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FM AMMAN 111200Z DEC 83
TO IMMEDIATE F C O
TELEGRAM NUMBER 577 OF 11 DECEMBER 1983

MY TWO IPTS: JORDAN/MIDDLE EAST

1. IN HIS LETTER OF 9 DECEMBER TO PRESIDENT REAGAN (TEXT IN MY TELNO 576), KING HUSSEIN STATED BLUNTLY THAT THE CONCLUSION OF THE STRATEGIC CO-OPERATION BETWEEN THE US AND ISRAEL HAD ALTERED THE AMERICAN POSITION FROM THAT OF PEACE-MAKER TO COMMITTED ALLY OF ONE OF THE BELLIGERENTS IN THE MIDDLE EAST CONFLICT: THIS "TRAGIC STEP" REPRESENTED THE ABANDONMENT OF THE REAGAN INITIATIVE, WHICH IT WOULD NOW BE FUTILE TO TRY TO KEEP ALIVE.

2. AS HE INDICATED DURING MY AUDIENCE ON 7 DECEMBER (MY TELNO 570), THE KING NOW SEEMS TO BE FOCUSING ON AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ATTENDED BY THE TWO SUPER-POWERS AND POSSIBLY THE OTHER PERMANENT MEMBERS OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL AS THE ONLY WAY FORWARD. THE KING HAS OF COURSE LONG HELD THAT THE ATTEMPT TO EXCLUDE THE SOVIET UNION FROM MIDDLE EAST PEACE NEGOTIATIONS WAS A MISTAKE AND, IN A SPEECH AT THE OPENING OF THE ARAB THOUGHT FORUM MEETING WITH CANADIAN AND AMERICAN ACADEMICS IN AMMAN ON 10 DECEMBER, CROWN PRINCE HASSAN STATED IN TERMS THAT THE EXCLUSION OF THE SOVIET UNION FROM THE PEACE PROCESS HAD BECOME AN OBSTACLE TO THE ACHIEVEMENT OF A SETTLEMENT BOTH OF LEBANON'S PROBLEMS AND OF THE WIDER ARAB/ISRAEL DISPUTE. THE KING'S RECENT MEETING IN AMMAN WITH THE LEADING SOVIET MIDDLE EAST EXPERT PRIMAKOV (MY TELELETTER TO NIXON IN NENAD OF 7 DECEMBER REFERS) WILL HAVE HELPED TO REASSURE HIM THAT THE SOVIET ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE OUTCOME OF ANY PEACE NEGOTIATIONS MAY BE CONSISTENT WITH JORDANIAN DESIDERATA.

3. IN THE FINAL PARAGRAPH OF HIS LETTER KING HUSSEIN INDICATED HIS ACCEPTANCE OF THE POSSIBLE REPERCUSSIONS WHICH THE ABANDONMENT OF THE REAGAN INITIATIVE MAY HAVE ON US MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO JORDAN (AND PRESUMABLY ALSO ON THE OTHER IMPORTANT MATTER TO BE DISCUSSED DURING THE JORDANIAN COMMANDER-IN-C SEF'S PRESENT VISIT TO WASHINGTON: SEE MY TELNO 548).

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4. THIS STRONG BUT ENTIRELY PREDICTABLE JORDANIAN REACTION, TOGETHER WITH THAT OF EGYPT (SEE CAIRO TELNO 537 REFERS), WOULD SEEM TO SHOW THAT THE MODERATE ARAB STATES NOW FEEL US MIDDLE EAST POLICY TO BE SO DISCREDITED IN ARAB EYES THAT THEY HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO DISTANCE THEMSELVES FROM IT.

THE DILEMMA IS A PARTICULARLY CRUEL ONE FOR KING HUSSEIN, BECAUSE IF JORDAN WERE THREATENED WITH ATTACK FROM SYRIA OR ISRAEL HE KNOWS VERY WELL THAT ONLY THE AMERICANS COULD SAVE HIM.

5. SEE PARA 3 OF MY TEL NO 575 ON POSSIBLE FURTHER DISTRIBUTION OF THIS AND MY 2 PRECEDING TELEGRAMS.

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