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TELNO 006

OF 061025Z JANUARY 86

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

KING HUSSEIN: THE PEACE PROCESS

SUMMARY

1. KING HUSSEIN IS REASONABLY PLEASED WITH THE RESULTS OF HIS VISIT TO DAMASCUS, PARTICULARLY THE AGREEMENT HE CLAIMS TO HAVE REACHED ON CERTAIN ASPECTS OF AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE. A FURTHER MEETING WITH PRESIDENT ASAD IS ENVISAGED BUT NOT FOR SOME TIME AND NOT UNTIL THE KING HAS SEEN ARAFAT.

DETAIL

2. ON 5 JANUARY KING HUSSEIN DESCRIBED HIS VISIT TO DAMASCUS TO ME AS 'A GOOD BEGINNING'. PRESIDENT ASAD HAD ACCEPTED THE IDEA OF AN INTERNATIONAL PEACE CONFERENCE, CONVENED BY THE UN SECRETARY-GENERAL AND ATTENDED BY THE FIVE PERMANENT MEMBERS AS WELL AS THE PARTIES TO THE CONFLICT. PROVIDED THAT THE CONFERENCE HAD A ROLE IN RESOLVING ANY DIFFICULTIES WHICH AROSE (AND IT WAS JORDAN'S POSITION THAT IT SHOULD HAVE SUCH A ROLE), ASAD ALSO ACCEPTED THE CONCEPT OF WORKING GROUPS DEALING WITH THE INDIVIDUAL TERRITORIAL DISPUTES. THE TWO LEADERS ACCEPTED THAT IF A SOLUTION TO ANY BUT NOT ALL OF THOSE DISPUTES WAS REACHED, IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AGREED SOLUTION WOULD AWAIT AGREEMENT ON THEM ALL. THE KING TOLD ME THAT THAT NOTION DID NOT WORRY HIM: SYRIA WOULD REACH AN AGREEMENT ON THE GOLAN LONG BEFORE JORDAN REACHED ONE ON THE WEST BANK.

3. IN ANSWER TO MY QUESTION THE KING SAID THAT SYRIAN AND JORDANIAN INTERPRETATIONS OF THE 11 FEBRUARY AMMAN AGREEMENT DIFFERED. BUT HE HAD EXPLAINED TO ASAD THAT FOR JORDAN THE AGREEMENT WAS FUNDAMENTAL TO THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN JORDANIANS AND PALESTINIANS. IF ARAFAT, WHO HE THOUGHT WOULD ARRIVE IN AMMAN ON 6 JANUARY, SHOWED THAT HE COULD NO LONGER DELIVER HIS PART OF THE AGREEMENT THEN THE MATTER WOULD HAVE TO BE RECONSIDERED. I SUGGESTED THAT ARAFAT'S ROLE SEEMED NOW TO BE A MAJOR POINT OF DIFFERENCE BETWEEN JORDAN AND SYRIA. THE KING IMPLIED THAT THIS / WAS

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WAS SO. ASAD HAD ASKED HIM TOWARDS THE END OF THE VISIT WHETHER HE COULD NOT THINK OF AN ALTERNATIVE TO 'THAT DREADFUL ARAFAT'. (THE JORDANIAN PRIME MINISTER TOLD THE U.S. AMBASSADOR RECENTLY THAT ASAD ALSO RULED OUT DEALING WITH 'THE CLIQUE AROUND ARAFAT' INCLUDING QADDOUMI.). AS TO ALTERNATIVES THE KING WENT NO FURTHER WITH ME THAN TO REPEAT HIS EARLIER REMARK THAT IF ARAFAT LET HIM DOWN HE WOULD HAVE TO MAKE PUBLIC TO THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE ARAFAT'S INADEQUACIES.

4. I ASKED WHETHER ASAD HAD ABANDONED THE CONCEPT OF A JOINT ARAB DELEGATION. HUSSEIN'S ANSWER WAS NOT ENTIRELY CLEAR BUT HE IMPLIED THAT HE HAD (AND I KNOW HE HAS GIVEN THE US AMBASSADOR THAT IMPRESSION TOO). NOR DID I OBTAIN A CLEAR ANSWER TO THE QUESTION OF WHETHER SYRIA ACCEPTED THE CONCEPT OF A JOINT JORDANIAN/PALESTINIAN DELEGATION BUT I IMAGINE THAT IS BECAUSE OF CONTINUING UNCERTAINTIES ABOUT ARAFAT'S ATTITUDE. THE KING DID IMPLY TO ME THAT ASAD COULD LIVE WITH THE IDEA OF A CONFEDERAL STATE AS PROVIDED FOR IN THE 11 FEBRUARY AGREEMENT. ASAD APPARENTLY SAID THAT IF THE PALESTINIANS DID NOT INSIST ON AN INDEPENDENT STATE NOR WOULD HE.

5. THE KING SAID HE HAD EMPHASISED TO ASAD THE IMPORTANCE OF THE TIME FACTOR. IT WAS ESSENTIAL TO MOVE WHILE PERES WAS STILL AVAILABLE. I ASKED THE KING HOW MUCH TIME HE THOUGHT PERES HAD LEFT. HE SAID HE DID NOT KNOW BUT NOT MUCH SEMICOLON HE WOULD PROBABLY NEED A SERIOUS OPENING BY THE END OF JANUARY.

6. I ENQUIRED ABOUT THE SYRIAN ATTITUDE TO EGYPTIAN PARTICIPATION IN A PEACE CONFERENCE. THE KING SAID THAT ASAD CONTINUED TO HAVE OBJECTIONS TO THIS AND IT WOULD TAKE TIME TO BRING HIM ROUND. HE ARGUED TO ASAD THAT THE BEST WAY TO MOVE EGYPT AWAY FROM CAMP DAVID WAS TO INVOLVE IT IN AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE DESIGNED TO BRING ABOUT A COMPREHENSIVE SETTLEMENT. HE (HUSSEIN) HAD TRANSMITTED PERSONAL MESSAGES FROM MUBARAK TO ASAD AND VICE-VERSA. HE BELIEVED THERE WERE PROSPECTS OF RE-ESTABLISHING A GENUINE DIALOGUE BETWEEN EGYPT AND SYRIA.

7. THE TWO LEADERS HAD DISCUSSED THE IRAQ/IRAN WAR AT SOME LENGTH. HUSSEIN HAD REMINDED ASAD THAT THERE HAD BEEN A TIME WHEN JORDAN HAD HAD A STRONG RELATIONSHIP WITH IRAN AND HAD USED IT IN PART TO MINIMISE TROUBLE-MAKING ACTIVITY BY THE IRANIANS. THE KING TOLD ME THAT HE HAD FOUND ASAD'S MIND RELATIVELY OPEN ON IRAQ/IRAN.

8. HE ALSO DISCUSSED WITH ASAD THE SYRIAN/ISRAELI PROBLEM OVER MISSILES. HE HAD APPROACHED THIS OBLIQUELY BY QUERYING WHETHER THE TENSION CREATED BY THIS WAS REALLY IN ANYONE'S INTERESTS. ASAD

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HAD IMPLIED THAT THE LOCATION OF THE MISSILES WOULD CHANGE ACCORDING TO THE SITUATION. THE KING HAD BEEN RELIEVED TO HEAR REPORTS ON 5 JANUARY THAT THE OFFENDING MISSILES HAD AGAIN BEEN WITHDRAWN FROM THE BEQA'A.

9. HUSSEIN TOLD ME THAT THERE WOULD NEED TO BE ANOTHER MEETING WITH ASAD, HE HOPED IN AMMAN. BUT THAT COULD NOT BE FOR SOME TIME. FIRST IT WAS NECESSARY TO DEAL WITH ARAFAT. THEN, AS I AM REPORTING SEPARATELY, HE WILL BE IN LONDON FOR TEN DAYS OR MORE. BUT MEANWHILE LOWER-LEVEL MEETINGS WILL CONTINUE. THE JORDANIAN MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR LEFT FOR DAMASCUS ON 5 JANUARY.

COMMENT

10. THE JORDANIANS HAVE SAID VIRTUALLY NOTHING IN PUBLIC ABOUT THE VISIT. THOSE CLOSE TO THE KING ARE ALSO DECLINING TO COMMENT PRIVATELY ON THE GROUNDS THAT THE ONLY IMPORTANT DISCUSSIONS IN DAMASCUS WERE THOSE BETWEEN THE TWO LEADERS ALONE, WHICH OCCUPIED SOME TEN HOURS, AND NO-ONE ELSE WAS PRIVY TO THEM. I SUSPECT THAT THE JORDANIANS DO NOT WANT TO FRIGHTEN OFF ARAFAT COMPLETELY BY REVEALING THE PROGRESS MADE. I THINK IT MORE THAN USUALLY IMPORTANT THAT WE DO NOT REVEAL THE KING'S ACCOUNT TO THIRD PARTIES.

11. THE US AMBASSADOR OBTAINED THE IMPRESSION FROM KING HUSSEIN ON 2 JANUARY THAT HE MADE REALLY SUBSTANTIAL PROGRESS IN DAMASCUS. BUT I DID NOT FIND THE KING QUITE AS CONFIDENT AND WOULD THINK THAT HIS PHRASE "A GOOD BEGINNING" JUST ABOUT SUMS IT UP.

12. FOR FURTHER COMMENT ON THE STATE OF THE PEACE PROCESS SEE MIFT (NOT TO ALL).

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MR DEREK THOMAS
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MR EGERTON
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TELNO 007

OF 061021Z JANUARY 86

INFO PRIORITY WASHINGTON, TEL AVIV, JERUSALEM, CAIRO,
INFO PRIORITY DAMASCUS AND RIYADH.

MIPT: THE PEACE PROCESS

1. THE FOLLOWING VIEWS ON THE PEACE PROCESS, AS SEEN FROM AMMAN, MAY BE HELPFUL PRIOR TO YOUR VISIT TO THE GULF AND THE VISITS BY KING HUSSEIN AND THE PRIME MINISTER OF ISRAEL TO LONDON.

JORDAN-ISRAEL

2. I SUSPECT THAT THERE IS A CONSIDERABLY GREATER MEASURE OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE KING AND PERES THAN HAS BEEN ALLOWED TO APPEAR. THE KING HAS REFERRED IN CONVERSATIONS WITH ME AND ONE OR TWO OTHERS HERE TO "CONTACTS WITH PERES, WHETHER DIRECT OR INDIRECT". THE US AMBASSADOR TELLS ME THAT THE BASIS OF THE AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE TWO IS THAT PERES WILL GO ALONG WITH AN INTERNATIONAL PEACE CONFERENCE IF HUSSEIN WILL FIND SOME WAY ACCEPTABLE TO ISRAEL OF RESOLVING THE PROBLEM OF PLO PARTICIPATION. I DO NOT KNOW HOW ACCURATE THIS DESCRIPTION OF THEIR UNDERSTANDING IS. BUT IT COULD EXPLAIN THE CURRENT DIRECTION OF JORDANIAN ACTIVITY.

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

3. JORDAN IS DOING FAR MORE THAN ANYONE ELSE TO TRY TO ESTABLISH AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE. THE KING CLEARLY MADE SOME HEADWAY IN HIS VISIT TO DAMASCUS THOUGH I THINK HE MAY BE PUTTING AN OPTIMISTIC INTERPRETATION ON PROGRESS IN ORDER TO KEEP THE US ON BOARD. BY EMPHASISING A CONTINUING ROLE FOR THE CONFERENCE IN RESOLVING DIFFICULTIES WHICH ARISE IN WORKING GROUPS, AND BY INSISTING THAT A SETTLEMENT MUST BE COMPREHENSIVE, HE HOPES TO WIN SYRIA TO THE CONFERENCE IDEA. THE US AMBASSADOR TELLS ME THAT THE US SECRETARY OF STATE DISLIKES BOTH NOTIONS.

4. AS YOU KNOW CLUVERIUS HAS BEEN SHUTTLING SECRETLY BETWEEN JORDAN AND ISRAEL IN AN ATTEMPT TO ACHIEVE AS MUCH AGREEMENT AS POSSIBLE ON CONFERENCE DETAILS, LEAVING ASIDE THE BIG ISSUES OF SOVIET AND PALESTINIAN PARTICIPATION WHICH FOR THE TIME BEING THE US AND OTHERS DO NOT WISH TO ADDRESS. I DO NOT KNOW ALL THE PROPOSALS HE IS CARRYING BUT THEY ARE PRETTY DETAILED. FOR EXAMPLE, THE US HAVE FLOATED THE IDEA THAT PARTICIPATION SHOULD BE AT PRIME MINISTERIAL LEVEL FOR THE REGIONAL STATES, FOREIGN MINISTER LEVEL FOR THE REST.

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5. IN A SENSE THE "PEACE PROCESS" HAS NOW BEEN REDUCED TO THE QUESTION OF WHETHER AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE CAN BE HELD. THAT IS THE FOCUS OF US AND JORDANIAN ACTIVITY.

6. BUT FOR JORDAN THERE IS A MORE DIFFICULT THOUGH CONNECTED ISSUE. IS IT NECESSARY TO ABANDON ARAFAT AND CAN JORDAN RISK DOING THIS? A PRINCIPAL MOTIVE OF JORDAN'S RAPPROCHEMENT WITH SYRIA HAS BEEN TO PUT PRESSURE ON ARAFAT TO ACCEPT RESOLUTION 242 ETC. BUT JORDAN IS NOW (SEE MIPT) UNDER PRESSURE FROM ASAD TO ABANDON ARAFAT AND, IT APPEARS, MOST IF NOT ALL OF THE CURRENT PLO LEADERSHIP. THE IRONY IS THAT THIS MIGHT SUIT PERES WELL. BUT FOR JORDAN THE MOVE WOULD CARRY VERY HIGH RISKS. WHETHER KING HUSSEIN CAN CONTEMPLATE IT WILL DEPEND ON HOW FAR HE HAS SECURED SYRIAN SUPPORT FOR THE PEACE PROCESS (AND HE PROBABLY HAS A LONG WAY TO GO) AND WHAT KIND OF ALTERNATIVE PALESTINIAN REPRESENTATION CAN BE DEvised. HUSSEIN HAS A VERY DIFFICULT ROW TO HOE BETWEEN ASAD AND ARAFAT. SOME OF HIS ADVISERS URGE THE IMPORTANCE TO JORDAN OF KEEPING THE RELATIONSHIP WITH ARAFAT. BUT THE JORDANIAN PRIME MINISTER WOULD BE DELIGHTED TO GET RID OF HIM.

US POLICY

7. FINALLY, THE US POSITION. THE AMERICAN AMBASSADOR TELLS ME THAT CERTAIN WHITE HOUSE OFFICIALS ARE ADVISING THE US PRESIDENT THAT THE PEACE PROCESS IS DEAD AND THAT HE SHOULD DIS-ENGAGE. (IT IS NOT DEAD BUT IT IS MUCH MORE DIFFICULT THAN IT WAS) HE ALSO SAYS, AND WASHINGTON MAY CARE TO COMMENT, THAT THE PRESIDENT MUST TAKE A DECISION FAIRLY SOON ON WHETHER TO INTERVENE TO PRE-EMPT OR BLUNT A PROBABLY MOVE AT THE END OF JANUARY BY CONGRESSIONAL OPPONENTS OF THE JORDANIAN ARMS PACKAGE TO POSTPONE A DECISION WELL BEYOND THE MARCH DEADLINE. ALTHOUGH THE KING KEEPS SAYING THAT HE HAS GIVEN UP HOPE OF THE ARMS ANYWAY, SUCH A MOVE, IF SUCCESSFUL, WOULD REDUCE JORDANIAN FAITH IN THE US EVEN BELOW ITS PRESENTLY LOW LEVEL. BOEKER BELIEVES THAT, IF THE PRESIDENT DOES DECIDE TO INTERVENE, IT WILL BE NECESSARY TO MAKE SOME CONCESSIONS TO THE CONGRESSIONAL OPPOSITION AND THAT COULD TAKE THE FORM OF POSTPONING A DECISION ON THE AIRCRAFT ELEMENT IN THE PACKAGE WHILE LETTING THE HAWK MISSILE ASSOCIATED EQUIPMENT GO FORWARD.

8. BOEKER EXPRESSED TO ME THE VIEW THAT A MESSAGE FROM THE PRIME MINISTER TO THE PRESIDENT URGING HIM TO TAKE ACTION TO REVITALISE THE PEACE PROCESS COULD TIP THE BALANCE OF AGREEMENT IN WASHINGTON. BUT HE THOUGHT THAT TO BE EFFECTIVE SUCH A MESSAGE WOULD HAVE TO REACH THE PRESIDENT IF NOT BEFORE MR PERES' VISIT TO LONDON THEN VERY SOON AFTERWARDS.

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9. I CANNOT TELL FROM HERE WHETHER BOEKER'S DESCRIPTION OF THE WASHINGTON DEBATE, AND THE TIMING POINT, IS ACCURATE. BUT ON THE BASIS OF HIS ACCOUNT IT LOOKS TO ME AS THOUGH A PRIME MINISTERIAL MESSAGE TO THE US PRESIDENT AT THE RIGHT MOMENT THIS MONTH COULD BE IMPORTANT.

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