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FROM AMMAN 130700Z DEC 83

TO PRIORITY FCO

TELNO 584 OF 12 DECEMBER 1983

AND TO INFO ROUTINE MIDDLE EAST POSTS , MOSCOW, PARIS, ROME,
UKDEL STRASBOURG, UKMIS NEW YORK, AND WASHINGTON.

MY TELS NOS 570, AND 575-577 (NOT REPEATED TO POSTS):

JORDAN/MIDDLE AST.

SUMMARY.

1. SPEAKING ON US TELEVISION ON 11 DECEMBER, KING HUSSEIN REFUSED TO BE DRAWN ON WHETHER OR NOT HE CONSIDERED THE REAGAN INITIATIVE TO BE DEAD, BUT MADE IT CLEAR THAT A UNITED STATES ALLIED WITH ISRAEL COULD NOT BY ITSELF BRING PEACE TO THE AREA. PUBLIC STATEMENTS IN AMMAN DURING THE PAST TWO DAYS BY CROWN PRINCE HASSAN AND THE JORDANIAN PRIME MINISTER HAVE BEEN MORE FORTHRIGHT, AND SEEM CLEARLY DESIGNED TO DEMONSTRATE A SHIFT IN JORDANIAN POLICY AWAY FROM SUPPORT FOR A US-SPONSORED PEACE PROCESS BASED ON THE REAGAN INITIATIVE TOWARDS A BROADER APPROACH IN WHICH THE SOVIET UNION WOULD ALSO BE INVOLVD.

DETAIL.

2. ASKED DURING A LIVE INTERVIEW BY SATELLITE WITH ABC TELEVISION ON 11 DECEMBER WHETHER THE REAGAN INITIATIVE WAS STILL ALIVE, KING HUSSEIN SAID THAT IT HAD BEEN "A GREAT HOPE AT THE TIME" AND THAT HE BELIEVED PRESIDENT REAGAN REMAINED DETERMINED TO CONTRIBUTE TOWARDS A PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT. BUT THE KING EXPRESSED DISMAY OVER REPORTS ABOUT THE NEW US/ISRAELI STRATEGIC AGREEMENT WHICH MADE THE US "AN ALLY OF A BELLIGERENT IN THE TRAGEDY IN WHICH WE ALL LIVE" IF THE AMERICANS CONTINUED ALONG THIS PATH, THEY COULD NOT HOPE TO PLAY THE ROLE OF MEDIATOR.

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3. ASKED WHETHER HE WOULD ENTER NEGOTIATIONS IF THE ISRAELIS ANNOUNCED A FREEZE OR LIMITATION ON SETTLEMENTS, THE KING REAFFIRMED HIS COMMITMENT TO THE SEARCH FOR PEACE BUT ADDED THAT HE REQUIRED PALESTINIAN AND ARAB SUPPORT AND ALSO REASSURANCES THAT NEGOTIATIONS COULD ACHIEVE AN ACCEPTABLE RESULT. THE KING REFERRED SEVERAL TIMES TO THE NEED FOR FULL IMPLEMENTATION OF SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION 242, "TOTAL PEACE FOR TOTAL WITHDRAWAL", AND STRESSED THAT ANY PEACE PROCESS WOULD HAVE TO BE BASED ON AN ACCEPTANCE THAT ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS WERE ILLEGAL ("THEY CONTRAVENE EVERY KNOWN INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENT IN TERMS OF ADMINISTERING OCCUPIED TERRITORIES"). HE ALSO SPOKE IN THIS CONTEXT OF HIS FEARS ABOUT THE BEN PORAT PLAN TO RELOCATE PALESTINIAN REFUGEES IN THE JORDAN VALLEY WHICH HE THOUGHT WOULD PROBABLY LEAD TO THEIR EVENTUAL EXPULSION FROM THE WEST BANK. ON JORDAN/PLO, KING HUSSEIN REPEATED THAT HE COULD NOT DO BUSINESS ONLY WITH "THE PLO RECOGNISED OVER THE YEARS" AND NOT WITH A PALESTINIAN ORGANISATION SUBSERVIENT TO ANOTHER ARAB STATE.
4. CROWN PRINCE HASSAN, IN HIS SPEECH OPENING THE ARAB THOUGHT FORUM MEETING IN AMMAN ON 10 DECEMBER WHICH IS CARRIED IN TODAY'S PRESS, WAS BLUNT IN HIS CRITICISM OF US POLICY. HE SAID THE AMERICANS COULD NOT BRING PEACE TO LEBANON OR THE AREA AS A WHOLE WHILE THE SOVIET UNION WAS EXCLUDED FROM THE PEACE PROCESS AND ADDED: "IT IS OF PARAMOUNT IMPORTANCE THAT THE SUPERPOWERS EMBARK ON A DIALOGUE TO FORMULATE A COMMON APPROACH TO ... THE MIDDLE EAST PROBLEM. A TWO TRACK APPROACH IS PREFERABLE: ONE TO DEAL WITH LEBANON AND THE OTHER CONCENTRATING ON THE CRUX OF THE ISSUE, THE PALESTINIAN PROBLEM."
5. THE JORDANIAN PRIME MINISTER, ADDRESSING THE NATIONAL CONSULTATIVE COUNCIL ON 11 DECEMBER, SAID THAT THE UNITED STATES AND ISRAEL NOW APPEARED TO BE ON ONE SIDE AND THE ARABS ON THE OTHER. BADRAN INSISTED THAT THERE COULD BE NO PEACE IN THE AREA WITHOUT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF UN RESOLUTIONS AND THE PARTICIPATION OF ALL PARTIES, INCLUDING THE SOVIET UNION SEMICOLON KING HUSSEIN HAD TRIED IN VAIN TO CONVINCING THE REAGAN ADMINISTRATION THAT THE SOVIET UNION SHOULD BE INVOLVED. BADRAN REFERRED WITH EVIDENT IRRITATION TO CLAIMS BY US OFFICIALS THAT THE ARABS WOULD MAKE A FUSS ABOUT US MIDDLE EAST POLICY FOR 2 OR 3 DAYS BUT SOON CALM DOWN.

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6. THESE STATEMENTS ARE PROBABLY THE MINIMUM THE JORDANIANS FEEL THEY CAN GET AWAY WITH IN FACE OF THEIR OWN AND ARAB PUBLIC OPINION. FEELINGS ARE RUNNING HIGH HERE AGAINST THE AMERICANS AND THE PRINCIPAL BENEFICIARIES ARE LIKELY TO BE THE RUSSIANS: WE KNOW THAT THEY ARE MAKING THE MOST OF IT LOCALLY BY TELLING THEIR CONTACTS THAT SOVIET MIDDLE EAST POLICY IS FULLY COMPATIBLE WITH JORDANIAN OBJECTIVES. EAGLEBURGER IS ON RECORD AS SAYING THAT CAREFUL NOTE SHOULD BE TAKEN OF WHAT THE ARABS SAID IN REACTION TO THE US/ISRAELI STRATEGIC CO-OPERATION AGREEMENT (WASHINGTON TELNO 3653). BUT ONE WONDERS WHETHER THE AMERICANS YET REALISE THE EXTENT TO WHICH THEIR CURRENT POLICY IN THE MIDDLE EAST IS PLAYING INTO SOVIET HANDS.

7. FULL TEXTS TO FCO ONLY BY BAG.

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