

Prime Minister

Mr Tomkys (NENAD)

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WSecretary of State's Call on King Hussein

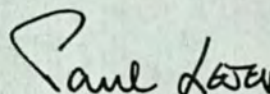
The Secretary of State called on King Hussein at 1030 this morning. Most of their discussion was centred on the situation in the Middle East. King Hussein made clear that, although the Arab countries who were opposed to the Camp David process would now need to reassess their position, he did not think that they would reach any different conclusions to those of the Baghdad Summit. There seemed no likelihood whatever, given Mr Begin's clear views, that the autonomy negotiations would lead to practical results. The rate at which the Israelis were creating new settlements on the West Bank was now becoming almost a joke. There was in any case no way in which the Egyptians could speak for the Palestinian inhabitants of the West Bank and Gaza. It was regrettable that the Americans had given up all their leverage on the Israelis for such meagre results. Lord Carrington said that he too was sceptical about the chances of achieving real progress in the autonomy negotiations. But, since the Camp David agreement was now a fact of life, the negotiations must be given a chance. There would be a problem however in judging the moment at which to conclude that they had failed and that some alternative approach was required. He asked whether King Hussein had any viable alternative to suggest. King Hussein replied that the Geneva process had been going quite well before President Sadat's initiative in visiting Jerusalem had put paid to it. There had been virtual agreement on a joint PLO/Arab delegation. There was now a new spirit among the Arabs. The Baghdad meeting had been a positive one in that it had affirmed the commitment of all Arab states to a peaceful solution. It would now be necessary to build on this.

Lord Carrington said that he had met Mr Begin for the first time two weeks previously. His fear was that Mr Begin would now feel that he had done something good in negotiating the Camp David agreement and would stand pat on it. Now that the risk of war with Egypt had been effectively neutralised, there was little compulsion on the Israelis to show flexibility. The time-scale envisaged for the future negotiations under Camp David seemed dangerously long. It would be difficult for the other Arab states simply to wait on the side lines and the risks to President Sadat's position would increase. King Hussein agreed that President Sadat would be in an extremely difficult position. He had promised so much to the Egyptians and would find it very difficult to deliver. Lord Carrington said that it was important to ensure that President Sadat survived. He hoped that the split in the Arab world would, at the very least, not become any deeper. He asked how King Hussein viewed the prospects for the Lebanon. King Hussein replied that it was hard to be other than pessimistic. There was real danger of a partition of the Lebanon between Syria and Israel, with the Israelis gaining control of the head waters of the Jordan river. A solution could only be reached among the Lebanese themselves.

/ Lord Carrington

Lord Carrington also mentioned his concern about the situation in Oman, following the events in Iran. King Hussein said that he shared this concern. He had sent an envoy and a very frank letter to Sultan Qaboos warning him of the dangers of his present form of administration. He could not understand why the Sultan was putting himself in a position where he antagonised everyone. Lord Carrington commented that he was surrounded by too many expatriates including too many British who told him only what they thought he wanted to hear. Sir A Parsons had recently visited him and had spoken at some length but it was not clear whether the message had really got through.

Finally Lord Carrington mentioned that Mr Pym, who would be calling on King Hussein that afternoon, would bring good news about the sale of Chieftain tanks. There was no political inhibition on their sale to Jordan. The British Government would no doubt have to take some flak from the Israelis about a decision in principle to supply, but would justify it on the grounds that Britain was a traditional supplier to the Jordanian armed forces.


P Lever

15 June 1979

cc: PS
PS/LPS
PS/Mr Hurd
PS/PUS
Sir A Parsons
Mr J Moberly
Mr Munro (MED)
HM Ambassador Amman
Mr Cartledge - No 10
Mr Facer - MOD

15 JUN 1979
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