

PEACE EFFORTS IN THE MIDDLE EAST AREA

REPORT

OF A

STUDY MISSION TO THE MIDDLE EAST

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INTRODUCTION

On October 30, 1975, the President sent to Congress a message requesting substantial sums for international security assistance in fiscal year 1976 and "such amounts as may be necessary" for fiscal year 1977. The major share for fiscal 1976—some 70 percent—was requested for programs he stated were necessary to sustain peace in the Middle East, with the principal recipients being Israel and Egypt. The President also proposed security assistance for the two allies on NATO's south-eastern flank, Greece and Turkey.

Noting U.S. peace efforts in the Middle East since the 1973 war, with the Sinai disengagement agreement of 1975 as the latest move in the step-by-step process toward a permanent settlement, the President stated that: "The hope for a lasting solution to the Arab-Israeli dispute is stronger today than at any time in the previous quarter century."

Concerning Greece and Turkey, the President said implementation of his proposed programs "would allow the United States to resume its traditional cooperative role following the unfortunate disruptions occasioned by the Cyprus crisis." He concluded that:

After 25 years of seemingly irreconcilable differences, two parties to the Middle East dispute at last have taken a decisive stride toward settling their differences, in joint reliance on our good offices and continuing support. In the strategic Eastern Mediterranean, two of our long-standing NATO allies look to us for a tangible sign of renewed support and traditional friendship.

The Presidential request was referred to the International Relations Committee. On November 6, Chairman Morgan and the ranking minority member, Mr. Broomfield, introduced the President's proposal by request. The committee began hearings that day with the Secretary of State as the lead witness. Other prominent administration spokesmen followed, after which the committee heard Members of Congress and nongovernmental witnesses.

The committee moved into markup November 13 on the basis of draft legislation which combined the President's request and amendments derived from extensive studies which had been conducted by the committee.

By the time of the congressional year-end recess, the committee had completed much work on the legislation. However, in the course of the testimony and markup, the chairman and various members felt it necessary to have more complete information on certain questions that had arisen during the proceedings on the bill. It also became apparent that some of these matters would have to be dealt with again fairly soon in separate fiscal 1977 legislation.

Under these circumstances—the importance to major peace efforts of the pending and prospective legislation, and the need for further information before committee action—Chairman Morgan decided to

lead a bipartisan committee study mission to examine, firsthand, the situation in the Middle East. The congressional recess provided an opportunity to do so without interrupting the legislative process.

Chairman Morgan was joined in the mission by Congressman William S. Broomfield, the committee's ranking minority member, and by Congressmen L. H. Fountain, Charles Wilson, Paul Findley, Larry Winn, Jr., and Robert J. Lagomarsino.

The mission left Washington January 3, 1976. After a 1-day stop in Naples, headquarters of the NATO Southern Command, the group visited Egypt January 5-7, Israel January 7-9, Iran January 9-11, Turkey January 11-13, Greece January 13-14, and Yugoslavia January 14-15, returning to Washington January 16.

Because of a mishap in Naples, requiring medical attention, Chairman Morgan remained there temporarily but rejoined the group in Ankara. During his absence from the mission, Congressmen Fountain and Broomfield acted as cochairmen.

The mission met with the leadership in the capital of each country visited. It was received with graciousness and cordiality throughout its journey.

The chairman and members unanimously wish to express their appreciation to the leaders and hosts in each nation visited, and to the American Ambassadors and staffs and departments for their assistance in the success of the mission.

After returning to the United States, the mission conferred on January 20 with Under Secretary of State Joseph J. Sisco concerning its findings and recommendations, and on January 22 met with President Ford.

NATO'S SOUTHERN COMMAND

On January 4 in Naples, the mission received a briefing from Adm. Stansfield Turner, Commander in Chief, Allied Forces, Southern Europe, at the admiral's residence. Senior members of the admiral's staff also were present for the discussion.

Admiral Turner's command is one of the three under the Supreme Allied Commander for the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in Europe, the other two being the Northern Europe and the Central Europe Commands. The Southern Europe Command extends from Gibraltar to the Black Sea and is responsible for the defense of the NATO region including Italy, Greece, and Turkey. It maintains a working relationship with France, although the French do not participate formally in NATO.

Admiral Turner spoke of four potential combat theaters in the southern region along its 1,700-mile defense arc that extends from Resia Pass in northern Italy to Mount Ararat in eastern Turkey, in the event of attack by Warsaw Pact forces. They are northeast Italy, Greek and Turkish Thrace, eastern Turkey, and the Mediterranean.

The Warsaw Pact forces are estimated by the NATO Command to have a land force superiority of $1\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 numerically facing the southern region and an air superiority of $2\frac{1}{2}$ to 1, including advanced aircraft and a more comprehensive air defense missile system. In the Mediterranean, NATO forces are numerically superior though the Russians have engaged in an extensive buildup and now have a Mediterranean fleet among the most modern and sophisticated in the world.

The Mediterranean figures importantly in NATO's southern command because of its geography: The land fronts are separated from each other by water with Italy, Greece, and Turkey all having extensive coastlines.

While NATO still is the leading naval power in the Mediterranean, Admiral Turner voiced concern about the increase in Soviet forces while those of the alliance are decreasing. Concerning Greek-Turkish dissension over Cyprus, he told us he was personally optimistic that both parties realize they must make progress toward a settlement.

The admiral also expressed views on other political problems in the area and responded to questions.

EGYPT-ISRAEL

Ever since the October 1973 hostilities in the Middle East, the U.S. Government has been actively engaged in assisting the parties to reconcile their differences through the process of step-by-step negotiation. The specific achievements to date—two interim agreements between Egypt and Israel in the Sinai and one agreement between Israel and Syria on the Golan Heights—are significant both as military disengagement and for the psychological impact of the negotiations. Largely as a result of the U.S. diplomatic initiative, the principals to the Middle East dispute have broken with the patterns of the past and opted for negotiation rather than war as the preferred means to settle their problems.

Maintaining the momentum toward a just and durable peace in the Middle East is of obvious concern to Congress and the American public. We have seen vivid, compelling evidence of the human and economic cost of hostilities in the region; we are encouraged by the U.S. role as catalyst in the negotiations, by the progress to date, and by the potential for further progress toward peace.

The Congress has played a significant role in the U.S. effort. It has consistently encouraged peace endeavors and, specifically since the October war, has enacted legislation to assist the Middle East parties in a manner designed to enhance prospects for a just settlement. The international security assistance bill pending before the International Relations Committee at the end of 1975 featured further proposed aid, primarily for Israel and Egypt, toward this end.

In visiting Egypt and Israel, the mission had two important objectives: to examine the requirement of each country for proposed U.S. assistance and to ascertain, on the basis of face-to-face discussions with the leadership of each country, the prospect for continued movement toward peace in the area.

DISCUSSIONS WITH EGYPTIAN LEADERS

The mission arrived in Cairo on January 5 and attended a country team briefing at the American Embassy that afternoon. In the evening the delegation attended an Embassy reception to which prominent Egyptians from governmental and private sectors were invited. The hosts were Deputy Chief of Mission Frank Maestrone (Chargé in the absence of Ambassador Hermann Eilts who was in Washington for consultations) and Mrs. Eilts. On January 6 the mission met with Dr. Gamal Oteify, Deputy Speaker of the People's Assembly, and selected members of the Egyptian People's Assembly. We then traveled to the Barrage for a meeting with President Sadat. In the evening the mission attended a reception hosted by Dr. Oteify. On January 7, before departing for Israel, the delegation met with the Speaker of the People's Assembly, Sayyid Mar'i, and other Egyptian Parliamentarians.