



*Prime Minister*

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

1 September 1980

*Dear Michael,*

VISIT OF M. CHEDLI KLIBI, SECRETARY GENERAL  
OF THE ARAB LEAGUE

I enclose briefing material for M. Klibi's call on the Prime Minister at 0930 on 3 September, as requested in Caroline Stephens' letter of 5 August. M. Klibi speaks French; Mr P W Ford will interpret. Mr J L Bullard will attend the meeting.

*Yours ever  
Stephen Gomersall.*

S J Gomersall

M O'D B Alexander Esq  
10 Downing Street

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CALL ON THE PRIME MINISTER BY M. CHEDLI KLIBI,  
SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE ARAB LEAGUE, 3 SEPTEMBER 1980

Points to Make

Arab/Israel

1. Recognise urgent need for progress and depth of Arab frustration. Committed to contributing if we can. Thorn mission aims to lay a basis for this.
2. Regret provocative Israeli acts and concerned about mood of defiant isolation in Israel. Arabs for their part must recognise that peace cannot be imposed on Israel but must be negotiated with her. This involves creation of goodwill by both sides.
3. PLO importance recognised, but they must show readiness to co-exist with Israel if they are to be accepted as a responsible negotiating partner.

Afghanistan

Internal Scene

4. The regime of Babrak Karmal still has no popular support. Without the backing of Russian forces it would fall. Resistance to the Soviet occupation continues throughout the country. The Russians have incurred significant losses (around 4,000 casualties) but not as great as the Press would suggest. Resistance fighters have suffered heavy casualties. They face helicopter gunships with primitive weapons.

/Reactions of

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Reactions of Soviet Union and Babrak Karmal

5. The Soviet Union have so far given no indication that they are prepared to withdraw their troops. Their aim appears to be to obtain international recognition for the Babrak Karmal Government and to win acceptance of the present situation by normalising relations with neighbouring countries.

Next Steps

6. The next major occasion for the international community to express its disapproval of the Soviet invasion will be at the UNGA. Vital that pressure be maintained and that any resolution commands solid support from Islamic, Non-Aligned and Third World countries. Hope that representatives of the independence movements may be able to address the Assembly and will be involved in any conference that may be planned.

Anglo-Saudi relations

7. Pleased that relations are now back on course and grateful for M. Klibi's intervention on our behalf. Most important to resume dialogue on regional and world issues, especially Arab/Israel (Lord Carrington's valuable discussions last week with Saudi leaders).

Euro-Arab Dialogue (defensive)

8. Ready to resume Dialogue. Political and technical aspects must be kept in balance. Await response of Arab side to our proposals.

(If pressed) Concerned that there should be sufficient preparation before all the Foreign Ministers of both sides are committed to a meeting.

/Diplomatic



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Diplomatic status for the Arab League Office (defensive)

9. Diplomatic status is only accorded to the missions of Sovereign states. The present situation does not seem to hamper the League's operation in London. The question of according any special status to the Office is for the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs.

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Essential Facts

Arab/Israel

1. M. Klibi wishes to claim for himself a leading role on the Arab side in discussing Arab-Israel affairs. In practice he can wield little influence. While his own views are reasonable and pragmatic, he has a tendency to make hardline noises on occasions in order to impress the radical Arab states and build up his own prestige. M. Klibi saw M. Thorn when the latter visited Tunis at the outset of his Middle East contact mission, but had little of interest to say. He welcomes European interest and activity although like others he sees Europe mainly as a channel to the US.

Autonomy talks

2. There is no sign of a resumption in the talks, but equally a final breakdown remains unlikely. President Sadat is still committed to his peace policy and shows little inclination to abandon Camp David and rejoin the Arab consensus despite the temptation to do so in the face of Israeli intransigence.

Thorn Mission

3. M. Thorn is engaged on his final visits to Cairo and to the West Bank. He has been welcomed everywhere but his talks have been hasty and superficial and he had heard little new. He has promised a written report to his Nine colleagues on 16 September and is due to address the General Assembly on behalf of the Nine at the end of September.

Anglo-Saudi Relations

4. HM Ambassador returned to Jedda on 19 August for Lord Carrington's visit on 26 and 27.

5. M. Klibi contacted Crown Prince Fahd in May to help restore our relations (our Ambassador has thanked him).



6. In Taif Lord Carrington had lengthy discussions with the King, Crown Prince Fahd, Prince Saud, (Foreign Minister) and Ministers of Petroleum, Defence, Interior and Finance.

Euro-Arab Dialogue

7. The Dialogue emerged at the time of the Summit of the Nine in December 1973. It aimed at establishing special relations between the Nine and the Arab League, covering a broad field of (mainly economic) co-operation, excluding only the Middle East conflict. The PLO take an active part in the Arab League side but we have avoided giving them recognition. The two sides meet without any national identification.

8. The Dialogue made slow progress, limited to technical work on its various sub-committees on, eg investment protection. It was suspended in March 1979 at the request of the Arab side following Egypt's expulsion from the Arab League. Subsequently the League's new Secretary General expressed a wish to renew the Dialogue, and EC Foreign Ministers agreed to the resumption of contacts at a technical level. They stipulated that Egypt should be kept informed.

9. During these exploratory contacts the Arab side moved from an early willingness to concentrate on technical aspects to a position which placed increased emphasis on political questions. They eventually demanded that the Europeans should formally recognise both the political nature of the Dialogue and the exclusion of Egypt from it. They also revived earlier demands for recognition by the Nine of the PLO, the reconsideration of the European position on the rights of the Palestinians and for a meeting of all the Foreign Ministers of both sides in a General Committee.

10. The Nine agreed at Venice that the Dialogue should have a political dimension and that there should be a meeting between the

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two sides at a political level but we have resisted the Arab League's more extreme demands (eg on the PLO). We have proposed a limited Ministerial meeting and await the Arab side's formal reply, which will emerge from the Arab League Council meeting in mid-September. Klibi is echoing the demands of the PLO and the hardliners in the League for a meeting of all Foreign Ministers. The PLO assume the Presidency of the League on 21 September and such a meeting would therefore require very careful preparation in order to avoid political polemics and confrontation. The Dialogue is so far insufficiently substantial to justify a Ministerial meeting.

Diplomatic status for the Arab League Office

11. Some months ago there were indirect approaches to the FCO for diplomatic status to be accorded to the Arab League Office in London. We refused, on the ground that we accord such recognition only to missions established here by Sovereign states. To treat the Arab League Office similarly would require prime legislation.

12. Klibi may draw a comparison with the offices of United Nations Agencies in London; EEC Commission representatives in Arab countries etc. This comparison is invalid, since the UK is a member of those bodies, but the question is detailed and should be referred to FCO.



Personality Note

KLIBI, CHEDLI

Tunisian, Secretary General of the League of Arab States since May 1979.

Deputy in Tunisian National Assembly and Mayor of Carthage since 1964. Member of the Political Bureau of the Destour Socialist party since January 1968.

Born at Tunis in 1925. Studied in Tunis and Paris, specialising in philosophy and Arabic literature. Formerly a professor at the Ecole Normale Superieure, also carried on journalistic activities. Held a succession of Ministerial posts dealing with cultural affairs and information from 1972 until November 1973. Designated against his will as Ambassador to Cairo in December 1973 and in fact avoided going there. Appointed Director of the Presidential Cabinet with the rank of Minister in 1974. Minister of Culture in December 1976 and of Information in September 1978. A champion of the use of Arabic in Tunisia.

A superficially unimpressive personality, he has worked hard to make the Secretariat General in Tunis effective, following Egypt's expulsion from the Arab League in 1979. Has pretensions to Pan-Arab Foreign Minister status and is something of an empire-builder. Reasonably well-disposed towards Britain, his characteristically Tunisian moderation is influenced by his need to maintain his acceptability to the hardline PLO supporters in the League.

Married. Three children.



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5 August 1980

Visit of Mr. Chadhli Klibi, Secretary-General of  
the Arab League

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Thank you for your letter to Mike Pattison  
of 4 August regarding the visit of Mr. Chadhli  
Klibi, Secretary-General of the Arab League.

The Prime Minister will be happy to see him  
and may I please offer you Wednesday 3 September  
at 9.30 a.m. Could your brief please reach this  
office by close of play on Monday 1 September.  
I should warn you that the Prime Minister's diary  
is very crowded for that period so she might not  
be able to give him quite so long as she would  
wish.

CAROLINE STEPHENS

Paul Lever, Esq.,  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.



Prime Minister

Mr Klibi would like to call on you on Sept 2 (when Mubarak sees you) or 3. You will be preparing

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London SW1A 2AH

speech, but there is 4 August 1980

time available. Would you like to see him for half an hour?

MP 4/8

Visit of Mr Chadli Klibi, Secretary-General of the Arab League

Will do  
Dear Mike,



You mentioned a few days ago that an informal enquiry had been put to the Prime Minister whether she would be prepared to receive Chadli Klibi, Secretary-General of the Arab League. The Syrian Ambassador, who is the informal "Dean" of the Arab Ambassadors in London, approached John Moberly in that capacity on 31 July and said that Klibi would like to visit London on 2 or 3 September for talks with the Prime Minister. He said that Klibi wanted to range widely over the whole field of relations between the European Community and the Arab world, including the Euro-Arab dialogue. Omran mentioned that Klibi had had talks both with President Giscard and with Schmidt and that he was very keen to see Mrs Thatcher on this occasion so that relations between the Arab League and the Nine would not be weighted unduly in the direction of France and Germany.

It is correct that Klibi has recently been received by President Giscard and by Schmidt. He made a good impression. He is a sensible and well-informed man with reasonable ideas about the Arab/Israel problem and other problems of the Arab world. We should not wish to press the Prime Minister to receive him, and if she agrees to do so we would make it clear to Omran that it was an exceptional arrangement for this particular visit. Nevertheless, if the Prime Minister did see him, she would not be wasting her time and the effect on our general position in the Arab world could only benefit.

Vice-President Mubarak of Egypt will be in Britain as the Prime Minister's guest at the same time. Although Egypt is not a member of the Arab League of which Klibi is Secretary-General, we do not believe that either side would make anything of this coincidence or that it would cause embarrassment.

Yours etc

Paul

(P Lever)  
Private Secretary

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Copies: PS/LPS  
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