element in future peacemaking efforts. In short, success would improve the situation in the area and maintain our influence, but we must bear in mind that it is unlikely to usher in a period of calm in the area. Differences of interpretation, for example, are inevitable with one side seeing it as a purely military disengagement agreement and the other as primarily a political agreement. Other parts of the Arab world, led by Syria which historically has played the spoiler role in the Mideast, could substantially unite against us, seeing it as a move to split the Arabs. Some form of renewed military action (the most likely Arab strategy is a protracted war of attrition against Israel) or economic action against the U.S. cannot be precluded as a possibility, though it is less likely.

"The way to avoid this is to find some way to assure Asad he will be brought into the negotiating picture. The Israelis will take some strong convincing, and I have begun to lay the groundwork with Rabin -- but I am not optimistic on that score. Sadat has been strongly urging this, as has Faisal. But Syrian suspicion is so strong, and Israeli opposition to giving up anything more on the Golan so great, that a stalemate is likely to result. This is why Asad has refused to accept repeated assurances that we will make a major effort for Syria as the next step after Egypt. However, he might relax his opposition to my present efforts, easing the way for rapid conclusion of a Sinai agreement, if we could find a credible way to guarantee him that a Syrian-Israeli negotiation would start (either at Geneva or with the U.S. as a middleman-catalyst) before the implementation phase of any Egypt-Israel agreement begins. But our difficulties in Israel will be monumental requiring great Presidential pressure.

"Another approach, if we judge the resistance to a separate Sinai agreement is too great, would be to suspend the present Sinai effort by using the daily stalemates as an excuse and go to Geneva to discuss an overall settlement. This would not be unpopular in Israel; it would probably buy us some time with Syria; it could be portrayed as a shift to Geneva in deference to strong Arab views against a separate Egyptian-Israeli agreement; and it might help Syria support renewal of the mandate of the UN force. But it would badly strain our relations with Egypt; it would not be long at Geneva before we would be confronted with the Arabs and the USSR on one side and a recalcitrant Israel on the other over such questions as PLO participation and proposals for total Israeli withdrawal from all