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From the Private Secretary

14 July 1989

Dear Stephen,

PRIME MINISTER'S MEETING WITH PRESIDENT MUBARAK

The Prime Minister had a brief meeting with President Mubarak in Paris this afternoon. The President was as usual rather boastful, recounting how he had single-handedly convinced Arafat to accept Resolution 242, fearlessly instructed Assad to withdraw his troops from Lebanon and given Qadhafi a dressing-down in front of the Arab Summit in Casablanca. Of substance, there was little. But allowing for all that, it was as usual a very friendly meeting.

Arab/Israel

The Prime Minister gave President Mubarak an account of her meeting with Mr. Shamir. She did not think that he would ever be able to make the concessions necessary for peace. She was horrified by Likud's recent decision to shackle Shamir's plan for elections on the West Bank with unacceptable conditions. But she rather doubted that the Labour Party in Israel had anything much better to offer at present. We were concerned by the possible effects of the Likud decision on the PLO: that was why the Foreign Secretary had seen Bassam Abu Sherif, to urge a moderate and cautious response. The one reasonably bright spot was the determination of the US Administration to keep on trying. The next step would be Eagleburger's visit to the area.

Mubarak said that Shamir was not a strong man: he lacked will. At least Begin had the courage to take difficult decisions. He did not know what to make of the Likud decision: Arens had telephoned the Egyptian Foreign Minister to say that it was not a government matter. But it was hard to believe that. He agreed that the break-up of the Israeli coalition was unlikely to serve any useful purpose. He had seen Arafat on 12 July and urged him to remain flexible. It was very important to support and encourage Arafat: without him, the PLO would break apart. The Prime Minister said that we would continue to support a solution based on territory for peace.

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Lebanon

The Prime Minister said that we were giving full support to the Arab League's efforts to achieve peace. President Mubarak obviously did not give much for the Tripartite Committee's chances of reaching a settlement, certainly not within three months. They would have done better to give themselves six months. Their only sanction was that failure would have to be reported to the Arab Summit, and might lead to further measures (unspecified). He had told President Assad repeatedly that he should withdraw all Syrian troops from Lebanon. The Prime Minister agreed that this was necessary, but it would be very hard to achieve.

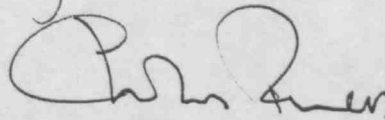
Sudan

President Mubarak spoke warmly of the new Sudanese leader - he was 'wonderful' - and hoped the United Kingdom would give him full support. He wanted to settle the problems with the South and was prepared to meet Garang in Addis Ababa. Sadiq el Mahdi had, in Mubarak's view, been corrupt and slothful.

Libya

We were treated to a long and probably fanciful account of President Mubarak's exchanges with Qadhafi at Casablanca, all of which had ended with Qadhafi's total discomfiture. Mubarak said that he was being very cautious in his dealings with Qadhafi and trying to bring him to see sense.

I am copying this letter to Brian Hawtin (Ministry of Defence) and to Trevor Woolley (Cabinet Office).

Yours sincerely,


(C.D. POWELL) →

J.S. Wall, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.