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FM AMMAN

TO DESKBY 202000Z FCO

TELNO 442

OF 201800Z AUGUST 90

INFO IMMEDIATE GULF POSTS, RIYADH, JEDDAH, BAGHDAD,
INFO IMMEDIATE CAIRO, WASHINGTON, UKMIS NEW YORK

YOUR TELNO 280: YOUR VISIT TO THE MIDDLE EAST

SUMMARY

1. KING HUSSEIN WELCOMES YOUR PROPOSED VISIT. DESCRIBES HIS LATEST THINKING. STILL PREOCCUPIED WITH MEDIATION: NOT FOCUSSED ON SANCTIONS.

DETAIL

2. I CALLED ON KING HUSSEIN AT 1800 HRS TODAY (20 AUGUST). IT WAS REASSURING THAT HE READILY AGREED TO RECEIVE ME. HE LOOKED VERY TIRED BUT WAS IN A MORE POSITIVE FRAME OF MIND THAN AT MY LAST AUDIENCE.

3. HE WELCOMED YOUR PROPOSAL TO VISIT AMMAN ON 4/5 SEPTEMBER AND MADE A NOTE OF THE DATE. I EXPLAINED THAT THIS WOULD BE IN THE CONTEXT OF A VISIT TO OTHER REGIONAL CAPITALS BUT THIS DREW NO COMMENT. HE SEEMED RELAXED ABOUT THE IDEA. BARRING UNFORESEEN DEVELOPMENTS, I THINK WE CAN TAKE IT THAT HE WILL BE HERE TO RECEIVE YOU AND I SHALL MAKE A POINT OF FOLLOWING UP WITH HIS SENIOR ADVISERS.

4. I HAD BEEN INTENDING TO MAKE THE CALL A BRIEF ONE BUT THE KING CLEARLY WANTED TO TALK. THE MAIN POINTS TO EMERGE WERE:

- HE HAD BEEN THINKING OF GOING TO BAGHDAD BUT HAD BEEN UNABLE TO GET HOLD OF SADDAM HUSSAIN. HE HAD THEREFORE SENT BAGHDAD A FULL ACCOUNT OF HIS MEETING WITH PRESIDENT BUSH. TARIQ AZIZ WOULD BE VISITING AMMAN ON 21 AUGUST FOR FURTHER DISCUSSIONS.
- THE KING MADE CLEAR THAT PART OF HIS PRESENT DIALOGUE WITH SADDAM RELATES TO THE FOREIGN COMMUNITIES BEING HELD

IN KUWAIT, BUT HE GAVE NO INDICATION OF FLEXIBILITY IN THE IRAQI POSITION.

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- HE STILL SEES NO ALTERNATIVE TO A NEGOTIATED SOLUTION. HE MENTIONED A TRADE-OFF BETWEEN IRAQ WITHDRAWAL (THOUGH ALLOWING THEM TO KEEP SOMETHING) AND THE WITHDRAWAL OF FOREIGN FORCES. THE MAIN DIFFICULTY IN THIS, HE THOUGHT, WAS THE RETURN OF THE KUWAIT RULING FAMILY. QUOTE ABOUT WHICH THE LESS SAID THE BETTER UNQUOTE. PERHAPS SOME PLEBISCITE COULD BE ARRANGED. I SAID THAT CREATIVE DIPLOMACY MIGHT CERTAINLY BE NEEDED BUT FOR THE MOMENT WE SAW NO ALTERNATIVE TO APPLYING ECONOMIC PRESSURES AS A MEANS OF INDUCING A CHANGE IN SADDAM'S POSITION. THE KING SAID HE DOUBTED WHETHER PRESSURE WOULD WORK.

- HE IS THINKING OF RENEWING CONTACTS WITH ARAB NEIGHBOURS. HE WAS IN TWO MINDS ABOUT THIS AND WOULD NOT DECIDE UNTIL HE HAD TALKED TO TARIQ AZIZ. HE HAD HAD NO CONTACT WITH FAHD FOR SOME TIME, DITTO THE LOWER GULF STATES, BUT HE REALISED THAT AN ARAB SOLUTION MEANT INVOLVING THEM. HE SPOKE BITTERLY ABOUT MUBARAK WHOM HE HAD WORKED HARD TO BRING BACK INTO THE ARAB FOLD. I REMARKED THAT MUBARAK SEEMED NEVERTHELESS TO HAVE BROAD POPULAR SUPPORT.

COMMENT

5. THE KING ALSO SPOKE IN FAMILIAR TERMS ABOUT HIS REGRETS OVER WHAT HE SEES AS THE LOST MEDIATION OPPORTUNITY. HE SEEMS ENTIRELY PREOCCUPIED WITH THE NEED TO GO ON TRYING. HE SAID NOT A WORD ABOUT SANCTIONS, BEARING OUT THE COMMENTS I HAVE HAD FROM OTHER SENIOR ADVISERS THAT HE IS NOT FOCUSSED ON THAT ISSUE (THOUGH I HAVE PREVIOUSLY RAISED IT WITH HIM AND ALL HIS SENIOR ADVISERS). NO DOUBT, TOO, HE THINKS THAT THE FULL APPLICATION OF SANCTIONS WILL REDUCE HIS CHANCES OF BROKERING A DEAL WITH SADDAM HUSSAIN. I CONTINUE TO THINK THAT THIS HIGH-WIRE ACT WILL NOT BE

SUSTAINABLE FOR VERY LONG SINCE IT IGNORES THE ECONOMIC REALITIES: NO WESTERN OR ARAB ASSISTANCE AS LONG AS SANCTIONS ARE NOT APPLIED.

REEVE

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MR PRIDDLE, DEPT OF ENERGY
MR W D REEVES CABINET OFFICE
MR D J GOWAN CABINET OFFICE
MR BARRASS, CABINET OFFICE
(BY TUBE H29)
PS/NUMBER 10 DOWNING ST
SIR P CRADOCK,
(NO 10 DOWNING ST)
CABINET OFFICE DIO
(BY TUBE H29)
SIR ROBIN BUTLER, CAB OFFICE
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