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OF 200450Z JUNE 90.

INFO PRIORITY RIYADH, AMMAN, KUWAIT, ABU DHABI

INFO ROUTINE BAHRAIN, DOHA, BAGHDAD

Good views

(E.R: Amss).

MIPT: ARAB ASSISTANCE TO JORDAN

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SUMMARY

1. SULTAN PESSIMISTIC ABOUT ARAB PLEDGES OF ASSISTANCE TO JORDAN AND BELIEVES SAUDIS ARE CONTENT TO SEE JORDAN RELATIVELY WEAK SO THAT IT WOULD NOT ADD TO THE THREAT WHICH THEY SEE FROM IRAQ AND YEMEN.

DETAIL

2. AT MY AUDIENCE LAST NIGHT, THE SULTAN WAS ALSO PREOCCUPIED WITH JORDAN AND SAID KING HUSSEIN WAS IN A VERY SERIOUS SITUATION FINANCIALLY AND POLITICALLY. HE DID NOT BELIEVE THE PROMISES OF FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS FROM 'THE RICHER BRETHERN' WOULD MATERIALISE. HE THOUGHT KING HUSSEIN HAD COMPLETELY MISHANDLED THE SAUDIS. THE LATTER HAD BEEN UPSET BY KING HUSSEIN'S DRAWING CLOSER TO SADDAM HUSSEIN WHOM THEY REGARDED AS A MAJOR THREAT TO SAUDI ARABIA. THE SAUDIS THOUGHT THAT THE IRAQIS MIGHT HAVE ENCOURAGED KING HUSSEIN TO THINK THAT THEY WOULD HELP HIM TO RECOVER THE HEJAZ. THE SAUDIS FELT THREATENED FROM THE NORTH AS WELL AS FROM YEMEN. THEY WERE ARMING NOW IN ORDER TO DETER AGGRESSION FROM EITHER QUARTER.

3. HE HAD ADVISED KING HUSSEIN ON HIS STOPOVER THERE LAST YEAR AND ON OTHER OCCASIONS THAT HE SHOULD ABANDON HIS TACTIC OF APPEALING FOR HELP TO THE ARABS BECAUSE OF HIS FRONT-LINE STATUS. NO-ONE BELIEVED THAT JORDAN WAS IN A POSITION TO FIGHT ANYONE'S BATTLES. HE SHOULD RATHER APPEAL TO THEM AS A BROTHER IN NEED. AS IT WAS HE DOUBTED WHETHER THE SAUDIS WERE INTERESTED IN HELPING KING HUSSEIN TO MAINTAIN HIS ARMED FORCES AT ANYTHING LIKE THEIR PRESENT LEVEL. THEY WOULD BE HAPPY TO SEE THE ARMY RUN DOWN AND THE AIR FORCE REDUCED TO ONE SQUADRON. THEY HAD NO INTEREST IN HELPING TO MAINTAIN A FORCE WHICH COULD COMBINE WITH THE IRAQIS AGAINST THEM. THEY WOULD JUST HELP TO KEEP JORDAN 'TICKING'.

4. THE SULTAN THOUGHT KING HUSSEIN WAS RIGHT TO ABOLISH

CONSCRIPTION BUT QUESTIONED WHAT HE WOULD DO WITH THE UNEMPLOYED. WHAT HE OUGHT TO DO WAS TO USE THEM TO REPLACE THE 200,000 FOREIGNERS WORKING THERE. AS FAR AS EMPLOYING FOREIGNERS WAS CONCERNED, JORDAN WAS NOT LIKE THE GULF STATES WHICH HAD MONEY TO BURN. THE GULF STATES WOULD RESPECT HIM MORE IF HE SENT HOME THE FOREIGNERS AND RELIED MORE ON HIS OWN RESOURCES. ✓

5. HE LAID MUCH OF THE BLAME FOR JORDAN'S PRESENT PREDICAMENT AT THE DOOR OF ZAID RIFAI. KING HUSSEIN HAD BROUGHT HIM IN AS PRIME MINISTER BECAUSE OF HIS GOOD LINKS WITH THE SYRIANS WITH WHOM KING HUSSEIN HAD WANTED BETTER RELATIONS. BUT RIFAI WAS CORRUPT AND UNTRUSTWORTHY. HE REFERRED FOR EXAMPLE TO ZAID RIFAI'S ATTEMPTS DURING THE DHOFAR WAR TO DRIVE A WEDGE BETWEEN HIM AND US SO THAT JORDANIAN FORCES MIGHT REPLACE OURS. HE SAID THIS WAS TYPICAL OF THE MAN.

COMMENT

6. AT VARIOUS POINTS I INTERJECTED THAT WHATEVER THE FAULTS MAY HAVE BEEN, KING HUSSEIN WAS IN A DESPERATE SITUATION AND NEEDED THE HELP OF ALL HIS FRIENDS. AT NO TIME DID THE SULTAN GIVE ANY INDICATION THAT HE INTENDED TO CONTRIBUTE HIMSELF: ON THE CONTRARY HE SPOKE RATHER POINTEDLY ABOUT THE RICHER BRETHREN.

7. HIS REMARKS ABOUT FOREIGNERS IN JORDAN SOUNDED STRANGE COMING FROM THE RULER OF A COUNTRY WHICH IS DEPENDENT ON A LARGE FOREIGN WORK FORCE. HE CLEARLY MEANT THAT THE GULF STATES COULD AFFORD THIS LUXURY, WHEREAS JORDAN COULD NOT AND HAD SKILLS WHICH WERE UNDER-UTILISED. ✓

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