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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

May 19, 1982 JUN 1 1982

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE HONORABLE ALEXANDER M. HAIG, JR.
The Secretary of State

THE HONORABLE CASPAR W. WEINBERGER
The Secretary of Defense

SUBJECT: U.S. Policy Toward Israel

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ISRAEL

This memorandum provides you with policy guidance on how to proceed with U.S.-Israel relations in the coming months. We face a difficult agenda of contentious issues. These include a serious effort to achieve an autonomy agreement, a major undertaking to achieve political stability in Beirut, a host of complex initiatives vis-a-vis moderate Arab states designed to foster better bilateral ties as well as our broader interests in the area and most importantly in the peace process. Our strategy for success in each of these several endeavors will inevitably involve measures which will be difficult for Israel to accept.

In order for us to be able to manage this process in a way that best serves overall U.S. interests, I believe that we must first improve and restore overall Israeli confidence in us. This confidence will depend less on any individual action that we might take than it will on their sense that in the aggregate we have a strategy for the area which is comprehensive in addressing the several dimensions of regional stability in a way which holds promise of success and protects their interest. By elaborating this broad strategy and then by taking specific steps which strengthen confidence and mutual trust, we improve the prospects for encouraging more moderate Israeli behavior and progress on other issues that concern us. In the absence of such trust, our influence with Israel will diminish and Israel could become further alienated and unpredictable in its behavior. But in seeking to establish confidence, U.S. actions should not be directly linked to specific reciprocal acts by Israel.

As we open this new period in our relations, it is clear that our short-term interests and objectives will often diverge. Where this is the case, we should make clear where we disagree with Israel's policies. They may not like what they will hear in some

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Review on May 10, 1982

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areas, but I believe they will respect our position and will not be able to say that we have misled them.

In this policy context, I believe we should take the following actions:

-- First, I would like to send a personal message to Prime Minister Begin. In it I would acknowledge the historic threshold we have crossed together and the promise it holds for the future. Next I would like to sketch the several dimensions of regional policy in which we must achieve a deep mutual understanding and trust, ranging from our approach to achieving stability in Beirut, to the continuation of the Camp David process, to what we seek in our relations with moderate Arab states. It would express my sense that this new beginning should be opened by a close personal exchange of views in a meeting between us in mid-June here in Washington. The message should note the visit next week of Minister Sharon and say that it provides an opportunity to reopen talks on specific measures in which we could commence the restoration of mutual confidence between us through defense cooperation. At the same time, it should make clear that this visit will be but a prelude to the talks I anticipate having with the Prime Minister in June from which we should expect concrete decisions to flow. It should close with a reaffirmation of deep commitment of Israel's security and my great personal anticipation of the opportunity to see him again. It ought also to include an expression of my concern over the health of Mrs. Begin.

-- Second, Al should undertake the preparation of the comprehensive tour d'horizon outlined above for my use in talks with Begin at the meeting. As I have said, it should address all issues on the agenda -- Lebanon, Autonomy, our regional strategy to include our sense of the imperative of a realistic arms sales program with moderate Arab states, and most importantly, how Israel's interests will be protected throughout these efforts.

-- Third, in the meetings with Minister Sharon, we should state at the outset my intention to undertake this major effort toward renewing our close relations with the Prime Minister in June as a basis for not reaching conclusions during his visit. At the same time, your conversations, Cap. ought to be aimed at a positive outcome, including such interim measures as can be taken (e.g. defense trade and local application of limited FMS) to set the stage for the June meetings. You should make clear, however, my belief that for defense cooperation to succeed it must be undertaken with the discretion and lack of publicity which governs analogous, strategic cooperation agreements which we have with other states.

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The successful launching of such a major demarche will involve considerable work and care, but I know from talking to both of you that the pieces are there to make it work. In the days ahead I want you to discuss this approach and the specific details so essential to carrying it off. Don't hesitate to let me know as problems or questions arise.

Ronald Reagan

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