

Highgrove,
Ashburton,
S. Devon.

3rd Feb.

Dear John,

This should reach you after what I'm sure will be a successful visit to Hungary. I am of course following public reactions like a hawk.

The point of this letter is, I need hardly say, Palestine. I don't know whether the Prime Minister saw Prince Hassan and King Hussein this week. If so, don't bother to read on. If not, it is just worth my giving an impression of long telephone conversations I had with each of them.

What interested me was that both had cast off the intense gloom which characterized their attitudes late last year. Hussein (and Hassan) said that the parliamentary →

Experiment was working extremely well. It was already recreating the relationship between Jordan and Palestine which had been interrupted by the rise of the PLO in the 1970s. Hussein was very optimistic that Arafat, whom he expected in Amman after he, Hussein, returned from his medical treatment in the United States, would come on board and give Hussein's initiative his blessing. Hussein said that he would be seeing Reagan and co in about a week's time and that he would urge him strongly to respond positively to a Jordan/Palestine initiative.

As you know I have felt for some time that Hussein's move to reconvene the Jordanian parliament could be one of the most important events of 1984. Combined with the successful Jordanian initiative (Prince Hassan) to introduce majority decision making at the Islamic Conference, thus paving the way for Egypt's return to that particular fold, and a similar move which the Jordanians

are proposing at the Arab League to remove the impenetrable obstacle of the consensus rule, the Hashemites and the Egyptians just might, given all my scepticism and pessimism, be on the point of giving the Arab world a shove in the direction of commonsense and practical politics. The Syrians will probably manage to wreck things as they always do, particularly if they continue to bog the Americans down in Lebanon thus leaving Reagan without the energy and resolution to tackle Palestine vigorously, but it seems to me that Husain / Dubarak should receive all possible support from the likes of us. These are the serious men, not the mice with cheque books who, according to Husain, were totally useless at Casablanca.

If, as now seems likely, Egypt returns to the leadership of the Arab world in the not too distant future, I hope that we will not take second place to the French in Egyptian →

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Thinking. An early P.M. visit to Cairo plus
an absolutely first class successor to
Michael are worth thinking about.

Please tell the P.M. that I was deeply
touched by her letter. I thoroughly enjoyed
working for her, and with all of you, and
will never forget - as I potter about and
write my little books and articles!

I promise not to weary you with regular
statements of the obvious. But I thought
personal calls from the Ashemites deserved
a short report.

My warmest good wishes to the P.M.,
to Robin and yourself.

Yours ever

Tony