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3 sides
Mr Chapman
20 4/11
 The Greeks and Italians
 have asked if we are
 giving a community
 briefing. I think
 we should, and it
 also covers Libya

NENAD

- cc PS
- PS/LPS
- PS/Mr Hurd
- PS/PUS
- MED
- Defence D
- News D
- Mr Bullard
- Mr Day
- WAD

3 pm
Friday

VISIT OF KING HUSSEIN: DISCUSSION OVER LUNCH

1. There was a wide-ranging discussion over lunch on 28 October. The following is a very summary record, since on most of the topics covered, very little new emerged and no notes were taken.

Lebanon

2. The King said that there was little progress or prospect of progress. The Syrians were not out to annex Lebanon, but undoubtedly made a reconciliation difficult because they wished to ensure a continuation of their own influence there. In this context, he was critical of Saudi policy. They seemed to think that massive subsidies were the answer to every problem. In the crisis at the end of November 1980 the Jordanians had welcomed Saudi mediation, but had been much concerned to discover that Syrian agreement to withdraw their forces from the frontier had been bought by a massive Saudi donation.

Oman

3. At one point I picked up a remark by King Hussein to the Prime Minister about the dangers of the Americans 'embracing' Egypt too obviously. I said that the King, as we knew, had a close relationship with Sultan Qaboos. We found ourselves in a somewhat embarrassing position, since in speaking both to the Omanis and to the Americans we might be thought to be concerned solely for our own position in Oman, but we had been worried by the risks to Qaboos of too manifest and obvious embrace by the Americans. The King said that the Sultan was very alive to this danger and was worried about it. He agreed that, as elsewhere in the Middle East, the Sultan needed to take account of his own public opinion.

/Libya

Libya

4. Although the King had spoken earlier at the meeting with the Prime Minister of Libya as an arsenal of Soviet arms, he agreed, and indeed volunteered, that much of the Soviet equipment supplied to Libya was in effect rusting or deteriorating in the sun. He agreed that there was little or no military threat to Egypt and noted that the Sudan was already beginning to play the threat down. He said that it was difficult to discern any consistent thread in Libyan policy, but it was noticeable that when really isolated Qadhafi became more amenable. Mr Moberly made the point that all the Libyans tended to defer to Qadhafi and it was his assessment that it was Qadhafi that called the tune. General Khammash remarked that there were strains of insanity in Qadhafi and in Libyan policy.

5. Speaking of Chad, the Secretary of State made the point that one had to admit that if it were truly the case that Libya had been invited in by Goukouni, they had a not unreasonable position. After all, we supported the intervention of Senegal in Gambia at the invitation of the Gambian Government.

Morocco and West Sahara

6. King Hussein had mentioned the situation in West Sahara to the Prime Minister. Over lunch, he agreed with the Secretary of State that King Hassan had managed things very cleverly at the OAU meeting in Nairobi. Asked whether King Hassan was sincere in his acceptance of a referendum, the King said that some solution along those lines had to be found. The Jordanian Ambassador remarked that one difficulty would be the definition of the Saharians. King Hussein recounted a bizarre story, to match our own experiences at the time, of how he had received an emissary from King Hassan with a draft letter, which he was invited to sign, to the President of France urging the latter to press King Hassan to agree to self determination in West Sahara. Curious as it was, he said that he had signed it.

The Dead Sea Canal

7. There was some discussion of whether the Israelis were serious in this project and the Jordanian Ambassador expressed anxiety that they were obtaining subscriptions from individuals, especially in the Jewish community in Britain. The King said that the project, if it were carried through, would inundate the Jordanian potash works on the Dead Sea and do a lot of damage. We tried to explain the difficulties of preventing private individuals from subscribing, even though the Government's official attitude was that the project was illegal.

Tornado/P-110

8. The King said that he was entirely content with the information he had received from BAe. The Spaniards had asked him about the P-110 and he wondered how he should respond. It

/was

was agreed that this should be left to us. I mentioned that it seemed to us that there was likely to be continuing difficulty over obtaining FRG agreement to the sale of Tornado. I should be grateful if Defence Department could follow this up with Defence Sales and keep Amman and Madrid informed.

Khalid Tank

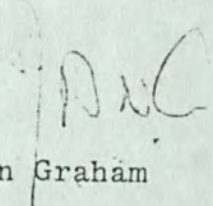
9. In response to Mr Blaker's question, the King said that he was content with the progress on resolving the technical problems of the Khalid tank and remarked that two or three tanks had already arrived in Jordan.

Military Training Courses

10. The King said that there were no problems on this front and cooperation was going well. Mr Blaker expressed our readiness to cooperate in any way.

Hospital of St John and Jerusalem

11. The Secretary of State thanked King Hussein for his efforts to raise funds for the hospital in the UAE.


John Graham

28 October 1981