

THE WHITE HOUSE
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MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Meeting with Dr. Abd Al-Salam Majali, Head of the Jordanian Peace Process Delegation (U)

PARTICIPANTS: The President
Brent Scowcroft, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs
Edward Djerejian, Assistant Secretary of State
Dennis Ross, Director of Policy Planning Staff
Richard Haass, NSC
Edmund J. Hull, NSC (Notetaker)

Dr. Abd Al-Salam Majali, Head of the Jordanian peace process delegation
Lieutenant General Abd Al-Hafiz Marai
Dr. Marwan Muasher
Dr. Fayiz Tarawnah

DATE, TIME AND PLACE: December 17, 1992; 11:45 p.m. - 12:00 Noon
The Oval Office

The President received Dr. Majali and his delegation for a separate meeting after having received the same group as part of the Jordanian/Palestinian delegation. (U)

The President: I had a good visit yesterday with the King. We go back a long ways together. I realize that the Madrid formula gives Jordan a headache so I wanted to have this separate meeting to show our sensitivity to this. Through my personal contacts with a number of Jordan's ambassadors I have always felt a personal interest in Jordan. (U)

Dr. Majali: This presents an opportunity for you to meet Dr. Tarawnah who is our Ambassador-select to the United States. (U)

The President: I am just disappointed that he is coming in just as I am leaving. (U)

Dr. Tarawnah: I hope to come in quickly and that my agreement will move with speed. (U)

The President: Where does this stand? It has probably been here all of two hours and not moved? (in jest) Who's to blame? (U)
How are things in Jordan? (U)

Dr. Majali: There is a continuing problem with ships being searched in the Gulf of Aqaba even those with certificates. Insurance premiums are high and that raises prices. The general economic situation is still difficult. This is particularly true for the civil service whose salaries have been cut by one third. Nevertheless there is a general feeling of progress. (Ø)

The President: Is the view there that we are being too tough on Iraq? (Ø)

Dr. Majali: Yes, for public opinion as a whole and now there is much more freedom of opinion. The problem is that they perceive others being hit very hard while the Palestinian problem goes without a solution. Still, there is a realization that something went wrong with the Kuwaiti business which caused the whole area to suffer and Jordan in particular. (Ø)

The President: There is no point in rehashing the Gulf War. My feeling is that relations have been better since. U.S.-Jordanian relations have an historic basis after all. In spite of our differences, we have wanted to be helpful. We have been ready to help, for example with the Saudis and other problems. (Ø)

As I leave office, I hope we have done what we could to put U.S.-Jordanian relations on a firm footing. This is not to deny that we had our differences. I recall in Maine we had some tough meetings. You could feel the tension. And, while we can't change our views on Saddam Hussein, we don't want to needlessly harm the Jordanian people. I think the new administration will see it the same way. I know it will support the peace process. (Ø)

Dr. Majali: There are still some outstanding issues, for example the \$35 million in aid. (Ø)

Mr. Djerejian: We have got FY 91 money released, and we are now working on FY 92 given the improvement in our relations. (Ø)

Dr. Majali: We understand there is a backlog. (Ø)

The President: We wanted to be clear in our earlier meeting that we disagree with Israel on the deportations. It creates a problem, and the timing is bad. (Ø)

Dr. Majali: We appreciate the chance to brief you on our track. We have good relations with the Israelis. We are doing good work on numerous subjects like water, energy, banking, and the economy. We hope next round that we can settle the language on the Agenda and get an agreement with Israel there. (Ø)

The President: I gather from King Hussein that your economy is doing well. (U)

Dr. Majali: Yes, much better than expected. We have good growth. (U)

The President: Do you have a problem with extremists in Jordan? Are they opposing your participation in the peace process? (Ø)

Dr. Majali: We have more than thirty in the parliament. They are not so much against peace as they are arguing that the peace process will go nowhere, that it is a waste of time. That's why I am pushing Israel so we can achieve more in the process and undercut them. I spoke to Eli (Rubenstein) about it. I told him to help the Palestinians. Otherwise, Hamas will gain ground. (Ø)

The 400 they deport to Lebanon will be received by Hizballah, feted and will come back even more dangerous. (Ø)

The President: Why are we hearing so much about Hamas now? (U)

Mr. Ross: They have been operating in Gaza for some time, but now they are getting support in the West Bank. (Ø)

Mr. Djerejian: They have been around since 1985. (U)

Mr. Haass: They are also getting more external support now. (Ø)

Dr. Majali: Even from Israel. (Ø)

Mr. Djerejian: In the sense that external funding to Fatah is being cut off. (Ø)

Mr. Ross: There is significant funding for Hamas from outside, including private Saudi money. (Ø)

Mr. Haass: Does Hamas get any help from Jordan? (U)

Dr. Majali: They have an office there, but it is under our control. There is no violence. They do have good communications with the West Bank. (Ø)

Dr. Tarawnah: The Muslim Brothers have a global network, of course. (Ø)

Dr. Majali: These deportations will be a big help to Hamas. (Ø)

The President: Well, I won't keep you longer, but I did want to have this chance to talk. Thank you for coming in. (U)

Dr. Majali: Thank you. You are one person who has shown that he can succeed where others failed. (U)

-- End of Conversation --