

Withdrawal/Redaction Sheet

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11. Memcon	Re: Memorandum of Conversation (5 pp.)	2/23/89	(b)(1)	S

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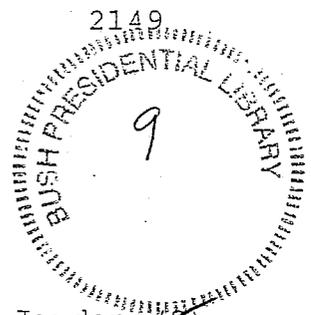
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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

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MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Meeting with King Hussein I of Jordan (S)

PARTICIPANTS: U.S.
The President
James A. Baker III, Secretary of State
John Sununu, Chief of Staff
Brent Scowcroft, Assistant to the President
for National Security Affairs
James A. Kelly, NSC, Notetaker

Jordan
King Hussein I
Field Marshal Zaid bin-Shaker, Chief of the
Royal Court

DATE, TIME AND PLACE: February 23, 1989, 7:55 p.m. - 8:25 p.m.
Ambassador's Residence, Tokyo, Japan

The President warmly welcomed King Hussein and opened by saying he was looking forward to seeing him in the United States at his convenience, and that their governments had been talking about spring. He then asked King Hussein to give his opinion of events in the region. (S)

King Hussein said that there were opportunities which had not been seen in the past. There was a feeling of new direction and amazing potential. He complimented the President's knowledge of the region, but reminded him that it was the most volatile and dangerous part of the earth. He commented on the uprising in the occupied territories of the West Bank and Gaza and the repression that had resulted. He said as a result the Palestinians for the first time had an identity and voice. As a result of the PLO meeting the American requirements, the dialogue that has been established makes the time right, said the King, for an international conference on the Middle East. (S)

He continued, noting that the Middle East bridges Africa and Asia, and that there is a threat of nuclear war. Other kinds of weapons of vast destruction are widely held in the region. He said that policies too often in the past had been hostage to extremists. At this time, the King said, sixty percent of Israelis support a dialogue with the PLO, and no solution is possible without the Palestinians. The King said that we do not

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need new initiatives. He said that if too much time is taken, extremists on both sides will seek greater advantage. (S)

The President said that there were some steps taken by the King which had generated wide applause, and that he was interested in receiving his advice. Concerning Yasser Arafat, it was significant that he had met America's minimum requirements before the dialogue began. The President asked if the King felt Arafat was able to control the PLO. He asked further to what extent Arafat was endangered by radical elements? (S)

King Hussein replied that the radical elements are very small. The King continued that Arafat was a symbol for the majority of Palestinians and that all, in some respects, support him. Arafat does not exert complete control over the PLO, but he remains the principal figure. Hussein noted that Israeli election plans were trying to cause divisions among the Palestinians and he expressed the view that if the PLO and local leaders are not encouraged to continue, the results will be that unknown, more radical persons will move in. (S)

The President noted that perhaps the process had been helped by Jordan's disengagement. (C)

King Hussein replied that the Palestinians want identity, that they have wanted this for seventy years, but that recent events provide some promise. There is a danger but everyone is ready now, he said. (C)

President Bush asked King Hussein about the Rabin plan for elections. (S)

King Hussein said yes, he was familiar with it. (U)

The President asked if he understood the Rabin plan to say that the Israelis would agree to talk to whoever wins the elections, including members of the PLO. (C)

King Hussein said that this election plan would take too long. Moreover, in his view it separates the Palestinians in the occupied territories and outside. The PLO, he stated, comprises both of these groups. (S)

Governor Sununu asked the King when he felt a conference should occur. (U)

King Hussein answered this year. (U)

Secretary Baker interjected that he had found a sense of support

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in Europe for an international conference. There would be some problems in structuring such an event. One view was that if a conference were too quickly called, it may preempt certain good opportunities. He explained that the King needed to consider Israel's position now, including the recent tough American human rights report, the U.S. dialogue with the PLO, and the uncertain political situation since the election, including the narrow margin now held by Likud. Secretary Baker said we agree opportunities that did not exist before are in place, but we do not know what kind. Would an international conference led by the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council be best now, or be more likely to succeed after proper tilling of the ground? (S)

King Hussein said the U.S. must hear from all parties. He said he believes strongly that this year is the time, and that the process should not be dragged out. (S)

President Bush asked how would the conference have to be shaped to meet Jordanian requirements. (U)

King Hussein said the five permanent members of the UNSC would lead the dialogue without imposing solutions. UN Resolution 242 would be the heart of the basis for resolving the Palestinian problem, and establishing peace to all parties of the conflict. Direct negotiations would be the basis. (S)

Marshal bin-Shaker then commented that he had taken the liberty, because the President's time was so short, to prepare a complete analysis of the situation. He said there would be much in this analysis of which the President was unaware. The analysis (attachment) includes three documents: A Chronology of Jordanian Efforts for Peace; U.S. Commitments and Positions in a Peace Settlement; and a Personal Letter for the President from King Hussein. (S)

The President promised to look at these documents and to treat them with appropriate confidentiality. (U)

Secretary Baker asked the King to comment on the kind of problems that he would see in a Palestinian confederation arrangement. (S)

King Hussein said there would be none immediately because that would be the final status. He believed the Palestinians will seek something like this because relations now are quite unstable. People are weary, he said, because there has been no progress. His country, in particular, with the longest borders in the area, longer than those of the West Bank and Gaza, as well as the inhabitants of those regions must have their say. (S)

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Secretary Baker asked again if there were direct negotiations, would a confederation be acceptable? (S)

President Hussein answered affirmatively. But he asked how to get Israel to enter into direct negotiations. Hussein said the Israeli public is ready. He added that in the Jewish American community many persons are also anxious to see this kind of progress. (S)

The President said that Hussein is right, public opinion in Israel is changing, and our dialogue with the PLO has not been so badly received. (S)

Secretary Baker asked the exact nature of the Israeli poll that the King had referred to. (S)

King Hussein said sixty-four percent had favored direct negotiations with the PLO. (S)

General Scowcroft asked that if the U.S. uses all of its influence with the Israelis to bring about a meeting, what influence would the U.S. have left to pursue a solution? This was why the international conference must be approached carefully. (S)

Governor Sununu commented that hesitancy on the conference is in part because few have an adequate sense of where the conference will go. He raised the prospect of possible pre-conference packaging, noting that a strong, clear road map will help hesitant participants to be more assured. (S)

King Hussein said things like that had been tried in the past, and that they have been tried directly with Israel. The United Nations Security Council five permanent representatives provide the modern weight of world opinion. They should not propose a solution, and neither should they exercise a veto against a particular solution. But the five could act as guarantors for UN Resolution 242. (S)

General Scowcroft asked what participants Hussein envisioned? (U)

King Hussein named Israel, Palestinians, U.S., Syria, Lebanon (he said Lebanon would need to be somehow included), and Egypt. He continued that Syria would be present. Shevardnadze had told him on the night he left Amman that Syria will be available for this conference. He said that the Soviet position had changed and had become quite constructive. (S)

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Marshal bin-Shaker added that Shevardnadze sounded as though he had become pro-American. If there was a conference, the Soviet Union would definitely restore full relations with Israel. (S)

President Bush said we will try to assess the situation carefully. (U)

King Hussein, turning to Iran and Iraq, said his hopes had not been high, and that there was just a cease-fire at this particular time. He commented that the work of the UN Secretary-General had been helpful. Now the recent Khomeini comments on Rushdie had set these relations back further and European countries were breaking relations. It is very hard to talk sense in such a situation. In the Gulf, he noted, things were much more quiet. (S)

President Bush mentioned that American concern continues for hostages in the Middle East, and he observed that a small number of the so-called Dawa prisoners had been released in Kuwait. (S)

King Hussein responded that [REDACTED] (b)(1)
[REDACTED] he was working to combat terrorism wherever it would be possible, but that he feared that the problem would remain for a long time. (S)

President Bush thanked him. The President then asked about the health of Queen Noor and the king responded that she was well and traveling in Europe at this time. (U)

King Hussein said that he had high hopes for the next four years, that he hoped to get the President to visit Jordan sometime. (U)

President Bush ended the meeting by commenting on his review of relations with the Soviet Union. It would be clear that the U.S. is not stalling, the President said, and we are looking at places the U.S. can be productive, and can be a catalyst to smooth the process. The President welcomed the King's assessment on the Middle East, but he said we have not sorted out how far we should go. The figures of Israeli support for PLO dialogue were not surprising. There is a moment of history at hand. The meeting concluded in collegial fashion. (S)

Attachment:

Tab A Document provided by King Hussein (U)

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