" MADE IN FIVE YEARS FOR "CHANGING THE NATURE OF THE RELATIONSHIP" BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND THE SOVIET UNION, THE ARAB-ISRAELI WAR COULD HAVE PRODUCED "A DIRECT CONFRONTATION" BETWEEN THE TWO SUPERPOWERS, SAID RUSH.

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TO ANY WHO MIGHT BE SKEPTICAL ABOUT THAT PROBABILITY, RUSH, IN EFFECT OFFERED ADDITIONAL RATIONALES.

"DETENTE WILL ALWAYS BE ON TRIAL BUT WE MUST NOT JUDGE IT BY ONE CASE ALONE" BECAUSE "THE NEW RELATIONSHIP IS STILL FRAGILE" AND "MUST BE BROADENED, DEEPENED AND STRENGTHENED."

KISSINGER WHO PLUNGED INTO EXTRAORDINARY ROUNDS OF DIPLOMACY TO COPE WITH A CRISIS THAT EXPLODED ON HIS SECRETARYSHIP WHILE HE WAS STILL EXPLORING THE RUDIMENTS OF HIS NEW POST, IS GRAPPLING SIMULTANEOUSLY WITH THE CAUSES AND THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE MIDDLE EAST DILEMMA.

THE UNUSUAL POWERS THAT KISSINGER COMBINES AS SECRETARY OF STATE AND THE PRESIDENT'S NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISER REMAIN TOTALLY UNDELEGATED. WHAT HE CANNOT DECIDE ON-THE-FLY REMAINS LARGELY UNDECIDED.

MAJOR FOREIGN POLICY ISSUES THAT COULD NOT BE HANDLED BY KISSINGER DURING HIS TWO-WEEK JET CIRCUIT OF EUROPEAN AND MIDDLE EASTERN CAPITALS ARE BACKED UP, AWAITING HIS RETURN TO WASHINGTON.

THIS BACKLOG INCLUDES A BASIC REEVALUATION OF NEGOTIATING POSITIONS IN THE STALEMATED STRATEGIC NUCLEAR ARMS LIMITATION TALKS, TO DETERMINE WHAT ROUTE THE UNITED STATES MIGHT TAKE OUT OF ITS IMPASSE WITH THE SOVIET UNION.

IN ADDITION, THE ADMINISTRATION'S FOREIGN POLICY MACHINERY, WHICH KISSINGER DOMINATES, MUST REEXAMINE STRATEGY FOR OTHER EAST-WEST NEGOTIATIONS TO BE REACTIVATED AFTER THE PRESENT HOLIDAY RECESS, INCLUDING THE EUROPEAN SECURITY CONFERENCE AND THE EAST-WEST CONFERENCE ON TROOP REDUCTIONS.

PROGRESS, OR LACK OF IT, IN THE GENEVA CONFERENCE ON THE MIDDLE EAST, INESCAPABLY WILL HAVE SOME IMPACT ON EACH OF THESE NEGOTIATING TRACKS, AS IT WILL ON THE CLIMATE OF OPINION THAT NOURISHES OR IMPEDES THE COURSE OF DETENTE.

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