MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

DATE AND TIME: Friday, June 20, 1975

PLACE: The Oval Office, The White House

The President: Mr. Foreign Minister, it is nice to see you again. We are fortunate it is the same week — sort of an anniversary — of the renewal of our relations and the building of better relations between our countries. It is my understanding that you and the Secretary had a lunch and a meeting before. It would be helpful if the Secretary could review for me the discussions thus far.
Khaddam: Mr. President, I am pleased to be here in Washington and am delighted to have the opportunity to meet with you. It is indeed a pleasant occasion to be here on our anniversary and to celebrate the relationship which we hope will become even stronger.

Kissinger: Mr. President, I reviewed for the Foreign Minister the alternatives that we have before us: One is a series of interim settlements eventually leading to an overall settlement and, two, an overall settlement. It is correct to say that Syria didn't declare a day of national mourning last March when the negotiation failed.

The United States is not pushing any particular approach, but you have publicly committed your prestige to producing progress in the Middle East. We have made clear to Israel that any agreement with Egypt would have to be followed by an agreement with Syria. The advantage we saw in this is that the obstacles in the way would be removed, leading to an overall settlement. On the other hand, this is not an American problem, and if the parties can't be brought together, we would support movement to an overall settlement. The Foreign Minister pointed out that an overall settlement need not happen at Geneva and the Foreign Minister would look for other ways than at Geneva through which to work.

God will punish me someday, but I have really developed an affection for the Syrians.

Khaddam: As Secretary Kissinger said, we reviewed the situation in the area. It gives me pleasure to present to you the situation as we see it at the present time.

We in Syria, and the Arabs, greatly appreciate the efforts of the President and Secretary Kissinger to bring peace to the area. We seek peace. We are now before a given situation.

Perhaps it would be useful to go back and review what has happened since I was in Washington last August where we discussed the same subject. If we referred to the minutes of those meetings, we would find that the same discussion we are having now we had then. That is, there has been no progress over the past year, despite the efforts of the United States and the positive attitude of the Arabs.

Despite the alternative approaches, Syria prefers the overall approach. It is difficult, but ignoring the complexities doesn't make them
go away. Now is the time to face up to all the problems and see where to go. Especially since we tried the other method. Because we try the overall approach doesn't mean we would not try other avenues to reach the same goal. Therefore, if step-by-step is found to be the only feasible way, it should take account of all the issues on all the fronts together -- meaning that any withdrawal should take place on all three fronts simultaneously. Should things turn out different from this, it would be suspect in our minds, not because United States policy doesn't want withdrawal on other fronts, but because of Israeli intransigence. Withdrawal on one front alone wouldn't be conducive to peace.

The Israeli attitude arouses our suspicion -- for example, the new settlements and new construction; Israel says they won't withdraw. Even more dangerous would be a map as published by the Labour Party, showing the Golan, Gaza and the West Bank as part of Israel. Labour is not an opposition party -- it is the government. And then, it is softer than the Likud. So what must the attitude of the Likud be? If we were to ignore this in going along with a step-by-step it would give a bad impression in the Arab world. We can't ignore public opinion. Those manifestations of Israeli intransigence concern us about the step-by-step, especially if the steps would be splintered.

Kissinger: But the Foreign Minister was an avid supporter before.

[There is some jesting about using the Kissinger method of analyzing Israel.]

Khaddam: We said that the heavy United States military shipments to Israel would make them more intransigent when others were saying that it would make them more secure and more able to negotiate. Now Rabin is in a position to thumb his nose at the United States. As to what the other methods could be used -- Geneva is only one. But if Geneva will turn into an endless conference like the negotiation on Vietnam, we see no use for it. If we agree to Geneva, it would not be for speeches but a serious desire to work for peace. Geneva is the preferred method -- the UN called for it. We don't reject Geneva; only that it be turned into an Indochina-type conference. But we want to continue all channels of effort -- and American efforts are basic to any progress. The United States has many roles -- as Co-chairman, as a great power, and a responsibility for peace and leadership in the world.

We could go back to the Security Council so that it would have to do something for the resolutions that it, itself, had passed. Another method
is to increase pressure on Israel by the international community. These are the basic alternative ways of dealing with the subject.

Kissinger: If you want to go one way -- say to an overall solution -- and if there are explosions, because of failure, a stalemate, etc., then this will be used in the United States to discredit all Arabs so those who supported it would not support other efforts for a while.

Khaddam: We do not want an explosion to occur, especially if we sense that serious efforts are under way in reaching a common and permanent peace. We have now tried for one year, and what do we see? Israel's attitude is more intransigent.

President: Let me assure you that our decision to pursue the step-by-step was made in total good faith. We have maximised our efforts to make progress in that regard. We were disappointed that the negotiations in March did not bring success, and we were happy they were only suspended. Second, I said in March that we were reassessing our policy in the Middle East. In that process we have surveyed all the alternatives and we will decide on the one which offers the best hope for success. That decision may be aimed at resumption of the step-by-step or may take the course of an overall settlement and may include Geneva.

I was interested in your comment that the conference would not take place in Geneva. Where else do you have in mind?

Khaddam: What I meant was that if Geneva turned out like the Indochina negotiation, with just talk, we would go by it to the Security Council.

Kissinger: We don't know until Geneva starts how it will work.

Khaddam: Of course. Even when we followed the step-by-step, we ended up at Geneva. So it doesn't matter whether we end up at Geneva or in the Security Council.

President: Did I understand...

Khaddam: Given the present circumstances we cannot return to a step-by-step as in the past. Our view of this step-by-step is that we would oppose it if it didn't include all three fronts.

Kissinger: Last year you settled for two. I keep teasing, but Asad and Khaddam have taken -- considering the conditions -- a very serious view of the problem.
Khaddam: The first method is the past one; the second is Geneva and at the same time step-by-step efforts; and third is Geneva by itself. If these methods -- none of them -- produce results, then we go back to the Security Council.

President: I have three questions: Would you expect the PLO to be at Geneva?

Khaddam: There are certain facts. One is that the axis on which the whole situation exists, is Palestine. We believe clarity in this will help all to understand. Therefore, I will speak quickly: The basic problem is resolving the Palestinian question. To ignore them would be for a surgeon performing an appendectomy, to find an ulcer but just close the man up after an appendectomy and send him on his way. The Palestinian people exist, as does the PLO. So there are two political alternatives: we acknowledge their existence or we don't. For peace, they should be there. I assure you the Arab world has never been so desirous of peace.

Kissinger: Would the Arabs recognize Israel?

Khaddam: Whatever the Palestinians agree upon, we would accept. That is why we think Secretary Kissinger should meet with the PLO next time.

President: What would the Soviet role be at Geneva?

Khaddam: I can't answer without knowing how the arrangements would be. The Soviet Union is Co-Chairman. The role of the U.S. Government we have discussed, but we have no clear procedure which we think the Soviet Union will follow.

We ought to judge the UN by its experience. We look at it the way it is now -- the General Assembly and the Security Council. The General Assembly could come to certain resolutions which would isolate them and bring certain political and economic pressures. Resolutions by the Security Council would have to take into account the position of the United States.

Kissinger: If everything depends on us, why should we invest our efforts through the UN? It wouldn't bring a result and thus we would pay for having given it to the UN and for its failing.

[General Scowcroft leaves the meeting briefly.]
Kissinger: Supposing the President takes a position. If Israel disagrees with it and all or some of the Arab Governments disagree, we will be in the worst possible position.

Khaddam: As the President and Secretary must be aware, the Syrians and Arabs are anxious that U.S. efforts succeed. Your efforts were greatly appreciated. So when the American decision is announced -- which is just in the eyes of the Arabs -- we won't pick at it. So we can't say what the Arab attitude would be without knowing the U.S. position.

Kissinger: But you must understand our limiting factors.

Khaddam: Are you hinting that your decision won't be palatable?

Kissinger: No.

Khaddam: I want to assure you both that we are anxious for the efforts to succeed. We discern a new understanding by the President and Secretary Kissinger. The new policy may not be exactly what we want, but we hope it will be different from what existed in the past.

President: Would you be willing to undertake negotiations with Israel on a further step-by-step attempt?

Kissinger: In the case of progress on the Egyptian front?

Khaddam: Our view is that activities should start simultaneously, because otherwise it would leave the impression of favoritism. It is already being said that Israel is adamant about perpetuating their occupation and this map will be used as proof of it. We actually appeal to President Ford and the U.S. Government to consider our attitude. We can't afford to ignore Arab public opinion. If Israel can't ignore the views of a few settlers on the Golan, how can we ignore the views of 100 million Arabs? Every day Israel makes statements about keeping the Golan, the West Bank, and Gaza, etc. If Israel is not dilly-dallying to reach the end of the U.S. elections, how does that jell with the fact that nothing has happened for 10 months? In fact, I repeat my plea -- we desire peace, but we are apprehensive because we don't want another year of stalemate.

Kissinger: I will see the Foreign Minister again. As we have told him, there are no decisions, but the President has clearly said there has to be progress toward peace. The President has never confined it to one front. We recognize Syria as the center of the Arab nation.
President: Give President Asad my best. I hope we have a chance to get together very soon.
Then at seven there is a call to prayer which is
followed in some way but I have really deliv-
ered an affection for a system.
I should not just say that in place of you, He
is the one.

As I was saying we arrived cist in a car.
It gave me pleasure to present you with a new
book at the present time.

We are from Africa and it seems c very P
and being present here. We seek you. We
are now before you but. Perhaps useful to be
around what has happened this I was in Africa
but when we discussed some points. If we
reflected to minute of the only we would find that
some sort of mission in having now we had them
in his presence and you after to the extent of not.

Attitude of Africa. Despite all, approach, there
presents in overall approach. It is different.

C completely different individual person. How is
a time to see up the whole picture as other
figuring up the system method. Because
an try overall approach don't mean we will
not try and discover in the same part.

If this is to be fixed in any possibility, it
should take account of all since all parts
are together meaning that any A hand should
be given an 80 to 30 to some change. Should
things turn out else after this, it would be
important not to waste, not to cause a paper.
Don't want to think of other plans but some of our training will probably be put on later and will be conducted in place. I attached some questions for you to consider:

1. How do you see the situation unfolding?
2. Are there any particular issues or concerns you would like to discuss?
3. What is your perspective on the current developments?

The most important of all is to remain calm and focused. Let's work together to find solutions to these challenges.

K. What is your plan in case of a crisis?

L. Some feedback about using K methodology analysis.
of effort and aim. Effective brain to any pen.
We have very few - go under a great power,
stop for the brain they call to.
We could go back to & so that it would have
to be something far more than it simply had past.
Another to increase pressure as I say, with unity.
These are brain all, upon the sky as they fly.
If we want to go one every step is a whole thing -
if them an apple pie, because of fortune, whatever it is
that ATM would be used in HX B because AM
American to close who regarded to would not stop
other efforts for a while.

K: We do not want an apple pie, too, or if some
other effort underlying unity common
again please. We have some read on type and tools
we see? I actually attended another of more
in insignificant.

P: Let me assume you can see a union here as well
positive & is one in total god page. We have
powerful and effort with just in that regard. We
always expect an attack not being successful.
Hoping they respond, I will I said in March
we are working on policy in NC. So here
from our line we arranged all other & can.
will elevation on which opposite the big
& success. That elevation very concerned
at new plan of its or may be turn of
astute relation and may involve another. I
was induced in your comment, Amy. Well
not take plan in camera. There is no
ke word 1 with 1 firm w. & finish both 1 will pro
by 3.5.
It cannot harm 1 cannot take live it immediat
4. Of course it even when we phosph at 1
report more. So it doesn't matter whether we
living at camera or in 3.5.
P. Did understand?
K. I fear present firm we will do as in part. Oth
number of cars 4 there would appear it if difference
included 3.5 please.
K. I will open your referred to 4. I keep trying out
K. 3.6 there later: something which has
a very thin very apt post.
K. There is 1 method to a part over a "at this present" in all wise.
not at same time 3 things if efforts; included by which.
If third meetings sans fiction produce result.
From we phab to 3.5 please.
P. 3.15 times word you report of 3.6 at noon
K. There are certain facts. One is that capital on
which e. whole s. matter 3.5 please. We
reduce clarity in this will help with substant.
1. I will speak greatly. This basic part is regard
P. The question. To a great there would be for anyone
perform an operation find and other have
just close a known copy of the operation would
them on tis way. Fire people plan what as an
close Ph. O. So you are a active activeness
We should act on our own. We should not wait for the UN to act. We should act alone. We should act now. We should act to prevent a possible attack. We should act to protect our interests. We should act to ensure our survival. We should act to avoid a disaster. We should act to save our country. We should act to save our lives. We should act to save our future.
command: which is just in digby arms, so
would jump at it. Do you mean to say what you would
would see Us part
P. But you would understand your limiting factor.
P. Are you limiting and your decision which be
judgmental.
K. No.

3. I want to assure you both we are far to confident

are always we declare a new understanding by

so stay. The new job may not an ultimate

what we always but hope it be big from what

the question is is.

P. Would you be willing to calculate weight of

be further 3 be attempt

any desire of EF paid.


K. Dennis wants us that more actors should start

drink tomorrow because actors would come

impression of function. All already been said

to much about perpetuating this change in

this may well be used as pay for it. We actually

agreed to finds C.A. Is reserved one condition.

we want afford to agree that put opinion. If

I would equal waive of a few Lizzy cook, has

can we agree with of C.W. and asked. Every
day I make hasta about keeping Arthur

Note; Beauty, power, etc. Of visibility adding it much

be of 11 twelve. but does think end of first

time. Nothing has happened to 9 more perfect,

supporting plot. We desire peace before
a sickening sense we don't want another
pair of statements.
I want to rise again. For by now, they are no divisions, but I fear they will
take longer to run a word from. I have been
reminded of that and we have begun to write
in a sick sense.

I can't reach my best. I hope there is
chance to get together again soon.