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**From the Journal of A.F. Dobrynin, 'Record of a
Conversation with US Secretary of State H.
Kissinger, 9 October 1973'**

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Summary:

During two conversations, Kissinger accuses the Soviet Union of urging Jordan to join the war against Israel. Dobrynin believes that Nixon and Kissinger are "clearly nervous" and suggests that the United States could decide to directly intervene in the Arab-Israeli war.

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Soviet Embassy in the US □□ □□ □□

TOP SECRET □□ □

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Washington □□ □□ □□

26 September 1974 □□ □

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from the journal □□

of A. F. DOBRYNIN □□ □□ □□

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RECORD OF A CONVERSATION

with US Secretary of State H. KISSINGER

during 9 October 1973

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Kissinger called. He said that they had just received information from Amman that the Soviet chargé had urgently requested an audience with the King.

When the King received him our chargé allegedly urged the King that “now the time had come when all Arab countries should participate in a military conflict with Israel together, essentially saying it in the sense that Jordan should join with the UAR [United Arab Republic*; Egypt] and Syria right now in pursuing a just war against Israel.

Kissinger expressed the “bafflement” of the US government concerning “such a Soviet representation to the King of Jordan[“] “directed at widening the war in the Middle East”.

I replied to him that I had no information about the conversation of our chargé with the King. I expressed doubt on my own behalf concerning the accuracy of the interpretation of our representative represented above. At the same time I said that the UAR [Egypt] and Syria were actually waging a just war against an aggressor which had seized their land.

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Late in the evening, Kissinger called again, and asked whether there was a message for the President from Moscow concerning the results of Soviet contacts with Arab leaders, which had been the subject of early reports made to him on this matter at the instruction of the CPSU CC General Secretary.

I answered him that there are no reports. I told him again that I considered his morning statement irresponsible, if I don't use any other stronger words, and that such statements could actually harm Soviet-American relations, including between the leaderships of both countries.

The discussion that then followed was at times quite sharp, but on the whole Kissinger behaved noticeably more quietly and evenly.

In the course of the discussion I stressed several points.

- The Soviet Union values Soviet-American relations and everything good in them that has been achieved together in recent years. However, this does not mean that the Soviet leadership is ready to abandon its principled positions in other important questions for the sake of this, in particular in questions of the Middle East.

- We have never concealed from the President and Kissinger that we consider Israel an aggressor which has seized foreign lands, and there will be no peace in this important region until Israel returns all the occupied Arab lands. We said this earlier, we say it now, and will say it in the future. We have never concealed that we have

given and are giving all possible aid to the victims of the aggressor. Is there anything new or unexpected for the President or for him, Kissinger?

- Attempts are being made right now to reduce everything to the question of "who started shooting first?" But the heart of the matter is different. Israel bears full responsibility for the lack of a settlement and for the continued tension in the area, which has resulted in a new war. This also cannot be something new for the White House. The Egyptian leadership and L. I. Brezhnev personally have repeatedly warned the President and him, Kissinger, about the ever-growing danger in the area and have called for joint actions in favor of a settlement. However, from the American side there were only evasive answers and vague promises for the future.

- But the heart of the solution to the whole problem, as was indicated in the most recent message of the General Secretary sent to the US President just two days ago, is as before to force Israel is to withdraw from all the occupied lands. Tel Aviv would now make a statement about such a withdrawal - and the war will automatically end immediately. After all, Israel is now waging a war not for its own existence, but to retain foreign lands.

- The United States actually condones this and is even "offended" when the Soviet Union points it out. At the same time, what is the White House offering now? A return to the old, completely unsatisfactory situation, somewhat colored by vague promises about some kind of negotiations in the future, without specific indications of the final outcome of such negotiations, especially regarding the withdrawal of Israeli troops.

I again expressed our readiness to act together with the US, as was already stated to the President some days ago at the instruction of L. I. Brezhnev, but to act toward a settlement and not to return to the previous situation, the completely unsatisfactory nature and explosiveness of which is now obvious to any open-minded person.

Kissinger listened to this without much argument. The main theme of his statements was that the President has welcomed and [continues to] welcome the General Secretary's appeal to act together, but that, they say, the latest actions of the Soviet government, allegedly encouraging all other Arab countries to join the UAR and Syria in the war with Israel, could not only widen the conflict, and also inadvertently lead to Soviet-American confrontation, because events could take on an "uncontrollable nature" if both USA and the USSR now encourage their "clients" toward a war and its continuation.

I, of course, rejected the equal sign that Kissinger sought to place between the Arabs and Israel and their responsibility for the events taking place.

In general, Kissinger was noticeably keen to soften the impression of his excited announcement of this morning.

The President apparently hit the roof in the morning - not without the influence of his advisers, including Kissinger - over these reports about our secret appeals to the heads of Arab countries, especially at a moment when he is impatiently awaiting our reports on the results of our appeals to the Arab leaders.

Then, judging from everything, he apparently calmed down and decided to take the edge off the whole thing, instructing Kissinger, to call me back under a plausible pretext. It is not excluded that during the first call, Kissinger himself, in a burst of excitement, could have said too much, and then, on reflection, decided to correct himself, giving the whole statement a clearly more restrained character.

All these conversations today with Kissinger show that, despite the outward calm of the White House and its continued propagandic role-playing out of "constructive efforts to establish peace," the President and Kissinger are clearly nervous, for they understand the complexity of the situation in which the United States itself finds itself, especially that the war is still disrupting the schedule they themselves had previously predicted.

Washington is becoming increasingly clear about the still very limited opportunities that the United States has to effectively influence the conflict itself: the traditional policy of the American government to support Israel is now being forced to be somewhat muted so as not to cut off its path to further relations with the Arab world (the threat of a fuel shortage this winter makes this especially urgent for the United

States), and also to not lead to a confrontation with the Soviet Union because of these events, which could deprive the Administration of the significant foreign policy asset of its past achievements.

At the same time it is necessary to keep in mind that if the situation begins to take on a difficult nature for Israel then [we] ought to proceed from a real probability of direct US intervention. This is the current domestic situation in the country, not to mention the well-known military-strategic and economic interests of the American ruling circles.

The events also show that the current conflict in the Middle East is causing definite damage to our relations with the White House and this will make itself felt in the future. Judging from everything, this result appears to be unavoidable, given the fundamental difference in the positions of both sides in connection with this conflict. The task, however, is to minimize these costs, if possible, taking into account our future relations with the United States and the latter's position in the USSR - USA - China triangle. Peking, despite all its loud statements, is essentially not coming into any serious conflict with the United States now, for Washington is well aware of China's still quite limited capabilities in this region of the world.

SOVIET AMBASSADOR IN THE US

(A. DOBRYNIN)

* [UAR until 1971--ed.]