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DESKBY 131200Z

FM RABAT 130940Z JAN 83

TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 22 OF 13 JANUARY

INFO PRIORITY ALL MIDDLE EAST POSTS, WASHINGTON, UKMIS NEW YORK

YOUR TEL 31: ARAB LEAGUE DELEGATION VISIT TO LONDON
SUMMARY

1. I WAS RECEIVED BY KING HASSAN IN MARRAKESH YESTERDAY AFTERNOON. IT WAS A CORDIAL MEETING. HE GAVE ME HIS SUGGESTIONS FOR THE PROGRAMME IN LONDON. HE MADE A STRONG PERSONAL PLEA TO ASK TO TREAT MILHEM AS A FULL MEMBER OF THE DELEGATION. HE IS THINKING OF STAYING IN BRITAIN PRIVATELY FOR A FEW DAYS AFTER THE DELEGATION VISIT. AFTER OUR MEETING I AGREED WITH BOUCETTA, SUBJECT TO YOUR CONFIRMATION, THE TERMS OF A SHORT FACTUAL ANNOUNCEMENT TO THE PRESS ON FRIDAY 14 JANUARY.

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DETAIL

2. I WENT DOWN TO MARRAKESH EXPECTING TO HAVE A WORKING SESSION WITH BOUCETTA AND MOULAY HAFID. IN THE EVENT, I WAS WHEELED IN STRAIGHT AWAY TO SEE THE KING. BOUCETTA AND GUEDIRA WERE WITH HIM. OUR MEETING LASTED FOR THREE QUARTERS OF AN HOUR, WAS MOST FRIENDLY AND RELAXED, AND AT THE END OF IT THE KING ORDERED UP ONE OF HIS PLANES TO FLY ME BACK TO RABAT.

3. WE DISCUSSED THE PROGRAMME. DETAILS IN MY IFT (NOT REPEATED TO ALL). THE KING THEN WENT ON TO TALK ABOUT THE RECEPTION OF MILHEM. HE SAID HE MUCH HOPED THAT, SINCE MRS THATCHER HERSELF HAD KINDLY AGREED TO RECEIVE MILHEM, THERE WOULD BE NO DIFFICULTY IN THE QUEEN DOING LIKEWISE. HE SAID THAT THIS WAS A PERSONAL AND FRIENDLY APPEAL TO THE PRIME MINISTER. IT CAME FROM THE HEART, AND WAS IN NO WAY INTENDED TO MAKE DIFFICULTIES FOR US. HE WENT ON TO SPEAK MUCH AS BOUCETTA HAD DONE (PARA 4 OF MY TELNO 09). WE HAD BEEN AHEAD OF THE AMERICANS IN STANDING TO ARMS IN THE TWO WORLD WARS. BUT WE NOW RISKED BEING LEFT BEHIND OVER DEVELOPMENTS OVER PALESTINE. HE SAID THAT KISSINGER, WHO HAD BEEN IN MOROCCO RECENTLY AS A MEMBER OF KING HASSAN'S ACADEMY, HAD MET DAJANI (PLO EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE) THREE TIMES, HAD TOLD HIM (HASSAN) THAT HE NOW REGRETTED HAVING PUBLICLY SET RIGID CONDITIONS FOR DEALINGS WITH THE PLO. THE KING EARNESTLY HOPED THAT WE COULD SHOW THE SAME UNDERSTANDING OF HOW THE SITUATION WAS CHANGING.

4. THE KING AGREED THAT BOUCETTA AND I SHOULD COORDINATE ARRANGEMENTS FOR A PRESS ANNOUNCEMENT ABOUT THE VISIT. I HAVE TELEGRAPHED SEPARATELY ABOUT THIS (TELNO 20). I MADE CLEAR TO BOUCETTA THAT YOU RELIED ON HIM, IN ANY ADDITIONAL COMMENTS HE MIGHT MAKE TO THE PRESS, TO REFER TO THE FACT THAT IT WAS THE PALESTINIANS NOT THE PLO WHO WERE BEING REPRESENTED ON THE DELEGATION.

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5. THE KING MADE NO REFERENCE TO ANY AGREEMENT BY THE OTHER ARABS AND THE PLO TO THE MILHEM IDEA, AND I FELT I COULD HARDLY QUESTION HIM ON THIS IN VIEW OF THE VERY POSITIVE ASSURANCES BOUCETTA HAS ALREADY GIVEN US. SINCE RETURNING TO RABAT I HAVE SEEN YOUR TELNO 17 TO JEDDA REPORTING SIR J LEAHY'S MEETING WITH THE SAUDI AMBASSADOR ON 12 JANUARY. I NATURALLY ACCEPT THE NEED FOR CAUTION AND NOT COUNTING CHICKENS. BUT IT SEEMS TO ME THAT WE ARE NOT GOING TO ELICIT EITHER FROM ARAFAT HIMSELF OR INTERMS FROM THE MOROCCANS, THAT THE PLO OR THE OTHER HARD-LINERS (NEXT WORD UNDERLINED) ACCEPT THE MILHEM IDEA. I SEE NO ALTERNATIVE TO TAKING HASSAN AT HIS WORD. HE HAS ACCEPTED RESPONSIBILITY FOR SQUARING THE PLO AND THE OTHER ARABS - JUST AS HE DID, SUCCESSFULLY, FOR THE WASHINGTON VISIT. I HOPE THEREFORE YOU WILL SEE NO PROBLEM IN AGREEING NOW TO THE JOINT PRESS ANNOUNCEMENT.

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