

SECRET

Prime Minister.

MR. COLES ^{AD 15}

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KING HUSSEIN'S VISIT

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King Hussein's latest letter to President Reagan (Amman Telno 576) is one of the most outspoken communications from one friendly (or unfriendly) Head of State to another that I have ever read. Taken with the Egyptian reaction, I hope, but doubt, that it will shake the apparent American complacency about the effect on the Arab world of the recent US/Israeli agreements. The full Arab reaction has been muffled by the relative silence of the Saudis and the Gulf States, all of whom desperately need the Americans in the context of the Gulf war.

There seem to me to be four subjects which the Prime Minister might discuss with the King; all very bleak:-

1. The King's proposal for an international conference including the Russians and the Americans. Although such a conference would solve nothing, the fact of it taking place would have a calming effect on the region: it therefore has some merit. But it is a non-starter. President Reagan and his advisers are ideologically hostile to any involvement of the Soviet Union in third country problems. Furthermore, the Israelis and the Israeli lobby in the United States would have a fit if the Americans showed any willingness to embark on such an exercise. If the King insists, we could undertake to talk to the Americans but we should not encourage him to think that there is any hope of success.
2. The King's plan to recall the Jordanian Parliament and possibly to launch a fresh Palestine initiative, if feasible with Arafat's blessing. The King has failed to extract adequate prior assurances from Reagan about American commitment to bring about the implementation of SCR.242 - Israeli withdrawal etc - if the King came forward as the Arab interlocutor. As before, the Americans are expecting him to do so without any such assurances. Does the King now consider that the risks are too great, even if he could get support from the (weakened) moderate PLO? (Amman tel No 586 is depressing : it suggests that the PLO have learnt nothing from their recent experiences.) Does he consider that recalling the Jordanian Parliament with nominated West Bank representatives, even without a consequent peace initiative, would be dangerously provocative to the Syrians and other Arab radicals?

/Again, if he

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Again, if he is desperately keen that we should try to persuade the Americans to give him firmer assurances, we could agree - although with virtually no hope of success.

3. Aid to the West Bank and Gaza. Prince Hassan has frequently urged that the West should do more by way of aid to the Palestinians in the Occupied Territories in order to preserve their Arab identity and to avoid further drift away from the Occupied Territories into Jordan. We are sympathetic to this objective. What would the King like the West to do bilaterally or collectively, governmentally and/or via the private sector? Would it be possible or practicable to channel larger quantities of aid into the area into genuine development, given the attitude of the present Israeli Government?

4. The Lebanon. The PM could give the King an account of Gemayel's visit. Does the King see any softening of the Syrian position, as Gemayel does?

If there is time, the Prime Minister might discuss the Iran/Iraq war. The difficulty is that the King is wholly committed to the Iraqi side. But it would be interesting to hear his views on the extent to which Jordan could provide military support for the smaller Gulf states if an Iranian threat to them materialises. He will be in no doubt that the Americans and ourselves will take action to help the Gulf states defend themselves and to reopen the Straits of Hormuz if the worst comes to the worst. But we at least would rather see the Arabs defend themselves so far as possible.

Finally, the King may ask for some "European initiative" on Palestine, a new Venice Declaration, some kind of public pressure on the Americans, evidence that we are "distancing ourselves" etc. I am not in favour of this kind of attitudinising. Our national interest does not require it at present and we should concentrate on trying to do something useful rather than striking attitudes. But we could assure the King that we will keep on plugging away at the Americans and that the Prime Minister will be in touch with Reagan following his visit.


A.D. PARSONS
15 December 1983



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Prime Minutes.

My only comment on this
very clear minute is that we
should not imply that we
shall intervene militarily, if
necessary, in the Gulf until you
have considered this with your
colleagues next week. It is a
big decision.

A-J C. $\frac{15}{12}$