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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

22 December 1982

Visit to London by an Arab League Delegation

Thank you for your letter of 20 December.

The Prime Minister has signed a letter to Lord Chalfont thanking him for his efforts in Morocco. A copy of this will reach you separately.

As regards the programme for the visit by the Arab League delegation, the Prime Minister could offer, on either 31 January or 1 February:

- (a) A Guard of Honour
- (b) A tête-à-tête between herself and King Hassan (one hour)
- (c) A plenary meeting with the delegation (say 90 minutes)
- (d) A dinner for the delegation.

But if (see below) a PLO representative came with the delegation, it would be understood that he did not participate in any of the above events.

As regards the composition of the delegation, the Prime Minister would prefer that we should seek to persuade King Hassan that the same delegation which went to Washington should come here. Should this not be acceptable, we could propose that the delegation should include a prominent Palestinian who is not a PLO official (option one of your draft telegram) or, alternatively, one or more West Bank Mayors.

If these proposals are not acceptable to King Hassan, the Prime Minister would be prepared for a PLO representative to come with the delegation but call on Mr. Hurd only. Mrs. Thatcher is less attracted by the idea of a PLO representative coming in advance of the main delegation, since this would be more conspicuous.

/ The Prime Minister

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The Prime Minister has also suggested that the visit of the delegation could be made more worthwhile if arrangements were made for a group of Parliamentarians to have a discussion with them (or call on King Hassan).

Your draft telegram would need some re-drafting to take account of the Prime Minister's views as set out above.

JC

John Holmes, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

20 December 1982

Dear John,

Visit to London by an Arab League Delegation

Lord Chalfont, who called on Mr Pym on 17 Decmeber, has given us an account of his mission to Morocco. He and Mr Egerton were received by King Hassan quickly and cordially. The Moroccans appeared keen to put the issue of the abortive visit behind them and have asked us to propose new dates and to outline our proposals on the question of PLO representation. King Hassan has emphasised the need for dates to be agreed quickly: he says he is under pressure from Arafat to bring this phase of the post-Fez operation to an end as soon as possible. The atmosphere of Anglo-Moroccan relations has improved considerably. Mr Cambridge is to present his credentials to King Hassan on 22 December.

Mr Pym hopes that we will be able to put new dates to the Moroccans soon but only on the understanding that the question of PLO representation is settled before a public announcement on dates is made. The attached draft telegram instructs Mr Cambridge to explain to the Moroccans our preferred solution to the problem of PLO representation, and to offer new dates.

The options in the draft telegram are the best we can put forward, on the basis of the discussions which have already taken place between Mr Pym and the Prime Minister. There is a reasonable chance that they will get a good hearing from King Hassan. It is far more questionable whether King Hassan will be able to carry his colleagues with him. Our proposals do not meet the requirements of, for example, King Fahd or King Hussein. Our Arab friends have in fact no sympathy with or understanding of the position we have taken up, and so long as this situation lasts the risk to our interests and commercial prospects remains quite serious. They know that we understand the importance of the PLO and they noted Mr Hurd's meeting with Qaddumi in the summer as part of an

/Arab League

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Arab League mission. Since then we have had the agreement of Arab leaders, including the PLO, at Fez II on a peace strategy, and a determined attempt by Arafat to come to terms with Jordan on the future of the Palestinians and the Jordanians, in direct response to the Reagan proposals - to say nothing of Israel's invasion of Lebanon. They know that despite occasional rhetoric, Arafat has chosen the diplomatic way forward, not least because the armed struggle is now hopeless; and that the main killers in the Middle East depend on Baghdad and Damascus, not the PLO. They therefore believe that our objections are out of date and we ought to be more responsive to the Palestinian aspirations. The PLO themselves are of course likely to find our proposals unsatisfactory, and other Arab leaders will be influenced by what the PLO say.

As against this, factors working in our favour are King Hassan's personal wish to make a success of a visit to London, and a more general wish on the part of Arab leaders to dispose tidily of the programme they set themselves in Fez, as well as an innate reluctance to press home a bitter quarrel with us. But the balance is not a comfortable one.

The earliest dates on which The Queen, the Prime Minister and Mr Pym are all available are Monday 31 January and Tuesday 1 February. The Moroccans will expect a similar programme to those offered earlier, key elements of which are:

- a) a meeting with The Queen;
- b) a tete-a-tete meeting between King Hassan and Mrs Thatcher;
- c) a plenary session at 10 Downing Street with the whole delegation;
- d) a meal offered by the Prime Minister for the delegation.
- e) a guard of honour in the FCO quadrangle.

I enclose a draft outline of three possible programmes. It would be useful to have the Prime Minister's views on these before we get to the stage of negotiating with the Moroccans.

I also enclose a draft letter from Mrs Thatcher to Lord Chalfont thanking him for undertaking his mission to Morocco and for delivering the Prime Minister's

no. P.L.O.
representative
to be
present.
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submitted
replied
A.S.C. 21.
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message.

Yours ever
J E Holmes

(J E Holmes)
Private Secretary

A J Coles Esq
Private Secretary
10 Downing Street

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	Classification and Caveats CONFIDENTIAL	Precedence/Deskby IMMEDIATE
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ZCZC 1 ZCZC
 GRS 2 GRS
 CLASS 3 CONFIDENTIAL
 CAVEATS 4
 DESKBY 5
 FM FCO 6 FROM FCO 17 DECEMBER 82
 PRE/ADD 7 TO IMMEDIATE RABAT
 TEL NO 8 TELEGRAM NUMBER
 9 INFO IMMEDIATE ALL MIDDLE EAST POSTS, WASHINGTON.
 10 INFO ROUTINE PARIS, UKMIS NEW YORK, MOSCOW
 11 INFO SAVING MADRID, UKDEL NATO
 12 ARAB LEAGUE DELEGATION VISIT TO LONDON
 13 1. Unless you think it would be appropriate to seek an audience
 14 with the King please ask to call on Boucetta and/or Moulay Hafid
 15 to outline our proposals for a reinstatement of the Arab
 16 League Delegation visit to London.
 17 2. You should stress that the Prime Minister and I continue to
 18 attach importance to receiving an Arab League delegation in
 19 London. We hope that agreement can be reached on a compromise
 20 which would enable the visit to take place soon. King Hassan
 21 and his colleagues are aware of our difficulties over the PLO.
 /// 22 To avoid any further misunderstandings or embarrassment it is
 // 23 important therefore, before new dates are publicised, for us to
 / 24 have the agreement of the Arab League side on the question of
 25 PLO representation in the Delegation.

NNNN ends telegram	BLANK	Catchword 3.
File number	Dept NENAD	Distribution ME STANDARD AND ARAB-ISRAEL
Drafted by (Block capitals) R O MILES		
Telephone number 233 6048		
Authorised for despatch		
Comcen reference	Time of despatch	

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2 3. Lord Chalfont's conversation with King Hassan suggests that
 3 His Majesty fully appreciates our problems and believes that a
 4 compromise can be agreed. The King himself put forward his
 5 own helpful suggestion. We have no illusions as to the
 6 difficulties but hope that King Hassan, as the leader of the
 7 delegation, will be able to secure the agreement of his
 8 colleagues to one of the following formulae (the first two of
 9 which have been discussed between the King and Lord Chalfont).

10 4. OPTION ONE. A prominent Palestinian, who could have good
 11 contacts with the PLO, but must not be a PLO official, would
 12 take the place of a PLO representative on the delegation. The
 13 name of Mohamed Milhem, ex-mayor of Halhoul on the West Bank,
 14 has been mentioned to us as a possible candidate. In this
 15 case the PM would receive the whole delegation. Alternatively,
 16 the Prime Minister is ready at any appropriate stage to
 17 receive a separate group of West Bank mayors.

18 5. OPTION TWO. A PLO representative would come with the
 19 delegation but call on Mr Hurd (next word underlined) instead
 20 and not take part in the other events.
~~of taking part in the plenary talks and meal at 10 Downing~~
 21 ~~Street.~~ A variant would be for a PLO representative to come,
 22 with a representative of the Arab League, in advance of the
 23 main delegation.

24 6. OPTION THREE. The scale of the mission might be reduced,
 25 eg King Hassan might come alone, or accompanied only by the
 26 Secretary-General of the Arab League.

27 7. You may let the Moroccans know that for planning purposes,
 28 but not (not) for public use at this stage, we propose that the
 29 visit should take place on Monday 31 January/Tuesday 1 February.
 30 Either could be a working day and there are a number of possible
 31 permutations which we should be pleased to discuss with the
 32 King once agreement has been reached on the PLO problem and we
 33 are able to go firm on the dates. * ~~~~~ *

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telegram

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Catchword

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8. You should stress that we fully appreciate the King's position as leader of the delegation and will use him as the sole channel for reaching decisions on both the PLO problem and dates. If the subject arises with other Arabs we will be emphasising the primacy of the Moroccan channel. We will be relying on Moroccan discretion to keep these negotiations private until we are both satisfied that the way is clear to make an announcement. The Prime Minister respects the King's wishes for as direct dealings as possible on the arrangements and a senior protocol representative is being considered for discussion in Rabat of the details, once both the dates and the composition of the delegation are agreed.

PYM

NNNN

* ~ * Passage deleted and closed, 40 years, under FOI Exemption.

Wayland
29 May 2013

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telegram

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Catchword