

ALGFO 003/23

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FM ALGIERS 231640Z NOVEMBER 82

TO FLASH FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 286 OF 23 NOVEMBER 1982

INFO PRIORITY ME POSTS, WASHINGTON, UKMIS NEW YORK, PARIS

1. AT SHORT NOTICE THIS AFTERNOON ARAFAT ASKED MY WIFE AND I TO COME ROUND TO SEE HIM AT THE OFFICIAL GUEST HOUSE HERE. IN AN HOUR LONG CONVERSATION HE NATURALLY RAISED THE QUESTION OF PLO MEMBERSHIP OF THE ARAB DELEGATION TO UK. WE MADE A GREAT EFFORT TO GET HIM TO GO FOR CONDITIONAL PUBLIC ACCEPTANCE OF ISRAEL'S RIGHT TO EXIST BUT HE WAS NOT TO BE MOVED. HE DREW ATTENTION TO THE FACT THAT AT THE FIRST FEZ CONFERENCE LAST YEAR THE WEST HAD SAID THAT ACCEPTANCE OF THE FAHD PLAN WOULD BE TAKEN AS ACCEPTANCE OF ISRAEL'S RIGHT TO EXIST. THIS YEAR HE HAD PUT HIS ENTIRE POLITICAL PRESTIGE ON THE LINE TO FORCE THE FAHD PLAN THROUGH, INCLUDING QUOTE POINT SEVEN UNQUOTE: THE RIGHT OF ALL STATES TO SECURITY. THIS OF COURSE INCLUDED ISRAEL WHICH WAS A STATE RECOGNISED BY THE UNITED NATIONS. HE SIMPLY COULD NOT GO FURTHER.

2. I SAID THAT IF THE FEZ DECLARATION WAS SO EXPLICIT THEN SURELY HE COULD BE EQUALLY SO. WHAT HAD KING HUSSEIN BEEN URGING UPON HIM? KING HUSSEIN UNDERSTOOD WESTERN POLITICAL THINKING BETTER THAN ANY OTHER LIVING ARAB. ARAFAT ADMITTED THAT HUSSEIN HAD BEEN URGING HIM TO DO THE SAME THING, TO WHICH HE HAD RETORTED THAT HUSSEIN HAD ACCEPTED RESOLUTION 242 15 YEARS AGO BUT THAT HAD NOT GOT HIM BACK A SQUARE INCH OF THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES.

... ATTACHED IMPORTANCE TO BRITISH ACCEPTANCE OF THE DELEGATION NOT FOR ITSELF, BUT BECAUSE IT WOULD HAVE AN EFFECT ON AMERICAN PUBLIC OPINION. HE COULD NOT PUT PRESSURE ON THE UNITED STATES BUT HE COULD PUT A LITTLE ON BRITAIN. HE HAD DISCUSSED THE MATTER WITH PRESIDENT CHADLI AND KING FAHD AND HAD SECURED THEIR AGREEMENT THAT IF THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT WOULD NOT ACCEPT PLO PARTICIPATION IN THE ARAB DELEGATION THEN THE ARAB DELEGATION WOULD REFUSE TO GO. THIS WOULD HAVE REPERCUSSIONS THROUGHOUT THE ARAB WORLD. HE ASKED THAT I TRANSMIT THIS MESSAGE TO YOU. HE STRESSED THAT HE WAS NOT ASKING FOR BRITISH RECOGNITION BUT SIMPLY BRITISH ACCEPTANCE OF AN ARAB DELEGATION, IN PRECISELY THE SAME WAY AS PRESIDENT MITTERAND HAD ACCEPTED IT.

4. IT WAS PRETTY CLEAR FROM WHAT HE SAID THAT A MAJOR CONSTRAINT ON A MORE PUBLIC STATEMENT OF PLO ACCEPTANCE OF ISRAEL'S RIGHT TO EXIST WAS THE BEIRUT MASSACRE DISASTER. HE REFERRED REPEATEDLY TO THE WRITTEN UNDERTAKINGS HE HAD RECEIVED FROM THE AMERICANS, ITALIANS AND THE FRENCH PRIOR TO THE EVACUATION OF HIS TROOPS. THOSE COUNTRIES HAD DISHONoured THEIR WORD AND HE HAD SAID AS MUCH TO COLOMBO AND CHEYSSON, WHO HAD ADMITTED IT. THERE WAS NOW A QUESTION OF CREDIBILITY WITH HIS OWN PEOPLE AND HE SIMPLY COULD NOT GO FURTHER THAN HE HAD. AFTER BEIRUT THE BALL WAS FIRMLY IN THE AMERICAN COURT.

5. ASKED WHAT WERE HIS MINIMUM TERMS FOR A FORTHRIGHT AND EXPLICIT CONDITIONAL ACCEPTANCE OF ISRAEL, HE SAID THEY WERE THAT PRESIDENT REAGAN SHOULD ACCORD TO THE PALESTINIANS THE SAME RIGHT TO SELF DETERMINATION THAT HE HAD RECENTLY ACCORDED TO THE 1800 INHABITANTS OF THE FALKLAND ISLANDS. E

6. REFERRING TO THE TIME HE MET THE PRIME MINISTER AT TITO'S FUNERAL, HE HAD REFLECTED THAT ALL THE LEADERS OF BRITAIN'S FORMER COLONIES WERE THERE AS HEADS OF STATE WHILE HE, A REPRESENTATIVE OF BRITAIN'S FORMER MANDATE, WAS THERE AS A STATELESS REFUGEE. HE STILL HAD HIS BRITISH PASSPORT, AS HIS FATHER HAD BEFORE HIM AND I COULD TELL MY GOVERNMENT THAT HE WOULD BE VERY HAPPY TO APPLY FOR MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMONWEALTH AS SOON AS PALESTINE RECEIVED ITS RIGHTS.

7. OTHER POINTS MENTIONED WERE THAT AS A RESULT OF THE EVENTS IN LEBANON, THE ENTIRE ARAB WORLD WAS IN A STATE OF FERMENT. ARAB LEADERS WERE SITTING ON VOLCANOS.

FELT VERY GUILTY ABOUT THEIR PERFORMANCE IN LEBANON, ABANDONING
THE PALESTINIANS. THERE WAS UNREST IN THE SYRIAN ARMY OVER THIS.
HE WAS HOPEFUL HOWEVER OF MENDING FENCES THERE.

9. HIS MEETING WITH KING HUSSEIN HAD GONE WELL. THEY WERE AGREED
ON A CONFEDERATION. HE HAD REFUSED A FEDERATION: FROM THE
PALESTINIAN POINT OF VIEW THIS WOULD BE GOING BACK TO SQUARE
ONE AND FROM THE HACHEMITE POINT OF VIEW IT WOULD HAVE OBVIOUS
DANGERS WITH A PREPONDERANT PALESTINIAN POPULATION.

10. HE SAID HE HAD NO DOUBT ABOUT THE OUTCOME OF THE PALESTINE
NATIONAL COUNCIL'S MEETING. FROM HIS GRIN I DEDUCE HE WAS
CONFIDENT OF A THUMPING MAJORITY FOR HIMSELF.

11. HE SAID HE WAS WELL AWARE OF THE IMPORTANCE OF WINNING THE
UNDERSTANDING OF THE JEWS OF THE DIASPORA. HE HAD MADE A POINT
OF HAVING A LONG TALK WITH VENNER (?) IN THE MARGINS OF
BREZHNEV'S FUNERAL.

12. AS FOR LEBANON, THE PHALANGISTS HAD MADE A TERRIBLE MISTAKE
IN LETTING ISRAEL IN, AS THEY WOULD FIND TO THEIR COST. THEY WOULD
NEVER GET THE ISRAELIS OUT. ALREADY ISRAEL WAS INCORPORATING
SOUTHERN LEBANON AND ARRANGING TO PUMP LITANI WATERS.

13. HE WAS WELL PLEASED WITH ALGERIAN SUPPORT. HE HAD A HIGH
REGARD FOR CHADLI AS A WISE MAN. THE ALGERIANS HAD AGREED TO
PROVIDE EXTENSIVE ARMED MILITARY TRAINING FOR THE PALESTINIAN
FORCES AGAINST THE DAY WHEN THEY WOULD NEED THEM TO DEFEND THEIR
OWN COUNTRY. ONE THING THE BEIRUT BATTLES HAD SHOWN THE WORLD
WAS THAT THE PLO WERE A FORCE OF GENUINE FREEDOM FIGHTERS, NOT A
BUNCH OF TERRORISTS. HE WANTED NOTHING BUT PEACE FOR HIS PEOPLE.

14. THROUGHOUT THE INTERVIEW I EMPHASISED REPEATEDLY THE IMPOR-
TANCE OF MAKING RAPID PROGRESS WHILE WORLD, AND PARTICULARLY
AMERICAN, SYMPATHY FOR THE PALESTINIANS WAS STILL FRESH. ARAFAT
INSISTED THAT HE WAS WELL AWARE OF IT.

15. AT A PERSONAL LEVEL THE MEETING WAS EXTREMELY CORDIAL (OUR
FIRST SINCE HE ATTENDED A FAREWELL PARTY GIVEN US BY THE
PALESTINIANS WHEN WE LEFT BEIRUT EIGHTEEN MONTHS AGO).

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