

cc Mr. Holmes (FCO)  
Mr. Jackling

MR. COLES

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ARAB LEAGUE DELEGATION, ETC

The Moroccan Ambassador invited me to lunch today. His main object seemed to be to establish himself as an important interlocutor. He was full of flattery about how Britain and Morocco had been directly responsible for the Fez Summit Declaration. The conversation, which consisted mainly of an Ambassadorial monologue (not easy at a tete-a-tete lunch with someone as talkative as myself as his partner) ranged from the Gulf war to the Western Sahara with parentheses about the iniquities of the present French Government. According to the Ambassador, President Mitterrand is trying to overthrow the Moroccan Government for some strange Socialistic reasons of his own.

On the Arab League Delegation, he was fervent in his protestations that there were no problems in bilateral relations between Britain and Morocco. He described the whole episode at length as an enormous and unnecessary mistake. He thought that the PNC meeting would be decisive and that we would have to wait beyond 22/23 February before arranging fresh dates, probably in March, for the Delegation visit.

Taking into account what seemed to me his total unreliability as an informant, he made the interesting remark that the Libyans were putting out powerful feelers to Morocco to change sides over the Western Sahara conflict and generally to come on board with the West. He thought that Qaddafi was becoming very conscious of his isolation and financial short-comings. I showed some scepticism and commented that he could not expect us to exercise much influence in Tripoli.

My only word of warning is that we must be careful not to become the ham in the sandwich of Saudi/Moroccan jealousy. At my two meetings with him, Prince Bandar was scathing about the Moroccans whom he described as prickly and disposed to exaggerate their importance as an influential contact with the United States. The Ambassador was equally scathing about the Saudis whom he described as weak and ridden with fear. By the same token, he claimed that we should rely on Morocco to influence the United States and that Britain and Morocco would make a first class team.

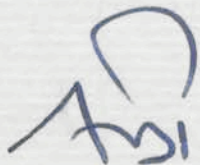
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We will have to continue the delicate act of dealing with King Hassan with one hand while smoothing down King Fahd with the other.



A.D. PARSONS  
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