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**The documents in this  
folder continue from the  
previous folder.**

March 9



MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

*no more seen*  
①

SECRET/SENSITIVE

March 9, 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR:

THE PRESIDENT

FROM:

BRENT SCOWCROFT *BS*

Secretary Kissinger asked that I pass the following report of his meeting with President Sadat to you:

"I hope this round will be fruitful and decisive.' These first words, spoken by Sadat at the opening of seven hours of talks here in Aswan, characterize the mood of hope, expectation and quiet determination which Sadat reflects. He also added at the press conference that 'this will be a hard round' -- meaning it will be a tough negotiation.

"I covered in some detail the principal points which Sadat is willing to consider in return for an Israeli withdrawal from the strategic passes and the oil fields. I got him to delete the point on linkage to a Syrian agreement which I knew in advance would result in a very adverse reaction in Israel. A number of the points which Sadat has given me are positive, and while some will not be acceptable to the Israelis, I am bringing enough with me to at least get the negotiations started in a serious way. The most positive element we have received is a willingness by Sadat to in effect agree to a no-war pledge. The form of words in which this is expressed is likely to be haggled over.

"Sadat is having a monumental problem with the military. Significantly he had with him throughout the day, General Gamasy, his Minister of Defense, whose support for any agreement is crucial. He brought in Gamasy to give us a full conceptual explanation from a military point of view of the next step as seen by the Egyptians. All of the possibilities discussed by Gamasy would move Egyptian forces east of the passes. I felt that it was essential that I tell Sadat ahead of time when I spoke to him alone afterward that Israel will not accept Egyptian soldiers east of the passes. We discussed as a possible alternative, a possible small advance of Egyptian troops to the present Israeli line which is west of the passes.

SECRET/SENSITIVE

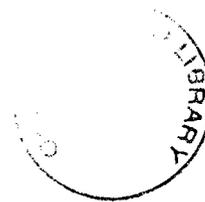
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E.O. 12958, SEC. 3.5  
NSC MEMO, 11/24/98, STATE DEPT. GUIDELINES  
BY HR, NARA, DATE 7/23/03



"Gamasy said that the agreement should be based on the following principles: (1) any line manned by one side should be secure from the other side's troops; (2) the agreement should not give either side any military advantage; (3) there should be a balance of troops in the Sinai for both sides; (4) the new lines should be a sufficient distance away to give security to the Egyptian people in the cities in the Suez Canal area and to navigation through the Canal; (5) the buffer zone should be wide enough to avoid clashes between the two sides; (6) navigation through the Suez Canal, once opened, would be an obstacle to Egyptian military reaction in event of renewed hostilities, thus making it necessary for Egypt to have more forces in Sinai.

"My plan is to return to Aswan on Wednesday. In the meantime you will have seen that Esenbel has invited me to come to Ankara. I am planning on having talks with the Israelis on Sunday night and Monday a. m., after which the Israelis will have 24 hours to think over what I have brought from Egypt. During this 24 hour period -- Monday afternoon and Tuesday morning -- I will be in Ankara to discuss the Cyprus situation with all of the principal Turkish leaders, including Ecevit and Demirel. I will use the occasion to explore possibilities, but will make no moves in this regard without further consultation with you. The principal focus of the discussions will be on what the Turks would be willing to give in return if we are able to get a commitment from the Greek Government to the concept of a bizonal federation.

"I leave Aswan early Sunday morning; I will make a brief five hour stop in Damascus before arriving in Israel Sunday night."



HAK/Khaddam  
Mencon

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

Trip Rec -

10

SECRET/NODIS/XGDSMEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

## PARTICIPANTS:

Abd al-Halim Khaddam, Deputy Prime Minister  
and Minister of Foreign Affairs  
Samech Tawfeek Abou Fares, Syrian Arab Republic  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Dr. Henry A. Kissinger, Secretary of State  
and Assistant to the President  
for National Security Affairs  
Peter W. Rodman, NSC Staff  
Isa K. Sabbagh, Special Assistant to  
Amb. Akins, Jidda (Interpreter)

## DATE AND TIME:

Sunday, March 9, 1975  
11:55 am - 12:30 pm

## PLACE:

In car from airport to the  
American Ambassador's Residence; The Residence  
Damascus

Khaddam: How is President Ford?

Kissinger: President Ford is fine.

Schwoebel [driver of the limousine] is one of the veterans of the Afrika  
Corps. That's a joke.

I said to the press I wanted to review with you the progress toward  
peace in the Middle East and that peace in the Middle East requires the  
participation of all countries. [See arrival statement, attached at Tab A].

Khaddam: Yes.

Kissinger: So, I've put on the record what our attitude is.

Khaddam: How is the health of President Sadat and Minister Fahmy?

SECRET/NODIS/XGDS

CLASSIFIED BY HENRY A. KISSINGER  
EXEMPT FROM GENERAL DECLASSIFICATION  
SCHEDULE OF EXECUTIVE ORDER 11652  
EXEMPTION CATEGORY 5 (B) (1, 3)  
AUTOMATICALLY DECLASSIFIED ON Imp. to Det.

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E.O. 12958, SEC. 3.5

NSC MEMO, 11/24/00, STATE DEPT. GUIDELINES  
BY KJR, NADA, DATE 7/23/03

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Kissinger: They're both fine. Fahmy complains that I've said Khaddam is the outstanding Foreign Minister in the Arab world. He complains that I have never said it about him. I said it in Saudi Arabia and they reported it to the Egyptians.

Khaddam: And he really was upset?

Kissinger: He noted he had never had a report of my saying it about him.

Khaddam: I find it very difficult to find anybody who does praise Mr. Fahmy!

I said it as a joke.

Kissinger: I know. I know that when Fahmy comes to the next NATO meeting Khaddam will be jealous.

Khaddam: We might even delegate responsibility for him to represent the Arabs!

Kissinger: [indicating something by the roadside] Is this the UNDOF memorial here? [Laughter].

Khaddam: Your statements in Cairo smacked of a lot of optimism.

Kissinger: No, they were Egyptian statements. I only said I came here to make progress. I didn't say progress had been made. The Egyptian press is very optimistic, but I don't know based on what.

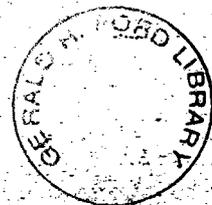
Khaddam: Egyptian optimism must be based on optimism about progress in the Sinai.

Kissinger: It may be. I've never misled you. It may be based on their hope, their analysis -- but it is not based on objective Israeli proposals.

I find by giving President Asad so much exposure in the American press, I'm turning him into a formidable weapon. He's learning how to use the American press with great skill.

Khaddam: Yes, he did conduct a few interviews.

Kissinger: Yes, very skillful. Look, whatever you may think, I want Syria to have an improving reputation in America. And you know I have worked to bring that about. I always say good things about President Asad and the Syrian leadership in America.



Khaddam: This is obvious. We, of course, attribute to you a major role in persuading the American press and the Congress to visit Syria.

Apparently the BBC broadcast an item that you were going to Europe to visit Gromyko soon.

Kissinger: No, I'm going to Ankara tomorrow.

Khaddam: Not to Israel?

Kissinger: Yes, tonight I go to Israel, then tomorrow I go to Ankara. I want to see if they can find Makarios' cook.

Khaddam: That will be difficult, because his cook is dead.

Kissinger: Really? You looked into it?

Khaddam: No, but it's difficult.

Kissinger: I'm prepared in principle to see Gromyko in Europe, but we have not fixed a time yet.

Khaddam: I was aware of that and that is why I was surprised at the news from London.

Kissinger: We have not fixed a time.

Khaddam: What are the general preparations that Israel is prepared to do?

Kissinger: The truth is, the Israeli Cabinet is so unreliable that I have not let them make a decision -- or, to put it better, I have not asked them to make a decision, because there would be such trouble in America. But I'll ask them now, and I will have a better idea after this visit.

Khaddam: The Egyptians are pinning great hopes on Dr. Kissinger's visit to the area. They're raising the people's hopes in their information media.

Kissinger: I saw that, and frankly I asked President Sadat not to be so optimistic. Maybe you saw it last night.

It's almost Spring here.

What the Egyptians want is the passes and the oil fields.



Khaddam: Abu Rudeis.

Kissinger: Yes. And the question is what Israel is willing to do.

Khaddam: Israel's own latest statements -- of course, they have been varied, but the latest ones indicate that Israel will be willing to give up the fields.

Kissinger: There are two possible theories. The first is that you're right, that they're willing. The second possibility is that they're trying to maneuver to give the impression to the American public that they're willing, and they can then put pressure through Congress to give aid, etc. We're putting pressure on them now. And I've not really made up my mind. Because their statements really are very confusing and their official communications to me are very vague. This could again have two reasons: one is that they want to wait until I get here and don't really trust their Ambassador in Washington, who is a friend of Golda but not close to Rabin. The second possibility is, again, that they're playing with me.

Khaddam: Then we assume on this visit you'll get a clearer impression.

Kissinger: Absolutely. The confusion must, and will be removed on this visit.

Khaddam: OK, you get a clear impression on this visit, but if you think they're maneuvering, what will be your decision?

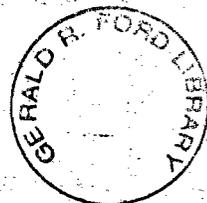
Kissinger: In that case, we will have to take a drastic reexamination of policy in Washington.

Khaddam: The conclusion is, therefore, that if you continue, your impression is good and you have a green light.

Kissinger: Yes, but I'll let you know; you don't have to guess. But I want your President to know that whatever they may say in the papers, we do not cooperate in their isolation of Syria. That is not our policy.

Khaddam: Actually, we don't derive our interpretation of their attitude from statements. The way events develop gives us a clearer picture.

With respect to the Palestinians, there is nothing new?



Kissinger: No. I mean our basic attitude is what I described last time. We are not permanently hostile to the Palestinians. But we have to pick the right moment. Because there is something about the country of Palestine that produces leaks to the press.

Khaddam: Did you hear about President Asad's speech last night?

Kissinger: Yes, it was very strong. I must say the President thinks he understands my tactics, and he probably does, but I understand his!

Khaddam: No, the President is working in accordance with a strategy, not tactics. What the President offered to the Palestinians is the result of long-term discussions with them. And the majority of the Arab countries will go along.

Kissinger: But the timing is tactics.

Khaddam: But it was the appropriate occasion. It was the 8th of March.

Kissinger: Why are all the flags up? I appreciate it. You didn't have to do it.

Khaddam: It's a national day.

Kissinger: This is a new route.

Sabbagh: We're going to the Residence.

[At 12:15, the motorcade arrived at the Residence. The Secretary and Minister Khaddam took their seats in the living room.]

Kissinger: You realize the only reason King Faisal received me is so he can hear Isa [Sabbagh] speak in Arabic. He never looks at me, always at Isa. He picks the lint off him!

Khaddam: King Faisal has told me of his admiration for you.

Kissinger: I believe he is an outstanding man.

[The ladies arrive.]

How was Cuba?

Khaddam: I haven't gone yet. I'm going on the 17th now.



Kissinger: I made some friendly remarks about Cuba last Saturday. [in the speech at Houston].

Khaddam: And we'll also be saying some good things about Cuba in Cuba. We might attack the United States in Cuba. [Laughter].

Kissinger: I suspected! Be careful, because we may be improving our relations.

What is the purpose of that meeting?

Khaddam: It is a regular meeting of the office for coordination of non-aligned nations.

Kissinger: The most formidable alliance today is the alliance of the non-aligned.

Khaddam: It is not an alliance in the true sense, but it's on the way.

Kissinger: Is Mrs. Khaddam going with you?

Khaddam: Yes, whenever I travel, I try to take her.

Kissinger: I try to do that.

Khaddam: Will we meet in Cuba?

Kissinger: Ask Castro.

Khaddam: I don't think he will object.

Kissinger: Maybe next year.

Khaddam: To effect a reconciliation between the U. S. and Cuba.

Kissinger: You can tell the Cubans we are in principle ready.

Khaddam: Senator Javits went.

Kissinger: Yes, but that was not official.



Khaddam: What is the news of oil?

Kissinger: You're going to reduce the price?

Khaddam: No.

Kissinger: You don't have any. That's the only thing that saves us.

Khaddam: But we're going to discover some. When the oil of the other Arabs begin to dwindle, it's then that the Syrians will strike oil. The initial surveys show good prospects.

Kissinger: You should. All your neighbors have oil.

Khaddam: Certain companies have made offers. Some American companies offered to survey off-shore.

Kissinger: I wouldn't be surprised if you have some.

Khaddam: We have some -- 70 million tons in 1975. It's small, but we expect to have good prospects.

Kissinger: Will you join OPEC?

Khaddam: Of course. We have to help the Saudis and the Algerians. [Laughter].

Kissinger: The price will double!

Khaddam: Of course, because we have to make up the losses due to the United States. The Saudis and Algerians help us in war when we are fighting, so we have to help their economies. We promised King Faisal to pray in Jerusalem.

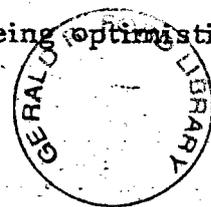
Kissinger: When?

Khaddam: It will happen.

You're not optimistic?

Kissinger: No, I'd like to see him exercise his religious convictions.

Khaddam: There is a difference between being pleased and being optimistic.



Kissinger: They told me a joke. They said Golda Meir took me to the Wailing Wall and said to me, "If you pray here, you're talking directly to God." So I said I hope peace comes to the Middle East. So she said "Why don't you try another prayer?" So I said peace will be achieved on the '67 borders. So Golda turned to her security people and said, "Look at that idiot. He thinks he's talking to God and he's talking to a wall." [Laughter].

Khaddam: It's a joke, but it sounds true.

Kissinger: There is an element of truth in it. [To Sisco]. The Foreign Minister is in great form. He's going to Cuba.

Khaddam: It's not final.

Kissinger: He thinks the oil price is too low.

Khaddam: It's because the dollar is doing down.

Kissinger: I like the speech of Boumediene. It was a very statesmanlike speech.

Khaddam: We're achieving assistance from the Arab countries in dollars, and since the value of the dollar is going down, we have asked the Arab countries to increase their assistance to a commensurate extent.

Kissinger: Have they done it?

Khaddam: Not yet.

Kissinger: Has it been published how much they have given?

Khaddam: No.

[At 12:30 the group went outside on the porch for drinks after lunch. Secretary Kissinger took General Shihabi aside, when he arrived, for a private conversation of about 10 minutes.]

[The exchange of toasts at the luncheon is attached at Tab B.]



UNCLASSIFIED

5515

O 091246Z MAR 75 ZFF-A CA:  
FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2985  
INFO RUQBZ/AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE 1484  
RUEHQB/AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE 539  
RUEHJH/AMCONSUL JERUSALEM IMMEDIATE 618  
RUQHAD/AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE 695  
RUEHNAH/USOEL ASYAH IMMEDIATE 216  
RUENFO/USINFO WASHDC IMMEDIATE  
BT  
UNCLAS DAMASCUS 0985

SECTG 128

STATE PASS NSC FOR GENERAL SCOWCROFT  
STATE PASS WHITEHOUSE FOR NESSEN

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: OVIP (KISSINGER, HENRY A.)

SUBJECT: SECSTATE VISIT - ARRIVAL STATEMENT

SECRETARY MADE FOLLOWING STATEMENT ON ARRIVAL DAMASCUS  
AIRPORT MARCH 9, 1975: "I JUST WANT TO SAY THAT, AS ALWAYS,  
I'M GLAD TO BE IN SYRIA, AND I'LL REVIEW THAT STEPS CAN BE  
MADE TOWARDS PEACE, TOGETHER WITH THE PRESIDENT AND THE  
FOREIGN MINISTER; AND OF COURSE WE RECOGNIZE THAT  
PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST REQUIRES THE PARTICIPATION OF  
ALL COUNTRIES. THANK YOU."

KISSINGER

UNCLASSIFIED



5515

O 391513Z MAR 75  
 FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS  
 TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2 007  
 INFO RUEHAM/AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE 451  
 RUEHEG/AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE 540  
 RUEHEM/AMCONSUL JERUSALEM IMMEDIATE 419  
 RUQMAD/AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE 686  
 RUEHHAX/UNDEL ASP44 IMMEDIATE 017  
 RUQMSE/AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE 1485  
 RUQMRA/AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE 2 30  
 RUEHFO/USINFO WASHDC IMMEDIATE  
 BT  
 UNCLAS DAMASCUS 0992

SECTO 130

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: OVIP (KISSINGER, HENRY A.)

SUBJ: SECVISIT: EXCHANGE OF TOASTS AT SECRETARY KISSINGER'S  
 LUNCHEON IN HONOR OF SYRIAN FOREIGN MINISTER  
 KHADDAM, DAMASCUS, MAR 9, 1975

1. TRANSCRIPT OF SECRETARY KISSINGER' TOAST:

QUOTE: I WOULD LIKE TO EXPRESS THE GREAT PLEASURE WE HAVE  
 IN WELCOMING THE FOREIGN MINISTER, MRS. KHADDAM AND ALL OUR  
 OTHER SYRIAN FRIENDS TO THE AMERICAN EMBASSY. I HAD THE  
 PLEASURE OF FIRST MEETING THE FOREIGN MINISTER IN DECEMBER,  
 1973. SINCE THEN I HAVE BEEN IN DAMASCUS ABOUT THIRTY  
 TIMES. I AM ONE OF THE WORLD'S GREAT EXPERTS ON THE  
 ROUTE FROM THE AIRPORT TO THE GUEST HOUSE, AND ON THE  
 TACTICS OF THE FOREIGN MINISTER, WHICH CONSIST OF GOING ON  
 THE ATTACK IMMEDIATELY UPON MY ARRIVAL. IN FACT, I WANT  
 TO COMPLIMENT HIM. HE HAS COMPRESSED THE TIME SCHEDULE  
 NOW, AND WE CAN GET INTO A FULL ATTACK FROM A STANDING  
 START IN TEN SECONDS. (LAUGHTER) I CAN SAY WITH ASSURANCE  
 THAT WHATEVER ELSE MAY HAPPEN IN SYRIAN-AMERICAN RELATIONS,  
 IT WILL NOT BE DUE TO THE INADEQUATE DEFENSE OF  
 SYRIAN INTEREST BY THE SYRIAN OFFICIALS THAT I HAVE EN-  
 COUNTERED.

IN THE YEAR AND A HALF THAT WE HAVE HAD THE PRIVILEGE  
 OF MEETING I HAVE LEARNED TO UNDERSTAND THE SYRIAN POINT  
 OF VIEW, THE SYRIAN PRIDE, THE SYRIAN DEDICATION TO ITS  
 PRINCIPLES. WE HAVE DORKED TOGETHER ON ONE AGREEMENT, AND  
 WHILE IT WAS A DIFFICULT NEGOTIATION, I THINK IT BROUGHT OUR  
 TWO COUNTRIES CLOSER TOGETHER. AS I CONTINUE THE AMERICAN  
 EFFORTS IN THIS AREA, IT IS BASED ON THE CONVICTION THAT A  
 LASTING PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST MUST INCLUDE ALL OF THE  
 CONCERNED COUNTRIES. THIS IS OUR BASIC ATTITUDE IN WHATEVER  
 CONTRIBUTION WE CAN MAKE TO LASTING PEACE. IN THE  
 PROCESS, I BELIEVE THAT SYRIAN-AMERICAN RELATIONS HAVE  
 DRAMATICALLY IMPROVED, AND WE WILL TO WHATEVER IS IN OUR  
 POWER SO THEY WILL CONTINUE TO IMPROVE. AS WE HAVE LEARNED



TO WORK TOGETHER IN MUTUAL RESPECT AND GROWING UNDERSTANDING. I AM CONFIDENT WE CAN SURMOUNT WHATEVER DIFFICULTIES EXIST FROM TIME TO TIME. I HAVE GREATLY APPRECIATED THE OPPORTUNITY OF WORKING WITH THE FOREIGN MINISTER, GENERAL SHIHABI, AND OF COURSE WITH PRESIDENT ASAD AND OTHERS HERE. I WOULD LIKE TO PROPOSE A TOAST TO THE FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN THE SYRIAN AND AMERICAN PEOPLE. UNQUOTE.

2. TRANSLATION FROM ARABIC OF FOREIGN MINISTER KHADDAN'S TOAST: QUOTE MR. SECRETARY, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN: FROM THE BOTTOM OF MY HEART I THANK YOU ON BEHALF OF MYSELF AND MY COLLEAGUES AND FRIENDS OF THE SYRIAN SIDE FOR THIS GRACIOUS INVITATION TO THE RESIDENCE OF THE AMERICAN EMBASSY. AND I ALSO THANK YOU FOR THE GRACIOUS WORDS YOU HAVE UTTERED IN APPRECIATION OF THE GOOD RELATIONS BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND SYRIA. YOU HAVE REFERRED TO YOUR REPEATED VISITS TO OUR COUNTRY. AND I BELIEVE THAT DURING THIS PERIOD AND THROUGH THESE VISITS YOU HAVE COME TO APPRECIATE AND UNDERSTAND WHAT WE FEEL AND HOW WE FEEL ABOUT CERTAIN THINGS.

AS PRESIDENT ASAD SAID EVER SINCE THE FIRST MEETING, I WOULD LIKE TO REITERATE THAT OUR COUNTRY WANTS AND STRIVES FOR PEACE. WE HAVE WORKED, WE ARE STILL WORKING, AND WE WILL CONTINUE TO WORK TOWARD THE REALIZATION OF A JUST PEACE. WE WERE VERY CLEAR WHEN WE SAID THAT PEACE MEANS TO US FIRST: THE PRESERVATION FOR THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE OF THEIR LEGITIMATE RIGHTS; SECONDLY: THE COMPLETE WITHDRAWAL OF ISRAELI FORCES FROM OUR OCCUPIED LANDS. AND IT IS FROM THIS ANGLE THAT WE VIEW EFFORTS IN THIS DIRECTION TOWARD A JUST SOLUTION, AND FROM THIS ANGLE APPEARS THE COMPREHENSIVE LOOK AT A JUST PEACE. THAT IS WHY WE IN SYRIA AND THE REST OF THE ARAB COUNTRIES WANT JUST AND PERMANENT PEACE. AND IT WAS ON THIS BASIS THAT WE WELCOMED ALL THE EFFORTS THAT WERE SPENT WITHIN THIS FRAMEWORK AND IN THIS DIRECTION.

I WISH YOU, MR. SECRETARY, AND YOU, MRS. KISSINGER, A VERY GOOD SOJOURN IN OUR COUNTRY. AND I WOULD LIKE TO EMPHASIZE AND ASSURE YOU THAT OUR COUNTRY STRETCHES OUT THE ARM OF FRIENDSHIP TO MEET THE ARM OF FRIENDSHIP EXTENDED BY ANY OTHER COUNTRY IN THE SAME SPIRIT. WE STRETCH OUT THIS ARM OF FRIENDSHIP TOWARD ANY COUNTRY WHICH SHARES WITH US MUTUAL RESPECT AND WHICH HAS MUTUAL INTERESTS WITH US. IN THIS CONNECTION, REFERENCE MUST BE MADE TO THE EFFORTS MADE BY DR. KISSINGER TO RETURN TO NORMALCY THE RELATIONS BETWEEN SYRIAN AND THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

FINALLY, I RAISE MY GLASS IN A TOAST TO SECRETARY KISSINGER, MRS. KISSINGER AND TO ALL OUR OTHER AMERICAN GUESTS HERE. UNQUOTE.

KISSINGER





## THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

~~SECRET/SENSITIVE/NODIS/XGDS~~

## MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

PARTICIPANTS: President Hafiz Al-Asad of the Syrian Arab Republic  
 Abd al-Halim Khaddam, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs  
 Muhammad Heydar, Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs  
 Maj. General Naji Jamil, Deputy Minister of Defense and Air Force Chief of Staff  
 Maj. General Hikmat Shihabi, Army Chief of Staff  
 Adib Daoudi, Presidential Adviser  
 Dr. Assad Elias, Presidential Press Secretary

Dr. Henry A. Kissinger, Secretary of State and Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs  
 Amb. Richard Murphy, U.S. Ambassador to Syria  
 Joseph J. Sisco, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs  
 Robert B. Oakley, NSC Staff  
 Peter W. Rodman, NSC Staff *PHR*  
 Isa K. Sabbagh, Special Assistant to Ambassador Akins, Jidda (Interpreter)

DATE & TIME: Sunday - March 9, 1975  
 3:15 - 7:30 p.m.

PLACE: Presidential Palace  
 Damascus, Syria



[Press and photographers were admitted at the beginning. The American press contingent addressed questions to President Asad.]

DECLASSIFIED

E.O. 12958, SEC. 3.5

NSC MEMO, 11/24/93, STATE DEPT. GUIDELINES

BY HR, NARA, DATE 9/24/03

CLASSIFIED BY HENRY KISSINGER  
 EXEMPT FROM GENERAL DECLASSIFICATION  
 SCHEDULE OF EXECUTIVE ORDER 11652  
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~~SECRET/SENSITIVE/NODIS/XGDS~~

Richard Valeriani (NBC-TV): Mr. President, do you think another agreement between Egypt and Israel is a good idea?

Asad: I have no idea. Dr. Kissinger is saying there is no agreement yet.

Kissinger: I have 15 assistants on the airplane conducting the negotiation for me.

Wilbur Landrey (UPI): Is Syria seeking or does it want another interim accord on the Golan Heights before a full settlement?

Asad: We would agree to an interim agreement provided it takes place on all the fronts. We are against separate, partial agreements. If you would have asked Dr. Kissinger on the way here, you would know this. [laughter]

Kissinger: I have told them already, Mr. President. They didn't believe me. They have to hear it from you.

Barry Schweid (AP): There is some confusion about whether you are interested in a separate peace treaty with Israel if Israel withdraws from the Golan Heights, the Gaza strip and the West Bank. Could you clear up that confusion for us, Mr. President?

Asad: We are ready to end the state of belligerency with Israel in accordance with Resolution 338, which stipulates that Israel should withdraw completely from all the Arab territories it has occupied since 1967, and if there is restoration of the legitimate rights of the Palestinians.

Barry Schweid: I asked about a peace treaty, Mr. President.

Asad: In Resolution 242 there is nothing called a peace treaty. In any case we are not enamoured of treaties, even if they are treaties of friendship. What is important is to move toward a condition of peace and not just to sign treaties. And an end of the state of war is what we are seeking and is stipulated in Resolution 242.

Marvin Kalb (CBS-TV): If there is a unified command between Syria and the Palestinians, would this give an opportunity to Syria to represent the Palestinians at the Geneva Conference?

Asad: It all depends on the resolution taken by the political command. In a sense you're right; it would give the Palestinians the opportunity to go to Geneva. But it could also prevent Syria from going to Geneva. It depends on the decision of the political command. In essence it means either we might go together or stay away together.



Ted Koppel (ABC-TV): If there is a joint command established, is it imminent, and if so, how imminent?

Kissinger: My hardest negotiation isn't here, Mr. President; it's on the airplane.

Asad: You're right. It is only 12 hours since I made my statement; it is too early to tell. But within one hour of my statement, I received a telegram from Chairman of the Executive Committee Yasir Arafat expressing welcome to the proposal. The leadership should convene and study the matter. If they decide now that they are ready, we will be ready now to unite. Certainly they will agree.

Barry Schweid: What is the effect of this on your joint command with the Egyptians?

Asad: Who knows? If not now, then in the future, we might become a tripartite command.

Ted Koppel: Thank you very much, Mr. President.

[The press was ushered out.]

Kissinger: Now we can talk about Sisco.

Asad: The press is like food; sometimes it's peppered with poison.

Kissinger: Our press doesn't want to find out the news; they want to create the news by their questions. [Asad nods yes.] So when they know the situation is very complicated, they ask simple questions which they know will irritate somebody.

Asad: Welcome.

Kissinger: Thank you.

Asad: I notice from your statements with President Sadat something new. You never said before that there were problems; especially [I see this now] in President Sadat's statements. I have the impression things are moving more easily than is apparent in those statements. [laughter]



Kissinger: I knew it couldn't be that simple. If he had said that success is assured, you would be at peace. But since he says there are problems, you know success is assured! [laughter]

Asad: Dr. Kissinger and I are used to exchanging those "snapshots."

Kissinger: There have been occasions when I have yearned for a less intelligent Syrian leader.

Asad: There were occasions when a more intelligent...

Kissinger: No, less intelligent maybe.

Asad: In the history of Syria, there have been quite a few geniuses. Perhaps you don't know.

Kissinger: I haven't noticed in my experience that lack of intelligence is a Syrian disease. [The Syrians laugh and comment to themselves.]

Asad: [to Kissinger] It is an internal joke.

Kissinger: Oh, you know some? [laughter]

About President Sadat: the mood in Egypt is very mercurial. For example, all last week the Egyptian press reported very optimistically. Quite honestly, I knew no basis for these reports, since there is nothing new since I last saw you. Then yesterday they said something pessimistic, so you are convinced the optimism was well founded!

Khaddam: With your advice.

Kissinger: I told him to say something?

Asad: No, in agreement. Not only because of the atmosphere in the area, perhaps you agreed it should be so to bring some pressure on Israel.

Kissinger: From that point of view, there is some merit in what you say. Not from the point of view that anything had been achieved which we are hiding from you, but from the point of view that too much optimism creates the impression of excessive eagerness on the part of [to] the Israelis. [He nods yes]

There is nothing of particular news from Aswan. I'll tell you what there is, then I'll give you my analysis of the situation. I want to say I have read your



many statements, and I have encouraged your many statements because, as you know, I have sent many senior journalists here. So I am not unhappy that you are being heard in America. Quite the contrary. You see, the precondition for our being able to do something for Syria is to -- I don't want to say anything offensive -- make Syria respectable in America. For 15 years, for a variety of reasons, Syria found itself in a position in America where it was considered totally irrational, totally anti-United States, and totally intransigent. And you have done an enormous amount to correct that.

Let me go back to the situation, first with Egypt, and then the overall situation. You know that Egypt has asked for the passes and the oil fields; they have said so publicly. They have not made any particular proposals other than elaborations of the disengagement agreement applied to the new situation.

Asad: What do you mean?

Kissinger: For example, there are proposals adapted to the situation of Israeli withdrawal -- where should the lines be, where should the forces be, civil administration, etc.

Asad: What is the purpose? That the Egyptians have not presented proposals other than asking for the passes and the oil fields and new details pertaining to the new situation?

Kissinger: Right.

Asad: The same conditions as disengagement, but applied to the new withdrawal?

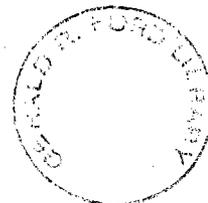
Kissinger: Yes. But of course the front would be more extensive, and new positions have to be found. We went through this for 30 days.

Asad: I am now presenting some figures just as a for-instance: There are 10 kilometers along the Canal where there are thinned-out forces; I'm assuming, when this new withdrawal is carried out...

Kissinger: If. If.

Asad: Of course. [laughter]

Kissinger: I am sure you think it's already arranged.



Asad: The news agencies think so.

Kissinger: They're wrong.

Asad: The English and Americans.

Kissinger: The English have no sources of information. And the American press is in a nihilistic mood. Those questions were designed to encourage international difficulties. That is the purpose of these questions. You answered very skillfully. But you have seen here up to now only the columnists, not the daily press.

So let me give you where the situation is, and what my analysis is, and the strategy.

For if there are new lines, it will be the same principle as the earlier one -- a demilitarized zone and a thinned-out zone, and so forth.

So this is what was discussed in general terms, and without any numbers, and without any exactly clear line. And the difficulty is, the Israeli Government is very... complicated, and it is complicated because I think Rabin and Allon genuinely want to move towards peace. Rabin suffers from the difficulty that he is the brightest student in the class and needs a grade every week, and must give an interview every week with some superclever statement. I mean I always have the impression that with each interview, the subtitle should be, "Look how clever I am." He gives an interview with the Washington Post. I can understand an interview with an Israeli paper, but why he needs to give an interview with the Washington Post I can't understand. But I think these two want peace.

Peres wants to be the Prime Minister. Or he and Dayan will work this out. So they are maneuvering in a purely tactical sense in Israeli domestic politics.

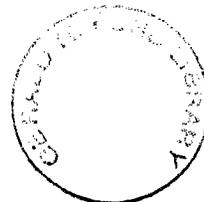
Asad: They are in agreement, Peres and Dayan?

Kissinger: It's a good question. Six months ago, I would have said yes, Peres is the junior partner of Dayan. But it is conceivable now that Peres thinks he can be the Number One man. So you have these three. The Chief of Staff actually is quite sensible.

Asad: Gur.

Kissinger: Gur is quite sensible.

SECRET/SENSITIVE/NODIS/XGDS



Asad: Always, the Chief of Staff is sensible. [Laughter, particularly from Shihabi.]

Kissinger: He has an obsession about hills, but otherwise... In a toast at a dinner, I said, "I'm looking for some flat country from which Israel can withdraw." Did you read it? I said it in Jerusalem.

Asad: I didn't read it. They didn't make it public.

Kissinger: Do we have it, Peter?

Rodman: I'll see if we can get it.

Kissinger: In the toast, I said a number of things they didn't like. I left the next day. It would be interesting to see if it was published in the Israeli newspapers. I'll send it to you.

The rest of the Israeli Cabinet is totally untested. Nobody has an idea of what they will do in a critical situation -- including Rabin. I mean Rabin doesn't know what they'll do. So I'm speaking quite honestly; I didn't ask them for a decision, because it would be in the newspapers, which would make the situation in the Middle East, which is already quite complicated, more complicated. So I have not since early December received any specific Israeli ideas, and those ideas were in the newspapers, so you know about them.

Asad: For a while you had several meetings with the Israeli Ambassador.

Kissinger: The Israeli Ambassador? In Washington? Or in Damascus?  
[laughter]

Asad: We haven't given him a visa yet!

Kissinger: I met with him very frequently. The Israeli Ambassador in Washington was particularly close to Golda Meir; he was Chef de Cabinet to Golda. He does not have a particularly close relationship with Rabin.

I have to see him from time to time, importantly for reasons of American domestic politics. I can remember only one meeting with him in the interval. [to Rodman]: Only one, I think.

Rodman: One.



Kissinger: Of course, he immediately runs to every newspaper. And the last time I met we spent 90 percent of the time on the question of guarantees for Israel. I had made a public statement which the Israelis objected to.

The Israelis have not made any new decisions. But they will have to consider them in the next weeks.

I have read with great care your statements, and as I have said to the Foreign Minister and to General Shihabi, I have great sympathy for your statements.

You know my personal view on these matters: I think one must not run counter to Arab unity. On the other hand, here is the difficulty that I face, and which also has to be realized. And I recognize you have your difficulties here; the Arab side has its difficulties. But at least we should understand each other. Let me give you my analysis first of my domestic situation and then of the local situation.

My domestic situation -- our domestic situation. I'll explain why I speak of "my" domestic situation in a moment.

There is no one in America now, except myself, with sufficient authority to bring about an Israeli withdrawal. Anywhere. And, second, there is nobody in the world right now who can bring about an Israeli withdrawal except the United States. For the next few years anyway. This I consider a fact -- regrettable or whatever, but it is a fact.

Now, to return to my situation. I'm in the peculiar situation that, generally speaking, a Secretary of State in America is not popular, but in my case I have through a series of events a very high popularity. But since I'm not a political figure, I have the sort of popularity that popular Presidents have, but I can't translate it into action the way Presidents can. I'm speaking very frankly. So I have to maneuver with some care. And since I have this popularity -- I'm rated number one in the most-admired poll -- I create a real problem for the opposition, who must reduce my popularity before the election. If a year from now I still have 80% popularity, then just by being there -- I don't have to campaign -- I'm a threat to the Democratic candidate.

Asad: Between parentheses, so to speak -- is there anything that prevents you from running?

Kissinger: Yes, because I wasn't born there. But if not, I would have a pretty good chance.



Asad: Is that the law?

Sisco: It's in the Constitution.

Kissinger: So there is a reservoir of people with an interest in destroying me anyway, regardless of policy, and they can hardly wait to inflict what looks like a setback on me. Quite frankly, a lot of the problem with aid to Cambodia has nothing to do with Cambodia but is an effort to destroy that particular line of policy.

So I give you this explanation because it's not the Jewish Community alone, but if you add this to the Jewish Community, and the newspapers and television they control, you have what amounts to a very formidable opposition. And therefore I have to spend an enormous amount of care and time to maneuver in such a way so as to paralyze the various centers of opposition to me to prevent them from combining against me. For example -- you can study it for yourself -- whenever I start going to the Middle East, there is an immediate press campaign against me. It always coincides with my trips to the Middle East. And one reason I usually go in two stages is so I can determine where the attack is coming from and then spend some of my time in the interval in blunting it. Now in every previous move -- I give you all these explanations because... Rabin speaks of isolating Syria; that is not our strategy. Our strategy is to isolate the opponents of moves that I believe must be made, even though it coincides for a short distance. And even though our strategy includes steps they don't want to take.

Take the Egyptian problem, Sinai. Two months ago they were speaking of ten-year agreements and nonbelligerency and a 30-50 kilometer withdrawal. In the last two months -- in our domestic discussion, and therefore in part of the Israeli discussion -- we have managed at least to get people to talk about the passes and the oil fields and not to talk of ten years, so our problem can be managed in our domestic situation. Everyone in America now accepts that progress must be made.

My difficulty in America is I can't create conditions simultaneously for Syria and for Egypt. I can keep it on peoples' minds that Syria has a claim. In every public statement I make I speak of your moderation, which is not common in America. And I think -- Joe, you sit with my [press] people on the plane -- I've gotten in the heads of those 14 people on the plane, 75% of whom are Jewish, that something must be done on Syria. And they're already talking about it and wondering what month.



So I understand your view. You made it clear to me last October, last November, and last time I was here, and you've made it clear publicly. I respect it and indeed I have great sympathy for it. All I can say is, first of all, I don't encourage any Arab leader to do anything he doesn't volunteer to me. I'm not going around the Arab world proposing strategies. Secondly, you know when I traveled last year, the Shah of Iran and Bhutto told me to drop everything and put it to Geneva because I would only lose prestige. I have continued because I thought if we stopped, there was great danger there would be a stalemate. And you should remember that in America, the people who want to go to Geneva are largely Israeli supporters.

This is what we're trying to do, to make progress on all fronts but within the limits of what I can support domestically, and to express our willingness to make as major an effort for one Arab country as for another.

I have to tell you quite frankly -- I've already told you this -- the problem of the Palestinians is a problem of particular difficulty. Because while I think that in America public opinion is beginning to be more sympathetic to the Arab cause, and while what you and President Sadat and King Faisal and others have done has been very constructive in this direction, the Palestinians of course in America are considered terrorists. And this is an extremely complicated situation.

I have stated to you what our basic policy is with respect to them. And I tell you frankly one reason I've not approached them before is that there is something about Palestine that makes people incapable of keeping secrets. Both the Israelis and the Palestinians put everything into the newspapers. If I had as much confidence in them as I have in you I would be in touch with them now. But I cannot give them the power to destroy us. And from the minute we authorize a contact, they have the power to do this. That is why in the past we authorized contacts only on intelligence levels, so we could say we were only collecting information.

But we are not in principle opposed to talking with the Palestinians. But we have not solved the problem which I have mentioned to you -- and in any case it's a difficult timing problem for us.

Asad: You mean, when to get in touch with the Palestinians?

Kissinger: Yes. We have to time it for the moment when it doesn't give them too strong a weapon to destroy whoever establishes contact. Or when I want to get rid of Sisco.



Asad: So you're hanging on tenaciously to Mr. Sisco. [laughter] We now understand one angle of your strategy!

Kissinger: As long as I can keep an eye on him.

I wanted to explain this so there is no misunderstanding of our purposes. You used the word "acrobatics" the other day.

Asad: Yes!

Kissinger: It's pretty true. It's true! [laughter]

Asad: We never say anything that's not true. Sometimes you do not sense the truth of my utterances, but the passage of time brings it forth. [laughter]

Kissinger: No, I understand.

Asad: If you were actually to review our discussions, you would find there is no room for any surprises.

Kissinger: I agree. You have been very fair. You've told me your position exactly. But I've told you my position as well. When Khaddam travels around, you will see we have not given this analysis of our domestic situation to anybody.

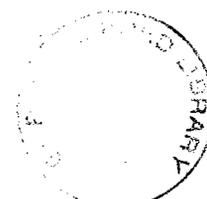
Asad: We don't know whether Minister Khaddam will be visiting the same countries as you. He won't be going to Turkey, and you're not going to meet soon Mr. Gromyko, as you are according to the papers, from whom we won't find out what you told him. And Minister Khaddam won't be going to Israel. [laughter]

Kissinger: I offered him a ride.

Asad: As for Egypt, of course, Minister Ismail Fahmy always tells us things because he is familiar with the international situation, perhaps more than what he knows of the Arab world. But what he tells us is not necessarily what Dr. Kissinger told him.

Kissinger: I'll undoubtedly go to Saudi Arabia and Jordan, and you'll hear from them.

Asad: Because we're brothers.



Kissinger: But I hope you remember, Arabic is the language of epic poetry.  
[laughter]

Asad: The Arabic language is the language of imagination and reality at the same time. You mustn't forget, the Arabs contributed greatly to mathematics and the sciences.

Khaddam: And logarithms.

Asad: And science and chemistry. In other words, the Arabic language is very rich, but in addition it was truly a language of epic poetry. This is one of our attributes -- there is always a connection between the spirit and things material. Because we want to build up a person spiritually and materially. That is why we are at variance somewhat with the West and with the East.

Kissinger: Do you know the joke about the difference between capitalism and communism?

Asad: Arabs! [laughter]

Kissinger: Capitalism is the exploitation of man by man, and communism is exactly the opposite. [laughter]

Asad: This is consonant with my definition, because only Arabs...

Kissinger: Incidentally, I don't think our press got your subtle point when you said you were also against friendship treaties.

Asad: I really would like them to get it, even if delayed. I realize Dr. Kissinger got it right away. [Asad laughs.] Even if they didn't realize the dimensions of the remark, they'll get it from the remarks.

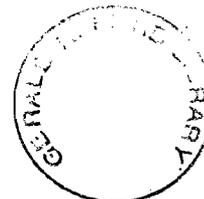
Kissinger: I think they'll get it. With a little help from Sisco. [laughter]

Asad: Of course, as we said, treaties and agreements are one thing, and friendships are another. And agreements are one thing and peace is another.

Kissinger: I understand that too.

Asad: For example, our relations with Dr. Kissinger are very good, but if you asked me to sign a piece of paper now saying so, I wouldn't. Because it is not so logical.

Kissinger: No.



Asad: Because just to suggest it would create another question which would have to be faced.

Kissinger: I have always believed foreign policy must be based on realities. I have said to Rabin -- and he has now said so publicly -- that all wars in history started between countries who are at peace. It's a peculiarity of the Middle East that wars in the Middle East start between countries who are already at war. [laughter] It's very funny; in the Mideast there have been four wars, and also four periods of relative peace. In the Sub-continent, there have been four wars, but the conditions of peace have never been abrogated. [to Sisco]: They still have diplomatic relations. [Sisco nods yes.]

So the legal foundation has some symbolic significance, but real peace depends on other factors.

Asad: The first time you had a philosophical discussion it was around such points too. I shunted you off the track. You know all these gentlemen [indicating the Syrian participants].

Kissinger: Yes, I think all except this gentleman.

Asad: The Deputy Prime Minister and head of the Economic Affairs Commission [Heydar].

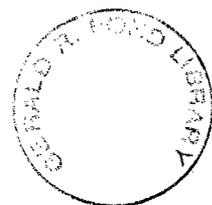
Kissinger: Yes, I've met him.

Asad: And he is at the same time an epic poet. [laughter]

Kissinger: We were talking, Mr. President, about the legal conditions involved in making peace, and I agree with you that the real conditions are at least as important if not more important than the legal conditions.

So this was the explanation of why we act as we do. But the point I want to stress is: It is not our intention to isolate Syria. And we are prepared to make a major effort on the Golan as well. And there is nothing in it for us, except to maintain our relationship with the Arab world. The Golan is not an American interest.

Asad: What are the major points of difference between the Israelis and the Egyptians?



Kissinger: I'll know that better by the middle or end of this week. And in that case I'll either send you a message through our Ambassador, or come back. Because there has not yet been a concrete negotiation in the sense of the Israelis putting forward concrete propositions.

Asad: The Israeli representatives themselves made statements, including certain data. The Israelis have made statements to the effect that if Egypt agrees to the termination of the state of belligerency, they will give up the passes and the oil fields.

Kissinger: Yes, they have said that, for the end of belligerency and a ten-year agreement. At one point they said if they take no more Soviet arms. But this is like the first map they gave you, in which they kept all of Mt. Hermon. So I don't know yet what they will do. And frankly we have no experience with this Cabinet. The previous agreements were with the old Cabinet, which was very difficult, but had two commanding personalities, Dayan and Golda Meir. If the Israelis maintain the positions they have stated -- which would be crazy but is not excluded -- then we will have to abandon the effort, and then we have to see what happens. But I don't believe it will do anybody any good.

Our overall strategy is what I told you last summer -- to bring about a series of withdrawals so at some point Israel will say they want to make a final peace, and it would not be on one front but on all fronts.

Asad: The press talks about detailed papers being discussed with Sadat.

Kissinger: Later this week...

Asad: Dr. Kissinger is wiser than to accept this kind of jargon.

Kissinger: Look, if there is an agreement between Egypt and Israel, it's going to become public. We can't hide it from you. Your confidence is more important to us. I read all sorts of ideas. There are no detailed proposals from either side. I frankly can't predict what the Israeli reaction will be because I have no experience with this government.

Asad: From our part, if I were to talk I would only be repeating what I have told you before. You know our view. Of course, we're not optimistic. We think it will be inevitable that there will be another war, and we believe if it had not been for America's tremendous support for Israel after the last war, the attitude of the Israelis would be very different from what it is. For example, Israel now has one-half the number of tanks of the American Army.



Kissinger: I didn't know we had that many left. No, I don't believe they have that many. How many is that?

Asad: About 3,000. According to the Institute for Strategic Studies, America has 8,000.

Kissinger: But we hear you have 3,000, too.

Asad: No, but we hope it will come up to that. If it were within our power, we would get every person in this country his own tank until we defeat Israel. Of course, tanks will not be much use for Israel. Syria's capability alone is much greater than Israel's.

We are going to exchange marriages and so forth. People would like this kind of regulation! Even Khaddam, who is embarrassed before his wife, would make his contribution, because he is patriotic. [laughter]

Kissinger: I wish some country would make this kind of offer to us.

Asad: You have 250 million.

Kissinger: 230 million.

Asad: You might have to fight Panama some day!

Kissinger: We have to start breeding right away.

I don't know if I told you about a discussion I had in China about the Jackson Amendment. They said, "Any time you need 20 million Chinese, we'll give them to you. It's no problem" [laughter]

Heydar: If our efforts and Mr. Khaddam's efforts take too long, we might need those 20 million Chinese. [laughter]

Asad: We don't need them. We have a goodly number.

Kissinger: On replenishment in Israel, it's a complicated situation. I would have to go into a long explanation of the circumstances that produced it. But I think we retain a sufficient amount of economic and other leverage so that our views will be heard.

Asad: I'm witnessing the opposite.



Kissinger: What I described to you was not just an Israeli problem but an American domestic problem, which is quite separate from the number of tanks the Israelis have. And after all, it's also a fact that the only Israeli retreats that have been brought about have been brought about by us. And I have indicated we are willing and determined to continue that effort.

Asad: I believe if Dr. Kissinger were in our position, he would come up with the same position: Looking at the situation we do not see much reason for optimism. Our path, our direction since October is that a solution cannot come about except by another war. Because it has to be decisive; one side has to win a decisive battle over the other. But the Arabs seem to be putting themselves into a position of begging for solutions. Why should we beg? Are we going to die if we don't get 5 kilometers on the Golan tomorrow? And what is the difference between the Golan and the West Bank. I'm just looking at the situation from a wide angle. The Israelis must be given an ineradicable conviction that victory can never be their own. The domestic situation in America is such that the United States can never give them this conviction, because of the ties between the Jewish community and the Zionists. So the only quarter that can do this is the Arabs themselves.

Second, it is an axiom that what is taken by force can only be recovered by force.

We appreciate the motives that led to American support for Israel, and the conditions of the American domestic situation -- the interests of the Jews and Zionists. But we also realize the Zionists inside the United States have their influence on the United States, and these would keep America on the side of Israel in case of another war. We realize all this but we have no other choice. We have our rights and we believe there are other peoples who struggled for the restoration of their lands and rights.

In the long run we believe America will have to give up their support for Israel. We are not going to wait that long! But it's the natural thing. America has her interests. Because for a great power to stand by a little aggressor is not in the interests of America. We can quote examples -- countries that America stood by but circumstances forced America to stand aside and say goodbye to: Cambodia, Formosa, Turkey.

Khaddam: Portugal.

Asad: Portugal is another category, but there was a time when America would go to war for Formosa. Vietnam is another example. Cambodia -- Phnom Penh will fall any day now.



In this case it's true that links between the United States and Israel are stronger because of the presence of the Zionists and Jews, but from the point of view of the interests of America, sooner or later the United States will give up its support for Israel. We have talked before on this.

Kissinger: Mr. President, however that may be -- and we can debate this -- it will not happen very soon...

Asad: That's why I said we're not going to wait very long.

Kissinger: ...Not without massive international complications of unpredictable consequences. I agree with you our policy has been unbalanced. We are prepared -- we are trying very hard in a situation which is unusually complicated because of the unexpected -- unprecedented -- resignation of a President -- to move things into better balance. In the process we are attempting -- and we will succeed, by complicated methods -- to return a maximum of Arab territory to Arab hands and then to have a final peace.

Before I left I talked to President Ford and I specifically told him I would talk to you about progress on all fronts and it would present him with great difficulties. And he told me to tell you that he would nevertheless proceed. We don't insist on this; it is up to each country concerned. But we are ready to do this. And this in itself would create a different balance.

Asad: The question that has to be asked now is what is new about your visit to the Middle East? And this is not like Gromyko -- I'm not asking about one, two, three [detailed points].

Kissinger: No, it's an important question. First, there is the fact that I can't be three weeks without seeing Khaddam. [laughter]

Khaddam: We thank you for those sentiments. [laughter]

Asad: The others are jealous.

Heydar: I'm not.

Kissinger: He's hurt my feelings.

Asad: I want Khaddam to absent himself forever. [laughter]



Kissinger: On this trip, what is new? We have had very general discussions on this trip; I want to see if anything concrete can be developed.

Incidentally, the President has referred on a number of occasions -- and in the de Borchgrave interview -- it is said if there is another disengagement it should only be in the southern part. However, I agree with the President; it should be all along and not only in the southern part. I've never said it should only be in the southern part. That's one of those newspaper inventions.

Asad: He asked me about it.

Kissinger: I know; you answered his question. But it was his invention.

But if there is another disengagement, it should certainly be all along the front -- maybe not the same distance all along. But I have not studied it.

I have heard each other's view, and now I must see whether something can be done concretely. If not, I will have to abandon these efforts.

And I would not be paying such repeated visits to Syria... Syria as such is not of such importance to the United States; Syria is important because of its symbolic significance in the whole Arab world. If it was just Syria against the United States, the Secretary of State would not come 30 times to Syria. So I come here because in terms of the overall analysis where much of what you've said I agree with, I want to move things as much as possible in the direction of a peaceful settlement. And I see no one else who can do it.

Asad: Do you mean both sides have through you heard about the other side's positions? Or through the press?

Kissinger: Both sides have heard through me, and it's also been in the press. In addition, there is a lot of nonsense in the press. Neither side has said: "If you go here, I'll do this."

Asad: We have not even heard this one. We have heard even less than this hypothetical phraseology.

Kissinger: They haven't done it. This hasn't been done. And if they're not willing to do it, I'm going to withdraw.



I haven't asked them so far for proposals because I was not ready domestically to move in America.

Asad: Last time you were here we discussed separate movements, and you promised to discuss them with President Ford, on the basis that they should not take place.

Kissinger: Yes, I discussed them with President Ford. We don't insist on separate moves; we don't insist on any moves. President Ford's broad dilemma is the same as mine. I'm being very honest with you. And I even talked to Sisco about it. If I had my personal preference, we would want a broad movement. What interest does the United States have in my doing this? You said it's not dignified for Arabs to beg; it's also not dignified for America to beg the Arabs to permit us to help them. If you look at the time the President -- both Presidents -- have spent on the Middle East, it's greater than on all other problems put together.

But if it should turn out that a separate move is possible, we have three choices -- if we are asked to participate: We could refuse to participate; we can say we can try that move that seems possible and then forget about it; or we can say we will make the move that is possible and after that make another move. On the whole, the President's instinct is to do the third. But if it isn't possible, it isn't possible.' Joe?

Sisco: It's an Arab decision.

Kissinger: This is how it looks to us. And if there is another...

Asad: Would you agree to the choice that would be ours to make? Should it be the Arab choice?

Kissinger: You mean a unified Arab choice?

Asad: The unified Arab choice was expressed at Rabat.

Kissinger: You can be sure the United States cannot impose its will. What interest do we have to impose our will?

Asad: You yourself wouldn't, but Israel would have an interest.

Kissinger: I'll tell you what Israel would like -- or at least some in Israel. A total stalemate, then let the Arabs get very angry at the United States and do again what they did after '67. Then they would say, Israel is the only friend of the United States in the Middle East. You are much more of a

problem for them, seeing the American press and the Congress, than your predecessors who wouldn't see anybody. Then if you do something rash or foolish, they would score a rapid victory... somewhere. You asked me what they want. Why is it that so many of the Jewish publicists have begun attacking me in America? Because they say we're applying salami tactics to Israel. So if this fails, there will be no great sadness in Israel. And my press in America... If I came back and said "The Arabs are unreasonable; it's not possible to make a settlement," I would have a good press for awhile. But I'm not there to have a good press. I know you've been reasonable. And I don't want to mortgage the future to three million people.

But if you think this is a coordinated strategy with Israel, you wait what's going to happen tonight when I get to Israel. This meeting doesn't bother me; what bothers me is what's waiting for me tonight in Israel.

Asad: We Arabs don't want inextricably to tie the question of Israel to the United States.

Kissinger: Whatever happens, it would be a great mistake to tie it. To the extent you have ties to the United States, your long-term strategy would improve too.

Asad: The Arabs as a whole -- there is nothing to prevent them from strengthening their ties with the United States even in conditions of a war breaking out between them and Israel. At the same time, the Arabs have to take an honorable stand which enables them to recover their dignity and their land. There are no disagreements between the Arabs over Israel. Again, generally speaking, the Arabs see the long run is favorable for their interests. And there are possibilities, military and economic. For example, yesterday the eradication of the problem between Iran and Iraq. Regardless of differences between Iraq and us, I regard this as a strategic victory for the Arab world.

Kissinger: I agree with you.

Asad: Regardless of piddling questions, there are no significant differences with Iraq, and only small things. This development between Iraq and Iran, in my view, has liberated a considerable portion of Iraq's potential, and even some of Iran's potential as a Moslem country. It would be possible to have beneficial use of Iran's non-economic potential. Removal



of this block -- relations between Iran and Iraq were the main block -- strengthens the Arab world as a whole. There are certain other things which still exist among the Arabs, but the fact is there are no longer any basic problems among the Arabs. The problems remaining are the sort that can be solved with a minimum of effort.

Therefore, given this picture in the Arab world, there is no reason for the Arabs to be in the role of beggar. The situation of the Palestinians in Jordan was a knot; now it is no longer. Even the situation between Jordan and Syria used to be quite bad; now it's quite different. And with Saudi Arabia.

Kissinger: You're even extending your activities to Ethiopia.

Asad: Eritrea wants to become an independent country. This would be in the Arab interest -- and in the interest of the United States. And against the interest of Israel.

Kissinger: We have no particular view. But why is it in the interests of the United States?

Asad: It would be in your interest, given the difference between Communism and capitalism -- because those in the saddle in Ethiopia are Communist, and you told Faisal those in Eritrea are communists.

Kissinger: No, Somalia. He misunderstood. The ones in Addis Ababa, insofar as they have any conception, lean more toward the Communists. In Eritrea they lean more to Syria. I told King Faisal that in Somalia the Soviet Union has a base, but not Eritrea.

Sabbagh: You asked Faisal if he could be helpful with Eritrea.

Asad: But the Ethiopians are Communists. They have even declared a Marxist program.

Kissinger: There are two problems: One is, do I believe the Eritreans are Communists? No. We support a moderate solution; and we would support negotiations between the two sides.

Asad: Don't you find it in your interest that Eritrea should be independent? Or under the canopy of a Communist country?



Kissinger: What does Gromyko think? [laughter]

Asad: We haven't seen Gromyko.

Kissinger: We would agree to any negotiated solution.

Asad: We feel -- it's a hunch -- that America's intentions are more on the side of Ethiopia, but we can't explain why.

Kissinger: No, that is not true. All the equipment of the Ethiopian army is American. When they ask us for both ammunition and weapons, we'll give them a small amount of ammunition. Simply as a question of principle, we can't allow the principle that anyone with American weapons when he gets into difficulty can't get ammunition. But we won't give arms. And our Ambassador, who I believe has just got there today, has been given instructions to bring about negotiations between the Eritrean group and the Ethiopian group. And if you can encourage it on your side, we have no objection to whatever comes out.

Asad: But the Ethiopians seem to be insistent if there are negotiations that these be between the sovereign entity of Ethiopia and the "district" of Eritrea. There are Ethiopian interests, certainly. But then the best we would like to see is for the Ethiopians to come up with a formula that preserves their interests-- access to sea, ports, etc.

Kissinger: Maybe a federal solution is a good way to start. But that may be a good way to do it.

Asad: Confederal.

Kissinger: Federal or confederal. We can live with that. For a transitional period it is better. Once you have an autonomous government in Eritrea, history will take care of the problem.

Asad: I am sure you know the developments in 1960, how they occupied Eritrea totally. I repeat what is the most feasible thing, namely a formula to preserve the personality of Eritrea -- diplomatically, economically, whatever. Then the problem will take care of itself.

Kissinger: We would favor a negotiation. Our Ambassador is instructed to do this; he'll arrive today. Would you like us to tell you what the reaction is?

Asad: Yes.



Kissinger: It will take a week. What you've said is fully consistent with what our policy is.

Asad: This is off our subject.

Kissinger: But I wanted to talk to you about it.

Asad: Our view is, it doesn't take pressure to get us to extend our hand for a little pittance from Israel. We will preserve good Arab-American relations and at the same time strengthen ourselves. There might come a time when Israel will come begging to America, not us.

Kissinger: That will be a new experience.

Asad: And the United States will be in the role of bringing some moral influence on Israel, not on the Arabs. That is why we feel separate moves are not in the Arab interest, but in the interest of Israel.

Kissinger: I don't see why they are in the interest of Israel.

Asad: We have discussed this quite fully. Did you read the statement by Mr. Mohammed Muhaishi, who was the representative of Libya who was here on the occasion of the holiday?

Kissinger: There are some statements of Libyans that I miss. He is Sisco's friend.

Sisco: I saw him in New York.

Asad: There was a positive development regarding Libya's relations with Syria, what he said yesterday.

Sisco: It was someone else I saw.

Asad: He said that Libya fully supports the attitude of Syria, that Syria won't be subjected to any pressure, and that they're ready to offer whatever Syria wants. They have stored some weapons and funds, and whatever Syria wants, they'll give. This wasn't all discussed publicly. Their attitude in the October War was good. It was strange from then until recently; now it is good.

Kissinger: They change their attitude quite frequently.



Asad: If they give us their arms and their money, we can live with them.

Kissinger: Reluctantly!

Asad: Their Arab attitude is a patriotic one. But occasionally their behavior is impractical. And sometimes they wax temperamental. But Syria has not done justice to them. So if we pay some attention to them, they're better. It's not epic poetry.

Remember my remarks to Philip Geyelin? I said to him, quoting Dr. Kissinger, that Dr. Kissinger said it was 50-50, but I added that because Dr. Kissinger is not a recognized mathematical expert, I don't take his figures so seriously. [laughter] He asked me if I expected Dr. Kissinger to become clearer about a comprehensive unified move in the near future. I said "Dr. Kissinger is enamored of separate moves." I said I thought you would become clearer, but, I added, you are enamored of separate moves.

Kissinger: Not true.

Asad: Untrue?

Kissinger: Untrue. I would much prefer unified movement; it would be simpler.

Asad: Then leave the separate move where it is now and move to other fronts; then, when the atmosphere is prepared for everybody, then move on all fronts. We'd love to have convincing explanations.

Kissinger: Mr. President, I am not recommending anything. When I am asked to be helpful, I see what I can do. I don't go around the Middle East recommending moves. I have explained why the situation calls for what is being done. You can rest assured there is no great popular demand in America for another Syrian negotiation, and when I say I'm willing, it's because I believe it's in our interest. I have no particular preference. I'm not advocating any particular move.

Asad: There are any elections in Israel upcoming?

Kissinger: No. I see no basis for it.

Asad: On the basis of internal differences, that the government doesn't have a majority?



Kissinger: But elections wouldn't change the result.

Asad: Maybe Begin would come to the front. Would you be surprised to hear I would prefer that?

Kissinger: No, I believe you. It's exactly what I would expect. Of course, you couldn't be sure what he would do if he came into power.

Shihabi: I imagine he would carry out the policy of the present government, but he would do it more clearly.

Kissinger: Which?

Asad: I want him to come up to the present Government.

Kissinger: I agree with Shihabi. He could carry out the policy of the present government but with more support. Unless he went to war. Either the same policy or go to war.

Heydar: It would be different if we transferred this analysis to America. With Jackson. [Laughter].

Kissinger: You want Jackson in America?

Asad: No, we want to fight Israel now. Later we'll get to America. [Laughter].

Kissinger: You'd need a few more people. Ten-to-one, you could win; 20 to one, not. You'd need 20 million before you can fight America.

Asad: We don't measure things by this formula, but this way: what would we require by way of fuel? Human fodder. World War I took 50 million people, all-inclusive, and that was a war with all the states of the world. Using the worst assumption, we have to assume we would need 50 million martyrs who would die. We have them, and we would have 100 million left. We don't calculate according to this but on willingness to sacrifice. There is a difference -- with the rocket and the atomic bomb -- but even those could be found. Then Dr. Kissinger would have to fight the Arabs step-by-step. [Laughter]. If we could solve the problem of rockets and the atomic bomb, then the problem would be solved.

What we're afraid of is not the United States against us or the Soviet Union against us, but two giants getting together against us. In politics, everything is possible.



You probably wonder why the Syrian President is jumping all over the place.

Kissinger: I'm catching the mood. [Laughter].

Asad: Actually, about the future I'm optimistic. Especially if we're on the same ground with the Europeans.

Kissinger: I think we're beginning to say things we may later on regret. Because we don't see ourselves as in a position of hostility to Syria. If we wanted confrontation, I wouldn't be here.

Asad: What prompted your saying we are saying things we might regret?

Kissinger: Because they would disturb a mood and relationship that had some value. Because I had the impression there were some veiled threats in those jocular remarks.

Asad: Threats against the United States?

Khaddam: [Laughs]. We certainly got into the mood!

Kissinger: I have stated what we're doing, why we're doing it, what we can do to Syria, and the choice is up to the individual Arab states and the Arab states together. And as far as we're concerned, we value the relationship I have had with the President.

Asad: Of course our relations with Dr. Kissinger are good and I have said so recently in the press. And our relations with the USA are developing in a good direction and we're anxious that they continue to so develop. And, of course, Dr. Kissinger understands by now that it's not a question of the relationship between a big power and a small power. We have the habit when we say something, to friends or anyone, I don't remember saying something I regretted later. And if you understood our remarks as threats, then within the confines of Israel, yes. This I have often said.

Kissinger: When you were talking about 50 million Arabs dead, I thought you meant this might be caused by the United States, and this is unconceivable.

Asad: It wasn't in that sense at all.

Kissinger: What you said about Israel, you've often said.



Asad: We have to fight. Even if every Israeli citizen has a tank, we have to fight. Because we have right on our side. With the United States it is inconceivable. About the U. S. and Soviet Union joining ranks.....

Kissinger: No, I.....

Asad: I know you must be thinking, what a fertile imagination!

Kissinger: As for your relations with Israel, that's between you and Israel. We are prepared to help return some land, and Syria has to decide whether it wants to go to war beyond this, and it's up to Syria to decide. But we stand ready to do whatever we possibly can, specifically, to help Syria regain as much land as can be attained through negotiation. With American pressure.

Asad: Is this thing now actually being discussed?

Kissinger: With whom?

Asad: Are you reflecting your thinking, or are you starting a discussion?

Kissinger: No, this is a serious position.

Asad: During this tour, will you be discussing this?

Kissinger: Yes, but I don't want to mislead you. If I wanted to play with you I would just come and discuss maps. I will raise it; I'm already preparing the ground with the press about its necessity. I have said to the press a dozen times that the right way to do it would be together. So I'm preparing the political and psychological groundwork. But I'm telling you as a friend, whom I don't want to trick, that the preparation will take longer, to bring about conditions in which it will actually occur. I will, in fact, discuss it. Those things have to take an evolution. The first time I mentioned the passes and the oil fields, it was pure theory. No one took it seriously. It took three months to get it to the situation of concrete consideration.

I want to tell you, in front of your colleagues, that I consider it an obligation to help make progress on the Syrian front. And so does President Ford. But I also feel it must be done in a way that can succeed and not just be a theoretical exercise. If you ask me, I also believe a point may be reached where negotiations will get stuck, and at that point you'll have to make the decision for war, but I don't believe that point has been reached.



I went through this long explanation at the beginning to make clear to you, Mr. President, that our preference for step-by-step is not directed at Syria, but is designed to deal without domestic situation so we can be effective. It does no good to publish a Rogers Plan and have to resign six weeks later. It does no good if I publish a Rogers Plan and nothing happens. And I don't say this as criticism against my predecessor who was essentially right. And I have said many times to Sisco that if he had succeeded, a lot of suffering would have been averted. But I saw what happened to him and learned a lot from his experience -- he was totally paralyzed in the United States. And it does no good to make statements that make everyone feel good but can't be implemented.

Asad: Yes, we heard Mr. Rogers say what you're pursuing is the Rogers Plan itself. But with a difference. The Rogers Plan did not have all these difficulties, like the Golan.

Kissinger: But it also didn't get anywhere.

Asad: And the Israelis were in agreement.

Kissinger: Nonsense. I mean...nonsense, with all due respect. I was in the White House and saw the Israelis sabotage it from the beginning. The Israelis fought the Rogers Plan and forced the repudiation of it. The trick is to get the results without stating the plan. I have nothing against the Rogers conception, but the fact is it led to nothing. If the Israelis had been in agreement with it, it would have been done in a week. The Israelis were never in agreement with it. What they did is mobilize in Washington and defeat it. He went running around the Middle East stating theories. Even though I had great sympathy for his conception.

Asad: Did you support it?

Kissinger: I did. Frankly, I kept out of the Arab-Israeli conflict because of my Jewish origin, because I would be thought to be influenced. But I was in sympathy with it and I worked behind the scenes with Mr. Sisco to implement it.

Sisco: One should say for the record, Mr. President, that the purpose of the Rogers Plan was to try to get agreement across the board, first, on Egypt and then Syria -- though the position of your government was a little different from today.

Asad: Yet the Golan Heights were incorporated within the Rogers Plan.



Sisco: By precedent. In one step.

Kissinger: I was in sympathy with it, but it taught me a lesson -- that a comprehensive approach cannot work in America.

Asad: How was it that Eisenhower succeeded in 1956 to make them withdraw?

Kissinger: In 1956, Israel was much weaker, and it was not so well organized in America. Thirdly, I think the biggest mistake we made was not to do it in '67. It would have been easier right after the war. And that was not a negotiation [in '56]; and Eisenhower was a President with the biggest popular majority in 40 years. And let's be frank -- we had one President who was totally under attack, and now a President who was not elected. Until he is elected, he can't speak with the same sweeping authority.

Asad: Israel was much weaker, but so were the Arabs and the Egyptians. But your statement was perfectly valid that in 1967 you should have moved. Aren't you making the same mistake now?

Kissinger: Had it not been for Watergate, President Nixon would have moved decisively. I believe under present circumstances I am doing the utmost that can be done. And I believe for the next two years at least, no one else could do as much as I am doing. Though I may be wrong. We have a very complicated domestic situation right now. You mentioned a number of countries where we're acting in a certain way. It's one thing -- you mentioned Formosa -- when you have overwhelming national interest where there are 800 million people. It's a regrettable event when you have to do that. With respect to Turkey, it's not a strategy; it's insanity. It's being done by three million American Greeks who own restaurants. We are not in the same situation as with Eisenhower. That would be inconceivable with Eisenhower. We're getting to a point -- you don't like step-by-step -- where a final settlement can be forced. But we are not at that point now. If we stop at any point, then the situation you described is inevitable; then there will be a war. The question is whether we can move this thing to a point where to move to something like the Rogers Plan looks like not such a shocking thing to do.

Asad: It seems you won't be able.

Kissinger: I think we will be able. That's a question of judgment.

Asad: There are no indications.



Kissinger: I think it is possible. I think it's inevitable, at the end of the line. But even if it is not, it is premature to judge now. But I can only explain to you our thinking as best as possible. We will stay in very close touch. If I misunderstood before, I thought you were talking about conflict between the United States and the Arabs, not between the Arabs and the Israelis.

Asad: No, we understood each other too well. Because our personal relations were good, relations between our countries are good too. You know very well, sometimes people say something they regret, but as you also say, we have not been talking from two sides of our mouth.

Kissinger: No.

Asad: And the language of threats and confrontation has not been used.

Kissinger: Never.

Asad: And we couldn't fight the combined forces of the United States and the Soviet Union.

Kissinger: It would not be easy but you couldn't exclude it! [Laughter].

Asad: Because as you say there is no difference between capitalism and Communism.

Kissinger: I wondered if, before we break up, I could see the President for five minutes alone.

[Kissinger and Asad conferred alone from 6:40 to 7:15 p. m. Then Mr. Sisco joined them from 7:15 - 7:30 p. m.]



HAK/ Khaddam  
Memcon

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

~~SECRET/NODIS/XGDS~~MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

## PARTICIPANTS:

Abd al-Halim Khaddam, Deputy Prime Minister  
and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Syrian Arab Republic  
Sameeh Tawfeek Abou Fares, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Dr. Henry A. Kissinger, Secretary of State  
and Assistant to the President for National Security  
Affairs

Isa K. Sabbagh, Special Assistant to Ambassador Akins,  
Jidda (Interpreter)

Peter W. Rodman, National Security Council Staff *pinz*

## DATE AND TIME:

Sunday, March 9, 1975  
7:30 - 8:00 p.m.

## PLACE:

In the Secretary's Car from the Presidential  
Palace to the Airport  
Damascus, Syria

Khaddam: Your [intention to] return would indicate a positive development.

Kissinger: No, it indicates we talked more about the future than about the general strategy. In that sense it is positive. By that time I'll know more concretely about what happens on the other side. We may be talking theory right now.

Khaddam: You managed to tell the President about the Iran-Iraq development. What the Shah said.

Kissinger: He said Iraq will give all the oil concessions to the US at a lower price. [Laughter] I didn't tell the President. Our impression is that the Iranian frontier will be open two more weeks and then they will close it. And at that point the Kurdish leadership will be given the opportunity to go to Iran or stay in Iraq. My understanding is Iraq will not put Communist leaders in Kurdistan. That's my understanding.

~~SECRET/NODIS/XGDS~~

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E.O. 13526, SEC. 2.5



CLASSIFIED BY HENRY A. KISSINGER  
EXEMPT FROM GENERAL DECLASSIFICATION  
SCHEDULE OF EXECUTIVE ORDER 11652  
EXEMPTION CATEGORY 5(B) (1, 3)  
AUTOMATICALLY DECLASSIFIED ON Imp. to det.

Khaddam: This information agrees with what we got. But our information says that Barzani will remain in Iraq.

Kissinger: Really? We have not got a report of what Barzani will do.

Khaddam: It's in the agreement. The Kurdish area will be led by him.

Kissinger: Really? I didn't know.

Khaddam: Perhaps not administering the Kurdish area but their own people.

Kissinger: I must say the President's evaluation of its strategic impact is the same as mine.

Khaddam: I must admit that solving that problem has left a lot of satisfaction with us.

Kissinger: It has?

Khaddam: Yes. Especially since our relations with Iran are developing in a very positive way. So the solving of this problem will expedite it.

Kissinger: Yes.

Khaddam: When do you expect to come back?

Kissinger: It depends. I'm meeting in Israel tonight and tomorrow morning; then I go to Turkey. Then I go back to Israel for an evening, then to Egypt. So on Wednesday or Thursday I should know whether we're talking theory or something realistic. So at that point I can let you know.

Khaddam: What will you say at the airport?

Kissinger: I discussed this with the President. We agreed I might say that we had one of our regular reviews of the whole range of issues involved in the progress for peace in the Middle East. And while I'm in the area I plan to come back to Damascus to continue these discussions at a date to be agreed. We also had an exchange of views on our bilateral relations, which are excellent. That's all. Maybe I should say the discussions were frank and friendly.

Khaddam: Yes, that's the truth.



Kissinger: That's the truth. Your toast was very elegant, Mr. Foreign Minister.

Khaddam: I wanted to really express what we truly feel. Because it is a fact that thanks to Dr. Kissinger's concentrated efforts we have developed positive relations. And that in itself has produced a sort of formula for our relations.

Kissinger: That's right.

[He tries to shut off the interior light in the limousine.]

The light won't go off now. It gives them something to aim at, the PLO [laughter]. Now it's a joint command.

Khaddam: That's why you should set your mind at ease because it's inconceivable they would shoot both of us together!

Kissinger: So that's it? Me alone is conceivable.

Khaddam: No, it's a joke. In Syria . . . .

Kissinger: What about in Kuwait?

Khaddam: In Kuwait, that can't be assured.

Kissinger: Because my security people don't want me to go.

Khaddam: Even when I go to Kuwait, though our relations with Kuwait are good and our relations with the Palestinians are good, they give me 100 guards. I say that as a personal statement.

Sabbagh: If I may add my two cents worth, I don't think you should.

Kissinger: But I'd insult them.

Sabbagh: Since you've told them twice you would go, perhaps you should. You should get Syrian guards.

Kissinger: [to Khaddam] My security people tell me yours are the best in the area. That they'd risk their lives.

Khaddam: That is a fact. One hundred of them would sacrifice their lives to protect their guest.



Kissinger: Once when I had only two security men, I asked them what if ten terrorists tried to capture their man. They said "We'd make sure he wasn't taken alive." [Laughter] He likes that!

Khaddam: It's a calamity for people like that to say this.

Kissinger: [To Agent Schwoebel, driving the limousine] Schwoebel, can you get this light off?

Schwoebel: We'll get it fixed.

Kissinger: What will you carry out of Damascus?

Schwoebel: Gold [Laughter].

Kissinger: [to Khaddam] They have a special plane with the car. On the West Coast they took out 40 cases of beer.

Khaddam: It's a great temptation.

Kissinger: But they got caught. It was in all the papers.

I think this is more than a full time job by itself, on top of conducting the rest of foreign policy.

Khaddam: Now, on the plane between here and Jerusalem, you'll have so many cables to write.

Kissinger: Yes, but it's a short trip.

Khaddam: You're lucky Sisco has brought his wife so he'll be preoccupied with her and won't be worrying you. [Laughter]

Kissinger: [To Sabbagh] One of these days, I'll make a farewell statement that really fixes him and he'll stand there nodding. I'll say we didn't achieve much but the Minister agreed to visit Tel Aviv with me on the next shuttle.

Khaddam: In that case you wouldn't leave the country. [Laughter]

Kissinger: You wouldn't know what I've said until I've left!

[Secretary Kissinger's departure statement at the airport is attached at Tab A.]





March 10, 1975

~~SECRET-SENSITIVE~~

MEMORANDUM FOR: THE PRESIDENT

FROM: BRENT SCOWCROFT

*BS*

*MC7*

Secretary Kissinger asked that I pass you the following report...

"I have just completed a four-hour meeting with Asad, who obviously is deeply suspicious that the Egyptians will go ahead on a separate agreement leaving him on the sideline. I found him edgy, bordering on the prickly a couple of times during the four-hour period.

'I am not optimistic,' Asad said several times. 'A solution cannot come about without another war. That which has been lost by war, must be returned by war.' He made one specific proposal: That the U.S. keep in Limbo its present efforts to achieve an Egyptian-Israeli second stage agreement, and start specific discussions with Syria and Israel more or less simultaneously to work something out with respect to the Golan. I sought to reassure him that we are prepared to make as major an effort for one Arab state as for another, but that this could not be done all at one time, and that conditions had to be prepared carefully before such a Syrian-Israeli process could start and offer some hope of success.

It was interesting that during our four-hour session Asad had both high-level civilian and military officials, the reason being to show them he was pressing Syria's insistence on being included in the negotiating process, and that he was taking an unyielding posture towards Israel. As I expected, he is interested in a continuing U.S. role regarding the Golan. He mentioned the Geneva conference only once, to tell me he does not want to go there since there is nothing in it for Syria.

I do not believe he feels completely reassured that a separate agreement between Egypt and Israel will not be achieved. He believes that talks between Egypt and Israel are much further along than they really are. I pointed out that it was for each individual Arab state and the Arabs collectively, to decide whether they wish to proceed step-by-step and what their attitude will be if there is an opportunity for further Israeli withdrawal from Arab territory. I told him it was not our intention to divide the Arabs and isolate Syria.

DECLASSIFIED

E.O. 12958, SEC. 3.5

NSC MEMO, 11/24/98, STATE DEPT. GUIDELINES

BY *HR*, NARA, DATE *9/24/03*



~~SECRET-SENSITIVE~~

While Asad remains suspicious, he has adopted a wait-and-see attitude regarding the Egyptian-Israeli negotiations. In a private half hour session alone, he underlined that he does not know how he can justify extending the UN force in May unless something is going on. He did say that even if there should be continuing differences over the step-by-step approach between us, he did not want this to effect adversely the relations between the United States and Syria.

In short, he still has not in his own mind written off the possibility that we might be able to make some move on the Golan within the present time frame of the negotiations, but he has coupled this with more war talk than we have heard before. Moreover, he struck the theme that time is on their side, and they are willing to wait. It is not without interest that he said the U.S. has given up Vietnam, Cambodia, Taiwan, Turkey, and Portugal. Eventually we would let Israel go down too."

Warm Regards





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