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CONVERSATION

IN S/S-I. OCT 3, 1975

By NARA Date 4/10/87

Date: February 27, 1974
Kissinger, Khaddam
While traveling from Guest

S/S WH (Rodman)

House to Airport

Syrian Foreign Minister Abdal-Halim KHADDAM
Secretary of State Henry A. KISSINGER

Khaddam: We shall make arrangements, then, for you to visit the mosque on Friday upon your return.

Dr. Kissinger: Thank you. I am very pleased. By the way, I have really liked all the Syrians I have met.

Khaddam: We truly appreciate your efforts, irrespective of the results, and we mean your efforts towards setting up new bridges between Syria and the United States of America.

Dr. Kissinger: This definitely is our intention. By the way, when does Gromyko arrive?

Khaddam: We requested that he arrive after you have left, Damascus so that there will be no mix-up in the works. Do you have any message for him?

Dr. Kissinger: No, no message, except give him my regards. I always speak respectfully of him and I look forward to seeing him in Moscow. We are both working for peace in the Middle East. We respect the role that is played by the USSR and we have no intention to interfere in what they are doing nor will we follow a policy against the USSR.

Khaddam: As I have mentioned before we always base our relations with others on the foundation of our national sovereignty and independence.

Dr. Kissinger: Do you think there is any need for me to make a statement at the airport?

Khaddam: If you wish.

Dr. Kissinger: If it helps you, yes.

Khaddam: If it facilitates your mission, we have no objections.

Dr. Kissinger: Perhaps it is better to make a statement after I come back.

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Khaddam: It appears that Dyan will participate in the new cabinet. His bloc urged him to do so.

Dr. Kissinger: I insisted that he take part in the talks with me in Israel today.

Khaddam: The Israeli newspapers (and the Israeli radio last night) spoke of the plan which Israel will give to you on disengagement. Those Israeli sources say that the disengagement would apply only to the territory occupied by Israel during the October war.

Dr. Kissinger: The Israelis talk too much and do too little.

Khaddam: When will you visit Moscow?

Dr. Kissinger: Around the 20th of March and on my return, I might pass by some Middle Eastern states.

Khaddam: That will be good.

Dr. Kissinger: What is important is that you not permit yourselves to be provoked by the Israelis. From my experience with them, I would say that the first plan is always rejected (unsatisfactory) but you must give us a chance to continue our efforts.

Khaddam: But the element of time is a factor of pressure upon us.

Dr. Kissinger: We do need time to organize American public opinion which otherwise would find it difficult to accept to see Syria and the United States of America suddenly cooperating. That is why we are asking you to give us a chance.

Khaddam: What do you estimate the needed time to be?

Dr. Kissinger: From one month to six weeks during which time I will strive to present you to the American public opinion in the proper way.

Khaddam: Our intention is to remove all reasons for the unnatural relations existing between our two countries. That is why provocation is something that Syrians could not be trapped by.

Dr. Kissinger: This is what we seek also.

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Khaddam: Are you going to attend the special session of the General Assembly?

Dr. Kissinger: It depends on who else attends. If Foreign Ministers attend, then I guess I will have to go to it.

Khaddam: Nothing much is usually achieved as a result of these big meetings.

Dr. Kissinger: That is true, nothing at all.

Khaddam: To travel all the way to New York for the purpose of making a speech and coming back is an arduous, futile thing.

Dr. Kissinger: In any case, if you come to New York I will organize a luncheon in your honor in Washington during which you will meet some members of our Senate. This also would help to change the picture of Syria in the United States of America.

Khaddam: Thank you very much. I will certainly do that at the first opportunity I have to visit the United States of America.

Dr. Kissinger: Or even Canada.

Khaddam: Canada, along with Latin America!

Dr. Kissinger: That is right, anywhere in the American Hemisphere.

Khaddam: What we have started must be completed. We don't believe in a half-confidence or in semi-good relations.

Dr. Kissinger: You are absolutely right. I am going to have a difficult time in Israel because they don't have a government now and I have to help bring them together, especially since Israel's foreign policy seems to stem from its internal policy.

Khaddam: What news from Jordan? Have you reached an agreement between Jordan and Israel?

Dr. Kissinger: There are some contacts but the Israelis are intransigent. Besides we are now giving priority to Syria. Thus, we are not applying pressure on Israel on the Jordan score because if we apply pressure in connection with both Syria and Jordan, we wouldn't get anything.

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Dr. Kissinger (Continued): I would like to thank you very much for your very generous hospitality.

Khaddam: Ours has been no more than a spontaneous expression of our appreciation for your efforts for peace and for establishing good relations between our two countries.

Dr. Kissinger: I feel that I am dedicating my efforts to the establishment of friendship between America and the Arab World.

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