

MIDDLE EAST: ADVANCE COPIES

16

M/Extr

PS
PS/MR HURD
PS/PUS
SIR J LEAHY
MR EGERTON
SIR J BULLARD
HD/NENAD
HD/MED
HD/UND

Situation

NO 10 DOWNING STREET
CABINET OFFICE D10

HD/... ..

ED/CONSULAR DEPT

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PUSD (2)
NEWS D
RESIDENT CLERK

ms

CONFIDENTIAL

FROM AMMAN 160900Z MAR 83

TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELNO 112 OF 15 MARCH 1983

AND TO INFO ROUTINE MIDDLE EAST POSTS ,BONN,MOSCOW,PARIS
UKMIS NEW YORK AND WASHINGTON.

JORDAN /PLO

1. I HAVE SEEN BOTH KING HUSSEIN (WHO LEAVES FOR BONN TOMORROW MORNING) AND THE JORDANIAN FOREIGN MINISTER TODAY, AS WELL AS THE US AMBASSADOR WHO HAS SEEN MUCH OF KING HUSSEIN AND HIS PRINCIPLE ADVISERS OVER THE LAST TWO DAYS DURING EX-PRESIDENT CARTERS VISIT TO JORDAN. A REVEIW OF THE LATEST POSITION AS THE JORDANIANS SEE IT MAY THEREFORE BE HELPFUL PRIOR TO KING HUSSEINS MEETINGS IN LONDON WITH THE PRIME MINISTER AND YOURSELF LATER THIS WEEK.

2. KING HUSSEIN TOLD ME THAT IT HAD NOT PROVED POSSIBLE TO HAVE SERIOUS DISCUSSION WITH ARAFAT IN NEW DELHI. SEMICLON THERE HAD BEEN TO MANY PEOPLE PRESENT AT THEIR MEETING AND ARAFAT HAD DELIBERATELY WASTED TIME BY RAISING TRIVIAL SUBJECTS SUCH AS THE LOSS BY GEORGE HABBASH'S WIFE OF HER JORDANIAN PASSPORT. CONSEQUENTLY HE STILL FOUND IT VERY DIFFICULT TO JUDGE WHETHER ARAFAT WOULD PROVE WILLING TO JOIN WITH HIM IN PUBLICLY ANNOUNCING HIS READINESS TO ENTER PEACE NEGOTIATIONS WHEN HE NEXT VISITED AMMAN (HE IS EXPECTED HERE ON OR ABOUT 21 MARCH). HOWEVER THE KING THOUGHT THE SIGNALS COMING FROM THE PLO WERE NOT ENCOURAGING SEMICOLON IT WAS CLEAR, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT THE RUSSIANS WERE PUTTING GREAT PRESSURE ON ARAFAT NOT TO GO AHEAD WITH NEGOTIATIONS. THE JORDANIAN FOREIGN MINISTER WAS MUCH MORE PESSIMISTIC AND SAID FIRMLY THAT HE DID NOT BELIEVE ARAFAT WOULD DELIVER.

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3. KING HUSSEIN ALSO COMPLAINED TO ME THAT HE WAS GETTING LITTLE HELP FROM HIS SUPPOSED FRIENDS. HE SEEMED PARTICULARLY UNCERTAIN WHAT GAME THE SAUDIS WERE PLAYING. HE SAID HE HAD BEEN ENRAGED OVER A CLAIM MADE BY PRINCE BANDAR TO THE AMERICANS THAT ARAFAT HAD AGREED TO ANNOUNCE JOINTLY WITH KING HUSSEIN ON 25 MARCH THAT JORDAN AND A DELEGATION OF NON PLO PALESTINIAN REPRESENTATIVES WERE PREPARED TO ENTER INTO NEGOTIATIONS SEMICOLON PRINCE BANDAR HAD FURTHER ALLEGED THAT THESE NEGOTIATIONS WOULD BE ON THE BASIS OF THE FEZ DECLARATION AND THAT KING HUSSEIN HAD AGREED TO JOIN WITH KING FAHD AND ARAFAT IN SIGNING A SECRET DOCUMENT STATING THAT THERE WOULD BE NO FEDERATION BETWEEN THE WEST BANK AND JORDAN. KING HUSSEIN SAID HE HAD CATEGORICALLY DENIED TO THE AMERICANS EVER HAVING DISCUSSED SUCH PROPOSALS WITH PRINCE BANDAR. THE KING ALSO SEEMED UNSURE WHAT WEIGHT TO PLACE ON DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN THE MOROCCAN FOREIGN MINISTER AND KISSINGER WHICH HAD GIVEN RISE TO SOME THOROUGHLY CONFUSING IDEAS. HE RECALLED THAT WHEN THE REAGAN INITIATIVE HAD BEEN UNDER DISCUSSION, THE PRESIDENT HAD TOLD HIM TO DEAL EXCLUSIVELY WITH HIMSELF AND HIS NOMINATED REPRESENTATIVES. HE FOUND IT PUZZLING THAT OTHER AMERICANS WERE APPARENTLY NOW BEING ALLOWED TO GET IN ON THE ACT (THESE COMMENTS MAY ALSO REFLECT UNCERTAINTY ABOUT CARTERS PRECISE ROLE, ALTHOUGH I UNDERSTAND FROM THE US AMBASSADOR THAT CARTERS VISIT RESULTED IN A TOTAL RECONCILIATION BETWEEN HIM AND THE KING AND THAT CARTER PROMISED THE KING HE WOULD DO EVERYTHING HE COULD TO HELP JORDAN BOTH WITH KING FAHD, WHOM CARTER IS SEEING TODAY, AND WITH PRESIDENT ASSAD, WHOM HE IS TO SEE ON 16 MARCH).

4. THE KING GAVE ME THE IMPRESSION OF BEING UNDER HEAVY PRESSURE AND, WHILE STILL DETERMINED TO PURSUE THE OPENING OFFERED BY THE REAGAN INITIATIVE IF HE POSSIBLY CAN, INCREASINGLY DOUBTFUL WHETHER HE CAN PULL IT OFF. THE US AMBASSADOR TOLD ME HE BELIEVED THE KING HAD ONLY RECENTLY COME TO A FULL UNDERSTANDING OF THE CONSTRAINTS ON HIS FREEDOM OF ACTION. HE NOW REALISED THAT HE COULD NOT BRING THE OTHER MODERATE ARAB COUNTRIES ALONG UNLESS HE OBTAINED THE BLESSING OF THE PLO AND HE WAS NOW LESS HOPEFUL OF OBTAINING A GREEN LIGHT FROM ARAFAT THAN HE HAD BEEN TWO WEEKS AGO, FOLLOWING THE PALESTINE NATIONAL COUNCIL MEETING IN ALGIERS. MY OWN VIEW IS THAT THE KING HAS ALL ALONG BEEN AWARE OF THESE CONSTRAINTS AND, AT LEAST IN HIS HEART OF HEARTS, SCEPTICAL OF THE CHANCES OF SUCCESS. BUT HE WAS NONETHELESS DETERMINED TO MAKE ALL HE COULD OF THE REAGAN INITIATIVE AND TO ENSURE THAT HE WOULD NOT BE BLAMED IF IT FAILED.

5. THE KING'S ADVISERS ARE ALREADY DEBATING WHAT HE SHOULD DO IF ARAFAT FAILS TO COME FORWARD. THE FOREIGN MINISTER, FOR EXAMPLE, TOLD ME THAT HE WAS STRONGLY OPPOSED TO KING HUSSEIN VISITING WASHINGTON IMMEDIATELY AFTER ARAFAT'S VISIT AS SOME HAD SUGGESTED SEMICOLON HE THOUGHT IT WOULD BE QUITE WRONG FOR THE KING TO GO TO WASHINGTON IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, AS IT WOULD EMPHASISE HIS DEPENDENCE ON THE UNITED STATES AT A TIME WHEN THE FIRST PRIORITY WOULD BE TO DO WHATEVER WAS POSSIBLE TO PROTECT THE INHABITANTS OF THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES FROM FURTHER ISRAELI ENCROACHMENT.

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6. THE KING TOLD ME HOW MUCH HE WAS LOOKING FORWARD TO DISCUSSING ALL THIS WITH THE PRIME MINISTER AND YOURSELF LATER THIS WEEK. AT THE MOMENT HE SEEMS PARTICULARLY TROUBLED BY SAUDI AND MOROCCAN ACTIVITIES AND UNCERTAIN ABOUT THE US ROLE. I TOOK THE OPPORTUNITY TO BRIEF HIM ON YOUR RECENT TALK WITH SHULTZ AND HAVE ALSO LEFT WITH HIM A COPY OF YOUR LETTER TO QASEM (YOUR TELNO 58).

CCN PARA 4 LINE 9

A GREEN LIGHT FROM ARAFAT THAN ...

URWICK

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