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Authority E.O. 12958

By (M) NARA Date 10/12/01



Department of State

TELEGRAM

1973-12-9, Faisal, ~~King~~ Amb., Meeting

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FM AMEMBASSY JIDDA 09 DEC 73 ZL7 13
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 5632
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~~SECRET~~ SECTION 2 OF 4 JIDDA 5416

NODIS CHEROKEE

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3. KING REPLIED HE WAS HAPPY TO RECEIVE PRESIDENT'S WORDS OF FRIENDSHIP AND ENCOURAGEMENT; IT WAS IMPORTANT THAT FRIENDS OF SAUDI ARABIA IN THE UNITED STATES--SUCH AS THE PRESIDENT AND OTHERS--ACT WISELY TO SAFEGUARD AMERICA'S INTERESTS AGAINST THE DESIGNS OF THE ZIONISTS AND THE COMMUNISTS. IN THIS SENSE, LETTER APPEARED A STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION. HE HOPED THAT SAUDI ARABIA'S FRIENDS IN AMERICA WOULD KEEP UP THE GOOD WORK, AND BY APPLYING PRESSURE ON ISHAEL RESOLVE ANY PENDING MATTERS THAT COULD COMPLICATE U.S.-SAUDI RELATIONS. AS REGARDS OIL, HOWEVER, ARAB POSITION WAS CLEAR AND HAD BEEN REAFFIRMED PUBLICLY AND OFTEN: OIL SHIPMENTS TO U.S. MUND EUROPE COULD BEGIN AGAIN AS SOON AS ISHAEL HAD WITHDRAWN FROM THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES, IMPLEMENTED THE RELEVANT SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTIONS, AND RESTORED TO PALESTINIAN PEOPLES THEIR NATURAL RIGHTS." IN MEANTIME, SAG'S POSITION ON OIL QUESTION SPRANG FROM AND WAS INVOLVED IN A GENERAL ARAB CONSENSUS.

4. AMBASSADOR REPLIED THAT A SYMPATHETIC AND CONSTRUCTIVE ATTITUDE BY SAG TOWARD OIL QUESTION STRONGLY IN INTERESTS OF BOTH SIDES; THIS PARTICULARLY TRUE SINCE TO AN UNPRECEDENTED DEGREE U.S. AND SAUDI POLICY TOWARD MIDDLE EAST WAS IN PRACTICAL ACCORD. AMBASSADOR NOTED WE HAD ALWAYS OPPOSED SEIZURE OF ACQUISITION OF TERRITORY BY FORCE. WE HAD ALSO SUPPORTED RESOLUTION 242 WHICH CALLED FOR ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL FROM OCCUPIED TERRITORIES. NOW, HOWEVER, OUR POSITION COULD BE DISTINGUISHED FROM THAT OF PAST BY OUR ACUTE AWARENESS OF NEED TO BRING ABOUT A JUST AND PERMANENT SOLUTION SOON. THIS AWARENESS EVIDENT IN PRESIDENT NIXON'S LETTER TO HM, AND CONVEYED TO HM ALSO BY SECRETARY KISSINGER ON HIS FIRST VISIT TO RINADH.

5. AMBASSADOR ADDED, HOWEVER, THAT AS A PRACTICAL POLITICAL MATTER, ACHIEVEMENT OF A MIDDLE EAST SETTLE-

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MENT WOULD CONFRONT PRESIDENT AND SECRETARY WITH SOME COMPLEX AND DIFFICULT PROBLEMS. ACCORDINGLY, IF ARABS WERE ABLE TO SUSPEND OIL BOYCOTT WHEN PEACE CONFERENCE BEGAN, OUR HAND WOULD BE STRENGTHENED BY SUCH A DISPLAY OF ARAB STATESMANSHIP. OTHERWISE, IT WAS FACT OF POLITICAL REALITY THAT PRESIDENT MIGHT FIND IT EXTREMELY DIFFICULT TO EXPLAIN TO U.S. CONGRESS AND PUBLIC WHY USG SHOULD BE EXERTING ITS INFLUENCE ON BEHALF OF ARABS JUST WHEN ARAB ECONOMIC PRESSURE WAS BEGINNING TO CAUSE SERIOUS ECONOMIC DISLOCATIONS AND HARDSHIPS ON EAST COAST OF UNITED STATES. (IN PASSING AMRASSADOK MENTIONED THAT ARAB CAUSE HAD NEVER BEEN PERSUASIVELY ARGUED IN U.S. BY ARABS THEMSELVES; KING REPLIED THAT SAG WAS PLANNING TO PUBLISH POSITION STATEMENT IN SOME 20 U.S. NEWSPAPERS AND MAGAZINES, AND HOPED THIS COULD BE DONE SHORTLY. FURTHER PR STEPS, HE SUGGESTED, WERE TO FOLLOW.)

6. KING REPLIED THAT HE HAD IN PAST RECEIVED ASSURANCES THAT U.S. WOULD WORK FOR A PEACE SETTLEMENT, BUT THAT NO ACTION HAD BEEN TAKEN. ONLY A FEW WEEKS AGO, FOR INSTANCE, GOI HAD AGREED TO WITHDRAW TO OCTOBER 20 LINES, AND USG'S INABILITY TO PERSUADE GOI EVEN TO TAKE THIS MINIMAL STEP, WAS SYMPTOMATIC OF MUCH IN USG-GOI RELATIONSHIP. IF SAF WERE TO MOVE POSITIVELY ON OIL, IT WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY COME UNDER SEVERE CRITICISM; WHAT CONFIDENCE COULD SAF HAVE THAT BY ITS ACTIONS AS WOULD SOON PROVE THAT SAG HAD BEEN RIGHT?

7. AMBASSADOR REPLIED THAT MANNER IN WHICH OIL BOYCOTT WAS LIFTED ALL IMPORTANT. IT SHOULD BE MADE CLEAR THAT SUCH ACTION BEING TAKEN BY E GOVERNMENT ACTING FROM A POSITION OF STRENGTH AND CONFIDENCE IN ITS ABILITY CONTINUE TO EXERCISE THAT STRENGTH IN A WAY THAT WOULD FORWARD ARAB INTERESTS. SAG COULD AFFIRM THAT BOYCOTT BEING LIFTED AFTER ARAB STATES HAD SURPRISED WORLD BY THEIR EFFECTIVE MILITARY AND POLITICAL CONDUCT OF OCTOBER WAR, AND THEIR ABILITY --UNDER KING'S DIRECTION-- TO APPLY PRESSURE VIA OIL IN A SOPHISTICATED MANNER CONCERNED MANNER. SAG'S DIPLOMACY HAD UNDOUBTEDLY LED USG ALSO TO AN INCREASED AWARENESS OF IMPORTANCE OF U.S.--SAUDI TIES.

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8. IT APPEARED TO AMBASSADOR THEREFORE SAG IN POSITION TO LEAD ARAB OIL PRODUCERS INTO LIFTING OF OIL BOYCOTT WHEN CONFERENCE BEGAN, ESPECIALLY IF OTHER ARAB GOVERNMENTS UNDERSTOOD (A) SAG HAD RECEIVED SOLEMN ASSURANCES FROM PRESIDENT NIXON USG WOULD DO ALL IN ITS POWER TO EXPEDITE A JUST AND EARLY SETTLEMENT, (B) BOYCOTT LIFTED TO CLEAR NEGOTIATING DECKS OF ANY EXORCISMS OR COMPLI-CATING ISSUE, BUT (C) IF PROGRESS NOT FORTHCOMING BOYCOTT COULD BE REIMPOSED AGAIN. TO AMBASSADOR IT APPEARED SUCH MEASURES WOULD GO FAR IN STRENGTHENING HAND OF PRESIDENT; SUCH A DISPLAY OF STATESMANSHIP MOREOVER WOULD PLACE ARAB DIPLOMATIC EFFORTS AT PEACE CONFERENCE IN A MOST ADVANTAGEOUS CONTEXT.

9. AS A RELATED SIDE ISSUE AMBASSADOR ALSO NOTED THAT OIL BOYCOTT POSED REQUIREMENTS THAT SIXTH AND SEVENTH FLEETS RECEIVE THEIR FUEL SUPPLIES FROM CONTINENTAL U.S. THIS WAS NOT A CRIPPLING MEASURE, BUT IT TENDED TO WEAKEN OUR DEFENSES VIS-A-VIS COMMUNIST WORLD. AMBASSADOR DID NOT SEE HOW BOYCOTT IN THIS RESPECT HELPED ARAB CAUSE.

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OR NECESSARY. HE NOTED, HOWEVER, THAT IN HIS SPEECHES AND WRITTEN STATEMENTS HE HAD URGED U.S. PUBLIC TO PAY HEED TO INCREASING IMPORTANCE OF MIDDLE EASTERN OIL AS FACTOR IN OUR RELATIONS WITH THE AREA; AT TIME, SOME HAD THOUGHT HIS ADMONITIONS WERE EXAGGERATED, BUT AMBASSADOR BELIEVED THAT SUBSEQUENT EVENTS TENDED TO CONFIRM HIS JUDGMENT. IN SAME MANNER, SPEAKING AS A FRIEND OF ARABS, AND A STUDENT OF THEIR AFFAIRS, HE SINCERELY BELIEVED THAT RAISING OIL BOYCOTT WAS A MOST IMPORTANT STEP IN BRINGING ABOUT CIRCUMSTANCES IN WHICH USG COULD MOVE EFFECTIVELY TO IMPLEMENT COMMITMENT TO PEACE EXPRESSED IN PRESIDENT'S LETTER.

12. KING CLOSED, ALMOST AS AN ASIDE BY ASKING IF U.S. COULD NOT SIMPLY CALL PUBLICLY NOR ISRAEL TO GIVE UP THE OCCUPIED ARAB LANDS AND SAY THAT IT SUPPORTED JUSTICE FOR THE PALESTINIANS.

PART B. AMBASSADOR'S SPEAKING WITH PRINCE FAHD, MINISTER OF INTERIOR.

13. FOLLOWING AUDIENCE WITH KING, AMBASSADOR CALLED ON PRINCE FAHD TO REVIEW WITH HIM SUBSTANCE OF PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE AND AUDIENCE WITH KING. AMBASSADOR STRESSED THAT LIFTING OF OIL BOYCOTT AT TIME OF CONFERENCE WOULD FREE PRESIDENT'S HANDS TO ACT CONSTRUCTIVELY IN US AND ARAB INTERESTS. IF ARAB PRESSURE REMAINED OVERT AND UNRELENTING, HOWEVER, AMBASSADOR FEARED THAT ENSUING ECONOMIC DISTRESS ON EAST COAST AND MOUNTING ANTI-ARAB FEELINGS AMONG US PUBLIC, WOULD GREATLY COMPLICATE ADMINISTRATION'S TASK.

14. PRINCE FAHD EXPRESSED HIS COMPLETE AGREEMENT WITH AMBASSADOR'S VIEWS. HE ASSURED AMBASSADOR THAT HE AND OTHERS OF LIKE MIND WERE DOING THEIR UTMOST TO SEE THAT OIL BOYCOTT WAS LIFTED. TO THIS END, SAF HAD BEEN CONSULTING WITH EGYPT, SYRIA AND KUWAIT ABOUT POSSIBILITIES OF RESUMING OIL PRODUCTION AT FORMER LEVELS WHEN PEACE TALKS BEGAN. PRINCE BELIEVED PRESIDENT SADAT FAVORED SUCH A STEP BUT WOULD NOT GIVE IT HIS PUBLIC SUPPORT UNLESS SUCH ACTION HAD GENERAL ARAB APPROVAL. FOR THIS REASON MINISTER FOR PLANNING (AND ACTION PETROLEUM MINISTER) HISHAM NAZER HAD BEEN SENT TO OAPEC CONFERENCE

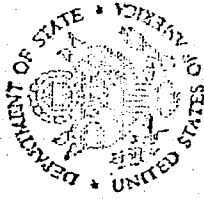
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IN KUWAIT WITH INSTRUCTIONS TO WORK FOR SUCH AN OUTCOME. SAUDIS UNCONCERNED WITH POSITION OF IRAQ, A PERPETUAL OUICAST, OR OF LIBYA; THEY BELIEVED MOREOVER THAT LOWER GULF STATES WOULD GO ALOING WITH ANYTHING SAG STRONGLY FAVORED NAZER ACCORDINGLY WOULD CONSULT CLOSELY WITH KUWAITIS AND OTHERS AND WORK FOR RESOLUTIONS THAT WOULD BIND ALL OAPEC PRODUCERS TO RESUME PRODUCTION WHEN PEACE CONFERENCE BEGAN. RESUMPTION COULD OF COURSE BE LINKED WITH THREAT TO REIMPOSE BOYCOTT IF MOVEMENT TOWARD PEACE WERE NOT SOON FORTHCOMING. SUCH RESOLUTIONS WOULD OVERAKE ACTIONS AGREED UPON EARLIER AT VIEENA CONFERENCE WHICH PRINCE DESCRIBED AS BEING "RECOMMENDATIONS."

19. PRINCE DESCRIBED KING'S DECISION TO IMPOSE OIL BOYCOTT AS AMONG MOST PAINFUL IN HIS POLITICAL LIFE. HE WAS SURE KING WISHED TO END BOYCOTT ASAP, BUT SAUDI ARABIA COULD NOT ACT ALONE AS IT WOULD BE VULNERABLE NOT ONLY TO CRITICISM FROM ABROAD BUT PHYSICAL ATTACK AT HOME. THERE WERE THOUSANDS OF IRAQIS, SYRIANS, PALESTINIANS RESIDENTS OF KINGDOM WHO MIGHT SEEK TO SABOTAGE OIL WORKS AND PIPELINES. PRINCE PROMISED TO KEEP IN TOUCH WITH AMBASSADOR ABOUT DEVELOPMENTS IN KUWAIT AND SAID HE WAS LOOKING FORWARD TO MEETING ONCE AGAIN WITH SECRETARY. KISSINGER.

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