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FM AMMAN 110955Z FEB 82  
TO PRIORITY FCO

10. DOWNING STREET. (2COPIES).

TELEGVAZ NUMBER 074 OF 11 FEB  
FNFO PRIORITY MODUK (DI4B) ROUTINE BAGHDAD BEIRUT CAIRO DAMASCUS  
TEHRAN TEL AVIV UKMIS NEWYORK WASHINGTON ABU DHABI BAHRAIN DOHA  
JEDDA DUBAI KUWAIT AND MUSCAT

YOUR TELNO 17: JORDAN/IRAQ

1. I HAD A LONG TALK WITH KING HUSSEIN YESTERDAY AFTERNOON AT HIS HOME, IN THE COURSE OF WHICH I MADE THE POINTS IN YOUR TUR. THE KING SAID HE WAS VERY WELL AWARE OF THE POTENTIAL EMBARRASSMENT TO OUR DEFENCE RELATIONSHIP OF TOO DEEP A JORDANIAN INVOLVEMENT IN THE CONFLICT BETWEEN IRAQ AND IRAN AND WAS DETERMINED TO LIMIT JORDANIAN INTERVENTION TO THE DESPATCH OF VOLUNTEERS. HE WENT ON TO TELL ME (EMPHASISING THAT HE WAS SPEAKING IN STRICT CONFIDENCE) THAT HE HAD JUST AGREED WITH THE IRAQIS THAT THE JORDANIAN VOLUNTEER FORCE WOULD BE INTEGRATED INTO IRAQI UNITS AND WOULD WEAR IRAQI UNIFORMS. HE HOPED THAT THIS MIGHT BE HELPFUL IN EMPHASISING THE LIMITED AND SYMBOLIC ROLE JORDAN WOULD BE PLAYING AND ALSO IN ENSURING THAT JORDAN COULD NOT BE REPRESENTED AS A BELLIGERENT. HE CLAIMED THAT THE IRAQIS FULLY SHARED HIS CONCERN THAT THIS SHOULD NOT HAPPEN.

2. THE KING SAID HE ENTIRELY AGREED THAT THE WAR SHOULD BE TERMINATED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE SEMICLN HE HOPED THAT THE LATEST DECLARATION OF JORDANIAN SUPPORT FOR IRAQ WOULD ENCOURAGE THE IRANIANS TO ACCEPT PEACE ON REASONABLE TERMS. BUT THE KING WAS NOT HOPEFUL THAT ANY OF THE CURRENT NEGOTIATING EFFORTS WOULD PRODUCE THIS RESULT. HE REMARKED THAT MR PALME SEEMED TO BE LIMITING HIS EFFORTS TO FREEING SHIPS TRAPPED IN THE SHATT, AND THOUGHT IT A PITY THAT PALME WAS NOT APPARENTLY ADDRESSING HIMSELF TO THE WIDER ISSUES.

3. WE THEN DISCUSSED THE COURSE OF THE WAR ITSELF. THE KING BELIEVED THAT THE JORDANIAN DECISION TO SEND VOLUNTEERS HAD HAD AN IMMEDIATE BENEFICIAL EFFECT ON THE MORALE OF THE IRAQI ARMED FORCES. THE KING WAS AWARE OF REPORTS THAT THE IRANIANS MIGHT BE PLANNING A MAJOR COUNTER-OFFENSIVE IN THE SOUTH SEMICLN HE ASSUMED THAT THE IRAQIS WERE TRYING TO BLUNT THIS BY PRE-EMPTIVE ATTACKS. HE UNDERSTOOD THAT THE IRAQIS RETAINED CONTROL OF THE AIR AND THAT THEIR AIR FORCE WAS PLAYING AN EFFECTIVE ROLE.

4. THE KING ALSO SPOKE AT LENGTH ON FAMILIAR LINES OF THE DANGER WHICH THE PARTICULAR BRAND OF SHI'ITE FANATICISM NOW PREVALENT IN IRAN POSED FOR ALL THE ARAB STATES OF THE GULF AREA. IF IRAQ WERE TO COLLAPSE, THE REST OF THEM WOULD NOT LAST LONG. OF COURSE HE WOULD GO TO THE HELP OF OTHER GULF STATES IF THEY NEEDED IT: HE REFERRED TO THE JOINT MILITARY EXERCISES AT PRESENT BEING PLANNED WITH BAHRAIN (MY TELNO 56), BUT CLAIMED THAT HE COULD HARDLY SUPPORT BAHRAIN AND NOT GIVE HELP TO IRAQ WHICH WAS THE KEY TO THE WHOLE GULF AREA.

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5. THE KING MADE A RATHER OBSCURE REFERENCE TO A RECENT VISIT WHICH THE SYRIAN MINISTER OF INFORMATION HAD PAID TO IRAN AND TO A MOVE TO HAVE THE ALAWITE SECT BROUGHT WITHIN SHI'ITE ORTHODOXY SEMICLN HE THOUGHT THIS A SINISTER DEVELOPMENT. HE ALSO SAID HE HAD HAD A REPORT THAT IT WAS THE AMERICANS WHO HAD TIPPED OFF PRESIDENT ASAD ABOUT THE LATEST PLOT AGAINST HIM. HE INTENDED TAKING THIS UP WITH MR WEINBERGER, WHO IS AT PRESENT VISITING JORDAN (I HAVE WARNED THE US AMBASSADOR OF THIS POSSIBILITY: THE JORDANIAN SUSPICION THAT THE AMERICANS HAVE SOME SORT OF SPECIAL UNDER-COVER RELATIONSHIP WITH THE ASAD REGIME IS A LONG-STANDING ONE).

URWICK

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