

RECORD OF A CONVERSATION BETWEEN THE PRIME MINISTER AND KING HUSSEIN OF JORDAN AT NO. 10 DOWNING STREET AT 1200 ON 10 SEPTEMBER 1980

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Present:

Prime Minister	King Hussein
Sir John Graham	His Excellency Mr. Ibrahim Izziddin
Mr. Michael Alexander	

Arab/Israel dispute

King Hussein said that he had had a good meeting with M. Gaston Thorn when he had visited Amman recently. He had also made it possible for M. Thorn to establish contact with representatives of the Palestinians in Jordan. The Prime Minister said that the terms in which M. Thorn would report on his visit to the Middle East were not yet clear. He was due to meet the other Foreign Ministers of the Nine on 15/16 September but it seemed that he might decide to report to them orally rather than in writing. Looking to the next stage, it had been suggested that the Presidency should attempt to clarify a number of detailed questions with Arab Governments before the Arab Summit later this year. During his tour, the Saudi and Kuwaiti Governments had proposed to M. Thorn that the occupied territories on the West Bank should be returned to their pre-1967 owners subject to subsequent clarification of their status. Would this be acceptable to King Hussein?

King Hussein said that it was essential that neither the principle of Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories nor the rights of the Palestinians to exercise self-determination should be compromised. The Jordanian Government had resisted attempts to propose a package envisaging Israeli withdrawal, and a UN mandate leading to direct transfer of control to the Palestine Liberation Organisation. This would be contrary to the principle of self-

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determination. As regards the question of Israeli withdrawal, the Israeli Government had successfully diverted attention to the question of autonomy. The basic principle must not be lost to sight. The Prime Minister asked whether there was any difficulty about UN recognition of Jordanian "ownership" of the West Bank. The Jordanian Ambassador said that there was no problem and that the UN had in fact recognised Jordan's rights. Sir John Graham asked whether a transitional period under UN administration with a referendum at the end would be acceptable to the Jordanian Government. King Hussein confirmed that this would be entirely acceptable. What would not be acceptable would be direct transfer to the Palestine Liberation Organisation.

King Hussein said that he understood M. Thorn had carried away an impression that there was confusion in the Arab ranks and that, in particular, the Saudi Government felt that the key to the situation was in the hands of the United States. His own view was that the position of the United States was critical but that the key to this in turn lay with Europe. Had it not been for the European initiative, hope would have been lost in recent months. A barrier had been created between the Arabs and the United States over the years which prevented the American people acquiring a full understanding of the Arab position. This barrier still existed. The only way of overcoming it would be a dialogue between the Europeans and the United States. This would, among other things, help to educate the US public. After years of standstill in the Middle East, Europe had injected a new element into the situation.

The Prime Minister said that as she understood it, King Hussein believed that the role of Europe in the next stage would be to bring influence to bear on the United States/ <sup>in order that</sup> they in turn could bring pressure to bear on Israel; and, more generally, to keep something moving in order that hope should not die in the Middle East. King Hussein confirmed that this was his view. He hoped that the Europeans would be prepared to outline the principles of a settlement, i.e. self-determination for the Palestinians, Israeli withdrawal and security for all. No such statement of principles had been made since Article 242 had been drawn up. In response to a comment by his

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/ Ambassador



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Ambassador that this would represent a new peace process, King Hussein said that it would be the peace process. Sir John Graham asked whether King Hussein saw any merit in a new Resolution supplementing Resolution 242 and saying something about the Palestinians, who did not figure in the original Resolution. King Hussein said that such a Resolution would have to come. It might be a new Resolution or an addition to Resolution 242. Commenting on the circumstances in which the previous Jordanian attempt to launch such a Resolution had been frustrated, Sir John Graham said that there might now come a point when a new Resolution would be helpful to the United States. The Prime Minister said it would be important to ensure both that a new Resolution did not distract attention from the need for Israeli withdrawal and that there was some practical follow-up. She understood King Hussein's feeling that the Camp David process had run into the ground and that a Summit was unlikely to change this appreciation. Therefore there was a role for Europe. The Governments of the Nine would have to decide soon the form of the next round of their activity. One difficulty was that many people were still paying lip service to Camp David .

King Hussein confirmed his view that nothing more was to be expected from Camp David. Despite the recent agreement to resume negotiations, the Israelis were taking the position that Linowitz's visit had achieved nothing. The Prime Minister said that it was very hard on President Sadat that he had been forced, by his own loyalty to his friends, to agree to the resumption of negotiations. This had weighed more heavily than Mr. Begin's failure to respond to President Sadat's clear statement that talks should not be resumed without an Israeli declaration on East Jerusalem. Vice President Mubarak had told her that Jerusalem was now the most important stumbling block in the way of progress. King Hussein said that he also believed that Jerusalem held the key to a solution. It was more important than the entire Palestinian issue. Without an adequate solution to the problem of Jerusalem, there could be no peace. The Prime Minister said Europe and, she thought, the United States, were united in rejecting Mr. Begin's move of his office to East Jerusalem. They would make this clear if and when the move took place. As regards the US Presidential Elections,

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the imminence of which had recently played so large a role in discussions about the Arab/Israel dispute, her own fear had always been that the electoral campaign would force the candidates to take up positions which would prevent progress for many months after the election had taken place. This now seemed to be happening. It gave additional importance to Europe's role in the months ahead.

Referring to her previous discussion with King Hussein (on 24 June), the Prime Minister asked if anything had happened about King Hussein's suggestion to President Carter that a way should be found to enable Palestinian opinion on the West Bank to express itself other than through the PLO. King Hussein said that there had been no developments. Indeed, the Israeli authorities were taking even firmer measures than before. He had recently seen the Mayor of Nablus (who was extremely grateful for the medical help he was receiving in London). The Mayor had reminded him that he could not meet the other West Bank Mayors without prior permission from the Israeli authorities. Difficulties had even been made about his wife travelling to Jerusalem from Nablus in order to seek legal advice following her husband's arrest. The Prime Minister recalled that M. Thorn had wished to meet the West Bank Mayors during his recent tour. Sir John Graham said that the meeting had been prevented by the Israelis. Although it had been made to look as though the difficulty had been a question of dates, he thought it had probably been a difficulty of substance. The Prime Minister said that she thought it would be useful if facts like these could be made more widely known in the United States.

The Prime Minister asked about the likely date of the Israeli elections and whether King Hussein thought that a Labour Government would be easier to deal with than Mr. Begin. King Hussein said that he did not think Mr. Begin was in major difficulties at home. He would probably be able to hold on to power throughout the life of the present Parliament, i.e. for another year or so. As regards the views of the present Opposition in Israel, he had been told that Mr. Peres was seeking support in Europe, e.g., from the Austrians.

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In asking for this support, he did not seem to be advancing new ideas. He was merely expressing good intentions. King Hussein had advised his friends that they should ask Mr. Peres for more concrete suggestions about the way ahead. Nothing tangible had yet emerged. Sir John Graham said that he thought a Labour Government might be more open to argument than Mr. Begin. King Hussein agreed but said that he was not sure that the practical differences between the positions of the two Governments would be all that marked. The Labour Party had been in power between 1967 and Mr. Begin's assumption of office, and little headway had been made.

#### General Situation

Referring to the general situation in the Middle East, King Hussein said that the two or three months would be a period of danger. Phalangist ambitions to form their own state in the Lebanon might lead to an explosion and to Israeli intervention. Similarly the proposal for unity between Libya and Syria, which was born of despair and could not last, might be a pretext for an Israeli adventure. The Prime Minister agreed about the dangers ahead. Referring to relations between Libya and Syria, she asked whether it was the case that the Syrians got money from Arab States so long as the Golan Heights were occupied by Israel. King Hussein confirmed that Syria was in receipt of funds. This was in recognition of Syria's status as a confrontation state and because there were Syrian troops in the Lebanon. Sir John Graham commented that, ironically enough, Libya was the worst payer.

Having thanked King Hussein for his help in Saudi Arabia recently, the Prime Minister asked whether the situation had improved. King Hussein said that his officials sensed a desire for fruitful co-operation on intelligence matters. This was encouraging by contrast with previous Saudi attitudes. Nonetheless he was still receiving reports which gave rise to concern about the future. The Saudi Government had plans which envisaged raising per capita income in Saudi Arabia to absurd levels.

/ The Prime Minister

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The Prime Minister asked about the situation in North Yemen. King Hussein said that there was nothing new to report. There had recently been a meeting between the Yemenis and the Saudis but he did not know the outcome. As regards the Gulf, it had been suggested to him that he should take the opportunity of the forthcoming Arab Summit to expose to the Gulf leaders some of the internal, as well as external, dangers which threatened the region. He hoped that this might lead to improved co-operation among the various Governments concerned.

The situation in Iran continued to give rise to great concern. He had heard that the recent coup attempt in Iran had been exposed by the Tudeh party. He drew the conclusion that the Tudeh were only too happy to see the chaos continue and that they were preparing a take-over. Sir John Graham expressed some doubts as to whether the Tudeh were all that widely organised. The present situation in Iran was such that it was often sufficient merely to make an accusation to bring a politician down. This was what had happened to Entezam, a close associate of Bazargan. King Hussein did not dissent, but said that nonetheless confusion could only be to the Tudeh's benefit. The Prime Minister said that she had learnt recently that the work at the Talbot factory in Iran was almost at a standstill. Sir John Graham said that the problem was that the factory were unable to handle the flow of kits from the United Kingdom. They had already piled up more stock than they could deal with. <sup>The</sup> deterioration seemed to have set in since June. The Prime Minister commented that the economy seemed to be breaking down.

The discussion ended at 1250.

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10 September 1980

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Jordan

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10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Private Secretary*

10 September 1980

Dear Stephen,

Call by King Hussein

As you know, King Hussein of Jordan called on the Prime Minister this morning.

I enclose a record of their discussion.

Yours ever

Michael Alexander

S. J. Gomersall, Esq.,  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

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