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TO PRIORITY FCO

TELNO 17 OF 13 JAN 82

INFO PRIORITY TO MOD (DI4B) BAGHDAD JEDDA TEL AVIV WASHINGTON

INFO ROUTINE TO BEIRUT CAIRO DAMASCUS RABAT AND UKMIS NEW YORK

JORDAN/MIDDLE EAST

JORDAN/ISRAEL

1. I SAW KING HUSSEIN ON THE EVENING OF 12 JANUARY. AFTER WARMLY WELCOMING YOUR PROPOSED VISIT TO JORDAN IN APRIL WHICH HE INTENDED DISCUSSING WITH HIS FOREIGN MINISTER LATER IN THE EVENING, THE KING REFERRED TO WHAT HE TERMED THE VERY DISTURBING INCIDENT REPORTED IN MY TELNO 12 (IN WHICH 6 ISRAELI HELICOPTERS HAD FLOWN OVER JORDANIAN AND SAUDI TERRITORY ON THE NIGHT OF 10 JANUARY AND HAD SPENT SEVERAL HOURS IN IRAQ BEFORE RETURNING BY A SIMILAR ROUTE). HE WAS STILL COMPLETELY IN THE DARK AS TO WHAT THE PURPOSE OF THEIR MISSION WAS AND HAD APPARENTLY RECEIVED NO INFORMATION FROM THE IRAQIS. BUT IT FOLLOWED ON TWO OTHER RECENT ISRAELI AERIAL INCURSIONS (SEE JEDDA TELNO U2G/026 OF 12 JANUARY), AND THE KING SPECULATED THAT THE ISRAELIS MIGHT EITHER BE PREPARING FOR ANOTHER MAJOR OPERATION AGAINST IRAQ OR THAT THE MISSION HAD SOME INCKOWN INTELLIGENCE PURPOSE, OR POSSIBLY BOTH. A THIRD POSSIBILITY WAS THAT THE ISRAELIS WERE SIMPLY TRYING TO PROVOKE THE ARABS INTO PROVIDING THEM WITH AN EXCUSE TO STAGE A MAJOR RETALIATORY INCIDENT. HE AGREED WHEN I SUGGESTED THAT THE ISRAELIS HAD MADE LITTLE OR NO ATTEMPT TO CONCEAL THE FLIGHT, BUT SAID THAT THE HELICOPTERS WOULD HAVE BEEN FLYING VERY LOW AND WOULD THEREFORE PROBABLY HAVE ESCAPED RADAR DETECTION. THE KING REVEALED THAT THE JORDANIANS HAD FIRED ON THE HELICOPTERS ON THEIR RETURN JOURNEY, BUT CLAIMED THAT THEY HAD BEEN OUT OF RANGE. HE TOLD ME THAT THE JORDANIANS HAD OBSERVED A HEAVY BUILD-UP TO THE OPERATION, AND ASKED IF WE COULD OFFER ANY EXPLANATION OF WHAT THE ISRAELIS WERE DOING. HE SAID THAT ALL THIS, TAKEN TOGETHER WITH OTHER ISRAELI MILITARY MOVES OPPOSITE SYRIA AND JORDAN IN RECENT WEEKS AND THE ANNEXATION OF GOLAN, MADE HIM VERY UNEASY.

SAUDI ARABIA

2. COMMENTING ON HIS RECENT VISIT TO SAUDI ARABIA ON 7/8 JANUARY, THE KING SAID IT HAD ON THE WHOLE BEEN A SATISFACTORY VISIT AND HE HAD SEEN KING KHALED AND PRINCES SULTAN, TURKI BIN FEISAL AND ABDULLAH, BUT NOT PRINCE FAHD (IT MUST HAVE BEEN A DISAPPOINTMENT TO HIM NOT TO SEE FAHD, AS IT IS OF COURSE WITH

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HIM IN PARTICULAR THAT THE KING WOULD HAVE WANTED TO DISCUSS WHAT SHOULD BE DONE BETWEEN NOW AND ~~THE~~ RECONVENING OF THE FEZ SUMMIT CONFERENCE). HE HOPED THAT PRINCE FAHD WOULD SHORTLY PAY A VISIT TO JORDAN. THE KING CLAIMED THAT THE SAUDIS SEEMED QUITE DETERMINED TO PURSUE THE COURSE AGREED BETWEEN PRINCE FAHD, KING HASSAN AND HIMSELF AT RABAT, THAT THEY HAD AGREED THAT THE FEZ SUMMIT SHOULD NOT BE RECONVENED UNTIL AFTER THE COMPLETION OF ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL FROM SINAI AND THAT EVERYTHING POSSIBLE SHOULD BE DONE TO RALLY THE MODERATE ARABS IN THE MEANWHILE. THE KING TOLD ME THAT HE HAD SENSED PRINCE ABDULLAH WAS RATHER OUT OF STEP WITH THE OTHERS SEMICOLON HE HAD LEARNED THAT IT WAS APPARENTLY PRINCE ABDULLAH WHO HAD TAKEN THE INITIATIVE IN RESUMING RELATIONS WITH LIBYA, AND THAT THIS HAD CAUSED SOME EMBARRASSMENT TO THE OTHER SAUDI LEADERS AS IT WAS DIFFICULT TO EXPLAIN PUBLICLY THE SUDDEN SWITCHES IN SAUDI POLICY INVOLVED. THE SAUDIS HAD CLAIMED TO THE KING THAT THEY WERE NOT INTENDING TO PAY FURTHER SUMS OF MONEY TO SYRIA, BUT HE GAVE ME THE IMPRESSION THAT HE DID NOT ALTOGETHER BELIEVE THEIR ASSURANCES ON THIS SUBJECT.

#### IRAQ

3. THE KING TOLD ME THAT HE WOULD BE VISITING IRAQ ON 16 JANUARY (PRESUMABLY THE VISIT HE HAD BEEN HOPING TO PAY BEFORE CHRISTMAS--SEE MY TELNO 486 OF 13 DECEMBER 1981). HE SAID THE IRAQIS WERE ACHIEVING AIR SUPERIORITY UP TO A DISTANCE OF ABOUT 150 MILES BEHIND THE IRANIAN LINES, BUT THAT RECENTLY THEIR AIRCRAFT HAD BEGUN TO BE SHOT DOWN BY MISSILES FIRED WITH UNUSUAL ACCURACY. THE IRAQIS THEMSELVES SUSPECTED THAT THIS MIGHT BE DUE TO ISRAELI TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE SEMICOLON HE WAS AFRAID THAT THE IRAQIS MIGHT RETALIATE IN SOME WAY, AND FEARED THE POSSIBLE CONSEQUENCES.

4. THE KING SAID THAT JORDANIAN AIR FORCE TECHNICIANS WERE AT PRESENT IN IRAQ, HELPING TO REPAIR 20 OLD IRAQI HUNTER AIRCRAFT WHICH THE IRAQIS WERE INTENDING TO BRING BACK INTO USE.

#### SYRIA

5. HE SAID THAT THERE HAD BEEN NO IMPROVEMENT WHATEVER IN JORDANIAN RELATIONS WITH SYRIA. THINGS REMAINED AS BAD AS EVER, AND HE DID NOT AT PRESENT SEE ANYTHING HE COULD DO TO IMPROVE MATTERS.

6. I AM REPORTING SEPARATELY COMMENTS MADE BY THE KING ON THE ITALIAN FOREIGN MINISTER'S RECENT VISIT TO JORDAN AND ON JORDANIAN INTERNAL AFFAIRS.



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7. AT THE END, THE KING REVERTED TO RECENT ISRAELI ACTIONS: OVERFLIGHTS OF JORDAN, SAUDI ARABIA AND IRAQ, ANNEXATION OF THE GOLAN, REINFORCEMENT OF THEIR FORCES ON VARIOUS FRONTS. HE KEPT REPEATING THAT THERE MUST BE SOMETHING BEHIND ALL THIS AND THAT HE HAD AN UNEASY FEELING THAT WE MIGHT ALL BE IN FOR A NASTY SURPRISE. THE CONTINUING WAR WITH IRAN WAS A SERIOUS SOURCE OF WEAKNESS FOR THE ARABS AND HE WISHED SOMETHING COULD BE DONE TO STOP IT. AS FAR AS HE WAS CONCERNED, 1982 HAD GOT OFF TO A DIFFICULT START.

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ADDITIONAL DISTRIBUTION  
ARAB/ISRAEL DISPUTE

IRAQ/IRAN

[NOT ADVANCED]

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