

MIDDLE EAST

PS
 PS/MR RENTON
 PS/PUS
 MR DEREK THOMAS
 MR FERGUSSON
 MR EGERTON
 HD/NENAD
 HD/MED

NO. 10 DOWNING STREET
 CABINET OFFICE DIO

PUSD (2)
 NEWS DEPT
 RESIDENT CLERK

1.10.85

PP RABAT
 PP SANAA
 PP TEAVI
 PP TUNIS
 PP WASHI
 FM AMMAN TO FCOLN
 061326Z NOV
 GRS 700

IMMEDIATE
ADVANCE COPY

CONFIDENTIAL
 FM AMMAN
 TO DESKBY 061600Z FCO
 TELNO 596
 OF 061326Z NOVEMBER 85

INFO PRIORITY ABU DHABI, ADEN, ALGIERS, BAGHDAD, BAHRAIN, BEIRUT
 INFO PRIORITY CAIRO, DAMASCUS, DOHA, DUBAI, RIYADH, JERUSALEM
 INFO PRIORITY KHARTOUM, KUWAIT, MUSCAT, RABAT, SANAA, TEL AVIV
 INFO PRIORITY TUNIS, WASHINGTON

MY TELS 584 AND 588: JORDAN/PLO
 SUMMARY

1. JORDANIAN MINISTER OF COURT HAS CONFIRMED THAT THE JORDAN/PLO DISCUSSIONS ON 29/30 OCTOBER ENDED WITH A TWO POINT ULTIMATUM FOR ARAFAT'S ACCEPTANCE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. OTHERWISE JORDAN WOULD HAVE TO CONSIDER ITS JOINT APPROACH WITH THE PLO ON THE PEACE PROCESS.

DETAIL

2. ADNAN ABU ODEH TOLD ME THIS MORNING THAT KING HUSSEIN AND PRIME MINISTER RIFAI HAD TAKEN A FIRM LINE WITH YASSER ARAFAT DURING THE JOINT DISCUSSIONS IN AMMAN ON 29/30 OCTOBER. THE KING SAID THAT IF HE WAS TO CONTINUE HIS POLITICAL ACTIVITIES ON THE INTERNATIONAL SCENE ON A JOINT JORDANIAN/PLO BASIS THEN IT WAS ESSENTIAL THAT THE PLO SHOULD BE SEEN TO BE A DISCIPLINED AND CONTROLLED BODY. RECENT EVENTS SUCH AS ACHILLE LAURO AND THE JORDANIAN/PALESTINIAN DELEGATION IN LONDON HAD SEVERELY DAMAGED THIS IMAGE AND HAD HARMED THE PEACE PROCESS. THE JORDANIANS THEREFORE CONSIDERED IT ESSENTIAL THAT THEY BE GIVEN TWO FIRM UNDERTAKINGS FROM THE PLO IF THEY ARE TO CONTINUE WITH THEIR PRESENT JOINT APPROACH TO THE PEACE PROCESS VIZ:

(1) ALL ACTS OF VIOLENCE OUTSIDE ISRAEL AND THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES MUST CEASE:

TERRITORIES MUST CEASE:

(II) JORDAN CANNOT ACCEPT THE PLO USING ANY OF THEIR ESTABLISHMENTS IN AMMAN TO MASTERMIND PLO OPERATIONS IN EITHER ISRAEL OR THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES.

THE REASON FOR (I) WAS SELF-EVIDENT IF THE JORDANIAN/PLO JOINT APPROACH IS TO CONTINUE TO RECEIVE INTERNATIONAL CREDIBILITY; (II) IS EQUALLY SELF-EVIDENT ON THE GROUNDS OF JORDANIAN SECURITY NECESSITIES.

3. ACCORDING TO ABU ODEH, ARAFAT WAS IMPRESSED BY THE FIRMNESS OF THE JORDANIAN ATTITUDE. HE DID NOT QUESTION EITHER POINT BUT PLEADED FOR TIME TO CONSULT WITH HIS ASSOCIATES. THE JORDANIANS ALLOWED HIM THIS: BUT DEMANDED AN ANSWER AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. IN RESPONSE TO MY ENQUIRY, ODEH SAID NO DEADLINE HAD BEEN SET: PERSONALLY, HE THOUGHT ARAFAT WOULD SHILLY SHALLY UNTIL AFTER THE REAGAN/GORBACHEV SUMMIT LATER THIS MONTH.

4. ODEH THOUGHT THAT ARAFAT WOULD EVENTUALLY ACCEPT THE ULTIMATUM. HE SAID ONE STRONG CARD IN THE JORDANIANS HAND WAS THAT IF THE JOINT APPROACH WERE TO BE ABANDONED THEN THE RAISON D'ETRE FOR PLO INSTITUTIONS BEING IN AMMAN WOULD FALL AWAY. IT WOULD WEAKEN ARAFAT'S GRIP ON THE PLO IF HE HAD TO FIND ANOTHER HOME FOR THEM. WHEN ASKED WHAT JORDAN WOULD DO IF ARAFAT FAILED TO ACCEPT THEIR TERMS, ODEH SAID THEY WOULD PROBABLY MAKE A STRONG PUBLIC STATEMENT EFFECTIVELY DISASSOCIATING JORDAN FROM THE JOINT APPROACH TO THE PEACE PROCESS. THIS WOULD CONSTITUTE A MAJOR SETBACK SINCE THERE IS NO CREDIBLE PALESTINIAN ALTERNATIVE TO THE PLO. IN ODEH'S VIEW ARAFAT COULD AND SHOULD DISPENSE WITH SOME OF HIS WILD MEN, PARTICULARLY QADDUMI. ARAFAT CONTROLLED THE PURSE STRINGS AND IPSO FACTO THE POWER.

5. ODEH THEN MENTIONED THAT GORBACHEV HAD RECENTLY WRITTEN TO KING HUSSEIN EXPRESSING SOVIET DISAPPROVAL OF THE 11 FEBRUARY ACCORD AND ARGUING THAT THE PEACE PROCESS COULD BEST BE SERVED BY HOLDING AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE WITH SOVIET PARTICIPATION. ODEH ADDED THAT READING BETWEEN THE LINES, THE SOVIETS ARE NOT CONVINCED THAT JORDAN IS WEDDED TO AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE AND IS MERELY USING IT AS A BARGAINING COUNTER FOR NEGOTIATING WITH THE AMERICANS.

6. I ASKED ODEH IF THE PERES PROPOSALS WERE DISCUSSED WITH ARAFAT AND HE SAID NOT. HE MADE A VAGUE REFERENCE TO DISCUSSIONS ABOUT RECENT AMERICAN PROPOSALS BUT DID NOT ELABORATE.

7. ON THE JOINT DELEGATION, ODEH SAID THAT ARAFAT COULD GIVE NO CONVINCING EXPLANATION WHEN TAXED BY THE KING: HE REFERRED TO IT AS A TRAGEDY AND IMPLIED THAT AT THE TIME HE WAS UNDER SEVERE EMOTIONAL STRESS AFTER HIS NARROW ESCAPE DURING THE ISRAELI RAID ON TUNIS. ON THE OTHER HAND, WHEN RIFAI TACKLED MILHEM THE LATTER ASSERTED THAT HE HAD NOT ACCEPTED THE DRAFT PRESS STATEMENT BECAUSE IT WAS OUT OF KEEPING WITH THE 11 FEBRUARY AGREEMENT. APPARENTLY RIFAI REACTED VERY SHARPLY TO THIS, STATING BLUNTLY THAT IT WAS NOT WITHIN MILHEM'S COMPETENCE TO MAKE SUCH JUDGEMENTS.

COMMENT

8. THE SECOND POINT OF THE JORDANIAN ULTIMATUM DOES NOT SEEM TO HAVE CROPPED UP BEFORE, THOUGH THE JORDANIANS HAVE OF COURSE BEEN APPREHENSIVE FOR SOME TIME THAT THE ISRAELIS MIGHT PICK ON A TARGET IN JORDAN FOR A RETALIATORY STRIKE.

RAFTERY

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ALHPAN 1356

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