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A Letter from George Assousa to Anwar Nusseibeh, 26 January 1981

Sent on 26 January 1981, this document shows a letter from George Assousa to Anwar Nusseibeh in Jerusalem.



Salzburg International Affairs Seminar
Schloss Leopoldskron
Salzburg • Austria

January 26, 1981

The Honorable Anwar Nusseibeh
P.O. Box 19322
Nablus Road
Jerusalem, Israel

Dear Anwar:

I was very pleased to know of your "in principle" agreement to co-chair the seminar entitled "Islam and the West: Revolution and Response" together with Professor Ralf Dahrendorf, Director of the London School of Economics. Professor Dahrendorf has confirmed his acceptance.

At the invitation of the Rockefeller Foundation, the seminar will be held at their Bellagio Study and Conference Center on Lake Como, Italy May 4 - May 8, 1981. I am enclosing descriptive materials and a preliminary list of potential invitees. Your role as seminar co-chairman would be to help guide the discussion during the seminar and to help in putting together the final summary of the proceedings. A rapporteur will be responsible for the preparation of the proceedings. A working paper will be distributed to all participants prior to arrival in Bellagio. As co-chairman, an honorarium of \$500 will be provided to you.

Turning to a different question, I am discussing with friends the possibility of inviting you to the United States immediately after the seminar to lecture in New York, Washington and Chicago. This is still in the preliminary stages, but if the idea is agreeable, meetings could be set up at the Council on Foreign Relations in New York and at the American Enterprise Institute, the Christian Science Monitor and the Washington Post in Washington. Further meetings in Chicago could also be arranged. I am now looking into sources for funding such a visit which would enable you to continue to the states following the conclusion of the seminar.

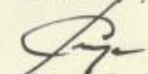
I have tentative plans for coming to Jerusalem the last week of February and the first week of March at which time we can discuss this in greater detail. However, I would appreciate having your response by cable (SALZBURG WASHINGTON D.C.) or telex (64299 GEAINTL) as soon as possible regarding co-chairing the seminar and your interest in my arranging for a U.S. visit if you think it appropriate.

With best regards,

George E. Assousa
Director

*In addition to the Arab
participants we will have
one person from Israel.
Does one, or the other
of those I listed seem
good to you?*

Sincerely yours,


George E. Assousa

Salzburg International Affairs Seminar
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A Conference of Media Leaders
on "ISLAM AND THE WEST: REVOLUTION AND RESPONSE"
To Be Held at
The Rockefeller Foundation's
Bellagio Study and Conference Center
Lake Como, Italy
May 4 - May 8, 1981

George E. Assousa
Director

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Introduction.

The way that Middle Easterners, especially Iranians and Arabs, and Westerners see one another is crucial for the survival of both. Both Middle Eastern and Western societies are undergoing rapid technologically-based changes which challenge their structure and traditions. There are revolutionary forces latent in both: these forces have surged to the surface sooner in the Middle East than elsewhere because the change there is relatively faster and more far-reaching, centuries crammed into decades.

If relations between the Arab and Islamic worlds and the West lead towards conflict rather than cooperation in dealing with common problems, the West may be faced with the choice between economic disaster through lack of oil or an attempted return to old imperial methods of conquest with the grave risk of world war. Such a conflict situation could also mean a serious threat to the political independence and economic welfare of the Middle East states.

The avoidance of such a catastrophe depends not only on the will of rulers in the West or Middle East but also on the perceptions of their publics and not only of the intellectual elites but also of the wider audiences now reached in both the West and Middle East by the mass media.

Project Director

George E. Assousa, Director, S.I.A.S., and Senior Fellow, Carnegie Institution of Washington.

Project Title

A Conference of Media Leaders on : "ISLAM AND THE WEST: REVOLUTION AND RESPONSE."

Project Design

The proposed conference will focus on the following objectives:

- 1) to provide American and European participants with a first-hand assessment by counterparts from the Middle East and North Africa of a) the social, economic and political changes sweeping the region and its implications for the region, b) the Islamic view of Western role and behavior and its implications for the Islamic world; 2) to provide Middle East participants an assessment by Western counterparts of the implications of this change from a Western perspective for both the region and the West; 3) to seek a framework for future analysis, interpretation and communication of events in both regions based on a broader and better informed perspective; 4) to initiate a continuing dialogue reaching beyond the time limitations of the conference.

Project Description

A four-day conference is planned for May 1981. Six American, eight European (including one Eastern European chosen for his knowledge of Soviet policy in the Middle East) and ten Middle East and North African participants, chosen from among controllers of the media (e.g., publishers, editors, program directors), and executives (leading writers and broadcasters). Some of these would be Middle East specialists, others would be non-expert on the region, but are potentially influential people.

One or two non-media people will be included as reference specialists. the participation of corporate and academic chief executives with interest in these questions under examination will be invited.

The conference will be co-chaired by Dr. Ralf Dahrendorf, Director of the London School of Economics, together with a suitably eminent Middle Easterner. All participants will share responsibility in the presentation and examination of issues. Three-page papers setting forth participant views will be expected. A limited circulation report will be prepared.

The Honorable Mr. David Astor, former Editor of the London Observer, and Mr Robert Stephens, Foreign Editor of the Observer, author and specialist on the Gulf, will serve in an advisory role to the Project Director.

Project Agenda

1. The Islamic revolution: its nature and scope.

Is it a new force or an old reaction? Is it a religious or political movement of both? Is it mainly a manifestationspecial to Iran and the Shia- what is its character and impact in other Muslim states such as the Arab countries, Turkey and Pakistan?

2. What are its social, economic and political aims and how does it relate to and differ from other revolutionry, radical and nationalist movements in the Middle East and the Third World e.g Nasserist forms of pan-Arab socialism, Baathism, Qadhafism and various forms of Marxism (Third World leftists and orthodox Communism)?

3. Islam, oil and modernisation. Islamic views of Western role and behaviour and its implications for the Islamic world. The Western role as both revolutionary force for change through technology and education and social organisation, and as simultaneous wrecker of traditional societies and upholder of the political statu quo.

4. The Islamic revolution's world view - its attitude to the Soviet Union, the United States and Europe.
5. Western views of Islam and change in the Middle East. Does "Western Imperialism" still exist or have a meaning?
6. The premises of US, and European policies towards the Middle East and the Islamic world. Western oil and strategic interests.
7. Soviet premises, interests and attitudes.
8. How can cooperation replace conflict in securing interests of all parties; balance of power, oil access modernisation without alienation or domination?

Partial List of Potential Participants

U.S.

Katharine Graham	Chairman of the Board Washington Post
Meg Greenfield	Editor Washington Post
Philip Geylin	Editor Washington Post
Winston Lord	President Council on Foreign Relations
Thomas N. McLean, or Ben R. Harris (Publisher)	Executive News Editor "The State" Columbia, S.C.
Robert McNeill, or James Lehrer	McNeil/Lehrer Report PBS
Bill Monroe	Executive Producer Meet the Press, NBC
Mike O'Neill	Editor New York Post
William Quandt	Fellow, Brookings Institution Formerly NSC

Europe

David Astor Advisor	Member of the Board London Observer
Prof. Bandarevsky	Middle East Expert and Historian Moscow African/Oriental Institute
Igor Belaev	Soviet - Middle East Specialist and Former ME correspondent- Pravda
Ralf Dahrendorf Co-Chairman	Director London School of Economics
Dick Francis, or Christopher Capon	Head of Current Affairs, BBC London " "
David Hirst	ME Correspondent - Gaurdian
Arnold Hottinger	Editor, Neur Zurricher Zeitung ? Zurich
Peter Jenkins	The Guardian
Richard Johns	Financial Times
Jean Lacouture	French Author, Journalist, ME Specialist Nouvel Observateur
Wolf von Lejewski	News Anchor, Ch. 1 German Television, Humburg
Arrigo Levi	La Stampa Italy
Edward Mortimer Rapporteur	Leader Writer, London Times
William Rees Mogg	Editor London Times
Hella Pick	The Gaurdian
Eric Rouleau	Middle East Specialist Le Monde, Paris
Theo Sommer	Editor, Die Ziet Hamburg
Robert Stephens Advisor	Foreign Editor London Observer

Middle East/North Africa

Mohamad Sid Ahmad	Al-Ahram - Cairo
Lakhdar Brahimi	Former Algerian Ambassador to the UK
Onaima Dahan	Head of Business School University of Jordan
Mohamad Hassanein Heikal	Former Editor Al-Ahram - Cairo
Mansour Khaled	Former Foreign Minister, Sudan
Raphael Khalis	M.E. Magazine Beirut/London
Sadek El Mahdi	Former Prime Minister, Sudan
Anwar Nusseibeh	Former Defense Minister, Jordan
Florida Safiri	Iranian Scholar Oriental Institute at Oxford
Dr. Shubeili	Former Head of Saudi TV - Riyadh
Mohamad al Sharif	Al -Dastour , Jordan
S. Schnitzer	Senior Editor Maariv - Israel
Majid Tehranian	UNESCO Former Head of Institute for Communication and Development - Iran
Ambassador Ghassan Tuani	Editor, An-Nahar, and now Permanent Representative of Lebanon to the UN
Danny Rubenstein	Israeli Journalist, Specialist in Arab Affairs
Kamal Abou Maged	Adviser to the Emir of Kuwait
Ahmad Bahaa Eddin	Kuwait Editor and Chief of Al-Ahram