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TELEGRAM NUMBER 09 OF 08 JANUARY

INFO PRIORITY ALL MIDDLE EAST POSTS, WASHINGTON

INFO ROUTINE PARIS, UKHIS NEW YORK, MOSCOW

INFO SAVING MADRID, UKDEL NATO

YOUR TELEGRAMS 13 AND 14: ARAB LEAGUE DELEGATION VISIT TO LONDON
SUMMARY

1. I HAD AN HOUR WITH BOUCETTA THIS MORNING. SOME PROGRESS: KING HASSAN IS READY TO RECEIVE MOHAMED MILHEM AS THE PALESTINIAN REPRESENTATIVE ON THE DELEGATION AND WILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR GETTING THE OTHER ARABS TO ACCEPT THIS. BOUCETTA ARGUED STRONGLY FOR ALLOWING MILHEM TO BE RECEIVED BY THE QUEEN ALONG WITH THE REST OF THE DELEGATION. ON DATES, WE ARE VIRTUALLY AGREED ON 7 AND 8 FEBRUARY. I AM TO SEE BOUCETTA AGAIN ON TUESDAY 11 JANUARY AND WOULD BE GRATEFUL FOR YOUR FURTHER VIEWS BEFORE THEN.

DETAIL

2. I FIRST HANDED OVER YOUR MESSAGE. BOUCETTA READ IT AND ASKED ME TO THANK YOU WARMLY FOR IT. I ASKED WHETHER HE HAD NEWS ABOUT THE COMPOSITION OF THE DELEGATION. HE SAID THAT, AS WE KNEW, KING HASSAN DID NOT WANT TO MAKE DIFFICULTIES FOR US. UNLESS WE HAD A BETTER OFFER, THE KING WOULD AGREE TO TAKE MILHEM WITH HIM AS THE PALESTINIAN REPRESENTATIVE. I ASKED IF THE OTHER ARABS AND THE PLO HAD AGREED TO THIS. (THE LOCAL MEDIA HAVE PUBLISHED AN AFP REPORT THAT QUOTE ARAB SOURCES IN LONDON UNQUOTE HAD REJECTED THE IDEA). BOUCETTA WAS EVASIVE. HE SAID SOME HAD AGREED TO THE MILHEM IDEA: OTHERS HAD NOT YET REPLIED. HE HAD HIMSELF SEEN KING HUSSEIN IN VIENNA, WHO HAD BEEN HAPPY TO GO ALONG WITH WHATEVER KING HASSAN DECIDED. KING FAHD HAD TAKEN THE SAME LINE.

3. I SAID THAT WE HAD EXPLAINED TO THE OTHER ARABS, AND THE PLO AS WELL, THAT WE WOULD DEAL EXCLUSIVELY WITH KING HASSAN OVER ALL MATTERS REGARDING THE DELEGATION'S VISIT TO LONDON. THIS HAD NOT OF COURSE MEANT A TOTAL SUSPENSION OF OUR DEALINGS WITH THE OTHER ARABS (BOUCETTA ENTIRELY ACCEPTED THIS) BUT WE LOOKED TO THE MOROCCANS TO ENSURE THAT THE OTHERS CONCERNED IN THE VISIT WERE KEPT FULLY INFORMED OF THE ARRANGEMENTS WHICH WE AND THE MOROCCANS WERE MAKING AND AGREED TO THEN. BOUCETTA ASSURED ME THAT KING HASSAN FULLY RECOGNISED THAT THIS WAS THE MOROCCANS' RESPONSIBILITY.

4. AT THIS POINT, BOUCETTA SAID HE WANTED TO MAKE A PERSONAL APPEAL TO YOU AND MRS THATCHER TO BE PREPARED TO RECEIVE QADDUMI. WITHIN TWO OR THREE MONTHS, THE PLO WOULD SET UP A GOVERNMENT OF THEIR OWN WHICH WOULD OF COURSE BE WIDELY RECOGNISED. HE HINTED THAT IT WOULD NOT BE LONG BEFORE THE AMERICANS THEMSELVES WOULD HAVE DIRECT DEALINGS WITH THE PLO. IF WE WERE TO MAKE A MOVE OURSELVES IN THIS DIRECTION NOW WE WOULD REAP INCALCULABLE BENEFITS WITH THE ARABS. AS THINGS WERE, WE RISKED BEING LEFT
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CONFIDENTIAL

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5. I SAID THAT I WOULD OF COURSE CONVEY THESE VIEWS TO YOU. BUT I DOUBTED VERY MUCH WHETHER WE WOULD MAKE ANY CHANGE IN OUR POSITION UNTIL THERE WERE GOOD REASON TO. OUR POLICY REGARDING MINISTERIAL CONTACTS WITH THE PLO HAD BEEN CONSISTENT THROUGHOUT AND WAS WELL KNOWN TO THE ARABS. I REMINDED BOUCETTA THAT IT WAS KING HASSAN HIMSELF WHO HAD SUGGESTED THAT ONE WAY FORWARD MIGHT BE FOR QADDUMI TO BE INCLUDED IN THE DELEGATION BUT RECEIVED ONLY BY A MINISTER NOT IN THE CABINET. AS I HAD TOLD HIM ON 26 DECEMBER, WE WERE READY TO GO ALONG WITH THIS PROPOSAL. BOUCETTA SAID THAT IT WAS NOT A STARTER NOW; IF QADDUMI CAME, HE WOULD HAVE TO COME AS A FULL MEMBER OF THE DELEGATION.

6. I THEN RAISED THE QUESTION OF THE RECEPTION OF THE DELEGATION BY THE QUEEN. I SAID THAT I WANTED TO AVOID POSSIBLE FUTURE MISUNDERSTANDINGS. THE QUEEN HAD AGREED TO RECEIVE THE WHOLE DELEGATION BEFORE, WHEN IT HAD CONSISTED OF FOREIGN MINISTERS, BUT THERE WOULD BE CONSIDERABLE DIFFICULTIES IN TREATING MILHEM IN THE SAME WAY. IT WOULD BE QUITE WRONG TO INVOLVE THE QUEEN IN MATTERS OF POLITICAL CONTROVERSY. THIS WAS AN ESSENTIAL POINT FOR US, AND WAS ONE WHICH I BELIEVED KING HASSAN HIMSELF WELL UNDERSTOOD. BOUCETTA LOOKED UNHAPPY. HE SAID THIS WOULD GIVE A LOT OF DIFFICULTY TO THE KING. HE ARGUED THAT MILHEM WAS AN ELECTED MAYOR SEMICOLON NOT A MEMBER OF THE PLO SEMICOLON WOULD BE PRESENT AS PART OF THE DELEGATION OF THE ARAB LEAGUE WITH WHOM OF COURSE WE HAD NORMAL DEALINGS SEMICOLON AND HAD EVEN BEEN RECEIVED AT THE WHITE HOUSE. HE URGED US TO RECONSIDER, AND SAID THAT HE WOULD NOT MENTION THIS DIFFICULTY TO THE KING OR INDEED ANYONE ELSE UNTIL HE HAD HEARD FROM ME AGAIN.

7. WE MOVED ONTO DATES. I PRESSED BOUCETTA TO RECONSIDER JANUARY 31/FEBRUARY 1. HE CONTINUED TO INSIST THAT THESE WERE NO GOOD BECAUSE MITTERRAND WOULD BE STAYING IN MOROCCO UNTIL THE EVENING OF 30 JANUARY. I TOLD HIM THAT 7 AND 8 FEBRUARY WERE A POSSIBILITY FOR US. HE SAID THAT THE MOROCCANS COULD ACCEPT THESE DATES STRAIGHT AWAY, AND HE WAS PRETTY CERTAIN THAT THE OTHER MEMBERS OF THE DELEGATION WOULD ALSO AGREE. HE WILL CHECK WITH THEM.

8. I TOLD BOUCETTA OF MOULAY HAFID'S TELEPHONE ENQUIRY (MY TELEGRAM 1, NOT TO ALL) AND SAID I OUGHT NOW TO BE IN CONTACT WITH HIM. I ADDED THAT WE HAD NOT FORGOTTEN KING HASSAN'S SUGGESTION THAT A HIGH LEVEL COURT OFFICIAL SHOULD AT SOME STAGE COME OUT TO DISCUSS DETAILS. BOUCETTA SUGGESTED THAT, FOR THE NEXT STEP, HE AND I SHOULD MEET AGAIN ON TUESDAY 11 JANUARY AT MIDDAY SO THAT I COULD GIVE HIM YOUR VIEWS ABOUT (A) ACCEPTING QADDUMI, (B) HAVING MILHEM RECEIVED BY THE QUEEN. HE WILL THEN REPORT TO THE KING IN MARRAKECH. THEREAFTER, PERHAPS ON THURSDAY 13 JANUARY, I COULD GO DOWN TO MARRAKECH AND DISCUSS DETAILS WITH HIM AND MOULAY HAFID QUOTE WITH THE KING IN THE NEXT ROOM UNQUOTE. I WELCOMED THIS.

CONFIDENTIAL -2-

19.

9. I SAID THAT THERE HAD BEEN TOO MANY MISLEADING REPORTS IN THE PAPERS RECENTLY ABOUT THE DELEGATION'S VISIT. BOUCETTA AT ONCE OFFERED AN EXPLANATION OF HIS QUOTE AL RIYADH UNQUOTE INTERVIEW (JEDDA TELEGRAM NUMBER 10, NOT TO ALL). HE SAID THAT HE HAD BEEN MISREPORTED. HE HAD NOT SPOKEN OF THE PLO, BUT MERELY OF OUR READINESS TO RECEIVE THE WHOLE ARAB LEAGUE DELEGATION INCLUDING A PALESTINIAN REPRESENTATIVE.

10. IN TALKING EARLIER ABOUT HIS VISIT TO SAUDI ARABIA, BOUCETTA SAID THAT KING FAHD HAD MADE A PARTICULAR POINT OF TELLING HIM THAT YOUR VISIT HAD NOT (NOT) BEEN CANCELLED, ONLY POSTPONED. WE HAVE OF COURSE HAD THIS MESSAGE OURSELVES FROM THE SAUDIS, BUT BOUCETTA ESPECIALLY ASKED ME TO CONVEY IT TO YOU.

COMMENT

11. BOUCETTA HAS NOW FIRMLY COMMITTED KING HASSAN TO SELLING THE MILHEM FORMULA TO THE OTHER ARABS. IT WILL NOT BE EASY, AND WE ARE STILL NOT OUT OF THE WOOD - FOR IF KING HASSAN FAILS, HE WILL OF COURSE WANT THE BLAME TO REST WITH US. IT IS IN OUR INTERESTS THEREFORE TO DO WHAT WE CAN TO MAKE THINGS EASIER FOR HIM. I FULLY REALISE WE CANNOT MEET THE MOROCCANS ON THE QADDUMI POINT, AND I DO NOT THINK BOUCETTA SERIOUSLY EXPECTS US TO. I THINK HE ONLY ASKED US SO AS TO BE ABLE TO ARGUE WITH THE OTHER ARABS WHEN TELLING THEM OF KING HASSAN'S DECISION TO TAKE MILHEM, THAT THE MOROCCANS HAD DONE THEIR UTMOST TO GET THE BRITISH TO BUDGE.

12. I APPRECIATE THE AWKWARDNESS OF INCLUDING MILHEM IN THE RECEPTION AT BUCKINGHAM PALACE AND I LEFT BOUCETTA IN NO DOUBT ABOUT OUR VIEWS ON THIS. ALL THE SAME, IF WE WERE ABLE TO AGREE TO THIS REQUEST, IT WOULD I THINK REMOVE MUCH OF THE ACRIMONY WHICH HAS BUILT UP OUTSIDE MOROCCO OVER THIS VISIT. IT WOULD ALSO HELP HASSAN EXPLAIN TO THE PLO WHY HE HAD NOT BEEN ABLE TO TAKE QADDUMI.

13. GRATEFUL FOR INSTRUCTIONS FIRST THING TUESDAY MORNING COVERING THE FOLLOWING POINTS:

- (A) REAFFIRMATION THAT WE CANNOT GO FURTHER THAN WE HAVE ON THE QUESTION OF PLO REPRESENTATION
- (B) ANY FLEXIBILITY I CAN HAVE REGARDING MILHEM AND THE PALACE.

14. FCO PLEASE PASS SAVING MADRID AND UKDEL NATO.

CAMBRIDGE

(REPEATED AS REQUESTED)

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