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FM AMMAN

TO PRIORITY FCO

TELNO 216

OF 150720Z MAY 86

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

INFO PRIORITY WASHINGTON, RIYADH

CURRENT MIDDLE EAST SITUATION: KING HUSSEIN'S VIEWS

SUMMARY

1. NO SIGN OF EARLY CHANGE IN JORDANIAN POLICY. THE KING BELIEVES IT RIGHT FOR THE TIME BEING TO FOCUS ON IMPROVING CONDITIONS IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES. HE IS MEANWHILE WORKING TO BRING SYRIA, IRAQ AND EGYPT CLOSER TOGETHER. FURTHER INDICATIONS THAT HE HOPES TO REACH AGREEMENT WITH SYRIA ON A WAY FORWARD ON THE PEACE PROCESS BUT HE BELIEVES THIS WILL TAKE TIME.

DETAIL

2. I HAD A LONG TALK WITH KING HUSSEIN LAST NIGHT. I SAID THAT I WAS SURE THE PRIME MINISTER WOULD BE GRATEFUL FOR AN UP-TO-DATE ACCOUNT OF HIS VIEWS AS SHE PREPARED FOR HER VISIT TO ISRAEL. THE KING SAID HE HOPED THE VISIT WOULD BE SUCCESSFUL. THE PRIME MINISTER WAS WELL AWARE OF JORDAN'S DILEMMA AND THE DANGEROUS SITUATION IN THE AREA. SINCE THEIR LAST MEETING IN LONDON SOME PROGRESS HAD BEEN MADE ON THE LIST OF MEASURES WHICH MR PERES HAD PROPOSED FOR IMPLEMENTATION IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES. JORDAN HAD NOW REPLIED TO PERES AND HE WOULD LET ME HAVE DOCUMENTS FOR THE PRIME MINISTER TO SEE SHORTLY (I WILL TELEGRAPH WHEN HE DOES SO). HE THOUGHT THE BEST APPROACH IN THE PRESENT CONFUSED SITUATION IN THE AREA WAS TO CONCENTRATE ON THE PROBLEMS OF THOSE LIVING UNDER OCCUPATION.

3. DURING PRESIDENT MUBARAK'S SHORT VISIT TO JORDANSDL 12 MAY THERE HAD BEEN SOME DISCUSSION OF THE SHAWWA'S IDEAS FOR AUTONOMY IN GAZA. THE KING HAD SAID THAT HE WAS OPPOSED TO 'GAZA FIRST' SOLUTIONS. ANYTHING DONE FOR GAZA SHOULD BE DONE SIMULTANEOUSLY FOR THE WEST BANK. HE HAD ALSO TOLD MUBARAK FIRMLY THAT HE SAW NO REASON TO GIVE THE PLO ANY ROLE IN GAZA.

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4. IN ANSWER TO MY QUESTION HE SAID THAT HE HAD NOT DISCUSSED WITH MUBARAK REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLANS. AS TO PERES' IDEAS NO PLAN WITH AN ISRAELI STAMP ON IT HAD ANY CHANCE OF SUCCEEDING. ON THE OTHER HAND, SINCE THE INDUSTRIALISED COUNTRIES WOULD CERTAINLY BENEFIT GREATLY FROM THE FALL IN OIL PRICES HE BELIEVED IT WOULD BE RIGHT FOR THEM TO DEVOTE AT LEAST PART OF THIS GAIN TO AID FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN THE AREA. HE SAID THAT HE HAD NOTED WITH INTEREST REFERENCES TO PREPARATION BY JORDAN OF A DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES BUT HE MADE NO COMMENT. HE CONCLUDE THAT HE HAS NOT YET CONSIDERED IT PERSONALLY.

5. HE HAD AGREED WITH MUBARAK THAT EGYPT AND JORDAN SHOULD ESTABLISH A JOINT WORKING COMMITTEE TO DISCUSS ALL MATTERS RELATING TO THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES. THIS MIGHT HELP TO PREVENT PEOPLE GOING OFF AT A TANGENT AND UNCOORDINATED IDEAS POPPING UP ALL OVER THE PLACE. HE WELCOMED THIS MOVE.

6. THE KING SAID THAT THE EGYPTIANS WERE STILL TALKING ABOUT JORDAN/PLO RECONCILIATION BUT IMPLIED THAT THEY WERE WAITING THEIR TIME. (THE EGYPTIAN AMBASSADOR TOLD ME THAT MUBARAK HAD NOT BEEN ABLE TO CONVEY ANY CHANGE IN ARAFAT'S POSITION AND THE JORDANIANS HAD SAID THAT A FUNDAMENTAL CHANGE WOULD BE NECESSARY BEFORE THEY COULD EVEN CONTEMPLATE RECONCILIATION.)

7. THE KING HAD FOUND MUBARAK ANGRY WITH THE SAUDIS, PARTLY BECAUSE HE BELIEVED THEY WERE FINANCING EXTERMIST RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS IN EGYPT. BUT KING FAHD WAS ALSO UPSET BY RECENT EGYPTIAN SPEECHES AND ARTICLES WHICH HAD APPEARED TO CRITICISE SAUDI ARABIA.

8. HUSSEIN SPOKE IN SOME DETAIL ABOUT PRESIDENT ASAD'S RECENT VISIT TO JORDAN. HE BELIEVED THAT PROGRESS HAD BEEN MADE. IN PARTICULAR, THOUGH THIS WAS VERY DELICATE (PLEASE PROTECT), ASAD NOW SEEMED TO BE GENUINELY INTERESTED IN OPENING A DIALOGUE WITH SADAAM HUSSEIN IN ORDER TO TRY TO CONTRIBUTE TO A SETTLEMENT OF THE GULF CONFLICT, AVOIDING THE RECRIMINATION OF THE PAST. THAT WAS THE MESSAGE WHICH THE KING HAD CONVEYED TO SADDAM HUSSEIN ON HIS VISIT TO BAGHDAD THE PREVIOUS EVENING (13 MAY). HE NOW AWAITED THE IRAQI REPLY, BUT HE BELIEVED THERE WAS AT LAST SOME HOPE OF PROGRESS IN SYRIAN/IRAQI RELATIONSHIPS. (HE ADDED THAT HE WAS ALSO WORKING TO RESTORE A DIALOGUE BETWEEN DAMASCUS AND CAIRO, AND IN GENERAL TO PROMOTE MORE SOLIDARITY IN THE AREA.)

9. HE HAD CHALLENGED ASAD RATHER ROUGHLY ABOUT THE SYRIAN CONCEPT OF STRATEGIC PARITY WITH ISRAEL. WHAT DID HE MEAN BY IT? HOW DID HE THINK IT COULD EVER BE ACHIEVED? AND WHAT WAS THE PURPOSE ANYWAY - TO THROW THE ISRAELIS INTO THE SEA? ASAD HAD SAID THAT THAT WAS NOT THE PURPOSE. NOR WAS HE THINKING IN MILITARY TERMS, BUT MORE IN TERMS OF CREATING SUFFICIENT ARAB SOLIDARITY TO ENSURE A REASONABLY BALANCED NEGOTIATION.

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10. THE KING TOLD ME THAT THERE WAS NOW A BROAD MEASURE OF JORDANIAN/SYRIAN AGREEMENT ON AN INTERNATIONAL PEACE CONFERENCE TO NEGOTIATE A COMPREHENSIVE SETTLEMENT, ATTENDED BY THE FIVE PERMANENT MEMBERS, WITH AUTHENTIC PALESTINIAN REPRESENTATIVES IN ATTENDANCE. THE DIALOGUE WITH SYRIA ON HOW TO PROMOTE THIS CONCEPT FURTHER WOULD CONTINUE (CF MY TELNO 202 NOT TO BAGHDAD). HE SAID THIS SOUNDED LIKE AN ATTEMPT TO REVIVE THE PEACE PROCESS. WHAT TIMESCALE DID HE HAVE IN MIND? HE REPLIED THAT NOTHING COULD HAPPEN FOR SOME TIME YET. THE PERIOD OF REFLECTION WOULD CONTINUE.

11. HE HAD DISCUSSED WITH ASAD THE QUESTION OF AN ARAB SUMMIT AND CLAIMED THAT ASAD NOW ACCEPTED THE NOTION OF AN AGENDA DEALING WITH ALL CURRENT ARAB PROBLEMS. THERE WOULD NOW BE CONTACTS WITH OTHERS, PARTICULARLY MOROCCO, ALGERIA AND SAUDI ARABIA, TO SEE WHETHER THE CURRENT OBSTACLES COULD BE OVERCOME. IF THE VENUE WAS A PROBLEM, AMMAN COULD BE CONSIDERED. BUT THE AGENDA HAD TO BE GENERAL. NOTHING WOULD HELP THE PROSPECTS FOR A SUMMIT MORE THAN AN IMPROVEMENT IN IRAQI/SYRIAN RELATIONS.

12. HUSSEIN SAID THAT ASAD HAD MADE NO REFERENCE DURING HIS VISIT TO SYRIAN/ISRAELI TENSION.

13. MIFT (NOT TO ALL) DESCRIBES HIS EXCHANGE WITH ASAD ON TERRORISM. MY SECOND MIFT CONTAINS MY OWN THOUGHTS, PARTICULARLY IN THE LIGHT OF THE ABOVE, ON THE PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT TO ISRAEL.

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