

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

~~SECRET/NODIS~~

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

PARTICIPANTS: Abdel Halim Khaddam, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Syrian Arab Republic
Rafiq Joejati, Chef de Cabinet to Minister Khaddam
Dr. Sabah Kabbani, Syrian Ambassador to US

President Gerald R. Ford
Dr. Henry A. Kissinger, Secretary of State and Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs
Lt. Gen. Brent Scowcroft, Deputy Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs
Ambassador Richard Murphy, U.S. Ambassador to Syria
Camille Nowfel, OPR/LS (Interpreter)

DATE AND TIME: Friday, August 23, 1974
10:35 - 11:34 a.m.

PLACE: The Oval Office
The White House

[The press was admitted briefly at the beginning, during the exchange of greetings. Then the press departed.]

Kissinger: I came to the airport 23 times and that is 40 minutes away from Damascus.

Khaddam: Does that mean I will be coming 23 times to Washington?

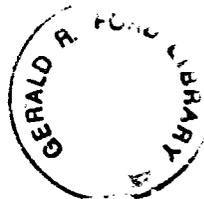
President: This is your first visit to Washington?

Khaddam: Yes, but I've been to the United Nations. Washington is a beautiful city.

Kissinger: They visited Capitol Hill yesterday.

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~~TOP SECRET~~ XGDS (3)
CLASSIFIED BY: HENRY A. KISSINGER



DECLASSIFIED
E.O. 12958, SEC. 3.5
NSC MEMO, 11/10/74, STATE DEPT. GUIDELINES
BY: WJA, NARA, DATE 2/29/04

President: That is an interesting place.

Khaddam: We met with Speaker Albert and several Senators. We had beneficial discussions with them.

Kissinger: He invited Javits to Syria.

President: That is fine hospitality.

Khaddam: We would in fact welcome such a visit. President Asad told Secretary Kissinger that Congressmen with preconceived ideas should visit and see things first hand.

President: I would hope they would accept, in order to get a true perspective of the problems.

Khaddam: That is true. This leads me to hope you could accept the invitation of President Asad to visit Syria.

President: After I get a better hold on my responsibilities, I look forward to visiting the Middle East and taking advantage of President Asad's kind invitation.

Kissinger: You must starve yourself first for two days.

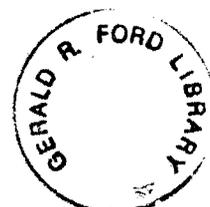
Khaddam: We had to offer Dr. Kissinger more food than usual because we thought Israel was starving him. He was also flirting with Golda.

Kissinger: The Foreign Minister has a thing about Golda. I am going to get both of them together.

Khaddam: It can't happen. She is looking for someone to respond more favorably to her desires.

President: It is wonderful to have you here. Dr. Kissinger has told me how useful you were in the difficult discussions last spring. I want to assure you--as I have every other dignitary who has visited here--that I support Dr. Kissinger's efforts for peace and to establish a better peace in the Middle East for the future. Dr. Kissinger is the most popular public official in the United States.

Khaddam: Among women or men?



President: Both. We are grateful also. We have talked about the Middle East with Dr. Kissinger every day. We are grateful for the meticulous adherence of Syria to the disengagement agreement. It is wonderful groundwork for the future.

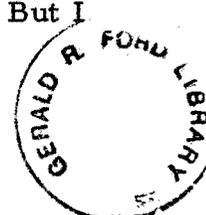
Khaddam: We are pleased to hear it and especially to know that U. S. foreign policy will continue, particularly with respect to the objective of bringing a just peace to the Middle East. Syrians and Arabs are eager and dedicated to a just peace in the Middle East. We believe the U. S. as a great power should and can play a key role in this respect. In the US there are misconceptions about the Arab role in this respect. In the U. S. there are misconceptions about the Arab role in the world. This may be due to the Arab leaders shortcomings in dealings with the West. Some like to ask the question: What do we Arabs want? I would like to assure you the Arab countries have not ever since 1948 launched a war against Israel. Israel has started every one. In 1949 Israel asked admission to the UN and submitted a map. The US accepted Israel and that map. A comparison with today would show Israel four times the size of that map. The fact is that is the only justification for Israel's desire for expansion. That is why we desire peace--to stop this continual aggression against us. There is talk about secure boundaries and changes to make them secure. Dr. Kissinger and President Asad have discussed this and President Asad made his position clear: Why should there be secure boundaries for Israel and not for Syria? Why for a few Israelis and not for hundreds of thousands of Syrians?

With sophisticated aircraft and rockets, there is no longer much reliance on geographic boundaries. Real security comes in one's desire for peace. I want to reiterate our desire to help everything possible for peace and help out those working for peace.

Kissinger: For the Syrian government to say these things is a revolutionary thing.

President: We are interested in a just peace and will work with President Asad to achieve it. And we are most anxious to broaden our relations with you.

It is important for you and President Asad to understand the difficult time we have had in the United States. President Nixon had serious problems which led to his resignation, and I have serious problems coming in under these circumstances, so we need some time. But I



can reassure you that we believe there must be movement in the Middle East and in your negotiations with Israel. It will be one of the major steps to work for further movement in the Middle East.

Kissinger: But you won't send me to negotiate with Syrians again?

President: He did such a great job under such difficult circumstances that he is not replaceable.

Khaddam: I think he played a key role under difficult circumstances. No other U. S. official could have done so much in so short a time and acquired the friendship of the Syrian people.

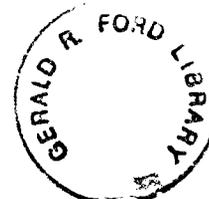
President: I can say this better than Kissinger: He has great affection for President Asad and Syria.

Khaddam: We know this. We know the relationship between Dr. Kissinger and President Asad and Dr. Kissinger and other Arab leaders is an important factor in achieving progress.

We hope your Administration will be one where there will be great progress in relations with the Arab world. Your messages were received warmly and made a good impression. We wonder why there were bad relations in the past. We know the present state of relations is new, and the U. S. leaders' understanding of the situation of the Arabs and willingness to remove the causes of misunderstanding is very helpful.

President: This new relationship is good, and if we are to build on it, it must be done in an atmosphere of peace. War is destructive of good relationships -- we can advance only with peace.

Khaddam: The U. S. has made contacts with all the Arabs and found in each a genuine desire for peace. The problem is not with the Arabs, but with Israel, and its obstinate refusal to accept any of the UN resolutions. For example, we signed a disengagement agreement and we have abided by it. Israel has violated many provisions which I want to discuss with Dr. Kissinger. Israel didn't withdraw from Quinetra before she destroyed it -- not with bombs but bulldozers. Israel is making provocative remarks about Syria's receiving Soviet arms. We would be pleased if we had the tops in arms, but it is not so. The U. S. knows what we have been getting. Their interest in bringing about problems between the U. S. and Soviet Union and Syria worries us.



President: We can't tolerate an atmosphere of war if we are going to build for peace.

Kissinger: I told the Foreign Minister that Israel couldn't fight an aggressive war with an open U.S. supply line. That's why Syria shouldn't be provoked to do rash things and be maneuvered into being the aggressor.

Khaddam: Israel called a general mobilization, massed its troops at the borders, and opened long roads at the border. We have not responded, but we can't ignore these measures. We believe Israel would do everything possible to destroy the chance for peace. We won't help Israel do that.

President: I hope you understand that we won't support Israel in any aggression. We must have like attitudes from the Arabs. We must have an atmosphere of peace to work toward a settlement.

Khaddam: I believe the fact that you have had a number of Arabs in Washington this month illustrates the Arabs' desire for peace. I know your Administration is busy because of problems and the change of Administration. I realize that although the transition took place very unusually and quietly, you will have problems for a certain period. In spite of this, we have met with you, and others have, to talk with you and do everything possible to bring the efforts for peace to a successful end.

President: This is very reassuring to the American people, that the Arabs are thus indicating their desires for a peaceful settlement. You must know the American people will not understand another oil embargo. They didn't understand it before, when we were working for peace, and they wouldn't tolerate it again.

Khaddam: I would like to say something I mentioned once to Dr. Kissinger at the lunch in my honor at the American Embassy in Syria. At that time he said that six months before it would have been crazy to think that the U.S. Secretary of State would be having lunch in Syria. Since then the U.S. has had a new understanding of the Arabs. The situation was very difficult from 1950 until the last years. The Arabs had a feeling of injustice. Not only U.S. aid and support of Israel, but many actions -- also the plight of the Palestinians for 25 years -- gave the Arabs a bad feeling of lack of justice. There was no parallel between the way the U.S. treated the Arabs and U.S. interests in the Arab world. The Arabs are good people -- as good as the American people.



President: The American people are interested in expanding relations with Arabs. Dr. Kissinger's efforts have given the American people a better understanding and appreciation of the Arabs. That's why we must have a peaceful atmosphere. An oil embargo would destroy this feeling of friendliness and cooperation with the Arabs.

Khaddam: As far as anything of a military nature, the Arabs will not undertake anything of that nature.

President: That's reassuring.

Khaddam: Why did we resort to war on October 6? Because for six years we had been trying for support and got no help at all. Imagine the Nazi -- in every sense of the word -- troops only 60 kilometers from your capital. If you come, I could show you mutilated Syrian children from Israeli bombs. We could have bombed Israeli cities, but we didn't. Even in war one should have traditional customs; war has its rules. We kept our operations in a military context.

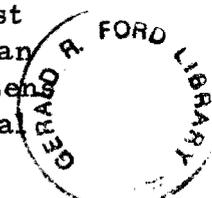
I want to say a few simple words, Mr. President. The United States now has a great opportunity to put a strong priority on relations with the Arabs. The Arabs love Americans and admire their background. Conditions for a good relationship exist. What we need is a man of courage like you and men like Dr. Kissinger who understands the problems. You will find great willingness on our side to cooperate.

Kissinger: Foreign Minister Khaddam has made many helpful statements here which will help remove the [bad] image of Syria in American minds.

Khaddam: Let me assure you these statements reflect our official position and are made in sincerity and are true. I meant what I said. When you meet President Asad, you will find him a man who wants peace in all seriousness and wants good relations with the United States.

President: I look forward to meeting with him and working for a just peace in the Middle East. I appreciate your words about the American people. They want to cooperate with the Arabs. We have many citizens of Arab extraction. If we can work together, it will be very beneficial to the cause of peace.

Khaddam: I thank you very much for your kind words and for making it possible for this meeting. I will convey my impressions to President Asad. I will convey anything you might wish to President Asad.

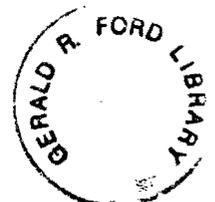


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President: Please convey my greetings and appreciation for his statesmanlike position since October. And Secretary Kissinger and I will work with him and you to move forward, and I reiterate the promise of President Nixon and Secretary Kissinger that we are committed to move forward.

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Camp diary

Transcribed by
PWP

P/Khaldun
HK/BS

8/23/74
10:30 am

Standing discussion - exchange of greetings, etc.

(Press reports)

K Come to airport 2-3 times & that 40 min away from Damascus

K Don't that mean 2-3 times to work

P 1st visit to work

K Yes, born to UN, work front city.

K Visited Hall yesterday

P That's interesting place

K That w/ Albert & several S. matters. Had brief and
discussions w/ them

K Don't forget to Syria

P That's fine hospitality

K We would in fact welcome such a visit. Assad told K
that any w/ commercial ideas should visit & see 1st hand

P I would hope they would accept, in order to get a
true perspective of a person.

K True, that would be to hope you would accept invites
of Assad to visit.

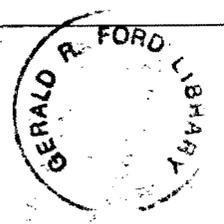
P After I got a letter held on my way. I look forward
to visiting ME & taking advantage of Paulo's kind
invitation.

K You must stay stayed for 2 days

K We had to offer K more food than we had because
we thought I staying him. Also planning w/
Cordoba

K FBI has a thing about Cordoba. Trying to get
both of them together

K Paris happen - she looking for someone to report
work forward to his desires



P We are happy to have you here. Dr. K has told me how useful you were in the big discussions last spring. We want to assure you - or have any other objection - I support K's efforts for peace & to establish a better peace for a future. It is most popular job official in US.

Ka Among women & men

P Both. We are grateful also. We have talked MEWK every day. We are grateful for constructive & sincere of Syria's agreement. Wonderful groundwork for a future.

Ka Planned to launch it & esp to board US EP with certain parties w/ resp to objective of bringing just peace to ME. Syria & Arab are eager & dedicated to just peace in ME & what US as GP should & can play

key role in this resp. In US there are messages about Arab role in world. This may be due to Arab black shattering in dealing w/ West. Let's ask question: what do we Arabs want?

Let's assume you Arab countries not ever since 48 launched war against I. It has started my own. In 49 I asked ~~admission~~ admission to UN & submitted a map. UN accepted I & that map. A comparison w/ today would show I 4 times a size of that map. Fact is that only justify to I drive for expansion. That's why we begin peace - to stop this continual aggression against us. There is talks about some boundaries & changes to make them feasible. K & Arab have discussed & Arab made ~~the~~ position clear - why some

revised



boundaries for I & not Syria. Why for a few I & not
for 100's of thousand of Syrians. W/ sophisticated airt +
satellite, no longer much reliance on gery boundaries.
Kiel security comes in our choice for peace. Want to
materialize our desire to help every thing possible ^{peace} ~~for~~
& help at those working for peace

K For Syria want to say that trip to Washington
thing

P We are interested in just peace & will work
up as to advised - are most anxious to improve
our relations w/ you

Long for you & Arab to understand ~~diff~~ of time
w/ travel in U.S. N had serious prob which led
to ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~is~~ ^{is} & I have serious prob coming in under
these circumstances, so we need some time. But
because you & you are believe there must be
movement in M.E. in your negotiations w/ I
It will become of the major key to work for further
movement in M.E.

K But you want send me to says w/ Syria again?

P He did such great job under such diff. circum
he that replace

K I think he played key role under diff circum
for other US official ~~but~~ could have done so
under in a short a time & against friendship
of Syria people

P I know my other better than K - K has great
appetite for Lee Arab & Syria

K We know this. We know relationship but K don't



Held at 1500

+ K + other Arab leaders is imp. factor in admin
prog. We hope your Admin will become where the
great prog in relations w/ Arab world. Given imp
need now only + much good impression. We wonder
why bad relations in past. We know present
state of relations is new + US leaders understanding
out of Arab + willingness to remove causes of
misunderstanding is very helpful.

P This new relationship is good + if we build
on it, must be done in atmosphere of peace. War
is destructive of good relationships - war achieved
only w/ peace.

K US has made contacts w/ all Arab + found in each
a genuine desire for peace. Peace is not w/ Arabs
but I, its interests refusal to accept any of UN
uses For ex, we signed dealing agreement + have
abided - I has established many links which went
to business w/ K. I didn't w/ draw from Q warehouse
before destroyed it - not w/ bomb but bulldozers.
I making provocative remarks about Syria being
Car Arab. We'd be pleased if we had top as in
arms, but not so. US knows what we have
getting. But is bringing about by I of peace but
US / SU + Syria worries us.

V We can't tolerate atmosphere of war if we going to build
for peace.

K Still FBI that I couldn't fight aggression w/ or open
UN supply lines. That why Syria shouldn't be prevented
to do such thing to be maneuvered into being aggressor



Ka I called your meeting, missed tapes of lectures, opening contact books. We not dependent, but we can't ignore that measure. We believe I will do everything possible to destroy chance for peace. We can't bluff I do that

P Hope you understood me when I suggest I in any aggression, we must have both attitudes from Arabs. Must have attitudes of peace to work toward a settlement.

Ka I believe just you were had # of Arabs in West then months in Arabs chance for peace. Know you Admin busy because of problems & change of Admin. Realize that the transaction took place very unusually quickly that you will have jobs for entire period. In spite of this, we have met w/ you - & others how - to talk w/ you & do everything possible to bring efforts for peace to successful end.

P This very reassuring to US people that Arabs all these indicators their desire for peaceful settlement. You must know Arab people will not understand another oil embargo. They didn't understand it before when ^{they} were working for peace & they wouldn't tolerate it again.

Ka Would like to say something mentioned once & K at lunch in my house at Fonda in Syria. At that time to send a message before would have been crazy to think US Sec State would have been Syria. Since then US has had some understanding of Arabs. Sit very dry, from \$ 50 it last years.



Arabs had feeling of injustice. Not only US aid & support of I but by ~~many~~ many others - also plight of Palestinians for 25 yrs. gave Arabs had feeling of lack of justice. There was no parallel but way US troubled Arabs & ~~not~~ US interests in Arab world. Arabs are good people - as good as US

P US people are interested in knowing situation w/ Arabs. K's efforts have given US people better understanding & respect of Arab. I don't why we must have frequent attacks - oil embargo would destroy this ^{growing} feeling of friendship & ~~cooperation~~ cooperation w/ Arabs.

K Before anything of truth, nature, Arabs will not undertake anything of that nature

P That's reasonable.

K Why did we want to war on it? Because for 6 years we had been trying for support & got no help at all. Imagine Iraq - in ~~any~~ any sense of a world war - troops only be here from your capital. If you came I could show you mutilated Sgt. Unlabeled front bombs. We could have broadcast I.E.T.s, but we didn't. Even in war one should have certain customs. War has its ~~own~~ rules. We kept our eyes in real context.

Want to say a few simple words, how P. US never has great eyes - to set strong personal relations w/ Arabs. Arabs ask how America advise their backyard. Conditions for good relationships exist. What we need is

was of course like you + more like R who understands & feels. You will find great willingness on one side to comp.

K Fxll has made very helpful statements here which showed a degree of Sincerity in US words.

K- It is to assume you these statements reflect official position was made in sincerity & are true I must what I said. When you meet deal you find how a more works place in all relationships & wants good relations w/US

P Work pursued to meeting w/ them + was working for past years in ME. Appreciate your words about Organization it has want to exp w/ anal. How many activities of Anal extraction. If we can work together it will be very beneficial to cause of peace.

K- Thank you very much for kind words & making it possible for this meeting. I will convey my regret to cancel. Will convey anything you might wish to deal.

P Many greetings & appreciation for his statements position since Oct. + K + I will work w/ him + you to more forward + decide practical of K + K that we will work to more forward standing

K Wtchamps

