

FM AMMAN

TO PRIORITY FCO

TELNO 646

OF 090840Z DECEMBER 85

INFO PRIORITY TEL AVIV, DAMASCUS, CAIRO, RIYADH, BAGHDAD,
INFO PRIORITY JERUSALEM, TUNIS, WASHINGTON, MOSCOW

JORDAN: THE PEACE PROCESS

SUMMARY

1. JORDAN IS CONCENTRATING ON REMOVING OBSTACLES BETWEEN THE ARABS TO THE PEACE PROCESS AND LOOKS TO THE US TO DEAL WITH THE SOVIET UNION. THE SYRIAN PRIME MINISTER WILL VISIT JORDAN FROM 10 TO 11 DECEMBER, ARAFAT SHORTLY THEREAFTER.

DETAIL

2. I CALLED ON THE JORDANIAN PRIME MINISTER ON 8 DECEMBER. HE UPDATED ME ON THE PEACE PROCESS AS FOLLOWS.

3. THE SYRIAN PRIME MINISTER WOULD VISIT JORDAN ON 10 TO 11 DECEMBER. ARAFAT WAS NOW EXPECTED TO COME SHORTLY AFTER THAT VISIT.

4. THE MAIN JORDANIAN AIM WITH THE SYRIAN VISIT WAS TO SMOKE THEM OUT FURTHER ON THEIR ATTITUDE TO AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE. RIFAI DREW FROM HIS POCKET A COMMUNIQUE HE HAD JUST DRAFTED WHICH HE SAID REFERRED TO A CONFERENCE ATTENDED INTER ALIA BY THE FIVE PERMANENT MEMBERS OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL, PLUS SUITABLE REFERENCES TO 242 AND 338.

5. HE THEN SAID THAT JORDAN WAS THINKING IN TERMS OF A CONFERENCE WHOSE INITIAL PLENARY SESSION WOULD DRAW UP GENERAL PRINCIPLES ON E.G. WITHDRAWAL AND SECURITY. THE WORKING GROUPS WOULD THEN IN EFFECT CONDUCT DIRECT NEGOTIATIONS BUT WOULD REFER ANY INSOLUBLE DIFFICULTIES TO PLENARY. THE AIM WAS A COMPREHENSIVE SETTLEMENT DEALING WITH ALL ASPECTS OF THE ARAB/ISRAEL PROBLEM (TO OTHERS HE HAS RECENTLY REMARKED THAT IF SOME MATTERS WERE RESOLVED BY NEGOTIATION BUT OTHERS E.G. THE GOLAN WERE NOT, IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AGREED ISSUES COULD BE FROZEN PENDING A SETTLEMENT OF THE OUTSTANDING ONES).

6. I SAID THAT IT SEEMED TO ME THAT THE KIND OF CONFERENCE THE SYRIANS MIGHT BE THINKING OF WAS A LONG WAY FROM ONE WHICH THE AMERICANS OR ISRAELIS WOULD ACCEPT. HE REPLIED THAT THE JORDANIAN POSITION ALSO DIFFERED GREATLY FROM THE AMERICAN. JORDAN COULD NOT ACCEPT A CONFERENCE WHICH WAS MERE CAMOUFLAGE FOR DIRECT NEGOTIATIONS. PRESENT JORDANIAN ACTIVITY WAS DIRECTED TO REMOVING OBSTACLES BETWEEN THE ARABS. IN THAT AREA JORDAN COULD DO A LOT. BUT IT HAD NO INFLUENCE ON THE TWO SUPERPOWERS. THE SOVIET UNION HAD TO BE LEFT TO AMERICA. THE PRESENT US TACTIC WAS TO MAKE AS MUCH PROGRESS AS POSSIBLE WITH THE OTHER PARTIES, BEFORE APPROACHING THE SOVIET UNION. IF THAT WAS THEIR JUDGEMENT, SO BE IT, BUT IN THE END ONLY THEY COULD PERSUADE THE SOVIET UNION TO ATTEND. AND A US/SOVIET DISCUSSION OF THAT POINT WOULD DEPEND MUCH MORE ON THE STATE OF ISSUES SUCH AS ARMS CONTROL THAN ON THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST.

7. I ASKED WHAT HIS READING WAS OF THE RECENT PLO MEETINGS IN BAGHDAD. HE SAID THAT ARAFAT AND THE PLO EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE HAD BEEN GIVEN A FREE HAND IN DEALING WITH THE QUESTIONS PUT TO ARAFAT BY JORDAN. I ASKED WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF ARAFAT BROUGHT THE WRONG ANSWER. HE SAID THAT IN THAT CASE THE KING WAS 'ABSOLUTELY DETERMINED TO PURSUE ALTERNATIVES'. I ASKED WHETHER THE CURRENT TALKS IN AMMAN OF ELECTIONS FROM THE WEST BANK WAS RELEVANT. HE CONFIRMED THAT A NEW ELECTORAL LAW ON THESE LINES WAS IN PREPARATION BUT SAID IT HAD NO CONNECTION WITH THE PEACE PROCESS. RATHER, JORDAN WOULD BE LOOKING FOR PALESTINIANS WHO WERE PREPARED TO CHALLENGE ARAFAT. THE SYRIANS WOULD NOT GO TO A PEACE CONFERENCE WITH ARAFAT BUT WOULD HAVE NO OBJECTION TO A SUITABLE JORDAN/PALESTINIAN DELEGATION.

8. I ASKED WHETHER HE REALLY BELIEVED THAT ALL THESE PROBLEMS COULD BE SOLVED IN TIME TO BE OF ANY USE TO PERES. HE SAID HE WAS CONVINCED THAT PERES WOULD HAVE TO BREAK UP THE COALITION ANY WAY BEFORE OCTOBER. HE ACCEPTED THAT THE PEACE ISSUE WAS ELECTORALLY THE BEST ONE FOR PERES (SEMI COLON) JORDAN WAS TRYING TO GIVE HIM THAT ISSUE BUT COULD NOT TAKE UNDUE RISKS IN DOING SO. HE REALISED THAT PERES WOULD HAVE TO TAKE HIS DECISION BY MARCH AT THE LATEST.

9. I SAID THAT IT WAS HARD TO RESIST THE IMPRESSION THAT THE PROCESS WAS LOSING STEAM. JORDANIAN PRESENTATIONS OF THEIR POSITION WERE LESS EBULLIENT THAN THEY HAD BEEN THREE MONTHS AGO. HE SAID THAT HE TENDED TO AGREE BUT IT WAS NOT IN JORDAN'S CAPACITY TO DELIVER THE SUPER-POWERS.

10. ALL THAT BRITAIN COULD USEFULLY DO AT PRESENT WAS EXERCISE ITS INFLUENCE ON THE AMERICAN ADMINISTRATION AND PERSUADE THEM IN PARTICULAR TO DISCUSS AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE WITH THE RUSSIANS. I SAID THAT IN MY PERSONAL VIEW THE TIME HARDLY SEEMED RIPE FOR A FRESH HIGH-LEVEL APPROACH BY US TO THE AMERICANS.

11. FINALLY, HE SAID, THOUGH HALF-JOKINGLY, THAT WE COULD ALWAYS TRY ANOTHER JOINT JORDANIAN/PALESTINIAN VISIT TO LONDON. I REPLIED THAT THAT ISSUE WAS SIMPLY BEST NOT RAISED. (HE SHOWED NO DISPOSITION TO PURSUE IT.) HE TOLD ME THAT WHEN THE KING WAS IN LUXEMBOURG IN NOVEMBER THE EC PRESIDENCY HAD AGREED TO RECEIVE A JOINT DELEGATION. I SAID THAT I HAD HEARD THAT FROM OTHER JORDANIANS TOO BUT I BELIEVED THERE WAS A MISUNDERSTANDING. THE FACT WAS THAT THERE WAS NO AGREEMENT AT PRESENT AMONG THE 10 THAT THE PRESIDENCY SHOULD RECEIVE SUCH A DELEGATION.

COLES

MIDDLE EAST

LIMITED

NENAD
MED
NAD
SOVIET D
PLANNING STAFF
UND
ECD(E) (POCO UNIT)
NEWS DEPT
INFO DEPT
PUSD
SED
SCD

PS
PS/MR RENTON
PS/PUS
MR FERGUSSON
MR DEREK THOMAS
MR GOODALL
MR EGERTON
MR O'NEILL
MR SAMUEL
MR LONG

ADDITIONAL DISTRIBUTION
ARAB/ISRAEL