

CONFIDENTIAL

FM AMMAN

TO DESKBY D61500Z FCO

TELNO 524

OF D61556Z SEPTEMBER 90

INFO IMMEDIATE DOHA, ABU DHABI, MUSCAT, SANAA, RIYADH  
INFO IMMEDIATE JEDDAH, TEL AVIV, CAIRO, BAGHDAD, ODA, ACTOR  
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YOUR VISIT TO AMMAN: 5 SEPTEMBER

## SUMMARY

1. VERY USEFUL CONTACTS PACKED INTO A SHORT PROGRAMME. KING HUSSEIN STILL INTENT ON 'DE-ESCALATION' AND COMPROMISE SOLUTIONS. CROWN PRINCE MORE CONSCIOUS OF NEED TO IMPLEMENT SCR 660 IN FULL AND TO COPE WITH LOOMING ECONOMIC DISASTER. FOLLOW-UP ACTION NEEDED IN DEFENCE EQUIPMENT (DELAYED BY US) AND ON RELIEF FOR EVACUEES.

## DETAIL

2. THE PROGRAMME WAS INEVITABLY BRIEF BUT YOU SAW THOSE WHO REALLY MATTERED: THE KING, THE CROWN PRINCE, AND THE FOREIGN MINISTER. YOU ALSO GAVE A PRESS CONFERENCE. WE WERE PARTICULARLY GRATEFUL THAT YOU DELAYED YOUR DEPARTURE TO VISIT THE EMBASSY AT THE END OF A VERY BUSY WEEK.

3. NOT FOR THE FIRST TIME IN THE PAST FEW WEEKS, I WAS STRUCK BY THE DIFFERENCE OF APPROACH AS BETWEEN THE CROWN PRINCE AND QASEM ON THE ONE HAND, AND THE KING ON THE OTHER. MY IMPRESSION IS THAT THE CROWN PRINCE HAS MATURED DURING THIS CRISIS. HE IS STILL INCLINED TO BANG ON, BUT LIKE QASEM, HE SAW AT AN EARLY STAGE THE NEED TO STATE JORDAN'S POSITION MUCH MORE UNAMBIGUOUSLY THAN THE KING HAS DONE. UNLIKE HIS BROTHER, THE CROWN PRINCE MAKES NO SECRET OF HIS VIEW OF SADDAM, WHICH IS MUCH THE SAME AS OURS. HE ALSO HAS MUCH CLEARER UNDERSTANDING OF THE SCALE OF THE ECONOMIC DISASTER WHICH LIES JUST AHEAD: AND OF THE POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCES OF APPEARING TO SUPPORT IRAQ. SENSIBLY, HE FOCUSED ON JORDAN'S NEEDS AS A CONSEQUENCE OF APPLYING SANCTIONS AND ON THE POTENTIAL CATASTROPHE POSED BY THE RAPIDLY GROWING EVACUEE PROBLEM. YOU MADE CLEAR THAT FOR JORDAN TO SEEK A WAIVER OVER SANCTIONS (AS OPPOSED TO COMPENSATION FOR APPLYING THEM) WOULD BE



VERY DAMAGING POLITICALLY AND WOULD UNDERMINE OUR EFFORTS TO INDUCE A CHANGE OF COURSE IN BAGHDAD.

4. IT WAS APPARENT THAT THE KING CONTINUES TO GO HIS OWN WAY. APPARENTLY UNDAUNTED BY HIS OWN LOW STANDING WITH THOSE ARAB STATES WHO REALLY COUNT AND BY THE CRITICAL ATTITUDES HE ENCOUNTERED IN EUROPE, HE SEEMS DETERMINED TO PRESS ON WITH THE PROMOTION OF COMPROMISE SOLUTIONS. YOU MADE IT VERY CLEAR TO HIM THAT THESE WERE NOT ONLY UNSELLABLE TO THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY (INCLUDING THE ARAB STATES) BUT ALSO REINFORCED THE SUSPICIONS OF THE GULF ARAB STATES THAT JORDAN WAS ATTEMPTING TO WEAKEN THE PRESSURES ON SADDAM. THE KING COUNTERED THAT HE INTENDED TO SPEAK FRANKLY IN BAGHDAD. HIS AIM SEEMS TO BE TO PERSUADE SADDAM TO RESCIND THE ANNEXATION OF KUWAIT AS A PRIOR STEP TO WITHDRAWAL: BUT HE ARGUED THAT A RETURN TO THE STATUS QUO ANTE WAS SIMPLY NOT ON: THERE WOULD HAVE TO BE A PLEBISCITE OF SOME KIND IN KUWAIT AND FUNDAMENTAL ISSUES, SUCH AS THE DISTRIBUTION OF WEALTH BETWEEN THE HAVES AND THE HAVE-NOTS, WOULD HAVE TO BE SORTED OUT. YOU EMPHASISED THE IMPORTANCE OF STRICT COMPLIANCE WITH SCR 660, AFTER WHICH NEGOTIATIONS ON THE KING'S WIDER AGENDA MIGHT BE POSSIBLE. YOU ALSO AGREED THAT THE QUESTION OF PALESTINE WOULD NEED TO BE TACKLED MUCH MORE URGENTLY, BUT NOT, IN OUR VIEW, BEFORE WE HAD ACHIEVED OUR OBJECTIVES OVER KUWAIT.

5. IT WAS NOTICEABLE THAT THE KING SHOWED LITTLE INTEREST IN SANCTIONS, OTHER THAN TO SAY THAT JORDAN WAS COMPLYING WITH THE UN RESOLUTION, NOR IN THE MECHANISMS FOR COMPENSATION. HE REMAINS TOTALLY PREOCCUPIED (I AM TEMPTED TO SAY OBSESSED) WITH - HIS FAVOURITE WORD - DE-ESCALATION OF THE CRISIS THROUGH ARAB DIPLOMACY.

6. YOUR PRESS CONFERENCE WAS INITIALLY DISRUPTED BY A PRE-PLANNED PROTEST BY THE JORDANIAN JOURNALISTS' ASSOCIATION WHOSE SPOKESMAN READ OUT A STATEMENT CRITICISING BRITISH POLICY AFTER WHICH MOST JORDANIAN AND PALESTINIAN PARTICIPANTS WALKED OUT. AS YOU POINTED OUT, THIS SHOWED A LIMITED UNDERSTANDING OF THE PURPOSES OF A PRESS CONFERENCE OR A FREE PRESS.

7. TWO OPERATIONAL POINTS ARISING FROM YOUR TALKS WILL NEED FOLLOW-UP:

- 1) THE KING AND CROWN PRINCE RAISED THE DELAYED CONSIGNMENTS OF DEFENCE EQUIPMENT. YOU SAID THAT WE EXPECTED TO BE ABLE TO



RESOLVE THIS PROBLEM (A RESPONSE WHICH YOU ALSO GAVE IN REPLY TO A SIMILAR QUESTION AT THE PRESS CONFERENCE). I HOPE THAT WE CAN NOW TAKE SWIFT ACTION ON THE VARIOUS CONSIGNMENTS WHICH WE HAVE REPORTED ON SEPARATELY. IT IS NOW MORE THAN 4 WEEKS SINCE THE SHIPMENTS WERE SUSPENDED AND THEIR CONTINUING DETENTION IS PRESENTED IN THE LOCAL MEDIA AS PROOF THAT WE ARE INTEND ON DESTROYING JORDAN ALONG WITH IRAQ.

- II) YOU TOLD THE CROWN PRINCE AND THE PRESS THAT WE WOULD BE DOING MORE TO HELP OVER THE EVACUEE CRISIS. I WAS STRUCK BY THE FACT THAT, ALTHOUGH WE HAVE DONE OUR BEST TO PUBLICISE OUR CASH CONTRIBUTION SO FAR, THE CROWN PRINCE FOR ONE DID NOT SEEM TO BE AWARE OF IT. THIS IS NO DOUBT BECAUSE CASH CONTRIBUTIONS MADE TO GENEVA HAVE LESS IMPACT HERE. THE NEWS THAT WE ARE TO MAKE A SUBSTANTIAL CONTRIBUTION TO AN INTERNATIONAL AIR-LIFT WILL CERTAINLY BE WELL RECEIVED HERE BUT WILL SIMILARLY BE HARD TO GET ACROSS AS A BRITISH-LABELLED PRODUCT. THERE IS MUCH TO BE SAID, APART FROM THE HUMANITARIAN CASE ITSELF, FOR A WELL-PUBLICISED BRITISH RELIEF EFFORT ON THE GROUND WHICH WOULD HELP TO OFF-SET THE LARGELY NEGATIVE PERCEPTION AMONG THE JORDANIAN PUBLIC OF BRITISH POLICY OVER THE GULF CRISIS. WE ARE LOOKING AT THE POSSIBILITIES AND WILL REVERT.

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