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IPS TO NO 10 DOWNING STREET.

TO PRIORITY F C O

TELEGRAM NUMBER 18 OF 17 JANUARY

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MIPT: ARAB LEAGUE DELEGATION: QATARI VIEWS

1. NORMALLY THE MILDDEST OF MEN, THE HEIR APPARENT LECTURED ME FOR 15 MINUTES ON THE IMPORTANCE OF BRITAIN RESTORING RELATIONS WITH THE ARAB WORLD. HE SAID HE CONSIDERED HIMSELF AMONG BRITAIN'S BEST FRIENDS IN THE ARAB WORLD AND HAD DEMONSTRATED HIS ATTACHMENT THROUGH THE DEFENCE RELATIONSHIP WE HAD BUILT UP IN RECENT YEARS. IN THE EVENT OF TROUBLE HE WOULD TURN FIRST TO BRITAIN FOR HELP. WE SHOULD NOT LISTEN TO THE QADAFIS AND SADDAMS, BUT HE HOPED WE WOULD LISTEN TO HIM.

2. SHAIKH HAMAD STRESSED THE NEED TO RECOGNISE THE CHANGE IN ARAB ATTITUDES SINCE THE INVASION OF LEBANON. HE HIMSELF WAS NO LOVER OF THE PLO, AS I KNEW WELL FROM EARLIER DISCUSSIONS. BUT NOW EVERY ARAB HOUSEHOLD IDENTIFIED WITH THE PALESTINIANS. THIS MADE THE ISSUE AN INTERNAL MATTER FOR COUNTRIES LIKE QATAR. ARAB GOVERNMENTS HAD TO BE SEEN TO BE ACTIVE. OUR EXPLANATIONS FOR NOT RECEIVING THE PLO WERE NEITHER UNDERSTOOD NOR BELIEVED BY THE MAN IN THE STREET. WE WERE SEEN TO BE LINING UP WITH THE AMERICANS AND ISRAELIS AGAINST THE ARABS AND GOING BACK ON OUR COMMITMENTS AT VENICE AND ELSEWHERE TO INVOLVE THE PALESTINIANS IN THE SEARCH FOR A SETTLEMENT.

3. SHAIKH HAMAD SAID HE HAD THE HIGHEST RESPECT FOR THE RESOLVE SHOWN BY THE PRIME MINISTER DURING THE FALKLANDS CRISIS. THAT DETERMINATION WAS RIGHT FOR THE FALKLANDS, BUT THE CURRENT ISSUE WAS QUITE DIFFERENT. WE WERE ON THE WRONG SIDE. SINCE THE DEATH OF NASSER BRITAIN HAD RE-ESTABLISHED ITS ROLE AS AN ALLY OF DECENT ARABS. THOSE ARABS WANTED BRITAIN INVOLVED IN THE SEARCH FOR AN ARAB/ISRAEL SETTLEMENT BUT TO DO SO WE HAD TO STOP THE ROT.

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ADDITIONAL DISTRIBUTION

ARAB/ISRAEL DISPUTE

THIS TELEGRAM  
 WAS NOT  
 ADVANCED

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