

V  
 LEVANT DEPARTMENT

V J1015/11

FROM Mr W. Morris, Amman  
 to Mr J.G.S. Beith

No. 16719.  
 Dated October 5.  
 Received October 14.

SUBJECT:

Internal Situation.

Talk with Major GAMMON, formerly Military Attaché in Amman; situation in Jordan; pro-NASSER feeling lessening; Jordan should show more interest in economic development.

References  
 -39.

MINUTES

(Printing Instructions)

151051 51735

(Outward Action)

Major Gammon sounds an enterprising sort of person. It would certainly be useful if we could provide him with information for his articles (Paragraph 6). It would be even more useful if the Embassy are able to get the Jordanians working on publicity for their development schemes. A certain amount is being done already e.g. on the occasion of the opening of the new port equipment at Aqaba last December and (we hope) the opening of the Desert Road which will probably take place later this month. The difficulty is, I think, the same as that which faced the Iraqi Government of Nuri es Said, namely, that things like roads and irrigation schemes bring no immediate advantage to most of the population and in any case take a long time from the moment construction begins till they are any use whatever.

*[Signature]*  
 P. H. Moberly  
 October 18, 1960

Mr. Arculus. 11/10.  
 F.O.R.D. (M.E. Section)  
 I.P.D. *[Signature]*

Another difficulty is that the Arabs 'intelligence' in general just aren't interested in things like roads, ports & irrigation works: principles are the stuff of politics. But we will see what sort of factual information Major Gammon wants.

F.O.R.D. M.E.  
 21.8.60.

(Action completed)

A2  
 27.10.60

(Main Indexed)

*[Handwritten initials]*

*[Signature]* 27/10

RE: 1  
 ARC: 3  
 14 OCT 1960  
 VJ1015/39

*Sw. R. G. Jones*  
 British Embassy,  
 AMMAN,

October 5, 1960.

*this is the sort of thing we wd like to put over to the King? About popularity?*  
*ll*  
*132*

*Dear John,*

We frequently find ourselves engaged here in guessing games about the state of Jordanian opinion, especially in regard to Nasser and to King Hussein. As you know, the general tenor of our reporting has been that over the last year or two enthusiasm for Nasser has declined, though not so much as to remove pro-Nasserism from its place as a most serious weakness of the régime; and that the personal popularity of King Hussein has increased, but without increasing the popularity of the Jordan government - which if anything has declined. (See for example my letter of July 15). But as we live close to events, our judgments may be distorted, and it is therefore valuable to be able to check them with those of someone who comes fresh to the scene. This is my chief purpose in reporting to you the following impressions of Major Gammon, a British officer who was formerly Military Adviser at this Embassy and recently returned to Jordan for a visit after an absence of four years. His impressions are supported by Michael Adams' article in the "Spectator" of September 25.

*VJ1015/39*  
*Please attach*

2. Major Gammon was last here between 1954 and 1956. Most of that time he spent in the West Bank as a British observer on the Jordan-Israel frontier. This left him with much time on his hands to follow his interests in social welfare. He speaks good Arabic and is of a gregarious nature, so that he built up a wide circle of acquaintances, especially on the West Bank. Since then he has left the Army and served in Aden first with the Levies, and then as a District Officer. He left Aden at the end of 1959 and began a long tour of Somaliland, Ethiopia, Sudan and Egypt by motor cycle, with an interlude looking for markets in the Persian Gulf for Musa el Alami's vegetables. He spent two or three weeks here before and after Nazma Najalli's murder and persuaded Waafi Tel to give him a journalist's facilities for looking at what was going on in Jordan, as the U.A.R. Government had done for him in Egypt.

3. He told us at the end of his visit to Jordan that he had no doubt at all that Nasser's stock had slumped since he was last here - and he claims to be a re-constructed pro-Nasserite himself. He was surprised at the number of his friends who had been pro-Nasser four years ago who took offence when he made pro-Nasser comments to them jokingly. At the same time he was also struck by the extent to which Jordanians, and especially Palestinians, talked approvingly of King Hussein. This was something which would not have happened during the time when he was living on the West Bank.

4. These expressions of approval of King Hussein were accompanied by much bitter criticism of the state of the country, for which the blame was attributed to the King's Government and

/advisors,

J. G. B. Keith, Esq., C.M.S.,  
 LEVANT DEPARTMENT,  
 FOREIGN OFFICE,  
 LONDON, S.W. 1.

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advisers, but seldom to the King. About half of this criticism - mainly directed against corruption - he thought was well based and of course this brought him to the familiar theme: "The King has such a potential fund of support in the country and such a talent for popular leadership. If only someone could make him see what chances he is missing and get him pointed in the right direction....."

5. The other half of the criticism he put down to ignorance of what was being done in Jordan in the way of social and economic development which, after four years absence, and after his recent tour of Egypt, he found quite impressive. Just as in Iraq under the Fari regime the disgruntled intelligentsia would not take the trouble to interest themselves in the development that was going on, so in Jordan he found that many of the grumblers looked surprised when he talked with enthusiasm about the progress of the East Ghor Scheme, the Desert Road and Ajlun Port. He thought this was partly their fault and due to their lack of interest in knowing anything good about the régime. But he thought it was also partly due to the lack of publicity given by the Jordan Government to what they were doing. He contrasted the situation here with that in Egypt, where the propaganda content of the much boasted economic and social development is so high. His own special field of interest is Community Development and he spoke enthusiastically about the work being done in the Nablus area by the Near East Foundation working, under contract to Point IV, with the Jordanian Ministry of Social Affairs. He thought this effort, which is completely unpublicised, was the best thing of its kind that he had seen on his travels, and compared most favourably with the "Potomac Village" stuff he was about in Egypt. (He says that he was taken on a conducted tour of a showpiece in the Delta. He got into conversation with village maidens teaching in a school and in a village institute and discovered that they were Cairo university students dressed up in local costume to play the part).

6. We think that Gamson has made a good point about publicity for development in Jordan and we are seeing if there is anything we can do to encourage the Jordanian authorities to take some interest in this. He also told me that he wanted to write some articles for the British Press on what he had seen, and asked if we saw any objection, and if not, whether anyone in the Foreign Office would be prepared to help with some factual information he might need. I encouraged him to pursue this idea and suggested that he should get in touch with Robert Manon in Research Department.

7. After discussion with the Near East Foundation and with Hazim Nusseibeh, the Secretary of the Jordan Development Board, he hopes to return here next year to work on Community Development among the Beduin, occupying a post for which provision has been made in next year's Point IV budget. In the meantime, he is going to take a course of study in this field, at his own expense, at Cornell University.

8. I am sending a copy of this letter to Porter at Development Division and Brach in Jerusalem.

*Yours ever,*  
*W. Morris*  
( W. Morris )

SPECTATOR  
23 SEP 1960

Cutting dated

## Nasser in New York

From MICHAEL ADAMS

BEIRUT

This is the first time in his life that President Nasser has travelled farther West than Yugoslavia, though he has paid visits in the past to India and Pakistan, Bandung and Moscow. It is reasonable to hope that he may benefit from the trip, even that he may go home with a less jaundiced view of Western life and policy than the one which normally colours his utterances on the subject. Much will depend upon the reception he gets in New York—and, possibly, in Washington.

Whatever his hosts may think of his visit, it arouses mixed feelings back in the Arab world, where Nasser's leadership is more challenged today than it has been at any time since his triumph over Suez. Without a doubt he is still the most important—practically speaking, the only important—Arab leader; but it is no longer clear whom he is leading, or towards what goal.

As to the goal, the obvious answer is still Arab unity—but if we accept that answer, we must also accept the conclusion that the goal is further from attainment than ever, not only because most Arab governments continue to regard Nasser with a caution which barely disguises their extreme mistrust, but also (and here is the novelty) because he has lost momentum in the eyes of many of the subjects of the other Arab governments, who find themselves bewildered by his repeated shifts of policy on the international level, and depressed by his authoritarian approach to the problems faced by Arab nationalism.

A good example of this was furnished by the recent assassination of Mr. Hazza Majali, the Prime Minister of Jordan. Whether or not the authorities in the UAR had a hand in the murder—and most people believe that they did not, but that their constant support for the Jordanian exiles in Damascus encouraged these wild spirits to commit the crime—Mr. Majali has been a favourite target for the commentators of the Voice of the Arabs in Cairo. A year or two ago, even an unsuccessful attempt to murder King Hussein's chief executive would have touched off pro-Nasser riots in Jordan and possibly given the signal for revolt amongst the Palestinians. Yet this time, with the prime minister's body buried under the rubble of one wing of the Foreign Ministry, with ambulances rushing up and down the main street of Amman to remove the bodies, some dead and some living, of more than fifty victims of this successful outrage, the capital and the rest of King Hussein's uneasy little country, remained perfectly quiet. Why?

A part of the explanation lies in the success with which the king and his ministers have tightened up their security system. The refugee camps, from which it used to be easy to recruit a mob of ready troublemakers, are now carefully controlled, and so are the familiar trouble spots on the west bank of the Jordan. But this alone would not be enough to prevent a movement of revolt, provided that such a movement had the initial encouragement of a successful and well-publicised stroke which would humiliate the government and damage its prestige. What more could potential rebels—of whom there is not, and never has been, any shortage in the Kingdom of Jordan—ask than the murder of the prime minister at his desk in the government's headquarters? And yet there was no follow-up, no rioting, no demonstrations, merely a vacuum of apathy and unconcern.

I asked a friend of mine in Amman (whose political background can be guessed from the fact that when he heard the explosions and learned what had happened, he telephoned to his wife to ask her to pack a little bag for him—just in case the government included him among the obvious suspects it rounded up during the next twenty-four hours) why there was no public reaction, why at least the stone-throwing mob for which Amman used to be famous was not

out in the streets. 'It's simple,' he said, 'who would they be rioting for? They don't like this government, but what is the alternative?—Nasser?' And he went on to say that even if Nasser showed any sign—which he does not—of being willing to add Jordan to his dominions, or of being able to run it and pay for it if he did, the Jordanians would no longer want him in place of King Hussein. My friend's view was not necessarily a representative one, but I found it echoed in one form or another amongst those least bound by loyalty to King Hussein or the Hashemite regime. The concepts of Arab unity and Arab nationalism retain their appeal for Jordanians as they do for Arabs elsewhere in the restless Middle East. But Nasser in the eyes of many ardent nationalists has shown himself to be less sincerely interested in furthering Arab nationalism than in using it—even at the cost of distorting some of its ideals—to further his own political ambitions.

This is not to say that Nasser is any worse or any less sincere than the leaders of the other Arab States. One has only got to think of General Kassem in Baghdad, or of King Saud, or of King Hussein himself, for Nasser to regain at once a stature of his own as the one leader in the eastern Arab world who can claim that his own country is better off now than when he came to power. But the tragedy of Nasser—and it is a tragedy for the tiny minority of Arabs in every country who have some understanding of political means and ends—is that he has shown himself to be basically no different from the rest, a politician whose first aim is to consolidate his own power at the expense of any possible rival. This at least is the conviction that is gaining ground amongst that minority of informed and educated men who three years ago (just before the union of Egypt and Syria) looked to Nasser without question as the saviour of the Arab world. Now there is no saviour in sight, and the fate of the Arabs seems to be to drift forward into the future with their goal of unity steadily receding in front of them, while the radio commentators, the time-servers, the office-seekers and the hired assassins continue to play their sordid roles in the melodrama of power politics.

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RECEIVED IN  
SECRETARY'S OFFICE  
15/10/60  
VJ1015/172

The attached brief for the Secretary of State has been seen and approved by Sir Roger Stevens.

*A.E. Saunders*  
(A.E. Saunders).  
October 15, 1960.

Private Secretary.

*H*

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Further Meeting with King Hussein

It has been arranged that the Secretary of State should call on the King on Monday, October 17 at 5.30p.m.

From our talks with King Hussein we have the impression that he and his advisers are unduly complacent about the prospect of successfully prosecuting his quarrel with the U.A.R.; and that he may not be sufficiently aware of our great concern. In particular, Wasfi Tel, one of the King's close advisers, has reverted to the possible need for Jordan to take military action. Meanwhile Sir Charles Johnston's telegram No. 1069 of October 12 gives a disturbing picture of the state of popular opinion in Jordan with which His Majesty and his advisers may not be fully in touch. Our aim in asking King Hussein for a further meeting, therefore is to leave him and his advisers in no doubt as to the seriousness with which we regard the situation.

Flag A.

2. We could begin by explaining that we are still worried about the situation and that we would like to take the opportunity of a further talk to re-examine some of the implications which have emerged from the recent discussions in London. We might then repeat that we have admired his statesmanship in handling the very difficult situation after Hazza' Majali's death and of the international sympathy which Jordan has won by her restraint. We

/could then

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could then enquire if the King agrees that we and he have these basic interests in common:-

- (a) peace in the Middle East and good relations with all states of the area;
- (b) a stable and independent Jordan;
- (c) close and friendly ties between our two countries;
- (d) continued financial support to enable Jordan to build up her own resources;
- (e) the containment of Communist influence in the area.

Taking these as a starting point, we should then aim at getting across each of the following points (phrased in the form of a question) as firmly as is consistent with politeness:-

- (i) can the plain fact be ignored that Nasser's weapons - military and propaganda - are stronger, and that Jordan can only lose in the end from an all-out quarrel? If attacked, Nasser would fight to the end to hold Syria.
- (ii) Does the King realise that we should think it dangerous and undesirable if trouble were to break out in Syria, and that in our view the disruption of the Union would be likely to push Syria back on the course she was taking before union i.e. into the Communist camp?
- (iii) Is the King sure that the majority of people in Jordan, including the West Bankers,

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/desire

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desire a "strong" policy towards the U.A.R., because frankly our information suggests the contrary?

(iv) What significance does the King attach to the official policy repeated in Amman only last week that "it is impossible for the Jordan Arab Army to fight against another Arab army?"

Flag B.

(v) While we have no illusions about Nasser's capacity for mischief-making, can Jordan benefit in the long run from any policy which does not aim at reducing tension and at exploring every possibility for a modus vivendi with the U.A.R.?

(vi) In short, would it be worth hazarding, by a resort to desperate measures, Jordan's real potentialities as an independent Arab state in good standing with the West and with world opinion?

(vii) Is not Jordan's best prospect for stability, and indeed survival, to try to live quietly, to reduce the temperature of her relations with the U.A.R. and to give up any thoughts of trying to influence the situation in Syria?

October 15, 1960.

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SUMMARY OF ARGUMENTS USED WITH KING HUSSEIN  
BY SIR CHARLES JOHNSTON IN THE SECOND WEEK  
OF SEPTEMBER.

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1. The United Kingdom's policy of support for Jordan would be placed in jeopardy by any Jordanian armed incursion against Syria. Nor, in that event, would H.M.G. be able to support the Jordanian case at the United Nations: on the contrary.
2. Jordanian action against Syria would lead to a war with the U.A.R., which Jordan could not hope to win.
3. No "invitation" from groups in Syria would be any good unless it came from the legally constituted Government of the country; failing this, an entry by Jordanian forces would still constitute aggression.
4. We did not share the King's view that serious trouble was imminent in Syria.
5. It would be tragic if Cairo succeeded in making the King lose his nerve. A stable Jordan was far better than a shaky greater Syria, even if the latter were politically possible.
6. We knew the King was under heavy pressure to take action, but he was a statesman and this was one of the times when statesmanship meant patience. He was the Head of the State and it was for him to control his extremists.
7. As the King knew, members of the British Training Mission were forbidden to take part in hostilities. Without its British pilots and fitters, the R.J.A.F. would be reduced in efficiency.

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VJ1015/173

Reading through the record of the meeting between the Secretary of State and King Hussein of Jordan on October 11 two thoughts connected with further action occurred to me:-

(i) paragraph 9 I think we ought to try and find out if we do not know it already exactly what has passed between the Jordanians and the World Bank about Agaba. At first sight the Jordanian story about what the World Bank said does not carry much conviction; though if the Bank is as much under American influence as is sometimes supposed their answer may have been a back-handed way of securing the State Department's objective of getting us to subscribe more money to Jordan. It seems more likely that the Jordanians did not produce the documentation necessary to attract serious attention by the Bank. Another factor may be that the Bank, as a matter of principle, do not like financing projects which have been started by somebody else or with earlier stages of which someone else has been associated (compare their attitude over the second stage of the Aswan Dam). It is also quite probable that the Jordanian economy would not stand up well to the sort of preliminary investigation which the Bank always make before considering a particular project; the reference to the British may, therefore, have been a polite way of saying that the Jordanians were not, from the banking point of view, a good enough credit risk. And this it must be admitted would be hard to controvert. Nevertheless, and particularly in view of our increased financial commitment in Jordan, I think we ought to draw the attention of the Treasury to this part of the conversation and ask them to enquire through Lord Cromer for the World Bank's version of what passed.

(ii) paragraphs 13-15 It seems to me noteworthy and to shed a new ray of light on the refugee problem that both the U.A.R. and Jordan now seem disposed to think that the number of refugees who might wish to return to their homes is relatively limited and that it should be possible for the Arab countries, other than Egypt, to accommodate some of them.

/No doubt

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No doubt the lure of other people's money brandished by Mr. Hammarskjöld has had some effect but this does appear to be an advance over the position which has prevailed for so long, namely, keeping the refugee problem alive politically by refusing to consider any kind of economic absorption. I am moved to wonder whether in fact in the case of Jordan and Syria there has been in practice so much absorption of refugees that if they were to return to their homes tomorrow it would not be seriously disruptive to the Syrian or Jordanian economy.

The difficulty of dealing with this problem is that there is no prospect of getting the Israelis to agree that the refugees should be given the right to return as long as there is a possibility that a substantial number of them would wish to do so. Is there perhaps any future in the thought that a referendum on this question might be conducted among the refugees under United Nations auspices before Israeli agreement has been secured with a view to determining what the size of the problem really is?

2. You are I think preparing a paper about refugees for the Secretary of State. I should be grateful if these thoughts could be taken into account in it - even if only to be shot down.

Levant Department  
VW

*RS*  
ROGER STEVENS  
October 13, 1960.

SECRET



FROM: Brigadier F.J.C. PIGGOTT, D.S.O., O.B.E.  
Deputy Director of Military Intelligence

*Sw M Strickland*

*enter*

THE WAR OFFICE,  
WHITEHALL,  
LONDON S.W.1.

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RECEIVED IN  
ARCHIVES  
19 OCT 1960  
VJ1015/174

14th October 1960.

*Mr Stan Beith*

1. The attached record of a conversation on 12th October between Brigadier Strickland and Colonel Webb (War Office) with the King of Jordan is forwarded. Perhaps you would make any further distribution you consider desirable.

2. We have the following comments :-

- (a) The general picture is the same as that painted in the telegrams sent by HM Ambassador in Amman.
- (b) So far as we know six (and not two) Jordanian Regiments are still on the West Bank, in addition to two Brigade Headquarters and two Artillery Regiments.
- (c) The desire to resign attributed to certain of the best Jordanian Officers, for the reasons given, is news to us.

3. Brigadier Strickland, with his great experience, said he felt the King to be more depressed, and even desperate, than he had ever known him. Strickland felt that the accelerated delivery of arms might well help the King in exercising a restraining influence on the Jordanian Army since it would take time to assimilate these new weapons and give the Army something other than their frustrations to think about. It would also, of course, boost the King's morale at a moment when it badly needs it.

4. Under present arrangements, [redacted], of the forty-two Centurions to be delivered, twelve will arrive by the end of this year, a further sixteen by 15th August 1961 and the final fourteen by 15th May 1962.

As you are aware these delivery dates are in accordance with Foreign Office instructions to the War Office. However we feel that the Foreign Office might now consider accelerating the programme in the light of the events reflected in Colonel Webb's report and in our comments above.

5. I am sending this over to you before the weekend so that you may have it whilst King Hussein is still in London.

J.G.S. Beith Esq., C.M.G.,  
Levant Department,  
Foreign Office,  
LONDON S.W.1.

*J.G.S. Beith*

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NOTES BY LT-COL M.H. WEBB, MC. ON A  
CONVERSATION WITH HM THE KING OF JORDAN  
ON WEDNESDAY 12TH OCTOBER 1960

---

King Hussein invited Brigadier Michael Strickland and Lt-Col Michael Webb to call on him at the Dorchester Hotel on Wednesday 12th October at 6pm. Both officers accepted the King's invitation.

The following is a record from memory of the general gist of the conversation which lasted uninterrupted until 8.40pm.

The King welcomed us as old and personal friends and the atmosphere from the outset was one of informal cordiality. The King was in serious mood and appeared anxious to disclose without reserve the personal and national problems besetting both him and his country. It was my impression that the King was anxious to make his points to us as friends in order that they might thus reach more appropriate quarters untrammelled by Protocol and his own natural reserve in the presence of strangers.

I have the impression that the King was covering ground previously covered in other and more official circles, his reason perhaps being that he felt unable further to argue his case against a background of high Government circles. To us however he was sincere and open and disarmingly frank.

Our conversation ranged across the many subjects causing worry to the King, and some were returned to later. For the purposes of this report however I set these points down separately.

### UAR

The aggressive attitude of the UAR was perhaps the subject on which the King discoursed principally.

He views the UAR (through the Syrian element) as being the main cause for worry in Jordan, because :-

- (a) The violent and vituperative propaganda from Cairo and Damascus strains to breaking point the patience of the Jordanian people.
- (b) Many acts of suppression and violence plotted in Syria were undermining the morale of persons in high and responsible positions. The King spoke with sadness about the assassination of Hazza Majali which he felt was instrumental in creating the present explosive situation.
- (c) The King emphasised the extent to which he personally had been successful in restraining the hotter heads and in cooling down the temperature of Jordanian feeling. This restraint had been one of his principal preoccupations over the past two years.
- (d) The King made the point very strongly that the continuance of a restrained policy in Jordan became increasingly more difficult as outrage followed insult and insult followed propaganda. To quote him exactly - "During the last few years I have had the people behind me, trusting in me personally and my decisions, but the people now begin to pass by me". This I interpreted to mean that there was an element in the country, in steadily increasing numbers, who might be prepared to act independently of King and Government, and who in the mood to redeem their national self-respect might move against the UAR. I quote again - "Indeed I tell you that in recent months my best officers, my best Regtl Comds have visited me personally to request and demand their resignation from my service. They are disillusioned and disappointed. The moment may be to hand when I can no longer forecast the course of events".

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Taking into account the fanatical loyalty of these officers to the King's person, I am deeply disturbed that he should have been confronted with such a situation. It is indeed grave and gives serious food for thought. The King then explained that having sensed this feeling in the Army he had been at pains to get the officers and regiments out into the desert, away from propaganda and subversive influences. Their presence in the desert and on the Syrian border might be ascribed to many reasons, but amongst the most important of these was the King's wish to keep them out of the towns.

### SYRIA

The King went to some lengths to disclose that he had proof, via Jordan intelligence sources and highly reliable Syrian informers, that the situation in that area of the UAR was very bad. It transpires that the Union was not the union of two equal partners. Rather had it developed as the domination of one country over the other. This was resented in Syria. The King asked us to accept his view on this matter and to believe him when he said that in Syria public opinion was seriously disturbed and there was discontent over this aspect of Egyptian/Syrian relations. He stressed that he had very reliable information to this effect. He felt very strongly on the point.

(It was at this stage that King Hussein brought in the point regarding the concentration of the Jordan Army on the Syrian frontier. We were informed that only two Jordan Bns remained on the Israel frontier, the remainder were facing Syria). The King here remarked that the officers and men of these two Bns considered themselves to be "left out" and had demanded to know why they also were not on the Syrian frontier. It was made clear to the King that this might be construed as an understanding with Israel regarding the frontier and the relations between the two countries. The abandonment of the West Bank runs counter to traditional Arab policy vis a vis Israel. He replied that after "years of facing towards Israel, his Army now faced towards Syria". That was where the real threat to his country's existence lay today.

At this point the King very forcibly emphasised that the possibility of a Jordan attack against Syria was a very real and live issue. Brigadier Strickland here emphasised the dangers inherent in an adventure of this nature, particularly in view of the weakness of the Jordan Air Force. The King appeared to be well aware of this weakness and made it clear that :-

- (a) He personally would not countenance an aggressive move into Syria as such.
- (b) Since he felt this would be right, he would have to sanction Jordan military intervention in Syria in response to a legitimate call for help from responsible circles in that country (i.e. not just individuals or two or three persons). The King made it abundantly clear that Syrian Nationalists (as opposed to the Nasserites) might be forced to join hands with the Syrian Communists who had been driven underground in a desperate bid to liberate themselves from Egyptian tutelage.
- (c) He appreciated fully the need for restraint particularly in view of the present state of balance of his forces. In his view however he thought that an operation against Syria ( (b) above) had a good chance of success.
- (d) In the event that his country and people should be further antagonised and frustrated by outside agencies, it might be imperative that Syria should be attacked as the last resort even though the chances of success might be slender.
- (e) Jordan's requirements in material for a Regt of Centurions and a Sqn of fighter aircraft were not related to the above factors (a) and (b) but were in fact the necessary minima for his country as assessed by British and American experts during the preceding three years.

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-3-

I emphasised the dangers of any military adventures at the present time, and drew attention to the world political arena.

I made very clear our admiration for him in this country over his handling of the political situation in these troublesome times. I stressed that it was the clear policy of Her Majesty's Government to discourage an arms race in the Middle East.

### ARMS

The King expressed his sadness (even disillusion) over the state of major equipment affairs. He said that he was grateful for all the help he had received in every respect and was grateful for all those who had helped, but he was sorry that in certain specific fields his country's urgent needs had not been appreciated by Jordan's friends and most powerful supporters. He went on to mention specifically his desperate need for aircraft and tanks. In regard to the Centurion Regt which he had been promised, he was very distressed to learn that the first 12 tanks would be delivered no earlier than the end of this year and that the last tanks would reach him no sooner than 24 months after that date. He told us somewhat despondently that he was not prepared to disclose to his officers that he had been informed by British sources that the delays were occasioned by the time required to fit the Radio Sets. When told that it was understood that he had agreed to the proposed delivery dates he replied that he had not in fact agreed but had accepted what was offered and expected that the Regt would arrive in Jordan as soon as possible.

The completion of delivery of the Centurions, said the King, was vital to Jordan, as was indeed the provision of aircraft. In regard to the latter the King said that he was prepared to contribute towards the cost of any aircraft which could be delivered now.

### CONCLUSION

Throughout my conversation with King Hussein I reiterated the following points which today constitute, as I know and see them, the main pillars of British official policy in Jordan and the Middle East.

- (a) Great Britain could not participate in nor encourage any country to enter into an Arms Race in the Middle East.
- (b) Great Britain is most anxious to ensure the stability, development and well-being of Middle East countries, and believes that it is in Jordan's interest that she (Britain) should speak with a strong voice in Egypt. Britain believes that this would have a very restraining effect in Cairo on Nasser's propaganda against Jordan or, indeed, against other countries friendly to us.

I also constantly reiterated the dangers which might attend any adventure in force by Jordan against her neighbours. This the King understood but he pointed out that matters were now so grave that he might be forced by events to accept the greater evil and go down fighting rather than weakly to accept destruction.

He felt that his friends in Britain and America would not willingly desert him but that their aid, coming in a moment of crisis, might turn out to have come too late. The King felt that he should speak from a position of strength and not from a state of isolated weakness.

Finally the King informed me that he would be leaving London on next ~~Tuesday~~ Wednesday and that he proposed to accept invitations from Turkey and Iran to visit those countries on his way home.

In Turkey he would discuss his problems with the new regime and in Iran he would be the guest of the Shah.

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SECRET

(VJ 1015/174)

FOREIGN OFFICE, S.W.1.

October 18, 1960.

Dear Piggott,

Thank you for your letter of October 14, and its enclosure, which we have been interested to see.

Your penultimate paragraph reveals I think, some misunderstanding of the situation. We pressed for earlier delivery of Centurions to Jordan and achieved some improvement on the original three years programme. The Treasury and the War Office, each for different reasons, could not agree to any further improvement. We think the present programme is, from the political point of view, just about right and this view has not been contested by the Treasury or MO4.

Yours sincerely,  
(sgd) John Beith

PS. As a result of the S's last talk with the (J. C. C. Beith.) King, we may want to look into the possibility of a further token improvement in delivery. (sgd) JGSB.  
Brigadier T. J. C. Piggott, C.B.O., O.M.S.,  
Deputy Director of Military Intelligence,  
War Office.

SECRET



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*cut*

VJ 1015/175

SECRET.

LEVANT DEPARTMENT.

I talked to King Hussein alone and reinforced all the points which the Ambassador had made to him in his earlier interview in Amman.

The King said in reply:-

- (i) That he was not engaged in fomenting trouble in Syria and did not mean to do so.
- (ii) If there was a revolt and he considered that he be quite likely he would not give armed assistance but moral support when an alternative Government had been installed.
- (iii) If he saw a situation of revolt arising he would give plenty of notice to his friends and would consult as he always did.

The King was quiet and restrained and expressed gratitude for the advice which he recognised was given as a friend, but we must realise that Nasser meant to destroy Jordan and if Jordan was left alone and deserted by friends and UNO then they must fight.

I asked if there was anything else we could do to assist him to retain his present position which seemed to us to be morally strong in the eyes of the world.

His answers shortly were:

- (1) Give more equipment more quickly. (I think we might look at the possibility of a token increase).
- and
- (2) Get Hammarskjold to control Nasser's propaganda offensive.

The King has promised to keep in close touch with the Ambassador.

H.

October 17, 1960.

SECRET

NOTHING TO BE WRITTEN IN THIS MARGIN.

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 Confidential. JGSB  
 Restricted. 18/10  
 Open.

Draft. letter  
 Sir C. Johnston  
 KCMG,  
 Amman.

From  
 J.G.S. Beith.

*Copy  
 Paul Wright  
 CARRO.*

It was arranged that the Secretary of State should call on King Hussein yesterday, before his departure today, not so much as a matter of courtesy but in order to take a last opportunity of reinforcing the representations you made last month about the danger of any Jordanian adventure.

2. Henniker-Major and I accompanied the Secretary of State but we did not take part in the interview with the King. When he arrived at the Dorchester, the Secretary of State suggested to the Ambassador that the King might prefer to have a private interview with him, particularly since Lord Home wanted to mention one or two delicate matters of policy. This was agreed and ~~you will no doubt be receiving~~ <sup>I enclose</sup> a record of what passed between the Secretary of State and the King.

3. John Henniker and I were shown into another room where there was the usual clutch of hangers-on, including Othman of the Air Force, and were then left alone for twenty minutes or so with the Ambassador and Wasfi el Tel. I intended to take this opportunity to remove, if possible, any misconceptions about our views on a possible disruption of the Union. The conversation ran roughly as follows.

4. I said to the Ambassador and Wasfi that our most recent news from Amman suggested that people there were becoming tired of the propaganda battle between Cairo and Amman and nervous of the future. The continuing /tension.

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tension was getting on people's nerves. Wasfi said that he doubted this. He thought that the Jordanians were used to this kind of uncertainty. They were fatalistic and believed in the justice of their cause. Of course it was always worrying for them to have the King out of the country. That particular gambit then dried up and Wasfi started talking to John Henniker about the charms of your house in Amman.

5. We then somehow succeeded in getting on to the subject of Syria. Wasfi started dilating on the <sup>agil</sup> ~~fr~~ ~~uity~~ of the Syrian situation. He said that there was great discontent with the Cairo-dominated régime. It was absolutely ~~inevitable~~ <sup>inevitable</sup> that Syria would break away from Egypt. I said that our information was that there was a good deal of grumbling but no immediate likelihood of it coming to a head. Wasfi said that that might be so, but that it soon would. He claimed that the increase in the powers of Sarraj had made it more likely that the latter would lead a breakaway policy. I said that it seemed to me that Sarraj was pretty well committed to Cairo and that it would be difficult for him, having once acted as local gauleiter, to re-emerge as a Syrian nationalist hero.

6. I added that it seemed unwise to assume that the disruption of the Union would be in the interest of anyone concerned with fighting Communism in the area. Our policy was to preserve peace and stability in the Middle East.

/Nasser

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Draft.

NOTHING TO BE WRITTEN IN THIS MARGIN.

Nasser would clearly fight to the death to preserve the Union. Quite apart therefore from the dangers inherent in a Syrian breakaway, we might well fear that Syria would revert to the status quo ante viz. that of a virtual Soviet satellite.

7. Wasfi said that he did not agree with this analysis. However his only comments were concerned with the way in which the Union was created. He claimed that it resulted from a deep-laid plot by Nasser, who worked with the Communists in Syria to achieve the Union. I told him that, on the contrary, it had been fairly clear that Cairo was taken aback by the prospect of a thorough-going Union, and that Nasser had only taken this step with some reluctance. And he was right, because his prestige was now deeply committed in a ~~militarily~~ <sup>politically</sup> unstable area.

8. I managed to get in the point with Wasfi el Tel that it was a mistake to label Nasser as simply a Communist agent. This was clearly not the case and it only gave the impression that the Jordanians would seize any stick to beat Cairo with. They had many legitimate grievances and should stick to those.

W  
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CONFIDENTIAL

The Secretary of State's farewell visit to King Hussein.

Mr. Henniker-Major and I accompanied the Secretary of State last night when he called on King Hussein. We were not present at the interview with the King which the Secretary of State conducted alone, but we had twenty minutes or so with the Ambassador and the Propaganda Minister which I have recorded below.

*J.G.S. Beith*

(J.G.S. Beith)  
October 18, 1960.

Copy  
Lord Privy Seal

*Adm.*  
19.60

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FOREIGN OFFICE, S.W.1.

October 18, 1960.

Dear Charles,

It was arranged that the Secretary of State should call on King Hussein yesterday, before his departure today, not so much as a matter of courtesy but in order to take a last opportunity of reinforcing the representations you made last month about the danger of any Jordanian adventure.

2. Henniker-Major and I accompanied the Secretary of State but we did not take part in the interview with the King. When he arrived at the Dorchester, the Secretary of State suggested to the Ambassador that the King might prefer to have a private interview with him, particularly since Lord Home wanted to mention one or two delicate matters of policy. This was agreed and I enclose a record of what passed between the Secretary of State and the King.

3. John Henniker and I were shown into another room where there was the usual clutch of hangers-on, including the man of the Air Force, and were then left alone for twenty minutes or so with the Ambassador and Wasfi el Tel. I intended to take this opportunity to remove, if possible, any misconceptions about our views on a possible disruption of the Union. The conversation ran roughly as follows.

4. I said to the Ambassador and Wasfi that our most recent news from Amman suggested that people there were becoming tired of the propaganda battle between Cairo and Amman and nervous of the future. The continuing tension was getting on people's nerves. Wasfi said that he doubted this. He thought that the Jordanians were used to this kind of uncertainty. They were fatalistic and believed in the justice of their cause. Of course it was always worrying for them to have the King out of the country. That particular gambit then dried up and Wasfi started talking to John Henniker about the charms of your house in Amman.

5. We then somehow succeeded in getting on to the subject of Syria. Wasfi started dilating on the fragility of the Syrian situation. He said that there was great discontent with the Cairo-dominated régime. It was absolutely inevitable that Syria would break away from Egypt. I said that our information was that there was a good deal of grumbling but no immediate likelihood of it coming to a head. Wasfi said that that might be so, but that it soon would. He claimed that the increase in the powers of Sarraj had made it more likely that the latter would lead a breakaway policy. I said that it seemed to me that Sarraj was pretty well committed to Cairo and that it would be difficult for him, having once acted as local gauleiter, to re-emerge as a Syrian nationalist hero.

/6.

Sir Charles Johnston, K.C.M.G.,  
Amman.

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6. I added that it seemed unwise to assume that the disruption of the union would be in the interest of anyone concerned with fighting Communism in the area. Our policy was to preserve peace and stability in the Middle East. Nasser would clearly fight to the death to preserve the union. Quite apart therefore from the dangers inherent in a Syrian breakaway, we might well fear that Syria would revert to the status quo ante viz. that of a virtual Soviet satellite.

7. Wasfi said that he did not agree with this analysis. However his only comments were concerned with the way in which the union was created. He claimed that it resulted from a deep-laid plot by Nasser, who worked with the Communists in Syria to achieve the union. I told him that, on the contrary, it had been fairly clear that Cairo was taken aback by the prospect of a thorough-going union, and that Nasser had only taken this step with some reluctance. And he was right, because his prestige was now deeply committed in a politically unstable area.

8. I managed to get in the point with Wasfi el Tel that it was a mistake to label Nasser as simply a Communist agent. This was clearly not the case and it only gave the impression that the Jordanians would seize any stick to beat Cairo with. They had many legitimate grievances and should stick to those.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Paul Wright in Cairo.

*Yours ever*  
*(sgd) John.*

(J. G. G. Beith)

CONFIDENTIAL

GUARD  
 180

V  
 LEVANT DEPARTMENT  
 JORDAN

V J 1015/177

FROM Sir C. Johnston,  
 Amman.  
**SECRET** GUARD  
 No. 48 (1013/142G)  
 Dated October 12  
 Received October 20.

SUBJECT:  
Internal Situation.  
 Brief analysis of the different phases of Jordanian history over the past five years.

References

MINUTES  
 A] Sir C. Johnston, Amman to Mr J.G.S. Beth - 9097 - Oct. 14.

(Printing Instructions)  
 F.O. PRINTED 24/10

A first class despatch in the style to which we have become accustomed. Sir Charles Johnston has promised the second part by next week's bag.

2. The one passage where I think we might dissent slightly from Sir Charles Johnston is his assumption of Nasser's guilt for the death of Hazza' Majali (paragraph 12). Although the full story may never be known, it seems doubtful if Jordanian investigations will be able to follow the line of responsibility much further than intelligence agents in Syria, whose involvement is not necessarily proof that Nasser himself authorised the plot. Nor, whatever the general assumption in Jordan, does it seem that Nasser's guilt for the outrage has (yet) been accepted in the Arab countries generally, let alone in the rest of the world.

3. There seems no need to wait for part two before sending this despatch to be printed. I attach a copy prepared for printing FOWH.

(Outward Action)

*P. H. Moberly*  
 (P. H. Moberly)  
 October 21, 1960.

Mr. Arculus Eastern Dept. F.O.R.D. (M.E.) 9/11  
 I agree particularly with the last sentence of para. 2 above. If the Jordanians could convincingly implicate Nasser it would harm the latter's repute in the Arab world, & more widely. Meanwhile the affair of the pilot who shot himself has damaged Jordan's reputation.

(Action completed) (Main Indexed)  
 ✓ 23:56  
 23:56

J9 56467-1  
*Moberly*  
 Yes. 2/10

Co-Bx



Yes: it seems that President Kasser has effectively drowned the noise of Mejahid's murder by effective use of the Syrian pilot's death.

You may care to see this despatch now before the arrival of its sequel.

Sir R. Stephens.  
 Mr Beith o.r.  
 WJ  
 MW 2

P.O. Regan  
 21/x

WJ  
 24/x

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SECRET AND GUARD

SUMMARY OF DESPATCH NO. 48

The last four years in Jordan have seen five different historical phases: the end of the Anglo-Jordan Treaty regime (paragraphs 1-3); the experiment in popular democracy under Suleiman Nabulsi between October 1956 and April 1957 (paragraphs 4 and 5); then three different variations on the theme of Palace rule; an American or "Cold War" period, coinciding with the rest of 1957 (paragraph 6); then, from February to July 1958, the short period of the Arab Union between Iraq and Jordan (paragraph 7); then, the Baghdad Revolution of July 1958, a period which opened with the arrival of a British Parachute Brigade and the establishment of the United Nations "presence" in Amman under Mr. Spinelli (paragraph 8). This period saw the resumption of British budgetary support and military aid (paragraph 9).

2. In May 1959 King Hussein replaced Samir Rifai as Prime Minister by Hazza Majali. The new Prime Minister relaxed his predecessor's tight security system and re-established relations with the United Arab Republic. Jordan/U.A.R. relations soon deteriorated; a propaganda war developed and a number of attempted murders in Jordan culminated in Hazza Majali's assassination on August 29 (paragraphs 10 and 11).

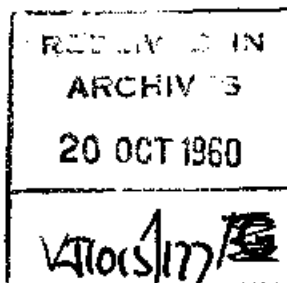
3. President Nasser's responsibility for Hazza's murder is generally accepted in Jordan as beyond reasonable doubt (paragraph 12). There is now a tense situation on the Jordan/Syrian frontier and a renewal of repression in Jordan. The régime suffers from serious dynastic, political and economic weaknesses. The reasons why we continue to help the Americans support such a shaky and unattractive régime will be examined later in a final despatch (paragraphs 13 to 15).

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SECRET AND GUARD

(1013/142G)

DESPATCH NO. 48



BRITISH EMBASSY,

AMMAN.

October 12, 1960.

My Lord,

A diminutive Jordanian General named Sadeq Shera' in recent years achieved some fame as the local arch-opportunist - a sort of Grand Mufti of Bray. It was said of him that, having been an Englishman until Glubb Pasha's dismissal, he became an Egyptian in 1956, an American in 1957, an Iraqi in 1958, and then, after the Baghdad Revolution, an Englishman again. Last year the little General was arrested and is now under sentence of death for treason. The charge was in effect that he had been caught out preparing for his second transformation into an Egyptian.

2. His story conveniently epitomises the different phases of Jordanian history over the past five years. It may be worth while looking at each of these phases briefly to see why it failed.

3. The first was a classic one: Anglo-Jordanian Treaty of 1948, British bases, British garrison, Glubb Pasha, British subsidy totalling about £14 million a year. This system broke down for two main reasons, a particular one and a general one. The particular reason was that, owing to the close coincidence in time between the 1948 Treaty and the Palestine débâcle, Britain and Jordan were really at cross purposes from the very beginning of this chapter. In British eyes the dominating factor at that period was the Russian land threat to the Middle East and the Suez Canal; an enlarged, British-equipped and British-trained Arab Legion represented something like an additional British division already positioned in the Middle East before hostilities began. In Jordanian eyes however the threat was not from the Soviet Union but from Israel. This divergence pulled the two allies increasingly

/apart

The Rt. Hon. The Earl of Home,  
etc., etc., etc.,  
The Foreign Office.

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apart. The general reason was that such a relationship of Treaty-cum-tutelage was becoming increasingly out-of-date. It was unsuited to the sophisticated and politically conscious element of the population, greatly reinforced as this was by Jordan's new Palestinian component. The Treaty régime sickened, lingered, sickened again, and finally died when Glubb Pasha was expelled in March 1956. The agreed termination of the Treaty a year later was merely the delayed burial of a corpse.

4. My arrival here in November 1956 coincided with the beginning of the second and most interesting phase, namely the experiment in popular democracy under Suleiman Nabulsi and Abdullah Rimawi. This régime started off with unexpected moderation; it would, in fact, have been more extreme if the general elections from which it sprang had come a few days after Suez, instead of a few days before it as they happened to do. Suez faced us with an anti-British nationalistic front in which King Hussein, the man who had dismissed Glubb, joined hands with Nabulsi and Rimawi, the men elected to power on a platform of Treaty termination. In the first stage Nabulsi showed himself more moderate than the King; it was His Majesty who wanted to attack Israel during the Suez campaign, and the Prime Minister who restrained him. Once, however, the Suez chapter was over, and once the Treaty had been terminated on generous British terms, centrifugal force took over and the patriotic front flew apart. King Hussein, offended by Nasser's treatment of him at the "Arab Solidarity Meeting" in Cairo in February 1957, realising too late the dangers of exchanging the solid British subsidy for a chimerical Arab one, and at last perceiving the threat of Communism to his throne, began gathering support from the right wing of the political spectrum and from former Ministers of King Abdullah. Meanwhile Nabulsi was

/abandoning

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abandoning his middle-of-the-road position and, under the influence of Rimawi and the King's treacherous ex-favourite, General Abu Nuwar, was moving fast down the slope towards communism. Irresponsibility and corruption were the keynotes - corruption not in the normal Arab sense, which has been all too much with us under later leaders, but in the sense of selling one's country for money, Saudi Arabian, Egyptian, Syrian, Russian, anything that came along. During this period there seemed to be little hope for Jordan. The scene was like a game of blind-man's-buff, in which the King and a number of third-rate leaders were groping confusedly around, with nobody knowing quite what he wanted to do or how to do it. Nasserism was triumphant, communism apparently inevitable. As the home of the original Gaderene swine, Jordan was living well up to its traditions.

5. The abrupt end to which this phase came in April 1957 seemed miraculous at the time, but has in retrospect a fairly simple explanation. It is, I suppose, true to say that Parliamentary democracy will not work, in the Arab world or elsewhere, unless it throws up leaders who command respect. I will not say that in the Arab world it cannot do so; it is certainly a fact that on this occasion in Jordan it did not. The corruptibility of Nabulsi, Rimawi and Abu Nuwar was on a scale which shocked even Arabs, and their reputation for sexual (or, in the case of the Prime Minister and the Chief of Staff, homosexual) misbehaviour gave a lot of umbrage in what is still one of the more straight-laced Moslem countries. Parallel with the decomposition of the nationalist leaders, a marked change occurred in the King; from a vain, conspiratorial boy, he suddenly snapped into maturity and the beginnings of statesmanship. When the show-down developed, he saw at once <sup>that</sup> the key to the situation was the loyalty of the armed forces. Having made sure of this by  
/putting

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SECRET AND GUARD

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putting down the abortive Zerqa mutiny, the King found himself master of the situation. The opposition melted, and His Majesty has remained in control ever since.

6. The succeeding phases have thus all been variations on the theme of Palace rule. The first or "American" period coincided with the rest of 1957, and brought Jordan for a short time into the theatre of the Cold War. The United States Government were preoccupied with the communist threat from Syria, intensified as it seemed to be by General Afif Bizri's successful coup in August 1957. A substantial American subsidy, replacing the defunct British one, kept Jordan afloat; a more private type of American aid seems to have reached the pockets of Samir Rifai, Deputy Prime Minister and strong man of the King's new régime; arms for Jordan were unloaded from Globemasters at Amman airfield by brawny American civilians in flowered shirts; and Ambassador Mallory was reputed to be the real ruler of the country. This phase had the slightly lunatic quality which has so often attended Cold War operations between America and Russia; as I commented to London at the time, it resembled a really bad game of lawn-tennis, in which the only points scored were from the double faults of the opposing side. It was soon terminated by an extraneous shake of the Middle East kaleidoscope which removed the Cold War from the area as abruptly as it had come.

7. In February 1958 the formation of the United Arab Republic brought the Communist threat from Syria to at any rate a temporary close. This encroachment on their special field of Arab unity produced a prompt response from the Hashemites in the shape of the Arab Union between Jordan and Iraq - an entity which, whatever its value from the Iraqi point of view, would in the long run have solved Jordan's problems by enabling her to marry up her skilled and surplus Palestinian manpower with Iraq's growing natural

/wealth

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SECRET AND GUARD

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wealth. In order to achieve this result King Hussein and his Government wisely agreed to allow their rich Iraqi cousins first place in the Union. Unfortunately for Jordan the Union was blown sky-high by the Baghdad Revolution of July 1958 (the causes of which are outside the scope of this despatch and of this Embassy).

8. During the ensuing period of acute crisis, in which Qassem still looked like Nasser's agent, Jordan was threatened not only on her Northern and Western frontiers but also by a dangerous wave of Nasserite subversion from within. The prompt arrival of a British Parachute Brigade restored the morale of King Hussein and certainly prevented a Nasserite attempt to overthrow the régime which, whether successful or not, must have involved serious bloodshed. The General Assembly's Resolution of August 1958 condemning interference by Arab countries in each other's affairs, and the subsequent establishment of a United Nations "presence" under Mr. Spinelli in Amman further calmed the situation, and in October British Forces were able to withdraw without the slightest shock to stability.

9. On Jordanian invitation a small British Army and Royal Air Force Mission remained behind to train the Jordan Armed Forces. Despite the disappearance of our Treaty obligation, British budgetary aid to Jordan was generously resumed by Her Majesty's Government at a level of \$2 million a year. This, with an American contribution of about \$ 40 million a year, enabled Jordan to carry on on a slightly more ample scale than under the Treaty régime. A British Development Loan of \$1 million a year made possible the completion of the new Aqaba port in 1959 and of the Desert Road linking it with the interior in 1960. Despite the smallness of our contribution compared with the American one, the King and his Government were embarrassingly open in their preference

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- 6 -

for Britain over America in almost all spheres, including that of political advice. Without any seeking on our part, we found ourselves with the rôle of "top Power" in Jordan firmly thrust back again upon us.

10. In May 1959, King Hussein felt conditions calm enough to justify him in accepting the resignation of the forceful Samir Rifai, and in replacing his government by a more liberal Cabinet under Hazza Majali. Against the advice of the Queen Mother and the régime's right-wing supporters, Hazza succeeded in relaxing Samir's tight internal security system, and in establishing diplomatic relations with the United Arab Republic. Under his Government Jordan in fact made a determined effort to co-exist with Nasser, as the Secretary-General and the British and American Governments had consistently advised it to do. Unfortunately co-existence takes two to achieve. Jordan's overtures were rebuffed by the United Arab Republic, first by its action in seeking to accredit its new Consul-General in Jerusalem over "the area of Palestine occupied by the Jordan Army" - a clear slight to Jordanian sovereignty over the West Bank - and secondly in its pertinacious pursuit of the proposal for a "Palestine entity" whose only practical effect could be to disintegrate the entity of Jordan.

11. These developments led to a war of radio and speeches in which Jordan was certainly not free from blame, notably in its broadcasts addressed to separatist opinion in Syria - a point of vital sensitivity to Nasser. Meanwhile a number of murder attempts organised from Damascus culminated in Hazza's assassination on August 29 by a time-bomb in his office.

12. President Nasser's responsibility for the murder is generally accepted here as beyond reasonable doubt. A more detailed report on this question will be submitted once the Jordanian Committee of

/Investigation

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SECRET AND GUARD

- 7 -

Investigation have completed their activities. From what we know of the Committee's report, and also from the way in which the crime fitted into Cairo radio's campaign of murderous incitement, it seems probable that the assumption of Nasser's guilt is correct. While the President is known to have attempted political assassinations in other Arab countries for some years past, Hazza's murder is his first big success in this line of business. It will be interesting to see how he reconciles the brutal liquidation of this amiable Prime Minister - in an indiscriminate explosion involving the death of twelve others - with his recent appearance at the United Nations wrapped in a mantle of reasonableness and world statesmanship. In fact, without attempting the uphill task of introducing morality into international affairs, I suggest that Nasser may find it as difficult as Napoleon did (with apologies to that Emperor for the comparison) to preserve a liberal image after putting into effect such old-fashioned tricks as political assassination. The Majali murder, like the execution of the Duc d'Enghien, removes its perpetrator into a different category, and makes him look subtly déclassé.

13. As a result of the murder we are now faced with a tense situation on the Jordan-Syrian frontier, and a renewal of repressive measures in the interior of the country. We do not yet know in what frame of mind King Hussein will return from his visit to the General Assembly. It seems probable however <sup>that,</sup> /having against his own judgement permitted one attempt to trust the United Arab Republic and to live on better terms with it, he will think twice before doing so again.

14. In both Jordan and Syria the régimes are unstable, and it is anybody's guess which is likely to collapse first. The instability of Syria under its present management is not for me to analyse.

/that

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That of Jordan will be familiar to the Department from our reports over a considerable period. The main weakness is the dynastic one, namely that too much depends on the life, health and resolution of King Hussein. The King has no son. His next brother, Crown Prince Mohammad, is unpopular, and neither mentally nor physically fitted for the task of Kingship, while the youngest brother, Prince Hassan, is only thirteen years old.

15. Secondly, there is a serious political weakness. There has always been a large body of anti-Hashemite, pro-Nasser sentiment in the country, particularly in the refugee camps and the larger towns. If the King's supporters lost their leadership or their resolution, a Nasserite take-over could easily come about, and the large proportion of the country which at present tolerates the Monarchy without enthusiasm could switch overnight into a similar attitude towards Nasser. The King's power depends ultimately on the armed forces and the security forces, thanks to which the regime remained in full control of the situation notwithstanding the severe shock of the Majali murder. Despite successive purges, however, there are pockets of disloyalty in these services, particularly in the Air Force and the Police. Apart from that, anything which shook the morale and cohesion of the armed forces, for example a military fiasco in Syria, would present a grave threat to the survival of the régime. Almost the worst weakness of all is the serious shortage of leaders who are at once capable of office, and loyal to the King. This means that the régime is particularly vulnerable to political assassination - as has been proved by the impossibility of finding any adequate replacement for the late Hazza Majali. It has also had a bad effect on the quality of the King's Governments. While Samir Rifai and Hazza Majali were outstanding Prime Ministers by Arab standards, their colleagues with a few exceptions have been indifferent or worse. In face of the terrorist threat, it takes courage to be a Minister in Jordan these  
/days

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SECRET AND GUARD

- 9 -

days - a recognised fact which has emboldened many of those in power to supplement their modest ministerial salary by corrupt practices of every kind. This situation has added to the unpopularity of the régime and thus by a vicious-spiral effect has further damaged its stability. In fact the ubiquitous corruption has reached a point where some of the Monarchy's most disinterested supporters now see the only remedy in a military Government.

16. The third weakness is the economic one. The following figures will show how serious this is. In the current financial year Jordan's estimated expenditure is £30½ million. Internal revenue is not expected to exceed £11 million, leaving a deficit of £19½ million, of which only £17 million will be met by foreign aid. The one possible major saving, namely a substantial reduction of the Armed Forces, would presuppose political settlements not only with Israel but - what may well prove even more difficult in practice - with all Jordan's Arab neighbours.

17. Conditions in Jordan have not changed basically over the past two years and have been well understood by Her Majesty's Government. Why, then, have we joined with the Americans in taking financial and political measures to keep such a shaky and, by Western ideas, unattractive ship afloat? I shall attempt to answer this question in a final despatch by next week's bag.

18. I am sending copies of this despatch to Her Majesty's Ambassadors at Ankara, Baghdad, Beirut, Tehran, Tel Aviv and Washington, to the Permanent United Kingdom Representative to the United Nations, to the Political Resident in the Persian Gulf, to the United Kingdom Representative in Nicosia, Her Majesty's

/Chargé

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SECRET AND GUARD

- 10 -

Chargé d'Affaires in Cairo, Her Majesty's Consul-General in Jerusalem, the Political Representative with the Middle East Forces, the Acting Governor of Aden, and to the Headquarters of the British Forces Arabian Peninsula.

I have the honour to be,  
With the highest respect, My Lord,  
Your Lordship's obedient servant,

*C.H. Johnston*

( C.H. Johnston )

SECRET AND GUARD

V  
LEVANT DEPARTMENT

V J1015/178

FROM F.O. Minute  
Sir R. Stevens

SECRET

No. -  
Dated October 15  
Received October 20

SUBJECT:

Secretary of State's talk with King Hussein.

Attendance; aim of meeting.

References

MINUTES

I submit a draft, in accordance with Sir R. Stevens' minute of October 19 within.

*[Signature]*  
21/10

Mr. Arculus first 22/10.

King Hussein has now attacked Nasser by name from Amman, but the Secretary General's intervention is no less necessary. Sir C. Johnston thinks that the King's talks in London have done him good (Amman telegrams 1099, 1108 & 1111 - Play (D.F.E.))

Sir R. Stevens

*[Signature]*  
24/x

The Lord Privy Seal may wish to approve the line in your letter; it seems to me to be his next follow-up action, though I do not set great store on its being effective.

J18 52948-1

U.N. Dept aa 22/10

U.B. Stevens  
24/x

*[Signature]*  
22/11

(Printing Instructions)

(Outward Action)

21/10 Sir P. Dean, New York from Sir R. Stevens. Oct 24.  
cpd Mr Henninger, Major, Amman.  
Mr Wright, Cairo  
Vis Count Hood, W'lon } Oct 24.

(Action completed)

*[Signature]*  
MAY 1981

(Main Indexed)

*[Signature]*  
61

V J10316/156.

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ARCHIVES  
20 OCT 1960

VJ1015/179

I have had some further thoughts about the meeting with King Hussein on October 17.

(i) Attendance at the meeting. I understand that the present form is to provide you to accompany the Secretary of State. This presumably means that the Jordanian team will consist of the King and the Prime Minister. I have been wondering whether or not it will be a good thing for El Tel to be present. On balance I am inclined to think, though not very strongly, that it would. He may inject himself into the conversation. On the other hand, if he is present he can be dealt with whereas if he is absent he can probably do even more damage afterwards.

The question then arises whether we could do anything to secure his attendance. One possibility which occurs to me would be if Mr. Henniker-Major were to accompany you. This would have the additional advantage, ~~or that~~ of providing continuity, viz the King in his future relations with Mr. Henniker would know exactly what the Secretary of State had said to him.

On the other hand I recognise that the Secretary of State may feel that the more advisers present the less freely can he speak to the King. You may, therefore, want to discuss these procedural matters on Monday with the Private Secretaries to whom I am copying this minute.

(ii) Aim of the meeting. Since neither the Secretary of State nor yourself were present at the Prime Minister's lunch on Wednesday, October 12, and since the conversation at this lunch has not been recorded I should perhaps record here that the Lord Privy Seal and I were both disturbed by what the King, seconded and encouraged by Wasfi el Tel, said at the lunch about the possible need for action against Syria. It is perhaps on this point rather than the question of the propaganda war with the U.A.R., which has already been fully covered, that the Secretary of State will wish to concentrate.

I have just seen the record of the conversation between the King and Brigadier Strickland and Colonel Webb, a copy of which I am sending with a copy of my minute to the Lord Privy Seal and the Private Secretary.

SECRET

/This is

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SECRET

This is consistent with what the King said at lunch but more specific and therefore more disturbing. It is particularly noteworthy that the King should:-

(a) have admitted that he is losing popular support in Jordan and notably in the army;

(b) ~~that he should~~ think that an operation against Syria in response to a legitimate call for help might have a chance of success and,

(c) ~~that~~ even if this were not the case ~~however~~ not exclude the possibility of an attack of Syria if the propaganda war continues.

2. I fear we must assume that, though what he says to the Secretary of State may be muted, this represents his real thoughts and intentions. I wonder whether, in the circumstances it will be enough merely, as proposed in the brief, to ask him questions. I suggest that the possibility ought to be held in reserve of reminding him of the warnings given by Sir C. Johnston between September 8-15 (you could construct a short note on this basis on the relevant telegrams) and confirming that they represent H.M. Government's considered views.

3. It is indeed for consideration whether we should go even further than this and warn him that if he were to take action in Syria on a basis which we considered unjustified we might feel bound to state publicly that we had warned him against action of this kind. I realise that this is a very delicate issue and I would not wish to press this point. I suggest, however, that the time has come when we ought to take another look at the draft press statement which I prepared in mid-September and on which you will recall the Lord Privy Seal minuted that he would like to see some alternative forms of statement drafted to deal with contingencies other than an unprovoked aggression by Jordan on Syria.

Mr. Beith

ROGER STEVENS

October 15, 1960.

copy to:- Lord Privy Seal  
Private Secretaries

You may like to know what action has been taken as a result of your minute of October 15 above.

/2.

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2. The Secretary of State agreed that Mr. Henniker-Major and I should go with him to the Dorchester but in the course of the day Mr. Samuel enquired whether the Department ~~thought~~ that it might be useful for the Secretary of State to have a tête-à-tête with the King. We agreed that it might be easier for the Secretary of State to speak frankly under such conditions and that we would be available to be called in if needed.

3. As it turned out, the Secretary of State had about twenty minutes with the King alone and we meanwhile talked to the Ambassador and Wasfi el Tel (see the attached accounts both of the Secretary of State's talk and my talk with Wasfi).

4. The Secretary of State duly concentrated, not on the propaganda war question, but on the danger of a Jordanian adventure. You will see that I did my best with Wasfi el Tel to remove any misconceptions ~~about~~ a disruption of the U.A.R. about our attitude towards

5. As regards the point made in your paragraph 2, we duly gave the Secretary of State a synopsis of the main points made by Sir Charles Johnston to the King during the last month and I think he found this useful.

*J.G.S. Beith*

(J.G.S. Beith)  
October 18, 1960.

*This seems to have gone as well as could be expected.*

*Perhaps we should now put Sir P. Dean in the picture - ask him to discuss with Mr. Hammarström.*

*llf*  
*19/12*

SECRET



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VJ1015

RETURN TO RM. 73

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The Secretary of State's farewell visit to King Hussein.

Mr. Henniker-Major and I accompanied the Secretary of State last night when he called on King Hussein. We were not present at the interview with the King which the Secretary of State conducted alone, but we had twenty minutes or so with the Ambassador and the Propaganda Minister which I have recorded below.

(J. C. S. Beith)  
October 18, 1960.

Copy

Lord Privy Seal

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It was arranged that the Secretary of State should call on King Hussein yesterday, before his departure today, not so much as a matter of courtesy but in order to take a last opportunity of reinforcing the representations you made last month about the danger of any Jordanian adventure.

JG3B  
18/10

letter  
Sir C. Johnston  
KCMG,  
Amman.

From  
J.G.S. Beith.

2. Henniker-Major and I accompanied the Secretary of State but we did not take part in the interview with the King. When he arrived at the Dorchester, the Secretary of State suggested to the Ambassador that the King might prefer to have a private interview with him, particularly since Lord Home wanted to mention one or two delicate matters of policy. This was agreed and <sup>I enclose</sup> you will no doubt be receiving a record of what passed between the Secretary of State and the King.

3. John Henniker and I were shown into another room where there was the usual clutch of hangers-on, including Othman of the Air Force, and were then left alone for twenty minutes or so with the Ambassador and Wasfi el Tel. I intended to take this opportunity to remove, if possible, any misconceptions about our views on a possible disruption of the Union. The conversation ran roughly as follows.

4. I said to the Ambassador and Wasfi that our most recent news from Amman suggested that people there were becoming tired of the propaganda battle between Cairo and Amman and nervous of the future. The continuing  
/tension

COPY

Paul Wright  
CARD.

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tension was getting on people's nerves.

He said that he doubted this. He thought that the Jordanians were used to this kind of uncertainty. They were fatalistic and believed in the justice of their cause. Of course it was always worrying for them to have the King out of the country. That particular gambit then dried up and Wasfi started talking to John Henniker about the charms of your house in Amman.

5. We then somehow succeeded in getting on to the subject of Syria. Wasfi started dilating on the <sup>fragility</sup> fragility of the Syrian situation. He said that there was great discontent with the Cairo-dominated régime. It was absolutely ~~inevitable~~ <sup>inevitable</sup> that Syria would break away from Egypt. I said that our information was that there was a good deal of grumbling but no immediate likelihood of it coming to a head. Wasfi said that that might be so, but that it soon would. He claimed that the increase in the powers of Sarraj had made it ~~more~~ more likely that the latter would lead a breakaway policy. I said that it seemed to me that Sarraj was pretty well committed to Cairo and that it would be difficult for him, having once acted as local gauleiter, to re-emerge as a Syrian nationalist hero.

6. I added that it seemed unwise to assume that the disruption of the Union would be in the interest of anyone concerned with fighting Communism in the area. Our policy was to preserve peace and stability in the Middle East.

/Nasser

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Nasser would clearly fight to the death to preserve the Union. Quite apart therefore from the dangers inherent in a Syrian breakaway, we might well fear that Syria would revert to the status quo ante viz. that of a virtual Soviet satellite.

7. Wasfi said that he did not agree with this analysis. However his only comments were concerned with the way in which the Union was created. He claimed that it resulted from a deep laid plot by Nasser, who worked with the Communists in Syria to achieve the Union. I told him that, on the contrary, it had been fairly clear that Cairo was taken aback by the prospect of a thorough-going Union, and that Nasser had only taken this step with some reluctance. And he was right, because his prestige was now deeply committed in a <sup>politically</sup> ~~militarily~~ unstable area.

8. I managed to get in the point with Wasfi el Tel that it was a mistake to label Nasser as simply a Communist agent. This was clearly not the case and it only gave the impression that the Jordanians would seize any stick to beat Cairo with. They had many legitimate grievances and should stick to those.

*I am sending a copy of this letter to Paul Wright in Cairo.*

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P.M.

Draft.

letter to  
 Sir P. Dean,  
 New York  
 from  
 Sir R. Stevens  
  
 Copy to  
 Mr. J.P.F.C.  
 Henniker-Major,  
 Amman  
 -----  
 Mr. P.H.Wright,  
 Cairo  
 -----  
 Viscount Hood,  
 KCMG  
 Washington  
 -----

NOTHING TO BE WRITTEN IN THIS MARGIN.

1+6

*Phelps*  
*24/6*  
*EA-14*

You will remember that the Prime Minister had two meetings with King Hussein while he was in New York. During the King's subsequent visit to London, the Secretary of State saw him twice more. Copies of the record of these conversations have been sent to the Delegation.

2. Now that the King has returned to Amman, ~~it~~ seems a good moment to take stock of the situation. ~~We think that our counsels of restraint may have made some impression on the King and his advisers. On the other hand, so far as we can judge, his frame of mind is still dangerous; he repeated to the Secretary of State that if Jordan were abandoned by her friends and U.N.O. then she must fight.~~  
 But <sup>and</sup> ~~that~~, if the tension between Jordan and the U.A.R. continues at its present pitch, there is a real <sup>risk</sup> ~~danger~~ that King Hussein will be driven to take some desperate action; or else that Nasser will set about causing his removal at all costs.

3. At the first meeting in London, there was some talk of the possibility of a truce in the propaganda war between Cairo and Amman. The King seemed to take the line that other things should come first, e.g. the return of the three Jordanians who were said to have escaped to Damascus after Hazza's assassination. From what we had learned recently from Heikal (who is our closest link with Nasser) it seemed possible that the U.A.R. ~~would~~ <sup>might</sup> accept some sort of truce to be arranged through us. As it has turned out, this idea never really got off the ground in Cairo, and we did not attempt to

/pursue

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pursue it with King Hussein. However, almost the last thing the King said to the Secretary of State at their second meeting was that Hammarekjold must somehow get Nasser to call off his propaganda offensive. This was at a time when Nasser was making some of his fiercest attacks yet on the King during his tour of Syria, forecasting King Hussein's doom and virtually encouraging the Jordanians to deal with him as with Hazza Majali.

Flag A

4. We did not secure a very clear account from the King of what had passed between him and the Secretary-General in New York. According to Charles Johnston's telegram No. 1069, there seems to be some feeling in the Secretariat that King Hussein's speech to the General Assembly spoilt what prospects there were for ~~some~~ a reconciliation with Nasser and that the subsequent flare-up of the quarrel was largely Jordan's fault. Whatever the truth of this impression, the fact remains that unless a real effort is made to bring the parties to terms their quarrel will almost inevitably go from bad to worse. I suppose there may be some thought of mediation on the part of one or more of the other Arab countries, though we have not heard of anything substantial of this sort. More than ever, ~~however~~ it looks as if the only way in which we can help things along is by encouraging the Secretary-General to use his influence ~~(which, if it could be brought to bear in due strength, could surely be decisive)~~ in both Amman and Cairo. This is not just a

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/matter

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matter of our own relations in the area, although naturally we are apprehensive of the threat to Jordan's stability and regret the effect which the quarrel has on our own relations with Cairo. A major clash between Jordan and the U.A.R. could, as the Secretary-General must realise, set the whole area on fire with all that that would involve.

5. We suggest, therefore, that you might take an early opportunity of explaining our anxieties to Hammarskjold, busy as we know he is with the even more complex problems of the Congo and Africa. You might begin by asking him how King Hussein responded to his offer of good offices in the dispute with Cairo and how far he was able to take advantage of the presence of the two Heads of State in New York. You could go on to stress the dangers of the present situation and the increasing difficulty of the King's position if the ~~present~~ war of words continues. ~~It is tragic that~~ Both sides profess (and probably genuinely believe) that they <sup>are</sup> ~~are~~ only responding each time to some outburst from the other side. I suggest you could then enquire if ~~Mr.~~ Hammarskjold has any thoughts as to how the temperature might be lowered. Has he, for example, considered the possibility of Spinelli acting as a go-between, as in the past; or a personal appeal direct to the two Heads of State; or, in the United Nations forum itself, some sort of re-affirmation of the Arab-inspired resolution of August 1958?

*You did say that we have ourselves urged both sides to moderate their hostile ~~statements~~ ~~propaganda~~ ~~statements~~ ~~propaganda~~.*

*We have done our best with King Hussein; can he not do something with Nassar?*

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VJ 1015/178

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Foreign Office,  
London, S.W.1.

October 24, 1960.

You will remember that the Prime Minister had two meetings with King Hussein while he was in New York. During the King's subsequent visit to London, the Secretary of State saw him twice more. Copies of the record of these conversations have been sent to the Delegation.

2. Now that the King has returned to Amman it seems a good moment to take stock of the situation. We think that our counsels of restraint may have made some impression on the King and his advisers. But, if the tension between Jordan and the United Arab Republic continues at its present pitch, there is a real risk that King Hussein will be driven to take some desperate action; or else that Nasser will set about causing his removal at all costs.

3. At the first meeting in London, there was some talk of the possibility of a truce in the propaganda war between Cairo and Amman. The King seemed to take the line that other things should come first, e.g. the return of the three Jordanians who were said to have escaped to Damascus after Hazza's assassination. From what we had learned recently from Heikal (who is our closest link with Nasser) it seemed possible that the U.A.R. might accept some sort of truce to be arranged through us. As it has turned out, this idea never really got off the ground in Cairo, and we did not attempt to pursue it with King Hussein. However, almost the last thing the King said to the Secretary of State at their second meeting was that Hammarskjöld must somehow get Nasser to call off his propaganda offensive. This was at a time when Nasser was making some of his fiercest attacks yet on the King during his tour of Syria, forecasting King Hussein's doom and virtually encouraging the Jordanians to deal with him as with Hazza Majali.

4. We did not secure a very clear account from the King of what had passed between him and the Secretary-General in New York. According to

/Charles

Sir Patrick Dean, K.C.M.G.,  
New York.

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Charles Johnston's telegram No. 1089, there seems to be some feeling in the Secretariat that King Hussein's speech to the General Assembly spoilt what prospects there were for a reconciliation with Nasser and that the subsequent flare-up of the quarrel was largely Jordan's fault. Whatever the truth of this impression, the fact remains that unless a real effort is made to bring the parties to terms their quarrel will almost inevitably go from bad to worse. I suppose there may be some thought of mediation on the part of one or more of the other Arab countries, though we have not heard of anything substantial of this sort. More than ever, it looks as if the only way in which we can help things along is by encouraging the Secretary-General to use his influence in both Amman and Cairo. This is not just a matter of our own relations in the area, although naturally we are apprehensive of the threat to Jordan's stability and regret the effect which the quarrel has on our own relations with Cairo. A major clash between Jordan and the U.A.R. could, as the Secretary-General must realise, set the whole area on fire with all that that would involve.

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/best.

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best with King Hussein; can he not do something with Nasser ?

6. I have just seen Amman Telegram No. 1112, paragraph 2. This throws further light on earlier action taken by Hammarskjöld with Nasser, but it does not really deal with the current situation created by the current propaganda war which is the immediate concern of this letter. It would be most valuable if the Secretary-General could find the means of saying something to the U.A.R. along the lines of paragraph 3 of Amman Telegram No. 1108, mutatis mutandis.

7. I am sending copies of this letter to John Henninger-Major in Amman, Paul Wright in Cairo and to Sammy Hood in Washington.

ROGER STEVENS

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FROM AMMAN TO FOREIGN OFFICE

21 OCT 1960  
VJ1015/179

Cypher/OTF

Sir C. Johnston  
No. 1110  
October 23, 1960

FOREIGN OFFICE (SECRET) AND  
WHITEHALL (SECRET) DISTRIBUTION

D. 8.39 p.m. October 23, 1960  
R. 8.41 p.m. October 23, 1960

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Addressed to Foreign Office telegram No. 1110 of  
October 23.

Repeated for information to:

Cairo	Washington
U.K.Mis. New York	P.O.M.E.F.
and Saving to:	
Baghdad	Jerusalem
Tel Aviv	H.Q., B.F.A.P.

My telegram No. 1069: Internal Situation. — VJ1015/168

I took advantage of my farewell audience today to suggest to King Hussein that in Jordan's interest it would be better if he could retire somewhat from the immediate arena and leave the day-to-day running of the country to his Ministers. (My letter of September 30 and Beith's letter VJ 1015 of October 14). It seemed important that the Crown should be kept above criticism and unpopularity. The King agreed and said that he had already been thinking on the same lines. The problem was to find some means of organizing the country in such a way that it would continue whatever happened to him.

VJ1015/167

VJ1015/168

2. I suggested that an important element in this problem was the improvement of the permanent Civil Service. Sir Eric Franklin, a British adviser with experience in Pakistan and elsewhere, was here at present as a United Nations Adviser on Public Administration. I hoped that His Majesty would have time to give full consideration to his views. He promised to do this.

/3.

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Amman telegram No. 1110 to Foreign Office.

- 2 -

3. I then mentioned the widespread criticisms of Government corruption. The King showed himself to be aware of this, and said that he was trying to find Ministers with "clean hands". It was, however, extremely difficult to do so. (This is true). The King said nothing about an early change of Government and it may be that he has not yet formed a view on this since his return.

4. The general situation is somewhat better. The King's return has cheered people up, and the prospect of normal commercial relations with Iraq is extremely popular.

Foreign Office please pass priority to Cairo, U.K. Mis. New York, Washington, P.O.M.E.F. and Saving to H.Q., B.F.A.P. as my telegrams Nos. 189, 138, 155, 316 and 56 respectively.

[Repeated as requested to Foreign Service posts.  
Copy sent to Tel Section Air Ministry for repetition Saving to H.Q., B.F.A.P.]

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