



FROM: THE RT. HON. JULIAN AMERY, M.P.

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Prime Minister

*Mr Amery is calling on you
to-morrow: you may like
to thank him then for this letter*

2nd June, 1980.

*Peres & Co
could find*

Dear Margaret,

Amey 26

I spent part of the recess in Jordan as the guest of Crown Prince Hassan. We had several talks together and I also had a good talk with King Hussein the day before he left for London.

I understand you have seen the King since then so I will not trouble you with a detailed account of my talks but simply send you a few general impressions derived from them. They may, possibly, help to fill in the picture.

In discussion on Iran neither the King nor the Crown Prince thought that the present Iranian leadership was capable of resisting Soviet penetration or holding the country together. The West should identify and support an alternative force which at best might take over the whole country and at least secure the vital southern areas. The Iraqis were already working hard on this. It might be wise to enlist their cooperation. This would have the added advantage of drawing them further away from the Soviets.

We were thought to have rather over-reacted in our efforts to placate Saudi Arabia over the unfortunate film. I mentioned to the King the importance we attached to our relations with the Saudis and he said he would be very ready to try and help heal any breach that might still exist. I expect you or Peter Carrington will already have discussed this possibility with him.

Most of our talks centred on the Palestinian problem and the possibility of a European initiative. There are several strands to Jordanian thinking on this and the following is simply an effort to unravel and set them out in a more or less logical order.

The basic Hashemite premise is that there is no serious business to be done with Begin over the West Bank and little prospect of American pressure on the Israel Government before the Presidential elections. The King is of course well aware of the views of Mr. Peres, the leader of the Israeli Opposition, and more particularly of his proposal to return the West Bank to Jordan with some reciprocal modifications. These, as I indicated to you in my letter of 20th February and enclosures, would involve the cession of Arab inhabited territory within Israel in return for Jordanian cession of largely uninhabited territory judged strategically important by the Israelis. These views correspond in principal to views which the King has often expressed. There is also some interesting new (or at least new to me) thinking on Jerusalem about which I attach a separate note. Clearly any progress on these lines seems likely to depend on a change of Government in Israel. The King is thus in a stalemate situation where policy is more a matter of public relations than of concrete proposals likely to lead to real results.



2.

For domestic reasons the King cannot afford to seem less concerned than the PLO with the future of the West Bank. He also is naturally anxious that the West, with which his regime is associated, should be seen as trying to find a just settlement. As you know it is fundamental to Hussein's position as to Sadat's, and indeed that of the Saudis, that the Arabs are more likely to get results from the West than the PLO are likely to get them from the Soviets. A European initiative is accordingly not without attraction to Hussein though he does not expect anything serious to come out of it. I detected however two important Jordanian reservations about such an initiative.

1. Since 1958 Hussein has become much more identified with the US than with any European power. He was Britain's ally but has never had close links with France or Germany. Any European initiative opposed by the US could therefore be damaging to him as showing that his American friends were not prepared even to try and put pressure on Israel over the West Bank. This would be grist to the PLO mill as to other radical Arabs.
2. In the absence of American support any European initiative seems unlikely to achieve concrete results. It does, however, risk increasing the prestige of the PLO and giving them a more formal role in international affairs.

As seen from Amman the PLO is not an organisation but a movement consisting of many different groups some more radical than others but all linked to Moscow in one way or another. In all the conservative Arab states, as in Egypt the PLO are regarded as the main danger. It is indeed against them that most conservative Arab rulers are so heavily guarded. Given the high proportion of Palestinians living in Jordan (apart from those on the West Bank) anything that increases the status of the PLO is bound to be a threat to the monarchy.

I would conclude therefore that the King would find it awkward to warn against a pro-PLO initiative as Sadat has done and indeed must appear to support it. It would, however, only be really acceptable to him if it carried enough American support to lead to sufficient Israeli concessions, here and now, that would show that the King has been right all along to side with the West. An unsuccessful initiative, and particularly one opposed by the US, would only be damaging to him.

My own opinion, for what it is worth, is that our initiative is not worth pursuing in the face of American and, as it seems, Egyptian opposition. If reports of a Saudi - Egypt rapprochement are confirmed this would strengthen the case for holding back. If we go ahead we shall be seen as appeasing Moscow's friends and so endangering the Western Alliance. In any case in the absence of American support we would achieve nothing, except possibly some very transient goodwill in "liberal" Arab circles.

The Arab states are hooked on self determination for the Palestinians by resolutions of the Arab league. We are not. Our position in Britain, as I understand it, has been that the West Bank has been part of Jordan since 1948. Under Resolution 242 the Israelis are committed to withdraw from most of it and so - in our eyes - return to Jordan. Would it not be wiser therefore for us, if we have to say something at Venice, to call for

- a) an immediate halt to further Israeli settlements on the West Bank
- b) to call on the Israelis to negotiate their withdrawal from the West Bank direct with Jordan which was the previous owner of the West Bank as Egypt



3.

was of Sinai.

It would then be up to King Hussein to decide in what way he wishes to bring the PLO into the picture. That is his affair and not ours. It seems doubtful moreover whether we should do anything to promote the PLO - and any commitment to Palestinian self-determination as distinct from return to Jordan does just this - until they have amended the obnoxious parts of the Charter.

Two remarks not said to me directly but reported are perhaps worth recording:

King Hussein: "So Tony Nutting is in charge of the Foreign Office again"!

Prince Hassan: "If they think King Hussein is another Bishop Muzorewa they had better think again"!

I would only add that Prince Hassan welcomed Mr. Begin's demand for an international force to police the Sinai as perhaps a useful precedent for ~~an~~ eventual transition period in the West Bank.

I am copying this letter to Peter Carrington and Francis Pym.

By am - ,
Julian.
Julian Amery

The Rt.Hon. Mrs. Margaret Thatcher, M.P.



Note on Prince Hassan's view of a possible Jerusalem settlement

I asked Prince Hassan if he had any views on a possible settlement of Jerusalem. He said that the problem was perhaps not as intractable as people thought. Could not the City remain united under a single municipality - a kind of Greater Jerusalem Council? Could it not be divided into a number of boroughs some of which would be Arab and some Israeli? Could not sovereignty over these boroughs - including political rights - correspond to the predominant nationality in each of them but without prejudice to the unity of the City. The Old City, within the walls, might have a separate status as a kind of Ecumenical Vatican. It could have sovereignty status though its municipal services would be run by the Great Jerusalem Council.

These ideas correspond rather closely to those expressed to me by the Israeli Mayor of Jerusalem, Teddy Kollek, and described to you in one of the enclosures to my letter of 20th February.

JA.
