

MIDDLE EAST

PS

PS/MR RENTON

11. PS/PUS

MR DEREK THOMAS

12. MR FERGUSSON

MR EGERTON

HD/NENAD

17. HD/MED

NO. 10 DOWNING STREET

CABINET OFFICE DIO

**IMMEDIATE**

PUSD (2)

NEWS DEPT

CONFIDENTIAL

FM AMMAN

TO DESKRY 131600Z FCO

TELNO 608

OF 131210Z NOVEMBER 85

INFO IMMEDIATE DAMASCUS

INFO PRIORITY WASHINGTON, MOSCOW, UKMIS NEW YORK,

INFO PRIORITY TEL AVIV, CAIRO, JERUSALEM AND RIYADH.

ADVANCE COPY

MY TELNO 602: JORDANIAN FOREIGN POLICY

SUMMARY

1. IT IS NOW REASONABLY CLEAR THAT JORDAN IS MAKING A MAJOR EFFORT TO INVOLVE SYRIA AND THE SOVIET UNION IN THE PEACE PROCESS, THAT IT HOPES TO DO SO BY SECURING THEIR AGREEMENT TO AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE AND THAT IT IS CONTENT FOR PRESSURES TO MOUNT ON THE PLO MEANWHILE. OTHER FACTORS ARE LESS CLEAR.

DETAIL

2. SINCE MY CALL ON KING HUSSEIN ON 10 NOVEMBER I HAVE NOT, AS I HAD HOPED, BEEN ABLE TO SEE THE JORDANIAN PRIME AND FOREIGN MINISTERS, BECAUSE THEY HAVE UNDERSTANDABLY BEEN PREOCCUPIED WITH THEIR CURRENT VISIT TO DAMASCUS AND OTHERWISE, LIKE EVERYONE ELSE HERE, ARE TAKEN UP WITH THE WEEK-LONG CELEBRATIONS OF THE KING'S 50TH BIRTHDAY. BUT TALKS WITH THE MINISTER OF COURT, THE US AMBASSADOR AND OTHERS ENABLE ME TO FILL IN SOME OF THE GAPS IN MY TALK WITH THE KING AND TO ANSWER SOME OF THE QUESTIONS POSED AT THE END OF MY TUR.

3. IT IS CLEAR THAT THE JORDANIANS ARE BITTERLY DISAPPOINTED BY THE US DECISION ON ARMS SUPPLIES. (I HOPE TO EXPLORE CAUTIOUSLY NEXT WEEK WHAT THAT MAY MEAN IN TERMS OF REQUESTS TO US FOR FURTHER ARMS.) THEY ARGUE THAT IT SHOWS ONCE AGAIN THAT WHATEVER EFFORTS THEY MAKE THE ISRAELI LOBBY IN WASHINGTON WILL ALWAYS PREVENT THE US ADMINISTRATION FROM TAKING SIGNIFICANT STEPS TO HELP THEM. THEY ALSO CONTINUE TO BE ANGRY WITH THE PLO ABOUT RECENT

ADMINISTRATION FROM TAKING SIGNIFICANT STEPS TO HELP THEM. THEY ALSO CONTINUE TO BE ANGRY WITH THE PLO ABOUT RECENT EVENTS AND ARE CONTENT TO LET ARAFAT STEW UNTIL HE CAN PRODUCE ANSWERS TO THE KING'S QUESTIONS.

4. THE MINISTER OF COURT (ADNAN ABU ODEH) HAS CONFIRMED TO ME THAT JORDAN IS NOW, AS HE PUTS IT, OPENING THE DOORS FOR SYRIA AND THE SOVIET UNION TO ENTER THE PEACE PROCESS AND THAT THE FOCUS OF CURRENT JORDANIAN DIPLOMACY IS TO OBTAIN MAXIMUM SUPPORT FOR AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE. THE FRENCH AMBASSADOR TELLS ME THAT THIS WAS KING HUSSEIN'S MAIN THEME IN HIS TALK WITH PRESIDENT MITTERRAND. ABU ODEH TOLD ME THAT JORDAN WAS NOT NOW INTERESTED, IF IT EVER HAD BEEN, IN THE AMERICAN IDEA OF A "PROFORMA CONFERENCE", FOLLOWED BY DIRECT NEGOTIATIONS. HE ACCEPTED MY VIEW THAT THE FURTHER JORDAN ADVANCED TOWARDS A CONFERENCE THAT SYRIA AND THE SOVIET UNION COULD ACCEPT THE LESS LIKELY IT WAS THAT PERES AND THE AMERICANS WOULD ATTEND. BUT HE ARGUES THAT THERE MAY BE MORE FLEXIBILITY THAN IS YET APPARENT IN THE SYRIAN ATTITUDE TO A CONFERENCE AND THAT THAT WILL ONLY EMERGE WHEN ASAD MEETS HUSSEIN. THE US AMBASSADOR HAS TOLD ME THAT MR SHULTZ IS WORRIED THAT JORDAN IS MOVING TOWARDS A KIND OF CONFERENCE WHICH WILL BE UNACCEPTABLE AND UNHELPFUL.

5. THE MANNER OF THE JORDANIANS ATTEMPT TO ACHIEVE RECONCILIATION WITH SYRIA IS STRIKING. THE KING'S ALMOST GROVELLING REFERENCES TO SYRIA IN HIS PUBLIC LETTER OF 11 NOVEMBER (MY TELNO 605) TO THE JORDANIAN PRIME MINISTER STRIKES MANY HERE AS OUT OF CHARACTER. THE STRENGTH OF THE CURRENT JORDANIAN DELEGATION TO DAMASCUS AND HUSSEIN'S PUBLIC INVITATION TO ASAD TO VISIT JORDAN ALSO SUGGEST THAT JORDAN IS MAKING MOST IF NOT ALL OF THE RUNNING. THE JORDANIAN PRIME MINISTER HAS OF COURSE LONG BEEN CONVINCED OF THE NEED FOR A STRONG RELATIONSHIP WITH SYRIA. OTHERS ARE LESS SURE. THE MINISTER OF COURT TOLD ME THAT IT WAS NOT CLEAR TO HIM WHAT JORDAN COULD EXPECT IN RETURN FOR SUCH A MASSIVE INVESTMENT (THOUGH THE JORDAN FOREIGN MINISTER ARGUES THAT IT MIGHT BE HELPFUL IN INDUCING A LESS PRO-IRANIAN ATTITUDE ON THE PART OF SYRIA TOWARDS THE GULF CONFLICT).

6. NOR IS IT CLEAR WHERE THE RAPPROCHMENT WITH SYRIA (THIS IS WRITTEN BEFORE THE COMPLETION OF RIFAI'S VISIT TO DAMASCUS) LEAVES RELATIONS WITH THE PLO AND EGYPT. JORDAN SEES THE RAPPROCHMENT AS PUTTING USEFUL PRESSURE ON ARAFAT, BUT WOULD SYRIA EVER AGREE TO JOIN A PEACE PROCESS TO WHICH ARAFAT WAS A PARTY? ARAFAT RETURNED HERE LAST NIGHT HOPING TO SEE THE KING BUT IS BEING TREATED COLDLY, AS ON HIS LAST VISIT. WHILE JORDAN WELCOMED, WITH RESERVATIONS, ARAFAT'S "CAIRO DECLARATION", IT IS IRRITATED WITH THE EGYPTIANS FOR BUILDING UP ARAFAT AGAIN. THE JORDANIANS WOULD HAVE PREFERRED PREFERENCE TACTICS. THE EGYPTIAN FOREIGN MINISTER WAS HERE ON 11 NOVEMBER TO EXPLAIN THE OUTCOME OF ARAFAT'S VISIT.

7. AS TO RELATIONS WITH THE US, ADNAN ABU ODEH HAS

7. AS TO RELATIONS WITH THE US, ADNAN ABU ODEH HAS CONFIRMED PUBLICLY THAT THE DIALOGUE CONTINUES. CLUVERIUS IS EXPECTED SHORTLY. BUT THE US AMBASSADOR HAS NOT BEEN ABLE TO SEE THE KING SINCE HIS RETURN FROM WASHINGTON ON 10 NOVEMBER AND HAS TOLD ME THAT, BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS NOTWITHSTANDING, HE THINKS HE IS BEING STOOD OFF.

COMMENT

8. I CANNOT YET ASSESS WHAT THE FUNDAMENTAL JORDANIAN AIM IS. ABU ODEH SAID THAT BY OPENING THE DOORS TO ALL THE POSSIBLE PLAYERS THEY HAD MADE THE GAME MORE COMPLICATED AND COULD NOT BE SURE WHAT THE RESULTS MIGHT BE.

9. IT MAY BE THAT THE KING HAS DRAWN THE CONCLUSIONS FROM THE US DECISION ON ARMS AND PLO BEHAVIOUR THAT HIS INITIATIVE, BASED ON THE 11 FEBRUARY AGREEMENT, IS LIKELY TO FAIL AND THAT HE MUST RESTORE HIS POSITION IN THE ARAB WORLD BY MENDING FENCES WITH SYRIA, PERHAPS HOPING TO OBTAIN FRESH SAUDI FINANCIAL AID FROM ARMS PURCHASES FROM SUPPLIERS OTHER THAN THE US. SYRIAN, OTHER ARAB AND SOVIET AGREEMENT TO AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE COULD BE THE CHOSEN VEHICLE FOR ACHIEVING THIS, IN THE KNOWLEDGE THAT IT MIGHT WELL BE REJECTED BY ISRAEL AND THE US. BUT IT MAY BE THAT HE STILL HOPES HE CAN SOMEHOW RECONCILE ALL THE POSITIONS - US, SOVIET, ISRAELI, SYRIAN, EGYPTIAN, PLO - AND TAKE UP THE PATH OF PEACE NEGOTIATIONS AGAIN. IF SO, IT IS A VERY LONG SHOT INDEED.

10. I EXPECT THE KING TO LEAVE ON A TOUR OF SOME ARAB COUNTRIES WHEN HIS BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS ARE OVER, SO IT MAY BE A LITTLE TIME BEFORE I CAN SEE HIM AGAIN.

COLES

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