

GRS 290
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

FM TUNIS 201455Z DECEMBER 82
TO PRIORITY FCO
TELEGRAM NUMBER 279 OF 20 DECEMBER

FOR NENAD

YOUR TEL NO 110: VISIT BY ARAB LEAGUE SECRETARY GENERAL

1. I DISCUSSED THE POSSIBLE VISIT TODAY WITH OMRAN ON HIS RETURN FROM ATHENS. (KLIBI WENT FROM ATHENS TO KHARTOUM AND WILL THEN BE VISITING JEDDA AND DAMASCUS).

2. OMRAN SAID THAT HE HAD FIRST SUGGESTED THE VISIT WITHOUT REFERENCE TO KLIBI, WHO HAD SUBSEQUENTLY APPROVED. THE PRIME MINISTER'S RESPONSE HAD BEEN MUCH APPRECIATED, BUT OMRAN WAS CONCERNED IN CASE THE MESSAGES AS CONVEYED BY DENNIS WALTERS AND OMAR AL HASSAN HAD NOT SUFFICIENTLY STRESSED THE IMPORTANCE WHICH KLIBI AND HIMSELF ATTACHED TO THE MEETING BEING STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL AND UNOFFICIAL. THEIR SUGGESTION WAS THAT IF THE PRIME MINISTER CONSIDERED THAT A MEETING WOULD BE USEFUL AND IF IT COULD BE HELD AWAY FROM OFFICIAL PREMISES, WITH NO PUBLICITY WHATSOEVER AND PREFERABLY AT A WEEKEND (WHICH THEY THOUGHT WOULD REDUCE THE CHANCES OF IT ATTRACTING ATTENTION), THEN KLIBI WOULD GLADLY COME TO LONDON.

3. OMRAN EXPLAINED THAT, IN THEIR OPINION, A MEETING AT THIS STAGE COULD HELP TO CLEAR THE AIR BY LETTING EACH SIDE GIVE A FULL AND FRANK ACCOUNT OF THEIR RESPECTIVE VIEWS. HOWEVER, IT WAS VITAL THAT KLIBI SHOULD NOT ACT - OR APPEAR TO BE ACTING - INDEPENDENTLY OF KING HASSAN. HE COULD NOT MAKE A PUBLIC VISIT TO LONDON, SINCE THIS WOULD ALMOST CERTAINLY BE MISINTERPRETED (IE IT WOULD BE ASSUMED THAT HE WAS NEGOTIATING AND PERHAPS MAKING CONCESSIONS ON THE REINSTATEMENT OF THE FEZ COMMISSION'S VISIT, WHICH HE HAD NO MANDATE TO DO). HENCE THE NEED FOR STRICT CONFIDENTIALITY.

4. OMRAN SAID THAT HE WOULD COME BACK TO ME ABOUT KLIBI'S VISIT AFTER GETTING IN TOUCH WITH KLIBI IN JEDDA OR SEEING HIM IN DAMASCUS, WHERE OMRAN WILL BE ON 23 AND 24 DECEMBER.

STIRLING

LIMITED

NENAD

MED

PS

PS/MR HURD

SIR J LEAHY

MR ECERTON

CONFIDENTIAL