

Kissinger Is Expected to Visit Mideast To Discuss Next Step in Negotiations

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WASHINGTON, Aug. 27—Secretary of State Kissinger will probably fly to the Middle East in the next two months to seek agreement on the next state in the Arab-Israeli negotiations.

State Department officials said an exact date had not been selected, and Mr. Kissinger has indicated that October seems more likely than September. But one official said he would not rule out a one-week trip next month to accelerate the pace of the talks.

For the last month, Israeli and Arab officials have come to Washington for preliminary discussions with Mr. Kissinger, but with the last Foreign Minister, Omar Saqqaf of Saudi Arabia, due to arrive tomorrow, the future negotiating course remains unclear, officials said.

Arabs Divided on Next Step

The Arabs are divided on the next step in the negotiations, and the Israeli position will probably not become more explicit until Premier Yitzhak Rabin arrives in Washington around Sept. 10 for talks with President Ford and Mr. Kissinger.

Essentially, Washington wants to insure that the next step toward a settlement maintains the momentum started by the Israeli disengagement agreements with Egypt and Syria that were worked out through Mr. Kissinger's "shuttle diplomacy" earlier in the year.

A lack of progress, officials have said, could precipitate a crisis in the area.

The Arab leaders are scheduled to hold a top-level conference in late October, and some officials believe that it is important for the moderate Arab states, led by President Anwar el-Sadat of Egypt, to have further results to show for their support of a negotiated approach to the Middle East settlement rather than a military one.

The immediate problem, officials said, is to reconcile the differing Arab approaches to the next stage, and to see if Is-

rael concurs with whatever the Arabs think would be the most promising set of negotiations. Officials said they wanted to avoid talks that seemed to have only slim chances of success.

At the moment, the Jordanians, who were represented in Washington two weeks ago by King Hussein and Premier Zaid al-Rifai, have urged the United States to press Israel to begin talks with Jordan on "disengagement" on the occupied West Bank of the Jordan River.

This would be a highly complex negotiation, however, because it would raise questions about the role to be played by the Palestinians in the talks—since Palestinians make up the bulk of the population on the West Bank. Moreover, Premier Rabin has pledged to hold new elections to ratify any agreement that would turn back some West Bank land to the Jordanians.

The Egyptian Government, which sent Foreign Minister Ismail Fahmy to Washington at the same time King Hussein was here, has been ambiguous about its position, at one time supporting Jordan's demand for a troop separation accord to match the Egyptian and Syrian ones, but more recently urging a "second-stage" Egyptian-Israeli accord on the Sinai.

Syrian Seeks Golan Pullback

The Syrian Foreign Minister, Abdel Halim Khaddam, who was in Washington last week, told Mr. Ford and Mr. Kissinger that Syria wanted to see further progress on her front with Israel—further Israeli pullbacks from the Golan Heights, that is—but that Syria was willing to allow diplomacy to take its course.

This was reassuring to American officials, who like the Israelis have been concerned about a major build-up in Soviet-supplied arms in Syria. Both Syrian and American officials have expressed pleasure with the way Mr. Khaddam's talks went.

When the Israeli Foreign Minister, Yigal Allon, was here at the beginning of the month, he told Mr. Kissinger that Israel

was willing to enter into talks with Jordan but opposed a "disengagement" accord with Amman.

Rather, Israel would prefer either a full-scale peace settlement or an arrangement by which Jordan could be assigned administrative control of some population centers.

King Hussein's rejection of the Israeli plans has led to Israeli speculation that the most feasible next step would be raised the question of whether President Sadat could afford to negotiate again without some progress having been made in meeting Jordanian demands and those of the Palestinians.

In an effort to get unity among the Arab states, Mr. Fahmy yesterday invited Syria and the Palestine Liberation Organization to attend a meeting with Egypt in the near future. Jordan would be invited to the session later, Mr. Fahmy has said.

American officials hope that the Arabs can agree on a next step by the time Mr. Rabin comes to Washington. After the talks with Mr. Rabin, Mr. Kissinger would then go back to the Middle East to confer with top Arab leaders, or as is more likely, meet with various Arab foreign ministers at the United Nations General Assembly session next month and then go to the Middle East in October.

The October trip would be either a separate Middle East mission

or an early in the month or part of a longer trip planned for late in October and early November.

Mr. Kissinger already has said he wants to go to the Soviet Union to talk about limita-

tion of strategic arms and then pay a long-promised visit to India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. He plans to fly home by way of Teheran and Rome, with a speech at the World Food Congress meeting in the Italian capital.

Tentatively, Mr. Kissinger also plans to visit China late in the year, either before President Ford's visit to Japan, expected in November or December, or right afterward.

Mr. Saqqaf, the Saudi Foreign

Minister, will meet with Mr. Kissinger on Thursday and Friday, and may also see President Ford. He can be expected to repeat the Saudi insistence that efforts be made as soon as possible to return East Jerusalem to Arab control because of the holy mosque there. The Saudis have not made public what they believe should be the next stage of talks.

American officials said that none of the parties seemed eager for an early convening of

the Geneva conference on the Middle East except for the Syrians, who are willing to support the Soviet Union's call for such a meeting.

As a result, it is not thought likely that the Geneva conference will reconvene until November or December, after the Arab summit meeting. At such a conference, the question of Palestinian participation would have to be raised, an issue that the Arabs themselves have not yet resolved.