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TELEGRAM

1974-1-21, Faisal, Arafat, Keefing

R 211816Z JAN 74 ZFF
FM AMEMBASSY JIDDA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5963
BT

~~SECRET~~ JIDDA 0334

CONTROL: 4 7 6 8QD

RECD: 21 JAN '74, 319PM

NODIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ENRG, PFOR, SA

SUBJ: SAUDI KING PRAISES AMBASSADOR TO PALESTINIAN LEADER

1. OMAR SAQQAF, SAUDI MINISTER OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFIARS, TOLD ME THIS EVENING (1600 GMT, JAN 21) THAT YASIR ARAFAT, HEAD OF THE PALESTINE LIBERATION ORGANI-

ZATION, WAS IN JIDDA AND HAD A LONG MEETING WITH THE KING THIS AFTERNOON.

2. ARAFAT ATTACKED THE AMERICANS COLLECTIVELY AND INDIVIDUALLY. SAQQAF SAID THE KING DEFENDED ME AT LENGTH AND WITH CONSIDERABLE VIGOR. THE KING TOLD ARAFAT THAT I WAS HONEST AND STRAGHTFORWARD; THAT THEY TRUSTED ME; THAT I WAS WORKING FOR THE INTERESTS OF MY COUNTRY BUT I WAS NOT WORKING AGAINST THE ARABS; THEY CONSIDERED ME A FRIEND.

3. SAQQAF SAID HE HAD NEVER HEARD THE KING DESCRIBE ANYONE WITH SUCH WARMTH.

4. I TOLD SAQQAF I WAS PLEASED THAT THE KING SHOULD THINK HIGHLY OF ME, BUT I WOULD HAVE PREFERRED HIM TO HAVE RESTRAINED HIS PRAISE IN THIS PARTICULAR CONVERSATION. WE KNEW THERE WERE ARAB TERRORIST GROUPS WHO WANTED TO UPSET THE PEACE NEGOTIATIONS, WE KNEW THEY WERE OUT TO GET YOU (AS WERE PERHAPS ISRAELI EXTREMISTS). WE KNEW THEY WANTED TO ELIMINATE ANYONE WHO SEEMED TO BE EFFECTIVE IN GETTING ARABS TO AGREE TO ANY SETTLEMENT WITH ISRAEL. THERE WERE EVEN TERRORISTS WHO WERE INTENT ON KILLING HIS MAJESTY. I COMMENTED THAT YOU HAD YOUR SECRET SERVICE AND THE KING HAD HIS NATIONAL GUARD AND I WAS GREATFUL FOR THE POLICEMAN WHO (SOMETIMES) FOLLOWS MY CAR, BUT BEING SINGLED OUT FOR FAVORABLE COMMENT BY A FEUDAL MONARCH TO

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E.O. 12958, as amended, Sect 3.5

NLN 01-29/125 by 24JULY 2006
By NARA, Date 02 AUG 2007
[2 pages]

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TELEGRAM

-2- JIDDA 0334, 21 JAN'74

A RADICAL REVOLUTIONARY WAS AN HONOR I WOULD HAVE GLADLY FOREGONE.

5. SAQQAF SAID HE THOUGHT THIS WAS THE PURPOSE OF THE KING'S REMARKS; THE KING WAS WARNING ARAFAT THAT NOTHING SHOULD HAPPEN TO ME. IF IT DID, SAUDI ARABIA WOULD CUT OFF THEIR SUBSIDIES.
6. I TOLD HIM I HOPED ARAFAT AND ALL OF HIS VARIED FACTIONS GOT THE MESSAGE AND ACCEPTED ITS VALIDITY; THAT NONE WOULD, BECAUSE OF THIS PRAISE, CONSIDER ME A MORE ATTRACTIVE TARGET. BUT IT SEEMED TO ME THAT EVEN THE KING'S INTENTIONS CUT OFF AID TO THE PLO, IF THIS BECAME KNOWN, WOULD EVEN MAKE ME AN ATTRACTIVE TARGET FOR SHIN BET RPT SHIN BET.
7. I ASKED SAQQAF IS THE SAUDI GOVERNMENT WOULD MAKE A SUPPLEMENTARY CONTRIBUTION TO THE STATE DEPARTMENT'S RATHER PALTRY PENSION FOR MY WIDOW AND ORPHANS IF THEIR CALCULATIONS PROVED FAULTY. HE SAID NOTHING COULD HAPPEN TO ME.
8. COMMENT: SEVERAL SAUDIS, INCLUDING AN AIDE TO PRINCE FAHD, HAVE RECENTLY ASKED ME AND OTHER EMBASSY OFFICERS IF WE THOUGHT I HAD ADEQUATE PROTECTION. WE DOUBT THAT THEY HAVE HEARD ANYTHING SPECIFIC; IF THEY HAD THEY WOULD HAVE TOLD US; THEY PROBABLY JUST HAVE SOME OF THE WORRIES WE HAVE. I AM SURE THE KING THOUGHT HE WAS BEING HELPFUL AND THAT ONCE THE PLO IS WARNED, I AM PROTECTED. ALL THIS GIVES A RATHER REVEALING INSIGHT INTO THE KING'S AND POSSIBLY THE SAUDI GOVERNMENT'S VIEWS ON THE WHOLE PALESTINIAN ORGANIZATION. THEY SEEM TO THINK THAT ARAFAT IS A STRONG LEADER IN CONTROL OF ALL HIS TROOPS. ONCE AN ORDER IS GIVEN IT WILL BE OBEYED DOWN THE LINE; AND ARAFAT WILL NEVER DISCUSS SUCH MATTERS WITH HIS MORE VIOLENT COLLEAGUES. EVEN SAQQAF THOUGHT I WOULD BE PLEASED BY HIS ACCOUNT; AND HE SEEMED PUZZLED AT MY REACTION. I MUST SAY I HOPE THEIR ANALYSIS IS SOUNDER THAN MINE.
9. I ASKED OUR SECURITY PEOPLE IN WASHINGTON BEFORE I CAME OUT FOR AN ARMORED CAR, AND WAS TOLD IT WAS TOO EXPENSIVE. I AM HEREBY REPEATING MY REQUEST.

BT
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