

Message Text

SECRET

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42

ACTION SS-30

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 (ISO) W

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O 111153Z MAR 74

FM AMEMBASSY JIDDA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 6371

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 JIDDA 1192

EXDIS

FOR SECRETARY FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OVIP (KISSINGER, HENRY A.) ENRG EFIN MARR SA

SUBJECT: JOINT US-SAUDI ECONOMIC COMMISSIONS: SAUDI
ENTHUSIASM

REF: (A) STATE 45017 (B) MANILA 2788 (C) STATE 48042

SUMMARY: AMBASSADOR BRIEFED SAUDI OFFICIALS SATURDAY,
MARCH 10, AND SUNDAY, MARCH 11, ON OUR IDEAS ABOUT A
NEW U.S.-SAUDI RELATIONSHIP. THE REACTION WAS UNIFORMLY
ENTHUSIASTIC. SAUDI CONSENSUS WAS THAT PRINCE FAHD
SHOULD HEAD THE SAUDI TEAM. THE SAUDIS HAVE NOT YET
DECIDED WHETHER THE FAHD TRIP TO THE U.S. SHOULD PROCEED OR
FOLLOW A VISIT BY U.S. TEAM TO SAUDI ARABIA. ALL AGREED,
HOWEVER THAT THE FIRST STEP SHOULD TAKE PLACE VERY SOON. ALL
ALSO AGREED THAT THE MATTER MUST BE KEPT SECRET UNTIL IT IS
ANNOUNCED OFFICIALLY AND SIMULTANEOUSLY IN WASHINGTON AND
RIYADH. END SUMMARY.

1. I SAW ZAKI YAMANI IN JIDDA EVENING OF MARCH 8 (REFTEL 1137)
AND INFORMED HIM OF OUR PROPOSALS FOR JOINT U.S. SAUDI
COMMISSIONS. ISA SABBAGH AND I SAW ROYAL ADVISOR RASHAD
PHARAON EVENING OF MARCH 9 AND DISCUSSED THE SAME MATTER
WITH HIM. HE GAVE A FULL REPORT THE SAME EVENING TO
KING FAISAL. SABBAGH AND I MET THE FOLLOWING MORNING
(MARCH 10) FOR AN HOUR AND A HALF WITH PRINCE MUSA'ID AND
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MOHAMMAD ABA AL KHAIL, (MINISTER AND DEPUTY MINISTER OF

FINANCE); WITH PRINCE SULTAN (MINISTER OF DEFENSE) ALSO FOR AN HOUR AND HALF; WITH HISHAM NAZER (MINISTER OF PLANNING) FOR TWO HOURS; AND WE SPENT THE EVENING WITH KAMAL ADHAM, THE KING'S INTELLIGENCE ADVISOR. MUSA'ID AND SULTAN HAD BEEN BRIEFED FULLY BY RASHAD PHARAON, BOTH ON THE PROPOSAL AND ON THE KING'S REACTION TO IT.

2. ALL THE SAUDIS WERE ENTHUSIASTIC; INDEED THEY WERE AS CLOSE TO EUPHORIA AS I COULD IMAGINE THEM TO BE. THERE WAS NO NEED FOR ANY "HARD SALE" ALTHOUGH I MADE LITTLE EFFORT TO CONCEAL MY OWN ENTHUSIASM. ALL THE SAUDIS CALLED THIS INITIATIVE THE NEWS THEY HAD BEEN EXPECTING FOR 25 YEARS. ALL SAID THAT THE U.S. HAS FINALLY RECOGNIZED THE IMPORTANCE OF ITS INTERESTS IN THE ARAB WORLD; ALL SAID THAT THE U.S. AND ARAB ECONOMIES WOULD BE SO CLOSELY ENTWINED THAT THERE COULD BE NO TURNING BACK AND ALL WANTED TO MOVE FORWARD AS RAPIDLY AS POSSIBLE.

3. I WAS NOT ABLE TO SEE PRINCE FAHD (MINISTER OF INTERIOR) WHO WAS IN THE DESERT ON HIS ANNUAL SPRING MISSION TO THE TRIBES, BUT HE PASSED WORD TO ME THAT I SHOULD SPEAK TO SULTAN AS I WOULD TO HIM AND SULTAN WOULD THEN SEE HIM. FAHD SAID HE WOULD BE BACK IN RIYADH BY THE END OF THE WEEK AND WOULD WISH TO SEE ME THEN.

4. RASHAD PHARAON CALLED THE PROPOSAL "A NEW AND CLEAN CHAPTER IN U.S.-ARAB RELATIONS". HE TOLD US ON MARCH 10 BY PHONE THAT THE KING WAS GREATLY PLEASED BY THE IDEA AND HE SAID HE WISHED TO THANK SECRETARY KISSINGER AND PARTICULARLY PRESIDENT NIXON WHOSE "INDELIBLE IMPRINT" IS ON THE PROPOSAL. THE KING HOPED THAT THIS EFFORT AT SAUDI-AMERICAN COOPERATION WOULD QUICKLY LEAD TO A BROADER ARAB-AMERICAN COOPERATION AND TO A JUST AND DURABLE PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST.

5. AHAMD ZAKI YAMANI SAID HE WAS LOOKING FORWARD TO RETURNING TO SAUDI ARABIA AND WORKING WITH ME AND HIS COLLEAGUES ON THE DETAILS OF THE PROPOSAL. HE WILL GO FIRST TO THE ARAB OIL MINISTERS' MEETING IN TRIPOLI THEN TO OPEC MEETING IN VIENNA, AND SHOULD BE BACK IN SAUDI ARABIA BY MARCH 20.

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6. PRINCE MUSA'ID SPOKE AT LENGTH AND ELOQUENTLY ABOUT THE RESTORATION OF AMERICAN POSITION IN THE MIDDLE EAST. HE SAID THE PROPOSAL WAS IMPORTANT BUT THE SPIRIT BEHIND IT WAS

MORE IMPORTANT. HE SAID NOT ONLY HE AND THE ROYAL FAMILY BUT "ALL THINKING PERSONS IN THE ARAB WORLD WILL CONSIDER THIS TO BE A NEW CHAPTER IN ARAB-AMERICAN RELATIONS. IT'S

A GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST, FOR THE ARAB CAUSE AND FOR AMERICAN GLOBAL INTEREST. IT MUST NOT BE LOST."

7. PRINCE SULTAN, WHO HAD BEEN FULLY BRIEFED BY RASHAD PHARAON ABOUT THE MESSAGE AND ABOUT THE KING'S REACTION TO IT, SAID THAT THIS EFFORT WAS EXACTLY WHAT HE AND PRINCE FAHD HAD URGED FOR YEARS.

8. FAHD SAID HE SPOKE AT LENGTH ABOUT THE TRANSFORMATION IN U.S. POLICY BROUGHT ABOUT BY "OUR FRIEND, DR. KISSINGER, WHOSE BRILLIANCE IS MATCHED ONLY BY HIS MOBILITY". HE HOPED OTHER ARAB COUNTRIES COULD BE INCLUDED IN OUR PROPOSAL; "IT SHOULDN'T JUST BE THE UNITED STATES AND SAUDI ARABIA BUT THE UNITED STATES AND THE ARABS." HE ADDED "IF THE UNITED STATES AND SAUDI ARABIA WORK TOGETHER WE CAN TRANSFORM THE ARAB WORLD; WE CAN BUILD A BULWARK AGAINST COMMUNISM AND SUBVERSION THAT CAN NEVER BE TORN DOWN". SULTAN, LIKE ALL THE OTHERS, THOUGHT ONLY FAHD COULD LEAD THE EFFORT ON THE SAUDI SIDE. HE ADDED "I'LL LET YOU IN ON A SECRET; FAHD IS ALREADY SECOND MOST IMPORTANT MAN IN THE COUNTRY AND HE WILL BE OUR NEXT LEADER." HE SAID THAT FAHD'S TAKING CHARGE OF THIS EFFORT WOULD SERVE A DOUBLE PURPOSE: IT WOULD STRENGTHEN HIS PRESTIGE IN SAUDI ARABIA AND IN THE ARAB WORLD, AND IT WOULD ASSURE ITS SUCCESS.

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ACTION SS-30

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EXDIS

FOR SECRETARY FROM AMBASSADOR

9. HISHAM NAZER LISTENED WITH GREAT ATTENTION TO THE EXPLANATION OF THE PROPOSAL AND THEN SAID "ITS GOOD. IT'S FINALLY HAPPENED. YOU'VE COME TO YOUR SENSES." ALTHOUGH IT IS DIFFICULT TO JUDGE DEGREES OF GREAT ENTHUSIASM, I WOULD SAY THAT HISHAM NAZER WAS THE STRONGEST AND MOST ELOQUENT IN HIS PRAISE OF THE IDEA. HE REMINDED ME THAT HE HAD STUDIED IN THE U.S.; HAD THE REPUTATION OF BEING PRO-AMERICAN BUT WAS BITTERLY DISAPPOINTED BY THE AMERICAN ACTION IN OCTOBER 1973. HE HAD TOLD ME EARLIER THAT HE HAD RESOLVED NEVER TO GO BACK TO THE STATES. "NOW THIS IS ALL CHANGED," HE SAID SEVERAL TIMES THAT "IF THIS PROJECT GOES THROUGH WE WILL HAVE NO NEED FOR THE FRENCH OR THE BRITISH OR THE JAPANESE. THE UNITED STATES CAN DO EVERYTHING. THIS IS EXACTLY WHAT I HAVE ALWAYS WANTED."

10. I TOLD NAZIR THAT WE HAD NO INTENTION OF DISPLACING ALL FOREIGN INFLUENCE IN THE COUNTRY. THIS PROBABLY WOULD NOT BE GOOD FOR THE SAUDIS OR FOR US, BUT WE DID THINK WE COULD DO A BETTER JOB IN DEVELOPMENT OF SAUDI ARABIA THAN COULD ANY COUNTRY OR COMBINATION OF COUNTRIES.

11. THE REACTION OF SAYYID OMAR SAQQAF, (MINISTER OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFIARS) FROM MANILA (REF MANILA 2788) WAS WHAT I FEARED IT WOULD BE. HE IS PEEVED THAT THIS INITIATIVE TOOK PLACE DURING HIS ABSENCE. WE CERTAINLY DON'T WANT HIM LOBBYING AGAINST THE EFFORT AND I HOPE MY TWO MESSAGES (REF JIDDA 1123 AND REF JIDDA 1175)

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WILL CALM HIM SOMEWHAT. IF THE SECRETARY HAS NOT SENT HIM A SIMILAR PERSONAL MESSAGE, I AGAIN URGE THAT THIS BE DONE. I WILL SEE SAQQAF IMMEDIATELY ON HIS RETURN TO SAUDI ARABIA MARCH 20, TELL HIM HOW IMPORTANT, INDEED HOW ESSENTIL WILL BE HIS ASSIS-TANCE IN MAKING THE JOINT EFFORT SUCCEED.

12. THE OIL BOYCOTT IN THE U.S. WAS RARELY MENTIONED IN THE CONVERSATIONS. IT WAS RAISED BY THE SAUDIS OCCASIONALLY BUT THEY WERE EMBARRASSED TO DO SO, AND THEIR REFERENCES WERE ALWAYS ACCOMPANIED BY ASSURANCES THAT THE BOYCOTT SHALL BE LIFTED IMMEDIATELY. THEY REMINDED ME THAT SAUDI ARABIA HAD LONG FAVORED LIFTING THE BOYCOTT; THEY HOPED THE OTHER ARAB COUNTRIES COULD SOON BE BROUGHT AROUND.

13. I MENTIONED TO EACH OF THE SAUDIS THAT WE WERE NOT PUSHING FOR OIL BARTER DEALS AND WE STILL OPPOSED THEM IN PRINCIPLE. IN ANY CASE, OUR OIL IMPORT NEEDS WILL START DROPPING SOON. I SAID I DID NOT, BY THIS, WISH TO IMPLY ANY UNDERESTIMATION OF THE IMPORTANCE OF SAUDI ARABIA. WE KNEW VERY WELL THAT SAUDI ARABIA WOULD PLAY THE MAJOR ROLE IN ENERGY SUPPLIES AND WORLD FINANCE IN THE NEXT 20 YEARS; AND IT WAS NOT ONLY IMPORTANT BUT LOGICAL FOR IT TO WORK CLOSELY WITH THE U.S.

14. I POINT OUT TO ALL THE SAUDIS THAT OUR PROPOSAL WAS NOT A DISINTERESTED, ALTRUISTIC ONE. WE EXPECTED TO BENEFIT BY RAISING SAUDI AND ARAB STANDARDS OF LIVING AND WE EXPECTED OUR INDUSTRY TO BENEFIT DIRECTLY AND INDIRECTLY THROUGH COOPERATIVE EFFORTS. ALL AGREED THIS WAS A SOUND BASIS FOR A JOINT APPROACH. HISHAM NAZER SAID PARTICULARLY THAT THIS TYPE OF ARRANGEMENT WAS SUPERIOR TO OUR AID TO EUROPE AFTER THE WAR AND TO OUR CURRENT AID TO ISRAEL AND THE LDC'S. HE SAID GIFTS ONLY AROUSE ENVY, THEY WIN NO FRIENDS. HE SAID THAT THE MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL ARRANGEMENT WE ARE PROPOSING IS NOT INSULTING OR DEGRADING FOR THE ARABS, THAT THEY KNOW AMERICA WILL PROFIT FROM THIS ASSOCIATION WITH SAUDI ARABIA AND THEY ARE SURE ITS INTEREST IN THE MIDDLE EAST WILL THEREBY BE KEPT ALIVE AND STRENGTHENED.
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