

Formal signing expected

Israel initials Egypt pact

Associated Press
JERUSALEM - Israel formally initialed an agreement with Egypt Monday to pull back its forces in the Sinai Desert and surrender the Abu Rudeis oilfields. Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger said it could set the stage for peace in the Middle East.

Egypt was expected to initial the pact a few hours later after a flight to Alexandria by Kissinger. A formal signing is expected a few days later.

President Ford, from the presidential retreat at Camp David, Md., hailed the agreement as "fair and balanced" and said it "reduces the risk of war in the Middle East."

"I am deeply gratified by it and proud of the contribution America has made," Ford said just before placing congratulatory telephone calls to Kissinger, Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Egyptian President Anwar Sadat.

Israeli Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Mordechai Gur and Avraham Kidron, director-general of the Israeli Foreign Ministry, initialed the pact in a crowded ceremony in Rabin's office as Kissinger and the prime minister looked on smiling.

In return for a broad Israeli withdrawal from the desert peninsula, Egypt committed itself to a number of political concessions including a promise not to threaten force or military blockade against Israel.

"I hope that the implementation of this agreement, and the documents that we have initialed today, will be remembered as that point at which peace at last began in the Middle East," Kissinger said after the ceremony in Jerusalem.

"Having taken this step," he said, "perhaps the parties will gain some confidence, if it works, to take further steps toward peace."

A senior American official acknowledged, however, that Israel weakens itself militarily by pulling out of the strategic Sinai mountain passes of Mitla and Gidi. He said this slightly complicates the Israeli military situation but does not make it significantly worse.

Subject to approval of the U.S. Congress, about 100 American civilian technicians will be positioned at early warning stations in the desert to guard against surprise attack. There will be three posts operated entirely by U.S. personnel with other Americans mixed with Israelis at one end of the Gidi Pass and with Egyptians at the other.

U.S. Defense Secretary James R. Schlesinger said in Washington there was a potential danger to Americans placed between the Egyptian and Israeli forces but that it is "an acceptable risk." Schlesinger also said assigning U.S. technicians to the area is unlikely to involve the United States in military conflict because there are "substantial" political pressures on both sides to be sure they remain safe.

Israel will return to Egypt the Abu Rudeis oilfields which supply more than 55 per cent of Israel's fuel needs. The pact calls for that to be accomplished within eight weeks of the full signing.

Stripped of Abu Rudeis, Israel will be entirely dependent on imports, but the United States will guarantee shipments in the event of a fuel boycott, compensate Israel financially for some of its losses, and help build new reservoirs for a year's supply of oil.

Israel, which in 27 years fought four wars with the Arabs and strove futilely for recognition by its neighbors, will for the first time have a signed commitment from

Egypt, its principal adversary, to ship and receive nonmilitary cargo through the Suez Canal.

Additionally, the two sides pledged "not to resort to the threat or use of force or military blockade against the other."

The Israeli and Egyptian armies will be limited to 8,000 men, 75 tanks and 60 artillery guns each on the Sinai front lines, with redeployment of these forces to be completed within five months, the accord text shows.

They promised to observe a cease-fire on land, sea and air and establish a joint commission functioning under the U.N. peacekeeping force "to consider any problem arising from this agreement."

The accord does not specifically bind Israel to negotiate further withdrawals on the Syrian or Jordanian fronts. However, Israel and Egypt recognize that "it is not a final peace agreement" and affirm they will continue their efforts to achieve peace in accordance with U.N. Security Council resolutions.

U.S. officials said Egypt will convey through the United States additional promises to Israel to soften the boycott of American firms doing business with Israel, and anti-Israeli propaganda.

Final implementation of the accord will depend on U.S. congressional approval of posting American technicians in the desert and on negotiations of military details.

Grand jury struggles for Hoffa case clues

Associated Press
DETROIT - The government is counting on the muscle of a federal grand jury to pry loose clues to the fate of former Teamsters President James R. Hoffa, who has been missing since July 30.

The panel convenes Tuesday. More than 70 witnesses are scheduled to appear in sessions expected to take more than two weeks.

Government attorneys counted heavily on three of the jury's powers to uncover leads in the disappearance of the former Teamsters boss.

These were its power to subpoena witnesses and documents; its ability to grant immunity to coax testimony out of witnesses and authority to cite reluctant witnesses for contempt of court.

Federal officials said the jury's primary purpose will be to investigate the Hoffa disappearance, rather than to issue indictments.

More than 100 FBI agents were assigned to the Hoffa case at its height and in more than one case reportedly ran into people reluctant to talk about Hoffa's disappearance. Grand jury powers were expected

to be focused on the reluctant witnesses.

Government spokesmen said Charles L. "Chuckie" O'Brien, Hoffa's adopted son, would be among the first witnesses to be called.

Members of the Hoffa family have urged O'Brien to take a lie detector test in the case, but he has declined to do so.

Investigators focused on O'Brien after it was reported that on the afternoon Hoffa disappeared, O'Brien drove an auto owned by Joseph Giacalone, son of reputed Mafia leader Anthony Giacalone.

O'Brien said he borrowed the car to deliver a fish to a Teamsters union vice president. The FBI seized the car several days later and reportedly found bloodstains on the seat; these were later described by some sources as being from the fish.

The FBI flew two tracking dogs from Philadelphia to check for any trace of Hoffa, and officials said the dogs found such traces in the car and its trunk. Other federal sources questioned the value of this type of evidence, saying Hoffa could have been in the car months ahead of the date the dogs sniffed it.

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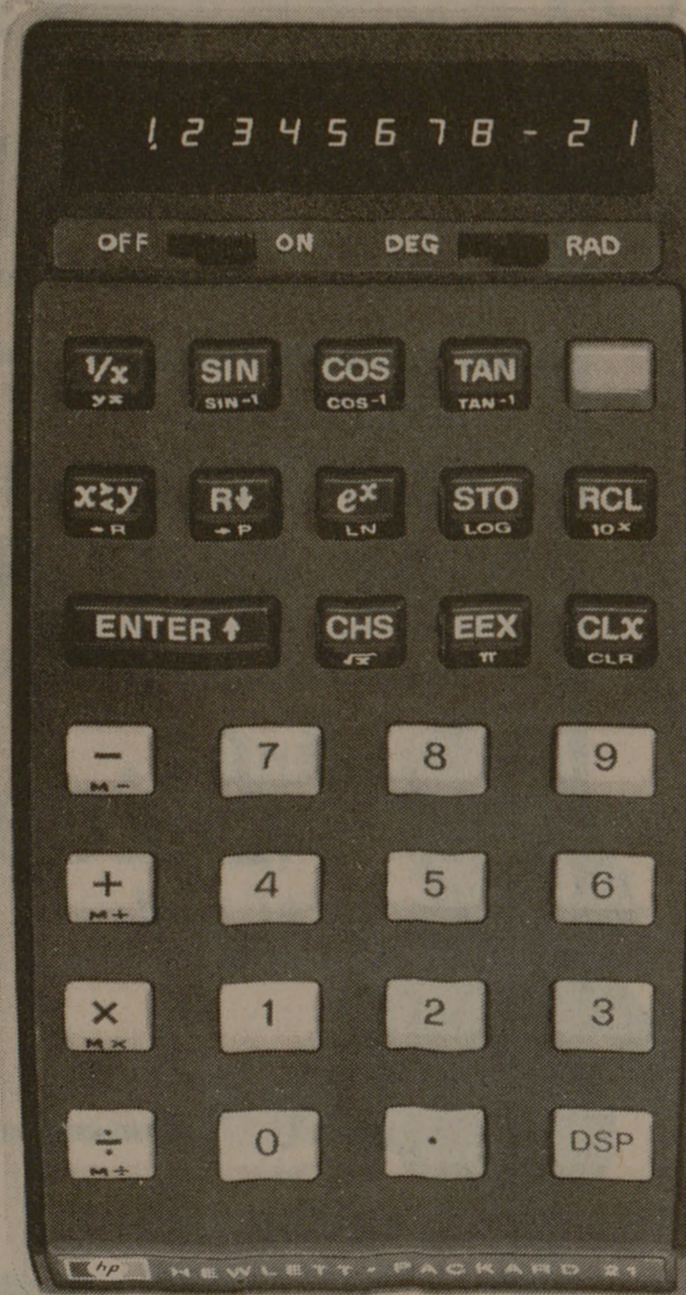
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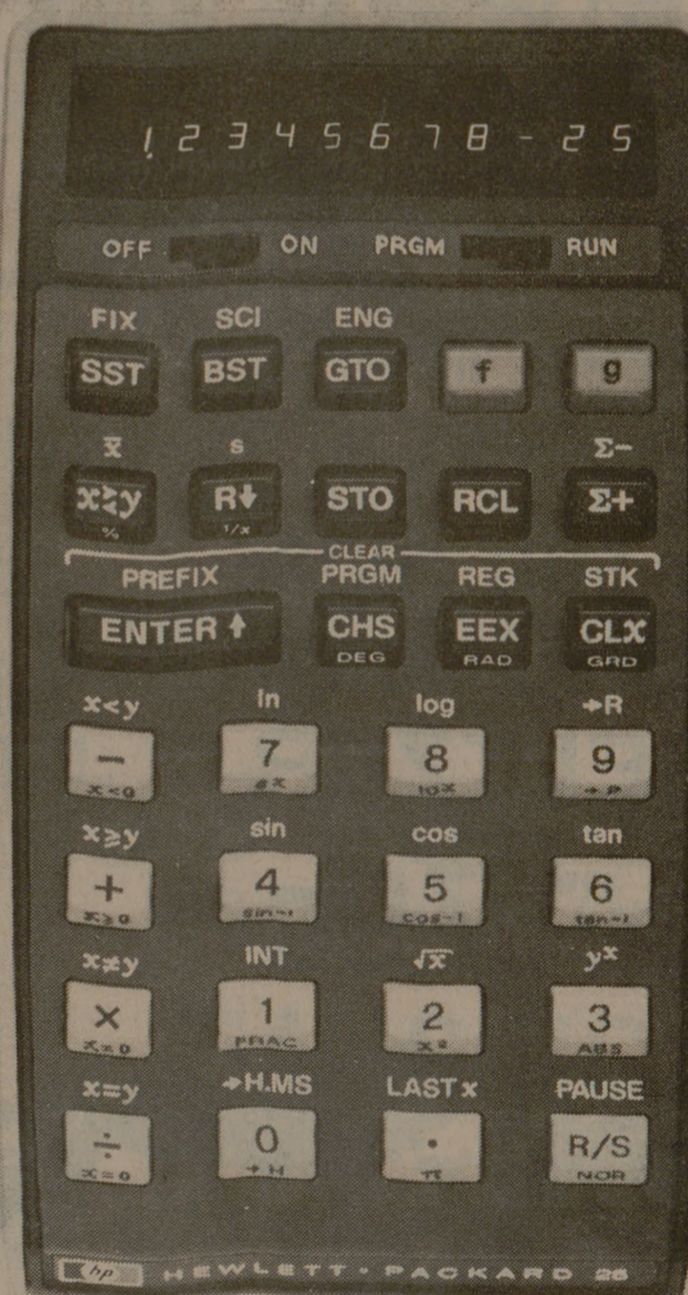
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