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DESKBY 111600Z

FROM RIYADH 111300Z DEC 82

TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 81 OF 11 DECEMBER

AND TO PRIORITY ALL MIDDLE EAST POSTS, WASHINGTON, UKMIS NEW YORK, UKDEL NATO.

FOLLOWING FROM AMBASSADOR IN RIYADH:

YOUR TELNO 402 : VISIT OF ARAB LEAGUE DELEGATION TO LONDON.

1. SUMMARY: I DELIVERED TO CROWN PRINCE ABDULLAH THE MESSAGE FROM MRS THATCHER TO KING FAHD, AND TOLD HIM OF THE PROPOSAL THAT YOU SHOULD COME HERE IN JANUARY. I WAS WELL RECEIVED BUT THE SAUDIS STILL EXPECT US TO FIND A SOLUTION.

2. DETAIL: BOTH THE KING AND PRINCE SAUD WERE IN MOROCCO. ACCORDINGLY I SAW THE CROWN PRINCE THIS MORNING. BEFORE I HANDED HIM THE PRIME MINISTER'S MESSAGE, I SAID I HAD TWO POINTS TO MAKE. FIRST THE SECRETARY OF STATE WAS PROPOSING TO COME HERE IN EARLY JANUARY FOR TALKS WITH PRINCE SAUD. SECONDLY, WE WERE NOW IN CONTACT WITH KING HASSAN OF MOROCCO AND WERE DISCUSSING WAYS AND MEANS (YOUR TELNO 106 TO TUNIS). ABDULLAH WARMLY WELCOMED BOTH THESE ITEMS OF NEWS AND I SAID I WOULD FOLLOW UP THE QUESTION OF DATES FOR YOUR VISIT WITH THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS.

3. I THEN HANDED HIM THE MESSAGE. AFTER HE HAD READ IT HE NODDED HIS HEAD AND SAID QUOTE THERE IS HOPE UNQUOTE.

4. I THEN RAISED THE IDEA THAT ONE OF THE ELECTED MAYORS FROM THE WEST BANK MIGHT BE THE PLO DELEGATE. AS HE HAD ALREADY SAID TO LORD CARRINGTON, ABDULLAH THOUGHT THAT IT WAS NOW TOO LATE FOR THIS TO WORK. WE SHOULD HAVE THOUGHT OF IT EARLIER AND SHOULD HAVE FORESEEN THE SENSITIVE NATURE OF THE PROBLEM. I SAID THAT WE HAD INDEED FORESEEN IT, AND HAD REACHED AN AGREEMENT WITH KING HASSAN TO GET ROUND IT. LIKE PRINCE SAUD, ABDULLAH COULD NOT UNDERSTAND HOW KING HASSAN COULD HAVE AGREED: HE COULD NOT EXCLUDE THE PLO FROM A VISIT TO LONDON WITHOUT THE AGREEMENT OF THE WHOLE DELEGATION.

5. I COMPLAINED GENTLY THAT THE AMERICANS TOO HAD REFUSED TO RECEIVE THE PLO DELEGATE, AND YET THEIR SECRETARY OF STATE FOR COMMERCE HAD SUBSEQUENTLY BEEN RECEIVED IN RIYADH WITH EXCEPTIONALLY KIND WORDS ABOUT FRIENDSHIP AND EXPANSION OF TRADE: WHEREAS IN OUR CASE THE PAPERS WERE FULL OF TALK ABOUT BOYCOTTS AND COMMERCIAL SANCTIONS. ABDULLAH SAID THAT THE AMERICANS WERE IN A QUITE DIFFERENT POSITION: MORE WAS EXPECTED OF US. BUT HE

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HIMSELF HAD SPOKEN STRONGLY IN PRIVATE TO THE AMERICAN SECRETARY OF COMMERCE. AS FOR MEASURES AGAINST US, THAT WAS NEWSPAPER TALK. HE HAD REPLIED TO ENQUIRIES ABOUT MEASURES AGAINST US THAT BRITAIN WAS A FRIEND, AND THAT THERE WAS NO QUESTION OF SANCTIONS. I TOOK THE OPPORTUNITY TO POINT OUT THAT WE COULD NOT GET TOO FAR AHEAD OF THE AMERICANS WITHOUT LOSING OUR POWER TO INFLUENCE THEM, AND I REMINDED HIM THAT THE FRENCH WHO HAD BEEN WIDELY PRAISED HAD NO SUCH INFLUENCE, AND COULD BE OF LITTLE ASSISTANCE TO THE ARAB CASE.

6. FINALLY ABDULLAH ASKED ME TO CONVEY HIS WARM GREETINGS TO MRS THATCHER AND TO URGE HER TO DO HER BEST TO FIND A SOLUTION.

7. WE SHALL PURSUE THE MATTER OF DATES FOR YOUR VISIT WITH THE MFA BUT IN THE ABSENCE OF PRINCE SAUD (WHO IS SAID NOT TO BE RETURNING FOR TWO WEEKS), IT MAY BE DIFFICULT TO GET A FIRM DECISION. AS A PRECAUTION, YOU MAY WISH TO CONTACT HIM THROUGH HM EMBASSY IN RABAT.

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