

Damascus Is President's Third Stop

6/16/74
By Carroll Kilpatrick
Washington Post Staff Writer

DAMASCUS, Syria, June 15—After receiving a startling endorsement in Saudi Arabia for his policies at home and abroad, President Nixon flew to this revolutionary capital today to try to bring Syrian President Hafez Assad into the design of the new American diplomacy in the Middle East.

Before the President left Jeddah, Saudi Arabia's King Faisal soundly denounced Mr. Nixon's critics, saying that anyone who stands against the President is causing "the splintering of the world."

Although the President's spokesmen have denied that the Middle East tour has any relation to his Watergate problems, the issue has surfaced repeatedly during the trip.

Two days earlier, in Alexandria, Egyptian President Anwar Sadat came close to an appeal for the President's continuance in office when he pointed to signs saying "We Trust Nixon," and said that the President is a man who can keep the momentum going toward a Middle East settlement.

In farewell remarks before the President left Jeddah, the king expressed "full confidence" that Mr. Nixon would succeed in removing all the "blemishes" standing between the Arab world and the United States.

"But what is very important," the king said, "is that our friends in the United States of America themselves be wise enough to stand behind you, to rally around you, Mr. President, in your noble efforts, almost unprecedented in the history of mankind, the efforts aiming at securing peace and justice in the world."

Declaring that his aims and the President's were identical in "securing peace, justice, stability and prosperity to the

whole world," the king said:

"And anybody who stands against you, Mr. President, in the United States of America, or outside the United States of America, or stands against us, your friends in this part of the world, obviously has one aim in mind, namely, that of causing the splintering of the world, the wrong polarization of the world, the bringing about of mischief, which would not be conducive to tranquility and peace in the world."

Throughout this trip, newspaper editors and government officials have commented crit-

See **PRESIDENT, A12, Col. 1**

PRESIDENT, From A1

ically to American reporters about the impeachment drive.

Arab leaders said they cannot understand criticism in the United States of Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger, a hero in this part of the world because of his key role in negotiations between Israel and Arab countries.

Since Kissinger's surprising statement in Salzburg last Tuesday that he would resign if attacks on his integrity continued, the Secretary has deliberately avoided newsmen and on most occasions stayed in the background.

Kissinger's refusal to perform his usual role of briefing reporters has left the press at a disadvantage in interpreting developments, for no one has taken over this task.

Mr. Nixon's vigorous efforts to win Arab friendship may take considerable explaining when he arrives in Israel Sunday, particularly his declaration that the United States and the Arab countries are moving toward "interdependence."

"The American and Arab nations are rapidly moving into an era of close cooperation and interdependence, an era unprecedented in the long history of our relationships," he said on leaving Jeddah, adding, "Our friendship... now

Spinola Said to Plan Meeting With Nixon

LISBON, June 15 (AP)—President Antonio de Spínola is planning to meet with President Nixon Tuesday on the Azores Islands, sources close to the Portuguese presidency said today.

Spinola, named president after the overthrow of the rightist regime April 25, will fly to the Portuguese Atlantic islands to meet Mr. Nixon as the American President makes a rest-and-refueling stop on his way back to the United States from his Middle East trip, the sources said.

There has been no official announcement of either President Nixon's stop in the Azores or Spinola's plan to meet him.

develops into an active partnership."

As part of the new "partnership," the President promised military aid to Saudi Arabia, a country of 5.5 million with no military pretensions.

In promising military aid, he said, "The United States will see to it that the level of security consistent with its responsibility to the Middle East is raised."

He said, "If Saudi Arabia is strong and secure, as it will be, it will enhance the chances for peace."

The White House Press Secretary Ronald Ziegler told newsmen on the flight to Syria that the question of the sale of F-4 Phantom jets to Saudi Arabia did not come up in the President's talks with Faisal.

He added that the question of future arms sales to Saudi Arabia will be considered in the context of the Economic Coordinating Commission agreement signed by the Saudis and the United States a week ago in Washington.

President Assad and leaders of the ruling Baath Party greeted the President and Mrs. Nixon and Kissinger at Damascus airport, and Assad and the President drove together into the city. There were large and friendly crowds along the route, but the many welcoming signs and the frenzied crowds Mr. Nixon saw in Egypt were missing.

As the motorcade approached the city and the crowds grew large, the two presidents stood up in the car to wave. Syrian officials estimated that 450,000 people lined the route, and sources said that nearly 10,000 soldiers, police and plainclothesmen had been deployed in and around Damascus for the motorcade.

President Nixon stopped and chatted with members of a women's military unit at a reception in his honor, and spent several minutes in conversation with the Soviet ambassador to Syria, Nouritdin Moukhitdinov, who attended as dean of the diplomatic corps.

Later, at a state dinner for

Mr. Nixon, Assad strongly emphasized, as President Sadat and King Faisal had, the Arab demand for restoring the "legitimate rights" of Palestinians.

All three Arab leaders emphasized this point in public in an obvious attempt to persuade Mr. Nixon to bring pressure on Israel to make concessions to the Palestinians.

Assad said that Kissinger's achievements must be regarded "as a prelude to the next stage, which should establish peace on a firm and real foundation."

In his reply, President Nixon emphasized the complex nature of the problems that still must be resolved. He said, "I would like to tell you that I had an instant solution for these very complex problems, but you would know . . . that I do not bring any instant solution."

He described the disengagement of Israeli and Syria troops along the Golan Heights as "a beginning — and a good beginning," adding, "Now we must move forward step by step as each case permits . . . until we reach our goal of a just and equitable peace."

After dining on mutton Arab-style — a whole roasted sheep served on a platter — the two presidents exchanged remarks, with both speaking of the search for lasting peace

tory." He said, however, that it was "nothing but a first step toward complete liberation."

(The weekly Cairo newspaper Akhbar Al Yom said today that Soviet Communist Party leader Leonid Brezhnev is expected to postpone a planned visit to Egypt.

(In his weekly column, editor Ali Amin gave no reason for the postponement, but he said it was not politically motivated.

(An influential Soviet publi-

cation, New Times, said today that a lasting peace in the Middle East is not possible without assistance from Moscow.

(The magazine stressed what it called the long-standing friendship between the Soviet Union and the Arab peoples, and said that des-

pite improved American-Arab relations there were still many U.S. policies that were adverse to Arab interests.)

in a region scarred by four wars in the past 25 years.

As the festivities surrounding the President's visit continued into the evening, Syrian villagers and troops were returning to territory in the Golan Heights that had been occupied by Israeli forces since the October war.

They were led by Gen. Mustafa Tlas, who was quoted by Syrian radio as saying, "Of course we are happy to have got back some of our terri-



United Press International

RALPH ALBERTAZIE
... surprised by escort