

Alma - really not for CF?
see records of 26/11
with President
Nubarak.
Key
26/11



South Africa

Confidential
Dear Mr Amery,

10 DOWNING STREET

19th November, 1981.

THE PRIME MINISTER

23 November 1981

Dear Julian

I was in Cairo at the time of the visit with Bill McLean and Robert Cranborne. We went at the invitation of the Foreign Minister, General El Shazly, who apparently followed a foreign affairs section.

Thank you for your letters of 12 and 19 November about South Africa and the Middle East. I am, as always, most grateful to you for letting me have the benefit of your views.

We had very cordial talks with the Foreign Minister whom I have known for some time. As the whole problem of the Middle East is very much on the agenda, I have thought it right to let you have fairly detailed records of these talks based on notes taken by Bill McLean and Robert Cranborne at the time. To had a short helpful meeting with our Ambassador Michael Weir and paid a courtesy call on the Empress Farah of Iran who is an old friend of mine.

signed

MT

Our visit received extensive coverage on Cairo television and in their press. This went well beyond the intrinsic interest of anything I had to say. It probably indicates the importance the Egyptian Government attach to demonstrating to their public that they have friends in Europe who share their broad approach to the Middle East problem. It may also be their way of signalling to other countries where they stand.

The Rt. Hon. Julian Amery, M.P.

The brief if necessary which I reached at the end of our visit are as follows; and here I would stress that they are my interpretation of what was said to us the record of which is attached.

jfh

1. The Egyptians attach paramount importance to securing the final withdrawal of the Israelis from the Sinai by April 25th 1982. They believe the Israelis to be firmly committed to this withdrawal but recognise that there are sections of Israeli public opinion which would like to go back on the agreement or postpone its fulfilment. They would welcome our participation in the Sinai Multinational Force and see some positive moves in Prince Fahad's plan. They are, however, very anxious to avoid any initiatives or declarations which could be seen as superseding Camp David and might thus interfere with the withdrawal process e.g. by incurring an Israeli veto on the composition of the multi-national force.
2. The Egyptians do not expect to get a detailed agreement on autonomy for the West Bank or Gaza before April 1982. They hope, however, to have constituted a framework which would enable Palestinian representatives to emerge in the occupied territories. It would then be for these representatives and the Jordanians, hopefully with Saudi encouragement, to take over the business of negotiations with Israel. The Egyptians would

19th November, 1981.

Confidential

Dear Margaret,

I was in Cairo at the weekend with Bill McLean and Robert Cranborne. We went at the invitation of the Foreign Minister, General Kamal Hassan Ali. His invitation apparently followed a speech I made on 5th November in the foreign affairs section of the debate on the Address.

We had very cordial and full talks first with President Husni Mubarak whom I knew only slightly and later with the Foreign Minister whom I have known for some time. As the whole problem of the Middle East is very much on the agenda, I have thought it right to let you have fairly detailed records of these talks based on notes taken by Bill McLean and Robert Cranborne at the time. We had a short but helpful meeting with our Ambassador Michael Weir and paid a courtesy call on the Empress Farah of Iran who is an old friend of mine.

Our visit received extensive coverage on Cairo television and in their press. This went well beyond the intrinsic interest of anything I had to say. It probably indicates the importance the Egyptian Government attach to demonstrating to their public that they have friends in Europe who share their broad approach to the Middle East problem. It may also be their way of signalling to other countries where they stand.

The broad if necessarily tentative conclusions which I reached at the end of our visit are as follows; and here I would stress that they are ^{purely} ~~my~~ interpretation of what was said to us the record of which is attached.

1. The Egyptians attach paramount importance to securing the final withdrawal of the Israelis from the Sinai by April 25th 1982. They believe the Israelis to be firmly committed to this withdrawal but recognise that there are sections of Israeli public opinion which would like to go back on the agreement or postpone its fulfilment ~~and perhaps even estimate their importance.~~ They would welcome our participation in the Sinai multinational force and see some positive merits in Prince Fahad's plan. They are, however, very anxious to avoid any initiatives or declarations which could be seen as superceding Camp David and might thus interfere with the withdrawal process e.g. by incurring an Israeli veto on the composition of the multi national force.
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continue to give their support but would no longer play a primary role. Other Arab countries must resort to negotiation as they had done rather than confrontation.

3. The Egyptians believe the Saudis will mend their fences with Egypt progressively. At the moment there is a truce in the war of words. Once the Sinai phase of Camp David is completed they believe the Saudi position will come much closer to their own. They and other Arabs will have to accept that negotiation pays and confrontation does not.

4. They accept the principle of Palestinian self-determination. But they do not believe that the moderates in the PLO can decide PLO policy so long as the Syrians remain in the Lebanon and thus have the main body of the PLO under their physical control and so indirectly that of Moscow. Accordingly they see two possibilities of achieving a settlement. One would be by bringing the Soviets into the peacemaking process. To this, they, and I imagine the USA would be strongly opposed. The other would be to secure the withdrawal of the Syrians from the Lebanon and some disarmament of the PLO with a consequent change of regime in Damascus.

5. Resistance to Soviet Imperialism remains their prime objective and they see close cooperation with the United States as the best way of organising it. They are indeed impatient to see the United States build up extensive military stockpiles and servicing facilities in Egypt itself as well as within the general area of the Gulf.

6. I am always sceptical of assessments of personalities. Sadat, after all, was Nasser's man until Nasser died and Sadat overthrew his policies. I do not know President Husni Mubarak at all well. He struck me, however, as more down to earth and more concerned with the practical problems of reorganising the Egyptian economy and administration than either of his predecessors. There was certainly little of the wideranging and perhaps unrealistic geopolitical vision which characterised my conversations with Sadat or for that matter Nasser. Internal pressures may lead the new President - as they so often have in the past - to seek an external role. If so, my guess would be that he would seek it in the Nile Valley, the Red Sea and North Africa more than in the Asian Middle East. But this can only be a guess. "Dissimulation" as Disraeli wrote (apologies for coded language!) is the secret of oriental policy."

In conclusion I would venture to suggest that we should consider paying more attention to Egypt than we have done in the recent past and put the Palestinian problem on the backburner at least until April 1982. It may prove easier to solve once the success of Sadat's policies where Egypt is concerned have been established beyond doubt.

Er's cover
Julian
Julian Amery

P.S.

As the records of the talks are rather long I have sidelined what seem to be the more significant sections.

I am copying this letter to Peter Carrington and to John Nott.

Foreign Secretary, Major General
Kamal Husayn Ali

The Minister's Private Secretary

Foreign Secretary, M.P.
Viscount Carrington, M.P.

After recalling earlier conversations and the Israeli report over the murder of President Sadat, Mr. Nott asked whether it was not the Arab world that was isolated from Egypt, rather than the other way round? The Minister agreed and pointed out the approval a leading article which had just appeared in Al-Naba, a Saudi owned paper, published in Kuwait, which had asserted "peace with Israel is inevitable". The Minister thought that of the Arab states were now drawing closer to the Egyptian position. The war of words in the press and on the radio had practically stopped. The peace process would continue to grow.

The Minister welcomed the proposal for a European contribution to the multi-national force in Sinai and thought the French plan was encouraging in its implicit recognition of Israel. But the Europeans must be careful not to create difficulties which might upset Israel and slow down or even stop the completion of the Israeli withdrawal from Sinai.

He was frankly worried about Israel which he described as suffering from "outright suspicion". He had noted gross reports of the possible formation of a coalition Government in Israel and recalled that the Israelis only went in for coalitions when they faced some grave national difficulty. He thought the coalition government might mean one or 3 things.

1. A decision to quiet Israeli settlements in Sinai by force. This might require a floodshed

2. A decision to withdraw from Sinai by April 1982.