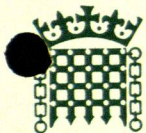


Confidential



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*with the
compliments of*

The Rt. Hon. Julian Amery, M.P.

HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA



CONFIDENTIAL

6th April, 1981.

Q. N. A.

I was in Jordan last weekend on a private visit and had talks with the King and Crown Prince.

I won't attempt to describe these in any detail but the following points may be worth reporting to you.

1. The King believes that Iraq holds the key to the future of the area. Saddam Hussein started the war with the main objective of bringing down the Khomeini regime. He was afraid that if this continued unchecked it would disrupt Iraq through the majority Shia community.

In the event Saddam Hussein had kept the allegiance of his own Shia population including those in the Army; but his military achievement had been disappointing. The Iraqis now claim that this was due to a reluctance to take on commitments in Khusistan, but this may have been a rationalisation of their failure to make more progress on the ground.

Sadam Hussein was moving steadily away from the Russians and towards the West. The King hoped we would do everything we could to encourage this. He was very glad that you had recently seen the Iraqi Foreign Minister.

If Iran did come to terms with Iraq, the Iraqis would probably launch a spring offensive. If this led to an Iraqi occupation of most of Khusistan it would then be for the Western Powers to help Iraq resolve resulting problems which they could hardly do on their own.

2. The PLO was a movement not a government or a party. It had its left wing and right wing. Some of its leaders were by no means pro Soviet and were reasonably conservative in outlook. The Jordanians were doing their best to strengthen the influence of the moderates as well as maintaining their own links with the West Bank. We had to remember, however, that the bulk of the PLO, both armed forces and civilians, were in the Lebanon and in Syria. They were ~~there~~ under Syrian and so indirectly under Russian control.

3. The determination of the new American administration to stand up to Soviet Imperialism was recognised and approved. But had they got the capability to stand up to the Soviets in the Middle East? The Jordanians had been disturbed to find that some items of military equipment which they had hoped to obtain from the Americans were not available, not because of any political difficulty but simply because the equipment was not there.



2.

4. I sensed considerable resentment against the Saudis, more particularly over their handling of the North Yemen. The future of the Arab world it was suggested might turn on the quadrangle Iraq, Oman, North Yemen and Jordan.

Long private discussions during the Amman Summit Conference suggested that they were thinking on very similar lines.

5. Prince Hassan mentioned to me that despite our longstanding connection with Jordan neither the Queen nor any Prime Minister in office had ever been to Amman. I asked him whether he wanted me to pass this on. He said he very much hoped that I would. I suppose one of the difficulties might be that a visit to Jordan might have to be balanced by a visit to Israel, but did not say so as I had a vague recollection that Wilson or Callaghan had been to Israel as Prime Minister.

Julian Amery

The Rt.Hon. Lord Carrington, KCMG, MC.

P.S. I am copying this letter to Margaret Thatcher and John Nott.