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TO PRIORITY FCO

TELNO 428 OF 28 OCT 80

INFO PRIORITY BAGHDAD DAMASCUS JEDDA TEL AVIV UKMIS NEW YORK  
 AND WASHINGTON

*Read in full.*

YOUR TELNO 877 OF 22 OCTOBER TO UKMIS NEW YORK; IRAN/IRAQ.

1. KING HUSSEIN, ACCOMPANIED BY THE PRIME MINISTER AND COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF, LEFT FOR BAGHDAD LATE ON 26 OCTOBER AND IS EXPECTED TO RETURN TO AMMAN THIS AFTERNOON. NO NEWS OF THIS VISIT HAS YET BEEN RELEASED HERE.
2. MY US COLLEAGUE (PLEASE PROTECT) SAW KING HUSSEIN SEVERAL TIMES LAST WEEK, BOTH TO CARRY OUT THE INSTRUCTIONS REFERRED TO IN YOUR TUR AND ALSO TO TRY TO ALLAY JORDANIAN AND IRAQI ANXIETIES CONCERNING A POSSIBLE US DEAL WITH IRAN ON THE AMERICAN HOSTAGES. VELIOTES TOLD ME THAT HE HAD FLOATED WITH THE KING A NUMBER OF IDEAS AS IF THEY WERE HIS OWN ON ELEMENTS WHICH MIGHT BE INCLUDED IN A SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION ON IRAN/IRAQ TO COVER BOTH WITHDRAWAL AND NON-INTERVENTION IN EACH OTHER'S INTERNAL

BOTH WITHDRAWAL AND NON-INTERVENTION IN EACH OTHER'S INTERNAL AFFAIRS: THE AMERICAN HOPE WAS THAT THE UNDERTAKING ON NON-INTERVENTION, WHICH WAS REALLY INTENDED TO APPLY TO THE IRANIANS, MIGHT MAKE THE IDEA OF WITHDRAWAL MORE PALATABLE TO THE IRAQIS. KING HUSSEIN HAD REACTED PREDICTABLY, CLAIMING THAT THE REAL AGGRESSOR HAD BEEN IRAN AND THAT THE DEMAND FOR TOTAL IRAQI WITHDRAWAL AMOUNTED TO TAKING SIDES IN THE CONFLICT.

3. ON THE POSSIBLE RELEASE OF US ARMS SUPPLIES FOR IRAN, VELIOTES SAID HE HAD TOLD THE KING BLUNTLY THAT THERE MIGHT WELL BE SPARE PARTS AND AMMUNITION IN US WAREHOUSES AWAITING SHIPMENT TO IRAN, WHICH HAD BEEN BLOCKED AS A RESULT OF THE TRADE EMBARGO AFTER THE SEIZURE OF THE HOSTAGES. THERE WAS THEREFORE NO GUARANTEE THAT SOME ARMS SUPPLIES MIGHT NOT REACH THE IRANIANS AS A RESULT OF ANY AGREEMENT REACHED WITH THE IRANIAN GOVERNMENT, BUT HE VERY MUCH DOUBTED WHETHER THEY WOULD MAKE ANY REAL IMPACT ON THE COURSE OF THE WAR.

4. KING HUSSEIN TOLD VELIOTES A FEW DAYS AGO THAT HE INTENDED GOING TO BAGHDAD AGAIN FOR TWO MAIN REASONS:

A. TO REVIEW THE LATEST MILITARY SITUATION SEMICOLON

B. TO DISCUSS POSSIBLE FUTURE COURSES OF ACTION.

WHILE THE KING DID NOT TELL VELIOTES IN TERMS THAT HE WOULD BE TRYING TO PERSUADE PRESIDENT SADDAM TO DISCUSS WAYS IN WHICH THE WAR MIGHT BE BROUGHT TO AN END, VELIOTES'S OWN PERSONAL VIEW WAS THAT, WHEREAS 10 DAYS AGO KING HUSSEIN WOULD HAVE TAKEN A NEGATIVE VIEW ON ALMOST ANY OF THE POSSIBLE CURRENT PEACE INITIATIVES (SEE MY TELS NOS 413 AND 419), HE HAD SINCE MODIFIED HIS ATTITUDE AND, IF HE SENSED PRESIDENT SADDAM WAS HIMSELF LOOKING FOR A WAY OUT, WOULD BE WILLING TO ENCOURAGE HIM.

5. VELIOTES BELIEVES THAT THE SAUDIS ARE INFLUENCING THE KING IN THIS DIRECTION. FOLLOWING HIS RECENT VISIT TO SAUDI ARABIA, KING HUSSEIN WAS ASKED BY PRINCE FAHD TO SEND HIS COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF (WHO IS ALSO IN OVERALL CHARGE OF JORDAN'S INTELLIGENCE SERVICES) TO SAUDI ARABIA FOR FURTHER DISCUSSIONS. GENERAL SHAKER VISITED SAUDI ARABIA ON 24 OCTOBER SEMICOLON ON SHAKER'S RETURN KING HUSSEIN RECEIVED A FURTHER MESSAGE FROM PRINCE FAHD. BASED ON A SUBSEQUENT DISCUSSION WITH THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF, VELIOTES DEDUCES THAT THE SAUDIS ASKED KING HUSSEIN TO TAKE THE LEAD WITH PRESIDENT SADDAM IN DISCUSSING WAYS OF TERMINATING THE CONFLICT.

6. THE SAUDIS ALSO WISHED TO DISCUSS WITH GENERAL SHAKER A REPORT

6. THE SAUDIS ALSO WISHED TO DISCUSS WITH GENERAL SHAKER A REPORT THEY HAD RECEIVED THAT SYRIA AND LIBYA HAD AGREED THAT LIBYA SHOULD TAKE THE LEAD IN TARGETTING RADICAL PALESTINIAN GROUPS AGAINST CONSERVATIVE ARAB REGIMES. GENERAL SHAKER ALSO REFERRED TO A REPORT WHICH HE BELIEVED TO BE WELL-FOUNDED THAT LIBYA HAD GIVEN SYRIA US DOLLARS 500 MILLION IN CASH AND HAD ALSO PROMISED TO PAY FOR AN ADDITIONAL US DOLLARS 1,000 MILLION WORTH OF ARMS PURCHASES FROM THE SOVIET UNION. SHAKER HAD TOLD VELIOTES THAT, WITH IRAQ LIKELY TO BE PREOCCUPIED WITH IRAN FOR MANY YEARS TO COME, JORDAN WOULD NO LONGER BE ABLE TO RELY ON IRAQI ASSISTANCE IN RESISTING SYRIAN THREATS TO THE JORDANIAN REGIME.

7. VELIOTES SPEAKS VERY FREELY, BUT IT IS NOT ALWAYS POSSIBLE TO BE SURE HOW FAR HE IS ADDING HIS OWN PERSONAL INTERPRETATION TO WHAT HE HAS BEEN TOLD. I HOPE TO SEE BOTH KING HUSSEIN AND THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SHORTLY AFTER THEIR RETURN FROM IRAQ AND OBTAIN A CLEARER IDEA OF WHETHER OR NOT KING HUSSEIN SEES ANY POSSIBILITY OF NUDGING THE IRAQIS TOWARDS A CESSATION OF THE CONFLICT.

8. MEANWHILE IN PRIVATE DISCUSSION JORDANIAN MINISTERS ARE MAKING NO SECRET OF THEIR UNEASE OVER THE PRESENT SITUATION. THE JORDANIAN FOREIGN MINISTER WHEN I SAW HIM ON 27 OCTOBER DESCRIBED THE WAR AS A "TOTAL DISASTER" BUT HAD NO NEW IDEAS ON HOW IT MIGHT BE BROUGHT TO AN END. THE JORDANIAN MINISTER OF INFORMATION (WHO IS ALSO ACTING PRIME MINISTER DURING MR BADRAN'S ABSENCE IN IRAQ) TOLD LORD HOME THIS MORNING THAT THE IRAQIS HAD "COMPLETELY MISCALCULATED"; THEY HAD BEEN BANKING ON A QUICK VICTORY FOLLOWED BY NEGOTIATIONS FROM A POSITION OF STRENGTH AND HAD ENTIRELY FAILED TO ACHIEVE THEIR OBJECTIVES. BUT HE TOO COULD SEE NO EARLY END TO THE CONFLICT.

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