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TO IMMEDIATE F C O

TELEGRAM NUMBER 154 OF 6 APRIL 1983

REPEATED PRIORITY WASHINGTON

REPEATED ROUTINE MIDDLE EAST POSTS, MOSCOW, PARIS AND UKMIS NEW YORK.

MY TELNO 152: JORDAN/PLO

1. MY US COLLEAGUE SAW KING HUSSEIN LAST NIGHT AFTER ARAFAT'S DEPARTURE FOR KUWAIT. VIETS SAID THAT THE KING, WHO WAS LOOKING VERY TIRED (HE HAS HAD SIX SEPARATE PRIVATE MEETINGS WITH ARAFAT IN THE LAST FEW DAYS: THE LOCAL PRESS HAS ONLY REPORTED FOUR), NONETHELESS PERKED UP CONSIDERABLY IN THE COURSE OF A LONG DISCUSSION. THE KING IS APPARENTLY KEEPING EVEN HIS CLOSEST ADVISERS IN THE DARK ABOUT HIS TALKS WITH ARAFAT AND CROWN PRINCE HASSAN ~~HAD~~ AS I HAVE ALREADY REPORTED, TAKEN NO PART IN THEM. THE KING HAD LAID EXTRAORDINARY EMPHASIS ON THE NEED FOR SECURITY SEMI COLON VIETS HOPED WE WOULD THEREFORE UNDERSTAND IT IF HE GAVE A GENERAL PICTURE OF WHAT WAS HAPPENING WITHOUT ENTERING INTO DETAIL, AND HE ASKED THAT HIS CONFIDENCE BE RESPECTED.

2. ACCORDING TO VIETS, THE KING HIMSELF STILL BELIEVED HE HAD A GOOD CHANCE OF OBTAINING ARAFAT'S SIGNATURE TO A DOCUMENT, THE TEXT OF WHICH ARAFAT IS CARRYING WITH HIM ON HIS PRESENT TOUR OF ARAB COUNTRIES AND WHICH STATES IN GENERAL TERMS PLO AGREEMENT TO THE ESSENTIALS IN THE REAGAN INITIATIVE. THE KING HOWEVER THOUGHT IT WOULD BE A CLOSE RUN THING. HE REMAINED MISTRUSTFUL OF ARAFAT AND VERY CONCERNED THAT IT MIGHT PROVE DIFFICULT TO HOLD HIM TO WHAT HE HAD SAID IN PRIVATE DISCUSSION WITHOUT OTHER PLO LEADERS PRESENT. THE MAIN REASON FOR ARAFAT'S VISIT TO KUWAIT WAS APPARENTLY TO CONSULT WITH ABU IYAD (SALAH KHALAF) AND THE FATAH CENTRAL COMMITTEE, AND TO MAKE ONE MORE ATTEMPT TO PERSUADE THE FATAH LEADERSHIP TO GO ALONG WITH THE DOCUMENT: ACCORDING TO THE KING, ARAFAT HAD MORE OR LESS GIVEN UP THE ATTEMPT TO WIN OVER THE RADICALS IN THE PLO. KING HUSSEIN DID NOT KNOW LAST NIGHT WHETHER ARAFAT WOULD GO ELSEWHERE ~~AFTER~~ KUWAIT, BUT HE SAID HE HAD GIVEN ARAFAT AN ABSOLUTE DEADLINE OF THE EVENING OF 7 APRIL TO STATE WHETHER OR NOT HE WAS WILLING TO SIGN THE DOCUMENT.

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3. KING HUSSEIN SAID HE HAD HAD A NUMBER OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATIONS WITH KING FAHD SEMICOLON THE SAUDI FOREIGN MINISTER HAD ARRIVED IN AMMAN LAST NIGHT TO BE BRIEFED ON THE LATEST SITUATION. PRINCE SAUD HAD NOT, AS FAR AS VIETS KNEW, BROUGHT THE ADDITIONAL US DOLLARS 150 MILLION PROMISED TO JORDAN. BUT VIETS CLAIMED THAT THE SAUDIS WERE BEING GENERALLY HELPFUL.

4. VIETS THOUGHT THAT IT COULD STILL GO EITHER WAY, AND IT WAS REALLY NOT POSSIBLE TO TELL AT THIS JUNCTURE WHETHER OR NOT ARAFAT WOULD AGREE TO SIGN THE DOCUMENT. EVEN IF HE DID, VIETS WAS NO LONGER EXPECTING IT TO BE FOLLOWED BY A PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT OF JORDANIAN/PLO WILLINGNESS TO ENTER NEGOTIATIONS. IF ARAFAT SIGNED, IT NOW SEEMS MUCH MORE LIKELY THAT BOTH HE AND KING HUSSEIN WOULD GO TO SAUDI ARABIA TO SEEK THE AGREEMENT OF KING FAHD AND THAT KING HUSSEIN, POSSIBLY ACCOMPANIED BY ARAFAT, WOULD THEN MAKE A SERIES OF QUICK VISITS TO ARAB COUNTRIES. THERE WAS THEN LIKELY TO BE AN ARAB SUMMIT MEETING: BOTH KING HUSSEIN AND KING FAHD NOW FAVOURED A SUMMIT MEETING RATHER THAN A MORE RESTRICTED MEETING OF STATES REPRESENTED ON THE FEZ DELEGATION, AS IN THE SMALLER FORUM SYRIA AND ALGERIA WOULD BOTH OPPOSE THE PEACE MOVES WHEREAS THE KING BELIEVED HE COULD COUNT ON THE SUPPORT OF 17 STATES AT AN ARAB SUMMIT. HOWEVER, HE AND KING FAHD HAD BOTH AGREED THAT THERE WOULD BE NO ARAB SUMMIT MEETING UNLESS ARAFAT HAD SIGNED THE DOCUMENT. IF ARAFAT REFUSED TO SIGN, THE KING THOUGHT THE SAUDIS MIGHT TAKE THE INITIATIVE IN TRYING TO ENSURE THAT THE MOMENTUM TOWARDS PEACE WAS NOT LOST.

5. VIETS WAS EMPHATIC THAT THE AMERICANS WERE NOT PUTTING UNDUE PRESSURE ON THE KING ALTHOUGH HE CONFIRMED THAT PRESIDENT REAGAN HAD SPOKEN TO HIM ON THE TELEPHONE ON 1 APRIL. CLUVERIUS FROM THE STATE DEPARTMENT IS STILL HERE, ALTHOUGH THIS HAS NOT BEEN PUBLICLY REVEALED AND VIETS WAS VERY VAGUE ABOUT THE PURPOSE OF HIS PRESENCE IN AMMAN.

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