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RECORD OF A MEETING BETWEEN HM KING HUSSEIN OF JORDAN AND THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS AT 1100 ON 23 FEBRUARY 1983 AT 7 PALACE GREEN

Present:

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| Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs | HM King Hussein |
| Mr Hurd | General Zaid bin Shaker (Commander-in-Chief) |
| Mr Miles | HE Mr Ibrahim Izziddin |
| Mr Holmes | |

Arab-Israel

1. After initial courtesies, Mr Pym said that he had seen overnight reports of the outcome of the Palestine National Council meeting in Algiers. Our initial impression was that while the final declaration was undoubtedly negative about the Reagan plan, this did not amount to a complete rejection of it. It looked as if Arafat had kept himself a little room for manoeuvre as well as protecting his own political position. King Hussein said that he could give no definite assessment at this stage. Arafat had told him before the Algiers meeting that negative-sounding statements about the US plan would be made but that he would retain his freedom of action. He had said that he would come and see the King again soon after the Algiers meeting with a view to an announcement of his intention of acting with Jordan on the future relationship between the Palestinian nation and Jordan and also on the composition of a joint delegation to negotiate for peace on the basis of the Reagan plan. Arafat was aware of the need to take the present opportunity and of the immense damage which could result if the opportunity was missed. Arafat knew that if he could not deliver after Algiers, he, the King, would make clear publicly what had been on offer, what the Jordanian position had been and what the PLO position had been. The King did not relish the prospect of going public in this way but felt that he would have little choice if Arafat let him down.

2. The King continued that the Russians were working against the Reagan plan and Jordan's role in taking it forward. This had been made clear to him both in Moscow and, more recently, by the Soviet delegation visiting Jordan. The Russians resented it because they

were not involved. He did not know whether they would in practice put their full weight against the Reagan plan or would rather calculate that President Reagan would ^{not} in any case carry his plan through and that therefore they need do no more than wait for its failure. Mr Pym said that his impression was that the Russians had become more active in recent months on the Middle East and might become more so still. King Hussein agreed. The Soviet hand could be seen in Syrian and Libyan hostile activity.

Lebanon

3. King Hussein said that the other aspect of the present situation was the lack of progress over withdrawal from Lebanon. He had been given assurances by President Reagan that he would exert maximum efforts to ensure Israeli withdrawal and that if the King and Arafat could reach agreement on a delegation to begin peace talks, the Americans would give him a timetable for complete Israeli withdrawal, as well as a settlement freeze, before expecting the Jordanians and Palestinians to begin talking. However, American pressures seemed to be making no impression on the Israelis and the situation was dragging on. Mr Pym said that the position in Lebanon was in substance no different from that which had obtained when they had last discussed it in October. He still found it difficult to see where the Israeli incentive to withdraw lay. He wondered whether President Reagan's statement about guaranteeing Israel's northern border implied a future US presence there. This sort of approach might not suit the complexities of the situation and might not in any case take the trick of achieving Israeli withdrawal. King Hussein added that there had been a recent statement from the Syrians which suggested that they too might be hardening their position about their own withdrawal. Mr Hurd asked whether the absence of an Israeli withdrawal would totally block talks on a wider peace if the King was able to reach agreement with Arafat. King Hussein said that it would, principally because Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon was a test of US commitment and capacity to put pressure on Israel. If the Americans could not succeed in Lebanon, where Israel had no real claim, the Arabs could have no faith in US policy to deliver over the West Bank. It was quite possible that a situation would be reached in which he would tell the Americans that he and Arafat were agreed and ready to negotiate, and were waiting for the promised Lebanese withdrawal and settlement freeze. The Americans would then be on the spot and a critical moment would be at hand.

4. Mr Pym said that he had talked recently to Vice-President Bush, who had not been particularly optimistic on this. The Congressional pressures on the US Administration were always there. He had conveyed to Mr Shultz on his return from Amman the urgency of the need for progress. Nothing had happened since except that the settlement process on the West Bank and Gaza had intensified. He expected to see Mr Shultz and President Reagan next week. He

would be grateful for any guidance the King could give him on what he should say to them, but he proposed in essence simply to repeat his message on the urgency of the situation, but with greater strength. On one particular point, he wondered whether King Hussein would not be satisfied with a freeze on the existing settlement situation, given that six months had passed since the Reagan plan had first been publicised and the situation on the ground had considerably deteriorated. King Hussein said that a freeze remained what was needed, although in his view for the existing settlements to remain would make no sense in the context of an overall peace settlement. He agreed that Mr Pym should speak as he proposed. He was very worried about the situation. It was impossible to know whether President Reagan would go through with the commitments which he had made. Jordan was looking to its friends to help so far as they could.

5. Mr Pym said that he shared the King's concern. Six months ago the atmosphere for progress had been more propitious. The Israeli invasion of Lebanon had created an opportunity in US politics. Embarrassment over this episode was now lessening. The consequences of a failure of present efforts could be disastrous. He would do his best to get this message across to Mr Shultz and President Reagan. It might be helpful if Mr Hurd could have another word with King Hussein on 28 February before the King's departure so that he, Mr Pym, would be fully up-to-date when talking to the Americans. King Hussein readily agreed to this. He said that the President had been consistent in his approach since he had announced his initiative and had been very positive with him. But the Israelis remained obdurate and it appeared that if there were another election in Israel, Mr Begin might well be returned with a larger majority. Apart from the result of the election, the fact of one being held would delay matters further and risk the process running up against the US election.

Arab League Delegation

6. Mr Pym said that the Delegation's visit now appeared to be on again for 18 March. The Moroccan Foreign Minister had visited London some weeks before to explain that, because of the death of General Dlimi, the Moroccans had to postpone the previously arranged date. King Hassan remained, as he had always been, confident and positive about the problem of Palestinian representation on the Delegation, but it was very difficult to be sure about the view of others. The initial difficulty over the Delegation had stemmed from a late change of mind on the part of the Moroccans, who had previously assured us that there was no question of a PLO representative being included in the Delegation. It was disappointing that the arrangement we thought we had agreed, which was similar to that for the Washington visit, had not been implemented. The consequences had been distressing in terms of Anglo-Arab relations. But we had stuck to our policy, which had the virtue of consistency. We believed that the PLO would be in a better position politically if they had taken the steps we suggested.

7. King Hussein asked about the present position on Palestinian representation. On a particular point, he would be interested to know where the name of Milhem had come from. Mr Pym said we had not been in the business of suggesting names. We had made clear that we could not accept a PLO office-holder, and had suggested that there were many Palestinians, for example elected mayors, whom we would find perfectly acceptable. We had however made clear separately that Mr Hurd would be ready to meet a PLO office-holder. There had been no response so far to this suggestion. Mr Hurd added that the Moroccans had assured us very recently that Milhem would definitely come as the Palestinian representative in the Delegation. This put us in a difficult position since we could not say to the Moroccans that they did not know their own business, but we continued to have doubts whether the position was quite as clear cut as the Moroccans were suggesting. King Hussein said that he had been very upset by the fuss which had arisen over this delegation. The visit should have taken place a long time ago. It was now in substance an irrelevance but since it had been blown up, it had somehow to be put behind us. It would be very helpful if we could make sure that we could keep him fully informed of the position as it developed. The affair had been dogged by misunderstandings and misinformation throughout. Mr Pym said that we would gladly do this. Any nudge which King Hussein could give the issue in the right direction would be very much appreciated.

Iran/Iraq

8. Mr Pym said that he would appreciate the King's assessment of the position. His impression was that it had not changed very much since their last talk in October. King Hussein agreed. The present Iraqi position was not too bad. The Iranians had suffered very large losses in the recent offensive. He had heard from the Pakistanis (who were worried separately about subversive Iranian influence in Pakistan) that there were two competing schools of thought in Tehran. One group thought that Iran could not bring about a political change in Iraq and should therefore seek to end the war soon. The other, which was in the majority, thought that it was necessary to continue the war for the sake of internal unity. It was possible that something helpful on Iran/Iraq would come out of the Non-Aligned Summit (The King added that he had recently visited Yugoslavia to see for himself whether Yugoslav policy had changed in the post-Tito era. He had the impression that it had not. Mr Pym agreed, but commented that the Yugoslavs had not only to deal with difficult political problems but also had some very difficult economic decisions to take). Mr Pym wondered whether Khomeini had changed his ground and modified his objectives. King Hussein said that this might be the case. It seemed that the Iranians were now asking for only \$50 billion in compensation rather than the \$150 billion, which they had

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previously wanted and might not be insisting on a change of regime in Iraq. The Gulf States seemed ready to put up the necessary money as part of a general reconstruction fund (from which in practice all the money would go to the Iranians) but the Iranians were demanding that Iraq should pay as an admission of guilt. The Iraqis were clearly feeling the strain on the material side but this might be eased if it were true that they had reached agreement with the Saudi Arabians to build an oil pipeline across Saudi Arabia. In response to a question from Mr Pym, the King said that the Russians were trying to keep in with both sides in the war. They were helping to supply the Iranians via Libya and North Korea (ironically, and embarrassingly for the Americans, the other main supplier was the Israelis) and they had now agreed to resume supplies to Iraq of equipment on which agreement had been reached before the war started. He expected Andropov to be a formidable adversary in the Middle East in general. He seemed to know the area well and to have a sharp mind.

9. In a short discussion on Afghanistan, Mr Pym said that the situation showed no sign of improvement. There was some talk around of the Russians being ready to make a deal under which they would withdraw but he did not believe this. King Hussein agreed that there was no prospect of an early Soviet withdrawal.

10. The call ended at 1140.

Near East and North Africa Department
24 February 1983

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