

MIDDLE EAST: ADVANCE COPIES

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Saudi Arabia

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PS/SIR I GILMOUR
PS/MR HURD
PS/PUS
MR J C MOBERLY

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Read in full

INFO ROUTINE WASHINGTON CAIRO AND TEL AVIV

SAVING TO DAMASCUS AMMAN BEIRUT BAGHDAD AND KUWAIT

SAUDI / WEST RELATIONS

1. I HAD A LONG MEETING WITH CROWN PRINCE FAHD LAST NIGHT. I AM REPORTING SEPARATELY ON THE SPECIFIC MATTERS DISCUSSED.

2. AS SOON AS I HAD RAISED THE FIRST OF THOSE MATTERS FAHD COMMENTED WARMLY ON THE HISTORICAL TIES BETWEEN SAUDI ARABIA AND THE UK AND EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR OUR UNDERSTANDING OF MIDDLE EASTERN AFFAIRS. HE THEN LAUNCHED INTO A LONG MONOLOGUE ON US AND WESTERN WEAKNESS, STARTING WITH VIETNAM AND CONTINUING THROUGH ANGOLA, ETHIOPIA AND ADEN TO AFGHANISTAN. YOU HAVE HEARD IT ALL BEFORE BUT IT WAS DELIVERED WITH OBVIOUS FEELING.

3. HE MOVED ON WITHOUT PAUSE TO PALESTINE. HE SAID HE HIMSELF WAS A FRIEND OF THE WEST AND WAS PROUD TO BE SO. THE FRIENDSHIP WAS BASED NOT ON SENTIMENT BUT ON THE COMMON INTERESTS OF HIS COUNTRY AND THE WEST. SAUDI ARABIA WAS EAGER TO HELP THE WEST BUT ALAS SHE GOT PRECIOUS LITTLE IN RETURN. SHE HAD WORKED HARD AND SUCCESSFULLY AT ISLAMABAD TO RALLY THE MUSLIM WORLD AGAINST THE SOVIET UNION. BUT NOW TODAY HE HAD SEEN THE ANNOUNCEMENT FROM PRESIDENT CARTER THAT HE WAS APPOSED TO AN INDEPENDENT PALESTINIAN STATE. WAS THE THE SAUDIS' AND THE MUSLIMS' REWARD ? WHY DID PRESIDENT CARTER NEED (UNDERLINED) TO SAY SUCH A THING? AND WHY AT THIS PARTICULAR TIME?. THE ARGUMENT THAT A PALESTINIAN STATE WOULD GO COMMUNIST WAS ABSURD: IT WOULD BE SURROUNDED BY ISRAEL, JORDAN AND EGYPT AND IT WOULD HAVE TO RELY FOR FINANCE ON SAUDI ARABIA DND THE GULF STATES.

4. THE ARABS HAD BEEN FOOLISH IN THE PAST BUT THEIR VIEWS HAD CHANGED. NOW THEY WERE ALL READY TO ACCEPT RESOLUTION 242 AND THE EXISTENCE OF ISRAEL. THE ONLY PEOPLE NOT (UNDERLINED) WILLING TO ACCEPT 242 WERE THE ISRAELIS.

5. THE WEST SHOULD REALISE THIS: THAT THE ARABS HAD TO HAVE A SETTLEMENT OF THE PALESTINE QUESTION. WITHOUT IT THEY WOULD FALL INTO DESPAIR, AND IF THEY DESPAIRED THEY WOULD TURN TO THE RUSSIANS. THEY WERE UNDER NO ILLUSIONS THAT THE RUSSIANS LOVED THEM. THE RUSSIANS WERE AFTER TWO THINGS: AN IMPROVEMENT IN THEIR STRATEGIC STANCE VIS-A-VIS THE WEST, AND THE PHYSICAL RESOURCES OF THE MIDDLE EAST. BUT IF THE WEST WOULD NOT HELP, THE ARABS WOULD HAVE TO FIND SOMEONE WHO WOULD. IN THAT CASE THERE WOULD BE IMMENSE CHANGES IN THE AREA, ALL OF THEM DAMAGING TO THE WEST. ANY LIKELY ALTERATIONS TO PRESENT CONDITIONS IN THE MIDDLE EAST WOULD BE, FROM THE WESTERN POINT OF VIEW, FOR THE WORSE.

6. THE SAUDIS HAD OPPOSED SADAT'S INITIATIVE FROM THE START, NOT BECAUSE THEY WERE AGAINST SADAT - ON THE CONTRARY THEY WISHED HIM WELL AND HOPED HE WOULD CONTINUE TO RULE EGYPT. BUT THEY HAD KNOWN HIS APPROACH WOULD ACHIEVE NOTHING AND THEY HAD BEEN PROVED RIGHT. THE MOSLEM WORLD COULD NEVER ACQUIESCE IN THE SURRENDER OF JERUSALEM.

7. ALL THIS AT GREAT LENGTH, ABOUT 40 MINUTES NON-STOP. HE WAS MUCH MORE FLUENT THAN WHEN HE SPOKE TO YOU. THERE WAS NO NOTE OF THREAT; ONLY SADNESS AND BEWILDERMENT. THE WORD

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7. ALL THIS AT GREAT LENGTH, ABOUT 40 MINUTES NON-STOP. HE WAS MUCH MORE FLUENT THAN WHEN HE SPOKE TO YOU. THERE WAS NO NOTE OF THREAT, ONLY SADNESS AND BEWILDERMENT. THE WORD "DESPAIR" WAS USED FOUR OR FIVE TIMES. HOW COULD IT BE THAT THE AMERICANS WENT ON YEAR AFTER YEAR DISREGARDING THEIR FRIENDS? IF THEY COULD NOT CHANGE, THEN EUROPE SHOULD DO SOMETHING.

8. I SAID THAT ONE OF THE MAIN IMPRESSIONS YOU HAD CARRIED AWAY FROM YOUR RECENT TOUR WAS OF THE IMPEDIMENT THAT THE ARAB/ISRAEL DISPUTE CONSTITUTED TO ARAB/ WESTERN RELATION AND OF THE CONSEQUENT NEED TO DO SOMETHING TO ACHIEVE PROGRESS. FOR THAT REASON YOU WERE NOW CONSIDERING WITH YOU EUROPEAN COLLEAGUES WHAT ACTION COULD BE TAKEN.

9. FCO PLEASE PASS TO SAVING ADDRESSEES.

CRAIG

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