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subject copy filed on:-

CONFIDENTIAL

PM: Arab League Delegations: Aug 80

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PRIME MINISTER'S
PERSONAL MESSAGE
SERIAL No. T 229 B/82

GRS 752
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DESKBY 020630Z
FM FCO 012130Z DEC 82
TO IMMEDIATE JEDDA
TELEGRAM NUMBER 384 OF 1 DECEMBER
INFO IMMEDIATE RABAT, DAMASCUS, AMMAN, TUNIS, ALGIERS, WASHINGTON

ARAB LEAGUE DELEGATION

1. PLEASE NOW PASS THE FOLLOWING MESSAGE FROM THE PRIME
MINISTER TO KING FAHD AS SOON AS POSSIBLE:

YOUR MAJESTY,

MAY I THANK YOU FOR YOUR MESSAGE, GIVEN BY CROWN PRINCE
ABDULLAH TO SIR JAMES CRAIG ON 28 NOVEMBER, EXPRESSING CONCERN ABOUT
THE BRITISH POSITION AS REGARDS THE ARAB LEAGUE DELEGATION'S
PROPOSED VISIT TO LONDON.

I THOUGHT I SHOULD LET YOU KNOW HOW DISAPPOINTED I AM THAT IT
HAS NOT PROVED POSSIBLE FOR THE DELEGATION TO COME HERE THIS WEEK.

WHEN THE VISIT WAS FIRST PROPOSED, WE HAD A SERIES OF
PRELIMINARY DISCUSSIONS WITH THE MOROCCAN GOVERNMENT IN WHICH THEY
RAISED, INFORMALLY, THE QUESTION OF PLO PARTICIPATION IN THE
DELEGATION. WE EXPLAINED THE WELLKNOWN BRITISH POSITION ON
HIGH-LEVEL CONTACTS WITH THE PLO. AND WE WERE SUBSEQUENTLY TOLD
THAT KING HASSAN WOULD BE ACCOMPANIED BY THE SIX FOREIGN MINISTERS
AND THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE ARAB LEAGUE. WE UNDERSTOOD THAT
THERE WOULD BE NO PLO REPRESENTATIVE, EVEN THOUGH OF COURSE WE KNEW
THAT THIS WOULD HAVE BEEN THE ARAB PREFERENCE. WHEN DESPITE THIS A
FORMAL REQUEST TO US TO AGREE TO PLO PARTICIPATION WAS PUT TO US
LAST WEEK, SUPPORTED BY MESSAGES FROM YOUR MAJESTY AND FROM SOME
OTHER ARAB LEADERS, WE WERE FACED WITH THE NEED TO SETTLE THE

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MATTER IN THE FEW DAYS REMAINING TO US. OUR PROPOSAL OF 26 NOVEMBER WAS INTENDED AS A POSITIVE AND CONSTRUCTIVE RESPONSE TO BRIDGE THE GAP. THE SUGGESTION WAS NOT THAT THE ARAB SIDE SHOULD MAKE OR SIGN ANY STATEMENT, BUT THAT THE BRITISH SIDE SHOULD BE IN A POSITION TO MAKE A STATEMENT ALONG THE LINES INDICATED.

AS REGARDS THE REFERENCE IN THE STATEMENT TO TERRORISM, WHICH HRH PRINCE SAUD DISCUSSED WITH SIR JAMES CRAIG, OUR PROPOSAL WAS THAT THE BRITISH STATEMENT SHOULD SAY THAT THE MEMBERS OF THE VISITING DELEGATION '(NEXT WORD UNDERLINED) CONFIRM THEIR REJECTION OF TERRORISM'. I AM OF COURSE AWARE THAT THE RESOLUTIONS OF THE PALESTINE NATIONAL COUNCIL HELD IN 1981 INCLUDE A FORM OF WORDS CONDEMNING TERRORISM. STILL MORE IMPORTANT, I AM AWARE OF YOUR MAJESTY'S RESOLUTE OPPOSITION TO TERRORISM, OF WHICH SAUDI ARABI, LIKE SO MANY OTHER COUNTRIES, HAS SOMETIMES BEEN THE TARGET. IT WOULD BE VALUABLE IF THE PLO, IN ASSOCIATION WITH ARAB GOVERNMENTS COULD REAFFIRM ITS CATEGORIC CONDEMNATION, AND THE PROPOSAL WE MADE WAS INTENDED SIMPLY TO ACHIEVE THAT PURPOSE, THEREBY DESTROYING ONE OF THE ARGUMENTS MOST FREQUENTLY USED TO DISCREDIT THE PLO AND THE PALESTINIAN CAUSE.

THE BRITISH POSITION IS NOT MEANT TO BE RESTRICTIVE OR NEGATIVE. THE SOONER ALL THE PARTIES TO THE ARAB-ISRAEL DISPUTE AND THOSE WHO WISH TO HELP THEM CAN SIT DOWN TOGETHER AND DISCUSS THE NEXT STEPS WITHIN A REALISTIC AND POSITIVE FRAMEWORK, THE SOONER THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE WILL BE PUT IN A POSITION TO EXERCISE THEIR RIGHT OF SELF-DETERMINATION. I DO NOT THINK THAT A CHANGE IN BRITISH POLICY TOWARDS THE PLO, IN THE ABSENCE OF ANY CLEAR STEP FORWARD BY THEM, AT LEAST A CONDITIONAL MOVE, WILL HELP TO BRING THIS ABOUT. OUR POSITION ON CONTACTS WITH THE PLO, WHICH IS WHOLLY CONSISTENT WITH THE VENICE DECLARATION, AIMS TO UNDERLINE OUR CONVICTION THAT PLO ACCEPTANCE IN PRINCIPLE OF ISRAEL'S RIGHT TO EXIST IN PEACE AND SECURITY, IF ISRAEL IS PREPARED TO ACCEPT LEGITIMATE PALESTINIAN RIGHTS, IS A NECESSARY STEP IF THERE ARE TO BE REALISTIC NEGOTIATIONS ON THE FUTURE OF THE PALESTINIANS. WE BELIEVE THAT IT IS VITAL FOR BOTH SIDES TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE PRESENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR MAKING PROGRESS TOWARDS NEGOTIATIONS: AND INEVITABLY THIS WILL MEAN BOTH SIDES HAVING TO COMPROMISE ON

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THEIR MAXIMUM DEMANDS.

I AM SADDENED THAT THIS MISUNDERSTANDING SHOULD HAVE ARISEN, FOR I BELIEVE THERE IS A BROAD AREA OF AGREEMENT BETWEEN US ON MANY OTHER ASPECTS OF THE PALESTINIAN PROBLEM. I HOPE A WAY CAN BE FOUND, CONSISTENT WITH THE PRINCIPLES AND POLICIES OF OURSELVES AND THE ARAB PEOPLES, FOR THE ARAB LEAGUE DELEGATION TO COME TO LONDON AND FOR US TO HAVE THE PLEASURE OF RECEIVING THEM, I SHOULD LIKE TO ASSURE YOU IN ANY EVENT THAT WE SHALL CONTINUE TO PLAY AN ACTIVE A PART AS WE CAN IN THE SEARCH FOR A JUST AND LASTING PEACE. WE HAVE FOR EXAMPLE BEEN PRESSING THE AMERICANS HARD ON THE URGENT NEED FOR ISREAL TO IMPLEMENT THE SETTLEMENTS FREEZE PROPOSED BY PRESIDENT REAGAN. IT GOES WITHOUT SAYING THAT I ATTACH THE GREATEST POSSIBLE IMPORTANCE TO HAVING THE VIEWS OF YOUR MAJESTY ON THIS AND OTHER MATTERS OF SUCH CONCERN TO BOTH OUR COUNTRIES.

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