

MIDDLE EAST  
PS TO NO 10 DOWNING STREET.

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DESKBY 211100Z JAN - FCO

FM AMMAN 210850Z JAN 83

TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 29 OF 21 JAN

INFO IMMEDIATE RABAT, TUNIS: ROUTINE OTHER MIDDLE EAST POSTS,  
BRUSSELS, MADRID, UKMIS NEWYORK, WASHINGTON  
AND INFO PRIORITY MODUK (DI4).

MF

MY TELNO 26 (NOT TO ALL): JORDAN/MIDDLE EAST

1. ALTHOUGH I WAS NOT ACCORDED A SEPARATE AUDIENCE (KING HUSSEIN IS RECOVERING FROM A BAD COLD AND HAS BEEN REDUCING OFFICIAL ENGAGEMENTS TO A MINIMUM), WE DINED WITH THE KING AND QUEEN LAST NIGHT WITH ONLY THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF AND HIS WIFE AND ONE OTHER COUPLE PRESENT. KING HUSSEIN MADE THE FOLLOWING POINTS IN THE COURSE OF MORE GENERAL DISCUSSION.

ARAB LEAGUE DELEGATION VISIT TO LONDON.

2. THE KING HOPED AND TRUSTED THAT OUR DIFFICULTIES WERE NOW AT AN END AND THAT THE VISIT WOULD TAKE PLACE AS PLANNED. HE PERSONALLY WONDERED WHAT THEY WOULD HAVE TO DISCUSS SEMICLN THE SITUATION HAD CHANGED SINCE FEZ. WHEN I SAID THAT I HOPED THE PROPOSAL THAT MILHEM SHOULD BE THE PALESTINIAN REPRESENTATIVE, WHICH HAD ORIGINALLY COME FROM THE ARAB SIDE, WOULD NOT BE ALLOWED TO GET IN THE WAY OF THE DELEGATION'S VISIT THE KING DID NOT REPEAT HIS EARLIER OBJECTIONS TO MILHEM (MY TELNO 9) AND SAID WITH EMPHASIS THAT HE HAD URGED EVERY ARAB RULER WITH WHOM HE HAD BEEN IN TOUCH (HE HAS OF COURSE RECENTLY SEEN BOTH PRESIDENT SADDAM AND KING FAHD) TO GET THE VISIT TO LONDON OVER SO THAT ATTENTION COULD BE CONCENTRATED ON THE POSSIBILITY OF NEGOTIATING FOR THE RECOVERY OF THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES. I SAID THAT WE TOO WERE MOST ANXIOUS THAT THE VISIT SHOULD GO AHEAD AND WERE NOT OF COURSE INSISTING ON MILHEM IF THE ARABS WANTED TO PROPOSE ANOTHER SUITABLE PERSONALITY SEMICLN THERE WAS NO DISCUSSION OF NAMES OF POSSIBLE ALTERNATIVES, BUT THE KING WELL UNDERSTANDS THAT THE PRIME MINISTER AND THE QUEEN WOULD NOT WISH TO RECEIVE SOMEONE WHO WAS OPEN TO ACCUSATIONS OF PAST INVOLVEMENT IN TERRORISM.

3. MY IMPRESSION WAS THAT THE KING WILL CONTINUE TO USE HIS INFLUENCE TO PRESS FOR AN EARLY VISIT TO LONDON AND TO SMOOTH OVER ANY FURTHER DIFFICULTIES WHICH MAY ARISE. THE JORDANIAN FOREIGN MINISTER HAS ALREADY LEFT FOR RABAT FOR THE MEETINGS OF THE JERUSALEM COMMITTEE AND OF THE ARAB LEAGUE DELEGATION FOREIGN MINISTERS.

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GULF WAR

4. COMMENTING ON HIS RECENT VISIT TO IRAQ, THE KING SAID HE HAD FOUND THE IRAQIS CONFIDENT OF THEIR ABILITY TO REPEL THE LONG-EXPECTED IRANIAN OFFENSIVE. THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SAID THAT THE ATTACK MUST NOW BE IMMINENT: WITHIN THE PREVIOUS 48 HOURS THE IRANIANS HAD MOVED FORWARD 2 ARMoured BRIGADES AND WERE IN POSITION TO LAUNCH THEIR OFFENSIVE AT ANY MOMENT.

SYRIA/IRAQ

4. THE KING SAID PRESIDENT SADDAM HAD TELEPHONED HIM ON 20 JANUARY CONCERNING SAUDI EFFORTS TO BRING ABOUT A RAPPROCHEMENT BETWEEN SYRIA AND IRAQ (MY TELELETTER TO MR MILES OF 19 JANUARY REFERS). THE SYRIANS HAD PROPOSED TO THE SAUDIS A SECRET MEETING SOMEWHERE IN EUROPE 'SO THAT THEIR IRANIAN FRIENDS WOULD NOT HEAR ABOUT IT' BETWEEN SYRIAN, IRAQI AND SAUDI REPRESENTATIVES. BOTH PRESIDENT SADDAM AND KING HUSSEIN HAD REJECTED THE IDEA OF A MEETING IN EUROPE AND HAD SUGGESTED THAT IT SHOULD TAKE PLACE IN SAUDI ARABIA.

KING HUSSEIN'S TRAVEL PLANS

5. KING HUSSEIN TOLD ME HE WOULD BE PAYING A SERIES OF RAPID VISITS TO GULF STATES ON 22 AND 23 JANUARY, INCLUDING KUWAIT BAHREIN AND OMAN (BUT EXCLUDING ABU DHABI BECAUSE THE RULER WAS AWAY). HE WOULD RETURN TO AMMAN FOR ONE DAY AND THEN PAY A BRIEF VISIT WITH QUEEN NOOR TO SPAIN TO SEE KING JUAN CARLOS AND QUEEN SOPHIA BEFORE VISITING BELGIUM AS THE GUESTS OF THE KING AND QUEEN. HE SAID HOW SAD HE WAS NOT TO HAVE BEEN ABLE TO VISIT BRITAIN ON THIS OCCASION, BUT THAT HE FELT HE SHOULD WAIT UNTIL AFTER THE ARAB LEAGUE DELEGATION'S VISIT 'ALTHOUGH IF THEY HAVE NOT SORTED THEMSELVES OUT SOON, I SHALL VISIT LONDON IN ANY CASE.'

6. THIS PROGRAMME WOULD SEEM TO PRECLUDE A FURTHER MEETING BETWEEN THE KING AND ARAFAT AT LEAST UNTIL THE END OF JANUARY. KING HUSSEIN SAID HE WAS SENDING THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF TO SAUDI ARABIA AT THE END OF THIS WEEK. FROM THE WAY THEY SPOKE, I OBTAINED THE IMPRESSION THAT GENERAL SHAKER'S PRINCIPAL OBJECTIVE WILL BE TO OBTAIN MUCH-NEEDED FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR JORDAN FROM THE SAUDIS.

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