

MIDDLE EAST

PS

PS/MR RENTON

PS/PUS

MR DEREK THOMAS

MR FERGUSSON

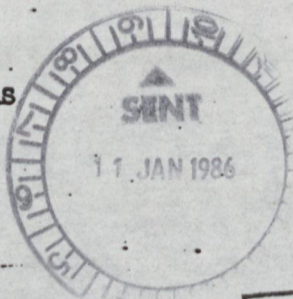
MR EGERTON

HD/NENAD

HD/MED

NO. 10 DOWNING STREET

CABINET OFFICE DIO



*A very
useful telegram*

IMMEDIATE

PUSD (2)

NEWS DEPT

RESIDENT CLERK

1.10.85

CONFIDENTIAL

FM WASHINGTON

TO DESKBY 130900Z FCO

TELNO 75

OF 102350Z JAN 86

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

INFO ROUTINE OTHER MIDDLE EAST POSTS, UKMIS NEW YORK, MOSCOW,

INFO ROUTINE BONN, PARIS, ROME

AMMAN TELNOS 6 AND 7 TO FCO: ARAB/ISRAEL: US VIEWS

SUMMARY

1. THE ADMINISTRATION IS OPPOSED TO HUSSEIN'S LATEST IDEAS FOR AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE. A SHULTZ MESSAGE TO YOU LIKELY. US DOUBTS ABOUT SYRIAN MOTIVES. NO HOPE FOR THE JORDAN ARMS PACKAGE.

DETAIL

2. WHETHER OR NOT KING HUSSEIN IS PUTTING AN OPTIMISTIC INTERPRETATION ON ASAD'S POSITION, OR CONTACTS IN STATE AS NSC INDICATE THAT THE US ADMINISTRATION CANNOT ACCEPT EITHER OF THE POINTS ALLEGEDLY AGREED WITH SYRIA ON AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE (A CONTINUING ROLE FOR THE CONFERENCE IN RESOLVING DIFFICULTIES IN THE WORKING GROUPS; AND INSISTENCE ON A COMPREHENSIVE SETTLEMENT). THEIR BASIC CRITERION IS WHAT PERES COULD CONCEIVABLY SELL WITHIN ISRAEL. PERES MAY WELL HAVE INDICATED TO HUSSEIN THAT HE COULD GO ALONG WITH AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE, IF HUSSEIN PRODUCED AN ACCEPTABLE SOLUTION ON PALESTINIAN REPRESENTATION (THOUGH OUR CONTACTS DOUBT THAT THIS IS AS CONCRETE AS A QUOTE UNDERSTANDING UNQUOTE). BUT IN THE US VIEW ISRAEL COULD NOT ACCEPT ANY CONFERENCE WHICH DID NOT PRESERVE THE INTEGRITY OF DIRECT NEGOTIATIONS.

3. SHULTZ IS LIKELY TO SEND YOU A MESSAGE BEFORE KING HUSSEIN'S CALLS IN LONDON. IT WILL PROBABLY INCLUDE THE US CONDITIONS ON THE STRUCTURE OF AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE WHICH ARE:

- 1) THE ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF THE CONFERENCE'S STRUCTURE AND PROCEDURE MUST BE AGREED IN ADVANCE BY ALL PARTICIPANTS.
- 2) THE CONFERENCE MUST LEAD DIRECTLY TO DIRECT NEGOTIATIONS IN BILATERAL WORKING GROUPS.
- 3) THE CONFERENCE WILL NOT BE ABLE TO IMPOSE ITS WILL ON OR NEGATE THE RESULTS OF THE BILATERAL WORKING GROUPS.
- 4) NEGOTIATIONS WILL ONLY TAKE PLACE IN THE BILATERAL WORKING GROUPS, WHICH WILL REFER ISSUES ONLY TO THEIR RESPECTIVE GOVERNMENTS.

THESE CONDITIONS WERE GIVEN TO THE KING IN A LETTER FROM SHULTZ IN MID-DECEMBER - SEE JENKINS' TELETYPE OF 20 DECEMBER TO EGERTON.

4. IN THE US ANALYSIS, HUSSEIN IS NOW PUTTING GREATER WEIGHT

THAN EVER ON THE INVOLVEMENT OF SYRIA IN THE PROCESS. HE HAS BEEN PREPARED TO CONCEDE BILATERAL JORDANIAN-SYRIAN POINTS FOR DIALOGUE WITH SYRIA ABOUT THE PEACE PROCESS. AND HE NOW BELIEVES THAT HE HAS MADE A START TOWARDS SHIFTING SYRIA FROM ITS TRADITIONAL LINE THAT THE TIME IS NOT RIGHT FOR ANY INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE.

5. THE ADMINISTRATION, HOWEVER, HAVE GRAVE DOUBTS ABOUT ASAD'S MOTIVES (DAMASCUS TELNO 11 TO FCO). THEY WERE STRUCK BY THE CONTRAST BETWEEN HUSSEIN'S REPORT OF HIS MEETINGS WITH ASAD AND ASAD'S INFLEXIBILITY WITH MURPHY ON 30 NOVEMBER. THEY SUSPECT THAT SYRIAN CONCESSIONS ARE ILLUSORY AND TACTICAL, TO PRESENT AN APPEARANCE OF MODERATION WHILE HOLDING FAST (AND BINDING HUSSEIN) TO POSITIONS WHICH THE UNITED STATES AND ISRAEL WILL INEVITABLY REJECT. SYRIA WOULD THUS AVOID ARAB MODERATE ACCUSATIONS OF SABOTAGING HUSSEIN, WHILE ALSO EFFECTIVELY BLOCKING IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FEBRUARY 11 AGREEMENT. THE UNITED STATES ACCORDINGLY BELIEVE THAT ASAD DOES NOT EXPECT TO BE CALLED TO DELIVER ON THE CONCESSIONS HE HAS SIGNALLED TO KING HUSSEIN.

6. ON ARAFAT'S EVASIONS (AMMAN TELNO 10) RIFAI HAS GIVEN THE AMERICANS A SIMILAR ACCOUNT OF THE JORDANIAN RESPONSE. THE STATE DEPARTMENT ARE ALSO NOT CONVINCED THAT HUSSEIN IS AS CLOSE AS RIFAI SUGGESTED TO GIVING UP ARAFAT. THEY BELIEVE THE KING STILL SEES VALUE IN ARAFAT, AT LEAST AS A CARD IN HIS HAND TO PLAY WITH ASAD. HUSSEIN HAS TOLD THE AMERICANS NOTHING FURTHER OF THE OPTIONS HE SAYS HE HAS IN MIND IF ARAFAT FAILS, HIM AND THEY CANNOT THEMSELVES IDENTIFY ALTERNATIVE PALESTINIANS WHO WOULD MEET THE KING'S NEED FOR COVER, IF ARAFAT WERE FORCED INTO OPPOSITION. THEY BELIEVE NONETHELESS THAT HUSSEIN IS ONCE AGAIN VERY ANGRY WITH ARAFAT, BUT ARE UNCERTAIN OF THE IMPLICATIONS.

JORDAN ARMS

7. THE SENATE IS LIKELY TO INTRODUCE A MOTION OF DISAPPROVAL OF THE SALE IN THE FIRST WEEK AFTER CONGRESS RETURNS ON 21 JANUARY. FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE STAFF CONTACTS EXPECT AN 85-15 VOTE AGAINST THE SALE (MORE THAN SUFFICIENT TO OVER-RIDE A PRESIDENTIAL VETO) AND BELIEVES THE SENATE WOULD BE EQUALLY OPPOSED TO A COMPROMISE PACKAGE (EG OMITTING THE AIRCRAFT). ACCORDING TO STARK (NSC), HUSSEIN HAS AGAIN INDICATED HE WOULD PREFER THE ADMINISTRATION TO GO DOWN FIGHTING, AND THE PRESIDENT INTENDS TO DO HIS BEST. BUT IN AN ELECTION YEAR, WITH NO PROGRESS IN THE PEACE PROCESS TO SHOW SINCE OCTOBER, AND HUSSEIN APPARENTLY CLOSER THAN EVER TO SYRIA, IT IS IN OUR VIEW ALMOST CERTAIN THAT THE PRESIDENT WILL ACQUIESCE IN THE BEST AVAILABLE DEAL, SUCH AS A POSTPONEMENT OF THE SALE SINE DIE.

COMMENT

8. WHETHER THE PRIME MINISTER SHOULD BE ADVISED TO SEND A MESSAGE TO THE PRESIDENT ON THE PEACE PROCESS, AND ITS TIMING, (AMMAN TELNO 7) SHOULD, IN OUR VIEW, BE JUDGED ON ITS OWN MERITS, INDEPENDENT OF THE ARMS ISSUE. THE JORDAN ARMS PACKAGE IS DYING OR DEAD, AND WE DO NOT BELIEVE THAT THE PRESIDENT COULD REVITALISE IT. THE US ASSESSMENT IS THAT HUSSEIN, THOUGH HE WILL BE DEEPLY HURT ONCE AGAIN, WILL NOT ACTUALLY WITHDRAW FROM THE PEACE PROCESS. THOUGH THEY HAVE SERIOUS DOUBTS ABOUT HIS LATEST MOVES WITH SYRIA, THE ADMINISTRATION BELIEVE THAT HUSSEIN IS STILL STRONGLY ENGAGED IN SEEKING A SOLUTION.

9. THEY WILL, OF COURSE, BE VERY INTERESTED IN ANY LIGHT THROWN ON THIS BY THE KING'S TALKS IN LONDON, AND SHULTZ'S MESSAGE TO YOU IS NO DOUBT PARTLY INTENDED TO ENCOURAGE US TO BRIEF FULLY ON THEM, AS I HOPE WE SHALL.

WRIGHT

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ORWBAN 0225

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