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Department of State

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TO AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY
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EXDIS TOSEC 84

FOLLOWING SENT ACTION TO SECSTATE, INFO CAIRO, TEL AVIV,
USUN NEW YORK, MAY 19, 1969 FROM AMMAN REPEATED TO YOU:

QUOTE: SECRET AMMAN 2320

EXDIS

SUBJ: DISCUSSION OF CURRENT ARAB-ISRAEL SITUATION WITH
KING HUSSEIN

REF: STATE 078999

1. RECALLING I HAD EXPRESSED TO HIM UNDER INSTRUCTIONS ON MAY 4
OUR DEEP CONCERN ABOUT THE HEIGHTENED FREQUENCY AND INTENSITY OF
ARAB-ISRAEL INCIDENTS, I BRIEFED KING HUSSEIN ON MAY 19 ON WHAT
WE HAD BEEN DOING WITH THE UAR AND ISRAEL TO TRY TO DEFUSE THE
SITUATION AND EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT THERE COULD BE ALSO A
COOLING OF THE SITUATION BETWEEN JORDAN AND ISRAEL.

2. DRAWING ON REFTEL AND OTHER APPROPRIATE MESSAGES, INCLUDING

SECRET

WITHOUT THE AUTHORIZATION OF THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

DECLASSIFIED
Authority: NND 96-4000
By: SC NARA Date: 1/19/97

By EBTS Date 5/25/82
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CAIRO 1237, I TOLD HUSSEIN WE BELIEVE A CALM SITUATION ALONG THE CEASEFIRE LINES IS ESSENTIAL TO THE SUCCESS OF CURRENT EFFORTS TO ACHIEVE A PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT. WE HAD STRESSED TO THE UAR THAT SUCH A CALMING WOULD NOT COMPROMISE THE ARAB POSITION IN ANY WAY. BOTH THE ISRAELIS AND THE EGYPTIANS HAVE INDICATED TO US THEY ARE "INTERESTED" IN COOLING THE SITUATION. WE FEEL HOWEVER, THAT UNLESS THESE STATEMENTS OF INTEREST CAN BE TRANSLATED INTO ACTUAL RESTRAINT ON THE GROUND THERE IS A PROSPECT THE SITUATION WILL GET OUT OF HAND. I NOTED WE WERE PARTICULARLY CONCERNED BY PUBLISHED UN REPORTS INDICATING THAT MOST INCIDENTS ALONG THE CANAL ARE BEING INITIATED BY THE EGYPTIANS. MOREOVER, WE HAVE INDICATIONS THAT THE ISRAELIS WERE REACHING A POINT WHERE THEY WOULD NOT TOLERATE THE CONTINUAL CASUALTIES ON THAT CANAL FRONT. I SAID WE HAD SUGGESTED TO THE SOVIETS THAT THEY SHOULD SPEAK TO THE UAR AND ALSO HAD TOLD THE BRITISH THAT WE HOPED THEY WOULD JOIN IN OUR COUNSELS OF RESTRAINT.

3. I THEN MENTIONED PRIMIN RIFAI'S DEMARCHE TO THE FOUR AMBASSADORS ON MAY 12 (AMMAN 2244). AFTER APPROPRIATELY STRESSING THAT WE DO NOT CONDONE ANY ISRAELI REPRISALS AGAINST JORDAN, I SAID WE NEVERTHELESS BELIEVE AFTER ALL IS SAID AND DONE THAT THE ROOT CAUSE OF THE PRESENT TROUBLES BETWEEN JORDAN AND ISRAEL IS THE CONTINUED FEDAYEEN ATTACKS, ESPECIALLY THOSE ON THE ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS IN THE BEISAN AREA. WE THEREFORE HOPED A MAJOR EFFORT COULD BE MADE BY JORDAN TO CONTROL THE FEDAYEEN IN THAT AREA. THIS WOULD REMOVE A PRIMARY EXCUSE THE ISRAELIS USE TO JUSTIFY THEIR REPRISALS. I WENT ON TO SAY THAT WITH CONTINUED IRRESPONSIBLE FEDAYEEN ACTS IN MIND WE WERE ESPECIALLY CONCERNED BY PRIMIN RIFAI'S SUGGESTION THAT THE JORDAN ARAB ARMY MIGHT FIND IT NECESSARY TO SHELL THE ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS IN BEISAN IF JORDAN CIVILIAN AREAS WERE SHELLED AS IN THE RECENT SHELLINGS OF SALT. WE DEPLORED SUCH INDISCRIMINATE ATTACKS. NEVERTHELESS, WHATEVER THE PROVOCATION, WE BELIEVE DELIBERATE JORDAN ARMY SHELLING OF THE BEISAN SETTLEMENTS WOULD LEAD TO A SERIOUS ESCALATION THAT WOULD RISK GETTING OUT OF HAND. IN CONSIDERING THE JORDAN-ISRAEL SITUATION WE ALWAYS SEEMED TO GET BACK TO THE

FEDAYEEN SHELLINGS OF BEISAN. THUS, WE BELIEVED THAT CONTROL IN THAT SECTOR COULD LEAD TO A GENERAL IMPROVEMENT OF THE JORDAN-ISRAEL SITUATION. CONTROL OF FEDAYEEN ACTIVITY WOULD ALSO ENABLE US TO TAKE A STRONGER AND HOPEFULLY MORE EFFECTIVE LINE AGAINST ISRAELI RAIDS ON



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JORDAN TARGETS.

4. HUSSEIN DID NOT DEMUR WHEN I SUGGESTED THAT THE FEDAYEEN ACTIVITIES IN THE BEISAN AREA WERE THE ROOT CAUSE OF TROUBLES. IN FACT, AT ONE POINT HE SAID HE WOULD BE SPEAKING TO ABU AMMAR (YASIR ARAFAT) TOMORROW AND AMONG OTHER THINGS WOULD ATTEMPT TO BRING ABOUT BETTER CONTROL OF FEDAYEEN ACTIVITIES IN THE NORTHERN JORDAN VALLEY. LATER IN THE CONVERSATION, HOWEVER, THE KING SAID HE IS "VERY NERVOUS" ABOUT THE SITUATION IN THE VALLEY, THE INDISCRIMINATE ISRAELI SHELLINGS OF CIVILIAN AREAS, THE CONTINUAL AIR INCURSIONS AND FREQUENT AERIAL BOMBINGS OF JORDANIAN CIVILIAN AREAS, AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF PERMANENT ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS ALONG THE CEASEFIRE LINE HAVE CREATED A SITUATION WHICH "COULD GET OUT OF HAND AT ANY MOMENT." GIVEN WHAT THE ISRAELIS ARE DOING, HE COULD NOT SIT BACK AND DO NOTHING. HE WENT ON TO SAY THAT ADDITIONAL SETTLEMENTS ARE NOW BEING ESTABLISHED ALONG THE JORDAN-ISRAEL CEASEFIRE LINE, -- OBVIOUSLY AS PART OF THE ALLON PLAN. HE THEN SAID, SOMEWHAT SOLEMNLY, THAT UNLESS THE ISRAELIS DISCONTINUE SETTING UP SUCH SETTLEMENTS, "WE WILL HAVE TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT THEM." IN FURTHER EXPLANATION THE KING SAID HE WAS SPEAKING ABOUT NEW NAHALI SETTLEMENTS THAT ARE BEING ESTABLISHED ALONG THE RIVER.

5. COMMENT: THE KING WAS IN A GRAVE AND SERIOUS MOOD, PARTICULARLY AFTER I HAD EXPLAINED HOW WE HAVE BEEN TRYING TO COUNSEL RESTRAINT ON THE VARIOUS PARTIES. I CAME AWAY WITH RENEWED FEELING THAT THERE IS SOMETHING OF A FATALISTIC DRIFT IN HIS ATTITUDE TOWARD THE CEASEFIRE VIOLATIONS AND HEIGHTENED INCIDENTS. HIS REMARKS ON THE NEW ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS WERE MADE WITH UNUSUAL FIRMNESS. IT WAS WHEN I COMMENTED THAT OUR BEST HOPE LAY IN KEEPING THE SITUATION QUIET SO THE FOUR-POWERS COULD COME UP WITH SOMETHING THAT HE SAID HE FELT "VERY NERVOUS" ABOUT THE SITUATION.

SYMMES UNQUOTE RICHARDSON

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 By EC NARA Date 5/19/97

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