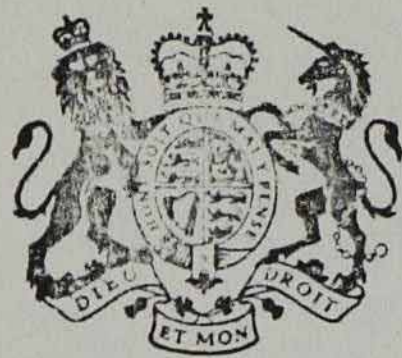


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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

12 March 1980

Call by Mr. Ahmed Osman

Mr. Ahmed Osman, a former Prime Minister of Morocco, paid a courtesy call on the Prime Minister this morning. He was accompanied by the Moroccan Ambassador. One or two points which came up during the discussion are, perhaps, worth recording.

Mr. Osman said that the Moroccan Army were in control of the situation in the Sahara. Moroccan units were attacked occasionally but the activities of the enemy were essentially terrorist in nature. The Polisario were being financed by Libya and Algeria and provided with arms from the Soviet Union. The Soviet intervention, while more discreet than that in Afghanistan, was part of an overall programme to destabilise the region. The threat to Morocco was also directly linked with the developing situation in Algeria. There were at present two or three conflicting political tendencies there. The Moroccan Government hoped that the position could be resolved. It would be helpful if there was someone there in a position of authority with whom it was possible to talk.

Mr. Osman said that the Moroccan Government had helped to foster contacts between Israel and President Sadat. But since the Camp David Agreement, they had associated themselves with the general Arab position. The Camp David Agreement would not suffice to resolve the Arab/Israel dispute. A European initiative might be helpful. The Prime Minister

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said that the dangers in the area had greatly increased since the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. All those with whom she had talked from the Arab countries had told her that the situation would be much easier to deal with if progress could be made towards a solution of the Arab/Israel dispute.

Mr. Osman said that there were problems in his Government's relations with the European Community. Although there was an association agreement, the Community adopted a protectionist attitude towards some of Morocco's exports. The provisions in the agreement for consultation were not being observed satisfactorily. Moreover, Morocco was deeply worried about the consequences for their trade of the enlargement of the Community to include Spain, Greece and Portugal. The Moroccan Ambassador commented that British imports of phosphates had fallen in recent years. However, the Moroccan authorities enjoyed good relations with the Departments of Trade and Industry. Discussions were in progress aimed at rectifying the situation.

Mr. Osman conveyed King Hassan's congratulations to the Prime Minister on the success achieved in Zimbabwe. The Moroccan Government thought the problem had been solved in a very elegant manner. The Prime Minister said that she hoped that what had been achieved in Rhodesia would not only be of benefit to that country. She hoped it would have the effect of bringing Africa and Europe closer together. The two Continents needed each other. She hoped that it would also underline the fact that those nations which wished to decide their own destiny should associate with the West. Those who sided with the Soviet Union were unlikely ever to be given the kind of choice which had been offered to the people of Rhodesia.

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