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FM AMMAN

TO PRIORITY FCO

TELNO 616

OF 201122Z NOVEMBER 85

INFO PRIORITY WASHINGTON, CAIRO, DAMASCUS, JERUSALEM, TEL AVIV

INFO PRIORITY TUNIS, MOSCOW, RIYADH

MY TELNO 610: ARAB/ISRAEL: PEACE PROCESS *MS*

## SUMMARY

1. IT IS NOW REASONABLY CLEAR THAT THE CORRECT INTERPRETATION OF RECENT JORDANIAN MOVES IS THAT KING HUSSEIN HAS DELIBERATELY EMBARKED ON A POLICY OF TRYING TO BRING SYRIA AND THE SOVIET UNION INTO THE PEACE PROCESS BUT THAT HIS PRIME MINISTER WENT FURTHER THAN ANYONE ELSE INTENDED IN DAMASCUS.

## DETAIL

2. THE EVIDENCE IS NOW OVERWHEPMING THAT RIFAI WENT TOO FAR:

(A) I HAVE ALREADY REPORTED (PARA 8 OF MY TUR AND PARA 5 OF MY TELNO 608) THE THINLY VIELED DOUBTS OF THE CROWN PRINCE AND MINISTER OF COURT ABOUT THE MANNER OF THE RAPPRTCHEMENT WITH SYRIA AND RIFAI'S INITIAL UNCONVINCING DEFENCE OF THE COMMUNIQUE.

(B) THE HEAD OF THEY ROYAL DIWAN, WHO ACCOMPANIED RIFAI, HAS LET IT BE KNOWN BOTH THAT HIS ADVICE TO RIFAI IN DAMASCUS WAS NOT TO AGREE TO ISSUE ANY COMMUNIQUE AND THAT HE TOLD THE KING ON HIS RETURN THAT THAT HAD BEEN HIS ADVICE.

(C) I ASKED THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ON 19 NOVEMBER HOW I WAS TO INTERPRET THE DAMASCUS RAZPRICHEMENTOM HE REPLIED THAT THE KING WAS TRYING TO BRING SYRIA INTO THE PEACE PROCESS, WHICH WAS PROBABLY WISE, "BUT SOME OF US ARE KEENER ON IT THAN OTHERS".

3. THE US AMBASSADOR TELLS ME THAT BEFORE RIFAI LEFT WITH THE KING ON HIS CURRENT MIDDLE EAST TOUR HE AND CLUVERIUS HAD A TWO-HOUR MEETING WITH HIM. RIFAI WAS CHASTENED. THE MOST IMPORTANT POINT IS THAT WHILE ON 14 NOVEMBER (MY TUR) RIFAI HAD PLACED A QUITE NEW EMPHASIS ON THE NEED TO HAVE SYRIA AT AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE, ON 16 NOVEMBER HE MAINTAINED THAT THERE HAD BEEN NO CHANGE ON JORDAN'S PREVIOUS POSITION, NAMELY THAT IT WAS NECESSARY THAT AN INVITATION SHOULD BE EXTENDED TO SYRIA, COUPLED WITH A REASONABLE OFFER FROM ISRAEL TO NEGOTIATE ABOUT THE GOLAN (SEMI COLON) BUT THAT IF THE INVITATION WERE DECLINED, THEN THE PROCESS WOULD GO AHEAD WITHOUT SYRIA. BOEKER CONCLUDES, I THINK CORRECTLY, THAT THE KING HAD MEANWHILE PULLED RIFAI BACK ON COURSE.

4. IN THE LIGHT OF THIS EVIDENCE I NOW BELIEVE THAT HUSSEIN, IN THE WAKE OF THE US ARMS DECISION AND RECENT PLO BEHAVIOUR, REASSESSED HIS POLICY (SEMI COLON) DECIDED THAT THE TIME HAD

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COME TO TRY TO BRING SYRIA AND THE SOVIET UNION INTO THE PEACE PROCESS AND THAT THAT WAS EVEN MORE NECESSARY GIVEN FRESH DOUBTS, ABOUT THE DEPTH OF THE US COMMITMENT TO THE PROCESS (SEMI COLON) RECOGNISED THE VALUE OF THE SYRIAN FACTOR IN PUTTING PRESSURE ON ARAFAT (SEMI COLON) RECOGNISED TOO THAT BETTER RELATIONS WITH SYRIA MIGHT HELP TO OBTAIN MORE SAUDI FINANCIAL AID (SEMI COLON) BUT STILL AIMS TO GET THE PEACE PROCESS BACK ON THE RAILS. THE TASK IS NOW MUCH MORE COMPLEX PARTICULARLY AS HE WOULD ALMOST CERTAINLY HAVE TO MAKE CONCESSIONS ON THE STRUCTURE OF A CONFERENCE TO HAVE ANY HOPE OF GETTING SYRIA AND THE SOVIET UNION ON BOARD. BUT IT WAS ALWAYS IMPLICIT IN HIS INITIATIVE THAT AN APPROACH WOULD HAVE TO BE MADE AT SOME TIME TO SYRIA AND THE SOVIET UNION. THE BEST EVIDENCE THAT THIS IS THE RIGHT WAY TO INTERPRET THE KING'S CURRENT POLICY IS IN FACT THE KING'S OWN DESCRIPTION OF IT IN MY TELNO 602. IT WAS RIFAI'S PERFORMANCE IN DAMASCUS THAT MADE ME INITIALLY RELUCTANT TO TAKE HUSSEIN'S ACCOUNT AT FACE VALUE.

5. THE KING NOW HAS AN INTERNAL POLITICAL NEED, ASDWLL -' -, EXTERNAL ONE, TO CLARIFY HIS POLICY. I HAVE NEVER KNOWN HIS ADVISERS IN SUCH DISARRAY AND THE BEWQCZUENT GOES WELL BEYOND THE CHARMED CIRCLE. BUT HE MAY NOT BE ABLE TO DO THIS UNTIL ARAFAT BRINGS REPLIES TO HIS EARLIER QUESTIONS (WHICH ARAFAT IS EXPECTED TO DO FOLLOWING A PLO EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING TO BE HELD SHORTLY IN BAGHDAD) AND UNTIL HE HAS EXPLORED THE SYRIAN POSITION IN MORE DEPTH. THERE IS NOW TALK OF HUSSEIN GOING TO DAMASCUS IN EARLY DECEMBER.

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-2-

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