

CONFIDENTIAL

FROM CAIRO 221115Z JAN 85

TO PRIORITY FCO

TELNO 36 OF 22 JANUARY

INFO ROUTINE AMMAN, BAGHDAD, JEDDA, DAMASCUS, KUWAIT, TEL AVIV,
WASHINGTON, MOSCOW, UKMIS NEW YORK, ROME, ATHENS, PARIS

INFO SAVING OTHER MIDDLE EAST POSTS.

CLOSED UNDER THE
FREEDOM OF INFORMATION
ACT 2000

MEETING WITH PRESIDENT MUBARAK

SUMMARY

1. MUBARAK MADE A FAREWELL CALL YESTERDAY ON PRESIDENT MUBARAK.
IN A 40 MINUTE CONVERSATION WE COVERED ARAB/ISRAEL, INTER-ARAB
RELATIONS, BILATERAL RELATIONS AND EGYPTIAN INTERNAL MATTERS.
MUBARAK HAD VIRTUALLY NOTHING NEW TO SAY ON ANY OF THESE TOPICS,
BUT HE REPORT THE MAIN POINTS BELOW AS A LAST ROUND UP.

ARAB/ISRAEL

2. MUBARAK SAID THAT WHILE HE FULLY SUPPORTED KING HUSSEIN'S
CURRENT EFFORTS (AND HAD JUST SENT THE EGYPTIAN FOREIGN MINISTER
TO AMMAN WITH A FURTHER PERSONAL MESSAGE), PRIVATELY HE HAD
LITTLE HOPE THAT THEY WOULD GET ANYWHERE. IT WAS IMPORTANT TO
TRY TO DEVELOP A MODERATE ARAB NEGOTIATING POSITION INCLUDING THE
PLO, AND ON HIS VISIT TO WASHINGTON IN MARCH HE WOULD ONCE AGAIN
PRESS PRESIDENT REAGAN ON THE NEED FOR A US DIALOGUE WITH THE
PLO. BUT BASICALLY HE DID NOT BELIEVE THE OTHER ARABS WERE
INTERESTED IN PURSUING A SETTLEMENT NOR THAT REAGAN WAS PREPARED
TO PUT SUFFICIENT PRESSURE ON ISRAEL. HE HAS NO OBJECTION TO THE
AMERICANS DISCUSSING THE MIDDLE EAST WITH THE RUSSIANS, BUT IT
COULD BE DANGEROUS TO GIVE THE LATTER AN OPENING.

INTER-ARAB RELATIONS

3. MUBARAK FULMINATED IN FAMILIAR VEIN AGAINST THE
SYRIANS, WHO BY THEIR WRECKING TACTICS LIKE THE ASSASSINATION
OF QAWASMEH WERE DOING THE ISRAELI'S WORK FOR THEM. HE REFERRED
SCORNFULLY TO AN ALLEGED STATEMENT BY ASSAD THAT THE PLO COULD
NO LONGER BE CONSIDERED THE LEGITIMATE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
PALESTINIANS, AND RECALLED THE FURIOUS ARAB REACTION WHEN SADAT
HAD SPOKEN OF THE PALESTINIANS RATHER THAN THE PLO.

HE TRIED ON HIM
THE STORY HE HAD GOT FROM YUSUF SHIRAWI IN BAHRAIN LAST WEEK
THAT AT MEETINGS OF THE GCC FAHD TENDS TO JUSTIFY SAUDI FENCE
-SITTING ON THE GROUNDS THAT AFTER THE GULF WAR HAS
ENDED THE GCC COUNTRIES WILL NEED SYRIA TO COUNTER THE RENEWED
THREAT FROM IRAQ. MUBARAK DISMISSED THIS AS RATIONALISATION.
SYRIA WAS NO MATCH FOR IRAQ, AND INDEED HE WONDERED HOW MUCH
LONGER ASAD COULD MAINTAIN HIMSELF IN POWER.

CONFIDENTIAL (1)

EGYPT

4. MUBARAK SAID HE HAD NOTHING AGAINST PERES WHO WAS A GOOD MAN, AND WOULD DO WHAT HE COULD TO SUPPORT HIM AS THE AMERICANS KEPT ASKING. BUT HE COULD NOT AFFORD TO AGREE TO A MEETING WITH PERES WITHOUT FIRMER ASSURANCES OF A POSITIVE OUTCOME THAN AT PRESENT EXISTED. EGYPTIAN PUBLIC OPINION WOULD NOT STAND FOR IT. HE RECAPITULATED EGYPT'S THREE REQUIREMENTS AND DILATED ON ISRAEL'S UNREASONABLENESS OVER TABA. IT WAS UNWORTHY OF THEM TO HAVE DAMAGED THE WHOLE SPIRIT OF THE PEACE TREATY BY FORCING SUCH A MINOR ISSUE.

QADDHAFI.

5. THE USUAL DIATRIBE. BUT IT WAS OF SOME INTEREST THAT MUBARAK CONFIRMED THAT FOLLOWING THE THREATENED HIJACK OF AN EGYPTIAN AIRCRAFT IN RETALIATION FOR THE BAKKUSH AFFAIR HE HAD ORDERED A MILITARY ALERT AND SENT SEVERAL AIR FORCE SQUADRONS UP TO THE LIBYAN FRONTIER. HE ALSO CLAIMED TO HAVE TELEPHONED A WARNING TO TRIPOLI. HE HAD NO DESIRE FOR A MILITARY CONFRONTATION WITH QADDHAFI, BUT IF HE WERE FORCED INTO ONE HE WOULD ACCEPT THE CHALLENGE. THE EGYPTIAN ARMY WOULD NOT JUST STOP AT TOBRUK BUT WOULD GO ON AND FINISH THE JOB. (I HAVE NEVER HEARD MUBARAK USE SUCH MONTGOMERY-LIKE LANGUAGE BEFORE: THOUGH HARD TO TAKE SERIOUSLY IT SUGGESTS THAT THERE ARE AT LEAST CONTINGENCY PLANS.) HE MENTIONED NIMEHRHI BUT MUBARAK DID NOT RISE.

BILATERAL

6. HE NOTED THAT AFTER DISAPPOINTING TRADE FIGURES IN THE EARLY 1980S BUSINESS HAD PICKED UP IN 1984 AND SHOULD GROW AS THE MASSIVE UK AIDED CAIRO WASTEWATER PROJECT GOT UNDER WAY. HE ALSO HOPED FOR BETTER THINGS IN THE DEFENCE FIELD, AND REGRETTED THAT DESPITE THE ROYAL NAVY'S SUCCESS IN MINIEHUNTING IN THE RED SEA THE EGYPTIANS WERE ABOUT TO PROCURE THEIR OWN VESSELS FROM ELSEWHERE. MUBARAK COMMENTED THAT THE DECISION HAD NOT YET BEEN TAKEN AND THAT FINANCE REMAINED A PROBLEM (WE SHALL CHECK WHETHER THIS IMPLIES A RAY OF HOPE).

7. FINALLY MUBARAK SAID HE WAS LOOKING FORWARD TO HIS VISIT TO LONDON IN MID-MARCH, AND ASKED ME TO CONVEY HIS GREETINGS TO THE PRIME MINISTER. HE HOPED THAT SHE WOULD MANAGE TO VISIT EGYPT IN 1985.

FCO PLEASE PASS TO SAVING ADDRESSEES.

[REPEATED SAVING AS REQUESTED]

WEIR

LIMITED
NENAD
MED
NAD
UND
DEF D
TRED

SCU
SOV D
PUSD
PS
PS/MR LUCE

PS/PUS
MR FERGUSSON
MR EGERTON.
(2)

ADDITIONAL DISTRIBUTION
ARAS/ISRAEL
COPIES TO:
PS/NO 10 D. ST.
ASSESS. STAFF CABINET
OFFICE

CONFIDENTIAL