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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Plenary Session with King Hussein of Jordan

PARTICIPANTS: U.S.
The President
The Vice President
James A. Baker, III, Secretary of State
John H. Sununu, Chief of Staff
Brent Scowcroft, Assistant to the President for
National Security Affairs
Ambassador Roscoe Suddarth
Paul Hare, Acting Assistant Secretary of State
Dennis Ross, Director, Policy Planning,
Department of State
C. David Welch, NSC Staff, Notetaker

Jordan

King Hussein
Prince Abdullah bin Hussein
Zayd al-Rifai, Prime Minister, Minister of Defense
Zayd bin Shakir, Chief of the Royal Court
Adnan Abu Odeh, Advisor for Political Affairs
Amir Khammash, Special Advisor to the King
Marwan Sidqi al-Kasim, Minister of Foreign
Affairs, Deputy Prime Minister
Abdullah Amin Salah, Permanent Representative to
the UN
Hussein Hamami, Ambassador to the United States

DATE, TIME AND PLACE: April 19, 1989, 9:30 a.m. - 10:25 a.m.
Cabinet Room

The President opened the meeting by welcoming King Hussein to the United States again and noted that he was the seventh President to meet with Hussein. The President said that he hoped that the visit would go well and that he looked forward to the opportunity to discuss anything and everything with King Hussein. We would like to use the visit to fertilize the field of ideas. The United States had a continued keen interest to try to help on the peace process. He mentioned that the King had remarked to the press that the time was right to make progress. The President agreed, noting that this did not mean that he had a "five point program" in mind as a U.S. initiative. (S)

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King Hussein thanked the President for the opportunity to visit and expressed his respect and admiration. The visit, he continued, was important in a very special way. There were very significant trends and developments in the world and in the Middle East. In particular, there was a world trend in the direction of removing problems and solving regional tensions that threaten regional stability and peace. Now was the time to move in the Middle East and now was the time for a constructive U.S. role. (S)

With this introduction, King Hussein presented Jordan's position, reading verbatim from a set of talking points which he later gave to the U.S. side (See Tab A). (S)

The President thanked Hussein for his presentation. He said that he would like to get the U.S. official position on the table and then ask Secretary Baker to make some remarks, including on his meetings with President Mubarak and Prime Minister Shamir. (S)

As a first point, the President continued, neither he nor Secretary Baker agreed that Shamir had bought two more years of the status quo with his proposal for elections. We pushed hard on the final status issues, not accepting interim arrangements alone as the basis for moving ahead. The U.S. position, the President said, was based on UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 -- these meant territory for peace and Israeli withdrawal. The issue of Palestinian representation also remained to be resolved, and some sense of the shape of a final settlement should be given. We had no intention of backing down on our position regarding a dialogue with the PLO or from Secretary Baker's statements, which caused some difficulty in Israel, not ruling out the possibility of Israel talking to the PLO. (S)

The President reaffirmed that he did not rule out a properly structured international conference at the right time; one may be necessary. At the same time, it was unwise now to focus, repeat focus, on an international conference; he reiterated that he would not reject the idea, which Hussein believed had merit, of an international conference. The U.S. wanted constructive negotiations for final status, and would look at a conference in light of how it could contribute to those negotiations. (S)

The U.S. also wanted to ensure movement from transitional arrangements to final status talks, the President said. Ensuring Arab support depended on movement to final status talks. The United States would not stop short of that goal. He said that the issue of elections also needed to be discussed; we needed to know where elections fit. The United States did not rule out other ideas for Palestinian representation, however. In the next several weeks, we wanted to flesh out the elections idea. (S)

The President noted that the coverage of the intifada had affected the American people. There was support and backing for the Administration in its effort to get a process going. (S)

The President said that he would be interested in Hussein's views on Jordan's role and the disengagement Hussein had announced last year. He added that the United States knew Jordan would not disengage totally, and stated that Jordan was key to final status negotiations. (S)

The President asked that Hussein not prejudice in public our position at this stage. He asked for Hussein to help to condition the environment by talking to the PLO and Palestinians and reaching out to Israel. (S)

The President mentioned that Hussein's reading of Arafat's views and of Iraq and Syria would also be welcome. He noted that he and Hussein had shared a moment in their private meeting of concern and worry over the carnage in Lebanon which has so shaken Americans. In concluding, the President repeated that the status quo could not come to be regarded as the best of worlds; we could not permit this attitude to develop. He said that the Israelis left the U.S. with their views more shook up. There would be no backing away from our dialogue with the PLO, we would continue to tip our hat at the international conference, and we would continue to express our serious opposition to any new Israeli settlements. The President asked Secretary Baker to add his comments. (S)

Secretary Baker opened by saying that the new Administration confronted a changed situation upon entering office. For the first time, the United States had a dialogue with the PLO. It had also issued a human rights report that was more critical of Israel than the one issued on the Soviet Union. Secretary Baker recalled that he had also stated that the United States could not categorically, irrevocably or completely rule out an Israeli-PLO dialogue. The President had also made a public statement in support of an end to the occupation. Private remarks were also made to Arens and Shamir on settlements, expressing our very strong views. (S)

Continuing, Secretary Baker said that in the U.S. view, the atmosphere now would not support direct negotiations, and direct negotiations were necessary for peace. There was a need for an improved atmosphere to prepare the way for negotiations. In advance of the Shamir visit, the United States had sent word that new ideas were needed from Shamir, with some forward thinking to move the process ahead. (S)

Shamir came with new ideas, Secretary Baker stated. Specifically, he said four things:

- Shamir spoke of a "political negotiating process," a new position for him. (S)
- He said that he was prepared to follow up transitional arrangements with negotiations on a permanent agreement. The Secretary recalled Hussein's earlier remark on the meaning of "permanent agreement" for Shamir, and said that the United States would have preferred the words "final status" in Shamir's presentation. (S)

- Shamir said that all options would be open at these negotiations. (S)
- Arens and Shamir had both stated privately that they would deal with whoever was elected, even if these people had ties to the PLO. (S)

Secretary Baker said these new points from Shamir fit nicely into what the United States was prepared to try. The United States would also support a properly structured international conference at an appropriate time. He stated that there would be no solution to the problem, however, unless the United States had the political strength to pull it off at home. We could lose this strength if it appeared that we were pushing too hard, he noted. A high visibility U.S. initiative could preempt more promising possibilities if it failed. Secretary Baker agreed that if the United States was going to pursue this approach, it must not allow the approach to become the means for delay. He noted that the United States had held another meeting with the PLO in Tunis, and was now pushing the idea in that channel. As an aside, he mentioned that Peres had said publicly that Israel was now dealing with the PLO through the U.S. In closing, the Secretary said that it may be correct that eventually the effort would fail, but the United States believed it must give this approach a serious try and maintain the political support at home that was necessary for success. (S)

King Hussein said that he was gratified to hear the President's and Secretary Baker's views and that he was reassured by their remarks on elections and how these would fit into a broader process. King Hussein said that when he returned to the region he would continue to speak out in his efforts to give people hope and encourage them to be positive. Jordan was committed to the cause of peace; it pursued this commitment in the Arab world, in the Arab Cooperation Council (ACC) and with the PLO. Hussein said that he would do all he could to help, since U.S. success was Jordan's success. (S)

King Hussein said that Jordan would always be involved in the peace process. It had the longest borders and ceasefire lines with Israel of any Arab state. He reviewed briefly the history of Jordan's efforts in the peace process, remarking that these efforts did not get anywhere. Jordan saw that the Palestinians wanted their own say, and felt that giving the Palestinians responsibility would open the doors for progress; thus, in the same way that Jordan accepted union with the West Bank, it assented to Palestinian requests and decided to disengage. The result was the memorable PLO decisions of late last year. (S)

At the same time, Hussein continued, the character of the Israeli occupation was changing. Its pressure on the people in the Occupied Territories grew. (S)

For the future, Jordan did not rule out a confederation, but it must be between two sovereign states, Hussein said. This would lay a much stronger and more secure basis for lasting peaceful relations. (S)

Iraq, King Hussein stated, would like to see relations with the United States improve. The Iran-Contra affair still rankled, but Iraq wanted to move ahead with better relations. After eight years of war, Iraq was committed to the cause of peace. Hussein added that Jordan believed that the Arabs should support the PLO's decisions on 242, right of Israel to exist, and renouncing terrorism; obstacles should not be put in the PLO's way. (S)

King Hussein said that Israel was worried most about the possibility of Palestinians, especially those in Jordan, returning to "Palestine." Hussein did not believe this was a problem, since most Palestinians, including those in Jordan where they were one family with Jordanians, would elect to stay put. The issue was one of right of return or compensation. He pointed out that Jordan had gone a long way, further than other Arab nations, to assure that the Palestinians in Jordan would develop a stake in Jordan and stay put. Hussein said that Jordan would continue to develop opportunities in Jordan for Palestinians so that this obstacle in Israeli minds may be removed. (S)

King Hussein stated that the problem in the past with direct negotiations and Jordan was that while the PLO could have such negotiations, Jordan could not. It was their cause and their future, he said. Arafat had authority within the PLO; he is the symbol of Palestine inside and outside the Occupied Territories. Of course, Hussein added, there were extremists, but we could not be hostage to them. (S)

Hussein said that the ACC was a new development, grouping 80 million people. Jordan hoped it would serve as a positive force in the area. There were enough ties beyond economic ones to be sure that there were controls on all the members, he stated. The ACC would be a force for stability, complementary to the GCC and Maghreb Union; he expressed his hope for coordination between the three groups. (S)

On the Arab-Israeli question and the peace process, we were committed to reaching peace, Hussein said. The Palestinians could do much more than anyone else, however. As for Syria, an international conference, properly structured at the appropriate time, could bring Syria in. (S)

On elections, King Hussein repeated that we needed to know what elections were for. On transitional arrangements, Jordan wanted to know what it is in transition toward -- in moving from point A to point B, what was point B? (S)