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FM WASHINGTON  
TO PRIORITY FCO  
TELNO 377

OF 142320Z FEBRUARY 86  
INFO PRIORITY PARIS, BONN, TEL AVIV, JERUSALEM, CAIRO, THE HAGUE  
INFO PRIORITY RIYADH, TUNIS, ROME, ALGIERS, UKMIS NEW YORK  
INFO PRIORITY DAMASCUS

AMMAN TELNO 76: ARAB/ISRAEL

## SUMMARY

1. NO NEW US IDEAS AT PRESENT FOR THE PEACE PROCESS. THEY DO NOT HAVE A CLEAR VIEW OF HUSSEIN'S INTENTIONS BUT SUSPECT HE MAY FIND AN ACCOMMODATION WITH SYRIA.

## DETAIL

2. MINISTER DISCUSSED THE PEACE PROCESS WITH MURPHY ON 14 FEBRUARY. MURPHY SAID THAT AFTER THE FAILURE IN AMMAN PERES AND HUSSEIN HAD TOLD THE US IN ALMOST IDENTICAL TERMS THAT THE PROCESS NEEDED TO BE THOUGHT THROUGH AGAIN. BUT NEITHER HAD SAID HE WAS GIVING UP. PERES' SPEECH ON DEVOLUTION OF POWERS IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES SHOWED ONE DIRECTION LABOUR POLICY MIGHT BE HEADING. BUT SUCH IDEAS WERE NOT PRACTICABLE WITHOUT JORDANIAN AND WEST BANKERS' COOPERATION. PERES WOULD STILL PREFER PROGRESS IN THE CLASSIC PEACE PROCESS AND HAD SAID PUBLICLY THAT HIS NEW IDEAS WERE NOT INTENDED TO IMPLY THAT THE NEGOTIATING PROCESS WAS OVER
3. HUSSEIN'S INTENTIONS SEEMED UNCLEAR. HIS EXPECTED PUBLIC STATEMENT MIGHT GIVE SOME INDICATION OF HIS NEXT TACK. FROM WHAT THE US HAD HEARD, THE KING WOULD NOT SIGNAL A BREAK WITH ARAFAT. HE NEEDED TO RETAIN SOME WORKING RELATIONS WITH HIM, THE BETTER TO COPE WITH ASAD.
4. BUT ARAFAT WAS PEDDLING A DISTORTED ACCOUNT OF THE AMMAN TALKS, MOST RECENTLY IN CAIRO. HUSSEIN HAD BEEN REALISTIC DURING THE AMMAN TALKS AND HAD NOT (NOT) PRESSED THE UNITED STATES TO RECOGNISE PALESTINIAN SELF DETERMINATION AS THE PRICE OF MOVEMENT BY ARAFAT. IT WOULD BE UNHELPFUL TO HUSSEIN IF THE EGYPTIANS WERE NOW PERSUADED TO FALL IN WITH ARAFAT'S LINE.
5. MURPHY SAID ASAD WAS CHARACTERISTICALLY KEEPING HIS CARDS WELL HIDDEN. HE WAS DELIBERATELY STANDING OFF TO EMPHASISE THAT HUSSEIN'S ADVENTURES WITH ARAFAT WERE ENDING, AS HE HAD PREDICTED, WITHOUT RESULT. ASAD WAS UNLIKELY TO BE GENEROUS WITH HUSSEIN WHEN THEY EVENTUALLY MET. MURPHY DESCRIBED RIFAI'S FOUR OPTIONS FOR THE KING WITH ASAD AS IN PARA 8 OF TUR. BUT HE SAID THAT, WITH SYRIA INVOLVED, NONE OF THEM WAS LIKELY TO EMERGE AS A WORKABLE PROPOSAL FOR ISRAEL AND THE UNITED STATES. IF SYRIA AND JORDAN DID PURSUE ANY OF THESE OPTIONS, THEY WOULD MERELY BE REACHING A 'PRINCIPLED POSITION' ON WHICH SYRIA AT LEAST WOULD BE CONTENT TO STAND PAT.

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6. ASKED ABOUT US INTENTIONS, MURPHY SAID THEY WERE THINKING HARD AND WATCHING HUSSEIN, BUT HAD NO PLAN OF ACTION AT PRESENT.

7. WE HAVE BEEN GIVEN A COPY OF AMBASSADOR BOEKER'S SUMMARY ACCOUNT OF THE AMMAN TALKS (FULL TEXT BY BAG - NOT TO ALL). HIS CONCLUSIONS ARE:

QUOTE: ARAFAT'S DEPARTURE FROM AMMAN DOES NOT NECESSARILY MEAN THE PEACE PROCESS IS OVER: IT DOES MEAN, HOWEVER, THAT WE ARE IN FOR AT LEAST A PAUSE. HUSSEIN HAS ALREADY BEGUN TAKING STOCK. ... HUSSEIN'S INTEREST IN THE PEACE PROCESS HAS NOT SUBSIDED. HE CONTINUES TO SEE A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT BETWEEN JORDAN, THE PALESTINIANS AND THE ISRAELIS AS BEING KEY TO JORDAN'S LONG TERM INTERESTS. HOWEVER, FAILURE OF HIS TALKS WITH ARAFAT IS NOT LIKELY TO WHET SYRIAN INTEREST IN THE PEACE PROCESS ON TERMS ACCEPTABLE TO THE US AND ISRAEL. WITHOUT EITHER A SYRIAN OR PLO NEGOTIATING PARTNER, HUSSEIN WOULD HAVE TO CONCLUDE THAT THE ELEMENTS FOR PROGRESS IN THE PEACE PROCESS ARE LACKING AND WAIT FOR EVENTS TO PRODUCE A CHANGE THAT MAY OFFER NEW OPPORTUNITIES. UNQUOTE.

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