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TO DESKBY FCO  
TELNO 530  
OF 061300Z OCTOBER 85  
REPEATED FOR INFO PRIORITY TEL AVIV AND JERUSALEM

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YOUR TELNO 344: VISIT OF JOINT JORDANIAN/PALESTINIAN DELEGATION

SUMMARY

1. THE JORDANIAN PRIME MINISTER AGREES THAT THE JOINT DELEGATION MUST BE BRIEFED TO GIVE CLEAR AND SATISFACTORY ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS FROM THE PRESS ON KEY ISSUES. HE SUGGESTS THAT IT WILL BE BETTER FOR THE DELEGATION TO ISSUE A STATEMENT AGREED IN ADVANCE THAN TO HOLD A PRESS CONFERENCE.

DETAIL

2. ZAID RIFA'I RETURNED FROM WASHINGTON LAST NIGHT. I SAW HIM THIS MORNING. THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER (MAJALI) WAS PRESENT AT MY SUGGESTION.

3. I SAID THAT WE WERE PROCEEDING WITH THE ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE MEETING WITH YOU ON 14 OCTOBER AND I HOPED TO HAVE INSTRUCTIONS ABOUT PRACTICAL ARRANGEMENTS EARLY NEXT WEEK. WHILE RIFA'I HAD BEEN WITH KING HUSSEIN IN THE UNITED STATES, INTEREST IN THE FORTHCOMING VISIT HAD BEEN BUILDING UP IN LONDON. MOREOVER, SINCE THE PRIME MINISTER HAD MADE HER STATEMENT IN AQABA, THE GENERAL ARAB/ISRAELI SITUATION HAD BECOME MORE COMPLICATED. IT WAS THEREFORE PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT THAT ALL OF US SHOULD BE CLEAR ABOUT HOW THE JOINT DELEGATION WOULD HANDLE THE PRESS DURING THEIR VISIT. THE STATEMENTS WHICH THEY WOULD MAKE TO THE PRESS WOULD BE CRUCIAL FOR THE SUCCESS OF THE VISIT. YOU WOULD WISH TO DISCUSS THIS MATTER AT THE MEETING.

4. I SAID TO THE PRIME MINISTER THAT WE LOOKED TO HIM TO ENSURE THAT ALL MEMBERS OF THE DELEGATION FULLY UNDERSTOOD THE SENSITIVITIES INVOLVED. IF THE KEY QUESTIONS WERE NOT CLEARLY AND SATISFACTORILY HANDED IN LONDON THE PEACE PROCESS COULD BE HARMED AND HMG EMBARRASSED.

5. I RECALLED THE BASIC STATEMENT AGREED BETWEEN RIFA'I AND THE PRIME MINISTER AND ANNOUNCED BY MRS THATCHER IN AQABA ON 20 SEPTEMBER. I SAID THAT THIS WOULD NOT SUFFICE, PARTICULARLY GIVEN DEVELOPMENTS SINCE 20 SEPTEMBER, TO DEAL WITH ALL THE QUESTIONS WHICH WERE IN THE MINDS OF THE PRESS. THERE WERE THREE PARTICULAR ISSUES ON WHICH ALL MEMBERS OF THE DELEGATION WOULD NEED TO BE READY TO GIVE CLEAR ANSWERS.

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6. FIRST, THE DELEGATION WOULD BE ASKED WHETHER THEY ACCEPTED RESOLUTIONS 242 AND 338. WE UNDERSTOOD THAT THEY WOULD CLEARLY CONFIRM THAT THESE RESOLUTIONS WERE AMONG THOSE RESOLUTIONS WHICH THEY ACCEPTED. BOTH RIFA'I AND MAJALI SAID THAT THIS WAS INDEED THE UNDERSTANDING. RIFA'I SAID THAT MAJALI WOULD ENSURE THAT THE MEMBERS OF THE DELEGATION MADE THIS CLEAR IN ANSWER TO ANY QUESTION ON THE POINT.

7. SECONDLY, I SAID, THE DELEGATION WOULD BE ASKED IF THEY PERSONALLY ACCEPTED ISRAEL'S RIGHT TO EXIST. ON THIS, WE WOULD EXPECT A CLEAR AND UNCONDITIONAL ANSWER. THE PRIME MINISTER COULD NOT BE IN THE POSITION OF HAVING AGREED THAT PERSONS WHO DID NOT ACCEPT ISRAEL'S RIGHT TO EXIST SHOULD BE RECEIVED BY YOU. RIFA'I SAID THAT THIS ISSUE HAD ARISEN IN WASHINGTON. THE QUESTION WAS 'WHICH ISRAEL HAD THE RIGHT TO EXIST?'. SHULTZ HAD EVENTUALLY ACCEPTED A FORMULA BY WHICH THE ARABS ACCEPTED ISRAEL'S RIGHT TO EXIST WITHIN ITS 1967 BORDERS. RIFA'I BELIEVED THAT THE DELEGATION SHOULD USE THIS FORMULA. HE FULLY UNDERSTOOD THE PROBLEMS CONFRONTING MRS STATCHER.

8. I THEN SAID THAT THE THIRD SENSITIVE AREA WAS THE QUESTION OF TERRORISM AND VIOLENCE. IT WAS IMPORTANT THAT ANY SPECIFIC QUESTIONS ABOUT TERRORIST ATTACKS RECEIVED ANSWERS WHICH MADE ABSOLUTELY CLEAR THE DELEGATIONS OPPOSITION TO TERRORISM AND VIOLENCE. RIFA'I SAID THAT THIS WAS CONSISTENT WITH THE STATEMENT AGREED FOR USE IN AQABA. HE HAD PERSONALLY READ THAT STATEMENT TO BOTH MILHEM AND KHOURY WHO HAD MADE IT PLAIN THAT THEY AGREED WITH EVERY WORD. MAJALI THOUGHT THAT IT MIGHT BE NECESSARY TO ADD, AS KING HUSSEIN HAD DONE IN HIS SPEECH TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY, THAT THE DELEGATION DISTINGUISHED BETWEEN TERRORISM AND THE ARMED STRUGGLE IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES. I ARGUED THAT IT WOULD BE BETTER IF THE STATEMENT WERE NOT SO QUALIFIED BUT I WOULD NOT CLAIM TO HAVE CONVINCED RIFA'I AND MAJALI. (THE JORDANIANS OFTEN ASK HOW WE CAN SUPPORT ARMED STRUGGLE IN SITUATIONS SUCH AS AFGHANISTAN BUT SHY AWAY FROM DOING SO WITH REGARD TO THE WEST BANK.)

9. BEFORE I HAD FINISHED GOING THROUGH THE AREAS OF DIFFICULTY, RIFA'I HIMSELF SUGGESTED THAT, GIVEN THE COMPARATIVE INEXPERIENCE OF SOME MEMBERS OF THE DELEGATION IN HANDLING THE PRESS, IT MIGHT BE BETTER IF THERE WAS NO PRESS CONFERENCE AT ALL. IT WOULD BE SAFER FOR THE DELEGATION TO RELY ON A PRESS STATEMENT ISSUED EITHER BEFORE OR AFTER THE MEETING WITH YOU. BEARING IN MIND PARA 3 OF YOUR TUR I SAID THAT THE SAME IDEA HAD OCCURRED TO US. I BELIEVED IT WOULD BE BETTER IF ANY STATEMENT WERE ISSUED FOLLOWING THE MEETING WITH YOU, RATHER THAN BEFORE IT. I ALSO WISHED TO SUGGEST THAT WE SHOULD LET THE JORDANIANS HAVE, INFORMALLY, A DRAFT OF THE STATEMENT

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THAT MIGHT BE MADE. IN THAT WAY WE COULD ENSURE THAT IT WAS PROPERLY GEARED TO THE SENSITIVITIES AT THE LONDON END. RIFA'I WELCOMED THIS AND I UNDERTOOK TO LET HIM HAVE A DRAFT VERY SOON.

10. I UNDERSTAND THAT MILHEM IS NOW LIKELY TO RETURN TO AMMAN FROM NEW YORK AND TRAVEL WITH MAJALI AND KHOURY ON 12 OCTOBER. RIFA'I SAID THAT MILHEM HAD CALLED ON THE KING IN NEW YORK TO SAY THAT HE ENTIRELY AGREED WITH THE KING'S SPEECH TO THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

11. RIFA'I'S OFFICE TOLD ME THAT THE DELEGATION WILL MEET THE EC PRESIDENCY IN LUXEMBOURG ON 16 OCTOBER (BUT I DO NOT KNOW WHETHER THIS DATE HAS BEEN FORMALLY AGREED WITH LUXEMBOURG).

### COMMENT

12. THIS SEEMS TO ME A GOOD FIRST REACTION. BUT I MUST WARN THAT IT IS CHARACTERISTIC OF ZAID RIFA'I TO MEET POSSIBLE DIFFICULTIES WITH OPTIMISM. I BELIEVE WE SHOULD SEEK TO AVOID A WHOLE WEEK OF DRAFTING WITH THE RISK OF TEXTS BEING SENT TO ARAFAT FOR CLEARANCE. I SUGGEST THAT I SHOULD NOW BE INSTRUCTED TO GIVE RIFA'I INFORMALLY A DRAFT STATEMENT WHICH MEETS YOUR ESSENTIAL CONCERNS BUT WHICH DOES NOT ATTEMPT TO PUSH THE PALESTINIAN MEMBERS OF THE DELEGATION FURTHER THAN IS NECESSARY. IF WE CAN AGREE A TEXT QUICKLY WITH RIFA'I WELL AND GOOD. IF NOT, IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO ENVISAGE A DRAFTING SESSION WITH THE DELEGATION WHEN THEY ARE ALL IN LONDON NEXT SUNDAY. THE JORDANIAN FOREIGN MINISTER WILL OF COURSE ARRIVE IN LONDON ON THURSDAY BUT I AM NOT SURE THAT THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER WILL TAKE KINDLY TO A DRAFTING SESSION BEING HELD WITH TAHER EL MASRI IN HIS ABSENCE.

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