

FM THE SITUATION ROOM  
TO AMEMBASSY KABUL

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SECRET SENSITIVE

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BREMER/GOMPERT FOR THE SENUETARY

COLBY ASKED THAT THE FOLLOWING BE SENT TO YOU:

MEMORANDUM FOR: THE HONORABLE HENRY A. KISSINGER  
ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT FOR  
NATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS

SUBJECT : MIDDLE EAST SITUATION

1. THE RABAT SUMMIT HAS GIVEN US CONSIDERABLE CAUSE FOR THOUGHT ABOUT THE POLITICAL-MILITARY SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST. VIEWED FROM HERE, IT APPEARS THAT THE ARAB NEGOTIATING POSITION HAS TAKEN A HARDER LINE, WITH PROSPECTS REDUCED FOR EARLY TALKS WITH THE ISRAELIS CONCERNING THE WEST BANK AND WITH SADAT'S ROOM FOR MANEUVER ON A SEPARATE AGREEMENT FOR THE RETURN OF MORE SINAI TERRITORY RESTRICTED. THERE IS ALSO EVIDENCE OF A SHIFT TOWARD A HARDER LINE BY THE SYRIANS, WHO APPEAR TO HAVE BEEN THE DRIVING FORCE IN SUPPORT OF THE PLO AT RABAT. IF NEGOTIATING EFFORTS ARE STALLED, TENSIONS WILL INCREASE AND THE ODDS FAVORING ANOTHER ROUND OF ARAB-ISRAELI FIGHTING WILL GO UP.

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2. WE EXPECT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT WHAT WENT ON AT RABAT IN THE NEXT FEW DAYS, AND THE MIMI-SUMMIT IN ALGIERS THIS WEEKEND COULD HELP CLARIFY THE SITUATION. IN THE MEANTIME, THE INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY IS INTENSIFYING ITS ATTENTION TO A POSSIBLE RESUMPTION OF ARAB-ISRAELI HOSTILITIES. IN VIEW OF THE EXPERIENCE IN OCTOBER 1973, THIS INCLUDES SPECIAL ATTENTION TO THE POSSIBILITY OF ARAB POLITICAL DEFECTION TO COVER PLANS FOR WAR. THE COLLECTION ELEMENTS OF THE COMMUNITY ARE ALSO GIVING PARTICULAR ATTENTION TO INDICATIONS OF ARAB MILITARY PREPARATIONS. WE ALSO WILL BE SENSITIVE TO POSSIBLE ISRAELI PREEMPTION. THE USIB NEXT WEEK WILL CONSIDER A DETAILED STUDY OF ARAB AND ISRAELI MILITARY CAPABILITIES, INCLUDING ALTERNATIVE SCENARIOS FOR THE OUTBREAK, CONDUCT AND OUTCOME OF HOSTILITIES.

3. THESE MEASURES SHOULD PUT US IN AN IMPROVED POSITION TO DETECT A MOVE TOWARD WAR IN THE COMING WEEKS. THE FACT, HOWEVER, THAT BOTH SIDES ARE AT A FAIRLY HIGH LEVEL OF ALERT WITH SUBSTANTIAL FORCES CLOSE TO THE DISENGAGEMENT LINES MEANS THAT, ONCE A DECISION IS MADE TO RENEW HOSTILITIES, THERE WILL NOT BE MUCH WARNING TIME.

SC

W.E. COLBY

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