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1	30	12/19/1968	Memo	From unknown, to unknown RE: RN and the Amir of Kuwait. 1 pg.

December 19, 1968

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

Participants: The Amir of Kuwait, Shaikh Sabah al-Salim al-Sabah
Foreign Minister of Kuwait, Shaikh Sabah al-Almed
al-Jabir al-Fabah
Kuwait Ambassador to the United States, Tal'at
Yaqub Ghufayn
State Department Interpreter

The President-Elect
Dr. Henry A. Kissinger

Date: December 17, 1968; 9:30 a.m.

Place: Hotel Pierre, New York New York

The President-Elect opened the conversation by speaking of his visits to the Middle East and his eagerness, sometime during his term in office, to take another trip in the area. The Amir replied by extending a formal invitation.

In response to a question, the Amir then pointed out that conditions in the area were very unstable. They could change for the better as a result of a responsible approach; on the other hand, if men of good will did not control events, things would get worse. The President-Elect was known as a man of good judgment. The Amir hoped that evil men would not come to control events. The President-Elect replied that his greatest desire was to be fair and to take a new look. He wanted to talk to the leaders of the area and he wanted, above all, to do the right thing. He would instruct his Ambassadors in the area to stay in close touch with each other so that the problems could be assessed in an integrated way. The Amir responded that he appreciated the expressions of good will. The Arabs look at the United States as a country that wants peace and that has the strength to bring about peace throughout the world.

The Amir then asked what the United State's position would be after Britain withdrew from the area in 1971. The President-Elect replied that this is a matter to be discussed early in the Administration, after full consultation in the area. The Amir insisted that while he did not expect a formal commitment, he would find it helpful to understand the President-Elect's intention, if, for example, Iraq attacked Kuwait. The President-Elect replied by saying that the United States was interested in the independence and the integrity of every nation of the area but the particular tactical measures, to give this problem effect, would depend on circumstances.

The Amir returned to his theme of the evil control sweeping the area and began a disquisition of the problem of Bahrain. He warned above all, against settling the future of Bahrain by a plebiscite.

The meeting ended with an exchange of pleasantries.

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By J. Saunders, National Security Council