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FM AMMAN 110930Z NOV 82
TO IMMEDIATE FCO
TELEGRAM NUMBER 497 OF 11 NOV

PS TO NO 10 DOWNING STREET.

INFO IMMEDIATE DAMASCUS, CAIRO, BAGHDAD, JEDDA, BEIRUT, TEHRAN,
TEL AVIV, JERUSALEM, TUNIS, WASHINGTON, UKMIS NEWYORK, UKDEL NATO,
MOSCOW, EC POSTS, MODUK

FOLLOWING FROM PRIVATE SECRETARY
SECRETARY OF STATE'S VISIT TO AMMAN

1. THE SECRETARY OF STATE HAD SEPARATE TALKS ON 10 NOVEMBER WITH THE JORDANIAN COMMANDER IN CHIEF, THE FOREIGN MINISTER, CROWN PRINCE HASSAN, KING HUSSEIN AND THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION. THE DISCUSSION WITH THE KING IS REPORTED IN MIFT. MAIN POINTS FROM THE OTHERS ARE AS FOLLOWS. FULL RECORDS BY BAG.

A: COMMANDER IN CHIEF

2. ON IRAN/IRAQ, BIN SHAKER SAID THAT HE BELIEVED THE LATEST IRANIAN ATTACK HAD BEEN CONTAINED, ALTHOUGH THEY HAD PENETRATED 4-5 KILOMETRES. HE PROFESSED NOT TO BE UNDULY CONCERNED BY THE WAY THE WAR WAS GOING. HE DID NOT THINK THE IRANIANS WERE PLANNING A MAJOR THRUST INTO IRAQ AND BELIEVED THE IRAQIS COULD HOLD THE SITUATION OVERALL. THE JORDANIANS WERE NOT UNDER PRESSURE TO GIVE MORE HELP TO IRAQ BUT WOULD CONSIDER THIS IF THE IRAQIS GOT INTO REAL TROUBLE, EG IF BAGHDAD CAME UNDER THREAT. AS FAR AS JORDAN'S OWN POSITION WAS CONCERNED, HE SAW THE MAIN THREAT AS COMING FROM ISRAEL. THE BEGIN GOVERNMENT MIGHT BE TEMPTED TO BRING ABOUT ITS FAVOURED JORDAN IS PALESTINE SOLUTION BY FORCE. THERE WAS ALSO A THREAT FROM SYRIA BUT A LESSER ONE. HE WAS SCATHING ABOUT THE PERFORMANCE OF THE SYRIAN FORCES IN LEBANON.

3. BIN SHAKER ALSO MADE A PLEA FOR HELP OVER THE COST OF BRITISH MILITARY TRAINING. JORDAN VERY MUCH WANTED HELP FROM BRITAIN BUT THE PRICE WAS PROHIBITIVE (EG SOME DOLLARS 370,000 FOR THE LONG STAFF GUNNERY COURSE AS OPPOSED TO DOLLARS 4,000 FOR THE US EQUIVALENT). THE SECRETARY OF STATE EXPRESSED ASTONISHMENT AT THESE FIGURES AND UNDERTOOK TO LOOK INTO IT.

B: FOREIGN MINISTER

QASEM SAID THAT THE FEZ PROPOSALS COULD BE SUMMED UP AS 242 PLUS PALESTINIAN SELF-DETERMINATION. THE PLO WERE NOW IN AN UNCOMFORTABLE POSITION. THEY WERE NOT NOW PROPERLY REPRESENTATIVE OF WEST BANK OPINION. IF THEY CONTINUED TO GIVE PRIORITY TO THE INTERESTS OF THE ORGANISATION OVER THOSE OF THE PALESTINIANS, THIS WOULD IN DUE COURSE LEAD TO THE EMERGENCE OF A NEW GROUP OF WEST BANK MODERATES PURSUING AN INDEPENDENT LINE. JORDAN WOULD SUPPORT THEM BUT COULD NOT TAKE THE INITIATIVE. BUT IN ANY CASE TO MOBILIZE PALESTINIAN OPINION BEHIND A NEW GROUPING WOULD TAKE TIME, WHICH WAS NOW NOT AVAILABLE. THAT WAS WHY JORDAN WAS WOOING THE PLO. ARAFAT COULD HAVE ACCEPTED WHAT HAD BEEN PROPOSED TO HIM IMMEDIATELY BY PUSHING IT THROUGH THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE BUT WAS PLAYING FOR TIME BY TALKING OF THE NEED TO CONSULT THE PALESTINE NATIONAL COUNCIL.

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/QASEM

*We must
push
this
higher up*

QASEM STRESSED THAT US CREDIBILITY WAS AT ITS LOWEST EBB IN THE MIDDLE EAST FOR YEARS. THE US HAD NOW TO TAKE A FIRMER AND CLEARER STAND. THIS EXPRESSION OF GOOD INTENTIONS WAS NOT ENOUGH. ARAFAT HAD QUITE RIGHTLY ASKED WHAT CREDENCE COULD BE GIVEN TO US ASSURANCES AFTER THE BEIRUT MASSACRES, WHICH HAD TAKEN PLACE IN THE FACE OF US GUARANTEES. QASEM CONCLUDED THAT JORDAN NEEDED THE SUPPORT OF THE OTHER ARAB STATES IF SHE WAS TO MOVE FORWARD. IT WAS VITAL THAT SHE SHOULD NOT ONCE AGAIN BE ISOLATED AS SHE HAD BEEN AFTER THE EVENTS OF 1970. SAUDI SUPPORT IN PARTICULAR WAS ESSENTIAL. THE AMERICANS SHOULD NOT TRY TO MAKE JORDAN ANOTHER EGYPT OR KING HUSSEIN ANOTHER SADAT. THAT WOULD BE DISASTROUS NOT ONLY FOR JORDAN BUT ALSO FOR THE WHOLE AREA.

C: CROWN PRINCE HASSAN

MOST OF THE DISCUSSION WAS TAKEN UP BY A DETAILED ACCOUNT, WITH THE AID OF MAPS, OF ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS FROM THE CROWN PRINCE. HE SAID THAT HE HAD HEARD THAT SOME PEOPLE IN WASHINGTON WERE ADVOCATING THAT THE ANNUAL COST OF THE SETTLEMENT PROGRAMME (SOME DOLLARS 300 MILLION) SHOULD BE DOCKED FROM US AID TO ISRAEL UNLESS THE ISRAELIS AGREED TO A FREEZE. HE ALSO MADE THE FOLLOWING POINTS:

- I. THE SOVIET THREAT TO THE MIDDLE EAST SHOULD NOT BE DISCOUNTED, DESPITE THEIR RECENT QUIESCENCE
- II. THE ISRAELIS SHOULD REALIZE THAT A MARXIST PALESTINIAN STATE WOULD BE MORE OF A THREAT TO JORDAN THAN TO ISRAEL
- III. IT MIGHT BE WORTH TRYING A NAMIBIA CONTACT GROUP TYPE OF NEGOTIATING MACHINERY IN THE MIDDLE EAST.

D: MINISTER OF INFORMATION

ABU ODEH DEVELOPED THE THEME THAT TIME WAS VERY SHORT FOR A SETTLEMENT, BUT JORDAN HAD ONLY JUST REALIZED IT. SHE HAD MADE A GREAT MISTAKE AFTER 1974 IN SHELTERING BEHIND THE ARAB CONSENSUS WHILE THE ISRAELIS CHANGED THE FACTS ON THE GROUND. THE ARABS SHOULD FORGET PRINCIPLES AND CONCENTRATE ON THE REALITIES OF THE SITUATION. THEY HAD NOTHING TO LOSE BY ACCEPTING ISRAEL. ASKED ABOUT WEST BANK OPINION, HE SAID THAT THE WEST BANKERS WERE UNITED IN WANTING THE ISRAELIS OUT BUT WHILE THE OLDER GENERATION WAS REALISTIC ABOUT HOW THIS COULD BE ACHIEVED, THE YOUNGER GENERATION HAD AMBITIOUS DREAMS, NURTURED BY THE PLO. JORDAN WAS ENCOURAGING THE REALISTS BUT RECOGNISED THAT THEY HAD TO HAVE A GREEN LIGHT FROM THE PLO. HE THOUGHT AN ARRANGEMENT BETWEEN JORDAN AND THE PLO WAS POSSIBLE.

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