

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

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MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

PARTICIPANTS: The President

Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger

His Royal Highness Prince Fahd ibn Abd al-Aziz Al Saud,
Second Deputy Prime Minister and Minister
of the Interior

His Excellency Ibrahim Al-Sowayel,
Ambassador of Saudi Arabia

DATE AND TIME: Thursday, June 6, 1974
10:00 a.m.

PLACE: The Oval Office
The White House

Prince Fahd expressed greetings to the President and stated how greatly he and the Saudi leadership looked forward to the President's forthcoming trip. He further expressed his congratulations to the President and to Secretary Kissinger for their successful efforts in the Middle East.

The President stated how much he looked forward to his first visit to Saudi Arabia. It had been necessary to cancel an earlier visit planned for 1967. The President recalled that his friendship for the Saudis went back 20 years to the Eisenhower Administration when the President attended a dinner at the Saudi Arabian Embassy for King Saud (1957). The President expressed his judgment that King Faisal was one of the wisest leaders in the world because the scope of his concerns went beyond purely domestic and bilateral issues to problems of the Middle East and indeed the world. The President expressed his appreciation for Saudi support during the difficult negotiations of the past months. He added how important it would be that Saudi Arabia play a key role in the Persian Gulf in the future in view of the instability of new governments in that area. The President stated that he particularly

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looked forward to receiving King Faisal's views on the Gulf States. For the moment, however, the President was pleased at the opportunity presented by Prince Fahd's visit to explore with the Departments of Defense, Treasury and State the outlines that had been sketched by Secretary Kissinger for bilateral cooperation. The President expressed the view that our Cabinet officials would listen to Saudi interests with deep sympathy. Secretary Kissinger stated his willingness to cut through bureaucratic obstacles to avoid their impeding the cooperation.

The President emphasized how important a role was to be played by a stable Saudi Arabia in building a permanent peace in the area. The President stated that his sentiments and attitude of support for Saudi Arabia were a product of his respect for the Saudi leadership and King Faisal in particular and their leadership in the area. He expressed the view "oil can not hold people together but friendship and respect can." He concluded by saying that his attitude towards Saudi Arabia and toward the Saudi people was based on friendship and respect.

Prince Fahd agreed with the President's statement and noted that US-Saudi friendship went back to a time long before oil became a major issue. Prince Fahd stressed that friendship and mutual interests with the United States would be the basis for Saudi Arabian foreign policy. He said that this was true not because of the benefits it would bring but as a correct end in itself. Prince Fahd stated that his country had always admired the US position. He added further that King Faisal had promised that US-Saudi relations would always develop on solid ground. He expressed the further viewpoint that had King Faisal's judgment been followed in the Arab world between 1960 and 1967 that things might have turned out differently. The President noted that while he had not been in office he believed that previous Presidents had acted with good faith. Prince Fahd stressed that Saudi antagonism to communism had been correct from the start and that it had failed because the Saudi people abhorred communism. Further, the Saudi system of government is based upon as broad a base as possible and operates under the precept that the government's authority should derive from the consent of the governed.

Prince Fahd stated that his directive from King Faisal was to make clear that the King intended for the U.S. -Saudi relationship to be based on mutual relations regardless of the winds which may be blowing; that currently friendship was being broadened at the highest level and that already the two countries are embarking on important innovations.

He added further that the King had spared no effort with Secretary Kissinger in order to bring out new and beneficial things in our bilateral relations.

With regard to the Gulf States, Prince Fahd stated that Saudi policy is clear. Friendship with the people of the Gulf States and their government is cherished; Saudi Arabia harbors nothing against them but seeks only peace, stability and progress as they develop. He added that occasional difficulty had arisen as a result of the shenanigans launched from the south and north. He believed that prevention represented the best approach and that the best prescription was a strong Saudi Arabia, in order that potential opponents would recognize that they had to deal seriously with Saudi Arabia. The Saudi army needs to be sufficiently strong to defend itself and its friends outside the country. It is the King's intention to keep the army well-equipped with what it needs, but never to use it as an aggressive force. Saudi Arabia is not looking for conquest; she is looking for respect. The Prince stated that if Saudi Arabia were strong it would be respected, but that if it were a jelly fish then others would go around it. He expressed his personal conviction that in Washington, Saudi requirements, both military and civilian, would be met.

With regard to the President's visit, Prince Fahd made clear that it was considered an important event which King Faisal and the government very much anticipated.

The President reiterated that his relationship with Saudi Arabia had its origin many years ago and that his respect for the people in the area was well-known. The President expressed regret that he was unable to visit Saudi Arabia in 1967 when he had been required to stop his travel in Morocco when the war broke out. He recalled the meeting with King Faisal in the late '60's, however, before his election to the Presidency. He particularly appreciated that occasion since it had no official meaning and was not required.

The President referred to his speech (Naval Academy Commencement Address) in which he described what detente meant and what it did not mean. He referred to King Faisal's strong aversion to Communism and stated that the United States agreed completely. He added that when it came to the internal affairs of the Soviet Union, however, that we had very little latitude for changing that. Similarly, the United States would take a strong stand on the right of all countries, as for

example Saudi Arabia, to maintain their own systems without outside interference from anyone. The President stressed that detente did not mean a privileged sanctuary in Communist states, and open hunting in non-Communist states, but rather that it provided a basis for dialogue in order to avoid nuclear conflict. The President made clear that the United States would defend the right of nations to maintain their independence from outside aggression over or under their borders.

Secretary Kissinger stated that it was in this spirit that the United States had agreed to work against Communist pressure from both South Yemen and Iraq. The United States was developing an action program which should absorb some of South Yemen's energies within that country. Prince Fahd expressed his pleasure at these remarks and stated that it was good to know that the Saudis and Americans would be working together, not only for each other, but for the peace and welfare of all people in the area. Prince Fahd then stated that he did not wish to delay the President by over-extending the meeting. The President noted that a number of Congressmen had been invited to lunch in order that the closeness of U.S. -Saudi relations would be made clear within the Congress. There would be an opportunity for toasts and for press coverage with pictures. Prince Fahd replied that it was a doubly good omen to have the opportunity to see the President twice in one day. The President confirmed that Prince Fahd would be in Jidda during his trip. Secretary Kissinger noted that knowing of Saudi hospitality he understood what was in store for the President. Prince Fahd closed by saying that when friends come they bring new life and quoted a Saudi proverb: "When you are in our house we are the guests and the visitor is the host."