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FM WASHINGTON
TO IMMEDIATE FCO
TELNO 1930
OF 15012DZ AUGUST 90
INFO IMMEDIATE AMMAN, RIYADH, BAGHDAD, ACTOR

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US/JORDAN: VISIT TO WASHINGTON OF KING HUSSEIN

SUMMARY

1. KING HUSSEIN TO VISIT US FOR MEETINGS WITH BUSH AND BAKER. ADMINISTRATION RECOGNISE ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES FACING JORDAN AND ARE PREPARED TO HELP. IMPORTANT TO AVOID FURTHER DESTABILISATION. BUT THE KING MUST DEMONSTRATE THAT HE IS SERIOUS ABOUT IMPLEMENTING US SANCTIONS.

DETAIL

2. WHEN I CALLED ON MACK (DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY, MIDDLE EAST) ON 14 AUGUST, HE CONFIRMED THE CNN STORY THAT KING HUSSEIN WAS EN ROUTE TO WASHINGTON. BUSH HAD TELEPHONED HUSSEIN ON 13 AUGUST AND THE KING HAD EXPRESSED AN INTEREST IN VISITING. BUSH HAD AGREED AND THE KING WOULD NOW SEE BAKER IN WASHINGTON ON 15 AUGUST, TRAVELLING ON TO KENNEBUNKPORT ON 16 AUGUST TO SPEND A DAY WITH BUSH.

3. AS BACKGROUND, MACK SAID THAT THE NEW US AMBASSADOR IN AMMAN HAD PRESENTED HIS CREDENTIALS ON 14 AUGUST AND INDICATED THAT THE US WOULD BE WILLING TO CONSIDER ASSISTANCE TO JORDAN. THE KING'S INTEMPERATE SPEECH TO PARLIAMENT - WIDELY INTERPRETED BY THE AMERICAN MEDIA AS A DIRECT ATTACK ON THE US - HAD NOT CHANGED ADMINISTRATION VIEWS. THEY RECOGNISED THAT THE KING WAS IN A DIFFICULT POSITION AND DID NOT WISH QUOTE TO PULL THE PLUG ON HIM UNQUOTE. BUT MACK SAID THAT WHILE THE US WOULD TAKE AS SYMPATHETIC AN APPROACH AS POSSIBLE, THEY WOULD BE BLUNT ON A COUPLE OF POINTS:

A) THEY WOULD WISH TO LAY DOWN VERY FIRM CRITERIA FOR THE ENFORCEMENT OF SANCTIONS BY JORDAN. THE CLEAR MESSAGE TO KING HUSSEIN WOULD BE THAT IMPLEMENTATION MATTERED. BUT THE US RECOGNISED THAT THIS WOULD PLACE A TREMENDOUS BURDEN ON JORDAN'S ECONOMY, GREATER THAN ON ANY OTHER STATE. THEY WERE THEREFORE DISPOSED TO FIND WAYS TO HELP. THEY WERE ENCOURAGED THAT THE EC WERE CONSIDERING WHAT THEY COULD DO. THE US MIGHT GO TO THE SAUDIS, WHILE CONCEDING THAT THEY WERE UNLIKELY TO BE A SYMPATHETIC AUDIENCE. JORDAN NEEDED OIL TO REPLACE IRAQI SUPPLIES, AND THE SAUDIS WERE AN OBVIOUS SOURCE. BUT THE KING

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WOULD HAVE TO DEMONSTRATE THAT HE WAS SERIOUS ABOUT IMPLEMENTING SANCTIONS.

B) PREVENTING LEAKAGE THROUGH AQABA WOULD BE AN IMPORTANT INDICATION OF JORDANIAN SERIOUSNESS. MACK SAID THAT QUOTE IT WOULD BE A SHAME UNQUOTE IF HUSSEIN DID NOT CONTROL AQABA. IF HE DID NOT, THE US WOULD HAVE TO ENFORCE THE EMBARGO.

C) THE US WOULD ALSO WARN STRONGLY AGAINST QUOTE MONEY LAUNDERING FOR THE IRAQIS UNQUOTE.

4. MACK SAID THE US FULLY SHARED UK CONCERNS ABOUT PREVENTING THE DESTABILISATION OF JORDAN. THIS WOULD BE A DISASTER ON TWO COUNTS: FIRSTLY, IT WOULD ONLY GIVE THE IRAQIS (AND THE SYRIANS) MORE INFLUENCE IN THE REGION: AND SECONDLY, IT COULD INVITE ISRAELI INTERVENTION. IT WAS ESSENTIAL TO AVOID THIS. MACK NOTED, HOWEVER, THAT SO FAR THE ISRAELIS HAD ACTED WITH COMMENDABLE RESTRAINT.

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