

SECRET / DEDIP

8(A-E)

SECRET

DEDIP

FROM AMMAN

TO FLASH FOO

TELNO 415

OF 140800Z AUGUST 93

FOR HEAD NENAD

YOUR TELNO 269

POLITICAL SITUATION IN JORDAN

SUMMARY

1. THE KING'S PRESENT ATTEMPT TO BALANCE SUPPORT FOR SADDAM AGAINST HIS UN OBLIGATIONS IS NOT SUSTAINABLE FOR VERY LONG. IF THE CRISIS CONTINUES, HE WILL PROBABLY CONCLUDE THAT HE HAS TO APPLY SANCTIONS MORE FULLY THAN AT PRESENT. HE CAN PROBABLY DO THIS WITHOUT UNACCEPTABLE RISK TO HIS OWN POSITION. BUT HE WILL SEEK TO AVOID A CLEAR-CUT PUBLIC STATEMENT AND, MOST IMPORTANT, HE WILL NEED SUBSTANTIAL FINANCIAL SUPPORT.

DETAIL

2. THE KING IS AT PRESENT ATTEMPTING A BALANCING ACT BETWEEN TACIT SUPPORT FOR SADDAM HUSSAIN AND COMPLIANCE WITH THE UN CHARTER. IN PRACTICE THIS WOULD MEAN APPLYING SOME SANCTIONS WHILE EVADING OTHERS. AT THE SAME TIME, HE HOPES TO KEEP HIS LINKS WITH SADDAM HUSSAIN OPEN, AND THIS HE WILL CONTINUE TO ADVOCATE AN ARAB SOLUTION AND TO WARN AGAINST THE CONSEQUENCES OF FOREIGN INTERVENTION. IF THIS BALANCING ACT WERE TO SUCCEED, HE MIGHT BE ABLE TO HARNESS AND CONTROL THE WIDESPREAD POPULAR SUPPORT HERE FOR SADDAM HUSSAIN. IN THAT CASE, HIS OWN POSITION WOULD REMAIN SECURE; BUT THE JORDANIAN ECONOMY WOULD CONTINUE TO DECLINE; THE KING'S LINKS WITH THE WEST WOULD BE WEAKENED; AND IF SANCTIONS BREACHES WERE APPARENT, HE WOULD PRESUMABLY FAIL TO SECURE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE EITHER BILATERALLY OR THROUGH THE UN.

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3. I SEE THIS STRATEGY AS ONLY SUSTAINABLE OVER A VERY SHORT PERIOD. THE LONGER THE CRISIS CONTINUES, THE MORE PRESSURE THE KING WOULD HAVE TO EXPECT FROM THE WEST TO COMPLY FULLY WITH SANCTIONS (AND I ASSUME THAT SUBSTANTIAL FINANCIAL INDUCEMENTS WOULD BE OFFERED TO ACHIEVE THIS). IF SADDAM REMAINS ISOLATED, THE IMPLICATIONS FOR JORDAN APPEARING TO PROLONG HIS SURVIVAL WILL BE INCREASINGLY SERIOUS FOR JORDAN'S RELATIONS WITH OTHER ARAB STATES, NOT TO MENTION THE WEST.

4. ON THE OTHER HAND, A CLEAR-CUT PUBLIC STATEMENT BY THE KING THAT HE WILL FULLY IMPLEMENT THE UN RESOLUTIONS WOULD PRESENT AN IMMEDIATE PROBLEM OF MAINTAINING PUBLIC ORDER. IT IS DIFFICULT TO ASSESS HOW SERIOUS THIS PROBLEM WOULD BE. MY OWN BELIEF IS THAT THE KING COULD PROBABLY GET AWAY WITH IT, EXPLAINING THAT HE WAS LEFT WITH NO CHOICE. BUT HE WOULD HAVE TO MATCH SUCH A STATEMENT WITH MORE ANTI-WESTERN AND PRO-SADDAM RHETORIC. THERE WOULD DOUBTLESS BE PUBLIC DEMONSTRATIONS WHICH COULD GET OUT OF CONTROL. THE REACTION OF SADDAM HIMSELF IS AN IMponderable. IN THE WORST CASE, HE MIGHT SEEK TO INCITE A POPULAR UPRISING.

5. FOR THESE REASONS, I BELIEVE THAT THE KING WILL TRY TO DUCK ANY FORM OF PUBLIC POSITION ON SANCTIONS. BUT IF HE PERCEIVES THAT THE CRISIS IS LIKELY TO CONTINUE BEYOND A FEW WEEKS, HE WILL PROBABLY ACCEPT THAT JORDAN HAS NO CHOICE BUT TO APPLY SANCTIONS MORE FULLY. I SUSPECT THAT HE MAY ALREADY BE REACHING THIS POSITION. THIS WILL ENABLE HIM TO TAP WESTERN (AND POSSIBLY ARAB) FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE WHICH WILL BE NEEDED TO SHORE-UP JORDAN (AND WOULD BE, EVEN IF SANCTIONS WERE NOT APPLIED). HE WILL NO DOUBT SEEK TO STAY ON TERMS WITH SADDAM AND THE PRICE FOR THIS MAY WELL BE ATTEMPTS TO BREACH SANCTIONS SECRETLY. PUBLIC OPINION WOULD BE INCREASINGLY UNHAPPY AS THE IMPLICATIONS OF SANCTIONS BECOME CLEARER - BOTH THEIR EFFECTS ON JORDANIANS AND THE CONTRIBUTION THEY WOULD MAKE TO UNDERMINING SADDAM'S POSITION. BUT I BELIEVE THAT THE KING COULD MANAGE THIS ASPECT, PARTICULARLY IF HE CONTINUES IN HIS PUBLIC STATEMENTS TO ADVOCATE AN ARAB SOLUTION AND TO CRITICISE WESTERN INVOLVEMENT.

6. MY CONCLUSION IS THAT WE WILL NEED TO MOUNT SUSTAINED PRESSURE ON THE KING TO PERSUADE HIM THAT SANCTIONS SHOULD BE

● FULLY IMPLEMENTED (AND TO MINIMISE THE NUMBER OF BREACHES). I BELIEVE THAT HE CAN BE BROUGHT TO DO THIS, AND THAT HE CAN DO SO WITHOUT UNACCEPTABLE RISK TO HIS POSITION. BUT WE SHALL HAVE TO EXPECT THAT HE WILL WANT TO MAINTAIN HIS PRESENT PUBLIC LINE (FUZZY ON SANCTIONS, CRITICAL OF THE WEST). AND MOST IMPORTANT, HE WILL NEED SUBSTANTIAL FINANCIAL INDUCEMENTS. VAGUE PROMISES OF ASSISTANCE WILL ACHIEVE NOTHING. WE CANNOT EXPECT HIM TO COMMIT SUICIDE.

7. THERE ARE RISKS TO THE KING'S POSITION, AND TO THE HASHEMITE LINE, WHICHEVER WAY HE JUMPS. IF HE WERE OVERTHROWN, I ASSUME THAT ANY SUCCESSOR GOVERNMENT, EVEN IF IT DID NOT THROW IN ITS LOT COMPLETELY WITH SADDAM AT THE OUTSET, WOULD TRY TO GIVE HIM FULL SUPPORT. I WOULD EXPECT AN IMMEDIATE CONFRONTATION WITH ISRAEL.

8. I SET OUT BELOW TWO BALANCE SHEETS FROM THE JORDANIAN POINT OF VIEW: THE FIRST, IF JORDAN APPLIES SANCTIONS; AND THE SECOND, IF JORDAN REFUSES TO DO SO. THESE ARE OBVIOUSLY FAR FROM COMPREHENSIVE AND BEG MANY QUESTIONS. BUT THEY MAY BE USEFUL AS A QUARRY.

9. JORDAN APPLIES SANCTIONS

A. CREDIT

(I) JORDAN CAN EXPECT TO IMPROVE ITS RELATIONS WITH GCC STATES, EGYPT, SYRIA, WESTERN STATES, AND THE SOVIET UNION.

(II) AID WOULD BE FORTHCOMING TO HELP JORDAN SURVIVE AND LONG. THIS MIGHT LEAD ON TO AN ESTABLISHED AID FRAMEWORK POST-CRISIS.

(III) JORDAN'S EXTERNAL MARKETS MAY BE DIVERSIFIED WITH CORRESPONDING LONG-TERM ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL BENEFITS AS THE ECONOMY IS WEANED FROM HEAVY DEPENDENCE ON IRAQ.

(IV) (CONCEIVABLY): ONCE THE CRISIS IS OVER, THE US MIGHT BE MORE READY TO TACKLE THE ARAB/ISRAEL PROBLEM MORE FORCEFULLY.

B. DEBIT

- (I) SEVERE ECONOMIC DISLOCATION DESPITE EXTERNAL ASSISTANCE.
- (II) THE GOVERNMENT MUST DEAL WITH PUBLIC UNREST WHICH MAY REQUIRE SUPPRESSION.
- (III) IF SO, THIS COULD SIGNAL THE END OF JORDAN'S DEMOCRATIC EXPERIMENT.
- (IV) IRAQI RETALIATION OR PRESSURE WHICH COULD BE UNPREDICTABLE. IRAQI MOVES IN THIS DIRECTION WOULD LIKELY BE SEEN BY THE ISRAELIS AS A DIRECT THREAT TO ISRAELI DEFENCE INTERESTS.
- (V) SADDAM MAY REFUSE TO ALLOW EXPATRIATES TO MOVE FROM KUWAIT OF IRAQ TO JORDAN.

10. JORDAN DOES NOT APPLY SANCTIONS

A. CREDIT

- (I) CONTINUING STRONG PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR THE KING.
- (II) JORDAN DOES NOT ATTRACT IRAQI THREATS OR RETALIATION.
- (III) KING MIGHT HAVE LEVERAGE TO PERSUADE SADDAM TO RELEASE FOREIGN NATIONALS TO JORDAN.

B. DEBIT

- (I) FURTHER DETERIORATION IN JORDAN'S RELATIONS WITH GCC, EGYPT, WESTERN STATES, AND PROBABLY SYRIA.
- (II) NO EXTERNAL FINANCIAL SUPPORT.
- (III) ECONOMIC DAMAGE FROM LOSS OF TRANSIT TRADE AS SANCTIONS BITE.
- (IV) THE RISK OF INCURRING SANCTIONS ITSELF AS A SANCTIONS BUSTER WITH FURTHER ECONOMIC DAMAGE.

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(V) THE DANGER THAT ISRAEL WOULD REGARD JORDAN'S CLOSER ENGAGEMENT WITH IRAQ AS POTENTIALLY THREATENING AND TAKE UNILATERAL ACTION, EITHER BY BLOCKADING AQABA OR DIRECTLY AGAINST JORDAN.

(VI) IF SADDAM IS OVERTHROWN, ALMOST TOTAL ISOLATION IN ARAB WORLD AND LOSS OF TRADE AND OTHER LINKS WITH IRAQ, AT LEAST FOR A PERIOD.

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