

MEMORANDUM

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CLASSIFIED BY FRANK WISNER
THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON
SUBJECT TO GENERAL DECLASSIFICATION
SCHEDULE OF EXECUTIVE ORDER 11652
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SECRET/NODIS/XGDS

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SECRET

PARTICIPANTS: Sa'dun Hammadi, Minister of Foreign
Affairs of Iraq
Falih Mahdi 'Ammash, Iraq Amb. to France
_____, Aide
Dr. Henry A. Kissinger, Secretary of State
Isa Sabbagh, PAO, Amembassy Jidda
Peter W. Rodman, NSC Staff *PR*

DATE AND TIME: Wednesday, December 17, 1975
12:20 - 1:18 p.m.

PLACE: Iraqi Ambassador's Residence
Rue d'Andigne
Paris XVI

Kissinger: Our two countries have not had much contact with each other in recent years, and I wanted to take this opportunity to establish contact. I know we won't solve all our problems in one meeting. It will take at least two. [Laughter] I thought a brief exchange of views would be helpful and I appreciate your courtesy in receiving me.

Hammadi: I am glad to see you, Your Excellency. We haven't had contacts, for reasons that you know and we know. It is always useful to exchange views.

Kissinger: Our basic attitude is that we do not think there is a basic clash of national interests between Iraq and the United States. For a variety of reasons, Iraq and the United States have been on opposing sides. But we have managed to normalize relations with most of the other Arabs. On purely national grounds, we see no overwhelming obstacles on our side. Maybe you have a different view.

SECRET/NODIS/XGDS

CLASSIFIED BY Henry A. Kissinger
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Hammadi: We of course have different views, and I will tell you why. Iraq is part of the Arab world. We believe the United States has been the major factor in building up Israel to what it is today.

Kissinger: True.

Hammadi: It was created in 1948 and could not have lived up to this day without the United States.

Kissinger: The Soviet Union was active then too.

Hammadi: True. That is why there were some strained relations with the Soviet Union. Our good relations with the Soviet Union are only more recent. The Communists were not popular with the masses then.

But the difference is you believe Israel is there to stay. We believe Israel was established by force and is a clear-cut case of colonialism. Israel was established on part of our homeland. You don't believe that.

But that is not the whole story. Israel is now a direct threat to Iraq's national security.

Kissinger: How to Iraq?

Hammadi: Israel has built up to a military power that can threaten Iraq, especially with the recent news that we read of the US supplying sophisticated weapons. So it is not only the Arab world that is threatened, and Iraq being part of the Arab world, but Iraq itself. We think the US is building up Israel to have the upper hand in the area.

Even Lebanon -- they say it affects Israel's security. A strong, powerful nuclear Israel with the upper hand in the area. Whatever happens in the Arab world is interpreted as a threat to Israel. Even a change of government in Iraq would be interpreted that way.

Kissinger: My impression is if you change your government in Iraq, they won't object. [Laughter] I understand your problem.

Hammadi: This is my painting of the picture now -- up to 1980. You say the United States is bringing all its weight to bring about a settlement. But this is a settlement, not peace. A new wave of troubles and clashes will start, because Israel is not a state to stay within what they are. Because if there is an opportunity, they will expand. The record shows it. And they are supported by the biggest power in the area. What the United States is doing is not to create peace but to create a situation dominated by Israel, which will create a new wave of clashes.

Kissinger: I understand what you are saying. When I say we are willing to improve relations with Iraq, we can live without it. But it is our policy to move toward better relations.

I think, when we look at history, that when Israel was created in 1948, I don't think anyone understood it. It originated in American domestic politics. It was far away and little understood. So it was not an American design to get a bastion of imperialism in the area. It was much less complicated. And I would say that until 1973 the Jewish community had enormous influence. It is only in the last two years, as a result of the policy we are pursuing, that it has changed.

We don't need Israel for influence in the Arab world. On the contrary, Israel does us more harm than good in the Arab world. You yourself said your objection to us is Israel. Except maybe that we are capitalists.

We can't negotiate about the existence of Israel but we can reduce its size to historical proportions.

I don't agree Israel is a permanent threat. How can a nation of three million be a permanent threat? They have a technical advantage now. But it is inconceivable that peoples with wealth and skill and the tradition of the Arabs won't develop the capacity that is needed. So I think in ten to fifteen years Israel will be like Lebanon -- struggling for existence, with no influence in the Arab world.

You mentioned new weapons. But they will not be delivered in the foreseeable future. All we agreed to is to study it, and we agreed to no deliveries out of current stocks. So many of these things won't be produced until 1980, and we have not agreed to deliver them then.

Our policy is to move our policy towards peace and to improve relations with the Arab world. Iraq is not a negotiator, but I think the policy of Egypt and Syria to improve relations with us helps us to bring pressure for a settlement.

The Israelis like you better than Sadat, because they like to put it in terms of a US-Soviet problem. We don't want you to have unfriendly relations with the Soviet Union; we don't interfere in your relations with the Soviet Union. But basically, the Israelis prefer radical Arabs.

If the issue is the existence of Israel, we can't cooperate. But if the issue is more normal borders, we can cooperate.

We have moved toward normalization with others -- except Libya. South Yemen we will move towards.

Hammadi: We are on the other side of the fence. We have the right to ask many questions.

Kissinger: Please.

Hammadi: Given the record, what can make us believe the United States won't continue the policy of the last twenty years of giving unlimited support.

Kissinger: It depends on what you mean by unlimited support. One important change in America...

Sabbagh was with me when I saw Faisal for the first time. I told him it would take a few years; we would have to move slowly. I have told all the Arabs this. It has now reached the point in America where attitudes have changed. When I testify to Congressional committees, I face increasingly hostile questions about Israel. No one is in favor of Israel's destruction -- I won't mislead you -- nor am I.

But the support in the 1960's was \$200-300 million. Now it is \$2-3 billion. That is impossible to sustain. We can't even get it for New York. It is just a matter of time before there is a change -- two to three years. After a settlement, Israel will be a small friendly country with no unlimited drawing right. It will be affected by our new electoral law, strangely enough. So the influence of some who financed the elections before isn't so great. This has not been so noticed. It will take a few years before it is fully understood.

So I think the balance in America is shifting. If the Arabs -- if I can be frank -- don't do anything stupid. If there is a crisis tied to the Soviet Union, groups in America could make it an anti-Communist crusade.

Hammadi: So you think the US policy after a settlement wouldn't be the same?

Kissinger: We want the survival of Israel, but not dominating the area. No one can conquer the Arab world. Even if they take Damascus, Cairo and Amman, you will be there, and Libya will be there. So if Israel wants to survive as a state like Lebanon -- as a small state -- we can support them.

Hammadi: What is the Israeli thinking?

Kissinger: First, they want to get rid of me. Because I made them go back. Second, in 1976 they want to provoke the Arabs -- in Lebanon, in Syria -- because they think if there is war they can win and create great

turnoil. Third, they want to pass legislation in America to antagonize as many Arabs as possible. So we get the anti-boycott, anti-discrimination, anti-arms sales legislation. They hope the Arabs will go back to a situation like 1967-1973, when the Syrians and Egyptians adopt an anti-American line. So they can say they are the only American friend in the Middle East. What they want is what you predict -- that they be the only friend. We want other friends, to reduce that argument.

Aide: Your Excellency, do you think a settlement would come through the Palestinians in the area? How do you read it? Is it in your power to create such a thing?

Kissinger: Not in 1976. I have to be perfectly frank with you. I think the Palestinian identity has to be recognized in some form. But we need the thoughtful cooperation of the Arabs. It will take a year or a year and a half to do it, and will be a tremendous fight. An evolution is already taking place.

Aide: You think it will be part of a solution?

Kissinger: It has to be. No solution is possible without it. But the domestic situation is becoming favorable. More and more questions are being asked in Congress favorable to the Palestinians.

Hammadi: Do you think a Palestinian state is possible?

Kissinger: We don't exclude it as a matter of principle. You can't do it now.

Hammadi: What about the Palestinians who are now refugees? The Palestine area is now crowded -- Gaza and the West Bank.

Kissinger: They should have a choice, either to stay where they are or go to a Palestinian state.

Hammadi: You think some in, say, the Galilee area might choose to leave Israel and join the new Palestinian state?

Kissinger: In Galilee?

Hammadi: Arab Israelis.

Kissinger: I have told friends that peace isn't a final end. Wars begin elsewhere between countries that are at peace. Only in the Middle East do wars begin between countries that are at war.

But we support the existence of Israel. We draw the line at the destruction of Israel.

Aide: The Palestinians already put aside this idea. This is my personal view. Because the Israelis are trying to buy land in the Galilee area and there is resistance. The Communist Party in the area is using it in the municipal elections. Is this because the Israelis are looking to the creation of a Palestinian state and want to buy this land?

Kissinger: It could be in their minds. I am not familiar with it.

Aide: This is being used by the Communist Party in the area. The Israelis know you Americans are behind the idea of a Palestinian state.

Kissinger: We have to be careful and move gradually. The Israeli press accuses me. I have said we can't move to the Palestinians until they accept the existence of the State of Israel and Security Council Resolution 242. I have never excluded the recognition of the PLO; I have always tied it to recognition of Israel and 242. The implication is we will do something if they do recognize Israel and 242.

Aide: Kaddumi says: "How can we recognize Israel if they don't recognize the PLO?"

Kissinger: With all respect, what Israel does is less important than what the United States does.

Hammadi: Your Excellency, your and our points of view are different. You are for the existence of Israel; we are not. So on this point I don't think we can agree.

Maybe we can talk of other aspects.

We are not against improving relations with any state, even states with whom we have basic differences.

We read in the newspapers the United States was providing weapons to the Kurdish movement in the north of Iraq. Our attitude is not based on that; we have a reason to believe the US was not out of this. What is your view?

Kissinger: When we thought you were a Soviet satellite, we were not opposed to what Iran was doing in the Kurdish area. Now that Iran and you have resolved it, we have no reason to do any such thing. I can tell you we will engage in no such activity against Iraq's territorial integrity, and are not.

Hammadi: This is a result of that agreement? That you think we are not satellites?

Kissinger: We have a more sophisticated understanding now. We think you are a friend of the Soviet Union but you act on your own principles.

Hammadi: Next year, if we sign an economic agreement with the Soviet Union, will you go back to the other view?

Kissinger: I wouldn't be here if we were not willing to have a new relationship with Iraq. If you have an economic relationship with the Soviet Union, that is your business. We don't interfere. It is our view that you are pursuing your own policies. We don't like what you are doing on your own. [Laughter]

We are moving towards more complex relations with the Arabs. Our policy now we don't think is inconsistent with the integrity and the dignity of Iraq.

Hammadi: We have different concepts. We have relations with the Soviet Union; we import arms from the Soviet Union. That led the United States to intervene and encourage a movement that would cut our country to pieces.

Kissinger: That goes too far. We were not the principal country involved there.

Hammadi: But the United States contributed arms in a way.

Kissinger: In a way.

Hammadi: And the Kurds wanted to cut Iraq to pieces.

Kissinger: There is no purpose discussing the past. I can only tell you what our intentions are. I understand what your concerns and suspicions are. We can wait. We need not draw any practical conclusions from this meeting.

Hammadi: Our concern is, has the United States really changed its position? What would insure that this would not be repeated in the future? Any time any country exercises its sovereign right, the United States gets involved in an activity that goes to heart of its integrity?

Kissinger: Take Syria. Syria gets all its arms from the Soviet Union. The Syrians will confirm we have never interfered in their affairs and never

interfered in their military relationship with the Soviet Union. We have made diplomatic attempts to influence their policy, which is normal. So with more mature relations with the Arabs, that is excluded.

Hammadi: What about Lebanon?

Kissinger: We have stayed out of Lebanon. We have done nothing in Lebanon. My view is that the Moslem weight will have to increase. We have had many talks with the Syrians and the Saudis but we have not engaged in any intelligence activities. That I can tell you. I mean, we collect information but not arms.

Hammadi: The United States is not in favor of dividing the country?

Kissinger: We are opposed.

Hammadi: The United States is not involved but would oppose.

Kissinger: We have not been asked, but if we were, we would oppose. I have made repeated public statements in favor of the integrity of Lebanon.

Hammadi: I am glad to hear it because we in Iraq are very sensitive to territorial integrity. Why are you opposed?

Kissinger: Because we believe the basis for peace in the Middle East is the integrity of the States in the area. Then you would have two more fragments. A Christian state would have to find outside support and a Moslem state would have to find outside support. It would add instability. You must know we are for the unity of Lebanon.

Hammadi: We were concerned about Israeli intervention.

Kissinger: We have strongly warned Israel about it. It would only gain them another few 100,000 Arabs and make a settlement impossible.

Hammadi: Is anyone internationally favoring a split?

Kissinger: No one I can see.

Hammadi: None of the big powers?

Kissinger: The Europeans like to play without risk. In the Middle East you can't play without risk. I tell you flatly, we won't support it.

We are prepared to cooperate to support the unity of Lebanon. We are only afraid that if we become active, the Soviet Union will become active. We have talked to Syria and Saudi Arabia and Egypt and Algeria.

Hammadi: I would like to sum it up -- our concern in our bilateral relations. We differentiate between political and other kinds of relations. A few years ago we lumped them all together. Economically, technically, Iraq is not closed to the United States. There is no objection to developing relations with the United States on the economic and cultural level. Only on the basis of noninterference in internal affairs. There are some U.S. companies in Iraq and they are assured they are treated fairly.

On the political level, we broke relations for a reason and we think the reason stands.

Kissinger: Leaving aside diplomatic relations -- and you will want to think about it -- if we want to exchange views, we could send somewhat more senior people to the Interest Sections in each other's capital.

Hammadi: But the higher the level of representatives, the closer we are getting to diplomatic relations.

Kissinger: But how do we do it? Through the UN mission? Or your people in Washington?

Hammadi: We can do it on a case-by-case basis.

Kissinger: All right. When you come to New York, we can meet. We can do it on a case-by-case basis.

You will see: Our attitude is not unsympathetic to Iraq. Don't believe; watch it.

Hammadi: We are a small state. We have to be more careful.

Kissinger: Things will evolve. We can stay in touch through Washington or New York.

Hammadi: Finally, I would like to say this Kurdish problem is of vital importance to us.

Kissinger: I can assure you. There will be no concern. One can do nothing about the past.

Hammadi: Not always.

[The Foreign Minister escorted Secretary Kissinger and his party to the door.]