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NOTE OF A DISCUSSION AT A WORKING LUNCH GIVEN BY THE PRIME MINISTER
FOR KING HUSSEIN OF JORDAN AT 1300 HOURS ON MONDAY 21 FEBRUARY AT
10 DOWNING STREET

Present:

Prime Minister

King Hussein

Sir Antony Acland

Commander-in-Chief

Field Marshal

Zaid bin Shaker

Sir Edwin Bramall

Jordanian Ambassador

Sir Anthony Parsons

Mr. John Coles

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The discussion began with a brief exchange of views about the forthcoming Non-Aligned Summit in New Delhi. King Hussein said that a number of members of the movement were determined to avoid a repetition of the Havana Summit. This would be the first Non-Aligned Summit with a strong representation of Arab countries at Head of State level. It would also provide an occasion for President Mubarak to rejoin the Arab ranks. Relations between Egypt and Jordan were now very good.

With regard to the Iran/Iraq war, General Shaker said that it was his impression that the weight of Iranian forces was now being moved to the south end of the central sector. King Hussein said that he had recently gathered from the Pakistan Foreign Minister that there was an internal debate in Iran about the desirability of continuing the war. But there was one faction which thought that once the war was over, internal dissension in Iran would be intensified. Sir Antony Acland said that a recent report from our own Mission in Tehran confirmed the impression of a growing internal debate.

King Hussein said that Iran had modified its original demands. It no longer insisted on a change of regime in Iraq and the original demand for compensation had been lowered.

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Turning to the Arab/Israel problem, the Prime Minister said that the tragedy of the Beirut massacres could be turned into an opportunity for peace if the moment were seized. The question was whether the United States would bring pressure to bear. She had never been able to understand why the Americans were so reluctant to use the powers of persuasion at their disposal.

King Hussein said that he had earlier put the thought to President Reagan that if he saw difficulty in dealing with internal pressures, the only course might be to arrange an international conference, as advocated by the Soviet Union. But later Reagan had made it clear that before he had announced his plan for a settlement last September, he had been in touch with the Jewish community in the United States. As a result of these contacts he believed that his plan was viable. The President's two international priorities were now defence and arms control and the Middle East. He believed that the outcome of the debate on these matters would determine his political future. Since the President's speech last September, Israeli settlements in the occupied territories had greatly increased. Within two months at most the number of Israelis in the occupied territories at the time of the speech would have been doubled.

The Jordanian Ambassador said that it was significant that, according to recent reports, Mr. Sharon would continue to serve in the two key committees of the Israeli Cabinet dealing with the situation in the Lebanon and the situation in the occupied territories. The Prime Minister said that she thought the retention of Sharon in the Israeli Cabinet was a mistake. We had recently seen reports that negotiations on the Arab/Israel problem would be linked to substantial prior withdrawal of Israeli troops from the Lebanon. The difficulty with this linkage was that the Israelis could delay withdrawal and thus delay negotiations.

King Hussein said that he would explain the background. In his discussions with the Americans, they had accepted that the Israeli settlements were illegal. They further accepted that Resolution 242 applied to the West Bank, Gaza and the Golan Heights.

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The Americans had implied that, following a solution, some Israelis might wish to continue to live in the occupied territories but without extra-territorial rights. He himself had insisted that major projects, such as the Canal from the Mediterranean to the Dead Sea, should be halted while peace negotiations were in train. He had equally insisted that the future borders should be those of 1967, but with some minor adjustments in particularly difficult areas. An independent Palestinian state was ruled out. There should instead be a Palestinian entity in association with Jordan and, within that concept, the right of self-determination would be an internal matter for Palestinians and Jordanians.

He had advocated that there should be no period of transition, but that the aim should be a full peace settlement. But the Americans had said that a transitional period was both necessary and provided for in Camp David. However, as soon as transitional arrangements were agreed, discussion could begin on a final peace settlement.

In the month after the Beirut massacres ten thousand people had moved from the West Bank into Jordan. The current situation could not be tolerated for much longer. Unless there was early progress the situation in the occupied territories would be a fait accompli and there would be nothing to discuss.

He had told the Americans that for the Arab negotiating position to be credible it would be necessary, before negotiations commenced, that there should be a final timetable for Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon and a freeze on Israeli settlements. President Reagan had given him these two commitments in writing. (Later in the conversation the King said that he had not solicited these undertakings. They were freely given by the United States and thus amounted to American commitments).

Sir Antony Acland asked what Mr. Begin would need, for internal political reasons, to produce if he stopped the settlements, as he ought to do, and agreed to the concept of a Palestinian entity in association with Jordan. King Hussein said

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that in return Israel would secure peace and an opportunity to play a role in the area.

The Prime Minister said that nothing would happen unless the United States applied pressure to Israel. Sir Anthony Parsons stated that his impression from a number of contacts in the United States was that President Reagan could only proceed with his peace plan if the Jewish community in America were at least not actively opposing him. Meanwhile, Jewish leaders were saying that they would support the President provided the Arabs agreed to negotiate without prior conditions on the settlements and on Lebanese withdrawal. If the Arabs insisted on pre-conditions, the Jewish community would withdraw their support from the President.

King Hussein said that he found this very strange. He had obtained a quite different impression from his talks in the United States. These had resulted in the two American commitments to which he had referred.

As regards his talks with the Palestinians, these had so far been quite promising. He had asked Arafat just before the Algiers meeting to clarify his position. The reply had been that Arafat would support anything and everything in order to recover Arab land. He did not intend to seek a precise mandate at the Algiers meeting, but instead wanted a broad "political" mandate to go ahead. Arafat recognised that this was the last chance. He accepted that negotiations would be on the basis of the Reagan plan. The King did not know whether Arafat would succeed in getting the go-ahead.

Andropov had told the King that he thought Jordan would come under pressure to join the United States and Israel in negotiation. This would not succeed - the Palestinians and the Russians would oppose it. Andropov wanted an international conference and an independent Palestinian state. He took the view that the question of any association between that state and Jordan would be for later discussion. He had told Andropov that threats and pressure

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against Jordan would not work (and Andropov had accepted this). Jordan maintained a dialogue with the Soviet Union which had recently sent a delegation to Amman.

The Prime Minister asked whether the Soviet Union would put pressure on Syria not to withdraw from the Lebanon and thus frustrate the whole withdrawal process. She had noted that there were new SA5s in Syria. King Hussein said that the Syrians were fully committed to withdrawal. The SA5s were under Soviet control.

On another matter, he had asked Weinberger, in the presence of President Reagan, whether Israel was helping Iran in the Iran/Iraq war. Weinberger had confirmed that Israel was supplying arms to Iran and some of the equipment was, embarrassingly, subject to American permission to export. The Soviet Union were also helping Iran. Sir Anthony Parsons said that he believed that the Soviet Union regarded Iran as basically more important than Iraq. The Chief of Defence Staff asked whether the Russians might see an Iranian defeat as an opportunity to promote a left-wing regime in Iran. King Hussein thought it probable that they would attempt to exploit such a situation in this way. Sir Anthony Parsons commented that he did not believe that the Tudeh Party were powerful enough on a country-wide basis to take over.

King Hussein said that Iran was trying to destabilise the whole area. They were making efforts in Jordan and he wondered how many cells they had been able to establish in the Gulf.

Reverting to the Arab/Israel question King Hussein said that Mr. Khalid el Hassan had been with him throughout his stay in the United States. El Hassan was even more enthusiastic about peace prospects than the Jordanians themselves were. The Prime Minister thought there was some ground for hope, given the situation following the Beirut massacres and the inquiry, and the fact that Shultz was now a powerful voice in Washington.

King Hussein said that he had told Arafat that if he did not live up to his promises, Jordan would have to make public what had been going on. Everyone would lose in that situation.

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The Prime Minister asked how negotiations on the Lebanon were going. Sir Antony Acland said that progress was very slow. It seemed that Haddad had strengthened his position in the South. The Lebanese Government now had more widespread authority in Beirut. But fundamentally, there was little movement. The Prime Minister pointed out that one danger was that a timetable for withdrawal would be announced but not implemented. King Hussein said that the Americans had spoken in terms of completing the withdrawal process before the end of the year.

The Prime Minister said that the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary would meet President Reagan and Mr. Shultz during The Queen's visit to the United States. We would take the opportunity to discuss the Middle East situation and urge the need for rapid movement.

The discussion ended at 1420 hours.

A. J. C.

21 February 1983



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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

21 February 1983

Dear John,

VISIT BY KING HUSSEIN

The Prime Minister gave a working lunch for King Hussein here today. I enclose a note of the main points made during the discussion.

I am sending a copy of this letter and its enclosure to Richard Mottram (Ministry of Defence).

Yours ever

John Colson

John Holmes, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

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