

ADVANCE COPIES

15

MIDDLE EAST

PS  
PS/MR RENTON  
PS/PUS  
MR DEREK THOMAS  
MR FERGUSSON  
S/O D. MIKAS.  
HD/NENAD  
HD/MED

NO. 10 DOOR STREET  
CABINET OFFICE DIO

ADVANCE COPY

IMMEDIATE

PUSD (2)  
NEWS DEPT  
RESIDENT CLERK

1.10.85

CONFIDENTIAL  
FM JERUSALEM  
TO IMMEDIATE FCO  
TELNO 120  
OF 221200Z MAY 86  
INFO IMMEDIATE AMMAN, TEL AVIV  
INFO PRIORITY CAIRO, DAMASCUS, WASHINGTON



JORDAN / OCCUPIED TERRITORIES

SUMMARY

1. MAYOR FREIJ OF BETHLEHEM RETURNS FROM AMMAN DISCOURAGED BY THE UNHAPPY ATMOSPHERE THERE. HE URGED THE PLO TO CURB CRITICISM OF JORDAN IN THE EAST JERUSALEM PRESS, TO CREATE A MORE FAVOURABLE CLIMATE FOR THE RAPPROCHEMENT WITH JORDAN THEY CLAIM TO WANT. BUT HE DETECTED NO JORDANIAN WILLINGNESS FOR RAPPROCHEMENT.

DETAIL

2. MAYOR FREIJ RETURNED FROM ATHENS AND AMMAN YESTERDAY AFTERNOON (21 MAY). HE CALLED THIS MORNING FOR A TOUR D'HORIZON BEFORE HE SEES THE PRIME MINISTER AT DINNER ON 26 MAY.

3. FREIJ WAS UNABLE TO SEE THE KING, BUT CALLED ON ZAID RIFAI, ADNAN ABU ODEH (MARWAN GASSEM WAS AWAY), TARIQ ALAUDDIN (DG OF THE GID), AND THE PLO TRIO OF KHALIL AL WAZIR (ABU JIHAD), BRIG GEN ABDUL RAZZAQ YAHYA, AND MOHAMMED MILHEM. HE WAS STRUCK BY THE GENERAL AIR OF UNHAPPINESS IN AMMAN, AND IN SOME QUARTERS EVEN DESPONDENCY. THE ECONOMIC SITUATION WAS BAD, AND MANY WERE ACUTELY NERVOUS ABOUT THE RECENT VIOLENCE AT YARMOUK UNIVERSITY (AMMAN TELNO 228). FEW COULD BELIEVE THAT THE FULL TRUTH HAD YET EMERGED: HE HIMSELF WAS SURE MUCH STILL LAY UNDER WRAPS. IT WAS STRIKING TO HIM TO HEAR EAST BANKERS BEING SO CRITICAL OF THE WAY THE INCIDENT WAS HANDLED, AND EXPRESSING SUCH UNEASE.

4. RIFAI AND ABU ODEH WERE ADAMANT THAT THERE WAS NO BASIS ON WHICH JORDAN COULD WORK WITH ARAFAT AND THE PRESENT LEADERSHIP OF THE PLO: THEY HAD PROVED THEMSELVES TOTALLY UNRELIABLE AND UNTRUSTWORTHY.

THEY HAD PROVED THEMSELVES TOTALLY UNRELIABLE AND UNTRUSTWORTHY. BOTH HAD GONE OUT OF THEIR WAY TO EMPHASIZE THAT ONLY THOSE IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES WHO HAD BEEN OPENLY CRITICAL OF JORDAN NEED WORRY; THEY WOULD RECEIVE THEIR JUST DESERTS, BUT OTHERS WOULD REMAIN WELCOME IN THE FOLD. (FREW HERE DENIED THAT HE HIMSELF HAD BEEN SEARCHED OR IN ANY WAY DISCOMFOTED ON CROSSING THE BRIDGE.) JORDAN WOULD BE WORKING TO STRENGTHEN ITS STRUCTURES IN THE WEST BANK, AND TO SHOW THAT WEST BANKERS' TRUE INTERESTS LAY IN COOPERATION WITH JORDAN. INVITED TO OFFER SUGGESTIONS, FREW HAD STRESSED THE IMPORTANCE OF HELP FOR "LEGITIMATE" MUNICIPALITIES, EDUCATION, AND HOSPITALS AND OTHER HEALTH SERVICES. WHEN HE ASKED FREW WHERE HE THOUGHT THE MONEY WOULD COME FROM, GIVEN THE GENERALLY DIFFICULT ECONOMIC SITUATION IN JORDAN, AND THE DRYING UP OF CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE JOINT FUND, HE SAID THAT DOLLARS 20 MILLION A YEAR COULD ACHIEVE A LOT IN THE WEST BANK; IT SHOULD NOT BE BEYOND JORDAN'S CAPABILITY TO FIND SUCH A SUM (IF ONLY FROM UNDER THE FLOOR TILES).

5. THE PLO TRIO SAID THAT THEY WERE SEEKING TO CALM THE SITUATION, AND TO AVOID GIVING THE JORDANIANS OFFENCE; IF THE PLO LOST THEIR Foothold IN JORDAN, "ALL WOULD BE OVER". FREW CLAIMED TO HAVE ATTACKED THEM STRONGLY FOR ALLOWING THEIR SUPPORTERS IN THE PRESS - PARTICULARLY IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES - TO ATTACK JORDAN, AND IN PARTICULAR, TO SPEAK IN LESS THAN RESPECTFUL TERMS ABOUT THE KING. THIS WOULD ONLY MAKE THEIR OWN POSITION IN JORDAN MORE DIFFICULT, AND WOULD DO NOTHING TO PERMIT THE RAPPROCHEMENT WITH THE KING THEY CLAIMED TO WANT. IT ALSO MADE THINGS MUCH MORE DIFFICULT FOR PALESTINIANS IN THE TERRITORIES. THE FIRST STEP THEY SHOULD TAKE WAS TO INSTRUCT THE EAST JERUSALEM PRESS TO CALM DOWN. HE CLAIMS THAT HIS THESIS WAS ACCEPTED, WITH YAHYA BEING A PARTICULARLY VIGOROUS SUPPORTER.

6. FREW COMMENTED THAT IT WAS JUST NOT POSSIBLE, IN PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES, TO BRUSH ASIDE THE PLO AND TO IGNORE ITS STRENGTH AND INFLUENCE IN THE TERRITORIES; IF NOTHING ELSE, IT HAD ENORMOUS SYMBOLIC APPEAL. HE COULD NOT SEE ANY EARLY READINESS ON JORDAN'S PART TO PATCH THINGS UP; HIS ANGER WITH THE PLO WAS ALL TOO EVIDENT. BUT THE PRESENT STATE OF TENSION WAS UNDESIRABLE, AND PEOPLE IN THE TERRITORIES WOULD ONLY SUFFER FROM IT. IT WAS ESSENTIAL TO LOWER THE TEMPERATURE, IN THE HOPE THAT THIS WOULD PERMIT A CALMER AND MORE RATIONAL AND PRAGMATIC APPROACH. THAT STAGE (IF IT WERE TO BE REACHED AT ALL) WAS STILL A GOOD WAY OFF. THERE WAS CERTAINLY NO POSSIBILITY, IN PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES, OF A DELEGATION OF CONCILIATION FROM THE TERRITORIES GETTING ANYWHERE (AN IDEA SENIORA HAD ASKED HIM TO TAKE SOUNDINGS ON); HE HAD NOT THEREFORE PURSUED IT.

DE COURCY-IRELAND

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