

Ce Master

RECORD OF A MEETING BETWEEN THE PRIME MINISTER AND KING FAHD  
AT THE ROYAL GUEST PALACE NASSRIA IN RIYADH ON 14 APRIL

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Present

Prime Minister  
Sir A. Acland  
HM Ambassador  
Mr. F.E.R. Butler  
Mr. C.D. Powell

King Fahd  
Crown Prince Abdullah  
Prince Sultan  
Prince Saud  
Sheikh Yamani  
Minister of Education  
Saudi Ambassador to London

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King Fahd said that the Prime Minister's acceptance of his invitation to make a brief stop-over in Saudi Arabia was very much appreciated. She was no stranger to the problems of the region.

Arab/Israel

King Fahd said that Saudi Arabia much appreciated the Prime Minister's efforts to help resolve problems of the region. During his recent visit to Washington and meeting with President Reagan he had felt that the United States was also trying to find solutions. On the other hand, statements from Israel were not encouraging. They continued their refusal to negotiate with any Palestinian personality who was a member of, or sympathiser with, the PLO. But the fact was that the PLO must take part in negotiations. The Israelis' aim seemed to be to force the Palestinians to recognise Israel before negotiations could take place. The negotiations should be approached without pre-conditions.

King Fahd continued that the United States' stance was of great importance. Saudi Arabia wanted the United States to be just and impartial. If this condition could be met, matters could be resolved easily. Any reasonable person

/nowadays

nowadays recognised Israel as a Middle Eastern country and as an accepted part of the region. The question was how Israel would co-exist with its neighbours. If Israel continued to base relations on force, there could not be peace. But if Israel gave evidence of readiness to withdraw from the occupied territories, leaving other issues to negotiations, the Arabs would be ready to respond. Unfortunately, Israel's actions gave little grounds for hope and without progress, the Arabs would become desperate. At present there were reasonable leaders in the Middle East. But there were also those who thought that peaceful solutions could not be achieved. Saudi Arabia supported peaceful solutions. But if the conviction were to grow that such solutions were unattainable, thoughts would turn to force. In these circumstances, Saudi Arabia would not be able to isolate itself from an Arab consensus. War would not only cause difficulties for Britain, Europe, the United States and Japan, but would also open the way for the Soviet Union to extend its influence on the Middle East.

The Prime Minister recalled that it had been clear during her own visit to Washington that King Fahd's earlier visit had made a considerable impact upon President Reagan. She was convinced that President Reagan genuinely wanted to take things forward in the Middle East and knew that the time for doing so was comparatively short. Since her visit she had kept in close touch with the United States Administration and was aware that Mr. Murphy, during his current visit to the area, would have some interesting proposals to make. The American aim was to secure direct negotiations between Jordan and the Palestinians on the one hand and Israel on the other. This could be achieved by building on the progress made by King Hussein with the PLO. She thought that Mr. Murphy would not press King Hussein and Arafat to define their positions further unless this undermined his authority and threatened the consensus already achieved. Both had moved considerably. The immediate purpose of Mr. Murphy's mission

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would be to canvass names of Palestinians who were not prominent members of the PLO but who would be acceptable to Palestinian representatives on a joint Jordanian/Palestinian delegation. This would not be an easy task. No prominent Palestinian would agree to take part without the blessing of the PLO. None the less, if progress could be made, her visit information was that Mr. Murphy might be ready to make a further visit to the area later and meet with a joint Jordanian/Palestinian team. She also thought that the United States Administration would put pressure on the Israelis to be more cooperative.

The Prime Minister continued that she recognised that even if agreement could be reached to hold negotiations, it would not be easy to fix an agenda. But she was convinced that this was the right psychological moment for a practical initiative. Three factors coincided: Israel's withdrawal from Lebanon which might make her readier to negotiate on the longer-term fundamental issue; the need to take advantage of Mr. Peres' term of office as Prime Minister; and US determination to follow up President Reagan's 1982 initiative by practical steps to draw the Palestinians into negotiations.

The Prime Minister noted that King Fahd had referred to the risk of conflict. If there were to be a war in the Middle East the bloodshed and turmoil would be appalling. We therefore had to do everything possible to avoid it. She was sure that the King would guide the Arab world away from conflict. She hoped also that he would keep in close and regular touch with President Reagan and with her to ensure that progress towards a peaceful settlement could be made.

#### Iran/Iraq

King Fahd said that Iran appeared determined to continue the war until Iraq had been defeated. In his view, this would not be achieved. Iran had rejected all reasonable suggestions for negotiations, including those from the United Nations Secretary General whose talks had been without result. Iraq, on the other hand, clearly wanted to end the war.

/ King Fahd

King Fahd continued that the ambition of the Iranians under Khomeini was to turn Iraq into a satellite of Iran as a prelude to extending their control over other Gulf states.

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The only way to end the war would be for "other countries" to face Iraq and Iran with a reasonable solution. If either of them refused to accept it, they should be ostracized internationally: politically, socially and economically. However, he recognised that it would be difficult to achieve consensus on such action.

The Prime Minister agreed that it was difficult

We had hoped that Iran was running out of sophisticated weapons and that this would inhibit its capacity to do damage. However, it now seemed that Iran had obtained SCUD missiles of Soviet origin, probably through Libya. This was bad news. The Prime Minister continued that Mr Gandhi had told her that he had recently sent an emissary to Iran, but the emissary had failed to make any significant progress. The Indians took some comfort from the fact that the Iranians had not mentioned the removal of Saddam Hussein as a condition for a settlement. None the less, it probably still was one. The Indians had also found the Iranians remarkably unconcerned and prepared to continue with the war, indeed optimistic about their prospects.

The Prime Minister continued that she was sure that the United Nations Secretary-General had been right to visit Iran and Iraq. We should all do everything possible to keep the horrors of the war before public opinion and work for a solution through the United Nations.

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/Lebanon

Lebanon

King Fahd described the situation in Lebanon as tragic, although it might improve if the Israelis were to withdraw completely. The Prime Minister pointed to the emergence of the Shi-ites as a new threat to stability in Lebanon and the border with Israel. She agreed that Israeli withdrawal should be completed as soon as possible.

Afghanistan

King Fahd said that Afghanistan remained under the thumb of the Soviet Union. The people of Afghanistan rejected Soviet rule and wanted to be free. The Afghan people must have the right of self-determination. The Prime Minister said that the Soviet Union had stepped up its forces in Afghanistan. She did not expect much change in Soviet foreign policy under Mr Gorbachev. He would try to implement Communist doctrine more vigorously and efficiently than his predecessors.

Bilateral matters

King Fahd pressed the Prime Minister to return to Saudi Arabia for a longer visit. There was a great deal to see. Perhaps she might agree to take a holiday in Saudi Arabia. The Prime Minister thanked the King for the invitation which she would like to take up one day. She hoped that the King would pay an early official visit to the United Kingdom. She greatly looked forward to this.

14 April, 1985

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10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Private Secretary*

*Mr Day, MEN*  
*PS*  
*PS/Mr Lee*  
*Mr Foyrse*  
14 April 1985  
*Mr Egote*  
*NSNA*

*Dear Peter,*

PRIME MINISTER'S MEETING WITH KING FAHD

I enclose a record of the Prime Minister's meeting with King Fahd in Riyadh on 14 April. Much of what King Fahd had to say about the Middle East consisted of well-rehearsed themes. I have therefore pruned his remarks quite considerably in my record. I have also done a certain amount of editing. What actually happened was that King Fahd spoke for some fifty minutes, covering all the subjects which he wished to raise, and the Prime Minister replied over about half-an-hour. To make for easier comprehension, I have arranged the remarks of both of them under subject headings.

You will see from the record that, during the talks, the Prime Minister renewed the invitation to King Fahd to visit Britain this year. King Fahd made no comment at the time but reverted to the matter over lunch, saying that he would like to pay an official visit this year. You will wish to consider how this can be fitted into the programme of such visits.

I am copying this letter to Richard Mottram (Ministry of Defence), Philip Wynn Owen (H.M. Treasury) and Richard Hatfield (Cabinet Office).

*Yours sincerely*  
*Charles Powell*  
CHARLES POWELL

Peter Ricketts, Esq.,  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

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