

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Meeting with Moshe Arens of Israel (S)

PARTICIPANTS: The President
James A. Baker, Secretary of State
John H. Sununu, Chief of Staff
Brent Scowcroft, Assistant to the President
for National Security Affairs
Ambassador Thomas Pickering, Ambassador to
the UN
Notetaker: C. David Welch, NSC

Moshe Arens, Israeli Foreign Minister

DATE, TIME September 25, 1989, 8:30 p.m. - 8:36 p.m.
AND PLACE: The Metropolitan Museum, New York City, NY

The President: I just wanted to take a few moments in private to touch base with you on where we stand in the peace process.

Foreign Minister Arens: There is a lot of political turmoil in Israel. It seems President Mubarak does not understand the Israeli coalition and the nature of our politics. Had Mubarak pursued his initiative differently by meeting with Shamir, things would have turned out differently.

The President: What do you mean by political turmoil? Is there the possibility of a breakup of the government?

Foreign Minister Arens: There has been talk of the coalition breaking up. The best way to proceed now in the peace process is for us to convince Mubarak to meet with Shamir. Mubarak has gone about this completely wrong if his objective was to attract Shamir into the process. By putting forward his initiative with Rabin, inviting Rabin to Cairo, he was inviting the third best.

The President: I don't think Mubarak was being mischievous in this. He honestly wants to make progress.

Foreign Minister Arens: He doesn't appreciate the intricacies of Israeli politics. I will see Mubarak on Thursday. I understand that he is reticent about a meeting with Shamir. I will talk to him about this and I think you should do so also.

The President: We could discuss it with him, to see what his thoughts are. However, he has been pretty clear that he's willing to meet Shamir if there is something to show for it.

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Foreign Minister Arens: If Mubarak met Shamir, then the 10 points would likely be more acceptable.

Secretary Baker: His view is that a meeting could be worked out if the outcome is positive. Getting a dialogue going between Israelis and Palestinians might provide the right circumstances, and Mubarak has said something public about this.

Foreign Minister Arens: It is difficult to say to a Prime Minister that he must agree beforehand on something like the 10 points.

Secretary Baker: But that's not the issue, no one has said anything about Israel or Shamir having to agree on the 10 points; the 10 points are Egypt's and the Palestinians' position.

General Scowcroft: You don't have to agree on the 10 points. The issue is the dialogue with Palestinians.

Foreign Minister Arens: Mubarak says that he will not meet with Shamir unless Shamir agrees.

The President: The main thing is to avoid negative answers.

Foreign Minister Arens: This is an issue because of the way it was handled, not because of the substance.

The President: What does the opposition say? -

Foreign Minister Arens: The invitation to Rabin was a problem.

Secretary Baker: There was the image of Egypt dealing with Labor, not with Likud, that was a problem.

The President: We kind of had that problem with Boris Yeltsin during his visit, but I didn't let it bother me when he visited with Ted Kennedy and others. I don't see any reason to get offended about that.

Foreign Minister Arens: Your speech today was great. If democracy ever comes to the Arab world then everything will change for the better. I still think that what you must do is convince Mubarak to meet with Shamir. This is the right way to go.

The President: Well, we'll look into it, and see what he says about the idea.