



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

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*Dear John,*King Hussein's Message to the Prime Minister

// King Hussein gave HM Ambassador Amman on 13 October a letter to the Prime Minister together with a folder of the King's correspondence with the Americans since June. These were reported in Amman telegrams 427 - 9. I now enclose the originals, together with copies of the telegrams.

The correspondence with the Americans covers Lebanon and exchanges over President Reagan's initiative. Mr Urwick telegraphed the two most revealing messages; we have not had time to study the remainder in detail, but they appear to add little to our knowledge of US/Jordanian relations. In particular, there is nothing in the King's messages which amount to a substantive rejection of any part of President Reagan's proposals.

Two main themes predominate in the messages from the King. First, he repeatedly makes clear Jordan's willingness to participate in the new peace process on the basis of Resolution 242, but that in order to do so he needs the support of the Palestinians and other Arabs. Secondly, he indicates lingering doubts about the American determination to follow through the process launched by President Reagan. The King's purpose in passing these papers to us is presumably to show us the basis on which he has agreed to co-operate with the Americans, and the pressure he is under from the American side to move rapidly towards negotiations.

All this provides useful background to the King's account of his discussions with Arafat in Amman. The King was evidently encouraged by this first round of talks. Arafat appears to be showing realism on several points:

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- (i) On a Palestinian state, the King told the US Ambassador in Amman that Arafat had said that while he was obliged to maintain his support in public for the immediate establishment of a state, he would in practice quietly drop this (easier said than done);
- (ii) Arafat accepted that some form of unity between Jordan and the Palestinian entity was the only sensible foundation on which to build; this is to be the subject of the follow-up Jordanian/PLO discussions;
- (iii) Arafat had ruled out the military option, and had given a firm commitment to stop all military operations into the Occupied Territories from Jordan, or mounted through Jordan;
- (iv) The King considered that he had made some impact on Arafat in arguing that it was essential for the PLO to make a clear statement recognising Israel's right to exist, and that this was the only obstacle in the path of a US/PLO dialogue.

This is as much as could have been expected from the initial round of talks, and in itself marks a considerable improvement in Jordan's relations with the PLO under Arafat. If further progress is to be made, Arafat must now unite the PLO leadership around a political strategy based on closer co-operation with Jordan, in preparation for the meeting of the Palestine National Council expected within the next month. There have already been rumblings of dissent from PLO factions in Damascus, undoubtedly stimulated by the Syrians, who are nervous about the increased warmth of relations between Jordan and the PLO.

The King believes that he has done well to bring the PLO to accept that Jordan/Palestinian relations are a matter to be decided by the two peoples 'within the context of the family that both form'. But unless he and the other Arab moderates can keep up the pressure on the PLO, the 'heads of agreement' he seems to have reached with Arafat may start to unravel. At the same time, he is concerned that the Americans are expecting him to move too far too fast, and he cannot afford to be seen as the agent of the US in the Arab world. He is therefore subject to pressure from both sides and deserves encouragement, particularly in his effort to persuade Arafat of the central importance of a statement recognising Israel's rights.

/I enclose



/ I enclose a draft reply from the Prime Minister to King Hussein's letter. The King said that he was 'looking forward to meeting the Prime Minister at the earliest opportunity'. He has told the US Ambassador in Amman that he is thinking of visiting Washington shortly after the visit of the Arab League team led by King Hassan on 22 October (though we have since heard that the Americans may be encouraging a later date). He may therefore already be thinking of stopping over in London on his way to or from Washington. We should encourage him to do this.

Yours ever

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