

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Memorandum of Conversation

① Scovroth
② Ed Roberts
WTH

DATE: August 9, 1974

SUBJECT: Briefing for Arab Ambassadors

PARTICIPANTS: For the United States: The President (entered during meeting)
The Secretary
Alfred L. Atherton, Jr.
Assistant Secretary, NEA
David A. Korn, Country Director
NEA/ARN

Arab Envoys:

- Algeria: Mr. Abdelkader Maadini, Acting Head of Algerian Interests Section
- Egypt: H. E. Ashraf A. Ghorbal, Amb. E&P
- Jordan: Mr. Riad Sabri, Charge d'Affaires, a.i.
- Kuwait: Mr. Jamil Al-Hassani, Charge d'Affaires, a.i.
- Lebanon: Mr. Joseph Akl, Charge d'Affaires, a.i.
- Libya: Mr. Ali El-Gayed, Charge d'Affaires, a.i.
- Morocco: Mr. Saad Taib, Charge d'Affaires, a.i.
- Oman: H. E. Ahmed Macki, Amb. E&P
- Qatar: H. E. Abdullah Saleh Al-Mana, Amb. E&P
- Saudi Arabia: H. E. Ibrahim Al-Sowayel, Amb. E&P
- Sudan: Mr. Mamoun Abdel Gadir Yousif, Charge d'Affaires, a.i.
- Syria: Dr. Sabah Kabbani, Ambassador-designate
- Tunisia: Mr. Amor Ardhaoui, Charge d'Affaires, a.i.
- UAE: Mr. Hamad Abdul Rahman Al Madfa, Charge d'Affaires, a.i.
- Yemen, H. E. Yahya H. Geghman, Ambassador E&P

The Secretary: I have taken the liberty of asking you to come to the White House for this meeting because the President wanted to see you, too. This will make it easier. I regret the circumstances of this meeting. The main thing to remember is that our foreign policy will be continued along the lines you are already familiar with. That may not be totally agreeable to everyone in this room, but you know that the United States is firmly committed to working for peace in the Middle East. We are
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(Drafting Office and Officer)

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-2-

working to help bring about a stable and lasting peace in the area. President Nixon was committed to this goal. I am here to tell you that it will be continued by the new President. The President has written to many leaders of Middle Eastern countries, and to all of those who have been involved in our peace efforts, I have written to those I know, to say that all the commitments and understandings we have made will be kept. We count on continuing to work together with those countries we have worked with in the past. As regards those countries we have not worked with closely, I want you to know that we are prepared to establish relations of friendship and confidence and are ready to work together to achieve the goal of a just and lasting peace. Our procedures will be those with which you are familiar. We will continue our consultations and correspondence with the leaders of your governments. You should look on what has happened as a change in personalities and not in policy. President Ford already knows a great many of your leaders.

This is the main reason I have asked you to come here. I would now be willing to answer any questions. As you know, we will be continuing our peace efforts this next week with visits and meetings with Foreign Minister Fahmy and King Hussein.

Ambassador Sowayel: Mr. Secretary, I want to thank you on behalf of the Arab envoys. We are very happy to know that you are here in this difficult period and that you will continue with the search for a peaceful solution in the Middle East. This matter is very important. I am very sure we will be able to continue our efforts, and I am very optimistic.

Ambassador Ghorbal: We all shared in your agony of the past weeks and we share in your hope for the future. We are gratified that you are carrying forward. We are equally gratified to hear what you have said about continuity in American policy.

The Secretary: You can be confident that this policy will continue.

Ambassador Ghorbal: You noted that Foreign Minister Fahmy will be coming to Washington to continue the dialogue to bring about a structure of peace in the Middle East. I hope that the other party to the conflict will make the necessary effort in this direction and will cease the unfortunate statements that have been coming out recently. We are reassured by your attitude. We hope to be equally reassured by their actions. We hope no one will try to disrupt the progress that has already been made.



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-3-

The Secretary: You can be sure that we will not tolerate pressure from anyone under these circumstances. It would be absolutely intolerable for anyone to try to take advantage of us in this moment which is not even a moment of weakness. We want to continue to move in a step-by-step process. We have always told you what we thought we could achieve and we have never misled you. We are now again in the process of consultation. I think we are in a better position now to achieve our goals domestically than we were before because we have a broader base of popular support in this country than we have had in a long time. After we conclude our talks this month we will be in a better position to know how to proceed next.

(Turning to the Algerian Acting Interests Section Chief)--I understand that my friend Mr. Bouteflika will be President of the General Assembly this fall. Can he actually bring himself to be neutral about anything? I know that it is not in his normal nature. Please give him my very warm regards.

(President enters and greets Arab envoys)

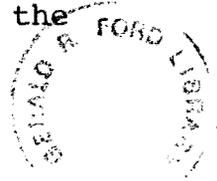
The President: I am honored to be with all of you here today.

The Secretary: Mr. President, as you instructed me, I have pointed out to the Ambassadors your determination to pursue our efforts for lasting peace in the Middle East which will take account of the concern of all peoples in the area. I have also pointed out that you possess a broader base of popularity than we have had in a long time and that therefore we are in a better position to pursue these objectives.

The President: Thank you. Let me welcome you. I have met some of you previously. I hope that my relations with you and your governments, through Secretary Kissinger, will grow in the months ahead. The Secretary has said that the policy I will pursue is lasting and durable peace in the Middle East. This is the policy the American people want. Let me say that I do not think the peace can be one-sided because then it will not be accepted. But I think that our goal of peace in the Middle East is achievable. Secondly, I think it is in the interests of all of us--those of us who come from industrial as well as developing nations, to keep our world economy strong. We can't maintain prosperity if we have broken links in our world economy.

I think we in the United States are very fortunate to have Henry Kissinger as Secretary of State. He is one of the most popular officials in our government. I would hate to run in an election against him (laughter). But it is fortunate for us and for the

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-4-

world, especially in this very difficult period, to have him in the job. He has our blessing and his policy has my support. As we work together with your governments I think we can achieve a lasting peace. This cannot be a one-sided agreement because one-sided agreements only lead to further conflict. At the same time we must also work for a strong world economy. I want to assure you that the United States will work toward these objectives, and we hope that we will have the cooperation of your governments.

Ambassador Sowayel: On behalf of my colleagues I thank you and congratulate you. We hope you will continue to work for a lasting peace and are gratified by your assurances.

The Secretary: Gentlemen, I hope you will report to all of your governments that the United States is determined to continue to work for peace and wants to cooperate with your governments in this effort.

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