



RECORD OF A MEETING BETWEEN THE FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH SECRETARY
AND HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS CROWN PRINCE FAHD BIN ABDULAZIZ IN TAIF,
SAUDI ARABIA: WEDNESDAY 27 AUGUST AT 12.30 PM

PRESENT:

The Right Honourable
Lord Carrington KCMG MC

His Royal Highness
Crown Prince Fahd bin Abdulaziz

Mr A J M Craig CMG

His Royal Highness
Prince Saud al Faisal

Mr G G H Walden

1. Prince Fahd said he was very interested in the role of the British, and of the Nine, in the Middle East. In his opening speech at the Conference of Arab Foreign Ministers the previous day, he had praised the European role. Lord Carrington asked whether Prince Fahd had gained the impression from his discussion with M. Thorn that Europe was on the right lines. Prince Fahd said that M. Thorn would have to consider different view points. Personally he was convinced that the Europeans had an important role to play. Lord Carrington said that M. Thorn had had a good reception so far; only the Israelis had been rather discouraging. The Americans were to some extent paralysed because of their elections. The Europeans must show that they understood the seriousness of the situation, and the rights of the Palestinian cause. The Americans had at first been rather concerned by the Venice Declaration. However, the US Government (and Mr Muskie in particular) now saw that there was some merit in what the Europeans were trying to do, and that this could ultimately be of help to them. In September M. Thorn would report to European Foreign Ministers. After that decisions would have to be taken at the European Summit in December on where to go next. Meanwhile, how did Prince Fahd anticipate developments in the Middle East?

2. Prince Fahd said that any further movement in the Middle East would depend on what the European Summit decided. Hopes in the Middle East were pinned on Europe. The Arabs wanted just solutions acceptable to all. The results of the Camp David process contradicted the UN Resolutions. It was difficult to ask the Arabs for concessions, when all the Arabs wanted was the implementation of UN Resolutions, including 242. There seemed to be a tendency to liquidate 242, but if this happened what form could a solution take? The Israelis were thinking in terms of capitalising on the present situation. It was not the Arabs who were rejecting a peaceful solution, but the Israelis. The evidence lay in the fact that President Sadat had made concessions, but had got nothing in return. President Sadat had thought that he could solve the problem simply by going to Jerusalem. Prince Fahd thought that by concentrating on Geneva-type negotiations, progress could be made. It was not the case, as President Sadat claimed, that the Saudi Arabians were against peace.

/3. It had



3. It had been supposed that, when President Sadat had gone to Jerusalem, it had been agreed with the United States that the Americans would pressurise the Israelis into concessions. But nothing had happened. He had been in America when President Carter had been elected, and the President had been enthusiastic about achieving a real solution. But all that had fizzled out into Camp David. Carter had been shocked when Mr Begin had been elected Prime Minister. Even the moderate Jewish organisations in America were not in favour of Begin, who had been called a terrorist on American television. His terrorist acts against the British were well known. Lord Carrington commented that these were unlikely to be forgotten.

4. Prince Fahd said that the patience of Arab peoples was nearing the end. The Russians and their cronies in the Middle East were against peace. Nasser had paved the way for Soviet influence in the Middle East, but all Arabs knew that the Russians were not interested in helping their cause, but only in their own objectives. He repeated that the only hope for a solution lay with the Europeans. If a just solution were achieved, everyone would benefit. If the Europeans came to the right conclusions, this would help the new American President, whoever he might be. Such conclusions might not please Israeli supporters in America; but we should ask ourselves what would happen if there were no solution. Tension could only benefit the Russians, and the cost of the crisis would increase. The Saudis, as friends of the West and of the Americans, were interested in stability. Arab friendship as a whole could be secured for the West and for the Americans.

5. Arabs could not oppose the existence of Israel, since Israel had existed in the past. But the Israelis could not be allowed to devour the rights of the Arabs. The Israelis were banking on discord between Arab countries. Prince Fahd added that if they were frustrated by Israeli intransigence the Arabs could still bank together and take decisions which might be harmful. Prince Fahd said that 1102 million Arabs had the resources to buy arms from the Russians if they wished; even Israeli nuclear weapons could not subdue them. Soviet objectives in the Middle East were money and oil. If they achieved this, the West would have to react, but this might mean war, and everyone knew what war meant.

6. Israel must be given her rights. But she also wanted the rights of others. It might be difficult for the Israelis or their friends in America, to imagine that the Saudis thought the way they did.

7. The Israelis were refusing to listen to logical, reasonable opinion, designed to preserve the existenc of Israel. They gave the impression of believing that they were a dependable base of the West and of the Americans in the Middle East. But it was the Saudis who were really the reliable friends of the West. It was they, and their fellow Arabs, who had exposed Soviet aggression in Afghanistan at the Islamic Conference. Europe must press for a just solution. If her decisions were not conclusive, or if Europe tried too hard not to embarrass the Israelis or their supporters, there could be great problems. Nor

/should



should the Europeans try too hard to avoid upsetting the Americans. Firm decisions would in the end benefit the US as well as Europe.

8. Prince Saud said that the Arabs were not asking for the destruction of Israel but merely the implementation of UN Resolutions on withdrawal. He was convinced that the Israelis would respond to international pressure. Perhaps friends of Israel were telling her that the Arabs would come to accept the status quo in time. But the situation could become more serious.

9. Lord Carrington said that the factors mentioned by Prince Fahd had been in the minds of the Europeans when they had framed the Venice Declarations. On the one hand, we wished to ensure the recognition of pre-1967 Israeli frontiers; and on the other the rights of the Palestinians. Only the Russians benefited from the present situation. Resolution 242 was not enough, eg it only referred to the Palestinians as refugees. We needed to go further on self-determination. Prince Fahd said that if the Israelis withdrew to pre-1967 frontiers the Palestinians could go back and self-determination would follow.

10. Lord Carrington said that the difference between the public and private posture of the PLO made life difficult for the Europeans. If he, Prince Fahd and Arafat met together, they might not find many differences between them. But in all Western countries there was a large Jewish minority which took exception to the more extreme PLO public statements about the obliteration of Israel. Others sheltered behind such statements, and used them to whip up indignation about the Arabs. He himself was not very popular with Jewish opinion. If Arafat could soften his public stance, he would make the position of the Europeans much easier. Lord Carrington said that he was often asked how the Israelis could be expected to hand over the West Bank to an organisation which was bent on the destruction of Israel.

11. Prince Fahd said that the Israelis used such statements as a pretext. Lord Carrington said that what was needed was a simultaneous process. Prince Fahd said that the Palestinians asked what guarantees they would get, eg, from the Americans, which could persuade the PLO to take a different posture. Lord Carrington repeated that the European position was made very difficult by the rather blood-thirsty public posture of the PLO. Prince Fahd asked whether the PLO could be expected to be more flexible than President Sadat, who had even absolved the Israelis from aggression in 1956. No one could go further than Sadat, and yet the Israelis and the PLO leaders would be exposed before Palestinian opinion, which would then choose more militant leaders.

12. Lord Carrington said that the Israelis would not accept Palestinian rights until their own right to existence was acknowledged, and vice-versa. Somehow we must break through this deadlock. Prince Fahd said that the Americans and the West should intervene and lay down precisely what the Palestinians and the Israelis must accept. Lord Carrington said that this was precisely what the Venice Declaration sought to do.

/Prince



Prince Fahd said that this must be taken a step further. What would the West do if either party refused to comply? Nevertheless, he was very grateful for European interest in the Middle East. Lord Carrington said that the ability of the Europeans to solve the problem by themselves should not be exaggerated. The Europeans would try to set an example, and to influence the Americans, but in the last resort only the Americans could influence the Israelis, and any final solution must be between the Arabs and the Israelis themselves.

13. Prince Fahd then expressed regret at the BBC report of a further screening of the 'Death of a Princess' at the Edinburgh Festival. Lord Carrington explained the background briefly, and said that he would be taking this up with the BBC on his return. He hoped that the Anglo/Saudi Committee on Cultural Relations could help to improve the situation. Prince Fahd said that he understood that the Government did not control the media, but hoped that something could be done by informal action.

cc MED
 PS
 PS/LPS
 PS/Mr Hurd
 PS/PUS
 Sir J Graham
 Mr Bullard
 Mr J C Moberly
 PCS
 NENAD
 ECD(E)

Chanceries:

Jedda
 Tel Aviv
 Cairo
 Damascus
 Amman
 Baghdad
 Washington
 Bonn
 Paris
 Moscow
 Luxembourg