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THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

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MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Memorandum of Conversation of Meeting between Jordanian Foreign Minister Abu Jabir, Haydar Abdul Shafi and President Bush (U)

PARTICIPANTS: The President  
James A. Baker, III, Secretary of State  
Brent Scowcroft, Assistant to the President  
for National Security Affairs  
Richard N. Haass, Senior Director for Near East and South Asian Affairs  
  
Kamal Abu Jabir - Foreign Minister  
Haydar Abdul Shafi, Palestinian Delegation Leader  
Abdul Salam Majali, Jordanian Delegation Leader

The President, Foreign Minister Abu Jabir and Haydar Abdul Shafi met at the Ambassador's residence at 8:24.

The President: Please thank His Majesty. This is a historic occasion. I am hoping that one by-product of this will be a resumption of good U.S.-Jordanian relations. We are very pleased the Palestinians are here. We know it is not easy. The fact that you are here is historic. What we want to do is try to get the parties together. We have strong views, some of which accord with yours. We are not veering off U.S. policy, but we want to be an honest broker. (C)

Foreign Minister Abu Jabir: We thank you for this meeting. His Majesty sends greetings. We appreciate your and Secretary Baker's efforts. We hope you will continue. The other side needs to be pushed. In Jordan, we also have an economic crisis, not just a political one. I hope you will be aware of that. It is a bit difficult for us. (C)

The President: I hope you are not asking us to change our position vis-a-vis Saddam which we cannot do. We are open to facilitating Jordan's commerce without bailing him out. (C)

Secretary Baker: We've just done that with one ship, the Tara. (C)

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The President: There is no desire here to burden Jordan. But I can't change my views on Saddam. But because of the peace process, we can be helpful to Jordan. (C)

Secretary Baker: Just before leaving town I worked with the Congress on freeing up aid and we are working hard to build international support. (C)

The President: Your being here helps now with your critics. I had a nice letter from His Majesty. We have a personal friendship that transcends our differences. It was strained by the war but the friendship has survived. (C)

Foreign Minister Abu Jabir: On settlements, it would be helpful if the other side stopped. (C)

The President: We'd like to see the plan that we discussed--suspend the boycott and settlements--move ahead. The question for us is on this day, October 30th, how helpful it is to reiterate all of this. We don't want to retreat from our policy but at this juncture it is not terribly helpful to reiterate the U.S. position. The key is for the Arabs and Israel to speak. We will be there down the road saying what we think is fair and right as an honest broker. Both sides are suspicious of us--Israel over settlements, the Arabs over our support for Israel. (S)

Secretary Baker: The only question I would ask is as we move on to the bilaterals, do you think all on the Arab side would support a suspension of the boycott for a suspension of settlements? And a suspension of the intifida for a suspension of settlements? It would give us ammunition. (S)

Haydar Abdul Shafi: The Palestinians coming to this conference show that Palestinians are committed to peace, especially as the conference is largely on Israel's terms. There is a contradiction between settlements and peace. As long as settlements are going on, final status is being decided. It is preemptive final status. I don't think the Palestinians would seriously engage in any negotiations unless the settlement issue is resolved. (S)

The President: Would you endorse a no-boycott and no-intifida for no-settlement deal? (C)

Haydar Abdul Shafi: Everybody is willing to endorse suspension of the boycott. On the Intifida, this was something started by the people, not the PLO. But if the people feel there is progress toward peace, the Intifida will end. There was a demonstration just yesterday in Gaza that was pro-peace. (C)

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The President: Our speech at the conference will be conciliatory. We will be available for you. I especially want say to the Palestinians that we know it is not easy. We know you are under pressure from all sides. But we want to start a new chapter and be seen as a catalyst for peace. (C)

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