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FM WASHINGTON 022350Z DECEMBER, 1983
 TO IMMEDIATE F C O

TELEGRAM NUMBER 3644 OF 2 DECEMBER

INFO IMMEDIATE DAMASCUS (FOR PS/MR LUCE), TEL AVIV, AMMAN,
 ROUTINE OTHER MIDDLE EAST POSTS, UKMIS NEW YORK, PARIS, ROME AND
 MOSCOW.

US MIDDLE EAST POLICY

1. MINISTER ASKED MURPHY TODAY WHETHER THE WARMER US/ISRAELI RELATIONSHIP IMPLIED CHANGES IN THE OVERALL US STRATEGY TOWARDS THE MIDDLE EAST. IT SEEMED LIKELY TO UPSET THE MODERATE ARABS AND TO MAKE IT MORE DIFFICULT FOR KING HUSSEIN TO JOIN THE PEACE PROCESS.
2. MURPHY ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THE AMERICANS MIGHT APPEAR TO HAVE GOT VERY LITTLE IN RETURN FOR THEIR ACCEPTANCE OF ISRAELI REQUESTS, ALL OF WHICH HAD A CLEAR PRICE TAG. THE FACT WAS THAT THE ISRAELIS WOULD HAVE ACHIEVED MANY OF THEIR OBJECTIVES ANYWAY THROUGH CONGRESSIONAL ACTION AND IT HAD BEEN BETTER FOR THE ADMINISTRATION TO VOLUNTEER THEM. DESPITE PRESSURE FROM BOTH SHULTZ AND THE PRESIDENT, THERE HAD BEEN NO CHANGE IN THE ISRAELI POSITION ON THE PEACE PROCESS OR SETTLEMENTS. IN THE AMERICAN VIEW, SHAMIR'S GOVERNMENT WOULD FALL IF HE AGREED TO A SETTLEMENTS FREEZE BEFORE KING HUSSEIN INDICATED THAT HE WOULD JOIN PEACE NEGOTIATIONS. THE AMERICANS HAD MADE IT VERY CLEAR TO THE ISRAELIS THAT THEY INTENDED TO CONTINUE ARMS SALES TO THE MODERATE ARABS: THE ISRAELIS WOULD NEVER EXPLICITLY ACCEPT THIS BUT MURPHY THOUGHT THAT THE MESSAGE HAD GOT HOME.
3. ON THE PEACE PROCESS, MURPHY SAID THAT NOTHING HAD BEEN CHANGED BY SHAMIR'S VISIT. THE AMERICANS WERE STILL LOOKING FOR WAYS TO GET KING HUSSEIN TO MOVE. MURPHY THOUGHT THAT THE KING HAD GROWN ACCUSTOMED TO A CLOSE US/ISRAELI RELATIONSHIP AND WOULD NOT OVERREACT TO SHAMIR'S VISIT: HE HAD AS YET SAID NOTHING TO THE AMERICANS ABOUT IT. FOR THE PRESENT HE WAS WAITING TO SEE THE OUTCOME OF THE CONFRONTATION AT TRIPOLI AND HOW PLO POLICY WOULD EVOLVE. MURPHY ADDED THAT ALTHOUGH PRINCE BANDAR WAS FURIOUS AT THE OUTCOME OF SHAMIR'S VISIT, PRINCE SAUD HAD MADE LITTLE OF IT TODAY WHEN HE SAW VISITING US OFFICIALS: HE HAD SEEMED MUCH MORE CONCERNED ABOUT THE SITUATION IN THE GULF.
4. IN THE COURSE OF A GENERAL CONVERSATION TODAY WE MENTIONED TO SEITZ (HEAD OF SHULTZ' OFFICE) THE DANGERS OF PUSHING KING HUSSEIN TOWARDS FURTHER INITIATIVES ON THE WEST BANK WITHOUT ADEQUATE ARAB SUPPORT. SEITZ SAID THAT THE AMERICANS HAD NOT BEEN PUSHING KING HUSSEIN. THE KING HAD TOLD PRESIDENT REAGAN OF HIS INTENTION TO RECONVENE THE JORDANIAN PARLIAMENT, INCLUDING REPRESENTATIVES

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repeated to Athens.
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FROM THE WEST BANK, AND HAD ASKED FOR THE PRESIDENT'S VIEW. THE PRESIDENT HAD REPLIED THAT HE FAVOURED WHAT THE KING PROPOSED TO DO, THOUGH WHETHER AND WHEN THE KING SHOULD DO IT WERE MATTERS FOR HIM TO DECIDE. TEICHER (NSC) TOLD US SEPARATELY THAT IF THE KING WENT AHEAD THE AMERICANS INTENDED TO ISSUE A STATEMENT WELCOMING THIS MOVE. HE CLAIMED THAT THE KING HAD EXPRESSED SATISFACTION WITH THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE.

5. SEITZ SAID THAT THE AMERICANS HAD ALSO NOTED KING HUSSEIN'S RECENT INTEREST IN TRYING TO RENEW CONTACTS WITH ARAFAT. THEY INTERPRETED THIS AS REFLECTING HIS DESIRE TO AVOID THE PALESTINIAN MOVEMENT BEING TAKEN OVER COMPLETELY BY SYRIA AND TO ACT AS A COUNTERWEIGHT TO SYRIAN INFLUENCE.

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MIDDLE EAST

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