

MIDDLE EAST: ADVANCE COPIES

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x22

PS  
PS/MR HURD  
PS/PUS  
SIR J LEAHY  
MR EGERTON  
SIR J BULLARD  
HD/NENAD  
HD/MED  
HD/UND

NO 10 DOWNING STREET  
CABINET OFFICE D10

HD/... ..

HD/CONSULAR DEPT

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GRS 680

CONFIDENTIAL

DESKBY 281300Z

FM RIYADH 281045Z

TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 69 OF 28 NOVEMBER 1982

INFO IMMEDIATE RABAT (DESKBY 281300Z)

INFO IMMEDIATE ALL OTHER MIDDLE EAST POSTS WASHINGTON UKMIS NEW YORK  
PARIS.

FROM AMBASSADOR IN RIYADH

RIYADH TELEGRAM NUMBER 68 (NOT TO ALL):

ARAB LEAGUE DELEGATION TO LONDON.

ADVANCE COPY

IMMEDIATE

1. SUMMARY: I WAS SUMMONED TODAY SEPARATELY BY THE FOREIGN MINISTER AND (ON THE INSTRUCTIONS OF KING FAHD IN MOROCCO) BY THE CROWN PRINCE. BOTH EXPRESSED EXTREME DISMAY AT THE WAY EVENTS HAVE TURNED OUT AND ANXIETY LEST ARAB/BRITISH RELATIONS BE HARMED. BOTH HOPED EARNESTLY THAT HMG WOULD RECONSIDER THEIR POSITION.

2. PRINCE SAUD SAW ME FIRST . HE SUGGESTED THAT WE SHOULD TALK OFF THE RECORD WITHOUT TAKING NOTES. HE BEGAN BY ASKING ME, WITH APPARENT GENUINE PUZZLEMENT, HOW IT HAD ALL HAPPENED. I REHEARSED THE COURSE OF EVENTS AND SAID THAT THERE WERE TWO MAIN POINTS I WISHED TO MAKE : FIRST, HMG'S POSITION ON RECEIVING THE PLO WAS LONG-STANDING AND WELL KNOWN TO THE SAUDIS. MINISTERS HAD SAID MANY TIMES THAT THEY WERE WILLING TO MEET PLO REPRESENTATIVES ON CONDITION THAT SUCH A MEETING WOULD LEAD TO A STEP FORWARD IN THE PEACE PROCESS, AND WE HAD MADE CLEAR WHAT KIND OF A STEP WE HAD IN MIND. SECONDLY, THERE HAD BEEN AN AGREEMENT THAT THE ISSUE OF A PLO DELEGATE SHOULD BE AVOIDED. THAT AGREEMENT HAD BEEN BREACHED BY SOME CARELESS WORDS FROM AN ARAB OFFICIAL IN LONDON. IT WAS PARTICULARLY DIFFICULT FOR HMG TO GIVE WAY UNDER PRESSURE: NEVERTHELESS, WE HAD RESPONDED POSITIVELY TO THE URGENT MESSAGES WE HAD RECEIVED FROM ARAB LEADERS, IN PARTICULAR FROM KING FAHD.

3. IN REPLY, PRINCE SAUD MADE SEVERAL POINTS. FIRST, HE KNEW NOTHING OF ANY AGREEMENT TO AVOID THE ISSUE OF PLO REPRESENTATION IN THE ARAB LEAGUE DELEGATION. HE ~~DID NOT~~ H

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HOW IT COULD HAVE

BEEN AVOIDED. SECONDLY, THE JOINT STATEMENT WHICH HMG HAD PROPOSED THAT THE ARAB SIDE SHOULD MAKE WAS QUITE IMPOSSIBLE. HE DESCRIBED THE OBJECTIONS TO IT ON FAMILIAR LINES AND ADDED THAT ASKING THE ARABS, AMONG THEM MODERATE COUNTRIES LIKE SAUDI ARABIA, JORDAN AND MOROCCO, TO REJECT TERRORISM WAS LIKE ASKING A MAN IF HE HAD STOPPED BEATING HIS WIFE. THIRDLY, THOUGH HE WELL UNDERSTOOD THE BRITISH POSITION THAT THE PLO COULD NOT BE MET UNTIL THERE HAD BEEN SOME MOVEMENT ON THEIR SIDE, THERE HAD INDEED BEEN SOME MOVEMENT: THE ACCEPTANCE OF THE EIGHT POINT PLAN AT FEZ, FOR EXAMPLE, AND THE TALKS BETWEEN KING HUSSEIN AND THE PLO. FOURTHLY, IF IT HAD NOT BEEN POSSIBLE FOR US TO AGREE TO RECEIVE A PLO DELEGATE, THEN WE SHOULD HAVE ARRANGED TO POSTPONE THE VISIT OF THE ARAB LEAGUE TO LONDON SO AS TO GIVE TIME FOR DISCUSSION AND RECONSIDERATION. THIS HAD BEEN THE INTENTION IN KING FAHD'S MESSAGE TO THE PRIME MINISTER. ( I DO NOT HAVE ALL THE TELEGRAMS WITH ME IN RIYADH BUT I DO NOT RECALL THAT THE IDEA OF POSTPONEMENT WAS CONTAINED IN KING FAHD'S MESSAGE).

4. SAUD WENT ON TO SAY THAT THE POSITION OF BRITAIN WAS DIFFERENT FROM THAT OF THE USA. SHE WAS NOT BOUND BY PRIOR ENGAGEMENTS, SHE HAD ALREADY MET THE PLO IN THE EURO/ARAB DIALOGUE AND MR HURD HAD ALREADY TALKED TO QADDOUMI.

5. IT WAS IMPORTANT NOW TO SALVAGE WHAT WE COULD FROM THE CRISIS. OTHERWISE BOTH BRITISH AND ARAB INTERESTS WOULD SUFFER. WHAT DID WE INTEND TO SAY IN PUBLIC ABOUT THE MATTER?. I REPLIED THAT WHAT WE SAID WOULD DEPEND ON WHAT CAME FROM THE ARAB SIDE. I UNDERSTOOD THAT KING HASSAN INTENDED TO ISSUE A STATEMENT. PRINCE SAUD GAVE INSTRUCTIONS TO HIS SECRETARY TO FIND OUT WHETHER SUCH A STATEMENT HAD BEEN MADE.

6. WE MET AGAIN HALF AN HOUR LATER WITH CROWN PRINCE ABDULLAH WHO TOLD ME THAT HE HAD RECEIVED INSTRUCTIONS FROM KING FAHD BY TELEPHONE TO SUMMON ME TO EXPRESS SAUDI ARABIA'S GRAVE DISQUIET AT OUR POSITION. HIS ARGUMENTS WERE MUCH THE SAME AS PRINCE SAUD'S THOUGH LESS DETAILED. HE SPOKE WITH GREAT EARNESTNESS AND LAID EMPHASIS ON SAUDI-BRITISH FRIENDSHIP.

7. PRINCE SAUD REPORTED THAT HE HAD NOW HEARD THAT KING HASSAN HAD ISSUED A STATEMENT BUT THE TEXT HAD NOT YET BEEN RECEIVED. BOTH HE AND THE CROWN PRINCE AGREED THAT MUCH WOULD DEPEND ON WHETHER KING HASSAN HAD USED THE WORD QUOTE POSTPONED UNQUOTE OR QUOTE CANCELLED UNQUOTE. IF THE LATTER, THE POSITION WOULD BE VERY DIFFICULT. ABDULLAH INSTRUCTED SAUD TO TELEPHONE MOROCCO.

8. I UNDERTOOK TO REPORT SAUDI VIEWS IMMEDIATELY. THEY WERE PRESENTED MORE IN SORROW THAN IN ANGER. BUT I FEAR THAT IF THE OTHER ARABS WERE TO MOUNT A CAMPAIGN AGAINST US, THE SAUDIS MIGHT FEEL OBLIGED TO GO ALONG, NO DOUBT AS MODERATELY AS THEY FELT THEY COULD GET AWAY WITH.

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