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THE NATION

AMERICAN NOTES

Portent?

The turnout was greater than expected for the first convention of the Republican Party on July 6, 1854. So on that langorous summer day, hundreds of people wandered to the edge of the village of Jackson, Mich., to assemble in the shade of a grove of majestic oaks. Ever since, Republicans have been returning to the spot in search, as it were, of their roots. Although most of the trees have disappeared over the years, there were enough limbs left to furnish the gavel for the 1972 G.O.P. National Convention. But Richard Nixon may be the last President to receive a chip off the old block. On a recent stormy evening, the mightiest remaining oak was struck by lightning. All that is left of its splendor is a jagged 15-ft.-high stump.

As a portent, the fallen oak may not be in the same league as the events that the Historian Livy claimed presaged disaster in ancient Rome: swamps turned the color of blood, chalk rained from the skies, a spear on a statue moved of its own accord, an ox talked and a child in the womb cried "Hurrah!" Still, several Michigan newspapers carried a photo of the splintered tree with the caption "Warning from Above?"

Hot Avocados

Although what the thieves are after has neither hoofs nor horns, to the victimized growers the crime is as dastardly as robbing a rancher of his cattle. Nestled among leathery leaves in unfenced orchards, avocados are an easy target for what Southern Californians call rustlers. And at current prices (about 50¢ apiece in most supermarkets, up to nearly $1 in some areas) the green fruit is an apparently irresistible one. Midway through this season's harvest, rustlers have already ripped off more than a million dollars' worth of Southern California's $38 million crop, and police estimate that one out of every five avocados in the state's supermarkets is a hot one. "It's like growing half-dollars on trees," says Detective Lieut. John Gault of San Diego County, which produces 70% of California's crop.

Roadside signs warning that "avocado rustlers will be prosecuted" amuse the fruit filchers. Neither a state law making the theft of more than $50 worth of avocados grand larceny nor a growers' reward of $750 for information leading to conviction of rustlers has deterred the thieves, who sometimes make off with whole 800-lb. bins of freshly picked green gold. San Diego County is now drawing up an ordinance that would require anyone transporting more than 40 lbs. of avocados to have a bill of sale. But growers have little hope that the law will nip the avocado-nappers. "Laws on the books don't mean a damn," complained one grower. "What we need to do is organize a posse."

Loyal but Untrustworthy

Scandal has spread to that bastion of model morality, the Boy Scouts of America. Last week the organization acknowledged that leaders in at least ten local councils had ignored the Scout oath to be "mentally awake and morally straight," and padded their membership rolls with tentfuls of nonexistent boys.

Their purpose was to meet the ambitious quotas of a recruitment drive called the Boypower Campaign. Begun in 1968, it was supposed to increase membership by 2 million boys, to a total of 6.5 million by the time of the U.S. Bicentennial. But some of the organization's 4,600 full-time professionals soon found their quotas unattainable. Apparently fearing for their jobs, they signed up thousands of fictitious scouts, in some cases even paying the registration fees. Scout officials have already resigned or been fired in Chicago, Detroit and Tulsa, Okla., and the investigation is continuing. Says Detroit Area Council Director Joseph Wyckoff: "When you try to teach youngsters integrity and trustworthiness, it's inconceivable to have professionals who don't follow scouting rules and the law."

Take a Judge to Jail

Most judges have never even seen the institutions where they send criminals for as long as the rest of their lives. Concerned by this distance between jurist and jail, New York State's top judicial administrative board has announced a new rule requiring judges to visit prisons and other detention facilities at least once every four years. The board hopes that getting off the bench and behind the bars—sensitivity training of sorts—will "strengthen the understanding judges have of facilities and institutions to which they send individuals." That may well be true, but one great psychological gap will remain, based on the simple fact that cell doors will always swing open at the slightest gesture from a visiting judge.

DIRCK HALSTEAD

DIPLOMACY/COVER STORY

A Triumphant

Like the prophets of old, the President of the U.S. demonstrated last week that he is not without honor save perhaps in his own country. From the moment Richard Nixon set foot on Egyptian soil, beginning his historic, seven-day trip to four Arab nations and Israel, the huzzas and hossannas fell like sweet rain. For the President, coming out of the parched Watergate wasteland of Washington, the praise and the cheers of multitudes were welcome indeed, particularly since each stop, each spectacle, was beamed in living color back to the living rooms of the U.S. Press Secretary Ronald Ziegler called Nixon's welcome "the greatest in my six years with the President." He meant no irony, but home was never like this, and the President's aides were convinced that the accolades abroad would strengthen Nixon's hand in his battle to stave off impeachment.

The hegira to Egypt, Saudi Arabia,

Middle East Hegira

Syria, Israel and Jordan had, of course, far broader purposes. It constituted not only what some Nixon critics scorned as "impeachment diplomacy" but also sound foreign policy. His trip, said Nixon, was "another journey for peace," like his earlier trips to Moscow and Peking. The first U.S. President to make a state visit to any of the five countries, Nixon went to the Middle East to seed the fields so brilliantly plowed by his Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger. Behind the highly visible pomp and pageantry, there was serious bargaining between Nixon and the heads of state or government who received him. Technical and financial aid was discussed, including the offer of U.S. nuclear reactors for peaceful purposes to Egypt. Most important—and most difficult—were the long, hard talks conducted by guests and hosts about the next steps toward achieving peace and stability in the area.

To the Arab world, Nixon's trip dramatized the beginning of a new era in U.S.–Middle East relations. "To the critics, to those with pragmatic American minds, the gesture is unnecessary," admits Cherif Bassiouni, an Egyptian who teaches international law at Chicago's De Paul University. "But such gestures reflect emotions, and to the Arab psyche such gestures have a greater impact than anything else the U.S. could have done. For the Arabs, political issues must be couched in moral and symbolic terms, not in terms of pragmatism."

To Abba Eban, who only this month lost his portfolio as Israel's Foreign Minister, Nixon's trip to Arab states as well as Israel symbolizes a change in U.S. policy in the Middle East, which has suffered for years from what he calls the "seesaw" effect—"if you go up with Israel, you go down with the Arabs." Now Eban sees both ends of the seesaw rising, a "spectacular paradox" that could greatly aid stability in the region.

Nixon's trip involved risks, of course, not the least of which was the danger of an assassin's bullet. On the President's first day in Egypt, Palestinian terrorists on a suicide mission raided an Israeli farming settlement and killed three women (*see* THE WORLD). Said a terrorist spokesman: "This is how every Arab should receive Nixon, the chief imperialist in the world." There were fears that there might be further terrorist "spectaculars" this week during the Israeli and Jordanian portions of the tour, and everywhere Nixon went security precautions were extraordinary.

Long before Nixon set out on his trip, teams of U.S. security experts were touring the capitals of the countries that he would visit, working out the intricate details of protecting him from attack. Acutely mindful of their responsibilities, the host countries mobilized hordes of police, soldiers and security agents to guard the President. A phalanx of Secret Service agents traveled with Nixon, some always at his side, others riding in cars close behind, their eyes constantly roving over the crowds that lined the way. But there was no gain-

saying the fact that during many parts of his tour the President was an easy target as he stood erect in open cars to wave at the crowds.

That his welcome was so resonant everywhere reflected the success of Henry Kissinger in disengaging the combatants of the region's October war. Kissinger's diplomacy, first between Egypt and Israel, then between Syria and Israel, had achieved not only a truce but also the beginnings of trust that a solution might be found to the animosity that has blanketed the area in the quarter-century since the creation of Israel. That trust, for now at least, rests largely in the power of the U.S., which Nixon, for all his difficulties at home, still embodies. Nixon's visit, as Alexander Haig, his chief of staff, puts it, "is designed to anneal what has already happened, to reassure both sides of our willingness to play a constructive role, while realizing that it's a matter for the parties themselves to work out."

For much of the trip, Kissinger seemed unable to savor his contribution to Nixon's triumph. He was morose and uncharacteristically aloof, having threatened to resign on the eve of the flight to Cairo over the continuing accusations that he was less than truthful about his role in national-security wiretapping (*see following story*). That was unfortunate, since the changes in the Middle East have been nothing short of astonishing since Kissinger went to work in the wake of the October war. Eight months ago, Egyptians regarded Nixon as the villain who was sending Phantom jets to the Israelis. Now Sadat has gone so far as to say that the impeachment of Nixon "would be a tragedy." A U.S. Navy task force has just completed a minesweeping operation to reopen the Suez Canal, closed since the 1967 war. Syria, still tied to the Russians by arms and economic aid, not long ago was denouncing the U.S. as its archenemy and an agent of Zionism. After the October war, Saudi Arabia led the move to cut off oil to the U.S. in retaliation for American support of Israel.

Despite its improving relations with the Arabs, the U.S. has been able to maintain its traditional ties to Israel, a feat that it has been struggling to achieve for years. What is more, American initiatives have cost the Soviet Union, the Arabs' military, political and economic backer since the mid-'50s, prestige and clout in the Middle East, although the Soviets continue to have a major role in the region (*see box page 19*).

The highlights of the presidential trip, country by country:

EGYPT. Appropriately, Nixon's trip began in Egypt, by far the most populous (36 million) and most powerful of the Arab countries and the one that took the lead in softening the Arabs' implacable hostility toward Israel. President Anwar Sadat gambled his political future on the belief that he could enlist American support in working out a lasting settlement with the Israelis. Because the 48½-hour visit of the presidential party had such great symbolic value for the Egyptians, it was carefully conceived and staged like a triumphal pageant, an exercise in diplomatic theater.

The mood was set in opening ceremonies at the airport. Sadat greeted Nixon warmly and immediately began an animated conversation in English with his guest. "I have been looking forward to this day from the time I took office," Nixon responded, adding that he wanted "to establish new relations between the U.S. and Egypt."

More than 300,000 exuberant, cheering Egyptians lined the seven-mile route as the two Presidents rode in an open limousine to Cairo. They perched atop walls, perilously packed balconies, clung to lampposts, balanced from bus windows and roof ledges. Bands of white-turbaned men wearing flowing blue galabias played primitive reed flutes in Nixon's honor. American flags fluttered, and the sky rained red, white and blue confetti. Amid the ubiquitous (if unflattering to Nixon) portraits of the two Presidents, signs in Arabic and English blossomed and bobbed: WE TRUST NIXON. GOD BLESS NIXON. KEEP IT UP, NIXON. Clapping and dancing, a crew of workers on an open truck lifted branches in homage and chanted: "Nixon, Nixon, *yehya* [long live] Nixon!"

That night, the Nixon party attended an elaborate state dinner on the grounds of the ornate Kubbeh Palace, once the favorite residence of Egypt's Kings, where the President and his wife had a newly decorated wing for their use. Colored lights played on the shrubbery and exquisite Persian carpets covered the grass. Sadat gave Nixon Egypt's highest honor, the Collar of the Nile, in recognition of his efforts for peace. Kissinger got the second-ranking award, the Order of the Republic, and Sadat, knowing full well where the real power lay and careful of Nixon's sensitivities, pointed out that the Secretary had performed well "under the wise leadership of President Nixon."

Later, Sadat brought on the danc-

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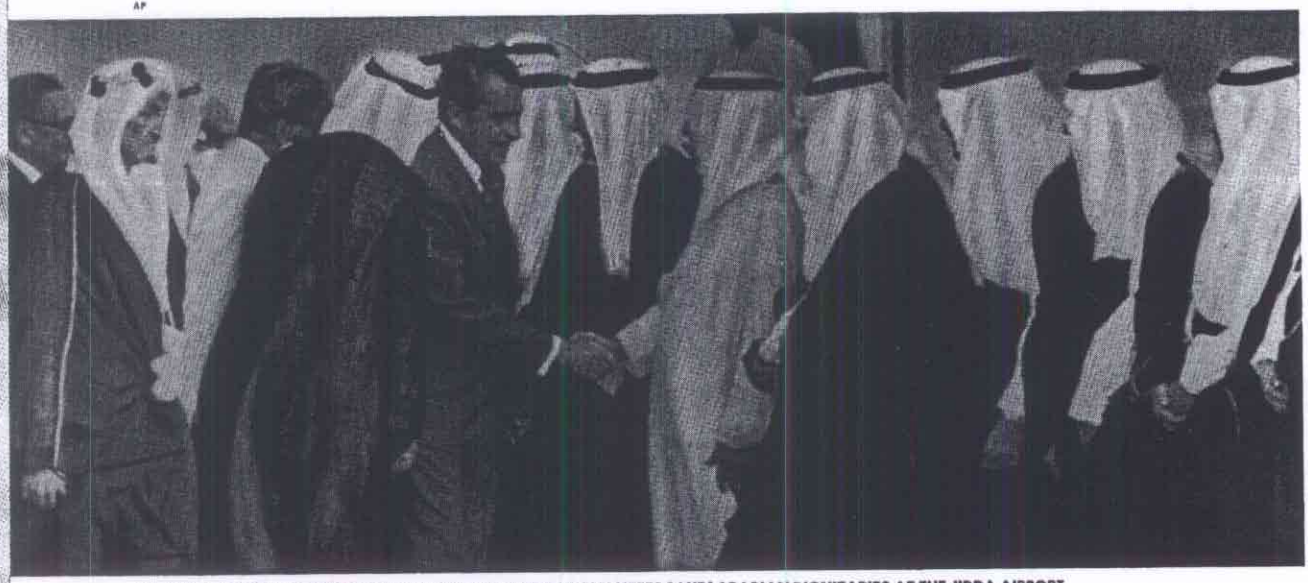

WITH KING FAISAL LOOKING ON (FAR LEFT), PRESIDENT NIXON MEETS SAUDI ARABIAN DIGNITARIES AT THE JIDDA AIRPORT
A warm welcome and a blunt if hyperbolic message to his guest.

Opposite page: Egyptians in Alexandria cheering the motorcade of Presidents Nixon and Sadat.

PHOTOGRAPH FOR TIME BY DENNIS BRACK—BLACK STAR

ing girls, including a spectacular performer known as the "Ambassadress of Love," who coaxed a smile out of the gloomy Kissinger by running her hand through his hair. At one point, she performed her sensual routine literally under Nixon's nose. Grinning with embarrassment, the President sat transfixed. When the entertainment finally ended at 2 a.m., Nixon was still ebullient from what he called his "most memorable day." With Sadat in tow, he bounded up to shake hands with the dancers and pose for pictures.

The next morning, Sadat loaded the Nixon entourage, which included 125 newsmen, aboard a special train and set out for Alexandria, 140 miles away, to show off his prize guests once again. The trip was vaguely reminiscent of an old-fashioned American whistle-stop campaign: the two men rode in an open-sided Victorian observation car in full view of some 2 million Egyptians, who cheered as the train moved up through the lush green fields of the Nile Delta.

Camels in Pink. Stationed along the right of way was TIME Correspondent Wilton Wynn. His report: "They came from miles around, walking or riding in donkey carts or buses or piled onto tractors, to wait for five or six hours in the merciless summer sun to get a look at Richard Nixon. In places where most of the people had never seen an American, they waved the Stars and Stripes, and little boys fought over photos of Nixon with Sadat. At the village of Itay el Barud, camels draped in pink silk carried huge pictures of the two Presidents.

"After so many years of feeling hostility in Egyptian villages, it was rare and pleasant for an American to be cheered while walking through the crowds. Each time I walked down the platform at Kafr el Zayyat, the people shouted: *'Ahlan wa Sahlan* [welcome] to the American!' An Egyptian climbed down off the platform and crossed the tracks to give me a bottle of the local cola drink. The mayor said: 'We are giving our hearts to Nixon today because we believe he is a man we can trust.'

"During the long wait for the train, a cheerleader used the public address system to teach the crowd to chant: 'Wel-come Nixon, wel-come Nixon, Sadat, Sadat.' When the train finally approached the station, the people in back pushed forward so hard that they nearly shoved those in front under the wheels. The band began to play with fury, and the chant 'Wel-come Nixon!' split the air.

"But the train did not stop. The cheering crowds got only a flash of Rich-

Opposite page: a belly dancer performing for the Nixons and Kissinger at a state dinner in Cairo. Mrs. Nixon and Mrs. Sadat waiting in a reception line. The President greeting members of the Egyptian National Dance Troupe following their performance for him.

Down, But Not Out, in Moscow

"If I were Brezhnev I'd say 'to hell with it' and go home."
A Soviet diplomat in Beirut

As President Nixon made his happy progress through the Middle East, that remark probably summed up much of the anger and frustration felt by many Russian diplomats. In Washington last week Soviet officials indicated privately that Nixon's reception in Moscow two weeks from now will be more restrained than it might have been because of the Russians' displeasure over their eclipse in the Middle East. Ironically, the U.S. has gone out of its way to give the appearance that the Soviets have been involved in the Syrian-Israeli disengagement negotiations, even as Moscow has played down the U.S. role and permitted little reporting on Nixon's trip.

Moscow's pique is understandable. The predominant role in the Arab world that the Soviets created at a cost of billions of dollars in military and economic assistance during the past two decades has been dramatically undercut by Henry Kissinger's dazzling diplomatic tour de force and by the change in perspective on the part of several Arab leaders, notably Egypt's Anwar Sadat.

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The problem for the Russians, say Soviet analysts, is that they are caught in a dilemma of exquisite subtlety: the more they succeed in supporting a settlement on Arab terms, the more their influence among the Arabs will decline. If there is a settlement in the region, the Arabs will no longer have to depend upon the Soviets for arms, and Soviet influence would lessen. Freed from confrontation with Israel, the Arab states would probably devote more of their energy to internal development.

The Soviet Union would find itself at a further disadvantage. As enormous new oil revenues begin to flow into the Arab countries, there is little inclination to spend them in the Soviet Union. Credits for inferior Soviet technology no longer amount to such an attractive deal. Iraq, the current epicenter of Soviet influence in the Middle East, is turning once again to the West for technology and investment. The country's biggest project, a $120 million deep-water terminal on the Persian Gulf, is being built by a Texas outfit and a West German company. A major expansion in oil production is being handled by a largely Western-owned concern.

There are, however, other long-term factors at work that seem to guarantee a significant Soviet role in the Middle East for years to come. The Soviets have been redoubling their diplomatic efforts in the Arab states that bracket Egypt: Libya, Syria and Iraq. Egypt and Syria still depend upon the Soviet Union for military supplies, and spare parts for current equipment will dictate a relatively close relationship for some time.

Aside from the Aswan High Dam, Moscow is believed to have nearly $2 billion in economic investment tied up in Egypt and almost $2 billion in military and economic assistance in Syria. If the Soviet presence declined dramatically, would or could the U.S. pick up where the Soviets left off? "I hope to God we don't," says one senior U.S. diplomat.

LOCHER—CHICAGO TRIBUNE

"The Russians? . . . They couldn't care less about us!"

When the Geneva Conference gets under way, the Soviets no doubt will play a highly visible role as the Arabs' champion, even as they have grudgingly acquiesced in Kissinger's peacemaking efforts. There is even some speculation that Moscow might renew its formal relations with Israel—to whose existence as a state the Soviet Union is still committed—in order to escape its present one-sided posture. But a more visible role at Geneva would result in merely a short-term success. In the long run, the formula still holds that the more the Soviets "succeed," the more it appears that they stand to lose. As Arab dependence upon Soviet military and diplomatic support declines, the Arabs will be looking elsewhere. They already are.

SECOND AND THIRD PAGES (CLOCKWISE): DIRCK HALSTEAD; MICHEL LAURENT—GAMMA; HALSTEAD; SIMONPIETRI—SYGMA; BRACK. OPPOSITE PAGE, BRACK; HALSTEAD; HALSTEAD

PRESIDENT NIXON STROLLING WITH KING FAISAL
Signal caller for the oil embargo.

AN EGYPTIAN LOOKS AT WELCOMING SIGN ERECTED BY SUEZ CANAL AUTHORITY

ard Nixon waving from a long side window. He seemed to be grinning. Then he was gone, but the moment was enough. The Egyptians had seen the living proof of American interest in their land. Within a couple of hours, the peasants were back in the fields, following their blindfolded oxen as they trudged endlessly round and round to turn the waterwheels."

To the Top. When the train reached Alexandria, Nixon got a reception even more boisterous and friendly than the one he had experienced in Cairo. A million or more people crammed the sidewalks, perched on the sea walls and crowded the balconies of the sprawling, seedy old Mediterranean city to cheer as the President passed by on his ten-mile motorcade. Lines of policemen on motorcycles flanked the presidential limousine, and four Jeeps full of troops armed with automatic rifles followed the Secret Service car in the procession.

That night, at the dinner he gave for Sadat at the Ras el Tin Palace, the President basked in the memory of his remarkable reception in Alexandria. "There is an old saying," Nixon told Sadat, "that you can turn people out but you can't turn them on. There was no question about the people that we saw yesterday and today—they were from their hearts giving us a warm welcome —and I can assure you, Mr. President, they touched our hearts, and I am sure the hearts of millions of Americans who saw that welcoming on television."

The next morning, the Nixons and the Sadats whirled off by helicopter for a brief look at the pyramids ("After we are done," Nixon joked to Sadat, "the press corps can climb to the top"), and Pat toured a nearby children's center, displaying all of the warm grace that she has shown during similar visits across the U.S. and around the world.

While the ceremonies were going on and the surging thousands were chanting their names, Presidents Nixon and Sadat were getting down to some hard bargaining that went beyond what their advisers had anticipated. First, they agreed to try to set up a round-robin of talks between the U.S., the Soviet Union and the various Arab countries before going ahead with full-scale discussions in Geneva aimed at reaching a general peace in the Middle East. Israel would not participate in the preliminary talks.

On the third and last day of the visit, the two Presidents announced a wide-ranging agreement that brought Egypt and the U.S. closer together than ever before—but will pose delicate problems for Nixon when he visits Israel this week. The President promised to try to provide Egypt with nuclear reactors and the know-how to operate atomic-power stations by the early 1980s. The main catch: working out a foolproof safeguard system to guarantee that the Egyptians could not use the nuclear equipment to make atomic weapons. The prospect of the Arabs' getting nuclear help from the U.S. raised immediate alarm in Israel and in the U.S. Congress. Democratic Senator Frank Church declared that Nixon had gone "beyond propriety" in making the agreement, and Democratic Congressman Melvin Price, chairman of the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy, predicted that his group would have to hold thorough hearings to make sure that the safeguard measures were really foolproof before Congress would approve the step.

Without naming a figure, Nixon also promised to give the Egyptians economic, scientific, medical and technical aid, as well as to work out cultural exchange programs and to encourage American business to invest in Egypt. At the moment, ventures worth $2 billion are under discussion. Sadat accepted an invitation from Nixon to visit the U.S. later this year.

The main issue that Nixon and Sadat sparred over was the explosive question of the future of the 3 million Palestinians left stateless by the creation of Israel. Sadat and other Arab leaders insist that any lasting peace settlement must include some resolution of the Palestinian problem, perhaps by creating a new state for them in territory now held by the Israelis.

Sadat warned Nixon that "the crux of the problem in the Middle East is the legitimate rights of the Palestine people, and unless this is implemented we feel that the prospects of peace will be waning." In reply, Nixon acknowledged the Palestinian problem and said that "it is not our intention that what we have done today is final. It is a beginning, a very good beginning, but there is more to be done and we look forward to working with you."

Both Nixon and Sadat had good reason to be pleased with the visit and the agreement that it had produced. Egypt was getting material aid and a valuable psychological prop. The U.S. had gained new and close ties with the leading state in the Arab world—an advance of great strategic significance if it can be sustained. In well-earned triumph, the Nixon caravan departed for its next stop —Saudi Arabia. A sign at the Cairo airport read: SEE YOU LATER, DICK.

SAUDI ARABIA. As the *Spirit of 76* flew over the arid wastes of the Arabian Desert, red-bereted troops riding in red Jeeps and red Chevrolets escorted a Rolls-Royce limousine to the airport in Jidda, the sun-baked seaport on the Red Sea. Saudi Arabia's royal guard —Bedouin tribesmen wearing black bandoleers and armed with single-shot rifles and curved knives in gold sheaths —stood smartly at attention. A team of sweepers began brushing the red carpet for the last time. When the blue and silver U.S. jet came to a halt and President Nixon emerged, King Faisal, 68, the man who controls a quarter of the

NIXON BEING GREETED IN SYRIA BY PRESIDENT ASSAD
Visible proof of the searing problems.

world's oil reserves, walked forward with great dignity to meet his guest.

The reception accorded Nixon on the way into town contrasted sharply with the greeting in Egypt. The sparse lines of Saudis along the streets contented themselves with clapping their hands rhythmically and waving banners as the President and the King, all but hidden in the closed Rolls-Royce, whispered by at 40 m.p.h. Saudi Arabia is not a populous nation, and staging an extravaganza is not the style of Faisal, a deeply conservative man. More important, U.S.-Saudi relations were going through a particularly delicate phase.

Although Faisal, who is bitterly anti-Communist, has been a firm friend of the U.S. over the years, he was roused to action by U.S. support of Israel during the October war. He helped bankroll the Arab armies, sent a token force of soldiers to fight alongside the Syrians on the Golan Heights, and then called the signals for the oil embargo that sent a *frisson* through the economies of the U.S., Europe and Japan. It was only two weeks ago that the U.S., taking a long step toward reconciliation, agreed to work out programs of economic, technical and military aid for Saudi Arabia, hoping thereby to be assured of a steady —or increasing—flow of oil.

Deeper Concerns. Faisal discussed with Nixon the details of how the agreement might be implemented, but there were deeper concerns on the King's mind. Before he dies, Faisal wants to pray once more at the mosque in Jerusalem near the Dome of the Rock, revered by Moslems as Mohammed's steppingstone to heaven. But the King refuses to journey to the ancient city as long as it is held by the Israelis. The fate of the refugees is another bitter problem.

With newsmen listening, Faisal chose to describe his worries at an all-male state dinner in the royal guest palace. As the smell of incense wafted through the huge, high-ceilinged rooms, the King delivered a blunt if hyperbolic message to his guest: "The injustice and aggression that were wrought upon the Arabs of Palestine are unprecedented in history." Although he praised the peacemaking efforts of Kissinger and Nixon, the King warned: "There will never be a real and lasting peace in the area unless Jerusalem is liberated and returned to Arab sovereignty, unless liberation of all the occupied Arab territories is achieved, and unless the Arab peoples of Palestine regain their rights to return to their homes and be given the right of self-determination."

Replying to Faisal's toast, Nixon said: "We are aware that we cannot produce an instant formula to solve all long-time differences. But what is new in the present situation is that the U.S. is playing a role, a positive role, working toward the goal of permanent peace in the Middle East."

Later that evening Nixon told the King: "I know that most people come to Saudi Arabia to get oil. We can use oil, but we need more, something that is worth far more than oil—we need wisdom." The President should have stopped there, but perhaps showing the strain of the trip, he rambled on: "Just to demonstrate that I am somewhat of a practical politician, let me say that while we treasure most your wisdom that we will take with us after this visit, we of course will need the oil to carry us to our next stop. And, Your Majesty, I just want to make clear—we of course will pay the world price."

Before leaving, Mrs. Nixon managed to get away for a brief shopping tour of the bazaars of Jidda. "I would like to spend a lot of time here without escorts," she said, "so I could have some fun."

During the farewell ceremonies, Faisal took the extraordinary step of allying himself with Nixon in his fight against impeachment. Although he did not mention Watergate by name, there was no mistaking the meaning of the King's softly spoken words as he called for Americans to rally round the President. Said Faisal: "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 that would not be conducive to tranquillity and peace in the world."

SYRIA. Twenty minutes' flight time from Damascus airport, Colonel Ralph Albertazzie, the pilot of Nixon's *Spirit of 76*, spotted four Soviet-built Syrian MIGs coming up fast. He immediately took evasive action, putting the giant jet through a series of sharp turns and steep banks while radioing the Damascus control tower for help. Assured that the fighters were on a friendly—though unannounced—escort mission, Colonel Albertazzie landed the President in Syria for his meetings with the leaders of a nation that has been bitterly anti-American as well as anti-Israeli.

Nixon's reception on the ground was similar to the one he had experienced in the sky—officially friendly but militant in tone. After the 1967 war, Syria broke off diplomatic relations with the U.S. and moved even closer to the Soviet Union for aid in its enduring fight against Israel. Syria made no secret of the fact that it held out no great expectations for Nixon's visit. The prevailing attitude was one of wary suspicion: What was the President really up to? A government newspaper did not get around to running a front-page story on Nixon's arrival until the morning his plane actually touched down.

President Hafez Assad, who politely received Nixon at the airport, had made

no effort to get out big crowds. Not until the presidential limousine reached Damascus, 28 miles from the airport, was there any buildup of spectators along the roadside. Then Nixon asked that the roof of the car be opened, and the two Presidents stood to wave to the crowd, which numbered perhaps 100,000. The people smiled and waved back but did little cheering. Though American flags dotted the route, only one placard was visible. It said pointedly: REVOLUTIONARY DAMASCUS WELCOMES PRESIDENT RICHARD NIXON.

In Syria, President Nixon could see visible proof of the searing nature of the problems that he was trying to help solve. As his plane approached the airport, he could detect in the distance the salient from which, by coincidence, Israeli troops that day were beginning to pull back in accordance with the disengagement agreement that Kissinger had worked out. One of the larger groups that watched the motorcade pass by was composed of Syrian refugees from the Golan Heights. The tough-looking young soldiers that guarded the airport and roads were armed with Russian-made AK-47s. Nixon's limousine also swept by a Palestinian refugee camp composed of grim, concrete-block and tin-roofed buildings.

Nixon and Assad were planning to discuss the possible resumption of diplomatic relations as well as the $100 million in the pending foreign aid bill that the Administration has said could go to Syria. But there was no getting away from the tougher subjects that were blocking a general settlement in the Middle East, and Assad gave Nixon the hard line. "No peace can be established in this region," he declared, "unless a real and just solution is found for the Palestinian question." In reply, Nixon said again that he had set out on his tour with no quick solutions to such complex problems. But he added: "Now we must move forward step by step until we reach our goal of a just and equitable peace."

ISRAEL. While President Nixon was visiting Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Syria, no one was following his progress more anxiously than Premier Yitzhak Rabin and the other members of Israel's new government. From the moment he was due to arrive at Ben-Gurion International Airport on Sunday afternoon, Nixon had the job of persuading the Israelis that he had not sold them out to buy favor with the Arabs.

UPI

MRS. NIXON BARGAINING FOR A COFFEEPOT IN A SAUDI ARABIAN BAZAAR
And a presidential predilection for cottage cheese.

During their official talks, the President was expected to try to soothe concerns about the proposed nuclear aid to the Egyptians by making a similar offer to the Israelis. (Israel has been getting U.S. help in nuclear research since 1955, but no materials.) Rabin hoped that Nixon would announce a new and long-term program of military and financial aid for his country to balance the new support going to the Arabs. The Israelis had good reason to believe that Nixon would be sympathetic to their case. Since its founding in 1948, Israel has received $5.6 billion in aid from the U.S. Government—nearly $3 billion since Nixon took office.

To protect their guest, the Israelis organized the most intensive security system in their history. Communications gear and bulletproof limousines were flown into the country by U.S. Air Force transports. An army of 19,000 policemen, soldiers and government agents were on guard. Troops lined the 32-mile route from the airport to Jerusalem. A *cordon sanitaire* encircled every area that the President visited. His movements were shadowed by three helicopters—a command center, a troop carrier and a flying medical team.

The Israelis virtually cleared out the entire 250-room King David Hotel for the Nixon party. One guest who was allowed to stay: a 93-year-old American woman who was conducting research in history and was deemed to be no security threat. Also emptied was the 110-room Y.M.C.A. across the street. In the King David (code-named "Beehive"), the Nixons occupied the presidential suite on the sixth floor, which was Kissinger's quarters when he was flying his diplomatic shuttle between Jerusalem and Damascus. This time the Secretary was relegated to a lower floor. Everything was as ready for Nixon as a sprinter on his blocks. Even the Beehive's chef was well briefed: he had been advised of the President's predilection for cottage cheese.

Balancing Act. From Israel, Nixon was scheduled to stop in Jordan for 24 hours to visit with King Hussein. Whatever plans other Arabs have for Jordan's West Bank, the territory once belonged to Jordan, and Hussein wants to talk to Nixon about his hopes for getting it back. The President was due in Washington on Wednesday. He will be in the U.S. only eight days before emplaning for Moscow and yet another round of summitry. He got a welcome card of sorts last week from Soviet Party Chairman Leonid Brezhnev, who declared that his country was ready to join with the U.S. in a ban on all underground nuclear testing.

Nixon's determined efforts to put his prestige behind a new U.S. policy in the Middle East—one aimed at accomplishing the balancing act of supporting both the Arabs and the Israelis simultaneously—marks just the beginning of the search for a lasting peace in the area. Cease-fires and disengagements of forces are one thing, but even more difficult problems lie ahead. What is to become of the Palestinian refugees? How much Arab territory should Israel give up? Who is to rule Jerusalem?

Yet Nixon's tour was a good beginning, characterized by realism and restraint on all sides. Once again Richard Nixon proved that he travels well and can be a gifted President in the intricate realms of foreign policy. But that is only part of any President's duties, and his failures in the large area that has come under the Watergate rubric will be waiting to be reckoned with on his return.