

## Jordan, September 1970

### 199. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in the Soviet Union<sup>1</sup>

Washington, September 6, 1970, 1712Z.

146336. Three US airliners have been hijacked by Palestinian groups.<sup>2</sup> You should contact Foreign Ministry soonest and ask for Soviet intervention should any of the flights land in Baghdad to the end that passenger, plane and crew are promptly released. Flights involved are TWA 741, Pan American 093 and Pan American 3.

**Johnson**

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 330, Subject Files, Hijackings. Confidential; Limited Official Use; Flash. Drafted and approved by Davies.

<sup>2</sup> A fourth plane, El Al flight 219 flying from Amsterdam to New York City, was also hijacked by two people, but El Al crew members shot and killed one hijacker and wounded the other. (Memorandum for the Record, September 6; *ibid.*) For additional documentation on this and subsequent hijackings on September 6, see *Foreign Relations, 1969–1976*, volume E-1, Documents on Global Issues, 1969–1972, Documents 45 ff.

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### 200. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassies in Belgium, the United Kingdom, and Italy<sup>1</sup>

Washington, September 6, 1970, 1756Z.

146338. Subject: Hijackings

1. We have asked British Embassy to request London to pass urgent message to British Embassy Baghdad re possible arrival in Baghdad of hijacked TWA or Pan American aircraft. We are asking that British Embassy Baghdad do what it can to assure that Iraqi government

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, AV 12 US. Unclassified; Flash. Drafted by Seelye, cleared in AV, and approved by Davies. It was repeated to Beirut, USINT Cairo, Paris, and Tel Aviv.

releases passengers and plane promptly in accordance Tokyo Convention<sup>2</sup> and, in addition, apprehend hijackers.

2. In addition, Embassy London, as well as Foreign Ministry Rome and Brussels, should be made aware of fact that should Pan Am 747 aircraft land in either Damascus or Baghdad there will be no equipment available at either airport to offload passengers. Only way for passengers to disembark would be by escape slide. Therefore we request that addressees pass this information to host governments to assure that they understand situation and to urge that respective airport personnel be patient until Pan American is able to fly from Beirut equipment necessary to allow passengers to disembark. This could take several hours depending on clearances, etc. Pan American hesitant use escape route since it could result in broken ankles, etc.

**Johnson**

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<sup>2</sup> The Tokyo Convention on Offences and Certain Other Acts Committed on Board Aircraft was signed in Tokyo on September 14, 1963, and entered into force for the United States on December 4, 1969. In Article 11, Section 2, the Convention requires contracting states to allow aircraft passengers and crew who have been forced to land in their country by hijackers “to continue their journey as soon as practicable.” In Article 13, Section 2, the Convention requires contracting states to take custody of hijackers. (20 UST 2941)

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## **201. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Lebanon<sup>1</sup>**

Washington, September 6, 1970, 1937Z.

146343. Subject: Hijacking.

1. Pan Am informs us that Lebanese are refusing to allow Pan Am aircraft to land at Beirut Airport. We consider it extremely important that permission for such landing be granted. Embassy instructed to do everything possible to persuade Lebanese Government to allow aircraft to land.

2. We have just seen ticker item quoting Amman “airport sources” to effect that airports at Amman, Damascus and Baghdad have refused

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, AV 12 US. Unclassified; Flash. Drafted by Seelye and approved by Davies. It was repeated Immediate to Amman, USINT Cairo, Brussels, London, Paris, and Rome.

landing permission to two aircraft. Aside from political desirability plane and passengers land at Beirut, safety of planes and passengers is jeopardized by continued inability aircraft find place to land.

Johnson

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## 202. Memorandum for the Record<sup>1</sup>

Washington, September 6, 1970, 2300 EDT.

### SUBJECT

Aircraft Hijackings

### REFERENCE

NMCC MFR 061700 EDT SEP 70, same subject<sup>2</sup>

1. Updated information concerning the aircraft reported hijacked in the referenced MFR indicates:

- a. TWA Flight 741 landed at Dawsons Field (25 miles east of Zarka, Jordan).
- b. Swissair Flight 100 also landed at Dawsons Field in Jordan.

Both aircraft and passengers are reported safe and Jordanian forces are on the scene and reinforcing their cordon of the area. The Fedayeen have announced they would blow up themselves and the aircraft if any attempt was made to storm the aircraft or otherwise checkmate the hijacking effort. Red Cross has determined that the passengers have enough to eat and drink, and ICRC will visit the passengers tomorrow, 7 September.

- c. Further information on El Al Flight 219 has not been received.
- d. Pan Am Flight 93 (vice 293 as previously reported) landed at Beirut at 061637 EDT. The aircraft was refueled and took off at approximately 061950 with original passengers, crew, and hijackers aboard and landed at Cairo at 062107 EDT. Press releases indicate that upon landing in Cairo, passengers were led to safety and the aircraft was blown up.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 330, Subject Files, Hijackings. For Official Use Only. Received in the White House Situation Room at 12:28 a.m. September 7. Copies were sent to Saunders and Dunn.

<sup>2</sup> See footnote 2, Document 199.

2. American Embassy Beirut has received a call that the Pan Am, TWA, and Swissair aircraft will be blown up unless a payment of one million dollars is made.

3. The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine has issued a 72-hour ultimatum to the Swiss Government to release three Palestinian Commandos currently serving 12 year sentences in Switzerland for attacking an Israeli airliner in Zurich in 1969. Responsible Palestinian leaders have said the TWA and Swissair aircraft will be released upon arrival of the three Palestinians in Amman.

**E.O. Martin**

*Brigadier General, USAF*

*Deputy Director for Operations, NMCC*

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**203. Memorandum From the President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Haig) to President Nixon<sup>1</sup>**

Washington, September 6, 1970.

SUBJECT

Middle East Developments

[Omitted here is material on the Arab-Israeli conflict unrelated to the Jordan crisis.]

In addition to the foregoing there have been four hijackings reported this morning involving American, Swiss and Israeli airlines:

—A TWA flight from Tel Aviv to New York via Athens and Frankfurt was hijacked shortly after takeoff from Frankfurt. There were approximately 142 passengers and crew members on board. Latest reports indicate that the plane is heading for Damascus.

—A Swiss Air DC-8 aircraft enroute to New York from Zurich was hijacked over Paris with 143 passengers and crew on board. A Swiss Air spokesman said the plane was seized by Palestinians with destination Cairo.

—A third incident involved an El Al 707 with 148 passengers and two armed guards. Enroute to Tel Aviv via Amsterdam an abortive hijacking attempt was made shortly after takeoff from Amsterdam. The plane then landed at London. The London police report that the

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 646, Country Files, Middle East, Middle East General, Vol. VII. No classification marking. Haig wrote on the first page: "Given orally by Haig to Pres. 6 Sept."

male hijacker was killed, his female accomplice wounded and the pilot and a steward also wounded.

—A Pan American 747 jumbo jet enroute from Amsterdam to New York with 151 passengers and 18 crew members has also been reported hijacked. Fragmentary information indicates that the pilot has asked flight clearance to Beirut.

The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) in Amman has now claimed credit for the first three highjackings, saying that the passengers on the Swiss Air flight will be held for the release of three fedayees being held in Switzerland. The highjackings are apparently all being carried out by male-female teams.

Both the White House and State have been called by Rabbi Rubin in New York who has notified us that the TWA 707 from Tel Aviv to New York carries one of the senior American Jewish rabbis who is ill and who would probably not survive a lengthy internment. Rabbi Rubin has been pressing for a strong condemnatory statement from you. We have delayed recommending such a statement until the situation with respect to all of the flights clarifies. In the interim, however, State has been in contact with each of the possible destination countries urging strongly that they adhere to established international practice and immediately release the aircraft and passengers. I believe it is preferable to withhold strong condemnatory statements until the diplomatic channels have been played out. In this way we will not put recipient Arab Governments in a position of having to side with the PFLP prematurely.

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#### 204. Paper Prepared by the NEA Working Group in the Department of State Operations Center<sup>1</sup>

Washington, September 7, 1970.

Situation Report as of 0600 Hours EST, September 7, 1970

Two of the jet airliners (TWA 741 and Swissair 100) hijacked on September 6 by the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) are at an airstrip about 30 miles east of Amman, Jordan, while the third (Panam 93), a Boeing 747 jumbojet, was blown up after landing at Cairo.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 330, Subject Files, Hijackings. Confidential. The NEA Working Group was formed to coordinate information and responses to the hijacking crisis. (Ibid.)

*Status of TWA and Swissair Passengers Unclear.* A high Jordanian official informed our Embassy that the 145 passengers aboard TWA 741 “were being released” and would be transported to Amman by Army units. However, a PFLP spokesman reportedly told the local TWA agent in Amman that American, British, Israeli, West German, and Swiss nationals would be held. It can not be immediately determined how many of the 145 TWA and 155 Swissair passengers are of these nationalities, but it is believed that about 90 Americans and perhaps as many as 50 Israelis are among the Swissair passengers.

*Panam Boeing 747 Destroyed.* Panam 93 was blown up after the 170 persons aboard were evacuated. All are believed safe, although five or six were hospitalized with undetermined injuries. Panam has dispatched a Boeing 707 to Cairo to transport the passengers to New York. UAR authorities have apprehended three of the hijackers and are seeking a fourth.

*PFLP Demands Release of Fedayeen.* According to news reports, the PFLP has made three demands for release of the aircraft and passengers: 1) release and return to Amman of three PFLP commandos imprisoned in Switzerland; 2) return to Amman of the commando killed in the abortive El Al hijacking and release of his female accomplice; and 3) release of three fedayeen being held in West Germany. A fourth demand, relayed by the PFLP office in Beirut, calls for the release of all fedayeen held in Israel.

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## 205. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassies in Switzerland, the United Kingdom, Israel, and West Germany<sup>1</sup>

Washington, September 7, 1970, 1448Z.

146375. You should inform Government to which you accredited immediately of PFLP demands as reported in Amman 4372.<sup>2</sup> In view linkage of demands, it important that any response to PFLP be made

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, AV 12 US. Secret; Flash. Drafted and approved by Sisco and cleared by U. Alexis Johnson. It was repeated to Beirut and USINT Cairo.

<sup>2</sup> Telegram 4372 from Amman, September 7, 1125Z, reported that the PFLP made five key demands focused on releasing passengers in exchange for the release of Palestinian prisoners held in Switzerland, Britain, West Germany, the United States, and Israel. (Ibid.)

only after closest possible consultation between governments principally concerned. We are in touch with representatives of respective governments here in Washington, and important that matter of any response be concerted here in Washington. Would appreciate your requesting government to which you accredited to instruct their respective Embassy to keep in closest concert with State Department so that this matter can be considered.

**Rogers**

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**206. Telegram From the Embassy in the United Kingdom to the Department of State<sup>1</sup>**

London, September 7, 1970, 1815Z.

7096. Dept pass Cairo Immediate. Ref: London's 7095.<sup>2</sup>

1. Greenhill has just told DCM following meeting at Prime Minister's office, that instructions are going to British Embassy Washington to suggest earliest possible meeting (hopefully Monday) of reps there of all governments concerned to concert next steps. HMG favors Security Council meeting at earliest possible moment to adopt resolution (exact nature of which unclear to us).<sup>3</sup> Foreign Office also suggests Foreign Secretary call in reps in London of all Arab states on Tuesday to try to get them to persuade PFLP to stand down. Greenhill said facts are not all in yet so HMG cannot, repeat, not decide about release of Leila Khaled.

2. In reply to question, Greenhill said HMG not considering engaging ICRC into affair but anyone could throw that suggestion into meeting they are proposing.

**Annenberg**

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970-73, AV 12. Secret; Immediate. It was repeated to Geneva (Immediate), Bern, Tel Aviv, Bonn, Beirut, and Amman.

<sup>2</sup> In telegram 7095 from London, September 7, 1619Z, the Embassy notified the Department that British Ministers would be meeting shortly to discuss options. British officials reported that the Ministers were divided between those who wanted to hold firm and those who wanted to find a way out of the crisis. (Ibid.)

<sup>3</sup> In telegram 147016 to Bern, the Department informed Embassy officials that the United States supported the U.K. suggestion for a Security Council meeting, and that the United States was prepared to act together with the United Kingdom or separately. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970-73, AV 12)

**207. Memorandum From the President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Haig) to President Nixon<sup>1</sup>**

Washington, September 7, 1970, as of 3:30 p.m.

## SUBJECT

Middle East Hijacking Status Report

Secretary Rogers has met with the Ambassadors of Britain, the Federal Republic of Germany and Switzerland. All have agreed to release prisoners they hold. These include: Switzerland, three Fedayeen; Federal Republic of Germany, three Fedayeen; United Kingdom, the girl hijacker captured yesterday.

State now hopes to announce through the Red Cross a concerted four power offer to the Fedayeen to the effect that the four powers will be willing to make this exchange *if all* prisoners and both aircraft are turned over to the International Red Cross. This varies from what the Fedayeen have demanded. The Fedayeen demand provides that only non Israeli nationals and non dual passport personnel will be released in return for the foregoing exchange. They would continue to hold Israeli prisoners and dual passport prisoners. (We believe there are ten U.S. personnel holding dual passports in this group.) These would only be released in return for all Fedayeen held by the Israelis.

If the Fedayeen holds to its original demand we could be placed in the untenable position of being isolated with Israel in negotiating the release of Israeli and dual-citizenship personnel. State will attempt to avoid this predicament through the proposal cited above. State has adopted this proposal because they feel that since the Swiss have already agreed to ransom their nationals and aircraft, it will be difficult if not impossible to hold them in line except by such an offer.

I believe if we do make this proposal it will likely be rejected. Then we will be faced with the same problem of holding the other three nations in line—a rather dim prospect. If we do not make this proposal we will probably lose the other powers and find ourselves isolated in either event. In going this route we should decide to remain firm in this position for as long as we can even if the other nations collapse. We are thus in effect buying time and providing a vehicle for the Red Cross to begin negotiating. In the past the Red Cross has been the only successful route for gaining the release of hijacked prisoners or other hostages.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 330, Subject Files, Hijackings. Top Secret; Sensitive. Sent for information. The time is handwritten at the top of the page.



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**208. Paper Prepared by the NEA Working Group in the  
Department of State Operations Center<sup>1</sup>**

No. 2

Washington, September 7, 1970.

Situation Report as of 1800 Hours EST, September 7, 1970

*Some SwissAir and TWA Passengers Released.* By mid afternoon today, at least 60 (including 45 Americans) SwissAir and more than 25 TWA passengers had been released. The former hostages were taken to the Intercontinental Hotel in Amman, and, according to a spokesman of the hijacking-group, "were free to leave." No details on departure plans from Amman are yet available.

German sources in Amman allege that only women and children were being released and that adult male passengers would be held until all fedayeen demands are met.

*Amman Security Situation Unstable.* Embassy Amman, meanwhile, paints a gloomy picture of the security situation in the capital. It reports a near-anarchical condition in most areas of the city, with instances of shooting, auto theft, and persons subjected to search at fedayeen roadblocks. Some clashes between Palestinian commandos and the Jordan Army have apparently occurred outside Amman.

*American Sergeant Detained.* Staff Sergeant Irvin Graham, attached to USDAO/MAP, was abducted on September 5 and is still in fedayeen custody at the Wahdaat Refugee Camp near Amman. The circumstances of his capture and detention are not available. His release is being sought by the Jordan Army officials, who are negotiating with the PFLP.

*Initiatives to Release Hostages.* The Secretary called in the British Ambassador, Chargés of Switzerland and Germany, and the Israel Ambassador for purpose of an exchange of views regarding the current situation. The Secretary reviewed the demands made by the PFLP to our Embassy in Amman. The German and Swiss representatives indicated that their governments had agreed to the fedayeen demands. The Israeli Ambassador said that his government would refuse to acquiesce in any blackmail. The British Ambassador said that his Government was then meeting on the subject. It was agreed to continue to exchange views but the Israeli Ambassador objected to the use of the word "coordination."

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 330, Subject Files, Hijackings. Secret. Drafted by Albert A. Vaccaro (INR/RNA/NE) and Peter A. Sutherland (NEA/ARN) and cleared by Seelye.

**209. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon<sup>1</sup>**

Washington, September 8, 1970.

## SUBJECT

Your 4:30 Meeting on the Hijackings

At your call, the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defense, the Director of Central Intelligence, the Attorney General, the Director of the FBI, and I will meet in your office at 4:30 p.m. to discuss the hijacking situation.<sup>2</sup> Secretary Rogers will bring Assistant Secretary Joe Sisco to the meeting.

The latest report on the hijacking situation is as follows:

—Embassy Amman now accounts for 137 persons from the TWA plane; of these, 37 have been released and 100 are presumably on the plane. The Embassy accounts for 136 persons on SwissAir, of which 86 have been released and 50 are presumably on the plane. These figures are not firm.

—According to Embassy Berne, the British Government is prepared to coordinate in Berne to work through the International Red Cross (ICRC) and to release the female hijacker and the body of her companion hijacker.

—Embassy Amman reports that the TWA plane is capable of take-off with the possible exception of the need for a battery change.

—The deadline for expiration of the 72-hour limit set by the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) for meeting its demands for release of the hijacked planes and passengers is 10:00 p.m. EDT, September 9.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 330, Subject Files, Hijackings. Top Secret; Sensitive.

<sup>2</sup> According to a 1973 memorandum that summarized the events and meetings relating to the Jordan crisis of 1970, the 4:30 p.m. meeting with President Nixon included Kissinger, Rogers, Laird, Mitchell, Hoover, Sisco, Helms, and U. Alexis Johnson. At the meeting, Helms remarked, "Unless someone goes in and cleans up the situation, there is no chance of peace in the Middle East." Laird noted that the United States would have to send in ground forces to help Hussein if he decided to fight the fedayeen. Nixon then asked what Jordan would do if Israel assisted it. Sisco responded that an Israeli intervention would "be a cause of death for Hussein" and that it would lead to a united Arab front against Israel and the United States. Nixon concluded that "U.S. intervention is better than Israeli intervention." Rogers also warned that "we'd pay an enormous price, and it is essentially useless." (Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, TS 31, Geopolitical Files—Jordan, Jordan Crisis—September 1970 Notebook, 1970–73)

—The International Red Cross envoy who worked effectively during the Jordanian crisis last spring arrived in Amman today to contact the PFLP and the Jordanian authorities in an effort to arrange for a departure of the two planes and the passengers.

—Damascus Radio announced at 3:45 that the PFLP stated in Amman today that the Front has accepted the Swiss Government's decision to release the Front's three Fedayeen now in Swiss prisons. It added that the Swiss plane and its passengers will be released as soon as the three Fedayeen arrive at a place to be determined by the Front under guarantees to be agreed on with the International Red Cross. All women, children and men, other than Israeli, American, British, Swiss and West German Nationals have already been released according to the spokesman. The Front will continue to detain the other passengers and provide them with all care until the governments concerned respond to the Front's ultimatum. The spokesman also said that the German passengers will continue to be detained until the West German Government reports officially through the Red Cross that it has released the Fedayeen detained in German prisons. He added that investigations of the U.S. Nationals are being conducted to determine who among them holds dual citizenship.

At a meeting held in the Secretary of State's office today at 11:00 a.m. possible actions related to the hijacking situation were held. In attendance were Secretary Rogers, Under Secretary Johnson, Assistant Secretary Sisco, Secretary Laird, Director Helms and myself. You may wish to call on Secretary Rogers at today's meeting to summarize the results of this discussion.<sup>3</sup>

In addition to the specific situation surrounding the Middle East Fedayeen hijackings, an effort under the aegis of the Secretary of Transportation has been under way since February 27 to investigate sophisticated surveillance equipment which might be used to detect explosives and other materials which could be used by airplane saboteurs. The Secretary's most recent report dated July 21 suggested that it would probably be impossible to develop any system that would give 100% certainty against conceivable sabotage.

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<sup>3</sup> According to Kissinger's memoirs, Rogers concluded at the meeting that the use of U.S. forces would be impractical and that Israeli intervention on Hussein's behalf would result in his death by fellow Arabs. (*White House Years*, p. 602)

**210. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Jordan<sup>1</sup>**

Washington, September 8, 1970, 2336Z.

147006. Although it is impossible now to foresee the course of events with respect to the hijacked aircraft during the next 36 hours, and although given their fanatical attitudes it may have none or minimal deterrent effect, it seems to us here that there might be some value, if the King is willing, for the commander of the Jordanian forces surrounding the site of the aircraft to get across to the PFLP personnel at the aircraft a warning that if they carry out their threat to destroy the aircraft and passengers, the Jordanian forces will do their utmost to assure that none of the PFLP personnel escape from the scene alive. We would hope that if matters do come to such a tragic pass the Jordanian forces would in fact implement such a threat for whatever value it may have in deterring future such tragedies.

**Rogers**

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, AV 12. Secret; Immediate; Nodis. Drafted and approved by U. Alexis Johnson and cleared by Sisco and Eliot.

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**211. Telegram From the Department of State to Certain Diplomatic Posts<sup>1</sup>**

Washington, September 9, 1970, 0211Z.

147024. Subj: Secretary's Appeal re Hijacked Passengers.

*Summary:* On September 8 Secretary called in all Arab Chiefs-of-Mission in Washington in order to make to them humanitarian appeal concerning safety of passengers now being held by the Popular Front

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, AV 12 US. Limited Official Use. Drafted by Scotese on September 8, cleared by Seelye and Eliot, and approved by Sisco. It was sent to Amman, Beirut, USINT Cairo, Jidda, Kuwait, Addis Ababa, USINT Algiers, Tripoli, Rabat, Tunis, USINT Khartoum, London, Paris, Rome, Geneva, Bern, Athens, Rawalpindi, Ankara, Bonn, New Delhi, Tel Aviv, Vienna, Belgrade, and Moscow.

for Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) in Jordan.<sup>2</sup> Secretary emphasized that USG does not hold any Arab government responsible for this inhumane act but expressed his hope that these governments might be able in some way to convey to perpetrators this act desire of civilized world that they release these innocent air passengers unharmed and at once. Secretary also stressed that USG does not in any way relate his humanitarian appeal to implementation of US peace initiative. Speaking on behalf of Arab Ambassadors, Kuwaiti Ambassador Ghousein assured Secretary that Arab governments share US concern and they would do all in their power to convey Secretary's humanitarian appeal. He noted, however, that PFLP is not beholden to any Arab government or to more moderate Palestinians. Jordanian Ambassador Sharaf said his government doing everything in its power to obtain early and safe release of passengers. *End summary.*

1. On September 8 Secretary called in all Arab Chiefs-of-Mission in order make appeal re passengers on planes hijacked to Jordan. Present included representatives from Kuwait, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, UAR, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia, Sudan, and Algeria.

2. Secretary emphasized purpose of meeting was to make appeal solely on humanitarian grounds re safety of passengers now being held by PFLP in Jordan. Secretary acknowledged that Arab governments could do little but wished to convey to respective governments his personal hope that all might be done to assure safety and immediate release of passengers. Specifically, Secretary requested that if Arab governments able they should transmit his humanitarian appeal to perpetrators of hijackings and emphasize to them that such actions can in no way benefit their cause.

3. Secretary pointed out if these passengers killed or harmed in any way, public outrage around the world would be great. While we have had similar instances of this kind of action in past, passengers have never been held for blackmail purposes, as in this case. Such threats to innocent and uninvolved air passengers threatens air traffic for entire civilized world. It could well set in train series of retaliations which could escalate problem and result in air traffic chaos around world. In addition, it would have immediately negative effect on Arab countries for reasons already being commented on by Arab press itself which has pointed out in last few days that world public opinion does not distinguish between Arabs and Arab governments and those outside of governments belonging to these radical groups.

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<sup>2</sup> Another record of the meeting is in a memorandum from Rogers to Nixon, September 8. (Ibid., President's Evening Reading: Lot 74 D 164) For text, see *Foreign Relations, 1969-1976*, volume E-1, Documents on Global Issues, 1969-1972, Document 48.

4. To emphasize international nature of continued detention these passengers, Secretary indicated that among 123 passengers now being detained in Amman hotels and 150 still being held on the planes themselves are some 72 Americans as well as Germans, Swiss, Pakistanis, Greeks, Turks, Yugoslavs, Austrians, Ethiopians and others. While PFLP has made no demands on US, we nonetheless involved in terms of safety of our citizens and aircraft. Secretary reiterated his hope that Arab Ambassadors convey his humanitarian appeal to their governments and, if possible, through them to PFLP to release these people unharmed and promptly.

5. Dean of Arab Diplomatic Corps, Kuwaiti Ambassador Ghousein, replied on behalf of Arab Ambassadors and expressed his appreciation for Secretary's invitation to discuss this problem. Ghousein noted that Secretary rightly understands that this radical group not controlled by any Arab Government or even by moderate fedayeen organizations. PFLP radical group acting on basis its own ideology and often against wishes of other Arab governments and peoples. Ghousein assured Secretary that Arab Ambassadors would convey his appeal to their respective governments and added his personal hope that Arab efforts together with those of US might be successful. He expressed wish he could guarantee results but hoped Secretary would appreciate position of Arab Governments. In meantime, Ghousein expressed hope that all involved in area would continue work together that peace might soon be achieved there because if something can be done in that regard other problems would also be solved. Ghousein added that he would certainly not advance one word of defense on behalf of act of PFLP but he did wish to make some defense of ultimate purpose of the act which was to bring to world attention plight of Palestinians who after 20 years have reached point of desperation. In this regard Ghousein quoted Arab proverb, "Fool can throw stone in well but it takes 100 wise men to get it out." In conclusion Ghousein hoped that USG would continue its efforts to implement its peace initiative.

6. Secretary emphasized he did not wish in any way to relate peace initiative to his humanitarian appeal regarding safety of detained passengers. Secretary noted this appeal not relevant to initiative except in terms of public opinion. In any case, USG in no way relates them and he wished it clearly understood by Arab Ambassadors that nothing he had said here concerning his humanitarian appeal would in any way diminish USG efforts on peace initiative. Secretary added that in addition he did not wish imply by this humanitarian appeal that USG held respective governments responsible for acts by group such as PFLP, which US also fully appreciates is not even under control of more moderate fedayeen. In this connection, Secretary noted that we have also publicly made clear need to take into account wishes of Palestini-

ans in any final Near East peace settlement. With regard to peace initiative, USG will continue to do everything it can to be fair and balanced as it pursues implementation peace initiative. Secretary reiterated that this kind of lawless, irrational act can only render grave disservice to Palestinian cause in long run. Moreover, such acts would: (1) seriously jeopardize future of air travel in civilized world, resulting in unwillingness of people to fly and (2) make it impossible to capture and hold perpetrators these crimes if these groups continue hijack aircraft in order obtain release those involved in earlier attempts.

7. Jordanian Ambassador Sharaf stated his Government feels special responsibility given fact hijacked planes in Jordan. He noted Secretary had placed his appeal in proper humanitarian perspective and assured Secretary GOJ would do all in its power to obtain eventual release passengers. GOJ now trying achieve all this through understanding with parties involved which is based on reason as much as possible. GOJ would continue trying do its best settle this problem promptly.

8. Secretary expressed his appreciation for Sharaf's response and again stated that he making his appeal solely on humanitarian grounds, noting that USG had recently made strong appeal to Israelis concerning detention Algerians. Continued detention of innocent men, women and children under adverse desert conditions might result in sickness and even death. For this reason Secretary wished make his humanitarian appeal because this problem for all civilized people everywhere.

9. Secretary asked Sharaf if Jordanian military people in contact with any fedayeen. Sharaf replied the Jordan Chief of Staff as well as other senior Jordanian officials have been on airstrip since arrival of planes. GOJ has organized airlift of necessary supplies for passengers and is in constant consultation with Palestinian Armed Struggle Command to obtain release these people. Sharaf concluded that there apparently have been differences of views during negotiations as well as some confusion. In any event he again assured Secretary GOJ would do all in its power obtain early release passengers.

10. Secretary assured Ambassadors that in any public statement the State Department would emphasize humanitarian nature his appeal and in no way indicate that USG holds any Arab Governments responsible for these hijackings.

**Rogers**

**212. Memorandum for the Record<sup>1</sup>**

Washington, September 9, 1970, 0720 EDT.

## SUBJECT

Aircraft Hijackings

## REFERENCE

NMCC MFR 062300 EDT Sep 70, same subject  
NMCC MFR 061700 EDT Sep 70, same subject  
NMCC MFR 071125 EDT Sep 70, same subject  
NMCC MFR 071530 EDT Sep 70, same subject  
NMCC MFR 072215 EDT Sep 70, same subject  
NMCC MFR 081257 EDT Sep 70, same subject  
NMCC MFR 082354 EDT Sep 70, same subject<sup>2</sup>

1. The following readiness actions have been taken to prepare U.S. forces to support possible military air evacuation of U.S. citizens held as hijacking hostages in Jordan:

a. At 082129 EDT, JCS requested USCINCEUR move the USS *Independence* (CVA-62) to a position approximately 100 nautical miles from the Israel/Lebanon coast (see attached map). The *Independence* is accompanied by four destroyers and one oiler and will be joined by two more destroyers. Estimated time of arrival on station is 100030 EDT.

b. At 082340 EDT, USCINCEUR reported that six C-130 aircraft are being prepositioned at Incirlik, Turkey (see attached map). Estimated time of arrival is 090800 EDT. Flight time from Incirlik to Amman is 1 hour and 20 minutes, and from Incirlik to Dawson Field is 1 hour and 30 minutes.

2. No alert to ground troops or tactical air support units has been given. Appropriate contingency plans for Europe and the Middle East are currently being reviewed. USCINC-STRIKE has activated his Battle Staff to monitor the situation and place himself in a more responsive posture.

**Raymond O. Miller**

*Brigadier General, USA*

*Deputy Director for Operations (NMCC)*

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 330, Subject Files, Hijackings. Top Secret. An attached map is not printed.

<sup>2</sup> Regarding the memorandum for the record, September 6, 1700 EDT, see footnote 2, Document 199. The memorandum for the record, September 7, 2300 EDT, is Document 202. Memoranda for the record, September 7, 2215 EDT; September 8, 1257 EDT; and September 8, 2354 EDT are in the National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 330, Subject Files, Hijackings. Memoranda for the record, September 7, 1125 EDT and 1530 EDT were not found.



## 213. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon<sup>1</sup>

Washington, September 9, 1970, 9 a.m.

### SUBJECT

Hijacking Status

#### *Where the Passengers Are*

No confirmed list of the hostages is available. A few more than 300 passengers have been involved altogether. Over half are U.S. citizens. Israelis and dual nationals have been estimated at 30–50. About 125 of these passengers, mostly women and children, have been brought to the Hotel Intercontinental in Amman. However, the Red Cross representative, after talking to Palestinian leaders, says these passengers are not free to leave Amman, even though the hotel itself is surrounded by Jordanian Government forces. He reports that the hostages are being well treated.

#### *The Diplomatic Situation*

You will recall that Monday night, the U.S. agreed to participate in a concerted U.S.–U.K.–Swiss–West German effort through the Red Cross. At a meeting Tuesday in Bern, the British, Swiss and West German representatives confirmed their governments' agreement that the Red Cross might offer release of the seven fedayeen prisoners they hold if the guerrillas turned over *all* passengers and the two planes to the Red Cross. Meanwhile, Red Cross representatives had arrived in Amman. Following are the main developments since the foregoing:

1. Below are the *main points made by Red Cross representative Andre Rochat* in a report to British, West German, Swiss representatives in Amman *following his first round of talks* (two meetings with Jordanian Prime Minister Rifai and a long discussion with the Palestinians):

—The situation is “extremely serious.” He is “not at all convinced it will end successfully. . . . We may face a tragedy. . . . There is perhaps one chance in two we will get everyone out.”

—He intends to be “extremely firm” in sticking to the terms of his mandate. He warned that if any attempt is made to move away from the multi-national approach as outlined in that mandate, the Red Cross representatives “will withdraw completely and leave the place.”

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 330, Subject Files, Hijackings. Secret. Sent for information. The time is handwritten at the top of the page. A stamped notation on the memorandum indicates that the President saw it. All brackets are in the original. An attached map is not printed.

—He concludes that the Jordanian Government fully supports the Red Cross position. As for the Palestinians, “The first meeting seems to be the beginning of something positive.” Rochat planned further meetings today, including meeting with the hostages.

—The guerrillas’ position on release of guerrilla prisoners in Israeli hands is that “not one person will leave the planes if the Palestinians are not satisfied” on this point. [*Comment: The meaning of this point is not clear since the official Palestinian demands stated that all but the Israeli and dual national passengers would be released in return for the seven fedayeen prisoners in Europe.*]

—The Red Cross has a plane (capacity 90) at its disposal for as many trips as necessary for as long as necessary to evacuate released hostages. “We do not need help in this regard.”

—He is “100 percent sure that the deadline will be postponed for at least 72 hours” after initial expiration. He later said he did not have assurances to this effect and revised his statement to say he is positive that “no one will be killed tomorrow afternoon unless by accident.”

—He does not want yet to deal separately with the hostages already released from the planes, but he conceded this might be brought up again if the internal security deteriorates seriously.

2. *Secretary Rogers yesterday called in all Arab Chiefs-of-Mission in Washington to make an appeal solely on humanitarian grounds for the safety of the passengers.*<sup>2</sup> He emphasized that, while we do not hold Arab governments responsible, public outcry around the world would be great if innocent passengers were harmed.

3. Under Secretary Johnson last night sent a message to the U.S. Chargé in Amman saying “it seems to us here that there might be some value, if King Hussein is willing, for the commander of the Jordanian troops surrounding the site of the aircraft to get across to the PFLP personnel at the aircraft *a warning* that if they carry out their threat to destroy the aircraft and passengers, the Jordanian forces will do their utmost to assure that none of the PFLP personnel escape from the scene alive.”<sup>3</sup>

4. An approach has been made in Bonn urging the West German government not to release their fedayeen prisoners unilaterally. They appear, as do the Swiss, to have received separate approaches from the fedayeen setting a separate deadline for exchange of their prisoners for their passengers. The West Germans appear to be increasingly nervous over the approaching deadline, and the Cabinet is meeting this morn-

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<sup>2</sup> See Document 211.

<sup>3</sup> Document 210.

ing. They have been informed of Rochat's insistence that the multinational approach be maintained.

5. According to Jerusalem radio this morning, *Israel intends to ask the British government today to detain the woman hijacker* in its hands until Israel can submit a request for her extradition. The British informed us yesterday that they are willing to release her as part of the U.S.-U.K.-German-Swiss response to the fedayeen demands. Israel continues to insist that nothing be done that will result in partial release of those detained—leaving only the Israelis (and presumably American Jews) in fedayeen hands. There is no indication Israel may be willing to release any fedayeen in its hands.

6. The British have proposed to the U.S., Swiss and Germans a *UN Security Council meeting* to consider the hijacking problem. We and the Swiss have reacted favorably.<sup>4</sup>

### *U.S. Military Actions*

I have arranged for the following actions by U.S. military forces:

—Six C-130 aircraft are being moved to Incirlik, Turkey to be available for evacuation purposes. They will be one hour and 30 minutes flying time from the field in Jordan where the hijacked aircraft are being held. (See attached map.) They are expected to be in place by 11:30 a.m. EDT.

—The attack aircraft carrier *Independence*, accompanied by four destroyers and an oiler, is southeast of Crete and steaming toward the Lebanon-Israel coast. It will reach a position 100 miles off the coast by shortly after midnight tonight. This force will be joined by two additional destroyers. (See attached map.)

—The battle staff of the U.S. Strike Command at MacDill Air Force Base in Florida has been activated to monitor the situation.

—Appropriate contingency plans for Europe and the Middle East are currently being reviewed.

—I am convening a senior WSAG meeting at 11:30 this morning to complete alternative politico-military contingency scenarios for the crises.<sup>5</sup>

### *How Events May Evolve*

1. A major factor will be whether Rochat has indeed succeeded in slipping the deadline.

2. Whatever the timing, it seems likely that Rochat in his negotiations will be confronted with a Fedayeen demand that Israel release

<sup>4</sup> See footnote 3, Document 206.

<sup>5</sup> See Document 214.

some of the Fedayeen prisoners it holds. At that point pressures will develop in two directions:

—There will be pressure on the British, Swiss and Germans to break the multi-national front and bargain for the release of their passengers. The U.S. would be under pressure not to jeopardize the lives of some passengers for the sake of others.

—There will be pressure on Israel (to some degree from the three European governments and presumably from the U.S.). Rochat may be able to suggest to Israel some broadening of the exchange. [You will recall that this was the eventual solution in the TWA hijacking case a year ago.]<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> TWA flight 840 flying from Rome to Tel Aviv was hijacked on August 29, 1969. For documentation on the U.S. and international response, see *Foreign Relations, 1969–1976*, volume E-1, Documents on Global Issues, 1969–1972, Documents 7–44.

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## 214. Minutes of a Combined Washington Special Actions Group and Review Group Meeting<sup>1</sup>

Washington, September 9, 1970, 11:40 a.m.–12:35 p.m.

### SUBJECTS

Middle East and Hijacking

### PARTICIPATION

State	CIA
U. Alexis Johnson	Richard Helms
Rodger P. Davies	NSC Staff
Joseph J. Sisco	Col. Kennedy
Defense	Hal Saunders
David Packard	Jeanne W. Davis
Robert J. Pranger	
JCS	
Adm. Thomas Moorer	
Lt. Gen. Melvin Zais	

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-114, WSAG Minutes (Originals) 1969 and 1970. Top Secret; Nodis. This meeting took place in the White House Situation Room. Kissinger is not listed as a participant but he chaired the meeting.

## SUMMARY OF DECISIONS

1. It is not feasible to attempt to rescue the passengers in the hijacked aircraft through the use of US military force, except as a move of desperation if we became convinced planes and passengers were to be blown up;

2. We have a plan for a military evacuation of American civilians from Jordan, and would prefer to use a US brigade from Europe, rather than forces from the US;

3. This military evacuation plan is essentially the same as that required to secure the airfield where the hijacked planes have landed, if it should be decided to attempt this move;

4. Mr. Saunders will prepare a status report on the hijacking situation and on Rochat's efforts to negotiate an extension of the deadline and extricate the passengers;<sup>2</sup>

5. While we would prefer to use US troops for a military evacuation if Jordanian troops were not adequate, Israeli troops would be preferable to US troops for an operation in support of King Hussein against the Fedayeen and possibly the Iraqis;

6. The JCS will investigate ways in which we might put the US brigade in Germany on semi-alert for a military evacuation operation with the minimum possibility of its leaking;

7. The JCS will prepare by tomorrow:

... an analysis of what we would need to mount and sustain an operation to prop up King Hussein against the Fedayeen and possibly the Iraqis;

... an estimate of the kind of arms package we would have to provide Israel if it should undertake the operation to prop up King Hussein;

... a package of what Lebanon would need to defend itself against a Fedayeen attack.

8. We should improve our public affairs coordination, with State taking the lead.

Mr. Packard: The Israelis have requested delivery of our equipment by ship by September 22. We could get it there by air in five days, but they have asked for it by ship, in case we should be accused of being unresponsive on quick deliveries.

Mr. Johnson: I just talked with UK Ambassador Freeman who said the British had lost contact with their Embassy in Amman.

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<sup>2</sup> Saunders's report was finalized as a memorandum from Kissinger to Nixon, September 9, 3:30 p.m. The memorandum notes that the PFLP provided an extension on its ultimatum, although it gave no time limit for the ultimatum. (Ibid., NSC Files, Box 330, Subject Files, Hijackings)

Mr. Helms: There is heavy firing in the city.

Mr. Packard: Do we have other communications?

Mr. Johnson: Our communications are no problem. I told Freeman of our conversation with Rochat who said he expected the BOAC plane to land at the desert airfield at any minute.

Dr. Kissinger: How many passengers are on board?

Mr. Saunders: One report says 63.

Mr. Johnson: [*2½ lines not declassified*] The plane has 104 passengers and 10 crew abroad. A phone call from our Embassy in Amman indicated they had talked with Zaid Rifai who said the Jordanian Army has not moved into Amman. The battalion that was already there is doing the fighting. A radio broadcast was interrupted with an announcement that the King had met with the Prime Minister and Chief of Staff and that the King was instructing General Haditha, in view of the regrettable developments in Irbid, to take steps to guarantee peace.

Mr. Blee: [*1 line not declassified*]

Mr. Johnson: The statement said the General has been instructed to look into the Irbid situation and take whatever steps were required to ensure peace. This announcement came at 10:25 this morning, our time.

Dr. Kissinger: If the King is apologizing for shelling Irbid, doesn't this mean that he has lost control?

Mr. Davies: I interpret this announcement to mean that Hussein has asked the Army to take over the country. This is what we had hoped he would do.

Dr. Kissinger: He's isn't telling the General to prevent a repetition?

Mr. Davies: I think he is entrusting the Army with the task of restoring order—I hope so, at least.

Admiral Moorer: Isn't this the first time he has done this? Hasn't he been holding the Army off?

Dr. Kissinger: What does he mean by "taking the necessary steps to prevent a recurrence"?

Mr. Davies: He has to assure the Palestinians that they won't be attacked in their camps by the Jordanian Army.

Dr. Kissinger: I agree that is one interpretation. The Army would take over Amman and the Palestinians should stay in their camps. We had a September 8 report saying that Hussein had lost control and that the First Brigade had defied the King and moved into Amman.<sup>3</sup>

Mr. Helms: That is the brigade doing the shelling now.

Admiral Moorer: (producing map) They are shelling this road.

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<sup>3</sup> CIA Intelligence Information Cable TDCS DB-315/04645-70, September 8, 1806Z. (Ibid., Box 615, Country Files, Middle East, Jordan, Vol. V)

Mr. Johnson: Where is the British Embassy? Where are the hotels?

Mr. Davies and Admiral Moorer: The hotels are far out the road. The British Embassy is out of the sight line from the shelling.

Dr. Kissinger: Has the deadline been extended?

Mr. Johnson: Yes, but the exact length of time has not been determined. Rochat is negotiating how much additional time has been granted.

Dr. Kissinger: (to Hal Saunders) Will you do a wrap-up of this?

Mr. Helms: (passing a paper to Saunders)<sup>4</sup> This may help.

Dr. Kissinger: Let's wait until Joe Sisco arrives to discuss the diplomatic side. In the meantime, I believe we should review our military contingency planning for Jordan. I understood our discussion yesterday as rejecting any attempt to extricate the passengers from the planes for the time being.<sup>5</sup> Is that correct?

Mr. Packard: (to Admiral Moorer) Has anyone come up with any idea as to what we might do for the passengers without running the risk that the guerrillas would blow up the planes?

Admiral Moorer: No. We couldn't save these passengers in that circumstance, but we could do something to save others in the future. This is another *Pueblo*.

Dr. Kissinger: It was agreed that we would use force only as a move of desperation if we become convinced that the planes are about to be blown up with the passengers aboard. If a judgement is made that this is likely, how much would it take to secure that airfield?

Admiral Moorer: The Jordanian Army is already surrounding the airfield. That is not the problem.

Dr. Kissinger: But the Jordanian Army might not move at our direction. Are there any US forces we could use? How many would it take?

Admiral Moorer: We could do it with one brigade,<sup>6</sup> flying out of Europe. The speed with which they could move would be affected by the time they received an alert. I believe we should alert them now and publicize the fact that we are doing it.

Mr. Johnson: No—I feel very strongly we should not alert now. We can't put them on alert without a leak, and the minute it becomes public it could stop the efforts of Rochat and the ICRC. It could make the situation worse.

Dr. Kissinger: I agree on the desirability of an alert, but not on publicity. How much time would an alert save?

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<sup>4</sup> Not further identified.

<sup>5</sup> Presumably the morning meeting in Secretary Rogers's office; see footnote 3, Document 209.

<sup>6</sup> A handwritten notation replaced "battalion" with "brigade."

Admiral Moorer: About 24 hours.

Dr. Kissinger: Is there nothing we can do in between without a leak?

Mr. Packard: There isn't anything we can do in the US without its leaking. It might be possible to do something with troops in Germany.

Dr. Kissinger: Could we mount some sort of NATO exercise to cover an alert?

(Mr. Sisco arrived)

Mr. Packard: The last time we already had forces on an exercise in Versailles and it was easier.

Dr. Kissinger: How fast could US troops get there from Europe?

Admiral Moorer: From 40 to 48 hours.

Dr. Kissinger: Suppose the Fedayeen say they will blow up the planes unless Israel agrees in principle to designate some prisoners for release. Suppose, contrary to our expectation, Israel is determined not to yield. What do we do?

Mr. Johnson: It is not feasible to think in terms of using American forces. The Jordanians are there. And the Israelis are closer, could move faster, and are better than our troops at this sort of thing.

Dr. Kissinger: The President would be very reluctant to use Israeli forces.

Admiral Moorer: The cease-fire would go out the window if Israeli forces were used.

Mr. Johnson: Not necessarily, if they were used only in a limited operation to rescue the passengers.

Mr. Sisco: Jordanian forces would be preferable, with US forces second and Israeli forces third. Reports from Amman in the last hour and a half indicate the situation is serious. We have been looking at our plans for evacuating our people from Amman. Alongside the contingency raised by Dr. Kissinger, we have to look at the possibility that there may be a need for US forces to go in to evacuate Americans. The two things are linked.

Dr. Kissinger: Let us put aside for now a rescue operation for the passengers. I see that as a last resort and can't now see a situation in which we would be that desperate. Let's look at the other contingency—use of US forces to evacuate American civilians from Amman—to see if there might be some fallout which would be applicable to the airfield situation. I see three possible situations: (1) if the planes were blown up, we might have to do something for domestic reasons.

Mr. Johnson: We have already pre-positioned the C-130s with medical supplies. If the planes are blown, we assume the Jordanian Army would secure the airfield. We would then go in with our medical supplies. Last night I sent a message to Amman suggesting that



the King make it clear that, if the planes were blown, the guerrillas would all be killed. Our Embassy has replied saying the Jordanian Army would need no encouragement to do just that.<sup>7</sup>

Mr. Sisco: If the planes are blown up, the Jordan Army will take action. They are reluctant to make any such announcement now, however. From the point of view of the Jordan Government, the situation in Amman is the more serious one. Such an announcement might be the flashpoint which Hussein has been trying to avoid. We have just sent a telegram to our Embassies, pointing out that with each successive tiny crisis, the King's position becomes a little weaker.<sup>8</sup> We have asked their judgement as to whether we should encourage the King to come to a showdown with the Fedayeen at this point. If he delays longer, he will be weaker. At least now he still has the Army.

Dr. Kissinger: In the present situation in Jordan, the peace initiative doesn't have a prayer. We can't ask the Israelis to negotiate a border arrangement with a government that isn't in control of its country.

Mr. Packard: If the planes are blown, we can then alert US forces.

Mr. Johnson: I agree—there is no problem of alerting after the planes are blown.

Dr. Kissinger: I personally don't think it is likely that they will blow the planes. To recap, the three situations are:

- 1) if the planes are blown up and we have to do something for domestic reasons;
- 2) if the situation in Jordan breaks down and we have to mount a military evacuation of American citizens;
- 3) possible US assistance to Hussein in a showdown with the Fedayeen, either provoked by the Fedayeen or provoked by the King with our encouragement.

Could a military evacuation plan for Amman be adapted to the airfield situation?

Admiral Moorer: Let me review our plan for evacuation of Americans from Amman. There are two possible situations: (1) where friendly forces would be in control of the airfield; and (2) where we would have to seize the airfield. We are planning on a brigade force either all landed by aircraft if the airfield is secure, or with the 1st battalion dropped by parachute to secure the airfield and the rest landed by aircraft.

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<sup>7</sup> Telegram 4495 from Amman, September 9, 1305Z. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970-73, AV 12) For text, see *Foreign Relations, 1969-1976*, volume E-1, Documents on Global Issues, 1969-1972, Document 53.

<sup>8</sup> Not further identified.

Dr. Kissinger: How long would it take them to get there after the executed order?

Admiral Moorer: 40 to 48 hours.

Dr. Kissinger: From the US?

Admiral Moorer: From Europe. The flight time from Europe is 7-1/2 hours in a C-130 and 4-1/2 hours in a C-141, so the troops would arrive rested. Flying time from the US would be 18-1/2 and 14-1/2 hours, respectively. This is from a non-alert status. If the forces used were from the 82nd Airborne at Fort Bragg, they would have to be staged either through Greece or Incirlik.

Mr. Sisco: Or through the British base on Cyprus. I don't think we could get approval for staging either through Greece or Turkey.

Mr. Johnson: And, of course, no staging would be required for forces from Europe.

Dr. Kissinger: Why not Greece? Because of our military assistance embargo?

Mr. Sisco: Greece might possibly agree for a limited evacuation operation.

Dr. Kissinger: If Greece would not agree, why would Cyprus?

Mr. Sisco: Makarios has been pretty good about these things. Also, he sees the base as a British sovereign base, and if the British agreed he would go along.

Dr. Kissinger: Once the forces begin to move through the staging areas, it will be known.

Admiral Moorer: Once they start to load the planes, it will become known.

Mr. Johnson: All the evidence argues for use of forces from Europe.

Dr. Kissinger: Do we have the airlift capability?

Admiral Moorer: Planes are no problem; they can get there faster than the troops can be ready. If we should be required to put forces into Jordan for any reason, the first step would be to get American civilians out. So, any operation would begin in the same way. We do have a well-thought-out plan and have made some preliminary moves, but we have not alerted anyone yet.

Mr. Johnson: Assuming a brigade operation, how would you follow it up in support of Hussein?

Admiral Moorer: By using the 82nd Airborne. We would then have four brigades: one brigade from Europe and a division from the US. We should look carefully at the second phase, however—examine our staying power, which is limited.

Dr. Kissinger: Will you look at our staying power and tell us about it?

Admiral Moorer: We may be faced with the possibility of Syria and Iraq mounting an attack on Lebanon and Jordan.

Mr. Sisco: On the political side, in the context of a limited American operation, limited to the evacuation of Americans, it would be entirely feasible militarily and, with no question of staying power, could be justified as a short-lived action appropriate to the circumstances. If, however, we should move into Option 3 or slip from Option 2 into Option 3, where we would be using US forces to prop up Hussein, the very fact that we had had to do this, could only mean a temporary prop for the King. We would have to stay for some time, and, even then, the moment we got out, the King would be in a much weaker position politically. We must lay out the political considerations along with the military.

Admiral Moorer: I am not recommending such action. I agree it would be a very tenuous situation with no end in sight.

Dr. Kissinger: (to Sisco) Are you saying it shouldn't be done?

Mr. Sisco: Only that it could be considered only as a temporary prop for the King.

Admiral Moorer: Is there a paper which lays out options?

(The State Department paper was passed around the table)<sup>9</sup>

Mr. Packard: I think it most important that we get some public affairs coordination.

Dr. Kissinger: Absolutely. (to Mr. Johnson) Will you take the lead on this?

Mr. Sisco: Ron Ziegler and Bob McCloskey had a long talk this morning before Ron went on at 11:20. Dan Henkin and McCloskey are also in touch. There was a slight hiatus because the decision on the C-130s with the medical teams was made yesterday when I was out of the room and I was not aware of it. Also, we were not aware of the fleet movements.

Mr. Packard: The State people are not getting the information they need.

Mr. Johnson: I forgot to tell Joe about the C-130s—I didn't realize he wasn't in the room. In this matter, Abshire (State's Congressional liaison) was told last night by the Defense Congressional man that Secretary Laird wanted to say something to the Congressional leadership about the C-130s. I cautioned against this.

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<sup>9</sup> Department of State paper entitled "Contingencies for Hijacking Crisis." (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-077, Washington Special Actions Group Meeting, WSAG & SRG Meetings, Middle East and Hijacking 9/9/70)

Dr. Kissinger: The President yesterday ordered that the carrier be moved into approximately the same position as in the June Jordan crisis.<sup>10</sup>

Mr. Johnson: We didn't know that.

Dr. Kissinger: That is my fault.

Mr. Johnson: I will ask Bob McCloskey to take the lead.

Admiral Moorer: I want to make it clear that we do have an evacuation plan, and a good one, for evacuating American citizens from Amman.

Mr. Johnson: I understand it takes 40–48 hours to bring troops in from Europe from a non-alert status, and 6–8 hours from an alert status.

(Mr. Packard left the meeting)

Admiral Moorer: The time of the alert has some bearing on this—whether it is 2:00 a.m. or 2:00 p.m.

General Zais: The first company could be there in 20 hours, with the rest of the brigade following.

Dr. Kissinger: Could one company survive?

General Zais: We would make this judgement at the time. Someone has to go in first.

Dr. Kissinger: The most realistic contingency would be military evacuation of American civilians. But this would be essentially the same as taking Dawson field. Would not the plan be interchangeable?

Admiral Moorer: Yes.

Dr. Kissinger: So that if we get in a fix, we have a plan. If we are questioned, we could say we had a plan. If we are talking about a military evacuation it is generally agreed we should use the brigade in Germany. If we use troops out of the US we would have to stage across the Atlantic, and the warning time would be greater. Is there any exercise we could send the European brigade on, without any apparent connection with the Middle East, so that they could be on alert? Could General Goodpaster do anything? Could we look at the possibility of ginning up some exercise to keep the brigade on alert?

Admiral Moorer: I will look into it.

General Zais: One problem is that the European brigade is a dual-purpose brigade, with both an air-borne and a ground capability. The

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<sup>10</sup> Throughout the first half of 1970, sporadic fighting broke out between King Hussein's forces and the fedayeen. In June 1970, 2 weeks of intense fighting erupted, which led U.S. policymakers to consider sending U.S. forces into Jordan. Documentation on this is scheduled for publication in *Foreign Relations, 1969–1976*, volume XXIII, Arab-Israeli Dispute, 1969–1972.

minute you start packing parachutes and readying planes you have given a signal.

Dr. Kissinger: I was thinking of things like cancelling leaves and getting troops together.

Admiral Moorer: You are talking in terms of a semi-alert.

Mr. Sisco: You could always send a General out there and call for a special inspection.

Mr. Johnson: Our first hope, of course, is that Rochat can pull a rabbit out of the hat as he did before.

Dr. Kissinger: Yes. Even if we put the unit on alert, 24 hours would be too long.

Mr. Johnson: Rochat might be helpful even in the event of a civilian evacuation of Amman. He has good contacts.

Dr. Kissinger: I see the weight of Sisco's political argument. Even if we should win a civil war in Jordan, there would be nothing left behind to sustain it. However, if the President should order such a move, are we in a position to do it?

Admiral Moorer: In terms of bolstering the King, we could do it from airheads.

Dr. Kissinger: If we do not get the Fedayeen in Jordan under control, the peace initiative will go by the board. Israel has to have a government to deal with that can fulfill its obligations. The President's instincts are to crush the Fedayeen now. Although he may reconsider, we must make sure such a move doesn't fail because we didn't have a good plan. Could we sustain an action to prop up Hussein? How long would we have to stay?

Admiral Moorer: We have a plan to mount such an operation. The question would be if it should spread. Given our Vietnam requirements, we might be in some difficulty with ammunition and other things. We always have to consider the next possible step.

Dr. Kissinger: Could we count on the Iraqis and Syrians becoming involved?

Admiral Moorer: It would be prudent to do so.

Dr. Kissinger: Then what?

Admiral Moorer: We would put the four brigades into Jordan to handle the situation.

Mr. Helms: Would that mean we had no strategic reserve left in the US? That scares the hell out of me.

Admiral Moorer: That's right. That would be everything we've got.

General Zais: There is no other existing unit in the US. We would have to reforge a unit to go to Europe to replace the brigade. Also, the

82nd is not in great shape. It is C-2, meaning it is at about 85 percent personnel strength.

Admiral Moorer: We would send it anyway.

Dr. Kissinger: How would the battle develop?

Mr. Sisco: We would land at the airport, and move out, I assume assisting the Jordanian Army, to clean out the city. We assume the Jordanian Army could establish and sustain certain positions. The Iraqis are outside the city. If both Iraq and Syria should move, I can't believe Israel would stand idly by. This would mean, basically, a US-Israeli operation to sustain Hussein against the Palestinians, Iraqis, and Syrians. The whole Arab world would have to come out in support of Iraq and Syria.

Dr. Kissinger: Suppose the King moves against the Fedayeen without US support. Would the Iraqis intervene?

Mr. Sisco: If they did, the Israelis would intervene, at Jordanian request, with ground forces.

Dr. Kissinger: That would finish the King.

Mr. Sisco: Yes, but better Israeli forces than US forces. The Israelis and Jordanians have already talked about this.

Admiral Moorer: We could always give Jordan air support from our carriers.

Dr. Kissinger: As a preliminary judgement, then, we can undertake a military evacuation, and would prefer to use US forces for this purpose if Jordanian forces are not adequate. For a defense of the King against the Fedayeen and Iraq, however, we would prefer to use Israeli forces. Is that a fair statement?

All agreed.

Dr. Kissinger: I assume if Israel moved in support of Hussein, it would be with our approval.

Mr. Sisco: At least our tacit approval. We could never convince anyone that it was done without our approval.

Dr. Kissinger: But if the Soviets or Egyptians prepare a move, we should be a position to keep the Soviets out.

Mr. Sisco: And we should be prepared to supply Israel with considerable additional wherewithal, since Israel would be expending materiel very rapidly.

Dr. Kissinger: (to Admiral Moorer) Could you get us an estimate on that overnight?

Mr. Helms: The JCS will have an awful time backstopping an operation which eliminates our strategic reserve. Anything involving four brigades would be out politically.

Dr. Kissinger: That is why Israeli forces are preferable. The missing ingredient would be enough US show of force to keep the Soviets and Egyptians out.

Mr. Helms: How big would that have to be?

Dr. Kissinger: That is the question I'm asking Admiral Moorer.

Mr. Sisco: I don't think the Egyptians would intervene. We would have to provide the ring so far as the Russians were concerned, however. Also, Israel would need more to sustain itself against the Iraqis in a Jordan situation.

Dr. Kissinger: Do we have a package that could serve this purpose? Could we pick one of the existing alternative packages?

Mr. Sisco: We could adapt one to suit the purpose—probably by including more planes and bombs.

Dr. Kissinger: We need an analysis of what it would take to hold the ring against Russia if Israel moves in support of Hussein at the King's request (which we would approve) against the Fedayeen alone, or against the Fedayeen and the Iraqis.

Mr. Sisco: On the Egyptian side, the Egyptians would probably move some of the SAMs closer to the Canal. Also, Russian pilots would likely become more involved. The Israeli tactic would probably be to keep the Canal area as quiet as possible. Nasser would have to step up his campaign against Israel in some way—probably by small, showy raids.

Mr. Helms: He might undertake a bombardment of the Bar Lev line.

Dr. Kissinger: We need to know: 1) what it would take to hold the ring against the Russians; and 2) what a new package to Israel would look like in terms of this objective. Can we have this by tomorrow?

Admiral Moorer: Yes.

Mr. Johnson: (to Mr. Helms) Do you feel the Jordanian Army can handle the Fedayeen by itself?

Mr. Helms: Yes, if they will do it. They don't need help to handle the Fedayeen.

Mr. Sisco: In these circumstances, the Fedayeen in Lebanon would feel they had to act. Without outside intervention, however, the Lebanese Army could do reasonably well against the Fedayeen. Lebanon would want additional military equipment, however—at least armored personnel carriers.

Dr. Kissinger: Then let's get a package together for that too. We may be forced when this crisis is over, to address the question of crushing the Fedayeen.

Mr. Sisco: I agree the outcome might have that effect. However, a political settlement is still the best tool in terms of the Fedayeen. A substantial portion of the Palestinians still prefer a political to a military solution. It might alter our attitude, however, as to the realistic elements of a settlement. For years we have told the Israelis that the

Allon plan is a non-starter.<sup>11</sup> We might look at it again in the light of changed circumstances.

Mr. Davies: After this crisis is over, and assuming Hussein is still in power, we might look [*less than 1 line not declassified*] to help get rid of the Fedayeen.

Dr. Kissinger: We need a plan to do it, or might decide to jiggle our notion of peace terms, depending on events. (To Mr. Johnson) Are we clear that we won't agree to treat dual US-Israel national on the planes as anything but US nationals?

Mr. Johnson: Absolutely—this is fundamental. Any other notion is out.

Dr. Kissinger: This group should meet again tomorrow.

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<sup>11</sup> Conceived in July 1967 by Israeli Foreign Minister Yigal Allon, the Allon Plan called for Israel to maintain a row of fortified settlements along the Jordan River to provide Israel a security buffer from future Arab attacks but leaving the rest of the West Bank demilitarized.

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## 215. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Israel<sup>1</sup>

Washington, September 9, 1970, 2241Z.

147517. 1. Sisco called Rabin 6:00 p.m. Sept 9 to bring him up to date on hijacking situation. Noted particularly deadline of tonight postponed and there now no specific expiration date. Also that Rochat has appointment very early tomorrow a.m. with PFLP rep and passengers on three aircraft safe.

2. Sisco informed Rabin we have repositioned six C-130s at In-cirlik. We request of GOI on contingency basis clearance overflight Israel these aircraft if need be in connection evacuation hostages. Rabin said there no question GOI would give clearance and that he would seek confirmation immediately.

**Rogers**

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970-73, AV 12. Secret; Priority. Drafted by Stackhouse and approved by Sisco.



## 216. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon<sup>1</sup>

Washington, September 9, 1970, 8 p.m.

### SUBJECT

Evening Report on the Hijacking Situation

Below are described the main developments since my mid-day memorandum to you on the aircraft hijacking situation.<sup>2</sup>

### *Passengers, Aircraft and Negotiations*

Red Cross representative Rochat reports that:

—The deadline on the ultimatum has now been “postponed” with no specific expiration. The negotiations are now considered to be open as far as time is concerned and he anticipates a very long negotiating process.

—The situation is “extremely serious.” He hopes that a clear position will emerge from the PFLP side by tomorrow morning, although he considers their demands to remain “extremely tough.” He will meet with them again “very early” tomorrow morning.

—The passengers on all three aircraft are safe and the Red Cross has a medical team permanently on the site. A second Red Cross plane with unspecified supplies has been requested.

—He may have reason to call on the U.S. for unspecified support on short notice.

Our embassy reports that things are now relatively quiet at the hotel where the passengers removed from the aircraft are staying.<sup>3</sup> Morale seems to be reasonably good given the strain of the situation. Earlier in the day they had to take shelter in the basement when heavy fighting broke out in the vicinity.

With the addition of the hijacked BOAC aircraft today, there are now some 300 hostages at the airstrip where the planes are being held. The BOAC plane has some 105 passengers including 3 U.S. citizens and 24 unattached children.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 330, Subject Files, Hijackings. Secret. Sent for information. Haig initialed for Kissinger. The date and time are handwritten at the top of the page. A notation on the memorandum indicates that the President saw it.

<sup>2</sup> Kissinger's midday situation report on the hijacking situation is in a September 9 memorandum for the President. (Ibid.) For text, see *Foreign Relations, 1969–1976*, volume E-1, Documents on Global Issues, 1969–1972, Document 52.

<sup>3</sup> Reported in telegram 4486 from Amman, September 9, 0855Z. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, AV 12 US)

*Situation in Amman*

The fighting in Amman seems to have died down this afternoon after the more moderate fedayeen leaders responded favorably to a call by Army Chief of Staff Haditha for all sides to observe a cease-fire. It seems quite possible, however, that this is only another overnight lull.

The embassy reports that so far there have been no injuries among local American residents. Three embassy personnel, however, are missing and presumably being held by the guerrillas.<sup>4</sup>

*U.S. Actions*

The UN Security Council is expected now to meet this evening. It was originally scheduled—at our request—to meet this afternoon but the pre-meeting consultations have dragged on longer than expected. We are working for a resolution calling for the immediate release of the passengers and crews and urging that all possible measures be taken to insure against further hijacking or interference with international aviation.

We are still working with the Swiss, Germans and British to maintain a common front against the fedayeen demands and efforts to split us. We have also informed the Israelis that we find the message they asked us to forward to King Hussein to be unnecessarily threatening (it held his government fully responsible) and suggest they use their own direct channels to the Jordanians.

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<sup>4</sup> Reported in telegram 4517 from Amman, September 9, 1906Z. (Ibid., POL 23 JORDAN)

**217. Telegram From the Embassy in Jordan to the Department of State<sup>1</sup>**

Amman, September 9, 1970, 2032Z.

4521. Ref State 147107.<sup>2</sup> Following are our thoughts on questions raised Dept's reftel:

1. We are uncertain that Husain would be willing at this time—even at our instigation—to undertake final military confrontation with fedayeen. This suggested we believe by his lack of response to the many fedayeen provocations of past two weeks. Several of these could have furnished pretext for confrontation if this had been in his mind. More recently it suggested also by his commissioning Chief of Staff to establish cease-fire on basis previous much-abused agreements. King's unreceptiveness to such proposal from U.S. finally suggested by our having received no feelers from him this subject. If destruction of fedayeen were high on King's list of plans, we believe he would have raised matter with us by now.

2. Even if Husain were to imply to us that it now propitious time for strike against fedayeen, we would counsel restraint. Fedayeen have large number civilian hostages—including several U.S. officials—in their hands. If Husain were now to give army its head, it quite possible that many hostages would be killed and that former TWA/SwissAir passengers now at al-Urdun Hotel might be endangered. Our having given diplomatic support to GOJ strike at such inopportune time, moreover, would sooner or later become public knowledge.

3. If ICRC rescue operation fails, however, and hostages killed Embassy believes that we should then emphatically urge King to settle fedayeen hash once and for all. Safety of hostages in fact might be promoted if GOJ made it clear that harm to them would be signal for repression of entire fedayeen movement.

4. If Husain shows disposition—after encumbrance of aircraft passengers removed—to contemplate fedayeen roll-up we believe JAA adequate for job. This judgment would still hold even if Iraqis joined opposition, except that conflict would then be bloodier one.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 330, Subject Files, Hijackings. Secret; Immediate; Nodis. Received at 8:20 p.m. It was repeated to Tel Aviv.

<sup>2</sup> In telegram 147107 to Amman, September 9, Rogers solicited the Embassy's opinion on whether the U.S. Government should "press Hussein to provoke major confrontation" with the fedayeen and also asked if this could be done without Hussein requesting U.S. military intervention. (Ibid., RG 59, Central Files 1970-73, AV 12 US)

5. If confrontation seemed advisable or in the offing, we would discourage Husain's request for direct military intervention as follows: we would point out that such assistance probably not needed, and that victory achieved even with token U.S. presence could be political suicide. Any direct U.S. participation would discredit King in Arab eyes and strike at base of political and social order for which King feels self deeply responsible. We could offer instead assurances of political and diplomatic support with international community and with some of Husain's Arab neighbors. (In former capacity we could seek obtain assurances of at least neutrality of USSR.) At same time we should caution King against launching one-man campaign against fedayeen. We should urge that he make any drive against them appear legitimate inter-Arab police action and seek participation of at least small units from Saudi Arabia and UAR. In aftermath recent PFLP successes and probable leftward shift of whole fedayeen movement, both these states might be prepared to come out more strongly against fedayeen than heretofore.

6. *Comment:* We realize that action suggested para three (above) differs from recommendation Amman's 4495.<sup>3</sup> Past seven hours of violent confrontation, however, suggest to us that status of passengers is shifting from that of pawns in terrorist publicity game to that of instruments to be used by fedayeen in political struggle against GOJ. As passengers' political significance increases so do dangers to which they exposed. For this reason believe it now appropriate to ask GOJ to issue warning of most dire consequences if passengers or any other hostages are harmed.

**Odell**

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<sup>3</sup> See footnote 7, Document 214. Odell recommended against the Department urging King Hussein to threaten the PFLP with harm if anything happened to the hostages. Odell argued that such a threat might panic the PFLP into an act of desperation.

218. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon<sup>1</sup>

Washington, September 10, 1970, 8 a.m.

SUBJECT

Morning Report on Hijacking Situation

Below are described the main developments since yesterday evening on the hijacking situation.

*Passengers, Aircraft and Negotiations*

Red Cross representative Rochat reports that:

—The deadline on the ultimatum has been extended by the PFLP for an additional 72 hours. Presumably it would now expire at 10 p.m. EDT on Saturday.

—The number of Palestinians in Israeli hands whose release is being demanded by the PFLP is "very high indeed."

—He anticipates negotiations that may carry on for "several weeks."

—He is "most interested" in what the U.S. action might be in a "final crash."

For the first time, in a series of discussions with Rochat, an Embassy officer detected a note of real pessimism creeping into his attitude.

Although the deadline has been extended the lives of the passengers are still very much in danger. The fedayeen, apparently nervous over the possibility of outside intervention, have told Rochat that if there is any foreign military action in Jordan the three planes and all their occupants will be blown up. An attack on the hotel in Amman where some of the passengers are staying is also possible. Heavy fighting broke out in the vicinity of the hotel last night and the building took several direct hits, although apparently none of the guests were injured.<sup>2</sup> Our Embassy in Amman also points out that the status of the passengers is shifting from that of pawns in a terrorist publicity game to that of instruments being used by the fedayeen in a political struggle with the Jordanian Government.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 330, Subject Files, Hijackings. Top Secret; Sensitive. Sent for information. The time is handwritten at the top of the page.

<sup>2</sup> As reported in the *Washington Post*, September 10.

<sup>3</sup> See Document 217.

*Situation in Amman*

A pooled dispatch by several U.S. correspondents reflects continued fighting in Amman during the early morning hours.<sup>4</sup> Guerrillas and the security forces were trading shots and fighting was going on in several areas of the city, including at the airport. Many houses are said to have been destroyed.

The Embassy reports that King Hussein still appears unwilling to take the final military confrontation with the fedayeen.<sup>5</sup> They continue to believe, however, that the army would come out on top, even if the Iraqis joined the fedayeen.

*Diplomatic Situation*

The UN Security Council met for a short session last evening to approve, by consensus, a resolution expressing grave concern at the hijackings, and calling for the release of the passengers. The resolution also called for all possible legal steps to be taken to ensure against further hijackings and other interference with international travel. Ambassador Yost notes that the resolution puts both the Soviets and the Syrians squarely and unequivocally behind the appeal for the release of the hostages.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Transmitted in telegram 4532 from Amman, September 10, 0731Z. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, AV 12 US)

<sup>5</sup> Telegram 4571 from Amman, September 10, 2159Z. (Ibid., PS 23–10)

<sup>6</sup> The resolution was transmitted in telegram 1857 from USUN, September 10, 0014Z. (Ibid., AV 12) See *Foreign Relations, 1969–1976*, volume E-1, Documents on Global Issues, 1969–1972, Document 58.

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**219. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Jordan<sup>1</sup>**

Washington, September 10, 1970, 1510Z.

147976. Ref.: State 147736; Amman 4521.<sup>2</sup> Subject: Hijacking.

1. You should proceed to suggest to King Hussein that he pass warning to PFLP of direst of consequences if any of hostages should be harmed.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, AV 12. Secret; Immediate; Nodis. Drafted by Davies; cleared by U. Alexis Johnson and Curran (S/S); and approved by Sisco.

<sup>2</sup> Telegram 147736 to Amman, September 10, 0032Z. (Ibid.) Telegram 4521 is Document 217.

2. Unanimous decision of UNSC September 9 and expressions of outrage not only in West but also in East Bloc can be cited as indication of harm done overall Arab image by current detention hundreds of innocent travellers. Any harm to these could only heighten this feeling to detriment of overall Arab position.

Rogers

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## 220. Telegram From the Department of State to Certain Diplomatic Posts<sup>1</sup>

Washington, September 10, 1970, 1752Z.

148073. Ref: State 143328.<sup>2</sup> Subject: Soviet Approaches to Iraq and Jordan.

1. Soviet Chargé Vorontsov called at his request on Assistant Secretary Sisco September 9 to report that Soviet Government had made approaches in Amman and Baghdad regarding situation in Jordan. (These approaches presumably made in response to our request that Soviets intercede with Iraqis—reftel.)

2. Reading from Russian notes, Vorontsov said following representations had been made in Amman and Baghdad by Soviet representatives today: "Concern has been created in Moscow by information that the situation in Jordan has become aggravated in recent days. This concern is caused by the fact that a fratricidal fight among Arabs could cause heavy damage to their own interests, first of all, and, secondly, to the cause of establishing peace in the Middle East. In this case, advantages could only accrue to the enemies of the Arab nations, the Israeli aggressors and the imperialist forces behind them. The Soviet Government appeals to the Governments of Iraq and Jordan to demonstrate farsightedness and reasonable restraint so that an end can be brought to the dangerous developments in Jordan. A further aggravation of the situation should not be allowed since this would only worsen the general situation in the Middle East which is already complicated enough. The Soviet Government expresses the hope that ways will be

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970-73, POL 23 JORDAN. Secret; Exdis. Drafted on September 9 by Adolph Dubs (EUR/SOV); cleared by Davies; and approved by Sisco. It was sent to Amman, Beirut, USINT Cairo, London, Moscow, Paris, Tel Aviv, and USUN.

<sup>2</sup> Telegram 143328 to USUN, September 2, 1410Z. (Ibid.)

found to solve the problems which have arisen by peaceful means. This will be in the interest of the Arab nations and cause no damage to the unification of Arab states, the fight for liquidation of the consequences of Israeli aggression and the securing of the national rights and social progress by the Arab nations.”

3. Sisco replied that we continue to be concerned by the situation in Jordan. We are especially concerned by Iraqi support of the fedayeen. The presence of Iraqi troops in Jordan poses specter of their direct intervention in that country. U.S. hopes that this private Soviet message to Iraqis will help to underscore desirability of resolving situation in Jordan peacefully. We hope Soviet Government’s appeal will be helpful in this connection, despite use of some questionable language.

Rogers

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**221. Memorandum From the President’s Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon<sup>1</sup>**

Washington, September 10, 1970, 3 p.m.

SUBJECT

Mid-Day Report on the Hijacking Situation

The following are the major developments since my memorandum to you this morning on the hijacking situation.<sup>2</sup>

*Negotiations*

The PFLP has conveyed a provisional counter proposal to Rochat. You will recall that, with our encouragement, the British, Germans and Swiss all agreed to hand over the fedayeen in their custody *only if all* the passengers were released. The PFLP now proposes to permit the immediate evacuation of all the women, children and sick from the three aircraft (one report also says from the hotel) in return for the release of the fedayeen held by the British, Germans and Swiss (7 persons plus one corpse). The remaining male hostages would be released only

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 330, Subject Files, Hijackings. Secret. Sent for information. The time is handwritten at the top of the page.

<sup>2</sup> Document 218.



in exchange for a yet unspecified number of fedayeen held by the Israelis. This counter proposal is to be confirmed this afternoon after clearance by the PFLP with all the splinter groups of the fedayeen. The PFLP now confirms that the deadline on its ultimatum is 6:30 p.m. EDT Saturday.

Rochat thinks that such an initial evacuation would be a positive step and would perhaps even assist in the negotiations for the men. He points out, however, that this would mean that the remaining male hostages would be used to exact from the Israelis the release of probably about 600 Palestinians. Our embassy in Tel Aviv comments that the Israelis will not necessarily oppose the proposal because of its humanitarian aspect and lack of discrimination by nationality or religion.<sup>3</sup> The most important factor, however, may be the precise commitment required by Israel in releasing the fedayeen prisoners.

The ambassadors of western states involved, including the U.S., are meeting in Bern this afternoon to consider the counter-proposal.<sup>4</sup>

#### *Condition of Passengers*

The condition of the hostages at the site of the aircraft has improved somewhat from yesterday with the arrival of further provisions and sanitation facilities. Health conditions are expected to improve further with the transport to the landing strip later today of additional Red Cross medical supplies and equipment. We are assured by the Red Cross that those passengers still on board the aircraft are physically well, although showing signs of strain and tension.

As for the passengers now in the hotel in Amman, their supply of comestibles is supposedly adequate for 10 more days and the utilities are still in operation. An earlier report that the hotel had fallen into the hands of the fedayeen has fortunately proved incorrect, although, of course, the fedayeen are still treating them as hostages for bargaining purposes. Some passengers from the BOAC plane that was hijacked yesterday have begun to arrive at the hotel.

#### *Situation in Amman*

Amman was reported by the embassy to be quiet and subdued this morning.<sup>5</sup> Experience, however, has shown that if there is to be shooting it does not usually begin until middle or late afternoon. There was only the sparse and occasional shooting in Amman this morning.

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<sup>3</sup> Telegram 4945 from Tel Aviv, September 10, 0930Z. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970-73, AV 12 US)

<sup>4</sup> See footnote 4, Document 222.

<sup>5</sup> Telegram from Amman, September 10, 1241Z. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970-73, POL 23 JORDAN)

Two embassy officers are still missing and presumably in the hands of the fedayeen. A third officer, earlier reported missing, has turned up unharmed and was only unable to contact the embassy yesterday rather than having been picked up by the fedayeen.

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## 222. Minutes of a Washington Special Actions Group Meeting<sup>1</sup>

Washington, September 10, 1970, 3:15–4 p.m.

### SUBJECT

Middle East (See Part II for discussion of Cambodia)

### PARTICIPANTS

State	JCS
U. Alexis Johnson	Adm. Thomas H. Moorer
Joseph J. Sisco	Lt. Gen. Melvin Zais
Rodger P. Davies	General John W. Vogt
Defense	NSC Staff
David Packard	Harold H. Saunders
Robert Pranger	Col. Kennedy
CIA	Mrs. Jeanne Davis
Richard Helms	
Thomas Karamessines	
David Blee	

### SUMMARY OF DECISIONS

It was decided:

1. that the WSAG Middle East Working Group would prepare;
  - a. a political-military scenario-contingency plan for deterring Soviet intervention in the event Israel were to employ its forces in support of King Hussein at his request against the Fedayeen<sup>2</sup> and;
  - b. alternate packages of equipment support for Israel based on alternative assumptions as to the level of hostilities and threat to Israel resulting from Israeli intervention in support of King Hussein at his request against Fedayeen in Jordan.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-114, Washington Special Actions Group, WSAG Minutes (Originals) 1969 and 1970. Top Secret. The meeting took place in the White House Situation Room. Kissinger is not listed as a participant but he chaired the meeting.

<sup>2</sup> Not found.

<sup>3</sup> Not found.

2. that the political military Contingency plan for U.S. intervention in Jordan in support of King Hussein at his request against Fedayeen would be reviewed and revised as necessary for consideration by the WSAG.

Mr. Sisco: To bring us up to date on the hijacking situation, I have had a report from Bern that we have received a counter proposal from the PFLP: If the three governments will release the captured commandos (7 in all and the body of the one killed), the PFLP will release all the women, children and sick without any discrimination as to nationality—i.e. including Israelis. As a second stage, they would exchange all the rest of the passengers for the Fedayeen (numbers unspecified) held by Israel.<sup>4</sup> This proposal has a certain amount of public appeal and we consider it a clever PFLP stratagem. It forces the four nations to decide to act together to turn down the proposal but put pressure on Israel; or, to act on a piece-meal basis and leave unresolved the most serious problem—the exchange of the balance of the passengers for the Israeli-held Fedayeen.

Dr. Kissinger: They are using the nationals of other countries as hostages for the Israeli prisoners.

Mr. Johnson: If Israel accepts, they accept the *principle* of hostages.

Mr. Sisco: Just before the Bern meeting,<sup>5</sup> we are told, Eban sent a private message to Home to the effect that if the four countries acted together and held out for the release of all passengers and the aircraft, Israel would reconsider its position. At the meeting, the ICRC representative said the PFLP counterproposal was discriminatory and he would not proceed on that basis. He demanded the release of all passengers, without discrimination, and the aircraft; or the ICRC would pull out of the negotiations. The UK, German and Swiss representatives took the same position, and the proposal was rejected. The UK representative then asked for the Israeli position on the exchange of the prisoners. The U.S. representative, as instructed, let others take the lead. The Israelis took a very hard line—in effect “no deal”. The four asked that the Israeli representative go back for instructions and he

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<sup>4</sup> No report from Bern was found, but an NEA Working Group Situation Report, September 10, 1800 EDT, includes the PFLP counterproposal. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 330, Subject Files, Hijackings)

<sup>5</sup> The meeting of the Bern Group, comprised of representatives from the United States, West Germany, Great Britain, Switzerland, and Israel, commenced at 1715Z. The representatives unanimously rejected the PFLP counterproposal and the British asked the Israeli representative to contact his government regarding Israel's position on the release of fedayeen prisoners in Israeli prisons as part of a possible deal with the PFLP. (Telegram 2160 from Bern, September 10, 1905Z; *ibid.*, RG 59, Central Files 1970-73, PS 7-6 JORDAN)

agreed to do so. Another meeting has been set for 6:00 p.m., EDT.<sup>6</sup> I think this represents a bit of progress.

Ron Ziegler is having trouble with press reports about the possibility of military intervention. We should hold to a line which neither adds to the speculation nor is absolutely categorical that nothing is intended.

Mr. Johnson: We have said previously that we are relying on diplomatic channels and the ICRC efforts. We should stick with that.

All agreed.

(Mr. Sisco left the room at Mr. Ziegler's request)

Mr. Johnson: The situation in Amman has quieted down.

Admiral Moorer: The Ambassador has not made any recommendation for an evacuation.

Dr. Kissinger: Who is fighting whom and to what end?

Mr. Davies: The 1st Brigade of the Jordanian Army and the radical Fedayeen—possibly the PLO.

Mr. Helms: It is unclear just who is involved. The King has said for the ninetieth time that if this present cease-fire doesn't hold, he has had it.

Dr. Kissinger: The radio report we had yesterday meant that Hussein was leashing the Army, rather than unleashing it, didn't it?

Mr. Davies: Yes. He asked the Army to restore control.

Dr. Kissinger: What is his game?

Mr. Helms: He wants to avoid fighting.

Dr. Kissinger: But that means his end. There is no way for him to get back control without fighting.

Mr. Saunders: He may think there is a difference between fighting now and after the hijacking crisis is over.

Mr. Helms: I don't think that is a determining factor. He is simply not willing to take on the Palestinians in his Kingdom, with the possible help they would receive from the Iraqis, possibly the Syrians. We have reports that the Fedayeen are virtually out of ammunition—that they would have run out days ago if they had not been supplied by the Iraqis.

Mr. Johnson: What is their normal source of supply?

Mr. Helms: Various sources—at present, the Iraqis.

Admiral Moorer: They have been buying arms and stealing them from the Jordanian Army.

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<sup>6</sup> See Document 224.

Dr. Kissinger: How good is the Iraqi Army?

Mr. Helms: As an Army, no good; as bandits, all right.

Dr. Kissinger: Can the Jordanians handle them?

Mr. Helms: We don't know; probably.

Dr. Kissinger: But the Israelis could handle them easier.

Mr. Helms: No question.

Admiral Moorer: It would be no contest.

Dr. Kissinger: Can we discuss the additional assistance package for Israel which the President requested last Friday? Can we agree on a position that it shouldn't be done, but if it is done, this is a package that makes sense?

Mr. Packard: This package provides for 125 sorties. There is some dispute about the number of sites.

Dr. Kissinger: We can forward it to the President as the one making the most sense. We can tell him we have put together other packages for other contingencies.

Mr. Packard: This package includes the package already committed.

Dr. Kissinger: What will it lead to if the President sticks by his Friday decision to send additional material?

Mr. Johnson: The original package plus this add-on.

Mr. Package: This will double the sortie capability of the original package.

Mr. Saunders: It doubles the expendable munitions.

Dr. Kissinger: Should the President hold this for his discussion with Mrs. Meir<sup>7</sup> or should we offer it now?

Mr. Johnson: Hold it for Mrs. Meir, by all means. The President can decide whether or not he wants to relate it to the New York talks.

Dr. Kissinger: Yes. Last week the President was relating it to the Egyptian violations. (to Mr. Johnson) Will you include this item in your memorandum to the President for his meeting with Mrs. Meir?

Mr. Johnson: Yes. We will include our recommendation on this additional package.

Dr. Kissinger: (to Mr. Saunders) Will you do a memorandum to the President on the package?

Can we now review our hijacking contingency plans? We agreed yesterday on two categories: 1) a military evacuation of Jordan, and 2) a military campaign in support of Hussein. We agreed that, if Jordanian troops could not succeed alone and outside help was required, that

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<sup>7</sup> Documentation on Meir's visit is scheduled for publication in *Foreign Relations*, 1969-1976, volume XXIII, Arab-Israeli Dispute, 1969-1972.

U.S. troops would be preferable for the first category and Israeli troops for the second. The forces required would be roughly the same. (to Admiral Moorer) Have you been able to review what we might do?

Admiral Moorer: It is clearly understood that whatever we do from Europe must be such that it will not leak. Generals Throckmorton and Goodpaster both understand this. It is agreed that there is nothing we could do from Fort Bragg without a leak. We do have one battalion on 22-hour continuous alert plus flight time at Bragg.

Dr. Kissinger: So one battalion would be ready to go in 22 hours. Could others follow in 48 hours or when?

Admiral Moorer: There are two determining factors: the time required to marry the aircraft and the troops and that required to prepare and load the planes and troops for paratroop.

In Europe we have the Crescent Cap exercise in which one company of paratroops is prepared to load out and move in four hours. One light infantry battalion can move in 8 hours; others in increased times.

Dr. Kissinger: Can one company do anything?

Admiral Moorer: That is 484 men. They could seize and hold an airfield.

Dr. Kissinger: For 4 hours?

General Zais: There could be some paratroop follow-up if necessary.

Admiral Moorer: This is the best we can do without the risk of its becoming public.

(Mr. Sisco returned)

Mr. Johnson: How long could they continue to hold?

Admiral Moorer: For several weeks. We would have the problem of readjusting our air assets. It takes 10–12 hours to get tactical aircraft to bases—Turkey or Cyprus if we use land-based air.

Dr. Kissinger: The Turks wouldn't let us in, would they?

Admiral Moorer: Probably not. With regard to the Navy, some ships could begin to move in four hours without any public awareness. We could move two submarines into the Mediterranean to keep track of what the Soviet ships are doing. We could put ASW patrol aircraft into the central Mediterranean. We also have an amphibious operation on Crete which is due to be backloaded on September 14. We have taken every action we can take now without signalling an increased alert. Goodpaster and Throckmorton are aware of the problem and there is nothing else we can do now without risking a leak.

Dr. Kissinger: To recap, we could have one company in within four hours plus flying time. We could have an infantry battalion in within eight hours plus flying time. The rest would follow—how soon?

Admiral Moorer: Within 24–28 hours, including alert time and flight time.

Dr. Kissinger: What gaps would there be after the battalion gets in? How long does the battalion have to hold?

Admiral Moorer: 24 hours alone; 48 hours before a brigade could get in. You understand that two battalions are understrength due to the general worldwide draw-down of the Army. In the meantime, we could start moving units of the 82nd Airborne.

Dr. Kissinger: Would it be possible to put this on a chart?

Admiral Moorer: Yes, but the situation changes by the minute. For example, some European units are now moving to training areas and would have to be brought back.

Dr. Kissinger: It's easier for you to visualize these things than for me. The President will be deciding this issue in a condition of stress. Can we give him an idea of the magnitude of the problem?

Admiral Moorer: I think this is as far as we can go now.

Dr. Kissinger: It sounds right to me.

Mr. Packard: I suggest, rather than supply a plan now, that the Chiefs keep the plan updated and when the President needs it he can call for it and get an updated plan.

Admiral Moorer: We could give you one to give you the feel of it. You should call us before you give it to the President, however.

Dr. Kissinger: I assure you no decision will be taken to implement any plan without the Chairman and Secretary Laird in the room. I was thinking of this for illustrative purposes.

Mr. Packard: (to Admiral Moorer) Your people should keep this updated.

Admiral Moorer: We have been keeping an updated plan since June.

Dr. Kissinger: Can we discuss the second operation—to support Hussein. I'm aware of the argument that it wouldn't do Hussein any permanent good and it would be better if the Israelis did it, but we had better have a plan on the off chance we have to do it. There is one additional alternative. The President wants us to consider using aircraft against the Fedayeen—not necessarily ground forces. If the King should ask for help, we should consider providing air support.

Admiral Moorer: Our first recommendation is that we should not get involved. If we do, our first preference would be for the use of air against ground units, LOC, etc. One problem is that the Fedayeen provide no discrete targets.

(Mr. Sisco left the room again at Ziegler's request)

If the Iraqis should come across, their LOC would be visible and could be attacked by air either from carriers or from Cyprus.

Dr. Kissinger: Can we have an operational plan?

Mr. Johnson: This would require a minimum of forward air controllers.

Admiral Moorer: It is a feasible option.

Dr. Kissinger: Can you work it out?

Admiral Moorer: Yes. The *Independence* is only 100 miles from the beach.

Mr. Packard: This would require only giving an order to the carrier.  
(Mr. Sisco returned)

Admiral Moorer: One third preference would be a ground operation in Jordan. The principal problem here is logistics. Initially, at least, we would have no seaport. We would require overflight facilities, or a move across Israel, a base in Lebanon, etc. The main difficulty would be fuel. If we had to mount a sustained operation, we would need ground access to Jordan proper.

Dr. Kissinger: How?

Admiral Moorer: We would need clearance to move across Israel or Lebanon.

Mr. Packard: (to Admiral Moorer) You should emphasize your caveat that you recommend against the operation.

Admiral Moorer: Yes, I recommend against it. The problem is logistics. An air operation could be done, but a ground operation would be a real problem.

Mr. Packard: Not to mention what would happen if the Soviets intervened on the other side.

Admiral Moorer: The Soviets have good reaction capability. They are capable of moving from Black Sea ports in about 120 hours. They could have ground forces to Egypt or Syria within 15–16 days.

Dr. Kissinger: Once we put in our four brigades, that's it then, unless we bring in troops from Germany.

Admiral Moorer: No. We could take troops from Europe or from the US. We have a Marine Battalion in the Mediterranean, some Marine Battalions on the West Coast. We would be stripped clean, however. If this should happen, we are at a mobilization level. If we got in a situation where there were indications that the Soviets were coming in, we shouldn't monkey around. We should tell the Soviets we mean business and show them by augmenting the 6th Fleet, moving tactical fighter squadrons and putting SAC on alert.

Mr. Johnson: We may want to do those things as a deterrent before the Soviets move.

Mr. Helms: Yes. If you wait until they move you're finished.

Admiral Moorer: Yes, we should establish a deterrent. We should call for partial or full mobilization, ask for a budget supplemental, divert materiel from Southeast Asia. We can't do it half-way; we have to be convincing.



Dr. Kissinger: To do what?

Admiral Moorer: To take a posture to deter the Soviets.

Dr. Kissinger: Suppose the President decides to assist the Jordanians. Does he have to do all these things?

Admiral Moorer: He should be prepared to take some or all of the series of measures I described.

Dr. Kissinger: Can you write them down? We don't want to go this course, but if we have to, let's be sure we do it right.

Admiral Moorer: The movement of one ship or one squadron is a feeble gesture that won't serve the purpose.

Dr. Kissinger: If the Israelis go into Jordan with ground forces, possibly with US air support, would we necessarily take these actions against the Soviets?

Admiral Moorer: No.

Dr. Kissinger: If we commit US forces for a sustained operation in Jordan, can we put together a contingency plan including these measures? (to Kennedy and Saunders) Will you put together something next week?

Admiral Moorer: You should clearly indicate US resolve—and possibly establish a requirement for mobilization.

Dr. Kissinger: We must look at it from the point of view of what is politically bearable—from the foreign policy point of view. We should get the list of measures you describe, let everyone look at it in the Working Group and agree that this is what we want to do.

Admiral Moorer: I would want the opportunity to selectively recommend certain steps.

Dr. Kissinger: You will. I want to narrow these steps to those which are more likely.

Admiral Moorer: I agree.

Dr. Kissinger: What if there is a collapse of Royal authority and Hussein asks for help, the Iraqis intervene, and Israel enters Jordan? We may have to provide assistance for Israel and take measures to deter Soviet intervention.

Admiral Moorer: They would be the same as those I described if the US was prepared to stop the intervention.

Dr. Kissinger: We can't mobilize before the Soviets intervene.

Mr. Packard: We could move at a lower level.

Dr. Kissinger: I consider this not a remote possibility—I think it is quite possible.

Mr. Packard: The Israelis have all the capability they need to intervene now.

Dr. Kissinger: Not to overcome a Soviet intervention. We might have to hold the ring.

Mr. Sisco: Any Iraqi invasion would increase the amount of support Iraq is getting from the Soviets.

Mr. Packard: The Israelis have the capacity now, but the question is for how long. The US might have to step-up supplies to them later.

Dr. Kissinger: No one is talking about doing it now. If Israel wants to move into Jordan, what are we letting ourselves in for; and what measures must we be prepared to take against the Soviets? It is silly to close our eyes to the possible results of Israeli intervention.

Mr. Pranger: There are different contingencies depending on what the Israelis would want to do. We have broken it down by the scale of the intervention, what the Arabs would do, etc.

Dr. Kissinger: Having a contingency plan doesn't mean we would do it. I don't want the President to tell us to do something without our knowing: 1) what we must do for Israel and 2) what measures we should take to prevent Soviet intervention.

Mr. Sisco: What would Israel need in the face of a sustained Iraqi intervention in Jordan? What if the Egyptians step up their activities on the Canal? What would Lebanon need to face a Palestinian uprising there?

Mr. Johnson: What assumptions can we make about the Jordanian Army?

Dr. Kissinger: It is easier to discuss these things now than on the morning it happens.

Mr. Pranger: We have looked at the matter. A limited Israeli intervention would require no additional military gear. From there on we have estimated levels of intervention from the other side. Israel would probably not need anything except expendables. We have an estimate here.

(Mr. Pranger passed a paper to Mr. Saunders)<sup>8</sup>

Mr. Packard: Basically, they could do it with what they have—or we could go as high as \$100 million a month.

Dr. Kissinger: Is \$100 million a month the only alternative to doing nothing?

Mr. Packard: We could do anything in between on a graduated basis.

Dr. Kissinger: We should be able to make some realistic assumptions in between—what the Egyptians would do, what the Iraqis would do.

Admiral Moorer: Israel would in effect be fighting on two fronts. Against the Iraqis, they would be using 500-pound bombs and ground-

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<sup>8</sup> Not found.

type ammunition. They have a stockpile of these things, which we would probably have to replenish. The \$100 million a month would be for a sustained war of attrition including the missiles in Egypt. This would not necessarily happen right away.

Dr. Kissinger: I might put my Program Analysis people on it and pull something together, which you could critique.

Mr. Packard: This represents only 24 hours work. If we put it into a Working Group, we can have a contingency plan. We would have to work with the Israeli Defense people if it actually happened.

Admiral Moorer: I believe there are four components of a deterrent: 1) our military posture in Europe, which we could increase by deploying additional Army, Navy and Air units; 2) our strategic position, in which we should alert SAC and deploy our missile submarines.

All these actions should be vigorous and visible.

Dr. Kissinger: We would take these actions if Israeli forces became engaged in Jordan and before the Soviets move?

Admiral Moorer: We should take deterrent action before they move. What do you mean by move?

Dr. Kissinger: Suppose the King asks the Israelis (or the US) for help against the Fedayeen or Iraq and Israel gets involved. What do we need to hold the ring against the Soviets?

Admiral Moorer: If we receive a political warning we could establish an advanced position.

Mr. Packard: There are two ways the Soviets might become involved: 1) through unlimited support for Egypt, Iraq, etc; there is no way we can stop them from doing that; or 2) if they should intervene with their forces, we could do these other things.

Dr. Kissinger: We may want to prevent the second possibility by assuming an intimidating posture.

Mr. Sisco: If you assume a limited operation in Jordan could be done by air; and if, by unlimited support of Egypt and Iraq, the Soviets unleash the Egyptians to intensify the situation on the Canal; there would be a tremendous need for Israel to counter with air. Do the Israelis have enough air power to mount a campaign against an Egyptian attack and at the same time mount an aerial operation against Iraqi troops? Iraq also has an Air Force which must be taken into account.

Mr. Packard: That would mean essentially the \$100 million a month package. If things went that far, the Israelis wouldn't be satisfied in a defensive position. This would mean all-out Middle East war.

Dr. Kissinger: It would not necessarily be all-out Middle East war. It would be a campaign of attrition along the Canal plus the operation in Jordan.

Mr. Packard: But we could assume the Israelis would go on the offensive.

Dr. Kissinger: Maybe they won't. Maybe they would be satisfied to hold one area and clean up the other.

Mr. Helms: For how long?

Mr. Sisco: Lebanon has even less control over the Palestinians. What would be required on that end? That is probably the way it would evolve, but it would be not quite all-out war.

Mr. Pranger: The Israelis will have good tactical air capability. The A4s could easily interdict LOC.

Admiral Moorer: Israel would first destroy the Iraqi and Syrian aircraft; then shift to the A4s to interdict ground operations. They could then turn their more sophisticated aircraft to Egypt.

Dr. Kissinger: Would they have enough?

Admiral Moorer: Yes, but we should be prepared to replace their losses.

Dr. Kissinger: Let's ask the Working Group to give us the various levels of what it would look like.

Admiral Moorer: May I return to the four components of a deterrent posture toward the Soviets: In addition to the two I mentioned (our military posture in Europe and our strategic position), we would have to 3) establish lines of communication through a hostile ocean and 4) take action within the country, including calling up the reserves, changing current personnel rules, extending enlistments, etc.—some things which would require Congressional authorizations.

Dr. Kissinger: That looks like the \$100 million package. If the Israeli forces move into Jordan you wouldn't need all that. You would need some diplomatic action somewhere.

Mr. Johnson: Yes, we need a political-military scenario. The diplomatic side of preventing the Soviets from coming in would be most important. What support we could get in the area, for example.

Admiral Moorer: But you have to convince the Soviets you mean business.

Mr. Johnson: And have the capability to back it up. This would require the support of others.

Dr. Kissinger: We should get this in order—what we might do politically with the Soviets, with NATO, etc. Have the Working Group put something together.

**223. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Jordan and the Mission to the United Nations<sup>1</sup>**

Washington, September 11, 1970, 0027Z.

148727. Subject: British Idea of UN Presence in Jordan; British Evacuation from Jordan.

*Summary.* British Emb Counselor Moberly under instructions informed Dep Assist Secy Atherton Sept 10 that (1) UK sounding out U Thant on stationing of UN civilian presence at Dawson's Landing, and (2) London exploring possibility of evacuation under ICRC auspices of British and other foreign nationals from Jordan starting morning of Sept 12. Moberly said Iraqis informed British Sept 10 that Iraqi Govt has decided to work for release of passengers, crew, and hijacked aircraft in Jordan. Assist Secy Sisco later informed British Amb Freeman we do not consider the idea of a UN presence a good one and gave our reasons. Freeman said he agreed entirely and would make use of US analysis. *End summary.*

1. Moberly said British are taking soundings on following scheme with U Thant and Bern powers. UN civilian presence would be established at Dawson's Landing to (a) exert some restraint on PFLP, (b) focus world attention further on hostages, and (c) provide basis for further international action to obtain release of hostages if ICRC gives up. London considers GOJ and PFLP agreement would be needed and also that of Rochat. It especially important not to make his task more difficult.

2. Moberly continued London thinks Security Council directive to SYG may be necessary, assuming SYG agrees with scheme. Or perhaps SYG could bypass UNSC and send representatives to Jordan for humanitarian reasons on his own authority. UK UN has been instructed to seek SYG's views. Moberly did not know if this has been done yet. If SYG favorable, London would formally consult in Bern with all concerned. UK Ambassador in Bern has already been instructed to inform others of scheme.

3. Atherton said we would study British idea and would be interested in SYG's views, which Moberly undertook to pass on promptly.

4. Moberly said Embassy was instructed to inform USG of new development in UK evacuation plans from Jordan. London has agreed

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970-73, AV 12. Confidential; Priority. Drafted on September 10 by Walter Smith (NEA/UAR) and approved by Atherton. It was repeated to London (Priority), Bern, Bonn, Geneva, Beirut, USINT Cairo, Tel Aviv, Moscow, and Paris.

with British Ambassador Amman to begin steps to obtain additional aircraft for removal of Britons under ICRC auspices. British have discussed matter with ICRC in Geneva. ICRC ready to accept responsibility, but said details should be worked out on spot. British have determined Middle East Airlines has charters available if needed.

5. Moberly continued British Ambassador Amman wondered if Red Cross reps in Jordan would want to involve themselves in evacuation before finishing with passengers and hijacked aircraft. London has sent fresh instructions to him to take any opportunity to reduce numbers of Britons in Jordan and has told Ambassador to request Red Cross reps to make arrangements with GOJ and also fedayeen, whose forbearance will be required. Ambassador is to consult his US and other colleagues and then approach Red Cross.

6. Moberly answered Atherton's question affirmatively that evacuation would be for any and all nationals who would want to join. Moberly said evacuation is to start not later than morning of September 12. UK will arrange additional charter aircraft for Red Cross.

7. Atherton thanked Moberly for information and said we would await judgment of US Chargé in Amman about situation on ground. Moberly suggested matter be further discussed between US and British sides in Bern and Amman.

8. Moberly said Embassy had just received telegram from British Chargé in Baghdad reporting his conversation Sept 10 with Iraqi Foreign Ministry official Jamali. He told Chargé that Revolutionary Command Council had been sitting and he had been authorized to say that Iraqi Government disapproved of hijackings on principle. They would, though not themselves involved, exert every effort with fedayeen to obtain release of all "civilians" detained in Jordan as a result of the hijackings. When Chargé sought clarification Jamali explained that this meant all passengers and crew irrespective of nationality. Iraqis would also work for release of the aircraft. Jamali said that he would be conveying same message to representatives in Baghdad of countries which were members of Security Council.

9. Subsequently Sisco called Ambassador Freeman to express our judgment that we did not consider idea of a UN presence, made up of two or so representatives of the SYG, as a good one. ICRC rep has non-political image, is an outstanding man, and doing a highly effective job. To introduce reps of the UN, which inevitably would bring with it background of the political debates in New York, would be to add both a superfluous and complicating factor to a situation which seems to be moving reasonably well. It would have to be explained to the ICRC, which in turn may misunderstand the situation as casting doubt on the excellent efforts it is making. Finally, as Ambassador Freeman knew Israeli position is key: injection of a UN element would

hardly encourage a positive reaction on part of Israelis. Freeman agreed wholeheartedly with this analysis, thanked Sisco for it, and said he would make very good use of it.

10. Later same evening, Moberly called Atherton to report that UKUN had raised UN presence idea with SYG whose reaction had been negative. Moberly assumed idea was now dead.

Rogers

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## 224. Telegram From the Embassy in Switzerland to the Department of State<sup>1</sup>

Bern, September 11, 1970, 0300Z.

2168. 1. In long meeting which broke up at 0200 Sep 11, following emerged:

A. We considered approved PFLP counterproposals transmitted by Rochat (Bern 2162).<sup>2</sup>

B. Drafted and transmitted agreed comments to Rochat (Bern 2163).<sup>3</sup>

C. Drafted and transmitted a separate telegram to Rochat at UK Prime Minister Heath's telephoned request asking for the immediate unconditional evacuation of all women and children (Bern 2164).<sup>4</sup>

2. Israeli Ambassador did not attend although invited and available. He communicated by telephone Israeli response to Bern Group request for a statement of position. The Israeli Government has discussed the matter, he said, the answer is negative. No one in the Israeli Government is prepared to liberate fedayeen.

3. Although there are a few hopeful elements in Rochat's last report, the Bern Group was seriously disturbed by the progressive escalation of PLFP demands. There was serious discussion, led by Swiss, of outright rejection of entire PLFP counterproposal. Agreement was reached on text transmitted Rochat (Bern 2163) only by restating what

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970-73, PS 7-6 JORDAN. Confidential; Immediate. It was repeated to Amman (Immediate), Beirut, Bonn, London, Tel Aviv, and Geneva.

<sup>2</sup> Telegram 2162 from Bern, September 11, 0040Z. (Ibid.)

<sup>3</sup> Telegram 2163 from Bern, September 11, 0140Z. (Ibid.)

<sup>4</sup> Telegram 2164 from Bern, September 11, 0150Z. (Ibid.)

was not acceptable in order to leave RoCHAT some power of action. Recall that ICRC Geneva has made clear early on both to RoCHAT and to Bern Group that this counterproposal, even in earlier incarnation, was unacceptable to ICRC (para 2 Bern 2160).<sup>5</sup>

4. UK, on instructions British Cabinet, raised question of contingency planning in event ICRC was forced abandon its mission. They suggested UN civilian presence, perhaps personal representative of UN SecGen. We understand Washington has received details of this directly from UK.<sup>6</sup>

Thalman, as former UN personal representative of SecGen did not favor. Lack of clear direction and low prestige of UN in area seemed to rule this out. He suggested quadripartite group on Middle East at UN in NY. Failure of RoCHAT mission could well lead to new dangerous and major crisis situation and representation by major powers could be stabilizing force. Coordination with Swiss and Germans as non-UN members posed no insurmountable problems. Important thing was to have someone waiting in the wings with real authority and prepared to step in immediately should ICRC mission fail. Otherwise there would be an immediate tendency to settle bilaterally with a potentially dangerous residue.

We agreed seek government views on these contingency thoughts. Thalman's views represent Swiss Government thinking.

5. UK also announced British Cabinet decision to seek evacuation of British civilians from Jordan if ICRC agrees. They hoped begin not later than morning of September 12. Despite extended rationale, this announcement went over like a lead balloon.

6. In view major difficulties with text, accuracy and distribution of last two PFLP proposals through ICRC Geneva, Bern Group decided and arranged with ICRC for immediate telex transmission from Geneva to FPD with immediate distribution of written text to four powers and Israelis here. This will preclude some of the confusion arising today from different texts.

**Davis**

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<sup>5</sup> See footnote 5, Document 222.

<sup>6</sup> See Document 223.



**225. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon<sup>1</sup>**

Washington, September 11, 1970.

## SUBJECT

Mid-Day Report on Hijacking Situation

The following are the major developments since my memorandum to you this morning on the hijacking situation:<sup>2</sup>

*Negotiations and Passengers*

The negotiations for the release of the hostages seem to have reached a critical stage. The fedayeen leaders apparently began to panic when the rumors of military intervention reached them this morning and began taking a series of uncoordinated decisions. There is considerable confusion in Amman and the situation appears extremely fluid, but here is the latest report from Red Cross representative Rochat:

—"Fantastic tension" reigns at the PFLP headquarters and "we are seeing these people as they really are—angry and desperate." He is trying to calm them and has made an appeal to reestablish the previous negotiating position and avoid reacting to rumors.

—He fully anticipates that the PFLP will take some action to demonstrate the seriousness of their intent. The PFLP will give him certain "warning measures" this afternoon.

—The three aircraft have been wired for bombing, but the passengers have been removed from them. The passengers are still, however, at the landing strip. Rochat is "nearly convinced" that they will not come to immediate harm and hopes to learn more about what can be done this afternoon.

—The PFLP has sanctioned the evacuation from Jordan of the passengers presently at the hotel in Amman with "no conditions" attached. A first group of 66 has already been evacuated by air from Jordan and are headed for Cyprus.

—The deadline on the ultimatum has been cancelled and no new deadline has been announced.

The Germans are again showing some indications of breaking away from the multinational approach. A high official of Chancellor

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 330, Subject Files, Hijackings. Secret. Sent for information. The date followed by a question mark is handwritten. While Kissinger did not initial the memorandum, a handwritten note at the top of the first page reads: "K saw."

<sup>2</sup> The overnight developments on the highjacking situation are in an 8:30 a.m. memorandum for the President. (Ibid., Box 331, Subject Files, Hijackings)

Brandt's SPD is reportedly to be sent to Amman to make contact with the PFLP. We are making a forceful representation direct to Chancellor Brandt, if possible, urging the Germans to desist from making any special deal and to recall his emissary or at least instruct him to deal only with Red Cross representative Rochat.<sup>3</sup>

An earlier report of a further hijacking has proved false.<sup>4</sup>

*Situation in Amman*

The cease-fire reached yesterday appears to be holding up fairly well so far. The situation is still very tense, however, and new fighting could break out at any time.

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<sup>3</sup> Transmitted in telegram 148818 to Bonn, September 11, 1531Z. (Ibid., RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, AV 12 US)

<sup>4</sup> Not further identified.

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**226. Transcript of a Telephone Conversation Between President Nixon and the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)<sup>1</sup>**

Washington, September 11, 1970.

P: Anything new?

K: No.

P: Are you going to Camp David?

K: I thought I would keep in touch with the situation here. All the passengers are off the planes. It's not clear if they are going to Amman. The first Caravelle of passengers are in Nicosia. 40 of the passengers are Americans.

P: Maybe I should have played that sooner. Dead or alive. We would have a terrible thing on our hands, I guess. We will not play a soft game in the future.

K: And every time we use the hard line, it works. We have a cable in from ICRC fellow saying that they seem confused and worried at the top. So they are not world baiters.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, Kissinger Telephone Conversations, Box 30, Chronological Files. No classification marking. Although no exact time appears on the transcript, a notation indicates that the telephone call took place in the afternoon.

P: They are afraid they will move on other things. The trip thing is working.<sup>2</sup>

K: We have heard from the Italians but not the Yugoslavs.

P: Do you think that's because he's on a trip?

K: Saragat<sup>3</sup> has invited you to stay at the Quirinale.

P: All right.

K: He has also offered you his Villa near Naples.

P: They are very generous. I just wish Saragat were their Prime Minister.

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<sup>2</sup> President Nixon was scheduled to travel to Europe and the United Kingdom September 27–October 5.

<sup>3</sup> Giuseppe Saragat was the President of the Republic of Italy 1964–1971.

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## 227. Transcript of a Telephone Conversation Between the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) and Secretary of State Rogers<sup>1</sup>

Washington, September 11, 1970, 5:15 p.m.

K: Hi Bill.

R: Hi Henry. I was returning your call.

K: I was just checking with you. The President has mentioned a few times that cable.<sup>2</sup>

R: Well, . . . Arabs not planning military action but just warning them. It is drafted but does not sound right. We must think what message we are trying to convey.

K: I don't want to fall on my sword. There are a couple of arguments for this. . . . moderate Arabs to go back to the guerrillas and say that if behave badly that . . . two principal arguments for it. . . . and if, believes movement of Fleet would contribute. I recognize that both of these arguments could be turned around.

R: Well, when we thought about it . . . Movement of ships prevented from having passengers . . . Continued to say that we would not do

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, Kissinger Telephone Conversations, Box 30, Chronological Files. No classification marking. The date is handwritten and a typed note indicates the conversation was "paraphrased."

<sup>2</sup> Not further identified.

anything . . . Arabists in our shop say that when you are dealing with these highly emotional people if you use threats it is counterproductive. The Fedayeen–Syria–Iraq have done all they can to come out against PFLP. You think that is generally what they will do to pick off the passengers. That Red Cross fellow I think is damn good.

K: It's an operational question.

R: We did talk to the Ambassadors. The Arab Ambassadors are behaving pretty well. . . . [*less than 1 line not declassified*] Other Africans, even Syria are being good. There is a big question whether we should say to them this is what we are going to do so get a move on.

K: No! No, only if any passengers are harmed.

R: Any way you phrase it. We do not really hold you responsible but if anything happens . . . Jordanians have surrounded the PFLP . . . I just wonder and let's think about it. We can decide tomorrow. We still have time. They have released a few passengers. Do you have a guess as to how it will be played from now on?

K: You know the deadline has been turned off.

R: Has it? You get a cable saying it is off and a half hour later you find out it is back on.

K: Deadline is still on?

R: Hold up. Can always decide to do this. I don't think the Arabs have any doubt that we are serious. We can decide later tonight if it is necessary or in the morning.

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**228. Transcript of a Telephone Conversation Between the President's Assistant for International Economic Affairs (Flanigan) and the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)<sup>1</sup>**

Washington, September 11, 1970.

F: Apparently many airlines have recommended that their airplanes not land at Beirut and Damascus. PAA has one and they want to know what do. They think there's danger.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, Kissinger Telephone Conversations, Box 30, Chronological Files. No classification marking. Although no exact time appears on the transcript, a notation indicates that the telephone call took place in the evening.

K: My recommendation is not to land there but talk to Rogers.

F: Why?

K: A) I don't think they are tough as they pretend but the moderate Arab Govts need an excuse to attack them. If the moderate Arabs can prove it hurts them, then they can go to them in the name of the moderate Arabs and say you are hurting us more than them, I think it's ended soon.

F: You would recommend then that no American lines go into any Arab country?

K: That's my recommendation. We can wait.

F: There's a rumor that there will be an attack if planes land there.

K: That's nonsense. If they don't let prisoners go tomorrow, that's what I would do.

F: Transportation is brooking the question to State.

K: The State answer will be to land.

F: Then just let them make that recommendation and make them act on it.

K: I don't want to do it without consultation with the President. Wait until the deadline has passed. After Sunday we should do it.

F: I will tell them to take their instructions from State. We will move in when we have to but we will stay out now.

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## 229. Intelligence Information Cable<sup>1</sup>

TDCS 314/09358-70

Washington, September 12, 1970.

COUNTRY

Jordan/Iraq

DOI

6-11 September 1970

SUBJECT

Iraqi Complicity in Multi-Hijackings

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 330, Subject Files, Hijackings. Secret; Priority; No Foreign Dissem. Received in the White House at 1400Z.

ACQ

*[less than 1 line not declassified]*

SOURCE

*[2½ lines not declassified]*

1. When Jordanian troops arrived at Dawson's Landing following the arrival of the hijacked TWA and Swissair aircraft, they were surprised to find Iraqi troops already in the area. It was apparent that the Iraqis had been there for some time and had assisted the fedayeen in making arrangements to receive the hijacked aircraft.

2. There is no doubt in the minds of senior Jordanian Government officials, including King Husayn, that there was collusion between the Iraqis and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) in carrying out the hijack operations. Senior officials also believe that the Iraqis misjudged the extent of world reaction to these hijackings and became particularly worried by the threat of foreign intervention. The Iraqis are now at the point where they are extremely concerned about their involvement and are doing their utmost to disassociate themselves from it.

3. Field Dissem: State, CINCMEAFSA *[1½ lines not declassified]*.

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### 230. Telegram From the Embassy in Jordan to the Department of State<sup>1</sup>

Amman, September 12, 1970, 1405Z.

4641. Dept pass Cairo Priority.

1. Rumors spreading at Intercontinental Hotel that all three planes have been blown up after removing all passengers. British Embassy intelligence officer states positively it is hard fact but has not revealed his source.

2. Rochat informed us 1535 local he had just received phone call that ICRC convoy on way to evacuate remaining group of male passengers had been halted by fedayeen three kilometers from planes and told they would not be allowed to proceed.

**Brubeck**

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, AV 12 US. Confidential; Flash. It was repeated to Athens (Immediate), Ankara, Beirut, Bonn, Bern, CINCSTRIKE, DIA, Dhahran, Frankfurt, Nicosia, The Hague, London, Paris, Rome, Tel Aviv, Geneva, and Zurich.

231. **Transcript of a Telephone Conversation Between Secretary of State Rogers and the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)**<sup>1</sup>

Washington, September 12, 1970, 12:06 p.m.

R: On reflection, I don't think it's a good idea to send a threat. All the passengers are released and in a hotel. We have a cable.<sup>2</sup> I think the idea that—now that they are out of the plane the threat to their lives is lessened. The Jordanians also thought it bad to do a threat now because the moderates are fighting with the radicals in connection with the passengers. I don't see the point.

K: You don't think it would give the moderates ammunition?

R: When they take action that minimizes the risk to the passengers is not the time to tell them "be careful." They have already let them out of the plane.

K: OK.

R: Secondly, the radicals are fearful about an invasion from Israel, not the U.S. They are there and it's a possibility. Anything that seems equivocal would be bad. If we were conveying it directly, I would feel differently. We did that when I met with their representatives. I said this is serious but we know your government is not responsible but it reflects on the Arabs.<sup>3</sup> All those things reflected on troops. The thing that frightened me about the planes was that they will explode them with passengers in them. Now they are under command of PFLP and the Jordanian Army and in different hotels. Now if we say we may invade it might cause these fanatics to react the wrong way.

K: It's just that we agreed to check this morning.

R: I would have checked earlier but I was testifying.

K: I wasn't criticizing.

R: We will keep you advised.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, Kissinger Telephone Conversations, Box 30, Chronological Files. No classification marking.

<sup>2</sup> Telegram 4638 from Amman, September 12, 1245Z. (Ibid., RG 59, Central Files 1970-73, AV 12 US)

<sup>3</sup> See Document 211.

**232. Transcript of a Telephone Conversation Between President Nixon and the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)<sup>1</sup>**

Washington, September 12, 1970, 12:32 p.m.

K: They have blown up the planes but without the passengers. The passengers and crew are in hotels in Amman. That removes some of the danger. They will have to kill them individually if they are stretched out.

P: They blew up the planes to prove themselves. To prove that they would have done it if we attacked them.

K: 60 have left and the remainder are in Amman. They haven't formulated any precise plans yet. State didn't want that cable and I didn't insist.

P: I don't suppose it's that big.

K: It's a question of whether one—.

P: What did Sisco think?

K: He was for it but others were against it. Frankly I didn't think you should insist on it. As it is the Arab (?) governments are in behind the scenes and are opposed if they say they are. If they are it would have given them something to work with. It's a tactical decision. I have been very loose about it and have not pressed anybody.

P: Nothing we can do now. If the passengers are out.

K: It might have [omission in the original] it up. The big problem today is Chile.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, Kissinger Telephone Conversations, Box 30, Chronological Files. No classification marking.



233. **Transcript of a Telephone Conversation Between President Nixon and the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)**<sup>1</sup>

Washington, September 12, 1970, 6:15 p.m.

K: Mr. President.

P: Hi Henry, anything new?

K: I just wanted to bring you up to date. All the passengers were off the plane when they blew it up.

P: I got this word earlier.

K: They are holding 40 hostages. 23 with dual citizenship, 6 Swiss, 6 German and 5 British.

P: They are holding the Israelis? Does this include any Americans? Not that it makes any difference. It is still the same thing. Are there people that do claim American citizenship? What about the action on the other side? —In terms of making a deal? What do they want for the hostages?

K: They are demanding that the Swiss release 3 fedayeen, the British the woman, the Germans 3 fedayeen.

P: And from the Israelis?

K: The 23. The 23 in return for an unspecified number of fedayeen. I doubt that the Israelis will agree. Pressure is not so bad on us.

P: No Americans?

K: Some claim that they have dual citizenship. If they have an American fighting in the Israeli army we would have a tough case. Nationalized . . . We are now trying to determine [citizenship questions].

P: What position are we taking? Problem for Israel to work out.

K: Ideal would be . . . not releasing prisoners . . . Germans have caved in. Swiss are willing to hold out.

P: What are the British going to do?

K: Probably will cave. Germans are . . . Brandt sent someone independently to Amman. He is very weak . . .

P: Well, released all the Americans. Do you think the Sixth Fleet had anything to do with this.

K: Definitely I do. In terms of time. The Sixth Fleet began to move—first they were hysterical and then they started releasing prisoners.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, Kissinger Telephone Conversations, Box 30, Chronological Files. No classification marking. All brackets are in the original.

P: I still feel that we have ready the contingency plans to go in there . . . support the King. He is not prepared to do anything. I think it is best for us to go in to support the King.

K: There are quite a few people who do not think it is a good idea. Only for evacuation purposes would be best for us to go in. Sisco feels that the King would not stand after we left if we went in and then pulled out.

P: Israel go in?

K: Yes. Israelis go in. If there is a war . . .

P: I guess it is pretty much up to the Israelis now.

K: If it comes out this way.

P: What do we say or do if anything about these planes being blown up?

K: We should get a plan started to start boycotting countries where planes are taken.

P: Of course, in the future . . .

K: . . . encourage King to move against Fedayeen. Helms . . .

P: Is he doing that? We want to do that. I am not concerned about the long occupation. . . . I still think it is better for us to go in and support the King.

K: It would strap us militarily. Use all our available military reserve. The JCS is not anxious to do this.

P: Well, that is all right. Evacuation is nothing.

K: This is not the problem anyway.

P: Problem is how we handle the Fedayeen. We cannot just let them go. Do we have anything to do about the Fedayeen.

K: We can urge Hussain to move against Fedayeen and we would militarily support it—with air support.

P: That is what I want to do. If the Israelis did it the ceasefire would go out the window. [Talking about the psychological impact. People thought Israelis bad after 6 Day war and now the Israelis were beginning to get sympathy again because of the Egyptian/Soviet violations of the ceasefire. Now people are siding with Israelis and are sympathetic to them.] Now feel that the Arabs are bad—if the Israelis went in the issue would become very confused.

K: Ideal would be if the King could clean up the Fedayeen with our air support.

P: With our help.

K: We have a brigade in Europe that we have put on maneuvers. The 82nd from the US to follow behind it.

P: Do not know what the Israelis are going to do?

K: Most of the Americans out. Otherwise it is between . . . problem for Fedayeen because Israelis may move. Ideal for them would have been . . .

P: I am surprised. What does Sisco think it had to do with it? (Sixth Fleet move) Haig?

K: General Haig reached the exact same conclusion I did quite independently—that the Sixth Fleet had a tremendous impact on the releasing of prisoners.

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### 234. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Jordan<sup>1</sup>

Washington, September 13, 1970, 0053Z.

149919. 1. On September 12 Secretary asked Jordanian Ambassador Sharaf to call in order to (a) exchange information on general situation in Amman and (b) urge that GOJ do everything to assure safety of passengers. Sharaf indicated he had no information from Amman but assured Secretary that he certain GOJ doing everything in its power to protect passengers and to effect their safe departure from Amman. Sharaf promised to convey Secretary's request to his government. Sharaf noted that PFLP not beholden to any other Palestinian organization and had been expelled from PLO Central Committee earlier September 12. Sharaf stated that while GOJ had good liaison with more moderate Palestinian groups, it doubted GOJ could do much with PFLP.

2. Secretary informed Sharaf that most passengers presently in Amman and that problem now was to obtain their early release. He again hoped GOJ would do everything to assist in this effort.

3. In conclusion, Secretary emphasized that it now important for King and GOJ to demonstrate to all concerned that they are able take control of internal Jordanian situation. Secretary stressed he *not* suggesting confrontation with fedayeen in order to destroy them. He noted, however, that incidents of past week in particular have caused doubt re ability GOJ exercise clear-cut authority throughout kingdom. This growing doubt about GOJ's efficacy affects not only current

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970-73, AV 12 US. Secret; Priority. Drafted on September 12 by Scotese; cleared by Seelye; and approved by Sisco. It was repeated to Beirut, Bern, Bonn, Jerusalem, London, Tel Aviv, and USUN.

situation but even more important possibility of achievement of fundamental peace settlement in Near East. Israelis have already been asking question with whom peace can be made in Jordan. Secretary said that we believe this is relevant question and hope that stronger stance on part GOJ over coming days will provide answer.

Rogers

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**235. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon<sup>1</sup>**

Washington, September 13, 1970, 10:30 a.m.

SUBJECT

Hijacking Situation Report—10:30 a.m. Sunday Morning

This morning some 350 passengers were safely evacuated from Jordan leaving some 50–60 still in PFLP hands. What is the process this morning is the shaking out of a new and perhaps more difficult negotiating situation surrounding the remaining 50–60 hostages. At this point, the Red Cross may be re-engaging in Amman, but that is not yet clear. So far the Bern group is holding firm, though reports of a separate German deal continue.

*The Passengers*

All passengers released by the fedayeen have now left Jordan.

Some 50–60 passengers are not yet accounted for. Most of these are believed to be still in the hands of the PFLP as hostages.

Of those 50–60, 40 are American citizens.

Of those 40 Americans, 12 are dual nationals; 16–18 others are thought to be Jewish; 4 are U.S. Government employees.

Of the non-American hostages, 6 are Swiss; 6 are Germans; 6 or 7 are presumably British.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 330, Subject Files, Hijackings. Secret. Sent for information. Haig initialed the memorandum for Kissinger.

*The Negotiations*

The Red Cross last night reluctantly agreed to place its negotiating role in a state of "temporary suspension" until the Red Cross negotiators could return from Amman to Bern to meet with the five-nation group there. This morning, however, the negotiators sent a message saying that their departure from Amman would be delayed because of new developments. As of 10:30 a.m. EDT we do not know whether the Red Cross has been re-engaged in negotiations by the PFLP or not.

Following last night's meeting of the Bern group,<sup>2</sup> the focus has turned sharply to the question of a prisoner exchange between Israel and the PFLP. The PFLP has still not provided a list of the prisoners it wants from Israel, and Israel still adamantly refuses to agree to the principle of an exchange. Israel is, however, building counter pressures: It has informed the Algerian Government via the Swiss that it would release two Algerian officials it holds, and it has rounded up a large number of PFLP sympathizers who live on the occupied West Bank and in Gaza and who presumably have relatives in Jordan.

The British are still holding firm with the united insistence on a package deal but are pressing the Israelis hard to make a contribution to the prisoner exchange. There are press reports of a separate West German deal but no official confirmation.

*The Situation in Amman*

Amman remained relatively quiet this morning.

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<sup>2</sup> Reported in telegram 2235 from Bern, September 13, 0130Z. (Ibid., RG 59, Central Files 1970-73, PS 7-6 JORDAN)

**236. Telegram From the Department of State to Certain Diplomatic Posts<sup>1</sup>**

Washington, September 13, 1970, 1808Z.

149944. Subj: Hijacking.

1. It is time to take stock of where we stand on this problem. We have passed through Phase One when the possibility of a package deal involving all passengers and aircraft might have been feasible. Fact that all but 50 have been released, and split in fedayeen ranks, presents us with new situation. There is question of continuing ICRC role, possible role of GOJ in this situation, and possible eventual Israeli "contribution" to any solution.

2. The Palestinians seem still bent on moving towards a solution which splits the Europeans from the Israelis and Americans. The price for the European hostages has already been budgeted by the Europeans who will at early time recognize that their people are being used in an effort to obtain the release of Americans and Israelis. It will be increasingly more difficult to maintain a united front under these circumstances, though this is the all important and continuing objective of our policy as best way to secure release of all remaining hostages.

3. The U.S. [U.K.]<sup>2</sup> (Greenhill) has already indicated belief that the U.S. contribution to a solution would be to persuade the Israelis to give up Palestinian prisoners in order to complete the exchange.

4. It is evident that the Israelis recognize that they will have to participate (they have already indicated willingness to release two Algerians and some Israeli diplomats have hinted at something more). At the same time the GOI must maintain its stand on principle. It seems therefore that the Israelis will not act until (a) the Palestinians make precise demands, and in particular submit a specific list of fedayeen prisoners, and (b) they can cite overwhelming pressure (especially from U.S.) forcing them to take part in the exchange.

5. For the next day or so, we cannot know clearly how to proceed until some of the following elements clarify. In particular we need to know:

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, AV 12. Secret; Immediate. Drafted by Sisco and Beaudry (EUR), and approved by Sisco. It was also sent to Bern, Bonn, London, Geneva, Amman, Beirut, and Tel Aviv.

<sup>2</sup> Telegram 149950 to the same posts, September 13, 1953Z, made this correction. (Ibid.)

- a. Precisely which prisoners the PFLP wish returned to [from]<sup>3</sup> Israel;
- b. The security situation in Amman and the capacity of GOJ to be helpful;
- c. The length of time the Europeans would be prepared to negotiate in common without breaking ranks;
- d. Whether the ICRC will send its top-flight negotiator back to Jordan.

6. We must continue the prudent, cool approach we have thus far followed successfully. Unity of group continues to be essential as we await concrete demands of PFLP, and we explore whether GOJ can play increasingly helpful role. We should apply maximum pressures on ICRC to stay in picture; they cannot leave as we approach crunch. We have succeeded in getting 90 percent of the prisoners; next phase is no more political, or no more "outside ICRC" humanitarian mandate than previous phase. There has been no criticism anywhere of ICRC role.

**Rogers**

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<sup>3</sup> Telegram 149950 made this correction.

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### **237. Telegram From the Department of State to Certain Diplomatic Posts<sup>1</sup>**

Washington, September 13, 1970, 1855Z.

149947. Subj: Hijacking Situation.

1. We are relieved that thus far all passengers and crew on 3 hijacked aircraft have left Jordan, with exception of some 50 to 60 still being held. Before proceeding further, we need answers to number of questions:

a) Precise identity of all hostages still held, which we should be able to derive here in Washington by process of elimination after following full examination manifest and lists of those who have departed Jordan.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970-73, AV 12 US. Secret; Immediate. Drafted and approved by Seelye, and cleared by Davies and Beaudry (EUR/AIS). It was sent to Amman, Beirut, Bern, Bonn, London, and Tel Aviv, and repeated to Geneva.

b) Precise location of hostages. We have had varying reports on this, including report that they are split up and incarcerated in several houses.

c) In whose custody they are. We assume remaining hostages are being held by PFLP but it possible that PLO security force and/or Jordanian security forces are also involved.

d) Which organizations are authorized to negotiate authoritively for release of passengers. There seems to be divergence of view between PLO–Fatah and PFLP on this score, as well as perhaps divergence of views within PFLP itself.

e) Precise nature of fedayeen demands. In this connection, list of names of persons held by Israel whose release is being demanded by the fedayeen still awaited.

2. In summary, we cannot make further decisions until we have more facts. Thus far, we are fortunate in having done reasonably well. Overwhelming proportion of passengers have been released with no conditions and deadline has been lifted.

**Rogers**

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### **238. Telegram From the Department of State to Certain Diplomatic Posts<sup>1</sup>**

Washington, September 13, 1970, 2220Z.

149954. 1. British Ambassador Freeman called on Secretary at urgent personal request British FonSec to make following points:

a) There was an apparent difference of opinion developing between London and Washington on need to press Israel for indication it ready to make contribution to overall settlement.

b) London was alarmed at the position of the FRG and feared it would move to separate deal.

c) The FonSec felt there would be no progress towards solution unless the Israelis could be brought to give a private assurance as to their readiness to accept principle of exchange.

2. Ambassador Freeman said that the following specific instructions had been sent to the British representative in Bern:

a) The objective is release of all passengers through five-power action.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, AV 12 US. Secret; Immediate. Drafted by Davies and Beaudry, and approved by Davies. It was sent to Amman, Bern, Bonn, Beirut, London, Tel Aviv, and Geneva.



b) It is imperative now to get alternate negotiator if ICRC not willing to continue negotiations.

c) Possible alternates might be Swiss Ambassador Dubois, Thalmann, or US Chargé Amman.

d) Colleagues in Bern must be urged as to need for Israeli agreement to principle of return of Palestinian prisoners.

3. As a personal suggestion Freeman said if Israelis reluctant to accept principle of exchange they might be willing to go along with notification through ICRC that it empowered to discuss release terms for hostages with PFLP or to acquiesce through silence. In this way, powers could get clear idea of what PFLP demands on Israelis would be.

4. The Secretary indicated we would have no difficulty in having this point raised.

5. The Secretary said he wanted to review his thinking in order to give the Ambassador the flavor of the U.S. position. The Secretary recalled that in the early hours when the hijacking occurred we had a situation where literally hundreds of people in aircraft wired to be blown up and we did not know which PFLP leaders were controlling the operation. It was then that we felt a sense of tremendous urgency. This was further intensified by a deadline for action. At that time the Swiss and German Governments made unilateral announcements of their readiness to release the Palestinian prisoners.

6. Let us recall, said the Secretary, what happened since those early hours. The five powers have established a basis of unity and engaged the ICRC as negotiator in Amman. Since the Bern group was organized, approximately 375 passengers have been released, thanks to the ICRC negotiators; unity of the four powers has been maintained and no concessions have been made to the Palestinians. On the other side, there has been a split among the fedayeen which created confusion on the ground over movement of passengers not to mention all kinds of alleged proposals. Clearly there was no one in charge on the fedayeen side.

7. In the past two days the passengers were first moved to Amman and then moved out of Jordan. Approximately 50 remain. All of this has resulted from our successful policy and has cost no concessions. Presently Al-Fatah has said no one would be harmed. The Secretary found it difficult to understand why we should be forced to make quick decisions today.

8. We do not know who has the hostages or who can speak about their release. We do not know what demands those people will make. The Secretary feels there is no new development which creates the urgency reflected in the British position.

9. With regard to the Israelis, the Secretary stated that it would be useless to ask them to accept in principle the need to release prisoners. We know they are prepared to release two Algerians under certain

circumstances and in the past have released other prisoners but it is not reasonable to expect them to make a promise in principle to release prisoners when we have no facts and no valid interlocutor on the Palestinian side.

10. Finally, the Secretary expressed his failure to understand why the ICRC which had been so successful thus far in negotiations wished to withdraw. The Secretary indicated that the ICRC had done a tremendous job and still had a serious humanitarian obligation to the innocent passengers who remained.

Rogers

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**239. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon<sup>1</sup>**

Washington, September 14, 1970, 10 a.m.

SUBJECT

Hijacking Situation Report

There appears to have been little change in the situation since my memorandum to you yesterday morning.<sup>2</sup> We are still in a period of uncertainty following the destruction of the aircraft, the withdrawal of the Red Cross from a mediating role and the apparent continuing confusion within the ranks of the fedayeen.

*The Negotiations*

The Bern Group met late last night with the Red Cross representatives who had just returned from Amman.<sup>3</sup> Red Cross Vice President Freymond made the following major points to the group:

—His departure from Amman was a tactical maneuver intentionally designed as a "shock tactic" to demonstrate to all concerned that the Red Cross would not accept the PFLP approach.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 330, Subject Files, Hijackings. Secret. The time is handwritten at the top of the first page.

<sup>2</sup> Document 235.

<sup>3</sup> As reported in telegram 2248 from Bern, September 14, 0620Z. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, PS 7–6 JORDAN)

—The Red Cross would continue an active role in the situation. First, and on an urgent basis, it considered its task was to identify and trace the remaining hostages. The second major task is to clarify the conditions which the PFLP is demanding for the release of the hostages. In doing this, the Red Cross will use all pressure possible on the Jordanian Government as well as work with the PFLP and other fedayeen leaders. It will also work with the Palestinian Red Crescent organization.

—None of the demands—even those stated most explicitly—received from the fedayeen so far can be considered binding or basic for negotiations.

—The Red Cross will continue to transfer information between both sides and see what steps the governments would wish to take next. How it carries out this role, however, would depend upon its appreciation of the situation. For now at least, neither Freymond or Rochat will be returning to Amman and the mission of the Red Cross representative remaining in Amman consists solely of protecting the hostages and visiting them.

Our representative to the Bern Group comments that, although the Red Cross role is diminished, it is probably adequate for the job. Perhaps more importantly, Freymond's exposé has probably bought another 48 hours solidarity in the positions of the western powers.

The Israelis are still maintaining their hard line toward negotiating with the fedayeen. Last night Israeli Transportation Minister Peres went so far as to publicly state that if the remaining hostages are not released the use of force, in "the limited and more precise sense of the word," could not be excluded. On Sunday the Israelis rounded up some 450 Arabs within their borders suspected of having connections with the PFLP. According to press reports, the Israeli strategy is to increase the pressure on the PFLP to release the remaining hostages.

### *The Passengers*

We have little further information on the remaining hostages. All of the some 55 hostages (38 now believed to be Americans) are still believed to be in Amman. There are reports that several more hostages will be released today.

### *The Situation in Jordan*

There have been no reports of fighting inside Jordan this morning. Yesterday, however, there reportedly was a major clash between the fedayeen and security forces in the northern part of the country.

**240. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon<sup>1</sup>**

Washington, September 14, 1970, 3:30 p.m.

SUBJECT

Mid-Afternoon Report on the Hijacking Situation

There have been no major developments concerning the hijacked airline passengers held hostage by the fedayeen since my memorandum to you this morning.<sup>2</sup> We are still in a position of trying to consolidate an exact list of the hostages and a precise picture of fedayeen demands.

*The Hostages*

It now appears that the hostages—the number is now thought to be 55—are being held in several houses in Amman, although we have been unable so far to find out exactly where. They are apparently under the sole control of the PFLP.

*The Negotiations*

Negotiations for the release of the hostages are in a state of temporary suspension, although the Red Cross this afternoon seems to be easing back into a more active negotiating role. The main task, as the Red Cross sees it, is to establish the basis for a negotiation—principally, to find out exactly what the fedayeen want from Israel. For this purpose, the Red Cross is again picking up its contacts with the fedayeen leaders. The fedayeen, for their part, seem confused and disorganized at this stage and appear not to be absolutely sure and united on what they specifically want for the hostages. The Red Cross representative in Amman doubts that the PFLP yet knows which or how many fedayeen under arrest in Israel it wants released.

Meanwhile, there are continuing indications that the united front approach by the Western powers could soon break down. Our embassy in Bonn has evidence that both the Germans and the British may be moving toward a smaller European package settlement that would presumably exclude American and Israeli nationals among the hostages. However, for the moment the formal positions of both governments are holding.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 331, Subject Files, Hijackings. Secret. Sent for information. The time is handwritten at the top of the first page.

<sup>2</sup> Document 239.

The Israelis continue to hold the line on their "no deal" approach. There are even reports in the press, though not confirmed by our embassy, that three emissaries were sent by Israel to the PFLP over the weekend with threats against the lives of the 450 Arabs arrested over the weekend in Gaza and the West Bank. Our embassy in Amman reports that the stories about the Arab arrests in Israel may be further hardening the PFLP demands.

The Pope has sent a high Vatican official to Amman. He has reportedly had contacts with the PFLP, but the specific results of these talks are not yet available.

#### *Situation in Amman*

Our Defense Attaché in Amman reports that on the surface the city was beginning to return to normal this morning. The traffic flow, for instance, was at the normal level and almost all shops were open. Most of the fedayeen were also off the streets and some of their road blocks had been dismantled.

There are other indications, however, that the present lull in the fighting may only be temporary. Most fedayeen strongpoints in Amman have been reinforced and some army units are also digging in. The Defense Attaché reports that it appears to him that the army commander has partially lost control of some army units which are operating on their own initiative in fighting the fedayeen.

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#### **241. Paper Prepared by the NEA Working Group in the Department of State Operations Center<sup>1</sup>**

No. 19

Washington, September 15, 1970.

Situation Report as of 0700 hours EDT, September 15, 1970

*Bern Talks.* The UK representative has called for a meeting of the five power group in Bern at 11 A.M. local time (0600 EDT). We have informed the U.S. representative that we have no objection to passing substance of Jaquinet's views regarding the imminent publication by

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 330, Subject Files, Hijackings. Secret. Received in the White House Situation Room at 8:45 a.m.

the PFLP of its demands regarding Fedayeen prisoners in Israeli hands. At the same time, we told our representative that if the consensus of the Bern Group is that the ICRC should approach the PFLP to keep the list confidential, we would have no objections.

The UK representatives informs us that he has instructions to insist that noon communiqué name Boisard as the principal ICRC representative. If ICRC will not accede to this, the British are prepared to consider withdrawing from the ICRC group.

We understand that the Swiss and German representatives are opposed to the British proposal and the Israelis are noncommittal, but probably favor continuing support for ICRC. We have instructed the U.S. representative to oppose the British proposal at this point and to continue to support Jacquinet's present role. If, however, a deadlock results from the British proposal we plan to attempt a compromise with the British position with a view to maintaining British participation in the ICRC effort.

*Dual Nationality of the American Hostages.* Bar-On, the special assistant to the Director General of the Israeli Foreign Affairs Ministry, has informed us that Israeli records show that only two passengers now held as hostages (the Harari-Rafouls) have dual U.S.–Israeli nationality.

*Uneasy Jordan Fedayeen Truce Continues to Hold.* The fragile truce between Jordanian and Fedayeen forces has for the most part continued to hold throughout the night. There have been some unconfirmed press reports of attacks by Jordanian forces on guerilla units in northern Jordan.

*Hostages Visited by ICRC.* Mr. Vincent of TWA in New York has informed us that the recently-released TWA steward Rudolph Swinkel confirmed that the remaining 54 hostages are being held as a group in a private house near or in Amman. Swinkel stated that ICRC representatives visited captives on Monday, September 14th. The captives, Swinkel continued, are being well taken care of and are in good health.

## 242. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon<sup>1</sup>

Washington, September 15, 1970, 9 a.m.

### SUBJECT

Hijacking Situation—Tuesday Morning

The principal development overnight is the Red Cross decision—against a background of growing British and German restiveness with the present situation—to return a senior representative to Amman. As head of the Red Cross permanent delegation in Cairo, he (Boisard) has successfully managed the Suez prisoner exchanges. (These covered the release of the hijacked Israeli TWA passengers last November.)

This decision was made known during a long—and, according to the U.S. representative, “depressing”—meeting of the Bern Group last night.<sup>2</sup> Both the British and German representatives pressed persistently for some sign of movement to placate public pressures for some sign of movement:

—The Britisher said the UK would feel obliged to move independently unless there is an announcement of Red Cross negotiations.

—The German pressed the Israeli to declare Israel's willingness to participate in a prisoner exchange.

The Red Cross insists on no announcement of Boisard's appointment until he is on his way to Amman, probably tomorrow. The Red Cross feels such an announcement would undercut the contacts of the team still in Amman. The Bern Group was called into session again this morning at UK request. London has sent “tough instructions” to insist on a Red Cross announcement this evening at the latest; if the Red Cross refuses, the British are prepared to end the Red Cross role.

There have been two statements by the PFLP overnight: (1) A spokesman said the front has closed the door to all mediation; their stand is simply the release of fedayeen detained by the states concerned. (2) At a press conference, commandos warned that any attempt to free hostages by force would endanger their lives. They demanded a prompt exchange; “we will not wait forever.”

There has been no serious fighting in Amman, though Jordanian forces and fedayeen have clashed in northern Jordan.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 331, Subject Files, Hijackings. Secret. Sent for information. The time is handwritten at the top of the first page. Another notation indicates the President saw the memorandum.

<sup>2</sup> As reported in telegram 2266 from Bern, September 15, 0040Z. (Ibid., RG 59, Central Files 1970-73, PS 7-6 JORDAN)

243. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassies in Switzerland and Jordan<sup>1</sup>

Washington, September 15, 1970, 1710Z.

150859. 1. According to press reports, PFLP held news conference in Amman on September 15 during which unidentified spokesman listed set of PFLP demands which are to be met by “individual instead of concerted action by the governments concerned.” Excluded are names of prisoners being held by Israel being demanded by PFLP. Instead PFLP announcement continues to insist no such list can be released until Israel agrees to exchange “in principle.”

2. *For Amman:* Request you indicate whether in your judgment data in PFLP announcement represents “list” PFLP was expected to pose to ICRC (Amman 4744)<sup>2</sup> and, if not, whether ICRC still expects to receive this list in view of PFLP announcement. Further progress in negotiating process hinges on receipt these names.

3. *For Bern:* In view latest PFLP announcement, you should again express our hope in strong terms that British, Swiss and Germans do not permit themselves to be drawn into any individual negotiations with PFLP but rather will continue to channel all their efforts through ICRC. You should also stress to Bern group importance our obtaining promptly as possible PFLP list of prisoners in Israel they want released and urge that group get ICRC to press hard on this. We assume that Israelis will continue to refuse to agree to commit themselves in advance to release “in principle” and, therefore, every effort should be made by ICRC to induce PFLP to come forth with specific list of names. For Israelis to do so would be buying “pig in poke.” Therefore, what ICRC needs to focus on is obtaining definitive list.

**Rogers**

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, AV 12. Secret; Flash. Drafted by Seelye and Scotese; cleared by Beaudry (EUR); and approved by Sisco. It was repeated immediate to Bonn, London, Tel Aviv, and Geneva, and also repeated to USUN.

<sup>2</sup> Telegram 4744 from Amman, September 14, 1720Z. (Ibid.)



244. **Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Switzerland<sup>1</sup>**

Washington, September 15, 1970, 1757Z.

150884. Subj: ICRC Personnel Shifts. Ref: Geneva 3165.<sup>2</sup>

1. While we in no way wish to second guess ICRC handling of negotiations, we note with some concern the several key ICRC personnel shifts over past few days. It appears to us one important tenet of effective negotiations and certainly of negotiations with Arabs is early establishment and maintenance of mutual confidence between negotiating participants. This confidence can only be built up over time and maintained through continuity. At time we did not consider recall of Rochat as good move but deferred to ICRC. Now we observe that Freymond replacement is Boissard, who apparently does not intend arrive in Amman for several days. We believe these constant changes do not help establish necessary confidence between ICRC and PFLP.

2. We would wish observation re personnel changes be made known to ICRC. At same time you should urge in the next Bern group meeting that Boissard leave for Amman as soon as possible and that Jacquinet overlap as long as possible before departing.

**Rogers**

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970-73, PS 7-6 JORDAN. Confidential; Flash. Drafted by Scotese; cleared by Seelye and Beaudry (EUR); and approved by Sisco. It was repeated Immediate to Amman, Beirut, Bonn, London, Tel Aviv, and Geneva.

<sup>2</sup> Telegram 3165 from Geneva has not been found.

**245. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in the United Kingdom<sup>1</sup>**

Washington, September 15, 1970, 1801Z.

150885. Subject: British Position in Bern Group. Ref: State 150740.<sup>2</sup>

1. Asst. Secretary Sisco called Ambassador Freeman to make points contained reftel. He observed that HMG seems more nervous than any other government in this matter and expressed hope that Ambassador Freeman might be able to pass our message to London.

2. Sisco reviewed our understanding of HMG instructions to its delegate in Bern re insistence on immediate announcement of Boissard appointment. Inter alia, he described current activities in Amman of Jacquinet and Hocke and conveyed our view that ICRC momentum in Amman continues. Accordingly, we do not think the timing on announcement so urgent as to be required immediately, particularly since ICRC prefers delay announcement a little longer and also in view of consideration that we do not wish to seem to be undercutting Jacquinet's position. Sisco stressed that we have no objection to appointment of Boissard and believe that he is a good man, but we feel that we should defer to ICRC's judgment on timing of announcement and give ICRC maximum flexibility.

3. Sisco also noted that the Bern Group has put out announcement that ICRC still talking in Amman and he thought this would be helpful. Sisco again stressed importance our being guided by ICRC judgments and asked whether HMG impatience stemmed from distraught British public opinion. Ambassador Freeman said that he did not think that public pressures in England were that great and that British public opinion was divided.

4. Sisco reviewed the latest PFLP announcement of its demands and noted PFLP demand that Israel agree in principle to exchange of hostages before providing detailed list. Sisco said that Israelis unlikely accept principle, and that first step must be for ICRC to get entire list. In short, we have to know total PFLP demands, rather than face a sit-

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, AV 12. Confidential; Immediate. Drafted by Seelye; cleared by Beaudry; and approved by Sisco. It was repeated Immediate to Beirut, Tel Aviv, Bonn, Geneva, Bern, and Amman.

<sup>2</sup> In telegram 150740 to Bern and London, September 15, 1124Z, the Department instructed the Embassies to join the Swiss and Germans in opposing British insistence on issuing a communiqué regarding Boissard's appointment. Department officials expressed puzzlement over the British desire to release a communiqué supporting appointment of Boissard since it would undercut the ICRC's role. (Ibid.)

uation where we are asked to buy "pig in poke". Sisco said we did not preclude going to GOI once we know all demands and have full list. Then group of four can as a group ask GOI what its reaction to concrete PFLP proposal, once received.

5. Ambassador Freeman fully understood USG position as well as our assessment re what we should focus on from here on out. He said he was well aware of the situation and "would do his best."

6. *For Bern*: You should work to get agreement that ICRC next job is to get full list of fedayeen wanted by PFLP.

**Rogers**

**246. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon<sup>1</sup>**

Washington, September 15, 1970.

SUBJECT

Evening Report on the Hijacking Situation

There have been two major developments today: (1) King Hussein has decided to move tonight to an all or nothing showdown with the fedayeen and (2) the PFLP has presented another list of unacceptable demands for the release of the remaining hostages.

*The Situation in Jordan:*

King Hussein had advised our embassy he is moving tonight to an all or nothing showdown with the fedayeen in order to "establish law and order."<sup>2</sup> Having waited three days, he is determined now to compel fedayeen to implement the cease-fire agreement and remove their forces from Amman. During the early hours of tomorrow morning he will establish a military government. This will be announced at 7 a.m. in Amman (1 a.m. EDT). Army units will be pre-positioned around the city but Hussein will not force the issue unless the fedayeen do. The army will only enter the city against the fedayeen if necessary. The

<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 331, Subject Files, Hijackings. Secret. Sent for information.

<sup>2</sup> As reported in telegram 4808 from Amman, September 15, 2040Z. (Ibid., Box 615, Country Files, Middle East, Jordan, Vol. V)

military government will take over communications and if necessary declare a curfew.

King Hussein urgently requested that the U.S. take steps to assure that the Israelis do nothing to prejudice or aggravate the situation. He also stressed that, depending on fedayeen reactions, he may need to call for U.S. and Israeli assistance.

If King Hussein carries through with his plans tonight the 54 hostages in the hands of the PFLP will be in grave danger. At our urging, Hussein has agreed to include in his announcement tomorrow morning a warning of most serious consequences should the fedayeen harm the hostages, but this may not be enough to stop them if they are desperate.

I am convening an emergency WSAG meeting to consider this situation.<sup>3</sup>

### *The Negotiations*

The PFLP issued a press statement today giving its conditions for the release of the hostages. The statement began with the declaration that the PFLP "is itself" holding the hostages and considers itself "responsible" for them. The PFLP warns that any "stupid attempt by any party to try to retake these hostages would expose their lives to great danger." The statement then lists the following demands:

—The PFLP will release the Swiss, Germans and British hostages in exchange for the six fedayeen in their hands plus Leila Khaled and the body of her companion.

—Announcement by the Israelis of the "acceptance of the principle of the return" of the two Algerian officials recently arrested at Lod Airport, of a Swiss youth arrested for belonging to the PFLP, of ten Lebanese soldiers and "likewise of the exchange of prisoners with the Palestine resistance." Only then will the PFLP provide the names of the prisoners which "Israel must release" in exchange for the release of the "detained Israelis and those holding dual Israeli-American citizenship." (No specific mention made of single passport American hostages.)

The PFLP statement concludes with a charge that the Red Cross is playing a "biased role" and "shirking its duty as a disinterested party." The PFLP therefore considers that "direct responsibility" falls on the states concerned and that it is incumbent on them to announce their agreement to the PFLP's demands.

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<sup>3</sup> A WSAG meeting took place on September 15 from approximately 10:30 to 11:30 p.m. No substantive record of the meeting has been found. The time of the meeting is drawn from a 1973 summary of events and meetings related to the Jordan crisis (see footnote 2, Document 209).

Our embassy in Amman opines that the PFLP statement seems designed to split the already strained unity of the Bern Group.<sup>4</sup> The discriminatory terms presented to the members of the Bern Group, the call for bilateral talks and the denunciation of the Red Cross effort all seem designed to tempt the other Bern Powers to break ranks. Moreover, it now looks as if the PFLP is prepared to withhold the list of Israelis it wants—the crucial point in getting the Israelis to accept any package deal—and to dangle the temptations of its offers before the other four powers involved.

Our representative to the Bern Group has been instructed to express in strong terms our hope that the British, Swiss and Germans do not permit themselves to be drawn into any individual negotiations with the PFLP and will continue to channel all their efforts through the Red Cross. He is also to stress the importance of obtaining from the PFLP a list of the prisoners in Israel they want and urge the Red Cross to press hard on this.

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<sup>4</sup> Telegram 4806 from Amman, September 15, 1845Z. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 331, Subject Files, Hijackings) Ambassador L. Dean Brown arrived at the Embassy in Amman on September 15 after having been sworn in on September 9. (Ibid., Box 615, Country Files, Middle East, Jordan, Vol. V) He replaced Ambassador Harrison M. Symmes, who left post on May 7. Due to the crisis, Brown did not formally present his credentials to King Hussein until September 29. (Telegram 5421 from Amman, September 29, 1800Z; *ibid.*)

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## 247. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon<sup>1</sup>

Washington, September 16, 1970.

### SUBJECT

Options in Jordan

As you continue to think about the decisions we may face in Jordan, you may wish to consider some of the broader issues raised.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 615, Country Files, Middle East, Jordan, Vol. V. Top Secret; Nodis. Sent for information. Printed from an uninitialed copy.

*The Broader Situation and U.S. Interests*

Two issues are now being contested in Jordan: (1) Who is to control the Palestinian movement? (2) What balance of political forces is to control Jordan?

The two are related. Whereas the less ideological groups focus on Israel and could make common cause with the government, the radicals are at least as dedicated to the overthrow of traditional regimes as to the destruction of the Zionist state. Although it is difficult to know exactly what the balance within the collection of fedayeen movements is, it seems relatively clear that the most active challenge to Hussein's regime comes from the radical fringe—the elements, for instance, responsible for the hijacking.

The outcome will determine whether there is a stable base for peace negotiations. The future political nature of Jordan will determine whether a Palestine settlement is possible or continuing war is inevitable. There seem to be several ways in which Jordan's political base could evolve:

—Hussein and the army could suppress the fedayeen and bring the non-fedayeen Palestinians into a settlement. This would ideally provide the most solid base, but it is doubtful whether there will be an outcome this decisive.

—Elements of the army, the King and the less militant Palestinians could make common cause. This would make for a less orderly negotiation but might make for a more enforceable peace if there is one.

—Some combination of fedayeen elements could demonstrate the King's impotence and force on him a weak civilian government that would do its bidding. Negotiations would be out of the question.

It is the last outcome which seems most immediately at stake in the current crisis. Either of the first two could conceivably produce stability. The consequences of the third could include the following:

—Prospects for a Palestine settlement soon on terms Israel could consider would drop to almost zero. Attacks across Israel's eastern border would increase.

—Chances that Israel would at some point feel compelled to seize more territory in Jordan would increase sharply.

—Nasser's ability to negotiate a settlement with Israel and Soviet ability to support a negotiated settlement would be diminished sharply.

—There would be one more radical state in the Middle East where the U.S. is barred. A radical fedayeen base there would strengthen the movement against Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and the Persian Gulf states.

In short, while it is not clear how the main political elements in Jordan will sort themselves out, it does not seem in the U.S. interest that a fedayeen movement urged on by radicals be permitted to im-

pose its will on the government. It could not produce the stability that is necessary for peace.

### *The Three Principal Contingencies*

A situation now exists in Jordan which may cause King Hussein to seek U.S. or other assistance in an all-out showdown with the fedayeen. These seem to be the main contingencies that will be faced:

1. *The King and army vs. the fedayeen alone.* It seems generally agreed in the intelligence community and in the U.S. Embassy in Amman that the Jordanian army can manage the situation as long as only the fedayeen—and not outside troops—are ranged against the regime. It is possible in this situation that Jordanian forces might need some materiel support. It has been our assumption that there would be no strong argument against supplying any reasonable support. Such assistance could be airlifted both as a demonstration and for prompt delivery.

The main issue to be considered in connection with this contingency is: *If the regime unexpectedly turns out to be too weak to win this battle with its own forces, should there be intervention to support it?*

A key judgment to be made is how much difference outside intervention might make in such a situation.

The principal *arguments for* such intervention are: It would prevent—at least as long as U.S. troops are present—dominance by a group that would offer almost no hope of a Palestine settlement. It might still be possible that stability could be rescued with the help of the army. It is also important for the U.S. to demonstrate its support for responsible regimes. In short, a risky intervention would be preferable to the certainty of radical control over the situation.

The argument against such intervention is that if Hussein is too weak to stand up against domestic opposition, outside intervention can only save his regime for a limited period of time. Attempting to bolster it in the absence of sufficient internal strength could put whoever intervenes into a position of supporting a minority cause against effective majority guerrilla opposition in a country without access to the Mediterranean where the U.S. would have a difficult time supporting sustained military operations. Intervention could cause a fedayeen reaction against U.S. installations elsewhere in the Mid-East.

In any case, there may not be much of a real choice since if the King appears about to fall, the Israelis may very well intervene on their own or at least seize the heights from which the fedayeen have been shelling Israeli settlements.

2. *The second contingency: King Hussein and the army vs. the fedayeen and Iraqi troops.* Even if one judged that Hussein should not be supported if he cannot control the fedayeen alone, one might judge intervention quite justified if the 17,000 Iraqi troops in Jordan stepped

in. Before considering the question of armed intervention, it would be prudent to look at the *possibilities for non-military action* that might precede armed intervention or perhaps even make it unnecessary. A request from Hussein for Soviet restraint on Iraq might help. Intelligence indicates that Nasser is prepared to give diplomatic and possibly military support in the event of Iraqi intervention. The Shah might mount a show of force on Iraq's border. Saudi Arabia and Kuwait might threaten to cut off financial support for the fedayeen. Finally, the greatest political assist to Hussein might well be the capacity to demonstrate hope for progress in peace negotiations.

If political actions fail, then a judgment must be made *whether armed intervention seems in the U.S. interest.*

The *argument for* is that—in addition to the basic objective of trying to save a regime that offers some hope of the stability necessary for peace—the U.S. would be supporting a responsible government against a threat from foreign forces. Such a stand is a necessary part of the U.S. posture. It would be possible to justify this as an in-and-out operation.

The main *arguments against* are the operational difficulty of sustaining such an operation and the possibility of a general Arab reaction. This operation would have to be sustained entirely by air (unless we used an overland route across Israel). It would require dipping into the reserve of strategic forces in the U.S.—leaving us little for other contingencies. Sustaining such an operation by air would be extremely difficult without a staging base in the eastern Mediterranean, and there is good reason to doubt their availability under these circumstances.

*If political actions fail and if armed intervention of some sort in support of Hussein seems desirable, then there are two related questions:*

a. *Would air attacks against Iraqi forces be sufficient?*

*Pro.* Iraqi forces are 60 miles northeast of Amman and, to be militarily effective would have to travel on an open road and would be vulnerable to air attacks which could presumably prevent their arrival in Amman. Also, air strikes are not likely to produce the same reactions either by other Arabs or by the Soviets as a major ground action would. Even Israeli air strikes would avoid the connotation of invasion and takeover.

*Con.* Air strikes are not operationally useful against the fedayeen. They are dispersed among the population and their concentrations and the fighting around them will be in such small areas as to make air targeting very difficult. If intervention had to reach beyond the Iraqis, air strikes would probably be inadequate.

b. *Should the U.S. or Israel intervene?* The minimal operational form which this question might take is: If the Israelis seem about to move,



should the U.S. make a special effort to head them off by moving first? Or should they be encouraged?

In answering this question, a distinction must be made between the ground and air attacks. Air attacks are likely to provoke less reaction because they do not have the connotation of invasion.

The *arguments for U.S.* as contrasted to Israeli, intervention are: While Israeli air attacks could probably be brought off with a minimum of sustained Arab reaction, Israeli ground action in Jordan would be taken as an invasion of Jordan and would tend to reunify the Arabs. The U.S. would be held responsible anyway. An Israeli ground action would almost inescapably be seen as a concerted U.S.-Israeli effort to put Israel in control of Jordan. It might even serve to unify forces in Jordan so that army and fedayeen alike would feel that they had to turn together against Israeli troops. A Hussein who had been saved by an Israeli invasion would probably not last long in Jordan.

The *arguments for Israeli intervention* are: It may be difficult to stop. Some believe the King already has clandestinely reached a tacit understanding with the Israelis that if the Iraqis intervene Israel will attack. If the U.S. were to intervene, the USSR would almost have to react in some way, even if not definitively. The USSR has no incentive to defend Jordan against Israeli attack. The Israelis have a great logistical advantage over the U.S. If we intervened and then had to bring supplies across Israel, we could have the worst of two worlds. Introduction of U.S. forces would put the U.S. in the middle of an intra-Arab war and we would still be viewed as collaborating with Israel.

If Israel intervened in Jordan, the U.S. would have to consider two kinds of support:

—It would be necessary to assure that Israel has the munitions and other supplies required to sustain the attack. It is the judgment of the group that Israel's war reserves would be sufficient to carry their operations through a prolonged operation. U.S. resupply could be provided within ample time.

—The more serious contingency would come about if the Soviets or Egyptians decided to take advantage of the situation by heating up the Suez front. The judgment was that their capability would be limited to re-opening artillery attacks, small harassing raids across the Canal and some air attacks. Support for Israel in this contingency would be developed from the same kinds of packages that have been worked out in the event the ceasefire breaks down.

### 3. *The third contingency: armed intervention for evacuation.*

If there is complete chaos in Amman and Jordanian forces lose control, it is probable that armed intervention could not with assurance save either the American community or the hijacking hostages.

If, however, the army remains in control of parts of the city and Americans can collect there, armed intervention could save them. Even in this situation, it seems unlikely that the hijacking hostages could be saved.

There is one other important aspect of this option: It is possible that an intervention primarily for evacuation could temporarily bolster Hussein's regime. It could, if well timed, amount to a U.S. show of force without the political onus of sustained intervention. It seems most likely that if intervention comes it would come this way.

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**248. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon<sup>1</sup>**

Washington, September 16, 1970.

SUBJECT

Jordan/Hijacking Situation

*Jordan*

King Hussein appointed a new military government early this morning as planned. The fedayeen have not reacted yet. Amman is still quiet this morning.

Hussein charged the Prime Minister in the new military cabinet—Brigadier General Muhammad Daud—to insure security, restore order and impose the state's authority and protection. He called for the cooperation of all.

The central committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization is meeting in emergency session to decide its next step. Arafat is reported to have ordered the immediate unification of all Palestinian forces. He also reportedly sent a message to all Arab heads of state appealing to them to intervene immediately to end the bloodshed in Jordan. As a result of yesterday's fighting in two cities north of Amman and reports of impending action against them, fedayeen units throughout Jordan are on full combat alert.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 331, Subject Files, Hijackings. Secret. Printed from an uninitialed copy.

*Hijacking*

The German representative under urgent instructions convoked a midnight meeting of the Bern Group to ask that the Red Cross team in Amman be strengthened and that a "new, clear mandate" be drawn up by mid-day today with the participation of all governments concerned. If this was not done, the Germans would seek release of their hostages bilaterally.

The first German requirement was met by Red Cross announcement that two senior officers were being sent to Amman. The second was a clear effort to press the Israelis to make a further contribution to the bargaining.

One way Israel might engage now is to pick up yesterday's PFLP demands and expand an earlier offer to release two Algerians to include a few other specific individuals they hold. State's thinking is moving in this direction.

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**249. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to the President's Chief of Staff (Haldeman)<sup>1</sup>**

Washington, September 16, 1970.

It is imperative that the President understand the circumstances under which last night's WSAG on the Middle East was convened:

—At approximately 9 PM, General Haig received a hot line call from 10 Downing Street initiated by the Prime Minister's Assistant, Mr. Greenhill.

—In behalf of the Prime Minister, Mr. Greenhill insisted on knowing U.S. intentions with respect to Jordan, stating that the Prime Minister was very concerned about King Hussein's decision to force a showdown with the Fedayeen.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-077, Washington Special Actions Group Meetings, WSAG Meeting Jordan 9/15/70. Top Secret; Sensitive; Exclusively Eyes Only. A handwritten notation on the top of the memorandum indicates the date of the memorandum to be September 14; however, it presumably was written on September 16 after the WSAG meeting from 10:30 to 11:30 p.m. on September 15. See footnote 3, Document 246.

—As General Haig told you last night on the phone, Mr. Greenhill indicated that the Prime Minister wished to discuss the situation personally with the President.

—Because of these circumstances, I judged it imperative to have all feasible courses of action prepared for the President's consideration in the event the call came through.

—As you know, Dave Packard, Admiral Moorer, Joe Sisco and I were at Airlie House when the situation developed and this group decided to return to the White House to prepare answers to specific questions posed by the Prime Minister and to make the necessary preparations for a possible head-to-head discussion between the President and the Prime Minister.

—The memorandum which I sent the President this morning was prepared jointly by Deputy Secretary of Defense Packard, Chairman of the JCS Moorer, Assistant Secretary of State Sisco and his assistant, Mr. Seelye.

I believe it is most important that you make the foregoing circumstances crystal clear to the President at the earliest possible moment so that he understands the context in which last night's meeting was convened and also understands the fact that the contents of the memorandum represent the view of the group.

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**250. Memorandum From Samuel Hoskinson of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)<sup>1</sup>**

Washington, September 16, 1970.

**SUBJECT**

The Situation in Jordan

The situation in Jordan is still very uncertain. Amman was calm during the day but King Hussein may soon move against the fedayeen with full force and request our help. The negotiations for the

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 615, Country Files, Middle East, Jordan, Vol. V. Secret; Nodis. Sent for information. Kissinger initialed the first page of the memorandum.

release of the remaining hostages are still stalled but the hostages are safe.

### *Security Situation in Jordan*

Amman was calm but tense during the day. The fedayeen made no apparent attempt to comply with the cease-fire agreement and talked big but they seemed eager not to directly provoke the army. There was even some speculation that they may be prepared to sit it out for now, or at least until such time as the army begins to physically enforce the agreement. By evening, however, there were press reports of fighting in Amman.

Today's situation may only be the calm before the storm. The embassy has learned that the Jordanian Cabinet is meeting tonight and that King Hussein is inclined to move vigorously against the fedayeen either at daybreak or twenty-four hours later.<sup>2</sup> The King's concern centers on possible intervention by Syria and the more remote possibility of intervention by the Iraqi forces. In this regard, the Jordanians are considering their contingency plans and wonder about possible air support from either the U.S. or the Israelis if their Arab neighbors intervene. Ambassador Brown does not consider this to be a formal request for U.S. military involvement at this time and will be meeting with King Hussein tomorrow morning. Such a formal request could, however, come out of his meeting with King Hussein.

### *The Hostages*

The embassy in Amman believes that the danger to the hostages has not been appreciably increased by the present political crisis, but will be if an armed showdown between the army and the fedayeen occurs and widespread fighting breaks out. The embassy further believes that the hostages may be more valuable to the PFLP as an insurance policy against the government threat than as a bargaining counter for a prisoner exchange and that therefore the PFLP may have an incentive to assure their safety.<sup>3</sup> On the other hand, the PFLP may not be able to ensure the safety of the hostages even if it wishes to do so if heavy fighting breaks out.

One of the remaining Red Cross representatives reports that he has good information that the hostages are safe. Some, however, may have been taken out of Amman. The Red Cross is still trying to get visitation rights as a first step toward a protective role.

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<sup>2</sup> As reported in telegram 4844 from Amman, September 16, 2205Z. (Ibid.)

<sup>3</sup> As reported in telegram 4822 from Amman, September 16, 1115Z. (Ibid., RG 59, Central Files 1970-73, AV 12)

*The Negotiations*

The Bern Group met again this afternoon for another difficult session.<sup>4</sup> The British took the lead in pressing the Israelis by insisting that the group agree to a mandate which included a contribution by the Israelis going beyond the release of the two Algerian officials they are holding. The British representative went so far as to threaten that if no such agreement were reached the UK would be taking a ministerial decision and “we all know what that means.” The Germans then joined the British in demanding an immediate response from the Israelis. Finally, our representative was able to save the situation securing agreement to consider a formula whereby the five powers would say they agree to consider the PFLP proposals at such time as the PFLP provides its total demands, including a specific list of the fedayeen it wants.

Once again we have bought some time within the Bern Group. If the Israelis buy our latest formula it may calm down the British some, although there are continuing indications from London that they are still very close to breaking away from the united front. The German attitude is even more problematical. At this point, it may be that only an unequivocal Israeli acceptance of the formula will hold the group together. The Israeli Ambassador has become increasingly engaged in the Bern discussions and it has seemed increasingly clear from the last several sessions that the element of solidarity has become a thing of value to Israel.

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<sup>4</sup> As reported in telegram 2319 from Bern, September 16, 2319Z. (Ibid., POL 23–9 JORDAN)

**251. Airgram From the Consulate General in Jerusalem to the Department of State<sup>1</sup>**

A-129

Jerusalem, September 16, 1970.

## SUBJECT

Israeli Detention on the West Bank

## REF

Jerusalem's 423, 429, 431 and Amman's 4711<sup>2</sup>

## Summary

Virtually all Arab contacts of the Consulate General believe that the Israeli detention of some 350 West Bank Arabs and 100 from Gaza over the weekend of September 11-14 was closely linked to the PFLP airplane hijackings and to their continued holding of upwards of 50 hostages believed to be largely Israeli citizens. Many apparently believe that the Israeli Government intends to use the detainees as bargaining counters in a more or less direct swap for the PFLP prisoners. None believe that the arrests had anything to do with a specific or even general security threat to Israel.

As of this writing the official Israeli explanation is that the arrests were for security reasons and that they were in no way connected with the PFLP hijack prisoners.

The Consulate General believes Israeli motives were probably mixed and somewhat more complicated than either explanation offered above. We think that a blend of domestic political considerations, and a desire to demonstrate to terrorists, particularly the PFLP that Israel can play it tough, too, were probably the central motives for the arrests.

With the notable exception of East Jerusalem itself, the Israeli arrests last weekend affected Arabs in most West Bank towns and many villages from Qalquiylia in the Northwest through Nablus, Ramallah, Bethlehem and Hebron in the South-center. Although we have been able to obtain only a few specific names of detainees, a wide sampling of information among our Arab contacts has made the pattern of the arrests clear enough to hint at the motives behind them. We have first

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970-73, POL 27 ARAB-ISR. Confidential. Drafted by John T. Wheelock (POL); cleared in ECON and POL; and approved in draft by Consul General Stephen J. Campbell. It was repeated to Amman, Beirut, and Tel Aviv.

<sup>2</sup> These telegrams are Consulate reports of arrests of Palestinians. Telegram 423 from Jerusalem, September 12; telegram 429 from Jerusalem, September 14; and telegram 431 from Jerusalem, September 15 are *ibid.* Telegram 4711 from Amman, September 14, is *ibid.*, AV 12.

hand or reliable second hand descriptions of four specific series of arrests in different communities, including two in suburbs of Ramallah, one in Bethlehem and one in the village of Battir near Hebron. In each case the pattern is similar. Two or more members of the same family or closely related families were arrested. The arrestees were fairly well-known and fairly prominent citizens; the brother of a secondary school principal, the politically active wife of an UNRWA official, a middle class merchant. Apparently young women were frequently included. The *Jerusalem Post* quoted security circles on September 14 as stating that 80 women were included in the total of 450 prisoners.

In every case described to Consulate General officers in detail, the people actually held were described by our Arab informants as respectable, above suspicion of personal involvement in terrorist activities. In every case, however, there was a son or reasonably close relative who is at present in prison or who had in the past been detained in connection with or suspicion of terrorist activities. Not all of these cases were identified as PFLP involved, merely Fedayeen. We have heard that a number of people named Habbash have been detained, mostly from the Ramallah area.

The official line to date, enunciated by Foreign Minister Eban at a press conference earlier this week, given to Consul General Campbell by a senior government official, and attributed to security authorities by the press is that the detentions are for security reasons and are unconnected with the PFLP hostages in Jordan. Special security foot patrols have indeed been highly visible in Jerusalem, particularly at and near the various gates to the old walled city since last weekend.

There have been persistent press reports that Israel has sent Arab emissaries to PFLP in Amman in recent days to warn the PFLP of Israeli reprisals against relatives and others connected with them if the Israeli prisoners of the PFLP are not released. Kol Israel's English language broadcast on Monday evening September 14 carried an interview with a Dr. Zahi Kamhawi of Nablus in which he stated that he had been rebuffed by PFLP leaders when he went to Amman over last weekend to deliver a warning on behalf of Israeli authorities. His mission, he said, had been to warn that Israel would jail all known relatives in Israeli controlled territory of PFLP leaders, houses of known activists would be blown up, and the death penalty would be reinstated for captured terrorists. Kamhawi said that he had been dismissed by PFLP leaders after only a few minutes interview.

Press reports quoting Israeli Security sources indicate that as of September 16, about 125 of the original 450 detainees from the West Bank and Gaza had been released after questioning, leaving some 325 in custody.

*Comment:* It is widely believed, we think correctly, that these measures were initiated by General Dayan and the Defense Ministry.



Despite the official line and visibly stepped up security measures in Jerusalem, we do not believe that the majority of those who have been arrested can be under serious suspicion of terrorist activity or even of active collaboration with terrorist elements.

Neither do we believe, as some Arab contacts claim, that Israeli Security Forces are naive enough to be adding fringe elements to their already sizable bag of hard core terrorist detainees simply with a view to having more bodies available to exchange against PFLP held Israeli prisoners.

Rather we think that these arrests are designed to show terrorists in Jordan and elsewhere, particularly the PFLP, that Israel can be ruthless, too. Probably it is hoped that these detentions will make the PFLP more careful in its treatment of Israeli detainees, and that they may even help in bringing about the ultimate release of these prisoners. For domestic Israeli consumption it shows the public that its security forces are alert and able to take prompt and effective counter-measures against Arab hijackers and terrorists.

Campbell

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## 252. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Jordan<sup>1</sup>

Washington, September 17, 1970, 0523Z.

152449. Ref: Amman 4845.<sup>2</sup>

1. We concur in your assessment that no real threat exists from Syria and, while Iraqi intervention seems more likely, our judgment

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970-73, POL 27 ARA-ISR. Secret; Flash. Drafted and approved by Seelye; and cleared by Sisco, Atherton, and Kissinger.

<sup>2</sup> In telegram 4845 from Amman, September 16, 2315Z, Brown suggested that Hussein was overly concerned about possible Syrian intervention as Brown estimated Syria had only approximately 600 troops in Jordan and a Syrian-directed Palestinian force. In paragraph 3, Brown reported that he suspected Hussein wanted "his hand held." Brown proposed telling Hussein that the United States wanted a strong, stable Jordan, and that it was a Jordanian decision on how to restore central authority. Brown suggested disabusing the King of the possibility of U.S. involvement in interdicting the Syrians or Iraqis. In paragraph 4, Brown hoped not to receive instructions to discourage Hussein from "taking stern measures against fedayeen." (Ibid., Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 615, Country Files, Middle East, Jordan, Vol. V)

continues to be that active Iraqi military intervention against King questionable.

2. Obviously King wants and needs his hand held. What you propose telling him (para 3 reftel) is entirely appropriate. You should not rpt not altogether preclude the possibility of direct USG involvement in form of interdicting Syrians and Iraqis, and you can be encouraging about the prospects for material assistance. You may inform King that Jordan situation is subject of high-level USG attention.

3. Re para 4 reftel, you should not discourage King from taking stern measures against fedayeen. This is course of action for him and him alone to decide. As you note, one cannot help but feel at this juncture that unless he asserts his authority more effectively the chances of his regime surviving are worse than if he were to continue to cater to fedayeen.

4. We agree that you should urge King to enlist all possible support from other Arab states. We recall Nasser's reported offer of assistance to King, made during latter's last visit to Cairo, in event King faced with critical internal situation. We take Nasser's assurances of material help with grain of salt but seems to us King should at this juncture at least test Nasser's earlier undertaking. Saudis, Moroccans, Tunisians and Lebanese are unable to be of any tangible assistance to King in current situation and their moral support would be of marginal value. Soviets cannot be expected to play useful role although it is our guess Soviets probably would like to see King win out over fedayeen in any confrontation. Best we can look for in this respect is avoidance of Soviet involvement.

5. We wish you the best of luck in your first meeting with King and believe your talk with him will be useful at this juncture. King, as you know, tends to be moody and at times somewhat headstrong. In recent months he has demonstrated lack of determination and consistency. Your advice and counsel could be important at this point.

**Rogers**

253. **Memorandum From the President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Haig) to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)**<sup>1</sup>

Washington, September 17, 1970, 7:30 a.m.

SUBJECT

Jordanian Situation Report

*Current Situation*

The Jordanian army with armored cars, tanks, and at least one company of infantry moved into Amman early this morning in what has been described by DAO personnel as a picture book pincer movement. Fighting is reported to be heavy within the city and there have been mortar attacks in the area of the American and British Embassies and the Intercontinental Hotel. Although the Embassy has been hit with several rounds, as of 0400 EDT all official personnel are accounted for and well. There have been no injuries reported to private American citizens in the Jordan Hotel or elsewhere. (The Ambassador and his staff have locked themselves in the code room and other safe areas of the Chancery.) The Ambassador talked to the Jordanian Prime Minister shortly after the fighting began and found the Prime Minister optimistic and more self-assured than when he talked with him yesterday. The Prime Minister added that the security situation is improving.

*Military Situation*

We have received recent reports that there is Israeli air activity over Jordan and along the UAR border. These flights have not become actively involved in the situation as of yet. There are also reports that a meeting of senior Iraqi officials will take place shortly to decide on a course of action for the Saladin units. (The Saladin is the Iraqi guerilla force equivalent to the Fedayeen.) Three days ago the Iraqis transferred motor units to Fateh and there is a concentration of Syrian troops reported at Derra (located on the Syrian side of the border, northeast of Irbid).

*Americans in Jordan*

The Jordan Task Force at State reports that there are approximately 50 official Americans in Amman. All official U.S. dependents have been

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-077, Washington Special Actions Group Meetings, WSAG Meeting Middle East 9/17/70 AM. Secret; Sensitive. The time is handwritten at the top of the first page. Printed from an uninitialed copy.

evacuated. However there are approximately 250–300 American citizens scattered throughout the country. These would include American nationals married to Jordanians, missionaries, etc. Thus far the Ambassador has been unsuccessful in his attempts to contact the ICRC representative.

All agencies have been instructed to keep us informed as soon as they develop any information in addition to formal Embassy reporting.

### *Third Country Reaction*

Damascus Radio called on Jordanian troops to revolt and fight with the Fedayeen. The Jordanian Ambassador was reportedly called in by the Syrian Foreign Office and informed that the Syrians would not stand idly by while the Fedayeen was “massacred.” A similar warning was made last night by the international leadership of the ruling Baath party in Baghdad.

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## 254. Minutes of a Washington Special Actions Group Meeting<sup>1</sup>

Washington, September 17, 1970, 7:32–8:50 a.m.

### SUBJECT

Middle East

### PARTICIPANTS

Chairman—Henry A. Kissinger

State—

U. Alexis Johnson

Joseph P. Sisco

Rodger Davies

Defense—

David M. Packard

G. Warren Nutter

Robert Pranger

JCS—

Adm. Thomas H. Moorer

General John Vogt

General Melvin Zais

CIA—

Richard Helms

NSC Staff—

Harold Saunders

Gen. Alexander Haig

Col. Richard Kennedy

Adm. R.C. Robinson

Jeanne W. Davis

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-114, Washington Special Actions Group, WSAG Minutes (Originals) 1969 and 1970. Top Secret; Sensitive; Nodis. The meeting took place in the White House Situation Room.

## SUMMARY OF DECISIONS

It was agreed:

1. to wait to see how the situation develops and to take no special measures with the Egyptians or the Russians at the present time;
2. CIA will issue its Sit Reps every four hours;
3. to amend Ambassador Brown's instructions to permit him to tell Hussein that, now that action has started, we would be sympathetic to a request for materiel assistance;<sup>2</sup>
4. to instruct our Chargé to get an Israeli assessment of the situation but not to ask what they intend to do;<sup>3</sup>
5. to instruct Ambassador MacArthur to see the Shah and to say that the President has asked him to give the Shah our thinking on the situation and get the benefit of his;<sup>4</sup>
6. to get the results of the Israeli reconnaissance flights and feed the information to the carriers in the Eastern Mediterranean;
7. Defense will prepare a package on what materiel Hussein might ask for;
8. Defense will identify planes for air shipment of materiel to Jordan;
9. we would not approach the Turks for overflight or base rights *unless* Egypt takes a public position in support of Hussein;
10. to explore the possibility of using Saudi Arabian C-130s for an Arab airlift of US materiel assistance from Iran;
11. to remove 5 of the 7 C-130s from Incirlik and position them in Europe or wherever seems best, and to increase the number of C-130's in Europe, a few at a time;
12. Defense will provide the best arguments for the use of US air in Jordan, for inclusion in the package to the President;
13. if US air operations begin in Jordan, we should insist that the Israelis stop any bombing in the country;
14. we must make it clear that any US air activity in Jordan is directed against the Iraqis and Syrians, not the Fedayeen;
15. it is too early to brief the Congress;
16. we should not go to the UN at present;
17. State will coordinate the press handling.

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<sup>2</sup> Transmitted in telegram 152501 to Amman, September 17, 1458Z. (Ibid., NSC Files, Box 615, Country Files, Middle East, Jordan, Vol. V)

<sup>3</sup> Transmitted in telegram 152502 to Tel Aviv, September 17, 1459Z. (Ibid., RG 59, Central Files 1970-73, POL 23-9 JORDAN)

<sup>4</sup> See Document 259.

Mr. Helms: I have distributed a Sit Rep as of 6:00 a.m. with an addendum.<sup>5</sup> To summarize, the Jordanian Army has moved into Amman. There is some question as to who triggered the action. They have started off well, but the situation is unclear and it is difficult to know what one can do at the present time. The situation is still at issue.

Dr. Kissinger: Is there fighting anywhere else?

Mr. Helms: No—only in Amman and in little towns on the fringes of Amman. There is some lack of clarity as to what the Iraqis are up to. [*1½ lines not declassified*]

Admiral Moorer: The Iraqi troops in the area are the worst they have. Can Iran help?

Mr. Davies: (using map) The Jordanian Army, with armor, is moving from three directions and is expanding its perimeter. They have secured a sizeable area of the city, including the major hotel section. The crunch will come when they secure the heights and begin moving into the heavily populated areas. These areas include a large refugee camp where the hostages might be.

Dr. Kissinger: Do we assume the Jordanians will continue to move?

Mr. Davies: Yes. We understand the Jordanian Government is willing to take heavy losses and will not be particularly concerned over the lives of Westerners. There is some fighting at Zarqa, which is 15 miles out, and at Salt. This involves the road to the airport. There are Iraqi troops in Zarqa and [*less than 1 line not declassified*] Jordanian tanks have entered some Iraqi-held areas. There are also some Iraqi troops in Irbid and Mafraq. Irbid is in the hands of the Palestinians. The King is at Hummar some 12 kilometers outside Amman.

Dr. Kissinger: If the King secures Amman, will this break the back of the Fedayeen for the time being?

Mr. Davies: If the leaders escape, Habbash will probably go to Iraq and Arafat to Syria. The Jordanian Army will have ringed the city, however, and their chances of escape are small.

Mr. Helms: They have the capability to keep going for some time in house-to-house fighting in those narrow streets. I have no idea how long, but it would not be over in a day.

Admiral Moorer: We would have to expect sporadic fighting for some time; this is guerrilla strategy—mining roads, a grenade now and then.

Mr. Johnson: The Jordanian Army has still not come to grips with the main elements of the Fedayeen.

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<sup>5</sup> Not found.

Mr. Packard: It will take a while for the situation to shape up.

Dr. Kissinger: Are we agreed that victory for Hussein is essential from our point of view?

All agreed emphatically.

Mr. Johnson: Hussein hasn't asked us for anything yet.

Mr. Sisco: We have had no communication from Hussein since the action began. We have instructed our people to conduct a hand-holding operation—to be sympathetic. This group should make a decision as to whether we should take any initiative with Hussein.

Dr. Kissinger: Have we any indication of Israeli moves?

Admiral Moorer: They have sent over 8 recce flights.

Mr. Helms: They are watching the situation.

Mr. Johnson: [*1 line not declassified*]

Mr. Helms: [*1 line not declassified*]

Mr. Sisco: The fact of Israel recce will not be lost on the Iraqis. This is a good low-level signal.

Mr. Davies: [*less than 1 line not declassified*] Nasser is willing to support Hussein. This will have some influence in Damascus.

Mr. Kissinger: What about the diplomatic side?

Mr. Sisco: I agree with Mr. Helms' fundamental assessment. We have to wait to see how the situation evolves. We should take no special initiative with Israel now. There is no need for special measures with the Russians with regard to Iraq and Syria at present. I see no diplomatic steps at the moment, although this may change in the next few hours.

Dr. Kissinger: I called John Freeman at the President's request last night to give him what information we had.

Mr. Sisco: That was highly desirable. You recall that in the earlier situation Denis Greenhill had called the President at the Prime Minister's request with some questions.<sup>6</sup> The UK was obviously suspicious of collusion.

Mr. Johnson: Would it be useful to have Zurhellen talk to the Israelis to get their assessment of the situation?

Mr. Sisco: Yes, but in a very careful way. He could say we are watching the situation carefully and ask for their assessment.

Dr. Kissinger: Yes, but don't ask what they intend to do. That is a good idea to get their assessment. State should instruct Zurhellen to do so.

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<sup>6</sup> See Document 249.

Mr. Helms: The JIC met yesterday and I'm sure you'll have no trouble getting an assessment from them.

Mr. Sisco: We are in a hand-holding position with Hussein. Should we take the initiative and offer help? I think we should wait. He has enough, and there are various things in the pipeline.

Dr. Kissinger: We might look at Brown's instructions. Should we let Brown say that, now that action has started, we would be sympathetic to a request for material assistance?

Mr. Packard: Yes; we should give Hussein some indication of moral support.

Dr. Kissinger: Let's amend Brown's instructions accordingly.

Mr. Pranger: We will know this morning how much ammunition they have.

Dr. Kissinger: (to Pranger) Can Defense prepare a package on what Hussein might ask for?

Mr. Pranger: Yes, we have several options with various packages already.

Dr. Kissinger: Can you do it by early afternoon? Would we be able to move fast? (to Packard) Could we get stand-by planes for material shipments to Jordan, or at least locate planes or ear-mark them?

Col. Kennedy: What about the psychological effect of using US aircraft?

Dr. Kissinger: Good point. Let's identify our choices. [*½ line not declassified*]

Mr. Helms: [*1 line not declassified*]

Mr. Pranger: [*1 line not declassified*]

Dr. Kissinger: (to Admiral Moorer) What is our military situation?

Admiral Moorer: I spoke to General Goodpaster this morning. His assumptions are the same as ours: that we should maintain maximum readiness without any overt, alerting action. He understands this. Our forces are in the same state of readiness as they were earlier. The carrier *Saratoga* will join the *Independence* this afternoon south of Cyprus. It can commence air operations by noon if necessary. They will be accompanied by a cruiser and 12 destroyers.

Dr. Kissinger: How about the third carrier?

Admiral Moorer: There is no 3rd carrier. The *Kennedy* could get there in 9 days.

Dr. Kissinger: I thought a CVA was on its way to replace one of the carriers now there.

Admiral Moorer: No. The fleet south of Cyprus will soon be in launching position. In addition, there is an amphibious Task Force with one battalion embarked, but no helicopters, south of Crete which could



reach the coast within 36 hours. Also, the Fleet flagship is getting underway from Gaeta and will join the force. That means the entire 6th Fleet will be in the Eastern Mediterranean.

Mr. Johnson: This will surface publicly. We can say it is a normal precautionary measure.

Admiral Moorer: The *Saratoga* was already scheduled to operate in this general area.

Dr. Kissinger: I think we should say as little as possible about military moves.

Admiral Moorer: We can say it is a routine training operation. The Soviets have a guided missile carrier, a guided missile frigate, two guided missile destroyers and an old-style heavy cruiser in the general area.

Dr. Kissinger: How many sorties does this give us?

Admiral Moorer: We have a capability of 200 strike sorties (100 per ship) on a sustained effort. We could surge to a higher level.

Mr. Packard: It would be a highly sensitive question as to who shoots first.

Dr. Kissinger: I doubt that the Russians will sink any US ships.

Admiral Moorer: Also, the *Guam* and her Task Group has departed Norfolk to participate in an exercise in the Mediterranean. They will pick up their load of Marines at Camp LeJeune and sail in the next day or two. They have 15 helicopters, and were planning to go the area.

Dr. Kissinger: Could we get them there faster?

Admiral Moorer: They could probably sail tomorrow night—12 hours earlier than scheduled.

Dr. Kissinger: Tell them to sail as soon as possible.

(Dr. Kissinger left the room)<sup>7</sup>

Admiral Moorer: If we tell the *Guam* to sail earlier this will undoubtedly be a news item. I also want to talk about target identification. We need more information on the situation to give our pilots their targets. We should find out from the Israelis what they have learned from their recce.

Mr. Packard: We can't send any recce over.

Admiral Moorer: We will have to send recce in when we send our planes in.

Mr. Johnson: [1 line not declassified]

Mr. Helms: [1 line not declassified]

Admiral Moorer: (to Mr. Helms) Also, can you issue your Sit Reps every four hours instead of every six hours?

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<sup>7</sup> Kissinger took a telephone call from Greenhill. See Document 255.

Mr. Helms: All right.

Admiral Moorer: The British have two frigates, a mine sweeper and a tanker in the vicinity of Malta. They would not be too much help but they could symbolically provide a joint force.

Mr. Johnson: And we have the U-2s there.

Mr. Helms: They could fly over in no time.

General Vogt: You don't get much tactical intelligence from U-2s.

Mr. Helms: They could sort out where the Iraqi and Syrian units are.

Admiral Moorer: We already know that. You can't identify Jordanian or Iraqi tanks from the air.

Also, in any military operation, we would have to think of over-flight rights and bases. If we could stage out of Turkey, it would facilitate operations by letting us move in closer and cut down our response time. If we fly in direct from Europe to Jordan, we would have to over-fly Austria and Israel. The longest way, overflying Iran and Saudi Arabia, would require refueling and would take time.

Mr. Johnson: (to Mr. Davies) Have we excluded the possibility of over-flying France? Is Austria likely to be sticky?

Mr. Davies: If Egypt should support Hussein, the Italians and French might cooperate. We could also possibly get rights in Greece and Turkey if Hussein appeals to them.

Admiral Moorer: Incirlik and Cyprus would be the best, with Athens as a fall-back.

Mr. Davies: I will see what Radio Cairo is saying about the action.

Mr. Pranger: Would the Turks let us use Incirlik for arms shipment?

Mr. Davies: There would be a real chance if Nasser supports Hussein. I think it is time now to begin to go to governments to see how our speculation as to their attitude stands up.

Mr. Packard: How about Cyprus for arms shipments.

Mr. Pranger: We would prefer Incirlik.

Mr. Davies: It might also be possible to gear up the Saudi Arabian C-130s and have them pick up our shipments from Iran in an Arab airlift.

Mr. Pranger: We could at least ask about Turkish airspace.

Mr. Davies: I recommend we go to the Turks.

Mr. Pranger: On both airspace and Incirlik.

Mr. Johnson: I agree (to Mr. Davies) let's do it.

Admiral Moorer: We can put it on the basis of an action to save Hussein, at his request. Let's be sure to ask our Embassy in Amman to keep us currently informed.

Mr. Pranger: We might get in touch with the Jordanian Army and see if we could use H-5 (an airfield) to land shipments.

(Dr. Kissinger returned)

Admiral Moorer: (to Dr. Kissinger) I think it is necessary to get as much information as possible.

Dr. Kissinger: Have we identified all the readiness measures we can take? What about the 82nd Airborne. Can we do anything to speed their readiness?

Admiral Moorer: Not without being obvious.

Dr. Kissinger: (to Mr. Johnson) Do you agree?

Mr. Johnson: Yes.

Dr. Kissinger: So do I.

Mr. Packard: (to Dr. Kissinger) While you were gone we discussed the desirability of moving up the *Guam* sailing 12 hours and decided it was not worth the publicity it would bring.

Dr. Kissinger: I agree.

Admiral Moorer: I have also recommended to Mr. Helms that we tighten up the Sit Rep timing and that the Embassy give us a status report on the airport.

Dr. Kissinger: Let's pull the readiness situation together for the President. Is there anything we can do with the 82nd Airborne to cut down their alert time?

Admiral Moorer: The officers at Fort Bragg are doing everything they can do without tipping their hand. They have formed a staff group which is watching the situation and have prepared a check-list. It would be 22 hours before they are flying and 18 hours flight time.

Dr. Kissinger: And we could get the German brigade in during this 40 hours.

Admiral Moorer: Yes, the first part. We should begin to explore with the Turks and others the availability of overflight rights and bases. We can get a reading from the Egyptians.

Dr. Kissinger: Let's go easy with the Egyptians.

Mr. Johnson: Only on what they are saying publicly.

Mr. Pranger: Would you go to the Turks on rights for intervention as well as for supply?

Mr. Johnson: No, only on supply.

Dr. Kissinger: Why go to the Turks on anything? Why not Cyprus? I am leery about the Turks.

Admiral Moorer: Turkey would be easiest, with Greece next.

Dr. Kissinger: Wouldn't it be politically less dangerous in Greece or Cyprus than in Turkey?

Mr. Davies: If Egypt supports Hussein, our problems with our allies will be reduced.

Dr. Kissinger: If that happens, then we can go to the Turks. But only if Egypt takes a *public* position in support of Hussein. We should not go to the Turks unless Egypt publicly supports Hussein. Cyprus and Greece could be alternatives.

Mr. Davies: It is thought inadvisable to use US aircraft, we might get the Saudis to use their C-130s for an Arab airlift from Iran.

Dr. Kissinger: Good idea. Let's explore it.

Mr. Pranger: This would still require the use of Turkish airspace.

Adm. Moorer: It would also be helpful to move a few more C-130s into Europe, a few at a time.

Mr. Johnson: That would be no problem. You have moved some out of Incirlik, haven't you?

Adm. Moorer: There are still 7 in Incirlik. We didn't take any out since it was thought this might indicate a pull-back. If we took five of these back to Germany it would facilitate any evacuation.

Dr. Kissinger: We didn't want to indicate any lessening of our posture as long as the hostages were there. We can take them out now that our general posture is being strengthened. Keep two there and take the other five out.

Adm. Moorer: We will put those five in the best position for the purpose.

Dr. Kissinger: How quickly can the carrier planes begin to operate?

Adm. Moorer: After the execute, in 2 or 2½ hours. The problem is to get the targets.

Mr. Packard: We may have to send in recce to get the targets.

Mr. Johnson: [1 line not declassified]

Adm. Moore: And I will feed it to the ships.

Mr. Packard: Can't we get some information from the Jordanians?

Adm. Moorer: It depends on where the targets are.

Mr. Johnson: Do we have the technical capability for direct communication between the carriers and the Jordanians and the aircraft and the Jordanians?

Adm. Moorer: We have the technical capability but no people on the ground.

Dr. Kissinger: To return to the problem of US vs. Israel air operations and our capabilities. Assuming the Iraqis move, I believe all agree that one day's operation may not do it. What are we getting into once we start bombing?

Adm. Moorer: This depends on the success of the Jordanian Army in pushing back the Iraqis.

Mr. Packard: That's stretching out interdiction strategy a long way.

Mr. Pranger: Israel is already striking Fedayeen targets.

Dr. Kissinger: To recap, on a pure readiness basis, we can be ready in 2½ hours. Our shortage is intelligence. We can get the recce information from the Israelis and feed it to the ships. But we have to think in terms of continued operations.

Adm. Moorer: The carriers can stay several days.

Dr. Kissinger: Once we start bombing, won't we be in a situation of several days' duration?

Adm. Moorer: I think the Jordanians can handle the Iraqis with air assistance from either the US or Israel—possibly without it. I think we should watch the situation develop since we can act quickly. The duration of any action is tied to the success of the Jordanian Army in disposing of the Iraqis.

Dr. Kissinger: Are we in good shape to watch Iraqi movements?

General Vogt: The Israelis are doing a good job of this.

Dr. Kissinger: The question won't arise for several hours, will it?

Adm. Moorer: No, it will be dark soon.

General Vogt: These 19,000 Iraqi troops are a ragged bunch.

Adm. Moorer: They are the worst of the Iraqi forces. Many of the officers were sent there as a form of political exile.

Dr. Kissinger: Would there be a possibility of sending them on suicide missions?

General Vogt: I don't think they will be very responsive to orders.

Mr. Packard: Where are the Saladin?

General Vogt: Around Zarqa.

Dr. Kissinger: Are the Syrians any good?

General Vogt: They're not much better.

Mr. Helms: I have a report on the Cairo radio. They have made no statements on the Egyptian position. They are just saying that the US has said it has no plans to intervene.

Dr. Kissinger: Is it helpful for them to say that?

Mr. Helms: I think so.

Dr. Kissinger: What about diplomatic actions? Are we agreed we should not approach any other capital now, except possibly for Iran? We should not go to Cairo?

Mr. Sisco: No.

Dr. Kissinger: I agree. How about Moscow?

Mr. Sisco: It is premature.

Dr. Kissinger: I agree. I think we have said too much to the Russians recently. Let them come to us.

Mr. Sisco: The Russians did intervene last week by talking to the Iraqis in a generally cautionary way over the hostage situation. As a result the Iraqis pulled back a little. The Russians will take a look at the situation on the ground and will probably be in to see us today and will ask us to restrain the Israelis.

Dr. Kissinger: I agree. What will our posture be?

Mr. Sisco: We should say “thank you very much; we will look at the situation.” I have given them no satisfaction in our recent talks. We must handle it very carefully, though, so they can’t accuse us of collusion. We should take the line that we have no interest in broadening the conflict. The presence of Iraqi and Syrian forces in Jordan is the problem. If Iraq should intervene, this would be the complicating factor.

Dr. Kissinger: Let’s not nail ourselves to a position that we will not intervene. Don’t preclude US intervention.

General Vogt: The Soviet Military Attaché in Amman has been talking about a possible US–UK–Israel intervention.

Mr. Helms: This is the kind of thing they invent and float all the time.

Dr. Kissinger: How about Iran?

Mr. Sisco: If we see that the Iraqis are about to move, we might talk to the Iranians. We should be very careful though. There are ways in which they could help lift the pressure, but if it is done at the behest of the US, it takes on the aspect of a US strategy rather than a move by Hussein. We should take the greatest possible care in any approach.

Dr. Kissinger: How would anyone know it was done at US behest? Also, wouldn’t everyone claim that it was done at US behest, whether it was true or not?

Mr. Sisco: Iran has no interest in giving the impression that the US is running the show. We would have the Shah’s cooperation on this. Our Ambassador could go in on the basis of getting his assessment of the situation.

Dr. Kissinger: We could inform the Shah of our assessment and ask him for his. The Shah values his relationship with the President. This would also give us a basis for going back to him if we should need to.

Mr. Helms and Mr. Packard: I agree.

Mr. Saunders: Or we might ask Hussein to approach him.

Dr. Kissinger: Hussein has his hands full. MacArthur could say the President has asked him to give the Shah our thinking and get the benefit of his.

Mr. Sisco: My instinct tells me this is a few hours too early for that.

Mr. Helms: By the time our Ambassador has been instructed and he has been given the appointment, it may be time.

Dr. Kissinger: It is late afternoon. He wouldn't see him until tomorrow.

Mr. Sisco: The Shah is shrewd enough to see what we are doing.

Dr. Kissinger: That's exactly it. How about the United Nations?

Mr. Johnson: Forget it!

Mr. Sisco: If there should be substantial Iraqi or Syrian involvement we should preempt a possible move into the UN.

Dr. Kissinger: But no one will drag us into the UN. Should we talk to Congress?

Mr. Helms: I think Rodger Davies' appearance yesterday was enough for the time.

Mr. Davies: Senator Fulbright<sup>8</sup> thought the Administration was doing the right thing. The Committee was badly split. Three Senators were very skeptical of the Soviet attitude—thought we were being led down the garden path. We took the position that, since the Soviets had taken the public attitude they had, we had to test their sincerity.

Dr. Kissinger: I think it's too early to brief the Congress. We're not really doing anything.

Mr. Helms: We're not doing anything and we don't know enough.

Dr. Kissinger: (to General Haig) Would you write down the readiness measures so I can take them to the President?

Can we reassess the relative preference for use of Israeli as against US air? I should tell you that the President leans toward use of US rather than Israeli air, although he hasn't precluded further discussion. I was persuaded in the other direction by our discussion the other day, but we should take another look at it in the light of the President's feeling. I have listed the pro-US and pro-Israel arguments,<sup>9</sup> although we may not have a choice. Are we all agreed that if it appears Hussein is going under, an Israeli move is highly probable? Is that a fair statement?

Mr. Sisco: An Israeli movement in the air is highly probable. What is their situation on the ground to deal with the Iraqis on the ground?

Mr. Helms: Israel can take them on any day. They can mobilize in 24 hours.

Mr. Sisco: Would they have to augment their present dispositions?

Mr. Helms: It depends on whether they think Egypt would take some move against them.

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<sup>8</sup> Senator J. William Fulbright (D-AR), Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

<sup>9</sup> See Document 247.

General Vogt: They wouldn't have to fight their way in. There is no Fedayeen opposition between the Israeli border and Amman. They have armored units already there that they could send in.

Mr. Helms: They would first undertake such a massive aerial bombing of the Iraqi troops that there wouldn't be much left when the tanks arrived. [*1½ lines not declassified*]

Dr. Kissinger: [*1 line not declassified*]

Mr. Helms: [*1 line not declassified*]

Mr. Sisco: I am seeing Yariv today.

Mr. Helms: We'll hit them both.

Adm. Moorer: It is important that we don't use both US and Israeli air. If the President should decide to use US air, we shouldn't also use Israeli air.

Dr. Kissinger: If US aircraft go in and, for some reason, can't hack it in a sustained operation, and the Israelis come in, we are then in maximum danger of a charge of collusion.

Mr. Packard: And it would make the US look silly.

Dr. Kissinger: One of the arguments for using US air is that maybe the time has come to show US strength in the area, even in the context of our peace initiative. A US show of force might even fuel the peace initiative when things settle down. On the other hand, Israeli involvement has the danger of a reopening of general hostilities and the end of the cease-fire.

Mr. Sisco: Any Israeli show of force or a successful Israeli operation will be played as a US show of force, though not to the same degree.

Dr. Kissinger: The counter-argument is that once US forces intervene in support of Hussein and succeed, the King becomes a Western lackey and his long-term position will be weakened. An Israeli move would be more easily understood.

Mr. Sisco: An Israeli move would be taken as being in the Israeli national interest—not just as support of Hussein.

Dr. Kissinger: If a US effort should fail and the Israelis would have to bail us out, this would be a bitter pill.

Mr. Pranger: If the President decided to use US air, we could sustain the operation from the carriers. We wouldn't have to stop after 200 strikes.

Dr. Kissinger: I understand we could sustain the 200 sorties for a fairly indefinite period, but we must disabuse people of the idea that one strike would do it. The US would be bombing in Jordan for some period.

Adm. Moorer: We should bomb until we get a satisfactory result.



Mr. Helms: We should make it clear that we are striking against the Iraqis or the Syrians, not against the Fedayeen.

Dr. Kissinger: (to Mr. Pranger) If you favor the use of US air, give me your arguments.

Mr. Pranger: I don't want the US to appear to be a paper tiger.

Dr. Kissinger: (to Packard and Mr. Pranger) Give me your strongest arguments for the use of US air. I promise they will go to the President.

Mr. Helms: Let me repeat: if the US intervenes, we must make it crystal clear that it is against Iraq and Syria, not the Fedayeen. The Fedayeen are the darlings of the Arab world. If we put ourselves in the position of defending Hussein against the Fedayeen, that would tear it.

Dr. Kissinger: That is another argument for using the Israelis. They are in a better position to bomb the Fedayeen than we are. I would be extremely uncomfortable if the US and Israel were both bombing in Jordan simultaneously. If we go in, we must insist that Israel stop its bombing. We can't have a joint military operation with the Israelis.

All agreed.

Mr. Helms: We would lose the peace initiative.

Mr. Packard: I think the arguments lean strongly against the US going in.

Dr. Kissinger: Let us meet again at 3:00 p.m. today.<sup>10</sup> The President is in Chicago, and I have recommended that he not come back until there is need for a decision.

All agreed.

Dr. Kissinger: On press guidance, Ziegler is on the road with the President. (to Mr. Johnson) Could you take the lead to see that we are all singing the same tune and that no one is talking?

Mr. Sisco: Bob McCloskey should be the only one saying anything. We will brief him.

Mr. Johnson: McCloskey will be in touch with Ziegler.

Dr. Kissinger: Absolutely. Should we say that we have had this meeting?

Mr. Helms: Yes, that is desirable. We are watching the situation but are not discussing US intervention.

Dr. Kissinger: Agreed. I understand Joe (Sisco) has had some exchange with the British on tactics for handling the noon meeting on the hostages, and we can discuss this later.

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<sup>10</sup> See Document 260.

**255. Transcript of a Telephone Conversation Among the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger), the Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs (Sisco), and the Permanent Under Secretary in the British Foreign Office (Greenhill)<sup>1</sup>**

September 17, 1970, 8 a.m.

G: Can we discuss the present situation in Amman for a moment?

K: Yes.

G: What is the latest report you have from the city?

K: That the army has secured the western hills and is moving on the road past the Intercontinental Hotel into the city. It has secured the southern hills but hasn't yet gotten into the heart of the city.

G: Do you think the King's claim that he will have the hostages by tonight is valid?

K: We can't judge that. We do judge that the whole operation will take longer than a day. But it is also our judgment that he can defeat the Fedayeen by himself.

G: I don't know whether you have seen the text of what we have proposed Bern Group should put out this afternoon.<sup>2</sup>

K: No, I haven't seen it. I have Joe Sisco on the line also.

G: Have you seen it Joe?

S: No. I am up on all the wire traffic but haven't seen that.

G: We have proposed that the Bern Group should put out the following communiqué: "The five governments are ready to open negotiations upon the proposal of the PFLP as soon as the PFLP provides the Bern Group with all the demands including the release of the people the PFLP wants. We have furnished [omission in the original] on this basis. Meanwhile, we will hold the PFLP responsible for the hostages in Jordan."

S: Offhand my reaction is that sounds very good. It's the precise position we discussed with you and the others in yesterday's meeting.<sup>3</sup> We will need to discuss it here with the others. We want to evaluate the im-

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, Kissinger Telephone Conversations, Box 30, Chronological Files. No classification marking. Kissinger and Sisco were in Washington and Greenhill was in London. The conversation was on the "secure phone."

<sup>2</sup> See telegram 152282 to Bern, September 17, 0032Z. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970-73, AV 12 US)

<sup>3</sup> Presumably the September 16 meeting of the Bern Group; see Document 250 and footnote 4 thereto.

pact of such an announcement on the evolving situation on the ground. My own reaction is quite sympathetic and we will let you know.

G: Okay, secondly, have you received any representations from the Germans?

K: No, to what effect?

G: You will be receiving one to the same effect as one they sent to us. What it amounts to is that they are thinking if we can't keep the five-power basis, we could proceed by a four-power or a three-power one, or finally a two-power collective agreement for a unilateral agreement for each of us to do the best with our hostages.

K: If you have no other comments of a general nature I will return to the meeting I left for this conversation.<sup>4</sup>

G: Okay. Joe, we are of course very concerned with the hostages. There are three possible courses if you abandon the five-power approach: the four of us could say that the European prisoners would be exchanged for all the hostages except for the three Israelis.

S: But those there are also Americans.

G: They are not pure Israelis?

S: No, they are Americans.

G: Then that would only be feasible for you if *all* the hostages, period?

S: Right, this deal is not a deal for us. We're satisfied that those two or three have an American connection here, they carry American passports. That's the problem.

G: But theoretically it's a possible deal for all the European prisoners if *all* the hostages?

S: But how does that differ from the announcement you were talking about? If this deal were available . . . we've been trying to get it. But the other side is insisting on this exchange.

G: But in view of this situation they might agree. There is another deal, that in view of the danger, Germany, the Swiss and ourselves would swap our prisoners for our hostages, leaving you unprovided for. Finally, we could agree among ourselves that no one would approach the other.

S: I can tell you we have difficulties with all three. Moreover, your government would want to weigh carefully the outcry in this country against your taking this action. It would be strong and you should be sure that your ministers understand that.

G: But there would also be an outcry in this country. If we don't agree to bargain, our people get killed.

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<sup>4</sup> See Document 254.

S: But who knows whether a separate deal is really feasible?

G: That's true, but people would say "why didn't you try?"

S: As soon as I'm out of this meeting we will consider the first proposal, the communiqué. But you should know that we have now gone to the Israelis directly.

G: Saying what?

S: Saying basically that we want to act together.

G: Have you gone as far as to say that they must pitch in?

S: Yes, for the first time we have gone to them for concrete and unilateral contributions.

G: Well, Israel is saying to us that they can't agree to anything because they are waiting for you.

S: We've gone now, so let's see what we get on that and also get back to you on the communiqué.

G: Okay, let me recapitulate our conversation. You will consider the text of the communiqué, you will continue saying to Israel that they must make a contribution. And you will consider our other proposals.

S: Yes, but our interim reaction to them is negative. Let's not talk in terms of proposals—"Line of thought" is better.

G: Okay. The Bern meeting is at 2:30 this afternoon.

S: Okay, if we need an hour or two delay you'll understand.

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**256. Transcript of a Telephone Conversation Between President Nixon and the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)<sup>1</sup>**

September 17, 1970, 9 a.m.

K: Incidentally, that speech<sup>2</sup> played very well in all the Eastern papers.

P: Oh really. Good.

K: That wasn't what I was calling you about. During the night Jordan blew. The King moved troops into Amman; he has taken the

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, Kissinger Telephone Conversations, Box 30, Chronological Files. No classification marking. The President was in Chicago and Kissinger was in Washington.

<sup>2</sup> Apparently a reference to a speech made by President Nixon on September 16 at Kansas State University; see *Public Papers: Nixon, 1970*, pp. 757–763.

western and southern suburbs and is advancing into the city. He seems to be gaining the upper hand. The Fedayeen is asking for Iraqi and Syrian help but there is no indication that they are responding. During the night I talked at length to Bob.<sup>3</sup> We are saying you were wakened and informed of the situation, but in light of the fact that there is nothing you could do we (Haldeman and Kissinger) thought it best not to waken you.

P: That's okay. I knew the King was planning it. We already had signed the paper.

K: Right. I talked to Bill, Sisco, Moorer and Packard—everyone is aboard.<sup>4</sup> They all recognize that it is a crisis.

P: A crisis that's good.

K: If the King wins, the peace offensive has a real chance.

P: We've got to help him. How about the fleet?

K: It's up there. One thing, everyone agreed you must not come back. It would create a crisis atmosphere. We moved the second carrier into the Mediterranean. We've got almost the entire Sixth Fleet near Cyprus now. There's another force with helicopter capability on the *Guam*. It was going to go to the Mediterranean anyway and we are moving into that area.

P: But this becomes necessary only if the Iraqis or Syrians move?

K: Exactly.

P: If they move, my strong feeling at this time is that we should use American air and knock the bejesus out of them.

K: That's our feeling.

P: It would be a show of strength on our part.

K: Well, there are strong arguments on both sides but nothing on that will happen till you are back.

P: The fact that the Israelis move . . . has other effects. I think a move on our part shows guts, having to do with these hijackers also. I think the U.S. ought to do something if it's air. If it requires men that's another thing.

K: What we have done in this regard, we are acquiring the targets—getting information for these air strikes and feeding them to the [omission in the original] as fast as we can. We've got to know where to hit. Helms is putting maximum effort into finding where the Iraqi and Syrian forces are.

P: [*less than 1 line not declassified*] they are frantic?

K: That they are asking for help.

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<sup>3</sup> No record of this conversation was found, but see Document 249.

<sup>4</sup> See Document 254.

P: The King's move is a result of our encouraging him, is it not? That's the thing I'm thinking about. He ought to be backed up.

K: We sent out a cable to that effect last night.<sup>5</sup> We think the cable we put out Monday stiffened his back, the one saying we can't tolerate the taking of American hostages. We also authorized the Ambassador to tell the King that if he needs material support we will give it very sympathetic consideration.<sup>6</sup>

P: Where are the hostages?

K: We don't know. So they are in danger. I have talked to the British—they are prepared to put out a five-power statement which is in effect the same thing as you said on Monday, that we hold the guerrillas responsible for the safety of the hostages.

P: Yes, can't I say that now?

K: Yes, Ziegler can.

P: That we will hold the guerrillas responsible and have him quote the President directly.

K: Right. We also have a package of what we think the King needs.

P: On this one I am sure you are going to find Sisco would be all aboard and Bill will be because it's the only chance for his peace offensive.

K: Exactly. If it fails the cease-fire and the peace offensive are dead.

P: It would be worse than before we started; the Fedayeen would have the upper hand.

K: It would push Nasser in a radical direction and would push the Soviets that way and would make the Israelis unwilling to accept compromises.

P: I want you to push through the bureaucracy my feelings, having a landing team ready for evacuation. As far as their going in and fighting, that's another thing. This would get the Russians in, but that's another side of it. This will show whether we have any stake at all left in the Mediterranean.

K: I have talked to Alex and Bill. Bill is all on board on doing the maximum possible to strengthen the King. On the Israeli versus U.S. question I haven't talked to him in detail. I will get a reading on that.

P: I think U.S. air has a lot to say for itself. It would be good in the event they still have the hostages.

K: I think it would be a good idea if we told the Shah and gave him our approach. That would bring him into it and he could put troops on the Iraqi border.

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<sup>5</sup> Document 252.

<sup>6</sup> See footnote 2, Document 254.

P: And we will back him.

K: Right. These are the measures we have taken. We will meet again at 3:00.<sup>7</sup> It was a worse situation last week. Then everything was festering and we couldn't get a handle.

P: What this is is a civil war in Jordan with Iraq and Syria in on it. How about your calling Vorontsov and saying "lay off boys."

K: I think we should be enigmatic and say nothing. They will pick this up.

P: Okay, this will worry them. But we want the Sixth Fleet stuff in the open.

K: They'll catch it.

P: I want them to know we're moving. I want everything that can be done to be done in the open. The wear and tear on the nerves between the Syrians and Iraqis is very important.

K: We can move it 12 hours early and get it picked up.

P: Tell Helms to get it picked up immediately.

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<sup>7</sup> See Document 260.

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**257. Transcript of a Telephone Conversation Between the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) and Secretary of State Rogers<sup>1</sup>**

Washington, September 17, 1970, 9:20 a.m.

K: I just wanted to review the situation with you. There is nothing really in addition to what we discussed last night. Alex and Sisco will tell you.

R: I've already talked with them.

K: The only thing I wanted to check out was between U.S. and Israeli air intervention, what is your judgment as to which would be preferable.

R: I am in favor of the Israelis doing it. In fact it's almost commanding the reasons are so strong. It would be in line with their national interests, it would help in preventing the Iraqis from having a

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, Kissinger Telephone Conversations, Box 30, Chronological Files. No classification marking.

hand in the government of Jordan. The King can give as the reason the Israelis are on his soil is because of the acts of the Fedayeen. Third, if we are going to have any peace, Jordan and Israel will have to work together anyway.

K: That's right. No matter how we slice it the question would be what are we doing there.

R: I think the national interest argument is very strong. Also, what if we failed; for Israel to bail us out would be awful.

K: Yes. You and I have to stay closely in touch on this. The President's instincts are the other way, but he's not adamant.

R: If we play it right, we may be able to pull out the whole thing.

K: And if we pull it out the peace offensive has a real chance. It would be good for credibility with the Israelis and show the Arabs that moderation is the only course. And we would have a chance of getting a government there that can make peace. We may come out very well.

R: That's what I think. In terms of our personnel: there's a total of 47. Twenty-some are in a special room which is locked and the others are in a place protected by the Jordanian army. We also have a report—a TWA pilot to Beam (?) that all the hostages are in a safe place outside of the city.

K: Good. The President is very anxious for Ziegler to reaffirm the Monday statement about the hostages and that we hold the guerrillas responsible for their safety.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> On September 14, Ziegler issued a statement at an afternoon news briefing in response to a PFLP announcement made that day stating that the PFLP considered dual U.S.-Israeli citizens as Israeli citizens only. Ziegler said that the U.S. government "rejects any attempt to establish distinctions among its citizens on any basis whatever." He continued that the PFLP's taking of U.S. citizens as hostages in a dispute with another country as "particularly reprehensible." (*New York Times*, September 15, 1970, p. 1)



258. **Transcript of a Telephone Conversation Between the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) and the President's Chief of Staff (Haldeman)**<sup>1</sup>

Washington, September 17, 1970, 9:35 a.m.

K: I have been with the President<sup>2</sup> and everything seems to be OK. I have had a good talk with Bill and no problems.<sup>3</sup> He knows that [we have to be strong.] I think it is a good break if we do it in a tough manly way. Of course, if we fall on our face . . . but we won't because we won't let it fail.

H: How is the President tracking on this? Is he all right?

K: The President is in good shape. He talked about the course he mentioned yesterday morning. I think he is softening though. After he has heard everybody [I think things will be fine.] I am having full plans made to implement it if he orders it—we can do it.

H: You know he is going to that newspaper at 11 o'clock.

K: That should be very low key.

H: Did you tell him that?

K: No, but I have a call in to him and I will. The Viet Cong have made a new peace proposal. It is still not acceptable but they are softening.

H: [omission in the original] move.

K: I am delighted with it. If we can do it and we will do it.

H: Bill is along with you on it? No problem there?

K: He is dead without it.

H: But you do not know if he knows that.

K: No, he knows. He does not want to be out in front on this. [He knows that we have to be firm on this. He knows if the King falls then this will be the biggest [omission in the original] in diplomatic history.] In fact he is urging us on. If it fails—no worse than before. But it cannot fail. We will not let it fail.

H: Will you need the President today?

K: Just make damn sure I can get to him on the telephone—wherever he is. You probably do that anyway but will you double check? We have a 3 p.m. meeting this afternoon.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, Kissinger Telephone Conversations, Box 30, Chronological Files. No classification marking. All brackets, except those that indicate an omission in the original transcript, are in the original.

<sup>2</sup> See Document 256.

<sup>3</sup> See Document 257.

<sup>4</sup> See Document 260.

**259. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Iran<sup>1</sup>**

Washington, September 17, 1970, 1500Z.

152503. For Ambassador MacArthur.

1. You should seek appointment with Shah as soon as possible to request his assessment of the situation in Jordan.

2. You should make clear that knowing his interest in survival Hussein's regime we particularly interested in his assessment. Shah's judgment on how far Iraq may be prepared to intervene to aid fedayeen would be of particular interest.<sup>2</sup>

**Rogers**

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, POL 23–9 JORDAN. Secret; Immediate; Exdis. Drafted by Davies, cleared in substance by Haig, and approved by Eliot. It was repeated to Amman and Tel Aviv.

<sup>2</sup> Telegram 4059 from Tehran, September 18, 1345Z, reported that the Shah stated that King Hussein had to act against the fedayeen or risk a de facto Palestinian state within Jordan. He also posited that Nasser's position would play a crucial role in the denouement of the Jordanian situation. The Shah concluded by speculating on various ways to help Hussein as well as possible outcomes to the crisis. (Ibid.)

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**260. Minutes of a Washington Special Actions Group Meeting<sup>1</sup>**

Washington, September 17, 1970, 3:20–3:45 p.m.

SUBJECT

Middle East

PARTICIPATION

Chairman—Henry A. Kissinger

State—

U. Alexis Johnson

Joseph J. Sisco

Rodger P. Davies

Defense—

David Packard

Robert J. Pranger

NSC Staff—

Gen. Alexander Haig

Adm. R.C. Robinson

Col. Richard Kennedy

Harold H. Saunders

Jeanne W. Davis

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-114, Washington Special Actions Group, WSAG Minutes (Originals) 1969 and 1970. Top Secret; Sensitive; Nodis. The meeting took place in the White House Situation Room.

CIA—  
 Gen. Robert Cushman  
 David H. Blee  
 JCS—  
 Adm. Thomas H. Moorer  
 Lt. Gen. John W. Vogt

### SUMMARY OF DECISIONS

It was agreed:

1. we would make no announcement of the departure of the *Kennedy*, and would consider whether or not to make any statement when the ship reaches Gibraltar;
2. the *Guam* will leave on its regular schedule (day after tomorrow) but once out of sight of land will advance its speed to make the crossing faster.

Gen. Cushman: Most of Amman is in Jordanian hands. There is some shooting between the hill on which our Embassy is located and the hill occupied by Jordanian Army troops. There is apparently still some activity in this no man's land, but the Jordanians are now preparing to cross the valley. We have reports that Zarqa has been taken, but we don't know about Irbid. We have no indication of Iraqi or Syrian movements.

Mr. Johnson: We have just received a message from a representative of Hussein that things are going well and they will have the situation under control by tomorrow morning. They have offered a cease-fire to the Fedayeen on the condition that the Fedayeen evacuate all towns and leave Jordan, and have offered to provide buses to take the Fedayeen to the frontier.<sup>2</sup>

Mr. Davies: Our latest Sit Rep reports that two Jordan tanks are now in the wadi between the two hills.<sup>3</sup> This is significant.

Mr. Kissinger: Can they organize themselves in any other area of the country?

Gen. Cushman: Irbid is the only area in doubt. The Syrians have some troops nearby.

Mr. Kissinger: If Iraqi forces have to come from Iraq, how long would it take?

Gen. Cushman: Probably a day, particularly if there was any air activity against them. However, there are still 17,000 Iraqi troops inside Jordan. We think some of these have been attacked by the Jordanians, but we have no report from Mafraq or Irbid.

<sup>2</sup> Telegram 4887 from Amman, September 17, 1824Z. (Ibid., NSC Files, Box 615, Country Files, Middle East, Jordan, Vol. V)

<sup>3</sup> Apparently a reference to Intelligence Memorandum SC No. 02437/70, September 17, 1200 EDT. (Central Intelligence Agency, Job 79-T00830A, Box 8)

Mr. Kissinger: How about the town near the Syrian border?

Mr. Davies: Ramtha, two kilometers south of the Syrian border. The Syrians could move there, but we have no indication that they are doing so.

Mr. Saunders: We have one report that in one town the Iraqi forces moved out of the way and stood by while the Jordanian Army mopped up.

(Mr. Sisco arrived.)

Mr. Sisco: I have just talked with Rabin. He said he knew what we wanted him to say—"If Hussein can pull it off, we will announce within 24 hours that we will resume participation in the talks with Jarring." Rabin has no more information than we do, but he thinks things look good. The quicker Hussein can finish it off the better since Nasser is temporizing. He obviously wants Hussein to win. Once he is sure of that, he will make some sort of mediating proposal. Daud<sup>4</sup> has announced the Jordanian government is willing to have a cease-fire if the other side agrees, on the condition that the Palestinians get out of Jordan. He has offered buses to take them out. A representative of Hussein has told Brown that the situation is under control and Amman will be in Jordanian hands by tomorrow afternoon. Rabin also said that we no longer have to worry, because it is dark and he did not know any Arab who would fight at night. He did not have the report that Iraqi troops had stepped aside when the Jordanian Army moved in.

Mr. Kissinger: Secretary Rogers and I have talked to the President.<sup>5</sup> He still has a bias for using U.S. planes rather than Israeli planes if Iraqi or Syrians move into Jordan, but he is more receptive to a counter-argument than he was yesterday. I think Secretary Rogers supported our argument.

Mr. Johnson: I think so.

Mr. Sisco: He too wonders, however, why Americans are not better than Israelis. He has reached the same conclusion about the President's bias in favor of American air.

Mr. Kissinger: It is not a question of who is better, the questions are: (1) who has the better reason for doing it—foreign intervention for the U.S. as opposed to a national security issue for the Israelis; (2) who can sustain it better there; (3) who has the deterrent force behind an

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<sup>4</sup> Brigadier General Mohammed Daud of the Jordanian Arab Army. On September 16, King Hussein declared martial law and appointed Daud to lead a cabinet comprised of army officers.

<sup>5</sup> See Document 256. Rogers also talked to Nixon from 8:40 to 8:50 a.m. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Central Files) No other record of the conversation has been found.

initial strike? If things continue as they are, however, it may not be necessary.

On military actions, the President has ordered the *Kennedy* to the Mediterranean, on the understanding that the 3rd carrier would be rotated out in November if the situation quiets. He wants some beefing up of the Sixth Fleet, as well as a demonstration that we can do so.

Admiral Moorer: The *Kennedy* can leave in the morning.

Mr. Packard: Do we want high visibility by announcing that the *Kennedy* is leaving?

Mr. Sisco: I would rather not say anything. The situation on the ground is going well. Visibility will merely solidify the anti-Hussein forces.

Mr. Kissinger: We don't have to say anything.

Mr. Johnson: The Russians will know when the ship goes through Gibraltar.

Mr. Kissinger: The President also wanted the *Guam* to move earlier to get visibility. Do we want visibility? Have these orders been issued or can we delay the departure?

Admiral Moorer: They have not started loading the troops yet. On the regular schedule they would be leaving day after tomorrow. They could leave tomorrow night on an accelerated schedule and we would have visibility.

Mr. Kissinger: Let's cancel the order for an accelerated departure and have them leave on the regular schedule (day after tomorrow). I will take the responsibility. If things blow up tomorrow, we can still get visibility.

Mr. Packard: This is a good example of the problems with operations of this kind. Things just don't move quite that fast.

Admiral Moorer: We can let the *Guam* sail day after tomorrow with the other ships, but could give her a different speed of advance. Once she was out of sight of land, she could speed up and still get there faster.

Mr. Kissinger: That is a good solution. That achieves everything. Let's do it.

Admiral Moorer: All right.

Mr. Kissinger: We could still speed up her departure tomorrow, if we need some psychological movement.

Admiral Moorer: I am going to Norfolk right after this meeting and I will be sure that they understand.

Mr. Kissinger: About the *Kennedy* the President wants it to leave tomorrow morning.

Admiral Moorer: It was originally scheduled to leave in November. We have a few civilian technicians on board that we will have to take off.

Mr. Packard: This will have visibility.

Admiral Moorer: This will give us 3 carriers in the Mediterranean until November, when one is rotated out.

Mr. Kissinger: This will be good for NATO. We have wanted an opportunity to demonstrate our ability to move in this area.

Mr. Johnson: I heartily approve of this action. It speaks for itself and requires no noise.

Mr. Kissinger: The President wants the *Kennedy* there when he is there.

Admiral Moorer: If we keep the 3 carriers in the Mediterranean, I suggest we hold the *Kennedy* around Crete.

Mr. Kissinger: I agree—the *Kennedy* around Crete, a second carrier closer, and the third for the President.

Mr. Johnson: If these were nuclear powered they would not need refueling.

Mr. Kissinger: Which of these are nuclear powered?

Admiral Moorer: The *Kennedy* is not—none of them are.

Mr. Kissinger: Has Dean Brown talked with Hussein yet?

Mr. Sisco: No; our only contact is by ham radio.

Mr. Kissinger: Are we getting the Israeli assessment?

Mr. Sisco: Yes, regularly. Our best information is coming from them.<sup>6</sup>

Mr. Kissinger: Are we feeding it to the ships?

Admiral Moorer: Yes, we have worked out a procedure.

Mr. Kissinger: Has MacArthur been instructed to see the Shah?

Mr. Johnson: Yes.<sup>7</sup>

Mr. Kissinger: We have the Defense package on the materiel that Hussein might ask for.

(This was passed out at the table)<sup>8</sup>

Mr. Pranger: We are getting six hour updates on all MAC aircraft. They could be ready in 48–72 hours. We could have two C–171's reloaded in 22 hours. We would hope to have overflight permission by that time.

Mr. Kissinger: Overflight of what?

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<sup>6</sup> According to Intelligence Memorandum OCI No. 0099/70, September 17, Iraqi forces in Jordan were making "administrative and logistical preparation for movement," but there was no indication of any intervention in the fighting between the JAA and the fedayeen. (Ibid., NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-077, Washington Special Action Group Meetings, WSAG Meeting Middle East)

<sup>7</sup> See Document 259.

<sup>8</sup> Not attached and not found.

Mr. Davies: Austria, Greece.

Mr. Kissinger: Are we exploring the possibility of using the Saudi C-130's?

Mr. Davies: Not until Nasser takes some position.

Mr. Kissinger: (to Admiral Moorer) You are moving the five C-130's from Turkey?

Admiral Moorer: Yes.

Mr. Kissinger: And we are getting the check list of arguments in favor of the use of U.S. planes?

Mr. Pranger: Yes, it is done and being cleared.

Mr. Kissinger: I want to list all the arguments for the use of American air and all the arguments for the use of Israeli air to short-cut the time needed to prepare such a paper if it should be needed. The Israelis, of course, may move whatever we decide to do. We are also agreed that if U.S. planes are used, the Israelis should not bomb concurrently. Our targets would be the Iraqi and Syrians, not the Fedayeen. We are agreed we need not go the Congress now and should not go to the UN. The press coordination is in hand and so far there have been no snafus. I suggest that this group meet again tomorrow morning.

(It was agreed to meet at 8:00 a.m., but this was subsequently changed to 8:30 a.m. at the request of Mr. Packard)<sup>9</sup>

Mr. Packard: I would like to suggest a small modification in our support tactics. We could probably use two C-5's for the supply mission.

Mr. Kissinger: We do not have to decide now whether to move openly or covertly on transportation for the material. We can face this when it happens.

Mr. Packard: We have the new aircraft and it would be a nice demonstration of their capabilities.

Mr. Pranger: They could land at H-5.

Admiral Moorer: To review the ship movements:

... The *Guam* will leave on schedule but will speed up once it is out of sight of land. There will be no public announcement since it was supposed to leave anyhow for the NATO exercise.

... The *Kennedy* will leave tomorrow morning after the discharge of the civilian technicians; we can think about a public announcement when it goes through Gibraltar.

Mr. Johnson: Are these civilian technicians going to come back and talk about having been booted off the ship?

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<sup>9</sup> See Document 264.

Admiral Moorer: It is possible. There are 8 or 10 of them, all with security clearances.

Mr. Johnson: Why don't we just tell them to keep quiet?

Mr. Kissinger: When the ship goes through Gibraltar, we can make a straight-faced announcement—part of normal rotation, etc.

Mr. Packard: Let's wait and see on the announcement.

Mr. Kissinger: When will it get to Gibraltar?

Admiral Moorer: In about a week.

Mr. Kissinger: We may want to play it up or play it down at that time. We don't have to explain the operations of our carriers in the Atlantic.

Admiral Moorer: We don't have to explain our carrier operations anywhere.

Mr. Kissinger: We can discuss it again as it nears Gibraltar. It will be in the Mediterranean when the President gets there?<sup>10</sup>

Admiral Moorer: Yes, it will.

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<sup>10</sup> Nixon arrived in Rome on September 27. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Central Files, President's Daily Diary)

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**261. Transcript of a Telephone Conversation Between the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) and the Director of the United States Information Agency (Shakespeare)<sup>1</sup>**

Washington, September 17, 1970, 6:55 p.m.

K: At least you know how to get my attention.

S: Do you want me to read it to you—they have alerted all the wire services that at 6:00 Chicago time they will be coming out with a big story. This is what the President said to the editors and broadcasters—If the Syrians or Iraqis intervene in Jordan there are only two of us to stop

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, Kissinger Telephone Conversations, Box 30, Chronological Files. No classification marking.



them, the Israelis or us.<sup>2</sup> It will be preferable for us to do it. The Russians are going to pay dearly for moving the missiles in. The Israelis are going to get five times as much as they would have if the missiles would not have moved. We are embarking on a tougher policy in the Middle East. The Sixth Fleet is going to be beefed up. I was having an argument with Kissinger who thinks we blew it in Jordan. We will intervene if the situation is such that our intervention will make a difference. *Chicago Sun Times* is saying as a lead that it was learned today from high sources that the U.S. will intervene in Jordan if the Syrians or Iraqis move. I know what the editors were told, but I don't know how they will write it.

K: What does he mean that I thought we blew it in Jordan. I have been raising hell with him along the lines that we have been behaving and that Jordan was about to blow.

S: This is a senior man's notes of what the President told them.

K: Was Lisagor there?<sup>3</sup>

S: I don't know. We will get this around the world in just a few minutes.

K: I think the Secretary of State is going to have a bloody heart attack.

S: We passed this along to State—Rogers and Sisco.

K: God help us. Those fools at State think I am putting him up to it. It doesn't give me any pain.

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<sup>2</sup> See William Quandt, *Peace Process: American Diplomacy and the Arab-Israeli Conflict Since 1967* (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, 1993), p. 102. Quandt notes that Nixon met twice with editors of Chicago newspapers and expressed his willingness to commit U.S. forces in Jordan if Syria or Iraq intervened in the conflict to assist the fedayeen.

<sup>3</sup> Peter Lisagor was the Washington Bureau Chief for the *Chicago Daily News*.

**262. Transcript of a Telephone Conversation Between President Nixon and the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)<sup>1</sup>**

Washington, September 17, 1970, 9:30 p.m.

P: Anything new?

K: King seems to be in pretty good shape. It has been night there since about 2 o'clock.

P: They probably won't do anything at night. The Russians are really stewing right now. Wouldn't you say? As you probably heard I put in a little squibb today.<sup>2</sup>

K: The backgrounders are beginning to break in the East now.

P: The stakes are high and we are not looking at this as a little . . .

K: Might as well let them know what chips are in the pot.

P: I agree with you in how to handle the Soviets is with cool detachment. I was wrong before. You are completely right. Do not warn them. They think you are bluffing. Just move . . . I want Helms to know that I think he should get some confused traffic out about ship movements.

K: I must tell you Mr. President that moving the *Kennedy* we have had to cancel shore leave for most of the crew.

P: That's all right. Shore leave is not all that easy. We will give them double the leave next time.

K: When the Soviets see the *Kennedy* come through the Straits of Gibraltar and . . .

P: They will know that we are ready to do something. [omission in the original] Makes them think we might do something.

K: You have the events leading to the highjacking—they have been a net loss for the Soviets. Concentrating on other things.

P: King has been informed that we will support him?

K: Yes. By the way, Ambassador Brown has done a very good job.

P: That meeting with him helped him.

K: You told him he was going to where the action was. He has been very coolheaded.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, Kissinger Telephone Conversations, Box 30, Chronological Files. No classification marking. All brackets, except those that indicate omitted material, are in the original. The President returned to the White House at 9:11 p.m. (Ibid., White House Central Files, President's Daily Diary)

<sup>2</sup> See Document 261.

P: Bureaucracy is all together on this one? Bill knows that the peace offensive is based on Jordan.

K: Yes, everyone is pulling together. I am more optimistic about the peace offensive—if it works. . . .

P: About this visit tomorrow.<sup>3</sup> We have to handle it with resolve. Don't want Meir going out and saying that we will go into Jordan. I made it clear in my backgrounder. It would be fatal to the King if the Israelis came in and almost. . . . [Paraphrased the President said it wouldn't be very good if PM Meir walked out of the meeting and said that they were going to move into Jordan.] Jordan has to be strengthened to scare off Iraqis and Syrians.

K: It gave us an opportunity . . . I talked to Rabin for 2 minutes today and told him [to keep it cool].<sup>4</sup>

P: Who is sitting in tomorrow?

K: Sisco, Haig, Eban. I think it would be good if after the meeting you would let the others go and spend 20 minutes with Meir. At least then she could say that she had a private meeting with you.

P: Yes, you told me. The reception in Chicago was good today. We went around the streets . . . Quite a reaction to the speech.<sup>5</sup>

K: Yes, excellent. Comments and what I have read were good. The editors thing went well yesterday. Today was good too. Jordan thing good for us.

P: Appear like quite a crisis but we lanced the boil and now. . . . The King is doing well?

K: Yes. About relaunching the peace initiative. I think we should take a longer look at the scenario. I think we should know where we are going and not [be wishy washy] when we relaunch it. When you meet with Meir tomorrow do not urge any particular course of action.

P: The visit should not strengthen Hussein's enemy's position. I wish we could do something publicly in support of the King.

K: I do not think that he is eager for too much publicity. He knows that we have planes available.

P: For strikes?

K: To carry in weapons if he needs them.

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<sup>3</sup> The record of the meeting between President Nixon and Prime Minister Meir is scheduled for publication in *Foreign Relations, 1969–1976*, volume XXIII, Arab-Israeli Dispute, 1969–1972.

<sup>4</sup> No record of this conversation was found.

<sup>5</sup> The President spoke at a Citizenship Day reception in Chicago; for text of his remarks, see *Public Papers: Nixon, 1970*, pp. 764–766.

P: We also have airplanes to strike. I want Europe mobilized in readiness. If we do I want (strike he is talking about) to hit massively. Not just little pinpricks. I want them to know we are hell bent for action.

K: If the King's military situation is as good as he thinks there is no problem. This afternoon they were hitting a commando unit in the middle of an Iraqi unit and the Iraqis did nothing. Nasser has not said anything. That is the most support he could give Hussain.

P: Are the Soviets saying anything?

K: Nothing.

P: I think this visit to the Sixth Fleet is good don't you?

K: The visit to the 6th Fleet is very good. Marvin Kalb<sup>6</sup> says it is a master stroke. He is Jewish, but he thinks it was a very good move.

P: Well, that's all right. We want him with us. He thinks it was a master stroke? What did he say?

K: We are committed to the Middle East. [HAK went into long talk on our Middle East policy and what we wanted there.]

P: I gave a hard thrust. I told the editorial boards today. The Russians know that if they moved they had us to deal with.

K: Salutary. If some of this stuff leaks it will be fine. It is not an Arab/Israeli conflict. Israel should not be alone in this.

P: That is what I said yesterday . . .

K: [if the bureaucracy ever understands ——] [importance of Middle East.]

P: I said look where without support of Soviet Union to Syria/Iraq [omission in the original]. If you want to see if it matters why are they building up a Fleet?

K: And we have no reliable land bases there.

P: I know that. And did you hear about my statement on Greece and Spain? They may not like them but they are our people.

K: Very strong statement. But on this Jordan thing the bureaucracy was pulling together. I think this thing is coming out well.

[Omitted here is discussion of Vietnam and domestic politics unrelated to the Jordan crisis.]

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<sup>6</sup> Marvin Kalb was the diplomatic correspondent for CBS News in Washington.

**263. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon<sup>1</sup>**

Washington, September 18, 1970.

## SUBJECT

The Situation in Jordan

The major change in the situation from yesterday seems to be that while the army still has the upper hand, it is proceeding methodically in Amman and is meeting fairly stiff resistance from the fedayeen. It also appears that the problem outside of Amman will require some time to resolve. This confirms that the struggle may turn out to be more protracted and the results less clear-cut than may have appeared from reporting yesterday afternoon.<sup>2</sup> It is even possible that Hussein could decide on some compromise settlement with the fedayeen when he feels that he has regained much of his status and authority and before he gets bogged down in a longer term campaign that could sap his army's strength and determination. He may, of course, opt to try to completely crush the fedayeen.

The following are the major developments since yesterday afternoon.

*The Military Situation*

During most of yesterday it appeared that the Jordanian army was gradually expanding its control of Amman in the face of stiff resistance from the fedayeen. The fighting fell off to occasional outbursts of small arms fire and artillery during the night but intensified again at dawn when the army went back on the offensive.

The situation is less clear outside of Amman, although apparently there has been some heavy fighting in some of the cities to the north. The central committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization has announced the creation of a "liberated area" in northern Jordan where it claims to be taking over the government of three districts. Northern Jordan has a history of separation going back to the late 1950's, although, as the embassy comments, the liberated area may have come too late to help the fedayeen cause. The Israelis say that fedayeen forces from Syria and Lebanon are moving into the "liberated area" presumably to

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 615, Country Files, Middle East, Jordan, Vol. V. Secret; Sensitive.

<sup>2</sup> Telegram 4894 from Amman, September 17, 2230Z. (Ibid., RG 59, Central Files 1970-73, POL 23-9 JORDAN)

strengthen the fedayeen forces already there. The Israelis also report having seen some movement of Jordanian armor and infantry northward but are not sure how much progress has been made in this direction so far.

So far the Syrian and Iraqi forces have stayed out of the fighting. Units of the Iraqi expeditionary force in Jordan, however, have been put on full alert and are being centralized. Some move by the Jordanians, such as the surrounding of an Iraqi camp, could trigger Iraqi involvement in the fighting, if only in a limited way to demonstrate solidarity with the fedayeen. The Israelis, who are watching this situation very closely, believe that for the present there will be no Iraqi intervention nor do they think there will be intervention by Egypt and Syria, barring unexpected moves.

Arab mediation efforts are underway. Nasser and the leaders of Libya and Sudan have sent a carefully worded and balanced message to both King Hussein and PLO leader Arafat. They call on both sides to stop the fighting and provide a chance for fresh talks or consultations. The Arab League Council also met yesterday and called for an end to the senseless fighting, so that the recently established four-nation conciliation committee—composed of Egypt, Sudan, Libya and Algeria—could undertake new efforts to achieve a settlement.

#### *The Negotiations for Hostages*

The Bern Group is continuing its efforts to come up with an agreed mandate for the Red Cross to continue its negotiations with the PFLP for the release of the remaining hostages. We are pushing—so far without much apparent success—a formula whereby the five powers would authorize the Red Cross negotiators to say they will agree to consider the most recent PFLP proposals at such time as the PFLP provides its total demands, including a specific list of the fedayeen they want from the Israelis.

The Bern Group last night met to consider an acceptable British redraft of the language of our formula but no progress was made.<sup>3</sup> The Israeli said that he thought his government would also find the British draft unacceptable and would prefer to wait for another report from the Red Cross representative in Amman, for further information on the general situation in Jordan and for the results of Mrs. Meir's trip to the U.S. The Germans were also opposed to the British draft saying that it

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<sup>3</sup> Telegram 2337 from Bern, September 17, 1925Z, relayed the British attempt to reformulate language from U.S. proposal made the previous day. British insistence on revising the text met with resistance from Israel, West Germany, and the United States, while Switzerland was willing to accept the British formula. (Ibid., PS 7–6 JORDAN) Regarding the September 16 Bern Group meeting, see Document 250 and footnote 4 thereto.

did not meet German demands specifically emphasizing an Israeli contribution to a package settlement.

It has become increasingly clear at recent sessions of the Bern Group that unless the Israelis soon join into the multilateral package approach there is a good chance that the British and Germans will break ranks and conclude unilateral deals with the PFLP. Our Chargé in Tel Aviv talked to Eban just before he left for the U.S. to urge favorable Israeli consideration of the formula being discussed in Bern.<sup>4</sup> Eban again refused to go along with our approach on the grounds that Israel was being asked to write a blank check. The Chargé concludes that it will not be easy to bring Israel along and suggests that pressure be applied at as many points as possible—including with Mrs. Meir—to achieve the maximum impact.

The issue here, of course, is that the fedayeen are conditioning the release of our citizens on the performance of a third country—Israel. Israel is in fact being asked to ransom the nationals of third countries—although the situation is complicated by the fact that the fedayeen classify some of the American Jews as Israelis which raises another problem of discrimination on the basis of religion.

According to a spokesman for King Hussein the Jordanian army commanders have been given orders to look for and liberate the hostages as quickly as possible. We have no further information on the safety of the hostages although there are some indications that at least some of them may be held at locations where they could be exposed to the fighting.

#### *U.S. Actions*

The decisions taken at yesterday's WSAG meetings<sup>5</sup> are being implemented. The WSAG is meeting again this morning.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> As reported in telegram 5120 from Tel Aviv, September 17, 0923Z. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970-73, AV 12 US)

<sup>5</sup> See Documents 254 and 260.

<sup>6</sup> See Document 264.

## 264. Minutes of a Washington Special Actions Group Meeting<sup>1</sup>

Washington, September 18, 1970, 8:35–9:05 a.m.

### SUBJECT

Middle East

### PARTICIPATION

Chairman—Henry A. Kissinger

State—

U. Alexis Johnson

Rodger P. Davies

Defense—

David Packard

Robert J. Pranger

CIA—

Richard Helms

David Blee

JCS—

Adm. Thomas H. Moorer

Lt. Gen. John W. Vogt

Lt. Gen. Melvin Zais

NSC Staff—

Harold H. Saunders

Col. Richard T. Kennedy

Adm. R.C. Robinson

Jeanne W. Davis

### SUMMARY OF DECISIONS

It was agreed that:

1. CIA, with State, will do a paper on the foreseeable outcomes of the Jordan situation, their impact in the area and their consequences for the US.<sup>2</sup>

2. Defense will do a paper spelling out what would be required by way of base rights, overflight rights, supplies, etc., if a decision should be made to use US aircraft based in Europe (as opposed to carrier aircraft) in support of Hussein.<sup>3</sup>

3. It would be better to let the airborne battalion in Europe move to the training area tomorrow at a cost of an additional six hours of alert time (from four to ten hours) than to convey an alerting signal by holding them.

Mr. Helms gave a briefing on the current situation, using a map, from the attached text.<sup>4</sup> He noted also that *Pravda* has begun to take

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-114, Washington Special Actions Group, WSAG Minutes (Originals) 1969 and 1970. Top Secret; Sensitive; Nodis. The meeting took place in the White House Situation Room.

<sup>2</sup> The CIA/State Department paper on possible outcomes and implications of the Jordan situation, received in the White House on September 18, is *ibid.*, Box H-077, Washington Special Actions Group Meetings, WSAG Meeting Middle East 9/19/70.

<sup>3</sup> Not found.

<sup>4</sup> Not attached and not found.



a harder line on US military movements and the possibility of US intervention. Cairo press (*Haikal*) is also warning against US movement and saying the Soviets will not retreat but will be in the area for generations.

Mr. Kissinger: Any movement on the diplomatic side?

Mr. Johnson: Nothing. We are a little disappointed that Nasser has not made any statement in support of Hussein.

Mr. Davies: The Egyptians are being very cautious, giving straight news. I anticipate before too long they will call for a stand-down by all parties and suggest a new effort at mediation. In Bern, all parties are beginning to feel that Israel should agree to accept part of the package in order to obtain release of the hostages. They are looking to Washington to convince Golda Meir of the necessity for this.

Mr. Kissinger: What is in it for Israel? Most of the passengers are Americans.

Mr. Johnson: They are American supporters of Israel.

Mr. Kissinger: But they are American citizens.

Mr. Packard: There is nothing in it for Israel.

Mr. Helms: [3 lines not declassified]

Mr. Kissinger: In this circumstance guerrillas could grab any airliner with Jews on it.

Mr. Johnson: The Jewish community is beginning to pressure Israel.

Mr. Kissinger: Of course the guerrillas haven't said what they want.

Mr. Davies: No—they have made no specific demands.

Mr. Johnson: I am somewhat sympathetic to the Israelis in this. It is very hard for them to accept the principle of hostages in the absence of any specifics.

Mr. Davies: In discussion with Argov yesterday I agreed that Israel could not accept the principle of exchange in the abstract, but said they might be able to look at a specific package of names and numbers. He did not disagree.

Mr. Johnson: We might have a completely different situation if the fedayeen are defeated, assuming the hostages survive.

Mr. Davies: We also have a TASS report speculating that either US or Israeli forces might intervene and warning that the US should not inject itself into the situation in the guise of protecting American citizens.

Mr. Johnson: That was to be expected—I see nothing unusual in this. We have made no approach to the Russians and we have heard nothing from them.

Mr. Packard: This might be a signal as to Iraqi intentions.

Mr. Kissinger: I don't think the Russians are that well informed on the Iraqi.

Mr. Davies: I think this was more a reaction to the President's Chicago statements.<sup>5</sup>

Mr. Kissinger: So we believe the fighting is likely to continue; we don't expect it to deteriorate?

Mr. Helms: I think it will be slow.

Mr. Johnson: This street fighting is tough going.

Mr. Kissinger: Could we speculate on the possible outcomes? What probability is there that Hussein will win an unambiguous victory?

Mr. Packard: There is high probability unless he is pressured by other Arab states.

Mr. Kissinger: How long will it take?

Mr. Davies: Yesterday the Jordanians said it would be over today. I think this is overly sanguine. They will have a tough job mopping up.

Mr. Johnson: I would say ten days to two weeks.

Mr. Davies: They can probably get control of central Amman in 24 hours.

Mr. Packard: It will be longer if the Iraqis and Syrians come in.

Adm. Moorer: I think there will be conflict for several weeks.

Mr. Kissinger: Would the fedayeen then be broken for the time being?

Adm. Moorer: Yes, they would have expended most of their ammunition and equipment.

Mr. Johnson: The fedayeen are apparently fighting desperately. We have a report that the Jordanians are not taking any prisoners.

Mr. Helms: It depends to some extent on your judgment of Hussein. If he cleans out the fedayeen headquarters in Amman things will be quiet. He hasn't done that yet. In the past, he has moved to a certain point against the fedayeen and then, on the basis of a cease-fire or an agreement with the fedayeen, has stopped. I think this time, too, he will stop short of an unambiguous victory.

Mr. Kissinger: If he stops short of victory, either on his own initiative or under pressure from other Arab countries, then what?

Adm. Moorer: We then may face the problem all over again later.

Mr. Kissinger: What would be the relative positions of Hussein and the fedayeen?

Mr. Johnson: The King's position would be somewhat improved.

Mr. Packard: The King's position would be improved. He would have done enough damage to the fedayeen to slow them down for some time.

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<sup>5</sup> See footnote 2, Document 261.

Mr. Kissinger: But he can't stop short of quelling the fedayeen and still maintain the morale and effectiveness of his troops.

Mr. Davies: It is significant that there have been no indications of Jordanian troops being anything but loyal and disciplined.

Mr. Kissinger: If the King persists, he is all right; if he doesn't persist, he is dead?

Mr. Davies: Not dead, but he is only buying time. In the long term he will lose control.

Mr. Kissinger: (to Mr. Helms) Will you and State do a paper for us on the foreseeable outcomes and how they would affect the situation in Jordan and in the Middle East generally; their impact on the peace initiative; what actions any of these might impose on us? Could we have the paper by tomorrow so that we could discuss it when we meet?

Mr. Helms: Yes.

Mr. Kissinger: What is our military situation?

Adm. Moorer: We have two carriers, a cruiser, 14 destroyers, an ammunition ship and an oiler at the 33-33 location south of Cyprus. We have Task Force 61 with an embarked Marine battalion near Crete. The *Springfield*, the Sixth Fleet flagship, will join the Force on the 19th. We have issued orders to the amphibious group to sail on schedule. Once out of sight of land, the *Guam* will move on ahead and will enter the Gibraltar Straits on Saturday, September 26th. The *Kennedy* has been ordered to proceed to the Mediterranean and is on its way fully equipped with ammunition, although we may need to augment the Sparrow missiles. It will arrive in the Gibraltar Straits on Friday, September 25. It will be well into the Mediterranean when the President arrives.

Mr. Johnson: How big is the amphibious group?

Adm. Moorer: 1500 men, with a total of 16 helicopters, 4 of them the big ones.

Mr. Kissinger: The President has indicated that if air support becomes necessary, he does not want it to come only from the carriers. He wants to see what we could do from Europe.

Adm. Moorer: This would depend on the base situation.

Mr. Kissinger: Where?

Adm. Moorer: Preferably in Turkey.

Mr. Kissinger: But the Turkey won't let us do it.

Adm. Moorer: Or in Saudi Arabia.

Mr. Kissinger: The Saudis won't do it either.

Mr. Packard: We have some F-111s with a longer range. If we could carry in logistical supplies (bombs, fuel, etc.) we could operate from Cyprus.

Mr. Kissinger: (To Mr. Packard) Could you give us a paper on what would be involved if we should operate from Europe? I owe the President a response on this. The paper should indicate what the problems are; what would be needed if it were to be done.

Adm. Moorer: The problem is the base.

Mr. Kissinger: You could start by saying you need a base, outline what you would have to haul in to a base. I have had three requests from the President for this and have still not responded.

Mr. Packard: Turkey would be the only place for such an operation. Turkey (Incirlik) is the only place where things are already available.

Mr. Kissinger: (to Mr. Helms) You should include in your think piece the various contingencies of a Hussein victory, some sort of withdrawal, or a reverse. We don't expect a reverse, do we?

Mr. Helms: Not now. What you want is a reasonable bet as to the outcome.

Mr. Kissinger: And the consequences for us.

On press guidance, will we begin to get some stories on the sailing of the *Kennedy*?

Adm. Moorer: Not now.

Mr. Johnson: Only when it reaches Gibraltar a week from today.

Adm. Moorer: It will be evident in a day or two that she has changed her schedule, but the real impact will be when she enters the Straits.

Mr. Kissinger: We should have suggestions for press guidance before Friday.

Mr. Packard: As of this moment it should be reasonably low key.

Mr. Johnson: I think Bob McCloskey, Henkin and Ziegler should talk and we should give them contingency guidance today.

Mr. Kissinger: I agree. We should all say the same thing. I think any statements should come from Defense.

Adm. Moorer: I have one question pertaining to the readiness of the airborne battalion in Europe. They are scheduled to go to the training area today. If we hold them back, this will be a readiness indicator. If we let them go, it will cost us six hours. I think this six hours is acceptable.

Mr. Johnson: I agree. I think changing the time from four to six hours is acceptable.

Mr. Kissinger: They were primarily designated for an evacuation of Amman.

Adm. Moorer: They would be an advance element for whatever we do.

Mr. Kissinger: It would take us ten hours to make up our minds.

Mr. Packard: We have no indication on the status of Jordanian Army ammunition supplies.

Mr. Johnson: Hussein has been advised that we are ready to help them if they need help, but we have heard nothing from him.

Mr. Kissinger: And we have the standby air capability to move it, haven't we?

Mr. Pranger: Yes.

Mr. Kissinger: Do we need any more communication with the Israelis?

Mr. Davies: We have had good exchanges.

Mr. Helms: [*1 line not declassified*] They are looking to the President's meeting with Golda Meir today.

Adm. Moorer: We have also readjusted our C-130s. We have moved the five from Turkey, are holding five in Germany and will have five more in the UK by midnight—a total increase of 15 aircraft.

Mr. Kissinger: We will meet tomorrow morning. We will let you know as to time. (It was subsequently agreed to meet at 9:00 a.m., Saturday, September 19.)<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> See Document 267.

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**265. Memorandum From Helmut Sonnenfeldt of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)<sup>1</sup>**

Washington, September 18, 1970.

SUBJECT

Soviet Reaction to US Involvement in Jordan

The Soviet attitude toward the latest round between the King and the Army and the Fedayeen is probably mixed.

On the one hand, the King appears to be the preferable alternative to a radical guerrilla regime, which the Soviets have treated with

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 615, Country Files, Middle East, Jordan, Vol. V. Secret; Nodis; Sensitive; Outside System. Urgent; sent for information. Kissinger's initials are on the first page.

some disdain, which could turn out to be sympathetic to the Maoist brand of revolution and more “spontaneous” than the Soviets like. The probable chaos resulting from the King’s overthrow and the psychological impetus that would give to the Iraqi and Syrian regimes cannot be something the Soviets would watch with much satisfaction or equanimity.

On the other hand, Jordan has never been of special concern to the Soviets except in that it reflected the basic policy toward the UAR. The disappearance of a regime influenced by, and sympathetic toward the US would also represent a gain of sorts for the USSR. In the end if faced with the new situation, the Soviets might convince themselves that they could work with Arafat, who, of course, has been in Moscow, and that the new pressures on Israel would strengthen the Soviet hand and weaken ours.

Whatever their theoretical ruminations, the practical matter is that the Soviets will not be happy to see US military power used in the area in any way. They will have to denounce it, harass us (including by horse play and close UAR-based reconnaissance against the 6th Fleet), and generally oppose us. The precedent is what will worry them most of all, and the demonstration that we could and will use our air power and naval presence will cast a shadow over their calculations about how far we might go in support of Israel at a later date in a new crisis, and our international posture generally. (This may be all to the good if our operations are, and are perceived to be successful.)

#### *Israel and Iraq*

1. Air strikes in support of Jordan against the fedayeen alone; this would be the least complicated for the Soviets and call for the least physical riposte; mostly propagandea and agitation, as long as the Arab states stood by.

2. Hussein vs. the fedayeen and Iraqi troops; if the conflict remains limited to these participants, no Soviet military action would be likely, especially if the US intervention was quick and effective; a more prolonged US air intervention, however, might produce some Soviet diplomatic actions, say in the UN, to castigate and condemn, to force the US to desist.

—If the Israelis became involved against the Iraqi troops, Soviet reaction could become more problematical and dangerous for two reasons: first, the Israelis might feel compelled to launch preemptive strikes against the air defense build-up along the canal, and second, the UAR might feel it had to activate that front.

—If this occurred, then the Soviets would be involved, and might shift to an entirely different diplomatic position and military calculation.

—It would be a situation in which the June war would be reopening piecemeal; the Soviets would be concerned that the Israelis would launch a massive attack on the new air defense complex; in which case, the UAR would almost certainly want to begin using the TU-16s against the Bar-Lev line; Soviet pilots would probably be flying missions, etc.

—In this contingency the Soviets would still want to avoid a confrontation with the US, but might engage in a greater show of force in the Mediterranean.

—The main danger would be a de facto Soviet-American air battle in the entire area, with Soviet pilots flying out of the UAR, and Syria and perhaps Iraq.

3. *Armed Intervention for evacuation:* Soviet calculations might be similar to the first case; i.e., that our action could be tolerated, but they would be concerned that we leave the area; and permanent entrenchment of American forces in Jordan would be a radical change in the situation and might lead the Soviets into a tough threatening stand.

—One danger would be that the Soviets would begin putting in organized ground units in the UAR, if it looked as if the American forces were in to stay for some time to come.

—Again, the total Soviet reaction would also be affected by Israeli involvement; Israeli intervention, plus US landings of ground troops would look to the Soviets like a power play changing the ball game in a major way in Israel's favor.

—The Soviets and the UAR would then have to consider whether to put pressure on the canal front, ranging from raids to a full scale attack; the Soviets would probably not encourage such a course, but they also could not afford to veto such a decision; thus the Soviets themselves could become involved at this point.

In sum, the Soviets want, first of all, to protect their stake in the UAR. Their decisions and actions will be influenced by Nasser, and, in turn, the Soviets will be counseling him to think of his own security first and his prestige as an Arab leader second.

The secondary, but still important Soviet aim will be to limit and prevent American intrusion with any military action or presence. They are probably not prepared to take much of a risk to do this in the situation in Jordan but the critical factor is whether Israel becomes involved and the fighting erupts along the canal. Should it do so, a proxy war would be underway, and the Soviets might just figure that decisive action along the canal would be preferable to a war of attrition. This is the main danger.

One important area of uncertainty is the impact of a crisis on the top Soviet leadership, which was sharply criticized after the June war for being too soft, and for mismanaging the entire affair. In another major crisis, particularly one in which the US demonstrated it was free to act militarily, the Soviets might feel they had to justify themselves. On the other hand, they could not afford to open up charges of mismanaging a risky affair by imprudent actions.

On balance, it seems that the Soviets would probably conclude they had little choice but to let the US get away with a limited intervention, as long as Israeli forces were not involved in attacks against the forces of Arab governments.

**266. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in the Soviet Union<sup>1</sup>**

Washington, September 18, 1970, 2252Z.

154000. Subject: Soviet Démarche re Jordan.

1. Soviet Chargé Vorontsov called urgently Sept 18 on Dep Asst Secy Davies (NEA) to present following Soviet Govt message to USG.

2. *Begin text.* The Soviet Government is concerned over the information coming in about the sharp aggravation of the situation in Jordan which has led to fierce and bloody clashes; the country stands on the precipice of a civil war. This turn of events complicates the entire situation in the Middle East and may adversely affect the continuing attempts to find ways of achieving a political settlement of the Middle East conflict.

The Soviet Government expresses the hope that the Government of the United States will agree with the Soviet Government's view that it is necessary for all states, including those not belonging to this region, to exercise prudence in their steps in connection with the prevailing complex situation in the Middle East.

We would like to draw special attention to the possible position of Israel in connection with the current events in Jordan, and hope that the US Govt will use its influence with the Govt of Israel in order to preclude the possibility of Israel's exploiting this situation for a still greater aggravation of the situation in the Middle East as a whole.

The Soviet Government for its part has deemed it necessary to urge the leaders of Jordan, Iraq, Syria and the United Arab Republic to take measures dictated by the situation in order at the earliest point to put an end to the fratricidal clashes in Jordan and to prevent the outbreak of civil war. We are searching for ways of bringing our viewpoint also to the attention of the leadership of the Palestine movement.

The Soviet Government as before stands for a settlement of the Middle East crisis by political means on the basis of the implementation of the Security Council Resolution of November 22, 1967 in all its parts, and is prepared to continue efforts together with other states toward the earliest attainment of this aim. *End text.*

3. At Davies' request Vorontsov confirmed USSR has already made démarches in Baghdad, Damascus, Amman, and Cairo. He added Soviets now seeking to contact Palestinians.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, POL 23–9 JORDAN. Secret; Priority. Drafted by Walter Smith (NEA/UAR); cleared by Dubs (EUR/SOV); and approved by Davies. It was repeated to Amman (Priority), Beirut, USINT Cairo, London, Paris, Tel Aviv, and USUN.



4. Davies said US too is anxious for ME settlement along lines Nov resolution. We are concerned about fate of hostages held in Jordan by PFLP and grave danger of situation in Amman. Situation in Jordan caused in part by GOJ acceptance of proposal for negotiations. Movement against GOJ is one of opposition to peaceful ME settlement.

5. Davies pointed out we would be particularly concerned if Syria or Iraq were to intervene in Jordan. There have been unconfirmed reports of Syrian involvement, which would only aggravate picture and make it more difficult to stabilize situation and get on with main objective of ME settlement.

6. Vorontsov said Gromyko wanted message brought to Secretary as soon as possible. Davies undertook to do so.

**Rogers**

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## **267. Minutes of a Washington Special Actions Group Meeting<sup>1</sup>**

Washington, September 19, 1970, 9:25–10 a.m.

### SUBJECT

Middle East

### PARTICIPATION

Chairman—Henry A. Kissinger

State—

U. Alexis Johnson

Rodger P. Davies

Defense—

David Packard

Robert J. Pranger

CIA—

Richard Helms

David Blee

JCS—

Adm. Thomas H. Moorer

Lt. Gen. John W. Vogt

NSC Staff—

Harold H. Saunders

Col. Richard T. Kennedy

Jeanne W. Davis

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-114, Washington Special Actions Group, WSAG Minutes (Originals) 1969 and 70. Top Secret; Sensitive; Nodis. The meeting took place in the White House Situation Room.

SUMMARY OF DECISIONS

It was agreed that:

1. we should not rush to reply to the Soviet note;<sup>2</sup>
2. a summary paper will be prepared on what would be required to mount US air operations in Jordan from land (as opposed to carriers);<sup>3</sup>
3. we will stick to our present press guidance;
4. consideration of the paper on possible outcomes in Jordan<sup>4</sup> will be deferred until Monday by which time the options might be narrowed;
5. a paper will be prepared on the possibilities for budgetary support for Jordan.<sup>5</sup>

Mr. Helms briefed from the attached notes.<sup>6</sup>

Mr. Helms: The Jordanian military commander has now issued a “final ultimatum” calling for the surrender of all fedayeen by 4:00 p.m.—a half-hour from now.

Mr. Kissinger: Does Nasser mean his cease-fire proposal?

Mr. Helms: Yes, he would like to see the fighting stopped.

Mr. Kissinger: Have there been a lot of casualties?

Mr. Helms: We have no figures.

Mr. Kissinger: How badly have the fedayeen been weakened?

Mr. Helms: You can't fire into those refugee camps without killing a lot of people.

Mr. Johnson: The government claims they have taken 6,000 prisoners.

Mr. Helms: We have unconfirmed reports of Soviet ship movements in the Mediterranean and, as you know, the Soviets have been in touch with both Davies and Ambassador Beam.<sup>7</sup>

Mr. Kissinger: This was very low key, wasn't it? Much more low key than their response to us on the missiles.

Mr. Johnson: Yes, very low key.

Mr. Helms: With regard to the hostages, the Red Cross delegate in Beirut has said he is not empowered to discuss them.

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<sup>2</sup> See Document 266.

<sup>3</sup> Not found.

<sup>4</sup> See footnote 2, Document 264.

<sup>5</sup> Not found.

<sup>6</sup> Not attached and not found.

<sup>7</sup> See Document 266. Beam reported on his meeting with Kuznetsov in telegram 5445 from Moscow, September 19, 0747Z. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Files, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-077, Washington Special Actions Group Meetings, WSAG Meeting Middle East 9/19/70)

Mr. Davies: We now have a report of a proposal made by the PFLP representative in Beirut that in exchange for the 7 captured guerrillas, the PFLP would release all hostages except the dual nationals.<sup>8</sup> From our count this would be all but two of the hostages, but we are not sure of the guerrillas' definition of dual nationals.

Mr. Kissinger: All but two would be within the range of what could be exchanged for the Algerians.

Mr. Davies: I think the PFLP would like the prestige of fulfilling this exchange. They must be under real pressure to release all the hostages.

Mr. Kissinger: Is there any reason why we couldn't agree to this proposal?

Mr. Davies: No, if there are no other conditions. Israel would agree if it were only the two Algerians.

Mr. Kissinger: The problem has been the principle that anyone of the Jewish religion could be held as hostage for anything Israel might do. This proposed arrangement sounds all right. Our diplomacy of the past two weeks would really have paid off. It would be a great achievement.

Mr. Saunders: It is so good, it doesn't sound real.

Mr. Davies: It could certainly be trumpeted abroad as a successful operation.

Mr. Johnson: If it is true, it is certainly an indication the PFLP is being pressed pretty hard. We must not count on it too much, however—just keep your fingers crossed.

Mr. Kissinger: Do the British know this?

Mr. Davies: They must have the same information; also, Joe Sisco is in touch with them.<sup>9</sup> The British Ambassador had suggested a broadcast appeal indicating that the governments were willing to negotiate with the ICRC. We decided to wait until this morning to consider this idea.

Mr. Johnson: I was a little worried about the Germans but they have now firmed up their position very satisfactorily.

Mr. Davies: And the British are aboard.

Mr. Kissinger: How about the Swiss?

Mr. Davies: They are as solid as we are. I don't know where the story began that they were shaky.

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<sup>8</sup> In telegram 7901 from Beirut, September 18, 1635Z. (Ibid., RG 59, Central Files 1970-73, PS 7-6 JORDAN)

<sup>9</sup> Apparently a reference to telegram 154363 to London, September 19, 0132Z. (Ibid., AV 12)

Mr. Kissinger: On the diplomatic side, we have the indirect Jordanian appeal. Has that not been overtaken by events?

Mr. Davies: Yes. If the Soviets have weighed in in Damascus and Baghdad, as they have indicated, this is as effective as anything they could do.

Mr. Kissinger: Have we thought about what we should do in response to the Soviet note?

Mr. Johnson: I see no need to rush a reply.

Mr. Kissinger: This is my instinct, too. They let us wait ten days for their reply to our approach on the missiles. (To Mr. Davies) What did you say to them?

Mr. Davies: I said we were seriously concerned for the lives of American citizens and that if Iraq or Syria should intervene, it would create a grave situation.<sup>10</sup>

Mr. Kissinger: Let's wait a few days to reply; I think the less said now the better, as long as the military situation is O.K. The Russians have appealed to Syria and Iraq, and I thought it interesting that they said they were trying to establish contact with the Palestinians.

Mr. Johnson: Very interesting.

Mr. Davies: The Russians were trying to be very correct. When I mentioned reports of incursions from the north, Vorontsov said "You don't mean we are involved."

Mr. Kissinger: So Nasser is urging a cease-fire. Have we heard from the Shah?

Mr. Johnson: Volumes. He gave MacArthur a tour d'horizon which ended up that he needs more equipment.<sup>11</sup>

Mr. Kissinger: That was inevitable.

Mr. Johnson: He is pretty perceptive—he makes a good case.

Mr. Kissinger: What about the military side?

Adm. Moorer: As you requested, we have prepared a study of land-based aircraft operations. We have listed every field from which operations could be considered, with the advantages and disadvantages of each. Turkey is the only place from which we could commence operations on short notice. Cyprus, Greece, or any other would require us to fly in support.

Mr. Kissinger: How long would it take?

Adm. Moorer: Seven days for 3 squadrons—54 planes. We looked at 11 fields. Two of them have F-4 war reserve munitions and they are

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<sup>10</sup> See Document 266.

<sup>11</sup> See footnote 2, Document 259.

both in Turkey. There are only 18 aircraft in Incirlik, but Cigli would require some augmentation.

Mr. Kissinger: How much would this step up our sortie rate?

Gen. Vogt: We figure one sortie per airplane per day.

Mr. Kissinger: So 3 squadrons would only add 25 percent to our sortie rate?

Adm. Moorer: The carriers have 5 squadrons with 12 to 14 aircraft each. We could figure 1.6 or 1.8 sorties per plane since the shuttle would be only 150 miles. The distance from Turkey is not much greater. We should figure one sortie per plane per day since their supplies are not all in position yet.

Mr. Kissinger: So we could operate immediately from Turkey bases but only with 18 aircraft. Could they handle more?

Adm. Moorer: Yes.

Mr. Kissinger: But our judgment was that there was no chance of Turkish approval of our use of these bases.

Adm. Moorer: We are left with Cyprus, Rhodes, Crete and Athens. All of these would require refueling by tanker. The closest fields are the two in Turkey and one in Cyprus. Cyprus would take 7 days to get 3 squadrons ready.

Mr. Kissinger: We would be in serious trouble if we were still bombing 7 days after we started. If we should need more than 200 sorties a day after 7 days something serious would be happening.

Adm. Moorer: If operations were confined to Jordan we have enough there on the carriers already.

Mr. Packard: And another carrier arrives soon.

Mr. Kissinger: Yes. In a few days, we could get 5 squadrons there by carrier faster than from the land. Two days from now we could reinforce quicker by carrier than by land.

Adm. Moorer: Would we have a chance of getting Cyprus?

Mr. Johnson: I think it is questionable; I am not sure of that at all.

Mr. Kissinger: Wasn't Makarios<sup>12</sup> cooperative over the U-2s?

Mr. Davies: He was willing to ignore the flights since there was no evidence of opposition from the UK or the Soviets.

Mr. Kissinger: That would not survive a week's operation in Jordan.

Mr. Johnson: Legally the British have the right to let us use the base in Cyprus.

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<sup>12</sup> Archbishop Makarios was President of Cyprus.

Mr. Kissinger: (to Mr. Saunders) Would you do a summary paper on this, indicating the amount of time it would take; what the possible fields are in Turkey, which we can't get, Cyprus and Crete; that the latter two require in-flight refueling; that, with the third carrier coming, after Monday it would be faster to reinforce from carriers than from the land.

Gen. Vogt: Unless we could use Turkey; in that case we could have 3 more squadrons there in 36 hours.

Mr. Kissinger: I think it is inconceivable that we could use Turkey, but we should make the point in the summary.

Mr. Packard: The Shah might let us operate from Iran.

Mr. Kissinger: We would still have to pre-position equipment.

Adm. Moorer: We considered that but ruled it out.

Mr. Kissinger: We will summarize the situation.

Adm. Moorer (passing a paper to Mr. Saunders)<sup>13</sup> It is all right here.

Adm. Moorer: We should send another tanker into the area. A tanker would normally be with the *Kennedy*, and it would permit better dispersal. It could come back when the *Saratoga* rotates out of the Mediterranean.

Mr. Kissinger: That is a military decision. You should do anything necessary to provide support for your carriers.

Adm. Moorer: All right. We will send 6 ASW aircraft and the tanker. They have also asked for a CVS group. We only have one and it would take a long time to get it ready. I would suggest we not do it.

Mr. Kissinger: Would the additional ships be noticed?

Adm. Moorer: They would be noticed here and the Russians would know it. When the *Saratoga* comes out, though, we will take the whole group out.

Mr. Kissinger: If the situation goes to pot we can send in the CVS group.

Mr. Packard: How about TC-3s?

Adm. Moorer: We have six.

Mr. Packard: They have some new equipment which gives them better capability.

Mr. Kissinger: As to press guidance, can we stick with our present position?

Mr. Johnson: Our low-key position? What would a high-key position look like? There are detailed press stories today, and 15 minutes

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<sup>13</sup> Not found.

of Walter Cronkite last night was devoted to marines boarding ships, ships sailing, etc.

Mr. Kissinger: Then we can say that we recommend continuing our present press guidance. Have we contingency guidance on the *Kennedy*.

Adm. Moorer: There has already been speculation about the *Kennedy*.

Mr. Helms: The only speculation was the name of the ship.

Adm. Moorer: The press is shooting from the hip. There is no difference between this speculation and the fact that they had US marines moving into Turkey, which is completely untrue.

Mr. Kissinger: Do we have contingency guidance?

Mr. Johnson: McCloskey, Henkin and Ziegler were all in touch yesterday.

Adm. Moorer: I think continuing speculation which turns out to be half right and half wrong dulls its impact.

Mr. Johnson: But it is 90 percent right.

Mr. Kissinger: Do we care?

Mr. Johnson and Mr. Packard: No, not particularly.

Mr. Kissinger: We also have the paper on possible outcomes in Jordan. It is an excellent paper but I suggest we defer consideration of it until Monday. By that time we may be able to eliminate one or more of the choices and concentrate on the ones that are more likely.

Mr. Davies: I think the outcomes were adumbrated by events this morning. The King will be in better shape but we will have to look at what we should do when the situation is stabilized. The King will probably need more from us.

Mr. Kissinger: More military assistance?

Mr. Davies: And funds.

Mr. Kissinger: Could we staff this problem over the weekend?

Mr. Saunders: Rodger is talking about replacement of budgetary support—there is no crash on this.

Mr. Kissinger: Can they operate with the military support they now have?

Mr. Pranger: Yes.

Mr. Kissinger: Let's get a paper on what our choices are in the area of budgetary support. My instinct is that the President would be prepared to entertain such a proposal. We should tell him what is involved and how it might operate under one or two choices.

Mr. Johnson: (to Mr. Davies) You might discuss this with Art Hartman. He has been working on my Operation Scrounge for Cambodia and his experience would be pertinent.

Mr. Kissinger: We have talked about tacking on a lot of supplements to the Israeli assistance package, but I doubt if the traffic would bear adding Jordan to that package.

Mr. Saunders: Every time we have concluded an arms deal with Jordan we have also concluded one with Israel.

Mr. Kissinger: Let's wait over the weekend. By Monday morning I think the options will have narrowed.

Mr. Davies: All indications are that the King will be in full control of Amman by then.

Mr. Kissinger: I think we can rule out Options E and F. Does this leave us a choice between C and D?<sup>14</sup>

Mr. Davies: Somewhere in that range.

Mr. Kissinger: Between A and C?

Mr. Davies: With two-thirds of his population made up of Palestinians, the King will have to reach some compromise at some time.

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<sup>14</sup> The options were laid out in the paper on possible outcomes in Jordan; see footnote 2, Document 264. Option C supposed a limited victory for King Hussein, leaving the fedayeen to operate primarily in the countryside. Option D supposed King Hussein compromising with the fedayeen and allowing them to function as they did before the fighting. Option E assumed successful resistance by the fedayeen, forcing the Jordanian Government to seek terms. Option F presumed a fedayeen victory and control of Jordan.

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## 268. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Switzerland<sup>1</sup>

Washington, September 19, 1970, 1554Z.

154331. Subject: Proposed Text Bern Group Message. Ref: Bern 2369; Beirut 7915, Beirut 7925.<sup>2</sup>

1. We are prepared support new UK formula for message with addition of sentence suggested by Swiss and your proposed amendment

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, PS 7–6 JORDAN. Confidential; Flash. Drafted by Seelye and Frank Trinkka (EUR/AIS), and approved by Seelye. It was repeated to Beirut (Flash), Amman, Bonn, London, Tel Aviv, and Geneva.

<sup>2</sup> Telegram 2369 from Bern, September 19, 1220Z, transmitted the British text of a proposed Bern Group message. In telegram 7915 from Beirut, September 19, 0935Z, and telegram 7925 from Beirut, September 19, 1333Z, the Embassy reported on discussions with ICRC officials. (All *ibid.*)



this sentence as well as further change in penultimate sentence (see below). Redraft takes into account comments made by Prime Minister Meir to Secretary.<sup>3</sup> *FYI*: Our current assessment based on Meir's comments is that while GOI will probably agree to initial three PFLP demands made of them (release of Swiss, 2 Algerians and 10 Lebanese soldiers), Israelis very unlikely agree to release of Palestinian prisoners. *End FYI*.

2. Text would thus read as follows:

"The governments hold responsible for the safety of the hostages all those in whose hands they may be. The governments call upon those holding hostages to provide information on their whereabouts and wellbeing. They require that the hostages should be brought to a safe place which in the view of the governments is a prerequisite to an orderly transfer. The governments stand ready to consider at any time proposals for the release of all hostages. They also reaffirm their mandate to the ICRC."

If above not acceptable, do not concur. Request instructions.

3. Imperative that Bern group reaffirm as soon as possible mandate to ICRC in view Beirut 7915 which indicates ICRC reps cabling for instructions and requesting presence ICRC rep with authority to negotiate re hostages.

4. *For Beirut*: You should make absolutely clear to PFLP, as well as to ICRC reps in Beirut, that USG has in no way accepted PFLP conditions and continues to insist on package approach. This means that either all hostages must be released or none at all. Beirut 7926<sup>4</sup> just received. You should emphasize to ICRC that USG cannot guarantee any Israeli undertaking in regard to release of hostages and, as indicated para 1 above, likelihood of Israel agreeing to release Palestinian prisoners is slim. We are disturbed at how Boissard and Boissier seem to be so unaware of what has gone on up to now. You should straighten them out.

5. *For Bern*: At today's meeting you should refer to conversation between Embassy Beirut and ICRC reps (Boissier and Boissard) and urge that Bern group assures that ICRC headquarters provide background information to their reps in Beirut re state of play in negotiations and positions of various parties up to now.

**Rogers**

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<sup>3</sup> The record of Meir's September 18 discussion of the hostages with Rogers is in telegram 154300 to Amman, Bern, Bonn, London, and Tel Aviv, September 19, 0311Z; see *Foreign Relations, 1969-1976*, volume E-1, Documents on Global Issues, 1969-1972, Document 73.

<sup>4</sup> Telegram 7926 from Beirut, September 19, 1335Z, reported the view of the ICRC representatives that the U.S. Government and Israeli Government had "agreed in principle that Israel should release some Palestinians it holds." The PFLP sought a guarantee from the U.S. Government that Israel would release a specified number of prisoners. (Ibid.)

269. **Transcript of a Telephone Conversation Between President Nixon and the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)**<sup>1</sup>

September 19, 1970, 11:05 a.m.

[Omitted here is discussion unrelated to the Jordan crisis.]

P: Still no word on the hostages?

K: Beirut representatives said would be released for 7 prisoners in Europe plus body plus 2 Israelis. We are trying to confirm that report. If it is true it will be a special achievement. We started off with 300 Israelis. Also what they interpret as dual citizens. Hold those against 2 Algerians. Israelis will let them go. We will know later this afternoon. Bern group is meeting now. More this afternoon. Fedayeen feel hard pressed.

P: Our moves certainly well covered. [talking about military moves.]<sup>2</sup> Press picks up all the ship movements which is just fine. [*less than 1 line not declassified*]

K: The *Guam* . . . The *Kennedy* has 4 destroyers with it. Also ASW planes moved in . . . Soviet note to us was very soft and much weaker than anything they said to us on missile violations.<sup>3</sup>

P: On the what?

K: Missile violations of the ceasefire. [*less than 1 line not declassified*] that the Arabs thinks we are getting ready to intervene which is exactly what we want.

P: What is critical is the hostages they hold.

K: The last 2 weeks have shown. When we moved the 6th fleet, within 24 hours they screwed down demands. Every time we started reinforcing.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, Kissinger Telephone Conversations, Box 30, Chronological Files. No classification marking. The President was in Camp David, Maryland, and Kissinger was in Washington. (*Ibid.*, White House Central Files, President's Daily Diary)

<sup>2</sup> Brackets are in the original.

<sup>3</sup> See Document 266.

**270. Transcript of a Telephone Conversation Between the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) and the Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs (Johnson)<sup>1</sup>**

Washington, September 19, 1970, 12:20 p.m.

J: Henry, have you seen this flash from Amman in which the King is asking for hospitals.<sup>2</sup> I think the nearest we have undoubtedly is Germany. I thought I would send a flash back and say of course we would do everything we could and ask has the King approached ICRC? We would like to get an ICRC umbrella in there.

K: Yes, I have seen it. Haig brought it in and he is going to call Sisco on it with the same ideas. Our minds are running along the same lines. I told Haig that we would like a multi-lateral umbrella but we should not hold up too long in order to organize it.

J: I'll tell them that we are taking all measures that we can.<sup>3</sup>

K: Yes, of course. Multi-laterally with the ICRC or with—jointly with Germany and France who I understand they also asked.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, Kissinger Telephone Conversations, Box 30, Chronological Files. No classification marking.

<sup>2</sup> Telegram 4936 from Amman, September 19, 1509Z. (Ibid., RG 59, Central Files 1970-73, SOC 10 JORDAN)

<sup>3</sup> In telegram 4986 from Amman, September 21, 0013Z, the Embassy reported it had told Zaid Rifai that the United States planned to send two complete field hospitals, transported to Jordan by U.S. military aircraft, but under ICRC auspices. (Ibid., Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 619, Country Files, Middle East, Jordan Crisis)

**271. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Iran<sup>1</sup>**

Washington, September 19, 1970, 2316Z.

154391. For Ambassador MacArthur. Ref: State 152503; Tehran 4059.<sup>2</sup>

1. We have read with interest Shah's assessment of Jordanian situation. Please convey Department's sincere appreciation when you share with the Shah our own assessment of the current situation as given below:

2. Militarily King appears have upper hand in Amman, Zarqa and southern part of country. Situation around Irbid not clear, but GOJ assures us army intends reestablish control over that city in the near future. Thus far there has been no active interference on part of Syria and Iraq, although we have reports of fedayeen belonging to Saiqa and other unidentified Palestinian organizations entering Jordan from Lebanon and Syria. With particular reference to Iraq, Iraqi troops in Jordan have not involved themselves in current fighting. Moreover, they have reportedly stood by while Jordan Army moved against fedayeen in Mafraq area. In addition other reports indicate Iraqis have begun as yet unexplained withdrawal of Iraqi units from Irbid area back to Mafraq.

3. In sum, security situation in Amman appears somewhat better than yesterday, although no doubt some bitter fighting remains to be done before King's authority entirely reestablished at least over urban centers of his kingdom.

4. You might also discreetly probe Shah's thinking on possible Iranian moves should Iraq actively intervene in Jordan.<sup>3</sup> You may inform him privately that we are prepared intervene if it becomes necessary to evacuate American citizens should there be complete breakdown of public order in Jordan and American lives are in serious

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, POL 23–9 JORDAN. Secret; Immediate; Exdis. Drafted on September 18 by Scotese; cleared by Davies, Kissinger via Haig, Seelye, Childs (NEA/IRN), and Sterner (NEA/UAR); and approved by Sisco. It was repeated Immediate to Amman and Tel Aviv.

<sup>2</sup> Telegram 152503 is Document 259. For telegram 4059 from Tehran, September 17, 1345Z, see footnote 2 thereto.

<sup>3</sup> Telegram 4113 from Tehran, September 21, 1315Z, conveyed the Shah's comments to MacArthur that there was little Iran could do to help King Hussein since Iran was not an Arab state. However, the Shah had sent a message to Nasser proposing that the UAR, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Iran, Turkey, and Lebanon formally urge all nations to avoid intervention in Jordan. The Shah intended the formal appeal to be aimed specifically at Iraq and Syria. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, POL 23–9 JORDAN)

danger. Beyond this, any other kind of intervention would obviously depend on future developments in Jordan situation. In the event of Iraqi and/or Syrian military intervention, which we consider unlikely, the King might request outside air support to interdict foreign forces moving against King. You may inform the Shah very confidentially that because of the importance we attach to the survival of the Hashemite regime and because of our previous commitments to him, we are considering how we might be responsive.

5. If the Shah should ask what the U.S. position would be re Israeli intervention, you should reply that we doubt such intervention would have positive effect except in connection air interdiction against Syria and Iraqi military forces at time King's regime seriously threatened. You may inform him that we are in close and continuing contact with Israelis re current situation in Jordan.

6. Re Nasser's position vis-à-vis Jordanian situation, we believe that Nasser would, all things considered, prefer to see Hussein stay in power, particularly in view of what we continue to believe to be Nasser's desire for some sort of Near East peace settlement. However, Nasser is aware of the growth of Palestinianism as a political force in the area, and he may rate the Hashemite dynasty's chances of long-term survival as slight. In the present crisis he appears to be trying to stay on the fence and in a position to deal with whatever forces emerge. He would probably prefer a situation of stability in Jordan with the King in control and the Palestinian guerrilla movement dominated by Yasir Arafat, the one among Palestinian leaders with whom Nasser has greatest rapport. He would probably have little problem with an attempt by the King to crush the extremist Palestinian guerrilla groups; however, the King's move against al-Fatah as well as the other groups probably aroused Nasser's concern. In general we can expect Nasser to play a moderating role. His recent appeal, in conjunction with Qhadafi and Numeiry, for a ceasefire and political solution of the crisis in Jordan can be seen in this light. We doubt whether Nasser will provide either Hussein or Arafat with any tangible assistance.

**Rogers**

**272. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon<sup>1</sup>**

Washington, September 19, 1970.

SUBJECT

The Situation in Jordan

After two days of fighting, the Jordanian army is still far from securing Amman. Although the army continues to have the upper hand, King Hussein apparently has been reluctant to apply the maximum force available to him for fear of causing numerous civilian casualties and reducing the city to a shambles. Some of his military strength is also being drawn off to cope with the stiff fedayeen resistance in the cities to the north. Hussein's problem now is that the longer the fighting drags on the greater will be the pressure from the other Arab states to accept a compromise solution.

Our Embassy in Amman comments that this is not a win-or-lose situation for Hussein.<sup>2</sup> The question is what kind of compromise Hussein will settle for. He appears to view his objective as restoring his authority in urban centers while not putting himself completely at odds with the Palestinians who form a large part of his population. Put another way, he seems to be seeking a solution which will still leave him with the support of the "silent majority" of moderate Palestinians. This objective and the pressures of other Arabs may cause him to stop short of completely suppressing the guerrillas, but our Embassy last night felt that unless the pace of his movement increased today he would not be in a strong position to force compromise on his terms.

*The Military Situation*

After another day of heavy fighting *in Amman* in which the army continued to make gradual progress in rooting out the fedayeen, the fighting slacked off again last night. The army opened up again, however, at dawn and may be pressing its attack more intensively than in the past two days. The embassy was repeatedly attacked last night by a small group of fedayeen who were finally driven off by the Beduin guard with the help of a tank. All embassy personnel are reported safe.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-077, Washington Special Actions Group Meetings, WSAG Meeting Middle East 9/19/70. Secret; Sensitive. An attached map is not printed.

<sup>2</sup> In telegram 4918 from Amman, September 18, 2000Z. (Ibid., Box 615, Country Files, Middle East, Jordan, Vol. V)

There are indications that the army is making some progress *in the north*, although it seems to be meeting fairly stiff resistance. Yesterday army troops were encircling Ramtha (see attached map), just south of the Syrian border. Ramtha is a key town, since Jordanian control there would cut off movement of fedayeen reinforcements and supplies coming in from Syria. According to the Israelis, the army is on the outskirts of Irbid, Jordan's second largest city and a fedayeen stronghold. The government, at least for now, seems to be in control of Zarka, just north of Amman. There are reports of fighting this morning in parts of the "liberated area."

*The Syrians* appear to have become at least marginally involved in the fighting near their border with Jordan. The Israelis yesterday spotted unidentified tanks moving in the area of the Syrian border in the direction of Ramtha and, according to the Jordanians, some Syrian tanks actually crossed the frontier near Dar'a and shelled Jordanian positions. The Jordanians say that, unopposed by Iraqi troops in the area, they have interposed a tank force to block further Syrian movement. It is by no means clear that the tanks in question belong to the regular Syrian army; they could well belong to a fedayeen organization, Saiqah.

*The Iraqis* from all indications continue to stand aside from the fighting. According to the Israelis, the Iraqi forces in Jordan continue to concentrate around Mafraq and the headquarters of the Iraqi First Division in Zarka is withdrawing to Iraq.

#### *Arab Mediation*

King Hussein met for three hours yesterday with Egyptian Chief of Staff Sadiq, the special envoy of the three Arab presidents—Numayri of Sudan, Qaddafi of Libya, and Nasser of Egypt—sent to discuss the situation. Sadiq, [1 line not declassified] expressed sympathy for Hussein's position but urged that "the time had come to stop the bloodshed." Hussein replied by stating the strict conditions he insists that the fedayeen must operate under in the future. Sadiq was unable to [apparent omission] Yasir Arafat.

#### *The Hostages*

A spokesman for the PFLP said yesterday that the 54 hostages from the hijacked aircraft are "in good condition." A senior PFLP official in Beirut, told our Embassy there that despite its previous statement, the PFLP is now prepared to negotiate the release of the hostages through the Red Cross.<sup>3</sup> They insist, however, that these negotiations be held in

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<sup>3</sup> As reported in telegram 7913 from Beirut, September 18, 2125Z. (Ibid., RG 59, Central Files 1970-73, PS 7-6, JORDAN)

Beirut and quickly, today if possible. The spokesman claimed that this proposal was made not from weakness but for humanitarian reasons. He said that as of yesterday afternoon a number of the hostages required medical attention—not because they had been injured in the fighting, but because of their general health. He added that the hostages were housed in areas where there had been no fighting, but that there were no doctors available to treat them.

According to a CIA report,<sup>4</sup> the hostages have been split into at least eight groups. Five of these are being held in Zarka near the refugee camp there; the others are reportedly in the Wahdat refugee camp in Amman and in other camps outside the city. The Wahdat camp has been and probably will continue to be the scene of some of the heaviest fighting between the army and fedayeen.

#### *Reaction to U.S. Actions*

The Soviets are apparently increasingly concerned at the possibility of U.S., British or Israeli intervention in Jordan. Soviet chargé Vorontsov yesterday called “urgently” on Deputy Assistant Secretary Davies to ask that Secretary Rogers be informed of the following:

—The Soviets are concerned about the situation in Jordan which “complicates” the entire situation in the Middle East and may “adversely affect” attempts to achieve a peace settlement.

—The Soviets “hope” that the U.S. agrees that it is necessary for “all states, including those not belonging to this region,” to “exercise prudence” in their steps concerning the Middle East situation. They draw “special attention” to Israel and “hope” that the U.S. will use its influence to preclude the possibility of Israel’s exploiting the situation. The Soviets, for their part, have already urged the leaders of Jordan, Iraq, Syria and the UAR to take measures to put an end to the fighting in Jordan.

—The Soviet Government “as before, stands for a settlement of the Middle East crisis based on the November 1967 U.N. Security Council resolution.”<sup>5</sup>

Ambassador Beam also reports that he met last evening with Deputy Foreign Minister Kuznetsov at a diplomatic reception who said that he hoped the U.S. had no intention of intervening in Jordan.<sup>6</sup> Such an action, Kuznetsov said, would make a bad situation worse, would risk widening hostilities, and would create serious difficulties for all nations with interests in Jordan.

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<sup>4</sup> Not further identified.

<sup>5</sup> See Document 266.

<sup>6</sup> Telegram 5445 from Moscow, September 19, 0747Z. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-077, Washington Special Actions Group Meetings, WSAG Meeting Middle East 9/19/70)



Soviet propaganda is also reflecting the apparent concern over possible outside intervention in Jordan. Tass, for instance, yesterday warned that any attempt at intervention in Jordan would "entail a new worsening of the conflict" which could "overstep the borders of that country."

The Egyptians are also alarmed and apparently are trying to discourage U.S. intervention. An official UAR spokesman this morning issued a statement which makes the following points:

—The movement of U.S. forces and fleet in the eastern Mediterranean and statements from the White House and State Department not ruling out intervention "constitute a grave dimension . . . that would escalate and expand the conflict to engulf the whole area."

—These movements "harm the whole Arab nation" because they exploit the situation in Jordan to create an opportunity for foreign intervention and for Israeli aggression.

—Any "implicit or explicit U.S. pressure is a threat to the security and peace of the Middle East," results in further military ventures and encourages Israeli aggression. "The UAR warns against the consequences of such movements and holds the U.S. responsible for the serious consequences that would result from them."

The Soviet and Egyptian diplomatic efforts seem directed at achieving a cease-fire in Jordan. This would work to the fedayeen advantage if it took place before Hussein is in a strong position to enforce his terms.

**273. Memorandum From Helmut Sonnenfeldt of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)<sup>1</sup>**

Washington, September 19, 1970.

SUBJECT

Additional Comments on the Soviet Position on Jordan

The approach made by Vorontsov to Davies bears out the main point in my earlier memo on Soviet reactions;<sup>2</sup> namely, that the Soviets vastly prefer to insulate the Jordanian crisis, even if the fedayeen are defeated, but are especially worried over Israeli intervention. Indeed, if Vorontsov's statement can be accepted at face value the Soviets are at least using some of their political capital to restrain Syria and Iraq and the UAR, and in effect are virtually appealing to us for restraint.

*Israel*

As to the prospect of our involvement, the Soviet approach in Washington as well as the remarks by Deputy Foreign Minister Kuznetsov to Beam in Moscow and public output also tend to bear out what we said in yesterday's memo; that is, that the Soviets would not intervene militarily but would not stand by without raising a major campaign against us. As Beam pointed out the Soviets probably feel that Kuznetsov has passed a warning to reinforce the more formal diplomatic demands of Vorontsov, who really did not touch directly on our possible intervention.

Again, there are two aspects that deeply concern the Soviets as Kuznetsov mentioned. First, outside intervention risks "widening hostilities." Second, it creates difficulties for all nations which have "interests in the area." The Soviet interests are plain. They want to forestall situations which could force them into the unpalatable decision of going to the defense of the Arab states with their own personnel. This means primarily to avoid Israeli involvement, and a resumption of fighting along the canal (at least until they are ready for it). Second, they want to demonstrate to us, to the Arabs, and to the world at large that the Middle East is a Soviet preserve where the US can no longer

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 615, Country Files, Middle East, Jordan, Vol. V. Secret; Sensitive; Outside System. Urgent; Sent for information. Kissinger initialed the top of the first page.

<sup>2</sup> See Documents 265 and 266.

act with impunity. But the situation in Jordan and our possible intervention might force the Russians to choose between protecting their clients at considerable new risks to themselves and accepting the fact that they cannot yet dictate American policy in the area.

I understand that at the WSAG the consensus was if any intervention is necessary, it should be done by Israel rather than the US.<sup>3</sup> While not arguing the relative effectiveness of Israeli vs. US intervention, I want to stress that from the *Soviet* viewpoint American intervention is more tolerable than Israeli. American intervention could be dealt with in the Great Power context, and, from the Soviet viewpoint, somehow managed. But Israeli intervention raises new questions and above all, the risks that the whole area will lapse into unrestrained warfare, bringing into play Soviet commitments and the probable involvement of Soviet personnel in the UAR.

One further aspect of this crisis is that it may be bringing home to the Soviets the risks they have run lately in upsetting the ceasefire standstill. As I noted in my memo of a few days ago,<sup>4</sup> there was some sign of Soviet apprehension in the Vinogradov–Beam talk,<sup>5</sup> and a hint of willingness to talk about rectification. The latest *démarche* on Jordan suggests that the Soviets may believe that some gesture on the UAR-Israeli front may be necessary to limit the chances of our or Israeli intervention in Jordan.

*In Sum:* the type of intervention that might be most dramatic but *least* effective in terms of controlling the situation on the ground in Jordan may be *least* likely to produce direct Soviet intervention; whereas the intervention *most* likely in the short run, at least, to be effective in controlling the situation on the ground (Israeli) may be *most* likely to produce Soviet intervention because it is most likely to reopen general Arab-Israeli hostilities and hence involve Soviet commitments and personnel.

The Soviets clearly prefer neither form of intervention even though, on balance, they would probably prefer to see the King remain in power.

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<sup>3</sup> See Document 267.

<sup>4</sup> Apparently a reference to Sonnenfeldt's September 16 memorandum; see *Foreign Relations, 1969–1976*, volume XII, Soviet Union, January 1969–October 1970, Document 205.

<sup>5</sup> Beam reported on his meeting with Deputy Foreign Minister Vinogradov on September 3 to discuss violation of the UAR-Israeli cease-fire in telegram 5076 from Moscow, September 3, 2000Z. See *ibid.*, Document 201.

**274. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon<sup>1</sup>**

Washington, September 19, 1970.

SUBJECT

WSAG Actions—Jordan

The following actions have been taken:

*Diplomatic*

—*Jordan*—We advised King Hussein that we would look promptly and with sympathy on requests for materiel assistance.<sup>2</sup>

—*Iran*—Ambassador MacArthur has seen the Shah and has exchanged views on the situation with him.<sup>3</sup>

—*Israel*—We are getting regular Israeli assessment of the situation and are obtaining reconnaissance and intelligence data from the Israelis.

—*USSR and UAR*—We have made no approaches to either government—the Soviets have approached us indicating that they believe all states both within and outside the region should avoid intervention and seek to bring an end of the fighting. The USSR made this point to Baghdad, Damascus, Cairo and the Fedayeen. We do not plan to reply immediately.

—*The U.N.*—We will not go to the U.N. now but be prepared to make an approach there if Syria or Iraq intervenes.

*Military Supply*

—Defense has prepared a package of materiel which Hussein might need; the materiel has been identified and can be shipped quickly.

—Defense [*less than 1 line not declassified*] developed plans for air shipment of materiel to Jordan if this is needed.

—Plans for shipment of materiel using staging through Turkey, Greece or Cyprus have been prepared. We will now [*not*] approach Turkey unless Nasser makes a public statement of support for Hussein.

—Defense is sounding out Saudi Arabia for possible use of their C-130s for delivery of materiel to Jordan which we would preposition for them.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-077, Washington Special Actions Group Meetings, WSAG Meeting Middle East 9/19/70. Top Secret; Sensitive.

<sup>2</sup> Not found.

<sup>3</sup> See footnote 2, Document 259.

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*Military Measures*

—*Airlift*—Five C-130s have been moved from Incirlik to preposition them for evacuation; ten additional C-130s have been moved to Europe.

—*The Fleet*—The entire Sixth Fleet has been positioned in the Eastern Mediterranean.

—The *Saratoga* and *Independence* are south of Cyprus along with the amphibious force with one Marine battalion landing team embarked.

—The *Guam* with another Marine unit embarked and with helicopters will pass through Gibraltar Straits on Saturday, 26 September.

—The Carrier *Kennedy* is enroute to the Mediterranean and will pass through Gibraltar Straits on 25 September.

—An additional tanker and four destroyers are being ordered to the Mediterranean to support the *Kennedy*.

—Six additional land-based ASW aircraft are being ordered to the Mediterranean—they will arrive in about 48 hours.

—*Army Forces*

—Airborne Brigade is on alert in Germany, one battalion could be in Jordan in about 10 hours. (That battalion is on immediate alert but on a training exercise—we let the training exercise go ahead in order that security could be maintained.)

—The 82nd Airborne Division at Fort Bragg is on the maximum alert which can be maintained with security.

—Defense has completed a study specifying requirements for the use of U.S. land-based air over Jordan (availability of bases and fuel and ammo supply are critical factors.)

—*Other Steps*

—CIA/State have completed a study of likely outcomes of the situation in Jordan, the impact on the Middle East peace initiative and the implications for U.S. policy and action. This paper is being further refined over the weekend.<sup>4</sup>

—Press guidance is being coordinated with State and Defense.

—Sitreps are being issued every four hours.

—Detailed scenarios for materiel support for Jordan, U.S. intervention for purposes of evacuation, U.S. intervention for support of the same either by air strikes or air and ground action, Israeli armed intervention and related supply requirements, and for deterrence of Soviet intervention have been completed.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> See footnote 2, Document 264.

<sup>5</sup> No scenario papers have been found.

**275. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon<sup>1</sup>**

Washington, September 20, 1970, 3:30 p.m.

SUBJECT

Situation in Jordan

*Military Situation*

After repulsing two earlier Syrian tank attacks and reportedly inflicting heavy losses on a Syrian armored brigade, the Jordanians have been attacked by two Syrian armored brigades along a broad front in northern Jordan. According to information provided by the Israelis on the progress of the battle after more than five hours of fighting (11:00 a.m. EDT), both sides have suffered casualties. The Syrians reportedly have artillery and about 150 tanks in the area, some 70 of which are actually in Jordan. The Jordanians consider the situation serious due to the Syrian numerical advantage. Some Jordanian aircraft were used in the fighting but have ceased operations because of darkness.

An Iraqi armored brigade has reportedly begun moving from Syria into Jordan, but appears to be avoiding involvement in the fighting.

*Actions Taken*

On three occasions today King Hussein has asked our Ambassador for U.S. assistance.<sup>2</sup> In response to his request we have thus far:

—made a public statement of concern over the Syrian actions (Tab A).<sup>3</sup>

—Given the Soviet Chargé a strong *démarche* (Tab B).<sup>4</sup>

—Taken further steps to determine whether we can safely provide medical assistance to Amman.

—Called for an updating of contingency plans in light of the new situation.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 615, Country Files, Middle East, Jordan, Vol. V. Secret; Sensitive. Sent for information. The time is handwritten at the top of the first page.

<sup>2</sup> As reported in telegram 4959 from Amman, September 20, 1030Z; telegram 4969 from Amman, September 20, 1534Z; and telegram 4970 from Amman, September 20, 1639Z. The King specifically asked for aerial reconnaissance in telegram 4969 and for general assistance in telegrams 4959 and 4970. (All are *ibid.*, RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, POL 23–9 JORDAN)

<sup>3</sup> The attached statement by Secretary Rogers condemned the Syrian intervention and warned of a widening conflict if Syrian forces did not withdraw immediately. It is printed in the Department of State *Bulletin*, October 12, 1970, p. 412.

<sup>4</sup> The note verbale handed to the Soviet Chargé is attached but not printed. See footnote 2, Document 276.

—Called a WSAG meeting for 7:00 p.m. this evening to review the situation.<sup>5</sup>

—Authorized the increased alert of our Army Brigade in Europe.

—Directed Defense to prepare, on a contingency basis, a plan for a punitive retaliatory air strike against the Fedayeen should they harm U.S. hostages.

—Stepped-up efforts to enhance the acquisition of intelligence from the Israeli armed forces on the military situation in Jordan.

—Asked our Ambassador in Amman to reassure King Hussein without making any commitments.<sup>6</sup>

I will be sending you a more detailed assessment of the situation around 6:00 p.m. this evening.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> See Document 281.

<sup>6</sup> Document 276.

<sup>7</sup> See Document 280.

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## 276. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Jordan<sup>1</sup>

Washington, September 20, 1970, 1553Z.

154413. 1. In view of developments re Syrian involvement, we are proceeding as follows:

A. We are calling in Soviets immediately and making a strong oral *démarche* warning against Syrian intervention in Jordan and insisting upon an immediate withdrawal of Syrian forces that have invaded Jordan with tanks in the north.<sup>2</sup>

B. We will put out a brief public statement focusing on the Syrian intervention and calling for withdrawal of its forces.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970-73, POL 23-9 JORDAN. Secret; Flash. Drafted and approved by Sisco; and cleared by Rogers, Curran, and Kissinger. It was repeated Flash to Tel Aviv, Cairo, USUN, Beirut, London, Paris, and Moscow.

<sup>2</sup> Telegram 154417 to Moscow, September 20, 1742Z, transmitted the text of the note verbale. The note responded to the Soviet note of September 18. It condemned the Syrian intervention in Jordan and called upon the Soviet Union to insist that the Syrians withdraw. The note also warned "of the serious consequences which could ensue from a broadening of the conflict." (Ibid., Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 619, Country Files, Middle East, Jordan Crisis) For the Soviet note of September 18, see Document 266.

<sup>3</sup> See footnote 3, Document 275.

C. For the time being we wish to keep in abeyance any call for SC meeting.<sup>4</sup> For a SC meeting to be helpful to the Jordanians two conditions must be fulfilled: (1) situation on the ground must be such that an unconditional ceasefire would be favorable to the Jordanians; and (2) Jordanians themselves should request such a meeting. *FYI*. Our own thinking is that perhaps GOJ at this stage would still be reluctant to take such an initiative for fear of being accused taking this matter out of Arab context. If SC were convened, immediate focus would be on a ceasefire. Finally, there would be strong feeling in the Council for a call on all concerned not to intervene which would tend to preclude our own option in this regard. *End FYI*.

2. You may inform GOJ of the above.

**Rogers**

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<sup>4</sup> Telegram 154420 to Amman, September 20, 1015Z, instructed Ambassador Brown to call Rifai and explain to him that the United States did not want the Security Council to meet until after a Soviet response to the U.S. note verbale. Additionally, the U.S. Government believed the Security Council would call for a conditional cease-fire, which it assumed would be to the disadvantage of the Jordanian Government at that time. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, POL 23–9 JORDAN)

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## **277. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Lebanon<sup>1</sup>**

Washington, September 20, 1970, 1854Z.

154423. Ref: Beirut 7937.<sup>2</sup> Subject: PFLP Hostages.

1. Department entirely agrees that Embassy has scrupulously avoided giving Zayn and PFLP any valid reason for assuming that Embassy agreement to pass on PFLP terms for release of hostages somehow implies USG acceptance of those terms. Yet they appear to

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, PS 7–6 JORDAN. Secret; Immediate. Drafted by Killgore; cleared in NEA/ARN; and approved by Sisco. It was repeated Immediate to Amman, and to Bern, Bonn, Geneva, London, and Tel Aviv.

<sup>2</sup> Telegram 7937 from Beirut, September 21, included six demands made by the PFLP regarding the hostage situation. The Embassy informed Zayn, who served as an intermediary with the PFLP, that he should pass on to ICRC all information he wished to send to the U.S. Government. Additionally, the Embassy told Zayn that the U.S. Government had not accepted any PFLP proposals. (*Ibid.*)



be making this assumption, probably without being honestly convinced of USG acceptance but rather as a negotiating tactic which they reason might serve to split five-power united front.

2. We believe time has now rpt now come to break off contact with Zayn in matter of hostages. You may be as diplomatic as you wish with him consistent with his fully understanding that Embassy wishes no rpt. no longer receive or transmit PFLP conditions.

3. Embassy's contacts with Zayn served a useful purpose during period when movement on hostages in Amman was frozen because of civil war in city. However, security situation there has improved, ICRC representatives have proceeded to Amman and negotiations on spot may be expected to resume. In these circumstances, Amman is proper place and ICRC is proper forum for receiving information from and carrying on negotiations with the PFLP.

**Rogers**

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**278. Telegram From the Embassy in Israel to the Department of State and the Embassy in Jordan<sup>1</sup>**

Tel Aviv, September 20, 1970, 1910Z.

5181. This message sent Exdis because Amman has no Nodis capability. Dept handle as Nodis for distribution purposes. Subject: Syrian threat. Ref: Amman 4973.<sup>2</sup>

1. Agree with Amman view on utility spooking Syrians. To some extent assume this is what we are trying to do with oral note to Sovs, UNSC meeting, moves of US forces, etc. For US to try to get Israelis into act, however, would add a dimension that should be viewed with caution. Most important question, to us, is whether GOJ can survive and hopefully win out on its own or with whatever moral or material support US can give. If it can, then outcome of present Jordan situation may still be a plus in fundamental problem of getting Mideast settlement,

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970-73, POL 27 ARAB-ISR. Secret; Flash; Exdis. Received at 3:49 p.m. A note at the end of the telegram indicates it was passed to the White House.

<sup>2</sup> In telegram 4973 from Amman, September 20, the Embassy suggested "spooking" the Syrians by massing Israeli forces at the Syrian border and flying low-level Israeli reconnaissance over Damascus. (Ibid.)

since it will tend to convince UAR and USSR of dangers in continuation present impasse and need to take steps required to permit negotiations to resume.

2. If Israel is brought into present Jordan situation, however, we fear this would have fallout in terms of providing a point for Arabs, including fedayeen and moderates, to rally round, and turn fight from one between GOJ on one side and fedayeen plus Syria on other into one between Arabs and Israelis. Even if IDF massing of forces opposite Syria had desired effect on Syrian forces and caused them to pull back, it might also provoke some reaction from USSR that would complicate situation. If IDF had to [garble—go?] further and actually move into Syria to objective of turning Syrian armor around, then we would surely have opened a new situation.

3. As Dept will recall, Dayan has previously (April) given us some ideas which are applicable now, principally one that in situation like present one GOI would move to buttress King only if we asked them to. If it appears that this is going to be only way of saving GOJ, then that would appear to us to take precedence over any other doubts expressed above, and we think GOJ would be responsive.

4. Have just seen Amman 4976 and agree with para four thereof that most meaningful thing we could do at this stage would be to leak that plan right away.<sup>3</sup>

**Zurhellen**

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<sup>3</sup> In paragraph 4 of telegram 4976 from Amman, September 20, the Embassy suggested leaking a U.S. contingency plan to evacuate U.S. citizens from Amman in the hopes of deterring the Syrians. (Ibid., POL 23–9 JORDAN)

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## **279. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Jordan<sup>1</sup>**

Washington, September 20, 1970, 2235Z.

154431. 1. The British Ambassador has called urgently to state that his understanding of appeal which King has made to HMG is that UK

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, POL 23–9 JORDAN. Secret; Flash; Exdis. Drafted and approved by Seelye. It was repeated Flash to London.

undertake airstrike against invading Syrian forces.<sup>2</sup> From your reporting we had not repeat not been aware that King had made such request of British nor is it clear that King in his appeal to us for USG assistance<sup>3</sup> had specifically in mind a US airstrike.

2. Please clarify this urgently.

**Rogers**

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<sup>2</sup> Telegram 7568 from London, September 20, 1242Z, reported that the King contacted the British Embassy in Amman to request assistance. (Ibid., Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 619, Country Files, Middle East, Jordan Crisis)

<sup>3</sup> Reported in telegram 4951 from Amman, September 20, 0720Z. (Ibid., RG 59, Central Files 1970-73, POL 23-9 JORDAN)

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## 280. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon<sup>1</sup>

Washington, September 20, 1970, 6:30 p.m.

SUBJECT

The Jordan Situation—6:30 P.M. Sunday, September 20

### *The Military Situation*

After armored engagements last night, Syrian and Jordanian tanks have been fighting again since late morning (Jordan time) in an area apparently about 8 km. inside northern Jordan. According to the Israelis, the Syrians have about 150 tanks and artillery in the area—about 70 tanks in Jordanian territory. There were reports that Jordanian aircraft were used this afternoon. As of now, the status of the fight was not clear; both sides had taken losses, but nightfall may have brought a temporary pause. It is still not known whether the Syrians will limit their action or press ahead to occupy an area in northern Jordan.

In Amman, the army continues mopping up, but it still had not secured the area around the U.S. embassy—a fact that limits U.S. diplomatic activity.<sup>2</sup> Most of our communications from King Hussein come

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-077, Washington Special Actions Group Meetings, WSAG Meeting Middle East 9/20/70. Top Secret.

<sup>2</sup> As reported in telegram 4972 from Amman, September 20, 1700Z. (Ibid., RG 59, Central Files 1970-73, POL 23-9 JORDAN)

through an aide. Ambassador Brown is unable to either assess the King's real state of mind—his aide may have a greater tendency to panic—or by face-to-face contact take maximum advantage of some of the steps taken today to reassure him of U.S. support.

#### *The King's Requests*

Earlier in the day, the King through a messenger asked whether we could help.<sup>3</sup> At that time, he sent a specific request for:

—a statement condemning invasion from Syria;

—a declaration that the intrusion of an outside power into Jordan cannot be tolerated and will necessitate international action.

At the end of the afternoon (6:15 P.M. Amman time), Hussein's aide phoned Ambassador Brown to say that the Syrians were attacking on a broad front and the Jordanians believed their objective was Irbid, Jordan's second largest city located about 20 km. from the Syrian border.<sup>4</sup> The Jordanian air force had attacked but was grounded by nightfall. He said the King requested the USG to take action.

The implication is that perhaps the King is hoping for U.S. (or Israeli) air attacks against the Syrian armor, but that has not been precisely specified. The Jordanians have, however, asked for aerial reconnaissance over the area which Syrian tanks have invaded. Arrangements have been made to pass the results of Israeli reconnaissance.

#### *What the U.S. Has Done Today*

1. The statement requested by the King was issued by Secretary Rogers at mid-day (text sent you earlier)<sup>5</sup>—but without the mention of “international action.”

2. Assistant Secretary Sisco at 1:00 P.M. transmitted the oral note to the Soviet Chargé.<sup>6</sup>

3. A U.S. brigade on maneuvers in Germany has been returned to base and put on full alert. There has been no alert yet of forces at Fort Bragg.

4. The Defense Department has been ordered to accelerate collection of target information through the Israelis and to prepare (a) a plan for U.S. aerial reconnaissance and (b) a plan for U.S. air strikes against Syrian forces in Jordan.

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<sup>3</sup> See footnote 3, Document 279.

<sup>4</sup> As reported in telegram 4970 from Amman, September 20, 1639Z. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 619, Country Files, Middle East, Jordan Crisis)

<sup>5</sup> See footnote 3, Document 275.

<sup>6</sup> See footnote 4, Document 275.

5. The U.S. Command in Europe is prepared to send two U.S. military field hospitals to Jordan under a Red Cross umbrella. The British are also prepared to send a medical team. The order to move, however, will not be given until the Jordanian government can assure adequate security.

*Other Developments*

1. The UAR Foreign Ministry has told Minister Bergus in Cairo that the UAR told President Atassi of Syria it "does not agree with" Syrian intervention. Atassi answered that there is no intervention on the part of Syria. The Ministry official said the UAR wants to end the crisis as soon as possible and not extend it.

2. Libya, Sudan, Yemen, Kuwait and Tunisia have come out in favor of an Arab summit meeting originally proposed by Libya. Hussein has agreed to attend. Jordan has also requested an urgent meeting of the Arab League Council to debate its complaints of armed intervention by Syria.

3. Libya's Qaddafi warned Jordan today that Libya would assist the Fedayeen. Nasser has advised him to hold off flying Libyan forces to Jordan.

4. Three Soviet missile ships entered the Mediterranean from the Black Sea early on 20 September. The addition of these missile ships to the Soviet Mediterranean squadron may be in response to the deployment of additional U.S. forces to the Mediterranean, but the Soviet squadron remains at average strength for this time of year. Soviet warships have thus far not gone beyond non-aggressive operations such as surveillance of U.S. forces in the eastern Mediterranean.

## 281. Minutes of a Washington Special Actions Group Meeting<sup>1</sup>

Washington, September 20, 1970, 7:10–9:15 p.m.

### SUBJECT

Middle East

### PARTICIPANTS

Chairman: Henry A. Kissinger

State—

Joseph Sisco

Alfred Atherton

Talcott Seelye

Defense—

David Packard

Robert Pranger

CIA—

Richard Helms

David Blee

JCS—

Adm. Thomas Moorer

Lt. Gen. John W. Vogt

NSC Staff—

Gen. Alexander Haig

Col. Richard Kennedy

Harold H. Saunders

Jeanne W. Davis

Ronald Ziegler

(for Helms briefing only)

### SUMMARY OF DECISIONS

It was decided:

1. that, once Israeli approval has been received, a carrier plane should fly into Tel Aviv to get their latest intelligence on the situation on the ground and discuss certain operational questions with the Israeli pilots;

2. we should a) convey to the Israelis in New York the Jordanian request for an air strike;<sup>2</sup> b) ask them to confirm the facts and the seriousness of the situation; c) tell them if their intelligence confirms the facts, we would have no objection if they decided to make an air strike, but that they should discuss their findings with us before they undertake the air strike.

Mr. Helms briefed from the attached notes.<sup>3</sup>

Mr. Kissinger: Can we say the King controls Amman if he does not control the refugee camps?

Mr. Helms: Yes, the camps are at some distance and can be isolated.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-114, Washington Special Actions Group, WSAG Minutes (Originals) 1969 and 1970. Top Secret; Sensitive; Nodis. The meeting took place in the White House Situation Room.

<sup>2</sup> See Document 279.

<sup>3</sup> Not attached and not found.

Mr. Seelye: With regard to Ambassador Brown's concern that the Egyptians may be planning to intervene, I think he really meant he was concerned that the Egyptians might be backing off from their support of Hussein.

Mr. Kissinger: How can we say the King controls Amman when the US and Egyptian Embassies are cut off?

Mr. Helms: This relates to the ability to circulate.

Mr. Blee: There is heavy sniper fire.

Mr. Helms: The fighting is not over, but the Jordanian Army is in the town and controls it.

Admiral Moorer: They can enforce a curfew.

Mr. Kissinger: (to Admiral Moorer) What is your military assessment?

Admiral Moorer: It's nip and tuck whether the Jordanian forces in the north can handle the Syrians. Their numbers are about the same. The Syrians have more tanks: 100 in Jordan now and 60 more just inside Syria. Jordan has 100 or 120. Tank for Tank, the Jordanians are superior. They have our tanks and Centurions; the Syrians have Russian T-54s and T-55s, with Russian 100mm guns. The Syrians didn't do too well this morning, losing about 30 tanks. All together Jordan has about 500 tanks and Syria about 700.

General Vogt: Syrian operational readiness rates are low.

Admiral Moorer: Syria uses some of its tanks as fixed artillery.

Mr. Kissinger: How far inside the country are the Syrian tanks?

General Vogt: 15 to 18 miles.

Mr. Kissinger: How many tanks did the Jordanians lose?

General Vogt: We don't know. The Israelis think the Syrians are heading for Irbid.

Mr. Kissinger: Aren't the Iraqis there?

Mr. Helms: The Iraqis are near Mafraq.

Admiral Moorer: We have authority to send a carrier plane into Tel Aviv to look at the latest Israeli recce pictures. We're just waiting for the Military Attaché in Tel Aviv to clear this with the Israelis.

Mr. Packard: Does the carrier have the necessary processing equipment for pictures?

Admiral Moorer: I don't know; I'll check.

General Vogt: The balance is about equal in numbers. The Jordanians are superior in performance. This morning's battle was a decisive defeat for the Syrians.

Mr. Kissinger: It can't have been a defeat; they came back.

Mr. Sisco: (to Vogt) What do you think will happen tomorrow morning?

General Vogt: Fighting will resume, depending on how many tanks were knocked out.

Admiral Moorer: There are two possibilities: either the Syrians withdraw or the battle is resumed.

Mr. Packard: Either the Syrians will win or the Jordanians will win.

Admiral Moorer: Not necessarily.

Mr. Kissinger: (to Admiral Moorer) What is your judgment as to the outcome if the fighting resumes with the present forces?

Admiral Moorer: I think it is highly likely the Jordanians will inflict casualties of the order that they did today.

Mr. Kissinger: If the Syrians commit new forces, then what?

Admiral Moorer: The Jordanians are having some problems getting ammunition for their tanks. It's primarily a problem of distribution; they have the ammo.

Mr. Kissinger: Don't the Syrians have the same problem?

Admiral Moorer: They don't have as far to go.

Mr. Sisco: Do the Jordanians have some tanks in reserve?

General Vogt: Yes, they have a total of 3 brigades. One brigade is involved now.

Mr. Kissinger: If Syria wins, is the road open to Amman?

Admiral Moorer: No, the Jordanians hold Zarqa.

(Mr. Kissinger left the room)

Admiral Moorer: The Syrians have turned west. They will try to take Irbid.

General Vogt: The Israelis will be nervous if they get close to their border.

Mr. Seelye: The Israelis will shell Irbid.

Admiral Moorer: The Israelis could cream the Syrians.

Mr. Blee: Just with aircraft alone.

Admiral Moorer: They've been in the territory before.

(Mr. Kissinger returned.)

Mr. Sisco: I think we should look at the assumption we have been making that the Israelis may jump into this fast. They don't seem at all anxious.

Admiral Moorer: It depends on how much the action moves toward their border.

Mr. Packard: They won't jump in until they think Hussein is losing.

Mr. Sisco: The British Ambassador in Amman has said that the King desires either UK, US or Israeli intervention. Ambassador Freeman has called me. I told him we would be having this meeting and



would discuss this, and would be in touch with him.<sup>4</sup> There have been several telegrams reporting that Zaid Rifai is asking us to “do something.”<sup>5</sup> The Jordanian Cabinet is meeting now, and we will know later precisely what they want.

Mr. Kissinger: What diplomatic steps have we taken?

Mr. Sisco: In addition to the Secretary’s public statement at 1:00 p.m. we have called the Russians in and delivered a verbal note, asking them to approach the Syrians to convince them of the danger of their course and tell them to desist, pointing out the “serious consequences” in a broadening of the conflict.

Mr. Helms: Did you tell them to get their guys in hand or else?

Mr. Sisco: It was not friendly but not that categorical. We have informed the British and French of what we did. The French want to try to organize a four-power statement. Tactically, I think we should tell the French that we have put out a statement. We would be agreeable to a four-power statement along the lines of our statement. If the French want to raise the idea with the Russians, that is okay. The only kind of statement we would approve, however, would be along the lines of ours—no call for a cease fire, no “even-handedness.” This is better than giving them the back of our hand, which they deserve.

Mr. Helms: Did we ask the Russians to get Damascus to withdraw?

Mr. Sisco: Precisely.

Mr. Kissinger: What about the airborne brigade in Europe?

Admiral Moorer: We have asked them about their reaction time—when they can get back from the training area and when they can be ready. They have been ordered to prepare one battalion for airdrop. State’s problem now is to pacify our Ambassador in Germany. He is worried about what to tell the Germans.

Mr. Kissinger: Tell them we are pursuing Ostpolitik.

Mr. Sisco: Tell them this is a precautionary move. We may have to evacuate Americans from Amman; possibly even a couple of German hostages.

Mr. Kissinger: And we’ll do nothing about the 82nd Airborne until we are further down the road.

Admiral Moorer: There’s still 22 hours. You recall we decided to let the European brigade go to ten hours alert time by letting them go to the training area. We are bringing them back now to a four-hour time. That’s not transportation, but the time it takes to get them assembled.

General Vogt: And to get their parachutes rigged.

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<sup>4</sup> See Document 288.

<sup>5</sup> See footnote 3, Document 270.

Mr. Kissinger: How about target collection?

Admiral Moorer: We have asked for and received authority to send an airplane from the carrier to Tel Aviv to pick up their latest intelligence and discuss it with them. We're awaiting confirmation from our DATT in Tel Aviv that the plane can go in. We hope to go in and out tonight under cover of darkness.

Mr. Kissinger: We need up to date intelligence for the carrier?

Admiral Moorer: Yes, they need operational information—entry routes, IFF, etc.

Mr. Kissinger: Is that necessary?

Mr. Helms: No question about it. [1 line not declassified]

Admiral Moorer: We need intelligence more than we need contingency plans.

Mr. Kissinger: I agree, we don't want to bomb Jordanian tanks.

Mr. Sisco: I'm concerned over the impact of this on the Israelis. The Israelis want us to intervene. If they see we're this interested, they may think we are going to go ahead and they don't have to do anything. If we want to nudge them, this doesn't help. Is there no other way to get the intelligence? I understand the need, and I'm not worried about it's becoming known. I am worried about the Israelis getting the idea we are going in.

Mr. Kissinger: There is a difference between their moving automatically, with its advantages and disadvantages, and our telling them to move. If they think we are going to move, they may wait. If not, they may move. I'm not really sure the Israelis would mind it if Hussein should topple. They would have no more West Bank problem.

Admiral Moorer: I thought there was a tacit understanding between Israel and the King.

Mr. Helms: [1 line not declassified]

Mr. Sisco: There have been some indications of such, but they have never been confirmed.

Mr. Helms: [1 line not declassified]

Mr. Packard: It would make a four-hour difference in our time of movement if we have to get the recce ourselves. Also, we would need overflight approval.

Mr. Sisco: Let's take the chance if there is no other alternative.

Mr. Kissinger: We may reach a point about this time tomorrow when we have to decide who goes. If we want to keep up the credibility of our planning we ought to do it.

Mr. Sisco: OK. Do it tonight.

Mr. Kissinger: OK, let's go ahead.

Admiral Moorer: We have already directed the ship and they will go as soon as they get the Israeli okay. Our DATT will notify the carrier directly when he has the approval and the plane will take off.

General Vogt: It's only a 30-minute flight.

Mr. Kissinger: What about medical assistance?

Admiral Moorer: The ICRC is making some unreasonable demands. They want us to repaint all the aircraft and remove the US labels from the surgical equipment. It would take 20 days to do this. Also, we have no assurance from the Jordanians that the airfield will be secure. We don't want to paint the aircraft; we may have to use them for evacuation or some other purpose. It's easier for the British—they have only 2 or 3 aircraft; we have 18. And their aircraft are not part of their regular forces.

Mr. Sisco: How would the British aircraft get there?

General Vogt: They're in London now. They would need overflight rights.

Mr. Kissinger: How would we bring the European brigade in?

General Vogt: Hopefully, over Austria.

Mr. Kissinger: Do we have to get clearance? Can't we just fly over and then apologize? Didn't we do that in 1958?

General Vogt: Yes, and they've never let us forget it.

Mr. Kissinger: They won't let us fly over their country with troop-carrying planes.

Gen. Vogt: We might link it to the hospital equipment. We could say that the situation was deteriorating and it was necessary to provide support for this humanitarian effort.

Mr. Kissinger: How long would it take if they had to go the long way around?

Gen. Vogt: Another day. They would have to stop to refuel.

Mr. Kissinger: And everyone would know about it.

Gen. Vogt: Yes, they would have to land in several countries. Even our hospital planes would have to go across Austria and land in Athens.

Mr. Sisco: Have we got clearance from Austria for our hospital planes?

Gen. Vogt: Yes, we have an unofficial response but no official response yet.

Adm. Moorer: If there were an emergency, we should just go.

Mr. Kissinger: Why don't you talk about the moves we might have to make tomorrow.

(Mr. Kissinger left the room.)<sup>6</sup>

Mr. Sisco: I'm still concerned about our people going in in uniform. I know the problem, the Geneva Convention, etc. But a uniform just increases the probability of someone taking a shot at them, even with a Red Cross armband, particularly when the British are going in in civilian clothes. In the present circumstances, an American uniform would be a lightning rod.

Mr. Packard: They will not be in a US uniform. They will be in fatigues with no identification. Most of the time they will be in medical clothes.

Gen. Vogt: They will wear Red Cross armbands and carry no outside identification or rank insignia.

Mr. Seelye: (to Sisco) That is a new development. It makes it more manageable.

Mr. Sisco: Yes, that's better.

Mr. Packard: They will carry their identification and their dog tags in their pocket; nothing outside. I've discussed this with Alex Johnson and Secretary Laird. There will be some military in uniform with the planes, of course.

Mr. Sisco: Okay.

Adm. Moorer: If the Red Cross demands are so unreasonable that we can't comply, then what?

Mr. Sisco: What are their demands?

Mr. Seelye: That all aircraft be painted white; all military in civilian clothes and carrying Red Cross identification; all markings on medical equipment to be obliterated. Alex Johnson has sent them a message saying these are obviously unreasonable. He has asked General Burchinal to work it out with the Red Cross.

Gen. Vogt: We have called Burchinal and told him to work it out.

Adm. Moorer: This is all academic without Jordanian assurance about the airfields.

Mr. Packard: If the Red Cross insists on civilian clothes, we can do it. The problem is painting the aircraft.

Mr. Sisco: Just paint a big red cross on the side.

Gen. Vogt: We will do that.

Mr. Packard: Burchinal won't bring the aircraft in unless the airport is secure.

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<sup>6</sup> The President's Daily Diary indicates that Kissinger met alone with President Nixon at 7:55 p.m. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Central Files)

Adm. Moorer: Our Ambassador will have to get assurances from the King.

Mr. Seelye: We have sent a cable asking him to get those assurances.<sup>7</sup>

(The group was summoned to the President's office at 7:50 and returned at 8:35, without Mr. Kissinger.)<sup>8</sup>

Mr. Sisco: I have talked to Secretary Rogers about the message from the British passing a message from the Jordanians asking for an air strike. I suggest we go to the Israelis in New York immediately, and pass the message we have received. We should tell them that, at the moment, we are in no position to advise them since we don't know the situation on the ground. We should ask them to give us their judgment on the situation and on the necessity for this kind of action.

Mr. Packard: I think that's the best step.

Mr. Sisco: We should ask them to consult with us as soon as they have the facts. Israel won't make an air strike without our blessing.

Mr. Atherton: Israel isn't itching to get in this.

Mr. Packard: As an alternative, we could encourage them to move. Sisco's course could be the first step.

Mr. Sisco: We wouldn't be saying "don't do it." I think it would be fairly obvious.

Mr. Helms: From the Golan Heights the Israelis have an easy run to cut off the area. Would the Syrians be so hell-bent to put tanks into Jordan?

Mr. Sisco: Where is the next Jordanian strong point? If Syria takes Irbid, what next?

Mr. Seelye: Possibly Mafraq.

Adm. Moorer: I think it is significant that they turned west.

Mr. Seelye: I think their primary objective is to control Irbid and the area in the north. This area has historical connections with Syria.

Mr. Sisco: We also have a message suggesting an approach to the Security Council. We can say we will give them our full support politically.

(Mr. Kissinger returned.)

Mr. Sisco: (to Kissinger) Regarding the British message, I have recommended that we call Rabin and tell him what we think the situation is on the ground. We should convey the Jordanian request for an

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<sup>7</sup> Telegram 154418 to Amman, September 20, 1751Z. (Ibid., NSC Files, Box 619, Country Files, Middle East, Jordan Crisis)

<sup>8</sup> The President's Daily Diary indicates President Nixon met with the rest of the WSAG members at 8 p.m. The WSAG members left the President at 8:40 p.m., but Kissinger stayed until 9:07 p.m. (Ibid., White House Central Files)

air strike; say we can't advise them now because we don't know the situation on the ground. Say we hope they will look at the situation, make a judgment as to its seriousness, and if they find it serious, we could (a) say we would have no objection if they saw fit to mount an air strike, or (b) say that, after they have surveyed the situation, come back to us with their judgment and we will consult as to the action to be taken.

Mr. Kissinger: We must assume the information is correct. Why would the King say the Syrians are in Irbid if they aren't?

Mr. Sisco: We could tell the Israelis we have no reason to doubt the information and ask them to confirm. I want the Israelis to check this out. We have many people in Amman under great tension. Zaid Rifai has passed us some very alarming things from time to time, and I don't know how good his judgment is under fire.

Adm. Moorer: All our information from the north has been second-hand. Confirmation would be highly desirable. We know the Israelis are up to date.

Mr. Kissinger: So we would pass the message to the Israelis; say we have no further information, and can they confirm.

Mr. Sisco: We would pass on the request, saying we want their judgment of the facts and of how serious the situation is. Then either say, after you have confirmed the facts, you and we should discuss the situation; or, say we have no objection if you want to go ahead with the strike.

Mr. Kissinger: So we have two choices: (1) ask the Israelis to come back to us after they have confirmed the facts and adjudged their seriousness; or (2) tell them that if they confirm that the facts are as they have been described, we will understand if they feel they should act independently.

Mr. Sisco: I prefer the first course. This is an extremely important step for the King from a political point of view. Israel should take this step only if it is absolutely necessary.

Mr. Saunders: Should we ask if they have an alternate way of frightening the Syrians short of an air attack?

Mr. Sisco: There may be a way.

Mr. Packard: But the situation is developing so much faster than we thought it would.

Mr. Kissinger: A half-hour ago we thought nothing would happen for six hours or so.

Mr. Helms: Of course we don't know the time frame of these developments.

Adm. Moorer: It may be that the intelligence is just catching up with the clock.

Mr. Helms: I think we should go with the first course. We can afford to wait for an independent appraisal. This is an extremely important step in every way.

Mr. Sisco: (to Kissinger) Let's you and I go call Rabin.<sup>9</sup>

Mr. Kissinger: The President's inclination is to make sure that the Syrians get stopped.

Mr. Sisco: Course 1 does not preclude Course 2.

Mr. Kissinger: [1 line not declassified]

Mr. Helms: [1 line not declassified]

Mr. Kissinger: [1 line not declassified]

Mr. Helms: [1 line not declassified]

Mr. Sisco: We will tell them to run a flight at dawn, although they probably will do it anyhow.

Mr. Kissinger: We might combine the two approaches. We could say "if your intelligence confirms this information and its seriousness, we would have no objection if you should decide to make an air strike. But discuss your intelligence with us before you undertake the strike."

Mr. Seelye: Should we do this before the King actually asks for it? We haven't had any request yet.

Mr. Kissinger: We will meet again at 8:30 tomorrow morning.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> See Document 283.

<sup>10</sup> Because of the fast-moving crisis, the WSAG met at midnight September 20; see Document 290. The National Security Council met the morning of September 21; see Document 299.

**282. Telegram From the Embassy in Jordan to the Department of State<sup>1</sup>**

Amman, September 20, 1970, 2355Z.

4984. Dept pass Flash info London Paris. Subject: Syrian Threat and Security Council Meeting. Ref: (A) State 154431; (B) State 154415; (C) State 154413; (D) Amman 4983.<sup>2</sup>

1. I have just finished talking to Rifai on telephone. I had ref (A) in hand. I asked him specifically if GOJ was requesting airstrike of British. He replied "not in those exact words." What he thought King had meant when he discussed matter with British Amb was that GOJ wanted to explore this possibility with UK. We, of course, in this Embassy had not known before that such a request had been made of British. We are not in touch with British Embassy. Rifai did not ask me on phone at this time for US airstrike. What he wants to know is what sort of assistance we can give him but it is evident from what he has said before that some sort of airstrike is what Jordanians are hoping for if situation gets out of hand.

2. He then told me that situation was considerably worsened. The Syrians are now in Irbid. Syrians columns are heading south; the King thinks they are heading for Amman.

3. I said that I wanted to read to him the Secretary's statement (ref (B)) to show the US condemnation of Syria's action. He said that the King was familiar with statement and appreciates it. I then gave him rundown of AsstSec Sisco's statement to the Soviet Chargé. (State 154417).<sup>3</sup> He had not known of this and was very appreciative.

4. He expressed the hope that we could continue to put pressure on the Soviets and would make *démarches* to any other country we could which has some influence with Syria. I then told him that we did not believe it would be wise to schedule a Security Council meeting on this matter and that it would be better to await result of our *démarches* (ref (B)). I said I thought the SC meeting might only lead to a propaganda battle.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970-73, POL 23-9 JORDAN. Secret; Flash; Exdis. It was repeated to Tel Aviv (Flash) and to USUN.

<sup>2</sup> Telegrams 154413 and 154431 are Documents 276 and 279, respectively. Telegram 154415 to Amman, September 20, transmitted the text of Secretary Rogers's public statement. In telegram 4983 from Amman, September 20, Ambassador Brown reported that he had received a letter from Hussein requesting four-power assistance to Jordan. (Both in National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970-73, POL 23-9 JORDAN) Regarding Rogers's statement, see footnote 4, Document 275.

<sup>3</sup> See footnote 2, Document 276.



5. He said that the situation has changed since their earlier considerations of what to do in the SC. Now that the Syrians are in Irbid, something must be done. The King has already acted on this and has sent me a letter (ref (D)) which is to be delivered tonight to one of the American houses with which the Jordanians and the Embassy are in touch. (Now delivered, see septel).<sup>4</sup> He said in view of the King's decision there was no turning back from a Security Council meeting.

**Brown**

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<sup>4</sup> See Document 284.

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**283. Transcript of a Telephone Conversation Among the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger), the Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs (Sisco), and the Israeli Ambassador (Rabin)<sup>1</sup>**

September 20, 1970, 10:10 p.m.

K: Mr. Ambassador, I have Joe Sisco here too. I just wanted to pass on some information to you. We have just got a request from the Jordanians via the British which requests an Israeli air strike on Syrian troops which allegedly have taken Irbid and are heading south and massing.<sup>2</sup>

R: I understand what was requested. I understand against whom. I didn't understand which area.

K: They have taken the town in the area of Irbid and there are Syrian troops massing there and heading south.

R: Heading south of Irbid?

K: Yes this is the request we want to pass on to you. We have no independent information of our own and we wanted to ask you whether it would be possible for you on an urgent basis to undertake some reconnaissance to confirm this and then just get in touch with us.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, Kissinger Telephone Conversations, Box 30, Chronological Files. No classification marking. Kissinger and Sisco were in Washington; Rabin was in New York with Prime Minister Meir.

<sup>2</sup> See Document 279.

R: Fine. I can assess when it comes to the reconnaissance. I don't see any problem. I just got a cable from our people talking about 200 Syrian tanks in the area of Irbid. The main thrust was against Irbid about 8 hours ago. According to what I got here they haven't yet reached Irbid but they were heading towards Irbid. That is what I got from Israel I think at about 4:00 o'clock there. I understand exactly what you ask us.

K: And could you do it on the most urgent basis?

R: First I will go to the Prime Minister here. She leaves tonight.

Sisco: When will she be back in Israel?

R: I think it will be evening there tomorrow.

Sisco: You will bear in mind that we got this from the British because our Embassy was out of touch with the King so the King asked the British to pass the request to you and the British in turn have asked us to pass the request to you. You ought to know another thing, namely that this request according to the British came first this morning to them and then it was reconfirmed again at 1830 Jordan time this evening.

R: Do you look favorably to this request? What is your position?

S: I think we want to exchange views with you on this as soon as you are able to give us a picture of how serious you think the situation is there.

R: It looks to be quite serious after I got the cable about 200 tanks and forces—quite a sizable force—if it is true and I sent a cable back and asked for more information, but now I will send another one. But I am sure that the first question that the Prime Minister will ask me . . . that the Government will ask.

(A copy of a cable was brought into Mr. Kissinger's office.)<sup>3</sup>

S: Wait a minute—we have just got something else.

K: You had better call us back in 10 minutes. Can you do that?

R: Yes.

S: Because we have a further message here that requires a further exchange with you.

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<sup>3</sup> Presumably telegram 4988, Document 284.

284. Telegram From the Embassy in Jordan to the Department of State<sup>1</sup>

Amman, September 21, 1970, 0124Z.

4988. Dept pass info Flash London. (Treat as Nodis)

1. The King phoned me at three A.M. He said that he wanted me to pass the following most urgent message directly to the President. Message follows:

2. "Situation deteriorating dangerously following Syrian massive invasion. Northern forces disjointed. Irbid occupied. This having disastrous effect on tired troops in the capital and surroundings. After continuous action and shortage supplies Military Governor and Commander in Chief advise I request immediate physical intervention both air and land as per the authorization of government to safeguard sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of Jordan. Immediate air strikes on invading forces from any quarter plus air cover are imperative. Wish earliest word on length of time it may require your forces to land when requested which might be very soon."

3. King said he unable to contact British and asked us to get this message to British Government most urgently.

**Brown**

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970-73, POL JORDAN-US. Secret; Flash; Nodis. It was received at 9:37 p.m. and then passed to the White House.

**285. Transcript of a Telephone Conversation Among the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger), Secretary of State Rogers, and the Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs (Sisco)<sup>1</sup>**

Washington, September 20, 1970, 10:10 p.m.

K: We have a message here Joe should read to you.<sup>2</sup> We were talking to Rabin when that message came in and we told him we would talk to him shortly.<sup>3</sup>

S: Here is what came in Mr. Secretary, from the King at 3:00. "Situation deteriorating dangerously following Syrian massive invasion. Northern forces disbanded. [omission in the original—Irbid] occupied. Having disastrous effect. . . . I request immediate intervention, both air and land to safeguard independence of Jordan. Immediate airstrike from any quarter plus air cover are imperative. . . ." What I am not clear from this is whether he is asking for British intervention or not.

R: Intervention by us or Israel? By anybody?

S: It obviously leaves both options open, in my judgment.

K: The way I read it air strikes from any quarter and the ground forces from us.

S: And they would also like British intervention. In light of this my own feeling would be that we now amend what we were going to tell Rabin and obviously Henry will have to check this with the President. (1) Give Israelis essence of the information in this message and go beyond merely a request for reconnaissance but to say to them that we would look favorably if they took this action. In fact, as we were talking and this message came in Rabin said there was no difficulty, but the first question the Israelis would ask is would the Americans agree we should do this. And we fenced, but this is an understandable question on their part.

R: My view is that we should favor it because if the King goes down the drain then the GD thing is a total mess. This way it will be a mess, but if they can save the King there is some advantage.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, Kissinger Telephone Conversations, Box 30, Chronological Files. No classification marking. As implied in the first paragraph, this call probably took place at 10:20 p.m. Kissinger and Sisco were at the White House and Rogers was either at the State Department or at his home.

<sup>2</sup> Document 284.

<sup>3</sup> See Document 283.

S: One would hope that whatever the Israelis did is sufficient.

R: I think the question of whether we should land troops is different. As long as we are sure the King is requesting Israeli air support.

S: Well Mr. Secretary here is a previous message—let me read it so you will feel completely confident. (Read the British message)<sup>4</sup> So the request to Israel for the air strike precedes this second one.

R: We have a request to the British and to us both so there is no doubt about it.

K: And we were not giving Rabin any satisfaction. In fact, Joe was doing the talking when at the precise moment the other message came in. The fact seems to me to be that if there isn't an air strike the whole thing may come apart. I don't think we have any choice.

R: No, I don't think we have any choice. What it amounts to is Israel is just doing it now at the right time.

S: Bear in mind that the Russians are behind the Syrians.

R: I don't think we have any choice. Let's go ahead.

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<sup>4</sup> In telegram 7568 from London, September 20, 1242Z, the Embassy reported that King Hussein contacted the British Embassy in Amman asking for assistance "in coping with large Syrian armored force, even from Israelis." (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 619, Country Files, Middle East, Jordan Crisis) See also Document 279.

**286. Transcript of a Telephone Conversation Between President Nixon and the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)<sup>1</sup>**

Washington, undated.

K: Mr. President, I wanted to bring you up to date on the number of things that have developed since I last spoke to you.<sup>2</sup> First of all, Bill decided to put out the statement in his own name which was very good—it made it tougher.<sup>3</sup>

P: Um-hm. A statement—what?

K: First, we sent a note to the Russians which was very tough. I am sending the text over to you.<sup>4</sup>

P: Was that public?

K: No, that is private.

P: And what did Bill do?

K: Bill, in his own name, said we have had information that Syrian tanks have invaded Jordan; that the Jordanian Army is resisting—something to that effect.

P: Yes.

K: That the broadening of the conflict will have serious consequences—we demand immediate withdrawal of these forces and this is an intolerable act. It was a very strong statement.

P: Well, that is probably the right level for it to come from at this point.

K: Absolutely, it is premature for you.

P: It also gets State into the business, too.

K: And it is the first time he has engaged his own prestige which will affect his subsequent actions.

P: Yes. Yes. That is good. That is good.

K: The second thing is I don't know whether I have said this to you but they have come back in. They withdrew and now they are back in with tanks. The King has appealed to us again for immediate

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, Kissinger Telephone Conversations, Box 30, Chronological Files. No classification marking.

<sup>2</sup> The President's Daily Diary indicates Kissinger last spoke with President Nixon in the Oval Office between 8:40 p.m. and 9:07 p.m. (Ibid., White House Central Files) No other record of that conversation has been found.

<sup>3</sup> See footnote 3, Document 275.

<sup>4</sup> See footnote 2, Document 276.

help but it is night there now. He has also asked us for reconnaissance.  
[4 lines not declassified]

P: Okay.

K: We have put that unit in Germany on alert. It was on near alert anyway, and I just wanted to warn you that if this thing keeps up within the next 24 hours I would guess by tomorrow morning we may reach the decision point as between U.S. and Israeli action—that is if the King loses the tank battle. And there is nothing we can do now, except the things we are doing which are all pretty strong.

P: Well, what is the—well, on that contingency though, we have a choice there; we are prepared for our air action; is that right?

K: We are prepared for our air action, Mr. President. We can run two hundred sorties a day from the carriers. The land-based planes—we have had a full study made that looks pretty grim. The only fields we could use are in Turkey and the Turks almost certainly won't give us permission. The only other fields would be in Greece or Crete and for that we would have to use air refueling and it would take us 8 days to get them ready.

P: And that won't work.

K: But the third carrier is on the way and within 8 days that can add to it and that would increase it by . . .

P: What about the plan based on the carriers?

K: That is in SHAPE.

P: In SHAPE—and they could really do them in good?

K: Well, they could do a good job on them. Their handicap is that if that fails they can't follow it up with very much unless we want to get ground forces fighting the Syrians which is a rough decision to make.

P: Which we don't want to do, but which the Israelis would be delighted to do.

K: Right. The Israelis can fly 700 sorties a day, but we are in a position to do 200 sorties and we could do quite a job on them.

P: Well, has the King indicated that he would like the Israelis to come in?

K: The King at an earlier stage had asked the Israelis whether they would be willing to come in if he asked for it. That was a month ago. It was during the last crisis. Sisco thinks that he would if things got to that point.

P: Well, the difficulty there, Henry, though is that while that may cool the immediate situation, it certainly puts the other Arab countries (and not just Nasser) unjustly have to line up with Syria in that case, don't they?

K: That's right. On the other hand, if we come in, there are two problems from that point of view. There are two advantages to our coming in—the one you gave and the one that the Russians are less likely to take us on than the Israelis. That is the advantage of our going in. The advantage of the Israelis going in is that they can follow it up and they can escalate it more easily than we.

P: Oh yes, there is no question that the Israelis going in is good, due to the fact that they not only have the air but they have got a helluva good ground punch, they could just put them in there and clean them out.

K: That's right. They have more air and more ground and therefore they might deter a purely Arab response more easily than we; and, secondly, hated as they are, they are at least recognized to have a local interest in the thing while we, coming from thousands of miles away fighting the Syrians, have a serious problem and the Arabs might unite against us too. We would be the Imperialists coming in.

P: Well, they are more likely to reunite against the Israelis, than us though.

K: The hatred of the Israelis is undoubtedly greater.

P: That's what I mean. Of course, the point is that the Israelis start with an enormous disadvantage in that respect. That is the thing I am concerned about.

K: That's true.

P: And so—

K: But they decouple us a little bit while if we are in—it's a strong argument on either side. The problem we have is if we don't succeed and then the Israelis come in, that's the worst of everything.

P: And of course the other side is if we succeed it has considerable impact—cooling the whole situation and acting forcibly in a critical area. It is such a—frankly a surprise too—and the message to the Russians is a helluva lot more than if we come in than if the Israelis—

K: If we could do it with two or three strikes or two or three days' operations, I would favor our doing it. If it is a two-week sort of thing and if it is not decisive—

P: What is Sisco's reaction at this moment on this point?

K: Sisco prefers the Israelis. I am slightly more on your side on this than Sisco's.

P: What does Bill say?

K: The last time I talked to him he preferred the Israelis,<sup>5</sup> but in the meantime you had talked to him.

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<sup>5</sup> See Document 285.



P: Well, I didn't get into anything except that we didn't want the Israelis. It is so easy to fall into that—to have them go in and they don't need any encouragement. They'd love to go in for other reasons.

K: You are absolutely right. And the Israelis would have the advantage that it is damned hard to get them out once they are in.

P: That's right. They would just occupy some more territory, wouldn't they?

K: Well, whether they do it vis-à-vis Syria, I'm not so sure.

P: Well, in any event, the Syrians would fear it.

K: The Syrians would fear it. Of course, there's a third problem that we may not have any choice about—I don't think the Israelis would hold still for very long if the Syrians seem to be winning. They seem already to have mobilized a bit, which is a good deterrent.

P: Yeah.

K: Incidentally, we picked up an intelligence report this morning—not very reliable—but interesting that the Russians gave the Syrians a *carte blanche* which proves when you told me Friday night they may be playing us, your instinct about the Russians is usually remarkable.<sup>6</sup>

P: In other words, that they gave you a note that they were . . . well, this note that they gave us over the weekend is . . .<sup>7</sup>

K: Just to keep us quiet.

P: To keep us quiet and threatened us and so forth. In the meantime, they say, "Stir it up, boys; give them trouble; give them trouble. Face them down." That's what they are going to do. Well, we may have to come to the Israelis, but I just want to be sure that at this point—that's why I've been so strong on it—we don't leave any impression we might come to them or they'll come in precipitately. We must not do it. It's got to be a very calculated thing.

K: No, it was absolutely right that we don't get anywhere near the situation where we seem to be egging on the Israelis, because they don't need any encouragement, and it should be at the . . .

P: As far as we are concerned, still the justification is we still have this refugee thing, haven't we, hanging over us.

K: Yeah, but that's tough to work against the Syrians.

P: That's right; that's right.

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<sup>6</sup> The President's Daily Diary indicates that Nixon spoke with Kissinger by phone on Friday, September 18, between 9:34 and 9:41 p.m. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Central Files) No other record of this conversation has been found.

<sup>7</sup> See Document 266. A copy of the note is in the National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-077, Washington Special Actions Group Meetings, WSAG Meeting Middle East 9/20/70.

K: But that's another that can work both ways, if we go in and then they get killed. And then I don't know what the Congressional reaction would be if we got involved. If we did it in a two or three-day operation, I think we'll be all right—or even a week.

P: How do we justify two or three days? Suppose we were to call the Congress in and say we are doing it for one purpose—to save Jordan?

K: To save Jordan and to prevent a general Mid-East war. But it's tougher if we do it.

P: Yeah.

K: And curiously enough, we might get more support if the Israelis do it. My major worry is if it doesn't work and another little country . . . It will work if we are determined enough, but these Syrians are the craziest of the lot.

P: Yeah, they might fight a long time. Well, when we are quite confident it will work with the Israelis . . .

K: Nobody has any question about that.

P: Because they are there.

K: Well, and they've beat them to a pulp once before and they haven't improved that much. Of course, it may still be that the Jordanian armor can defeat the Syrians. The original estimate of CIA was that the King could handle the Syrians and the Fedayeen simultaneously.<sup>8</sup> The situation in Amman from the health point of view is very bad; many people killed and there seems to be a cholera epidemic.

P: Yeah, pretty miserable.

K: So, it's a miserable situation. It is night now, so nothing is going to be happening now for another 12 hours anyway. There isn't any decision needed. I only took the liberty of calling you to alert you that this may be coming up.

P: Yeah. Well, now the point is, you see, the Rogers' public statement—of course, the only public statement that I have made related to hostages only—his public statement relates to Syria intervening in Jordan.

K: That's right.

P: Well, that puts it right to us. If they do it, either we have to do something—we cannot let the Syrians get away with this—or we've got to support the Israelis in doing something. We cannot make a public statement and not back it up.

K: Right, but the . . .

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<sup>8</sup> Not further identified.

P: Do Rogers, Sisco and all those people understand that? They have put themselves out where we now have to back this up.

K: I didn't ask Rogers to make that statement. What we had recommended to them was just to send the note. But I have to say in their defense that the acts we undertook last week pretty much put us in that posture where it would have been hard not to do something.

P: Well, we . . . The position is absolutely correct.

K: Oh, I don't think they will give you any trouble.

P: The question is—it isn't a question of that—having taken the position, we must act one way or the other; either the Israelis or ourselves. That's the way it looks.

K: I agree with you.

P: It's too bad we don't have more land bases. Our action would have to be quick and surgical.

K: Well, our action would have to be overwhelming.

P: Yes, that's right.

K: We can't have another even three-months' war—trouble against these God-damned Syrians.

P: No; that's right. Okay.

K: Right, Mr. President.

P: Good-bye.

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**287. Transcript of a Telephone Conversation Between the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) and the Israeli Ambassador (Rabin)<sup>1</sup>**

September 20, 1970, 10:35 p.m.

K: We have had another message<sup>2</sup> and another conversation with the President.<sup>3</sup> I will first give you the essence of the message and then the request of the President. Sisco and Haig are on the line. This is the message from our Ambassador who says he had a phone call from the King at 3:00 a.m. local time pointing out that the situation was

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, Kissinger Telephone Conversations, Box 30, Chronological Files. No classification marking. Kissinger was in Washington and Rabin was in New York.

<sup>2</sup> Document 284.

<sup>3</sup> See Document 286.

deteriorating dangerously. A massive invasion. The northern forces were disbanded. Irbid occupied. That is the information we have from the King. This was having a disastrous effect on the troops in the capital. He therefore requests immediate physical intervention, both air and land. Especially he wants immediate air strikes on invading forces from any quarters. In light of your information we have discussed with the Secretary of State<sup>4</sup> and the President and we can now assure you under these circumstances we would look favorably on your actions and the President has asked me to tell you if you undertake such action we would of course make good any materiel problems that might arise as a result of these actions and we are cognizant of the fact we would have to hold the situation under control vis-à-vis the Soviets.

R: I would like to make it clear that the President looks at it favorably.

K: That is correct.

R: Second, if there would be a question of materiel you would find ways to compensate what would be the outcome.

K: We promise that.

R: Third, if there would be certain problems with the Soviets we can rely on you.

K: That is exactly correct and we are taking some immediate precautionary measures to put ourselves into this position.

R: Give me two or three minutes and I will bring it to Prime Minister Meir and I will discuss it with her and be in a position to tell you.

K: And you will call me at the White House board. Just a second—I would like to talk to my associates who are on the phone to make sure I don't leave anything out, but this has been discussed with the Secretary of State and has the personal endorsement of the President. Hold on. (Discusses with people in room.) We will call the British and inform them also, Mr. Ambassador. We will inform the British of this conversation.

R: If you find it necessary to inform the British it is up to you, but once the decision will be taken by us I think it is only between you and us.

K: We will not tell them of your decision, we will tell them of our discussions with you.

R: Since the last I had an opportunity to talk to the Prime Minister—when it comes to the reconnaissance there is no problem. I can't say for the time being anything about the second part.

K: You will call us back about that?

R: Yes.

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<sup>4</sup> See Document 285.

**288. Transcript of a Telephone Conversation Among the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger), the Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs (Sisco), and the British Ambassador (Freeman)<sup>1</sup>**

Washington, September 20, 1970, 10:45 p.m.

K: We have some news for you which confirms all you passed to us earlier. We had a message from Amman (reads message).<sup>2</sup> Passing on request of King Hussein. Asked us to pass it on to the British.

F: Which I think you have done.

K: We are doing it now. We have passed this message in substance to the Israeli Ambassador and he said he would take it under advisement.<sup>3</sup> That is where the matter stands now.

F: Quite. Now I will pass that message. You are not thinking of ringing up Greenhill immediately.

K: I would be glad to.

S: We have flashed it to London and we could have our people there in the Embassy take a copy right over.

F: That would be helpful. I think they would like to see the text.

K: Joe, do you know how many British nationals in Jordan?

F: I think the figure is 160 unless there has been some change in the last few days.

K: Well we will be in close touch with you and keep you informed of any information that we might get.

F: You haven't yet got any information about how you are going to react to this?

K: No.

F: Are you considering this a matter of urgency? You have had this formidable request addressed to you and the next question is what are you going to answer.

K: We have not had a formal request to land troops. We have not made any decisions about how we will respond for ourselves.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, Kissinger Telephone Conversations, Box 30, Chronological Files. No classification marking.

<sup>2</sup> Document 284.

<sup>3</sup> See Document 287. In telegram 154448 to Amman, September 21, 0556Z, the Department instructed the Embassy to inform Hussein that his message was passed to the British and discussed with the Israelis. The Department also requested that Hussein keep the U.S. Government informed regarding all developments on the ground. (Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Files, Box 172, Geopolitical File, Jordan Crisis, Selected Exchanges)

F: One more question to make sure I understand the text. At the end he said this request may come to you very quickly for air strikes. I will pass the gist of it on.

K: And we will get the text of it right away.

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**289. Transcript of a Telephone Conversation Between the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) and the Israeli Ambassador (Rabin)<sup>1</sup>**

September 20, 1970, 11:30 p.m.

R: First, [omission in the original] leaving immediately to have reconnaissance over the area whenever possible in daylight.

K: That should be in a few hours.

R: Transfer the results of these to Washington. According to what she had from Israel the situation is quite unpleasant to put it mildly.

K: What do you mean?

R: There's a massive Syrian force in the area.

K: So you agree with us.

R: When it comes to the facts and implications, we don't agree. The people there are not sure if air alone will be sufficient at the present. Anyhow, she has instructed to look into the matter favorably your point of view but no decision before we know exactly what's going on.

K: Will you be in touch with me?

R: Yes. I have no air communication back to Washington. If Gen. Haig could help me.

K: We will get you back. Let's get through our business and he will take it up.

R: She has exchanged views with the Defense Minister and she is sending a cable detailing everything we talked about but we cannot promise you anything now. In the morning perhaps. Now it's 5:35 a.m. and after more light—

K: Our time or your time?

R: It's morning there. As soon as possible air reconnaissance will be carried out.

K: Stay in your hotel room. Or do you have to see her off?

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, Kissinger Telephone Conversations, Box 30, Chronological Files. No classification marking. Kissinger was in Washington and Rabin was in New York.

R: It's not a question—it doesn't matter. The sooner back to Washington—

K: Stay there and we will tell you where to go and how to get back. Now I will sum it up. Reconnaissance is ordered. You will transfer results to us immediately. Your information is that there are massive forces in the Irbid area and therefore you confirm information from the other side. Your people are not convinced air alone is sufficient. They have been ordered to look into our proposition favorably but cannot give final views until they have studied what they have. You will be back in touch. We will get you back to Washington.

## 290. Minutes of a Washington Special Actions Group Meeting<sup>1</sup>

Washington, September 20–21, 1970, midnight–12:40 a.m.

### SUBJECT

Middle East

### PARTICIPANTS

Chairman—Henry A. Kissinger

State—

U. Alexis Johnson

Joseph Sisco

Alfred Atherton

Defense—

David M. Packard

G. Warren Nutter

Robert Pranger

JCS—

Adm. Thomas H. Moorer

Lt. Gen. John W. Vogt

CIA—

Gen. Robert Cushman

David Blee

[*name not declassified*]

NSC Staff—

Gen. Alexander Haig

Col. Richard Kennedy

Harold H. Saunders

Jeanne W. Davis

### SUMMARY OF DECISIONS

It was decided to:

1. prepare a diplomatic scenario of what to do when an Israeli strike comes;<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-114, Washington Special Actions Group, WSAG Minutes (Originals) 1969 and 1970. Top Secret; Sensitive; Nodis. The meeting took place in the White House Situation Room.

<sup>2</sup> "Issues in Diplomatic Scenarios," September 21. (Ibid., Box H-077, Washington Special Actions Group Meetings, WSAG Meeting Middle East 9/20/70)

2. check on the various arms packages for Israel to be sure they have everything they need to protect their border and that everything is underway or can be started;

3. prepare for a Congressional briefing tomorrow after checking with the President;

4. prepare a military assistance package for Israel, similar to the one for Jordan, of what Israel would need to replace materiel expended against the Syrians;

5. prepare contingency plans for a possible Soviet response;<sup>3</sup>

6. outline in writing the principal points we would make to the Soviets, after an Israeli strike has taken place;<sup>4</sup>

7. hold the medical planes;

8. inform our Embassies in Amman and Tel Aviv of today's actions.

Mr. Kissinger: To bring you up to date on what we have done, Joe Sisco and I telephoned Rabin with Option A which had been approved by Secretary Rogers and the President.<sup>5</sup> We asked him to run a recce and come back to us with their information. We would then give them our judgment as to the desirability of their mounting a strike. Rabin had just asked us whether we would look favorably on this, when we were handed the new telegram from Amman reporting that the King had said the situation was deteriorating and asking for help.<sup>6</sup> We told Rabin we had new information and would call him back. We called Secretary Rogers, who said he thought we had no choice but to say, if the Israeli recce confirmed the reported situation, that we would look favorably on an Israeli strike.<sup>7</sup> We told the President of the Secretary's judgment, with which Sisco and I agreed, and the President approved.<sup>8</sup> He told us to tell the Israelis that if they decided to go ahead, we would make up any materiel losses they incurred and would protect them against the Soviets. The President also wanted us to take certain readiness measures in case we had to evacuate American citizens, including alerting the 82nd Airborne. Rabin called back.<sup>9</sup> The President was

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<sup>3</sup> "Possible Soviet Intervention and U.S. Countermoves," undated. (Ibid., Box H-076, Washington Special Actions Group Meetings, WSAG Meeting Middle East 9/22/70)

<sup>4</sup> "Talking Points for Use with Soviets in Event of Israeli Intervention against Syrians," undated. (Ibid.)

<sup>5</sup> See Document 283.

<sup>6</sup> Document 284.

<sup>7</sup> See Document 285.

<sup>8</sup> See Document 286.

<sup>9</sup> See Document 287.



in the office during the call but we did not tell Rabin this. We gave him the substance of the Amman telegram but not the text, and told him if the information was corroborated by their recce, we would look favorably on a strike, would make good any of their material needs and would protect them against Soviet reprisals insofar as it was within our power. Rabin repeated these three points to be sure he understood and said he would report to his Prime Minister and call back. He called back in an hour (the President also heard this conversation) at 11:25 our time to say: 1) the recce had been ordered and would start as soon as it was light enough; 2) their own intelligence confirmed that there were massive Syrian forces and that the situation around Irbid was very bad for the Jordanians, but they would check this; 3) he could not say what they would do if this information was confirmed, but the Prime Minister had instructed Dayan to look favorably on the U.S. request. He commented that they were not sure air action would be enough.<sup>10</sup>

Mr. Sisco: They also said they were in general agreement with our views as to the facts and the implications of the facts. Their information agrees with ours and they have the same judgment of the seriousness of the situation.

Mr. Kissinger: I think it would be prudent to assume some Israeli military action tomorrow.

Mr. Packard: That is all right.

Mr. Kissinger: I should tell you that the President has no excessive reluctance to commit American forces. If the situation in Amman should come unstuck, he might want to put American forces in to protect and evacuate American citizens.

Mr. Sisco: He also wants very much to concert with the British and try to get them to go in with us. The British have 160 nationals involved, and it would be good if this were a US-UK operation.

Mr. Kissinger: We have passed the Amman message to the British; I have spoken to Freeman<sup>11</sup> and to Greenhill's assistant.

Mr. Johnson: Should we consider going back to the Soviets again?

Mr. Sisco: I think the most effective time to follow up with the Soviets is shortly after an Israeli air attack to give our approach some force. We should look at this though—whether to go back to the Russians now to ask what they have done about our Sunday afternoon approach.<sup>12</sup>

Mr. Johnson: Yes, I think we should.

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<sup>10</sup> See Document 289.

<sup>11</sup> See Document 288.

<sup>12</sup> September 20; see footnote 2, Document 276.

Mr. Packard: No, I think we should go ahead.

Mr. Kissinger: I agree, we should go ahead.

Mr. Johnson: We could tell the Russians, "this is our information; what about it?"

Mr. Kissinger: If they had any comments to make about our approach, they would have made them.

Mr. Sisco: If we approach the Russians now, we imply that we are acting from a position of weakness and are worried about what the Syrians might do. If we wait until after the Israelis have struck, they will be worrying about the Israelis. We would be in a better position.

Mr. Packard: I think we should do what needs to be done first.

Mr. Kissinger: We should prepare a diplomatic scenario of what to do when the news of an Israeli air strike hits.

Mr. Packard: We will do two things: we will check on all the various arms packages for Israel to be sure they have everything they need to protect their border and that everything is already on the way, or we will start it on its way.

Mr. Sisco: We haven't had time to write it yet, but Golda Meir told the President they want more of everything, and also wanted some qualitative improvement in additional items.

Mr. Packard: There was some argument on the [*less than 1 line not declassified*] package, but we will resolve it and get it moving.

Mr. Kissinger: Yes, let's move what we can.

Mr. Packard: And we have to advise the Congress. The American public is not prepared for this. We have to have a Congressional briefing first thing in the morning or it will be worse than Cambodia.

Mr. Kissinger: I agree, but I want to check this with the President. We will do it as early as possible tomorrow.

Mr. Packard: We can talk to our committees, and State can talk to theirs.

Mr. Kissinger: But not before the President gives the okay. We need a military assistance package for Israel vis-à-vis the Suez Canal. We also need the same sort of package you did for Jordan—what Israel would need to replace materiel expended against the Syrians.

Mr. Johnson: I expect a frantic call for ammunition from Jordan.

Mr. Kissinger: Are we all set on the Jordan package?

Mr. Pranger: On expendables, yes.

Mr. Kissinger: How about tanks?

Mr. Packard: We would have a very hard time getting tanks there in time. Could we put some in a C-5?

Gen. Vogt: You could get four in a C-5.

Mr. Sisco: The President also asked if the Israelis go in and there are losses, and they have to continue a holding action on the Suez Canal, are we in a position to undertake a quick, massive supply of new aircraft—Phantoms and Skyhawks—if we had to?

Mr. Packard: Yes. I've just learned that we have 40 percent more aircraft than are shown on the list.

Admiral Moorer: We have 40 percent more than the UE. If we remove 40 percent, we reduce the UE.

Mr. Sisco: What is the UE?

Admiral Moorer: The unit of equipment; how many aircraft there are in a squadron.

Mr. Kissinger: So, we need assistance packages for Israel and Jordan. And we need contingency plans for any foreseeable Soviet response. Do the Soviets have the capability of attacking Israel directly?

Admiral Moorer: Yes, but with heavy losses.

Mr. Johnson: Without using Egyptian bases?

Mr. Packard: They have long-range bombers, but we could make it pretty hot for them.

Mr. Kissinger: Would we fly air cover for the Israelis?

Mr. Packard: If the Soviets attack Israel, we would have to protect Israel.

Mr. Kissinger: Let's get some plans for that. I think it highly unlikely that the Soviets will attack, but we should have some plans.

Mr. Johnson: If they attack from Soviet territory, they would have to overfly Iran or Turkey.

Mr. Packard: Or they could go from the other side of the Bosphorus.

Mr. Sisco: They have planes and pilots in Egypt they could use.

Mr. Packard: They could go over Romania and Bulgaria, with just a little tongue of Greece.

Mr. Johnson: If they attack from Egyptian territory, the ceasefire is finished.

Mr. Sisco: I think the ceasefire will blow anyhow.

Mr. Kissinger: (to Admiral Moorer) Can you get us some contingency plans?

Admiral Moorer: Yes. The most important thing is to get a communications plan established with Israel—IFF, coordination of air activity, etc.

Mr. Kissinger: Can you do it?

Admiral Moorer: Yes, we can do it with their people here in Washington.

Mr. Kissinger: Let's wait until we know whether the Israelis have decided to strike. Once we know, you can work out a communications plan without putting American equipment into Israel.

Admiral Moorer: It's just a matter of frequencies.

Mr. Johnson: Dayan once told us that the biggest mistake they made in the Palestine war was in not fighting off the Irbid Heights. Is Israel likely to move on the ground?

Mr. Packard: They said they doubted that air would be enough, so they will probably have to.

Mr. Kissinger: The President said we should not encourage Israeli ground action, but that they should do what they feel they have to do.

Mr. Packard: It will probably be better in terms of a long-term solution if Israel comes out in a better position from this exercise.

Mr. Moorer: It will also be better if Israel does what it thinks it has to do quickly.

Mr. Kissinger: Yes. The quicker it is over, the better possibility there is of handling the Russians.

Mr. Packard: And the better bargaining position Israel will have.

Mr. Kissinger: I'm not inclined to encourage Israel to take any more territory.

Mr. Atherton: It is very likely they will want to hold those Heights. They are full of fedayeen.

Adm. Moorer: They could be in Damascus in three days and we'll have trouble getting them out.

Mr. Kissinger: I don't think they're interested in going to Damascus. Can they handle 200 tanks with air alone?

Adm. Moorer: With a combination of Jordanian and Israeli forces, probably yes. You still may have some activity around Irbid. I wouldn't rule out Israeli ground movement.

Mr. Packard: How many tanks did they destroy with air in 1967?

Adm. Moorer: Six or seven hundred. They blocked them in the passes with their tanks.

Mr. Sisco: Should we raise with the British the possibility of their joining us?

Mr. Kissinger: It is premature. Let's let the President sleep on it. We were talking in general terms. Would one British battalion or company be worth all the wailing?

Mr. Sisco: It would be a great political advantage, but I don't think they'll agree.

Mr. Kissinger: Let's concentrate tonight on the things it would be good to have for tomorrow: (1) contingency plans for possible Soviet moves; (2) assistance packages for Israel and Jordan; (3) a Congress-

sional briefing; (4) a diplomatic scenario, with the understanding that we will talk to no one until the Israelis have struck.

Mr. Sisco: Assuming the Israelis have struck, what we should say to whom and when, what we should say publicly, etc. We can do a one-page check list.

Mr. Kissinger: When we call in the Soviets, what do we tell them?

Mr. Sisco: Tell them: (1) our efforts, as before the strike took place, continue to be directed toward ending the Syrian intervention; (2) we are still interested in seeing that there is no broadening of the conflict; (3) in order to accomplish this, we want to get the Syrians out.

Mr. Kissinger: Should we warn them against Soviet intervention?

Mr. Sisco: I'm not sure. That may be premature.

Mr. Johnson: They already said they were approaching the Syrians.

Mr. Sisco: We can say we have a responsibility. We are prepared to do what is necessary to see about stopping the Israelis if they get the Syrians out.

Mr. Kissinger: It seems to me the chief purpose would be to tell the Soviets to stay out.

Mr. Packard: We could tell them to get the Syrians out first.

Mr. Sisco: Yes, and we will get the Israelis out. The Soviets have been worried about the possibility of our intervention. They have warned us.

Mr. Kissinger: Then why shouldn't we warn them?

Mr. Packard: They are not taking any steps toward intervention. They are doing it by proxy.

Mr. Johnson: We're not sure the Soviets wanted the Syrians to intervene or how much control they have over the Syrians.

Mr. Kissinger: I'm not sure the Syrians could have moved 200 tanks without Soviet blessing.

Mr. Sisco: The Soviets have influence if they will exert it.

Mr. Kissinger: We have two objectives: (1) to get them to use their influence with the Syrians to get them to withdraw; and (2) to make sure they do not believe they can escape the dilemma of an Israeli move by putting the squeeze on Israel. Our major interest is with the Soviets in the light of some of our other problems. I think waffling now will give us more problems later. We need not be truculent. We could use the same language they did to us last Friday.<sup>13</sup>

Mr. Johnson: What if the Soviets do not intervene but continue to use the Syrians and we decide we want to go in?

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<sup>13</sup> September 18; see Document 266.

Mr. Kissinger: We are not saying we will intervene. We would only say that if they intervene, we will intervene. The basic problem is Syrian intervention. If they get the Syrians out, we will use our influence with Israel.

Mr. Packard: But there is no evidence of Soviet intention to intervene. We have given some evidence of our readiness. I think we should take one step at a time. Let's address the Syrian question first with the Russians.

Mr. Johnson: Their natural answer will be that they won't intervene if we won't.

Mr. Packard: So if we intervene, they can too.

Mr. Nutter: We shouldn't leave them with any doubt of what we will do.

Mr. Kissinger: That's my view.

Mr. Sisco: We will write down in the morning the principal points we would make to the Soviets.

Mr. Kissinger: Shall we meet at 8:00 a.m.? State can jot down the principal points. Won't someone go to the UN?

Mr. Sisco: Yes, and our attitude should be positive.

Mr. Kissinger: A request for a simple withdrawal would be the right line for the UN.

Mr. Johnson: Jordan will take the lead.

Mr. Kissinger: And we don't tell the British anything?

Mr. Packard: Be polite.

Mr. Kissinger: We should also probably be prepared to brief our NATO allies. We should give Ellsworth some sort of instruction. Also remember the Shah. Can we give him some little word? Are there any other diplomatic moves? So at 8:00, State will come in with a diplomatic scenario, and Admiral Moorer will come in with some contingency plans for a possible Soviet move. Are there any other readiness measures we should take?

Adm. Moorer: We will go out tonight to all Unified Commands, telling them to augment their intelligence watch since the situation may change quickly—a general heads-up message.

Mr. Johnson: Will the movement of the brigade in Europe surface?

Mr. Kissinger: We should probably hold the medical planes.

Adm. Moorer: We can do that. Our problem is to start movements, not to stop them.

Mr. Sisco: We should also send a telegram to Tel Aviv and Amman telling them what we have done.

**291. Transcript of a Telephone Conversation Between President Nixon and the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)<sup>1</sup>**

Washington, September 21, 1970, 1:10 a.m.

K: I was told you were still up and I wanted to tell you. We have gone over everything at that meeting<sup>2</sup> and Alex Johnson is preparing a diplomatic scenario for first thing in the morning if the Israelis go. We will call in the Soviets. The second possibility that State favors is if [omission in the original—Syrians] withdraw, we would ask the Israeli's to withdraw.

P: I think the best thing is to say nothing and let them come to us. No reason to tell them.

K: The only argument for that is to warn them to stay out. They know the Syrians have been bad boys.

P: Under no circumstances. But to warn them to stay out—

K: That might be useful.

P: This is happening because Syrians are there and we want you to stay out. All right.

K: We will report to our allies our general attitude but so no one's nose gets out of joint. Moorer is preparing for contingency. Soviets probably knew about this and they will have a starchier reply than we now have. They may attack the Israelis from the air and we may have to fly air cover over Israel against the Soviets.

P: We will see.

K: The major thing is to go in and come out—

P: I understand. We know it's a possibility. We will now find out.

K: Packard has been—we are getting together an assistance package for Jordan in case they need it and Israel for losses. We are telling the Jordanians that we have passed on messages to all people they wanted and question of assistance is being urgently and sympathetically considered. We are phrasing it constructively. As you said, the morale of the King is important.

P: He will tell his troops.

K: We will advise the Shah just to show him consideration.

P: What about the Arabs?

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, Kissinger Telephone Conversations, Box 30, Chronological Files. No classification marking.

<sup>2</sup> See Document 290.

K: We should keep quiet. They won't tell them. There's some feeling you might call in Congressional leaders tomorrow to advise them. If you want to consider evacuation scheme, you might want to inform them and it gives them flexibility.

P: We will consider it but late in the day.<sup>3</sup>

K: On the check list. If it breaks. Otherwise, everyone is tracking. We are meeting again in the morning and everyone will work down.

P: Russians flying with air strikes? I don't believe it.

K: Not normally but their behavior lately—they are either incompetent or forcing a showdown. If they are incompetent, we will have an easy victory.

P: We will see what's happening in the morning.

K: You pulled them together. Haig and I feel that. You're calm and got to the heart of it. When they heard the Commander in Chief say this.

P: In the office we hadn't had messages yet from the situation and they came in later and we were considering the contingency. Know we have told them there's no question. The Secy. of State has spoken and the U.S. is committed.

K: I called Bill—couldn't reach Laird—and he is content with everything. This time everyone is together.

P: We hope for the best. Thank you, Henry, and good night.

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<sup>3</sup> On September 22, President Nixon met with Senator Hugh Scott and Congressman Gerald Ford from 10:40 to 10:53 a.m., and with 13 Southern Democrats from 5:05 to 6:25 p.m. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, White House Central Files, President's Daily Diary)



292. **Transcript of Telephone Conversations Among President Nixon, the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger), and the President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Haig)<sup>1</sup>**

Washington, September 21, 1970, about 5:30 a.m.

*Mr. Kissinger/The President*

K: Mr. President, I'm sorry to disturb you. I just had a call from Rabin.<sup>2</sup> Their answer is as follows. They've made reconnaissance; they haven't fully analyzed it yet. It confirms our information. There is a massive Syrian force there, and it is in the town of Irbid. It hasn't apparently moved south of it yet. They believe that air alone won't do it and that if it's done, ground action will be necessary either at the beginning or shortly thereafter. And they wanted to know what our reaction to that would be. I didn't want to do that even in the light of our conversation yesterday<sup>3</sup> off the top of my head, so I told him I'd discuss it. They need the answer in two or three hours.

P: Well, the problem we have here is that the message requested only—and it's specific as far as they were concerned—air action.<sup>4</sup>

K: Well, it is unambiguous about air action.

P: That's smart.

K: In the message to the British,<sup>5</sup> it was indiscriminating and in the message to us . . . My suggestion, Mr. President, would be that rather than ask you to make this decision at this moment that perhaps we should schedule a meeting of the principals for, say 7:30 or 8:00—say 7:30.<sup>6</sup>

P: No, no, no. We'll make it now. The point is that they are saying that they can't take the action unless they have . . . He doesn't want to take the action unless they go in on the ground at this time now.

K: Right.

P: That's what he's really saying.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, Kissinger Telephone Conversations, Box 30, Chronological Files. No classification marking. The time is handwritten.

<sup>2</sup> Apparently a reference to their 11:30 p.m. conversation on September 20, see Document 289.

<sup>3</sup> See Document 286.

<sup>4</sup> Reference is to Hussein's message; see Document 284.

<sup>5</sup> See Document 279.

<sup>6</sup> See Document 299.

K: That's what it will boil down to—that's right, Mr. President. Last night, when Sisco and I spoke to Rogers about it,<sup>7</sup> we told him that when we were talking in general terms, the implication seemed to be that the thinking was to do what was necessary, and it didn't bother him then, but it hadn't reached the point of decision.

P: Yeah, well I think they have to do . . . The concern I have is that—and I trust they're considering this adequately, too—ground action presents, in a maximum way, a much more difficult reaction point, you see. It's the ground action that . . .

K: There's no question . . .

P: . . . invasion and all that sort of thing. That's the whole point. It's that that they have to have in mind and, of course, you have the shades of [gray?] even though we don't think they will want to stay and all that sort of thing; that they're going in or occupying territory—that it would be rather than the air action, just from their standpoint, and ours, too—but rather than if you just hit in the air at the outset at least. That's one thing, but of course they wouldn't comprehend this, I suppose, but the idea of Israel invading Jordan—that's the point, see. That's the point I think they may be missing.

K: Right. Well, their view probably is that they want to be sure that if they move militarily at all, they better succeed and that they probably have . . .

P: That's true, too.

K: They probably have only a limited time to do it, and Haig said to me last night they won't move without ground and I said, "well, let's see."

P: Would it not be well to find out what the Jordanian reaction to that is? Is that something we could find out?

K: Well . . . to ground action?

P: We don't know for sure, do we, on their part.

K: My own instinct is that it presents two kind of problems: (1) it presents a massive security problem because we are communicating with the Jordanians on the open radio; and (2) even if it were secure, it presents a massive problem . . .

P: Yeah, well, we'll just have to guess what their reaction . . .

K: . . . of the King. The King's position, I think it's safe to say, for his own survival will have to be to disassociate himself from any action, but more even from the ground action, of course, than . . .

P: Okay, yeah. Well, that's the point.

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<sup>7</sup> See Document 285.

K: But in either event he will, to some extent, disassociate himself. But it's a decision that can hold, say, three or four hours—closer to three than to four, because it probably takes from 12 to 24 hours to get ready.

P: Well, I think it . . . The point is what is the decision, though? If the Israelis are putting it to us in terms where we don't do this. You understand?

K: That's right.

P: That's what they're saying.

K: No, they are saying . . . I asked that precise question and the precise answer was that "the possibility of a favorable response is greatly enhanced if we have your understanding."

P: Give Sisco a call and get his reaction and call me back.

K: Right, Mr. President.

*Mr. Kissinger/General Haig*

K: Hello.

H: Yes, sir.

K: Al, the reaction was pretty much as you expected. The last thing he wants is a meeting of the principals.

H: Right.

K: Because he might have to face some people. And you know, he is just not eager to do. He said it will . . . headlines will be Israeli invasion of Jordan. It's a better headline to say the Middle East is lost two months from now. So what he wants me to do is ask Sisco on a personal basis. But you know that son-of-a-bitch will be on the phone to the Secretary within two seconds after that.

H: That's correct.

K: So, you don't think if I call the Secretary myself . . . What do you think? Or I could call Sisco and then the Secretary. And then go back to the President.

H: Yeah, I would do that. I'd get Sisco lined up first.

K: Okay.

H: And then get the Secretary next.

K: Okay, but I better get you lined up for a conference call when I go back to the President. You should have been on that line, incidentally.

H: Okay, sir.

K: Good, hold on then.

*Mr. Kissinger/The President*

P: Yeah.

K: Mr. President.

P: The way we would do this is—before you tell me what it is—to call him back in these precise terms. Tell him these are the principles that I believe—no, that I consider imperative. (1) First, the operation must succeed; (2) success diplomatically as well as militarily must be considered; (3) if it is militarily feasible, they must lean in the direction of accomplishing a true air action alone in the first instance, having in mind the fact that that might have a psychological impact which is needed; (4) if, however, that proves to be militarily and overall inadequate, again what is necessary to achieve success would have our support; (5) the ground for the action on the ground as distinguished from the air must strictly be limited to Jordan. Invasion of Syria would be very difficult. Bombing in Syria is not difficult. How does that sound to you?

K: That sounds very good to me. Let me sum it up to make sure I . . . You still want me to check Sisco first.

P: No, that's all right. Go ahead. This is all right. He won't have anything else to add.

K: Right. As I understand it, you say that . . .

P: These are five principles which should guide them.

K: These five principles should guide them. The first I didn't quite get down.

P: The operation must succeed.

K: The operation must succeed. (2) . . .

P: . . . must succeed from a military and diplomatic and political point of view.

K: That if they go, they should lean in the first instance toward air. That if air is insufficient, (that's principle 4) then ground action would have our support. (5) That ground action, however, to be effective . . . that ground action must be strictly limited to Jordan. It cannot expand to Syria or, even less, into other countries. However, air action in Syria would be understood.

P: Yeah, they have our support. You missed one—the second there, where I said that the . . . State the first principle; then, the second one is . . .

K: The first principle is it must succeed. The second principle is it must succeed not only militarily but also politically and diplomatically.

P: That's right.

K: And then, the third is air action is preferred.

P: Air action alone is preferred from all standpoints, if it will work militarily.

K: Right; if that is not sufficient, ground action would be supported; and the fifth principle is that it should be . . .

P: . . . that ground action should be confined to Jordan alone.

K: Exactly.

P: See, this is the problem that I had with Joe Sisco's principle of where they just go up that road and cut off the bastards. See, that road involves an invasion of Syria, so . . .

K: Mr. President, I couldn't agree more.

P: You see, it puts Israel in the same position. Let me say, I just assume . . . these things I raised for you myself . . . they'd go to Damascus. For Christ's sake, if they start doing that, the Russians then have a real cause. They want this deserter to be Jordan to help . . .

K: . . . then resisting the invading army in Jordan.

P: Yeah, yeah. Now, I don't mean that we have a Yalu River concept or anything of that sort. And I understand the other, but in other words, this puts it all in the terms of what it is; the first principle—so give him that and five principles. I've decided it. Don't ask anybody else. Tell him "go."

K: Right. Mr. President, I think for your own protection it ought to be mentioned as your decision to give them a chance to protest to the others.

P: All right, all right. Call them.

K: I'll call them and then I'll call Rabin.

P: Yeah. Don't call me back thought if you don't want to.

K: I won't call you back unless there is a protest.

P: In other words, I've . . . First, there may be a protest, but a protest . . . If they protest this [omission in the original], what the hell example do you have?

K: I'll tell them that they have to get in touch with you.

P: I won't be in the office until 8:30 or 8:45.

K: Right, Mr. President.

P: All right, but I think this is the right decision.

K: There's no question.

P: Frankly, I don't think there's anything . . . I don't think they'll main-line us. We don't have much part in the position, and second, who knows, they are there. They have to do it. Now, of course, the reason . . . Another reason I suggest this is that the Israelis have mixed motives, and also they have their military bureaucracy which they now have to have the luxury and the burden of. Their mixed motives are that they'd like to go in there, you know, and fuck a little of the ground. And second . . .

K: They want to really tear up the Syrians for once, whom they've never had a crack at.

P: I hope to Christ they do! But the other thing is their military bureaucracy, you know—these ground guys say, "God, we've got to go in and do this, too." The only thing is I have just a hunch—an intuition—that if they go in with massive air . . . I'd even put it to air action should be . . . It should be limited air action for the first 24 hours.

K: I don't think they'll do that.

P: You can see my point. They could have air action. It could have a psychological effect and could turn this thing right around. The alternate ground action . . . I would say if air action went to ground action prepared as a threat to them. You see my point?

K: Absolutely.

P: I know just from their standpoint that they're going to have a hell of a lot bigger problem.

K: They probably figure they only have 24 hours.

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**293. Transcript of a Telephone Conversation Among the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger), the President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Haig), and the Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs (Sisco)<sup>1</sup>**

Washington, September 21, 1970, about 5:45 a.m.

K: Al, the President called me back.<sup>2</sup> He's made a decision. He wants us to communicate to the Israelis the following: that we want the action to succeed (2) that it should succeed politically, diplomatically—God-damn it, hold on a second; I just ran out of ink at a crucial moment. Can you hold on?—He said he wants me to communicate this, and he'll . . . and if anyone wants to protest they've got to wake him. Now, what do I do? My suggestion is that I call Sisco on a conference call with you. Then we'll call Rogers on a conference call for all four of us; and then I call Rabin, together with Sisco.

H: How about Laird?

K: Then, I better call Laird. Isn't he clued in on everything?

H: He is, if his assistant called him. He said he would; I called him back again as you instructed.

K: Did you tell him I was trying to reach him?

H: Yes.

K: What explanation did he have?

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, Kissinger Telephone Conversations, Box 30, Chronological Files. No classification marking. The time, "early a.m.—prob. about 5:45 am," is handwritten.

<sup>2</sup> Document 292.

H: He said he couldn't understand it, unless he was just sleeping very heavily. But I told him that he should get the word to him and to be sure that he knew that you have been trying to get him.

K: Should we get Sisco? Or should I go straight to Rogers? Well, Rogers will only go to Sisco.

H: I think you can—since you've got a decision—get them all on.

K: Right; okay.

H: Including Laird.

K: Right, but I better communicate it to Rabin by the time Sisco does it, it will be the God-damnedest garbage you've ever heard.

H: Oh, I would just say that the President had told me to communicate the following.

K: Yeah, well, you can be damned sure my heroes will not be eager to get into that one. This is not a peace initiative.

H: No, that's right.

K: They won't want to communicate this. Now, you stand by now and I'll get Sisco on a conference call.

H: All right, sir.

[Joe Sisco entered the conversation]<sup>3</sup>

K: Joe?

S: How are you?

K: Al, are you on?

H: Haig on, sir.

K: We've had a call from Rabin. I've talked twice to the President. Let me give you the sequence of events. Rabin called in here. I called the President with his answer. I then told the President I was going to call you. As I was placing the call to you, the President called back and said, well, of course, you should be informed; he'd made his decision. Now here is what Rabin said. Rabin said they have had preliminary reports from their pilot and it confirms our information with one proviso—that they have not, according to his preliminary readout—moved south from Irbid, but they are in Irbid in force . . . in substantial force. Their judgment is that air action alone is not enough to be decisive and that ground action is necessary. They believe that they . . . they would like to know our reaction if that were done. I told him nothing. I said this is something that we have to consider here, and he said he would have to have an answer within two to three hours at the latest, but preferably quicker. This was now . . . I talked to him also about getting out of there if they go in, and I stated our strong view on that, but I have to tell you in all candor, he was not unambiguous

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<sup>3</sup> Brackets are in the original.

in his reply. I then called the President and communicated this to him. His first reaction was that this is, of course, more difficult than air. This is, of course, obvious. And he said I should discuss it with you.

Al, . . . I just want to make sure that Al is aboard.

I then said let me check Sisco and call you back. I placed a call to you; since you are usually carousing around, you weren't reached within five minutes.

S: Since I've just gotten out of the shower and have just shaved and am putting on some presentable clothes.

K: Is that what you always do when you take a phone call from me?

S: Yes; but if I hadn't come down clean, I'd have been dirty all day.

K: Let me give you the President's reaction, so then you have the whole picture. He then called me back and said he wants me to pass the following information to Rabin. (1) The action must succeed; (2) It has to succeed diplomatically as well as politically, and as well as militarily. He's never explained exactly what he meant by that. I've asked him about three times. (3) Actually, the next sentence explains it. From that point of view, air action alone would be easier, but we would support ground action if they thought it necessary. But we believe that ground action should be confined to Jordan. He specifically mentioned that, as he'd thought over your plan—which he likes militarily, but not diplomatically—it should be confined to Jordan, though air action in Syria would be supported. I said, "Let's get the principals together first thing in the morning." He says he doesn't want that. And he says, as far as he's concerned, that the decision is made. Anyone who wants to protest it has to call him. He doesn't want me to call him.

S: You know what I would do, Henry.

K: What? Let's do it in two stages. What do you think of this?

S: On substance?

K: On substance.

S: On substance, I think we have no alternative in the situation, and I agree on substance.

K: Should I call Bill and tell him the same thing?

S: The Secretary is in his office to relieve me for a couple of hours while I change clothes. He is in his office, and I think you ought to put it to him. He may want to have a chat with a few of us since we've got an hour or so.

K: Well, look, if I talk to the Israelis, I want you to be on the conference call.

S: All right; look, Henry. You go ahead and call the Secretary.

K: I will not talk to the Israelis alone on this.

S: No, I agree with you. Why don't I do this? I'll go directly to the State Operations Center because I'm already half-dressed.



K: Where is the Secretary?

S: Right in his own office at the State Department.

K: Okay.

S: He gave me an opportunity to come home and change clothes.

K: Okay.

S: So, I will go directly to State Operations as soon as I . . .

K: Okay; can I tell the Secretary that I've talked to you?

S: Don't tell him that you talked to me first just now; don't do that. Just go ahead and . . . because I don't want him to know that you and I have talked ahead of time on this, Henry. No, just go ahead and tell him we've talked.

K: I'll tell him we've talked, but that you didn't give me your . . . just to inform you.

S: No, no—well, just tell him that . . . I think he is going to say the following, Henry: (1) Emphasize strongly with the Israelis to try to do it with air; (2) however, if, in fact, they find it necessary to use ground, okay. I think he'll just have you put a little greater emphasis on the air. You see, Henry, I think this is just . . . if this is the way they read it, I think the dice have been thrown myself, and that's it.

K: Well, that's what the President thinks.

S: That's my feeling, and I don't think you are going to find the Secretary difficult on this.

K: Right, well, you know, if he is, he is, and then we'll discuss it with the President. I'm no more . . .

S: He's perfectly free to call the President, and that's what you ought to do. But, as I say, I think you'll find that he will see also that there's no alternative. He will go right on in to the Operations Center and then, if you need me to come to the White House, you just let me know.

K: Okay; right. Let me talk to Haig for a minute. Can you hang up, Joe?

S: Good. Thank you.

K: Hello.

H: Right, sir.

K: How do you think that son-of-a-bitch of a field marshal is doing there? He's probably got television cameras on him.

H: Well, I think he's in the corner.

K: I bet you he wants to come in to the WSAG meeting tomorrow morning. I'll call him and I'll get you put on the conference call.

H: All right, sir.

K: But I won't necessarily tell him you are on—yeah, I'll tell him you are on there.

H: Sure, I'd tell him.

K: Okay, and then we'll get back. And then you and I talk, and then we decide. Good.

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**294. Transcript of a Telephone Conversation Among President Nixon, the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger), the President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Haig), and Secretary of State Rogers<sup>1</sup>**

Washington, September 21, 1970, about 6 a.m.

K: Bill?

R: Yeah, Henry.

K: I've got Haig also on an extension because he was in on the conversations so that if you had any questions of nuances I might have missed, you can check with him. We had a call from Rabin, oh about half an hour or so ago, with the following information.<sup>2</sup> He said they've undertaken reconnaissance—they haven't had a full read-out yet—but their preliminary indication is that there is a substantial Syrian force in Irbid. It has not moved south as far as they can tell, but it is there and, otherwise, the situation is substantially as it's been described in these cables. Secondly, they believe that air action alone is not going to be enough under these circumstances, and that ground action would be necessary. Thirdly, they wanted to know what our reaction would be if they thought ground action was necessary to accomplish the objective. I told him that, of course, I would have to check; that I couldn't say. Last night, the President had said they should do what was necessary, as I told you. But I didn't want to do it when the issue was theoretical, and wanted to make sure it would be put to him again.

R: Did they give any indication of the size of the force?

K: They had said it confirmed their original estimate which was about 200 tanks, but they had not had the full read-out yet on the pictures. They said it was a substantial force. To bring you up to date, I then called the President . . .

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, Kissinger Telephone Conversations, Box 30, Chronological Files. No classification marking. The time is handwritten. All brackets are in the original.

<sup>2</sup> No other record of conversation has been found.

[The Signal Operator interrupted to say the President was calling Mr. Kissinger]

The President came on.

K: Mr. President.

P: It seems if they go in on the ground, I think they should announce that they will withdraw—whether they do it at the time they go in or—they shouldn't do it under pressure, but it's better to do it early—that they will withdraw when the Syrians withdraw from Jordan. Do you see the point?

K: Right.

P: They shouldn't leave the implication, which again will make it politically more difficult for them than to just go in and sit there. Don't you think so?

K: Right.

P: Don't you think so?

K: I think that would be very helpful. They'll be tough as hell on all these things.

P: I understand.

K: But that should certainly be our position.

P: Therefore, it's also a position that we're going to have to take with them later, and it's also in their interest. They look awful good here.

K: I, incidentally, asked him that point, and he said, "well this depends on how things develop in Jordan, if the whole thing comes apart" . . . but yours, of course, is on the assumption that it won't come apart.

P: I mean, that's a different ballgame. If the whole thing comes apart, they've changed their minds. But when they go in, they should say that.

K: Absolutely.

P: And break their word.

K: I completely agree with you.

P: Tell them they have to look good at the beginning, so that that will help things not coming apart in Jordan.

K: Right, Mr. President.

P: That's the whole point of this. If things come apart, then they break their word and we understand.

K: Right.

P: Okay, that's going to help them.

K: Right, Mr. President.

[End of tape]

**295. Transcript of a Telephone Conversation Among the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger), the President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Haig), and Secretary of State Rogers<sup>1</sup>**

Washington, September 21, 1970, about 6:15 a.m.

H: Haig, sir.

K: The Secretary said he had to go to the Men's Room—he can't take the call right away. The President added another condition.<sup>2</sup> Did you hear it?

H: No, I did not.

K: They should announce if they go in on ground that they'd withdraw if the Syrians withdraw, and I think he's right—that if it gets unstuck, if the Jordanians collapse, then it's a new situation anyway.

H: That's correct.

K: I think that's right. You know, they can't act like maniacs. Should we have the WSAG meeting anyway?

H: Oh, I think you are going to have to.

K: Well, I hate to tell that many people so much. I think they should confine it to principals.

H: Yeah, I wouldn't tell them so much. One thing that's concerned me, Henry, is how this thing evolves, assuming that this all goes as outlined. The situation in Amman, the Sit Room tells me, is getting worse, and we may be faced with—concurrently—this U.S. citizen problem. Some thought in sorting that out should be applied; in other words, I gather they intend to react in the area involved.

K: That's right.

H: So this could possibly be a concurrent action. It was demanded in terms of our citizens, and I wonder if we shouldn't convey the possibility of that.

K: To whom? Rabin?

H: Yeah. I don't know that it's a good idea, but if they get in there—see, you just don't know broad a front they intend to move on. I wouldn't think they would want to get locked into that problem.

K: It is deteriorating in Amman?

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, Kissinger Telephone Conversations, Box 30, Chronological Files. No classification marking. The time, "prob. about 6:15 am," is handwritten. All brackets are in the original.

<sup>2</sup> See Document 294.

H: Yes.

K: I thought they had the stinking town under control.

H: I think they probably did; I think they have sped some more people in there, too. This thing's been set up—this is a typical Soviet exercise.

K: What would have happened if the King hadn't moved? They would have moved against him.

H: Oh, he would have been overthrown within two or three months, I think, and decisively.

K: I think less than that—that's the only thing. I now see the game plan. They were going to use the peace talks to overthrow the King and in the meantime strengthen the Egyptians.

H: Sure.

K: And then really put the squeeze on the Israelis.

H: That's right.

K: That's the only thing that makes sense.

H: That's right. And, in the meantime, obviously they bilk the Syrians. They've just been active across the board.

K: You don't think . . .

[At this point, Secretary Rogers joined the conversation]

K: Hello.

R: Hi, Henry.

K: Let me continue where I was before. (1) Then I talked to the President and gave him those facts. He said that that, of course, made it more difficult obviously and that I should start calling around to people who had been in the meeting in the evening, starting with Sisco to get their views. I placed a call to Sisco and just as I got him, the President called me.<sup>3</sup> He said he had thought about it. . . .

[The Signal Operator interrupted to say Assistant Secretary Sisco wanted to speak with General Haig]

K: No, just leave him on here now. No, leave this conversation uninterrupted except for the President.

K: (Cont'd) . . . and said that he had made the following decisions: First, that we should communicate to the Israelis: (1) the action must succeed; (2) it has to succeed diplomatically as well as militarily—for this purpose, our preference is for air in the first instance, but that if they believe ground forces are essential, we would support that also. Ground forces, however, should be used inside Jordan; this was

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<sup>3</sup> See Document 292.

in reference to when Joe was in the office and he came in and Joe said he thought the best thing for the Israelis would be to start attacking from the Golan Heights into Syria. The President says that is militarily good, but politically not good. Those were the five points he wanted me to communicate. I told him maybe we should have a meeting of everybody. He said no, that's what he wants to do, but of course, anyone who wants to protest can do so to him. Now, he added, when he interrupted before, a sixth point which is that they should be told that if they go in on the ground, they should announce that they will withdraw when the Syrians withdraw or if the Syrians withdraw. I said, "what if the situation gets completely unstuck in Jordan?" He said, "That's a different problem, but the correct diplomatic posture is to go in and say they'll withdraw as soon as the Syrians withdraw." So, this is where we stand. I haven't done anything else.

R: Have you told them?

K: No, no, no. I wouldn't do that without talking to you. But I got the call from Sisco that I had placed earlier. I just told him and told him I was going to call you immediately, and Sisco said he was coming in to the office. Those are the only people who have been contacted.

R: There are two things: (1) I gather from Al that he felt that the Israelis would not do anything until tomorrow. Is that right? Did they pass?

K: I would guess by tonight our time—uh, tomorrow night our time (Monday night our time) is our instinct. They didn't say.

R: Yeah, but in any event, we'd have . . . it's 1:00 in Amman.

K: I would think Tuesday morning Amman time.

R: Did you say that they wanted an answer right away?

K: Within two hours or so.

R: I wonder what the . . .

K: Well, I think they have to get their forces ready.

R: We have here a cryptic message which just came in. [*1½ lines not declassified*] the Israelis have landed forces from helicopters in Syria." What do you think of that?

K: I haven't. For all we know, they may be running around there already.

R: That's what I mean.

K: That's not my impression, though. I don't believe that. Al, you were in on that conversation. Was it your impression that they could be moving?

H: No, I think they could be feinting a little bit.

K: I don't believe it.

H: I don't believe it either.

K: Unless they are absolutely tricking us, and I don't see what advantage it is to them to trick us about asking our support for a move that they say they'll make later and then make it ahead of time. At any rate, they gave us no indication of that, though.

R: Well, it seems to me there are a couple of things we should be doing—certainly a couple have come to mind right away. (1) Once this happens, and the chances of saving the King are probably pretty slim anyway; I can't imagine any Arab can survive very long if he has to call upon the Israelis to save him.

K: Well, my guess would be that he would disassociate himself.

R: Uh-huh.

K: I don't think he can admit that he called them—that he asked for air strikes.

R: Yeah, probably not. If that is the case, and you are probably right, although I am never convinced that anything can be held in confidence though if they decide to leak—just because the British certainly know about it, too—but, in any event, assume it doesn't leak, then what if Eban(?) says to the Arabs that the Israelis have, without request from Jordan, invaded their land, which will probably mean an Arab-Israeli conflict. I don't see how Nasser can stand by and do nothing if it doesn't appear that this was done at the King's request.

K: Well, they've stood by before. Well, you do something.

R: When did they stand by before.

K: The Egyptians haven't, but all the other Arabs have stood by while the Egyptians were being . . .

R: Oh, yeah. I was trying to put it the other way around though.

K: No, no—the Egyptians haven't stood by; but the Egyptians have never had the choice of standing by.

R: No, but if Nasser's going to have to be standing with the Arabs, he can't . . .

K: No, I think it's reasonable that he'll do something, and I think Joe thinks he'll do something.

R: Which means really that we'll be faced with the problem if he does that if Israel doesn't succeed, that they'll call on us.

K: Succeed against the Egyptians?

R: Yeah, against whoever would be helping IF THEY are not . . . In other words, when the President lays down the pre-condition that they have to succeed, I suppose they'd say to themselves, "well, we agreed, too."

K: But, I think what the President's phrase, "action must succeed" means it's to lead into ground action. I think what we have to expect is this, IN MY judgment, Bill. There's no doubt that the action will

succeed and there's no doubt, I think, that the Israelis can handle the Egyptians together with the Syrians. The question that arises is, if the Soviets intervene and there we would be obliged to help support them, I don't think there is . . . I cannot conceive that the Israelis can't handle the Egyptians and Syrians combined. What do you think, Al?

H: I think that's so.

R: That certainly has been everyone's assessment.

H: I don't think there's too much the Egyptians could do although I think they would try to do something. I don't think they have much they can do other than to start the artillery falling, in which case the Israelis will act.

K: I think that's the only thing, myself, that can be done—that they can do. I think the realistic occasion for American intervention will arise when . . . if the Soviets were to intervene one way or the other. And we would have to be prepared to be very tough in warning them off. There is a corollary to this move. Within the area, I think it can be handled—with a lot of excitement, but I think it can be handled.

R: Well, it's awfully damned difficult to make these judgments. That certainly would be my judgment and I think it's the judgment of those over here. Well, the trouble with that is, so was everybody confident that the King could handle the Fedayeen and apparently can't. Leaving Syria out, we can't handle them in Amman 'cause that seems . . .

K: I was never so confident of that one.

R: Most people were, though.

K: Yeah, I know most people were, though.

R: I didn't hear anybody express any real reservations.

K: Well, I was . . . after the first few days' reports, I also saw that he could. But, be that as it may, if the Israelis can't handle the Arabs, they can't be bailed out by us. We won't have enough forces to bail them out. We only have one decision. But since all of our policy has been based on the assumption that the military balance hadn't turned against them and that they were still superior . . . that I don't think is going to happen.

R: In our weighing it, we were thinking about it in terms of Egypt and Jordan. I don't know as we were thinking about it in terms of Syria and Iraq, but, you know, I never heard anybody express any doubt about it including the Israelis. They've always thought they could.

K: And they repeated that again. And we checked yesterday with Moorer at the meetings. He thinks . . . but that's, of course, subject to the same theories (queries?) that you've put before. They also thought they probably could handle the Fedayeen.



R: Well, I think the question probably in my mind now is the time problem, whether we have to give them an answer so soon if they aren't actually going to invade. If this cryptic message is incorrect and they aren't going to actually invade until sometime tomorrow morning—in other words, if we have 24 hours, I wonder why they need so much advance. I can see how they can sort of get ready with it, but I don't see why they have to know for sure. Because the information we had was to the effect that [End of tape]

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**296. Transcript of a Telephone Conversation Between the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) and Secretary of Defense Laird<sup>1</sup>**

Washington, September 21, 1970, about 6:30 a.m.

[Beginning of new tape]

K: . . . felt that it was better to go this route than to go the other, though he is somewhat cautious about communicating this to Rabin now. I don't think he fully realizes that, for the Israelis to move, they'll have to mobilize some forces and that they will commit themselves once they mobilize forces. So that they have to get our word by 24 hours before they move.

L: Yeah, because it's going to stir up a lot of stuff. I'll tell you that, and because of the pressure from Egypt then on this thing and the pressure within country in Egypt and within country in Lebanon.

K: Well, look, Mel, the reason I'm calling you is even though the President has said this is his decision and that he wants to go, I think we all ought to be together on it.

L: Yeah, I think we should, too.

K: If anyone has serious reservations, I want to know them.

L: The only thing I wanted to give, Henry, was an update on that intelligence which we don't have right now, but we should have that soon. We are trying to get messages back from DIA on that, and you haven't gotten them yet either. I just want to know why the Jordanians haven't committed their forces, and that's the only outstanding question I have.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, Kissinger Telephone Conversations, Box 30, Chronological Files. No classification marking. The time, "prob. about 6:30 am," is handwritten. All brackets are in the original.

K: Yeah.

L: That hasn't been answered yet.

K: But even if they haven't, it doesn't change the facts, does it?

L: Well, it changes the facts inasmuch as it might be able to handle them in those pass areas up there where the Syrians are.

K: Well, have you seen the message from the King?<sup>2</sup> He doesn't seem to think so.

L: I've seen those. Yeah, he's a young sort of a guy. He gets a little panicky. I understand those messages loud and clear. Let me check . . . Are you going to be right there for a minute? Let me call DIA and find out the latest that they have. Are you going to be in your office?

K: I'm at home actually, but I've been on the phone the whole time; so you can reach me through the board.

L: Okay; I'll call you right back.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> See Document 284.

<sup>3</sup> Laird called Kissinger back at approximately 7 a.m. Laird reported that he was still trying to put the intelligence together, but that it was "spotty." He promised to have the intelligence ready for the 8:30 a.m. NSC meeting (the meeting did not begin until 8:45 a.m.). (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, Kissinger Telephone Conversations, Box 30, Chronological Files)

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**297. Transcript of a Telephone Conversation Among President Nixon, the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger), and the President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Haig)<sup>1</sup>**

Washington, September 21, 1970, about 6:45 a.m.

K: Mr. President.

P: Yes.

K: I have Haig on the line because he has listened in on most of the other conversations—in case you have any questions and in case I am not exactly accurate, he can correct me.

P: Okay.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, Kissinger Telephone Conversations, Box 30, Chronological Files. No classification marking. The time is handwritten.

K: I have been talking to the Secretary of State and to Mr. Laird.<sup>2</sup> Laird is basically with the decision. He just wanted to check some of the Defense Department Intelligence to make sure that the situation is as bad as we believe it is. Bill has two views: (1) he feels we ought to have a meeting of your principal advisers and (2) he raises a number of objections such as if the Israelis are not going to move before tomorrow morning anyway, why do they have to know now? Why don't we wait until during the day to make our final decision? Well, the answer to that is that they are committed once they start mobilizing. They have to mobilize in order to do this. And if we put it to them on this basis—of course if things happen during the day, we can always go back to them but—(interrupted by P)

P: That doesn't mean anything. It is alright for him to raise it. We can always go back to him. But I understand—that is just a delaying tactic.

K: Exactly. And (interrupted by P)

P: Just putting off until tomorrow what you have to decide today.

K: Then he says there is no evidence that the Syrians are moving south. This is true but the estimate now is 300 tanks. We just checked recent intelligence. There is also another indication and I don't know how reliable that intelligence is. Al, do you know how reliable this information is?

H: This is an Israeli report.

K: That the Iraqis are getting ready to move and we have had a new appeal from the King which says that we have his advice and authority to land if the situation in Amman deteriorates and in order to protect our people. One of the problems we will face, Mr. President, is that we may come up within 24 hours to the decision to implement our evacuation plan.

P: Yes.

K: And we should not get the Israeli moves and ours confused, if we implement our evacuation plan. In my judgment, we will be forced to ask the Israelis to help then anyway. But at any rate, the first (interrupted by P)

P: Yes, I get the point. Now what is the question?

K: The question is do you want to have a meeting.

P: I have no objection to a meeting.

K: I think given all the leaks that will occur if you refuse a meeting, it is (interrupted by P)

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<sup>2</sup> See Documents 295 and 296.

P: He hasn't changed about the necessity for it? What is the trouble? He hasn't changed his view about approving it—he approved it last night.

K: He approved it last night but then—well, what seems to be new in his mind is that the Syrians are moving south. Al, can you make out?

H: And the fact that they have come back and want to use ground operations.

P: Yes, well, a ground operation does pose a problem.

H: Now Sisco said that in his view the die is cast and that we should support the Israelis' proposal unless it is changed but that is what he said before.<sup>3</sup>

P: Okay, yes, yes. Why don't you have a meeting at 9 o'clock. How is that?

K: Well, Mr. President, we have got to get back to the Israelis. It is already getting close to the time we said we would. Could we do it a little earlier?

P: Well, yes, I suppose.

K: Because everyone is up anyway.

P: Well, yes, alright. Have you got them all together? 8 o'clock is alright with me. Who the hell does he want to have on that meeting?

K: I think it should be just you, Laird. I guess we might as well have the Chairman.

P: Moorer, sure.

K: And I guess we could have Cushman.

P: We don't need him.

K: That's all we need.

P: We should also have Sisco and Haig there.

K: Yes, and Packard was in on some of the other meetings.

P: He should be there.

K: I will get them all lined up.

P: The ones that have been working on it all the time.

K: Right, Mr. President. I will get it lined up. If there is any delay—maybe we should make it 8:30 so that you don't have to wait unnecessarily.

P: Just so we make sure they are all there, why don't you make it 8:30?<sup>4</sup>

K: Right, Mr. President.

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<sup>3</sup> See Document 293.

<sup>4</sup> See Document 299.

**298. Transcript of a Telephone Conversation Between the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) and the President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Haig)<sup>1</sup>**

Washington, September 21, 1970, about 7:30 a.m.

K: Al, I think you ought to call Rabin. Or should I do it?

H: No, I can do it.

K: And tell him this is a matter of such importance that we have decided to get the senior people together so that they could be sure that they had a united government backing them.

H: Yes.

K: Put it in a positive way.

H: Absolutely.

K: And that I have asked you to communicate that to him.

H: Right.

K: And that otherwise we didn't want to go through the Cambodian exercise again.

H: Right.

K: So that the meeting is at 8:30 and they won't get the answer much before 10:00.

H: Okay, sir. I think that is alright. He said they would hope to have an answer in two or three hours so we will make it alright.

K: We won't make it because he called you at 5:00 am.

H: Yes.

K: They will decide not to decide.

H: Well, that could happen but—

K: Let him hear his goddamned Secretary of State. I have called Laird and Rogers<sup>2</sup> and that is aboard.

H: Good. Everyone else is being called right now.

K: Now do something about Moorer for Christ's sake. And tell him this is the goddamned ball game. We are going to be dead. This is worse than Cambodia.

H: Oh, by far. Especially in the light of the other thing.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, Kissinger Telephone Conversations, Box 30, Chronological Files. No classification marking. The time is handwritten.

<sup>2</sup> See Documents 295 and 296.

K: We will be dead—if we decide to do nothing and the Israelis go, we will be worse off. The only hope we have of preventing a disaster is to let them go and be tough as nails.

H: That's right.

K: If there is a collapse and the Israelis do not go and then our world position is finished because they will be finished, don't you think?

H: Right. Oh, I think they'll go. They know in their own minds they have a couple of days because they can clean that thing out. So I'm not too concerned about that.

K: Frankly, I think they want the King to fall and then they will clean it up.

H: Yes. They want it to deteriorate a little more. And I think in either event they have control of that no matter what position we take.

K: Right.

H: Okay.

K: Okay. I'll get a car. What time is it?

H: It is about 7:10.

K: Okay, I will come in as quickly as possible and I suppose you will too.

H: Yes.

K: Good. But talk to Robbie,<sup>3</sup> will you?

H: Yes.

K: I don't know what I'd do without you. We will be snapping at each other all afternoon we'll be so tired.

H: Chuckle.

K: Except that we don't snap on big things. It takes little ones.

H: Right.

K: Okay. Goodbye.

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<sup>3</sup> Not further identified.

## 299. Minutes of a National Security Council Meeting<sup>1</sup>

Washington, September 21, 1970, 8:45 a.m.

### SUBJECT

Jordan

### PARTICIPANTS

The President  
Secretary of State William Rogers  
Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird  
Deputy Secretary of Defense David M. Packard  
Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs Dr. Henry A. Kissinger  
Deputy Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs General  
Alexander M. Haig  
Assistant Secretary of State for Middle East Affairs Joseph Sisco

The President opened the meeting by asking Dr. Kissinger to review the situation as it had developed over the past 24 hours with the reported entry of Syrian forces into Jordan and the decisions made during the night.

Dr. Kissinger stated that at 5:15 that morning Ambassador Rabin had called and reported that Irbid had fallen to the Syrian forces, that the Israeli Government did not believe their intervention should be limited to air action alone, and that they had posed a series of questions and conditions on which they would like a response within three hours. Later, at about 6:45 a.m. Ambassador Rabin had called again and stated that Israeli reconnaissance had observed Syrian units south of Irbid but they were not sure whether the units represented security forces or were the vanguard for a move south. The Israelis stated that the King could maintain his position for at least another day or more. The Israelis had no territorial ambitions vis-à-vis Jordan, however, they did believe that an attack in support of the King must have some "political cause" and that some adjustment of a technical nature would have to be made as a result of their attack to preclude future technical difficulties. Among Israeli conditions were assurances that the U.S. would protect Israel against Soviet counteraction.<sup>2</sup> Following this call, Dr. Kissinger then called the President.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-109, NSC Meeting Minutes, NSC Minutes Originals 1970. Top Secret; Sensitive. The meeting took place in the White House Cabinet Room.

<sup>2</sup> No other record of either of Rabin's calls has been found.

<sup>3</sup> See Document 297.

Admiral Moorer then reviewed the military situation with emphasis on the ambivalent position taken by Iraqi forces on the eastern flank of the Jordanian army.

Assistant Secretary Sisco stated that it appeared the Israelis had determined that air action alone would not be adequate in view of the deteriorating military situation. Sisco added that we could not assess the time of possible Israeli intervention, that we would not know the hour and that we would probably not have advance notice, although he did not believe that the Israelis could launch attacks prior to Tuesday morning.<sup>4</sup> The question at hand was at what point our coordinating with the Israelis would make their action irreversible. This morning, he stated, it would be necessary to arrive at a new decision on the issue posed by Israel to combine both ground and air action in any intervention which they might undertake.

Secretary Rogers then stated that the important issue was whether or not the Syrians were actually moving south with the view toward taking Amman or whether they intended merely to carve out an enclave in northern Jordan. Admiral Moorer stated that his intelligence suggested that a spearhead of 40 Syrian tanks was indeed moving south. Secretary Laird confirmed that military intelligence suggested that the spearhead was on a route which led to Amman.

Sisco then stated that before the Israelis move one of the conditions listed by them early that morning was the requirement that the King know what they were doing and be in full agreement with it. For this reason, State had sent a message to Embassy Amman to confirm that the King in fact does wish to have Israeli air and ground support.<sup>5</sup> A second issue which must be resolved rapidly is the fact that the Israeli Government apparently insists on establishing liaison with the Jordanian Government before taking any military action. Finally, they have made it clear, as Dr. Kissinger pointed out, that they have no territorial designs in Jordan, although this certainly remains to be seen.

Secretary Laird stated: "At this point, my main concern before any intervention by Israel or the United States is the Congressional attitude and the lack of public understanding of this problem. Whatever we do we should make it clear that Jordan has been attacked and that the survival of the King is crucial from the U.S. interest, especially the long-term perspective. Finally, if there is to be intervention, it must be done quickly with intervening forces moving in rapidly and pulling out rapidly."

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<sup>4</sup> In September 22.

<sup>5</sup> In telegram 154462 to Amman, September 21, 1233Z. (Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Kissinger Papers, Box 172, Geopolitical Files, Jordan Crisis, Selected Exchanges-Jordan, September 1970)



The President then stated that the question at hand is what we do. This depends on whether the Syrians are moving south towards Amman. The question is not necessarily whether the Israelis can win. The question, rather, is what effect will Israeli intervention have on the King. Secondly, what effect will Israeli intervention have on the Soviets. It is difficult to believe that the Soviets are not aware of what the Syrians have been doing. If the Soviets were to move in the face of our messages, both public and private, then I suspect further delay on our part would be dangerous. From the King's perspective also it should be kept in mind it is not so much a question of whether the Syrians intend to take over Amman, but rather the impact that any Syrian action is having on his morale.

Secretary Rogers stated that he agreed with the overall assessment of the situation and was relieved to learn, as the Israeli Ambassador pointed out, that we have some additional time. Secretary Rogers added that although the King thought that the Syrians were moving on Amman, this was not the case in his view. Therefore, it was necessary to find out again what the King's feelings were with respect to Israeli intervention. In light of the possibility that the Syrians were not moving on Amman, obviously, Rogers stated, Israel was playing it cool. They wanted liaison with the Jordanians, perhaps even a common staff for the conduct of their operations in Jordan. On balance, Rogers insisted, it would be far better if the King could do the job himself. If he had to call on Israel, it was likely that he would be doomed in any event. Secretary Rogers also raised the question of U.S. motivations for encouraging Israeli intervention and asked whether this was not really benefitting the Israelis more than anyone else. He judged that Israel had probably not made up its own mind yet with respect to intervention. Finally, he cautioned, it was most important that we know exactly what course of action the U.S. should pursue with respect to the Soviets. He stated: "I am relaxed about the situation, but for God's sake, let's know what we are going to do. I am relieved to learn that we have a little more time."

Secretary Laird stated that we should not give the Israelis a go-ahead at this time, but that we should tell them to be prepared to move. The President commented that it would be necessary to investigate what the consequences would be of too long a delay. We have considered carefully, he stated, what the effect of our own intervention might be and the possibility of Soviet counteraction. The U.S. has also made it clear to all parties that this Government considers the Syrian action most grave. If the King falls and we take no action, then we still will have to face the possibility of a requirement to intervene to evacuate our people. The President stated that if he were the King, he would take a rather dim view of the prospect of Israeli intervention in his country. On the other hand, the King can ask himself, who will help.

Without air or air and ground assistance in the present circumstances, the King will probably fall. The worst thing the U.S. could do would be to delay too long in deference to either the Soviets or the King's own inhibitions. Both are grim prospects. Intervening now has its risks, but the other consequence is to let the King fall and then to have to intervene to evacuate our people. At the same time our warning to the Soviets and the Syrians would be permitted to go unheeded.

Assistant Secretary Sisco suggested we might again consider the United Nations. President Nixon stated firmly that he wanted no more exchanges of notes between Governments and no more references to the United Nations. Secretary Rogers interjected that he was not asking for a delay but rather extreme caution before moving so that we do not get into an inflexible position. The President commented that the Administration would take a severe beating domestically. He added that the King must make his own position clear and that we must know this position. Above all, it was essential that he know that we are supporting him so that his morale and own determination would be strengthened at this critical time. Secretary Rogers again made the point that previous requests for assistance from the King were based on his assumption that Syrian tanks were moving on Amman.

The President then noted that one option might be for the Israelis to move into Syria. Secretary Laird added that they might strike Syrian air fields. Secretary Rogers commented that in his view militarily Syria was the best target, but politically Jordan was preferable.

Assistant Secretary Sisco cautioned that another twenty-four hour delay might be too much for the King's morale. Perhaps it would be better, he suggested, to inform the King and the Israelis that we agreed in principle to air and ground intervention, subject to final review sometime later that day. It was obvious that the King would agree with Israeli air strikes and perhaps we might urge them to initiate at least the air strikes that day. Secretary Sisco then stated that while there would be no further diplomatic move toward the Soviets, he hoped that the President would keep an open mind on a further approach in the event the signal was given to Israel to initiate air strikes so that the Soviets would know our position on the situation. The President agreed but cautioned that another note to the Soviets without any action on our part or on the part of Israel was not a practical course of action.

Secretary Rogers then said that he had some severe reservations about telling Israel how to conduct their operation. It would be difficult for the United States to dictate to the Israelis in this regard. Perhaps all we should do was tell them to go ahead in principle, get an answer from the King with respect to his desires, and then suggest to Israel that they do it in such a way as to achieve maximum results and a quick solution. In any event, it would be a terrible diplomatic mess.

The President indicated that first, he wanted whatever action was taken to be taken with the view toward maximum success. The operations, he stated, must succeed militarily. Second, with respect to political and diplomatic considerations, it was obvious that air action alone would be preferable. Third, if it was Israeli military judgment, however, that ground action must be taken as well, then indeed we should support both air and ground operations.

The President then asked the group to consider the Syrian invasion problem, and questioned whether or not an Israeli invasion of Syria did not in effect constitute a more difficult problem. If the Israelis moved into Syria, the Soviet involvement certainly would be more likely. Secretary Rogers asked if Israeli action against Syria was the only alternative. The President replied that it might be possible that they would feel impelled to strike Egypt. Secretary Rogers then recalled that Allon had stated Sunday that action against Egypt was not necessary. The President stated that in any event, air action alone would be preferable. Dr. Kissinger agreed but noted it might not be sufficient to do the job. The President then commented that obviously the surest solution was to favor both air and ground action by the Israelis. If they go they will obviously, as they have already told us, want to do both.

Secretary Rogers asked if it might not be possible to start close air reconnaissance that day. Assistant Secretary Sisco stated that he would suggest air action today and if that proved to be defective, we would have bought at least some time before having to decide on full intervention. At the same time, we could tell the Israelis that we agree to both actions in principle. The President stated that on balance he felt that it would be preferable not to tell the Israelis how to do the job. They were in control of their own military and they had their own political motives. We should use the Israeli message as a pretext to check once and for all whether or not the King would agree with Israeli intervention. The President confirmed that it was important to know the King's feeling as to the present situation. Admiral Moorer commented that the Israelis may not be in too much of a hurry to act since they might prefer to let the Arabs deplete each other's strength before actually moving, out of purely military and political considerations.

Secretary Rogers then asked, if the King falls, what will the Israelis have achieved? Admiral Moorer replied that the situation would be changed little, but that the Israeli military task would be considerably easier with both sides depleted. Secretary Rogers referred to the message received on Sunday from the Israelis in which they expressed a desire to establish liaison with the Jordanians. Dr. Kissinger stated that those conditions established yesterday by Israel occurred before the exchange with the Israelis the previous night. Assistant Secretary Sisco commented that in any event, the Israeli communication of early Mon-

day morning would be a good vehicle for inquiring again as to the King's view.<sup>6</sup>

The President stated that we should get a message off immediately to the King and asked how long it would take to get a response. Secretary Rogers stated that this would be difficult to judge since we would have some difficulty on the ground in Amman communicating with the King and that we had used a combination of radio and telephone. The President stated that in the meantime, we should inform the Israelis that we are checking with the Jordanians.<sup>7</sup> Tell them we are favorable in principle to their intervention pending final receipt of the King's reaction. In either event, the Israelis must know that they have a free hand. If we do tell them this, we are, of course, bringing the whole thing to a head.

The President then asked if our evacuation plans were ready to go if required. Admiral Moorer stated that they had intensified readiness measures and thereby lowered essential lead times for military action by U.S. forces. The President asked how long specifically it would take. Admiral Moorer stated that our forces were on a four-hour alert which when added to 4½ hours flight time would total roughly 8½ hours to get the force of first U.S. elements on the ground. He also added that the need to obtain overflight clearances from the Austrians was still outstanding. The President commented that we could just move and not worry about the clearances.

The President then asked Mr. Sisco whether or not we had coordinated possible action with the British and what the British plans were. Sisco replied that they have no forces that could assist and that Mr. Hume had suggested that they would do nothing. Secretary Laird stated that they have personnel also in Jordan and should certainly feel an obligation.

Assistant Secretary Sisco stated that we have not really put it to the British in these terms. Secretary Rogers asked whether or not we should tell the United Kingdom about our plans if we decide to support Israeli intervention. Dr. Kissinger stated that the only thing the British know at this point is that we have conveyed the message they received from the King requesting intervention.<sup>8</sup> The President stated

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<sup>6</sup> Telegram 5211 from Tel Aviv, September 21, 1138Z, reported the Israeli Government's continued desire to create an operational and political liaison with Jordan to coordinate an attack on Syrian forces. The Israelis wanted information from the Jordanians to assist them in identifying Syrian forces from Jordanian forces as well as other intelligence to aid them in launching an operation. (Ibid.)

<sup>7</sup> The instructions to inform the Israelis were transmitted in telegram 154501 to Tel Aviv, September 21, 1630Z. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 619, Country Files, Middle East, Jordan Crisis)

<sup>8</sup> See Document 279.

that he could see no objection to letting the British know. Secretary Laird commented that we should make our contacts now in the event of a possible need to intervene by U.S. forces for the evacuation of U.S. citizens. The President concluded the discussion of this point by stating it was important that the British know what we are going to do but only at that point in time in which we are sure of what we are going to do ourselves.

Secretary Rogers asked how we should play Israeli intervention. Should we suggest that the Israelis initiated this action on their own with U.S. knowledge or in fact with U.S. encouragement? The President responded that this would have to be resolved and that it was equally important that we know precisely how we would act with the Congress and that the Congress was even a more important consideration. Perhaps it would be better not to do any consultations that morning but to tell them later that we are ready to move to evacuate U.S. citizens. In this way, they would know that some military action was imminent.

Secretary Laird suggested that we also consider giving to the Congressional leadership the military facts of life right now, perhaps through a military briefing. We could tell them that we have prepared evacuation contingency plans but that nothing has been decided. The President asked if anyone had an objection to this course of action. Secretary Rogers stated that what we are really talking about, however, is Israeli intervention. This could lead to a new Middle East war. If we are to give the Israelis a go-ahead, the results could be most serious. Congress, Secretary Rogers stated, must know the consequences of these actions. The Soviets also must know. The Soviets have to be aware of what is being done and why, if we are to avoid another confrontation with the Soviet Union. We also have the problem, Secretary Rogers stated, that everyone will suspect that we plotted with the Israelis for the action. Thus, we will need very careful and detailed Congressional coordination if we are to acquiesce in Israeli intervention.

The President then asked Dr. Kissinger how he thought the situation should be played. Dr. Kissinger stated that it would be most difficult to specifically inform the Congress that we were working in collaboration with the Israelis. On the other hand, we might keep our consultation in the most general terms with some emphasis on the fact that it might be necessary to use U.S. military forces short of intervention and that before using these forces we would consult. The President reaffirmed that the U.S. should inform the Congress that we would indeed consult before intervening. Secretary Rogers stated that this was well and good but that with respect to Israeli intervention, we cannot lie to the Hill. Would it not be possible to just inform the leaders that we have discussed this with the Israeli Government but have

made no decision? Secretary Laird commented that he did not think that the Congressmen would press us that hard. The President stated that we should just discuss the military situation with them.

Secretary Rogers then asked what we would tell Congress if we decided to go ahead with Israeli intervention. Certainly it would become public quite soon and if it comes out in the newspapers that we have worked in collaboration with the Israelis, then what. For all these reasons, Secretary Rogers strongly suggested that we should consult with the Congress specifically about Israeli intervention. The President stated that it might be that we would not wish to make the King's request public because it would certainly be damaging to him. Therefore, opening up the whole issue of Israeli intervention with the Congress posed great difficulties. Assistant Secretary Sisco said that if we say "yes, we have consulted with the Israelis", this is tantamount to collusion. Maybe we would be much better off just suggesting benevolent acquiescence. The President stated that should the question arise, we should state that we were aware of the possibility of Israeli intervention, but deny that we were working with them actively on this possibility. And finally, we should add that we understand the reasons for their action.

Secretary Rogers then stated that certainly the Soviets should know where we stand on this issue. Dr. Kissinger commented that the Israelis will not want us to inform the Soviets for purely military reasons and they certainly would not want us to go to the Soviets in the role of negotiating Israeli military action. The President stated that this was obviously a correct conclusion. The facts are that the Israelis are moving, that the Secretary warned the Soviets of this possibility,<sup>9</sup> that we understand the reasons for the Israeli action, and that we want to caution all other states not to further complicate the situation.

Secretary Rogers stated that we will need Congressional support if the going gets rough, and certainly it is necessary that we consider notifying key members of the Congress. The President stated this may be so but that he thought that Secretary Laird's idea of a briefing was preferable.

Secretary Rogers said that he was talking about the situation that would come next after the Israelis move in. It was likely, he stated, that Senator Russell<sup>10</sup> would insist that the U.S. not intervene if and when the Israelis decide to move. Then we could say that we would move only if the super powers get involved. The President stated, just tell the Congressional leaders that we would not intervene without consultation.

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<sup>9</sup> See footnote 2, Document 276.

<sup>10</sup> Senator Richard Russell (D-GA) was Chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee.

Dr. Kissinger then commented that he believed the first thing that must be done is to provide them with a military briefing, as Mr. Laird has suggested. Secondly, we can tell the leaders that we will not intervene without consultation but we must be careful not to deflate the balloon. One of the operative pressures on the other side is their fear of a unilateral U.S. move. The President indicated that Dr. Kissinger was correct and that he saw this point. He added that Ziegler should say nothing beyond the fact that we have stated our position, that the Secretary of State's statement of yesterday<sup>11</sup> stands on its own, and that we are watching the situation most carefully. It is important that we do consult with the Congress before the Israelis move so that we achieve their cooperation. Dr. Kissinger confirmed that he favored the action as outlined by Secretary Laird and elaborated further in the conversation.

The President then stated that he wanted the WSAG to put a precise scenario together. Dr. Kissinger replied that there would be a meeting of the WSAG at noon.<sup>12</sup> Secretary Rogers again stated that he believed we should tell the Congressmen what we know about Israeli actions and that we have been in consultation with them. We should tell them that while we will not intervene, we won't discourage Israel from doing so, and that if they move, it is with the King's blessing. Dr. Kissinger added that it was very important that no one suspect that we have been moving jointly with the Israelis on this issue. The President agreed stating that all we need say is that we were aware of the Israeli plans and had discussed them but nothing further.

Secretary Rogers then commented that on the question of the use of U.S. forces, we need merely tell the leaders that we are making preparations in the event it is necessary to evacuate U.S. personnel. The President stated that we should limit this consultation to Russell and Stennis and not a whole number of others. Secretary Laird asked about Senator Mansfield. The President agreed that Mansfield should be consulted. The President added that Mansfield had told him that he would support action if it were required.

The President then directed that the WSAG work out a precise scenario and that it get a message to the King to obtain a precise feeling for his most current view of Israeli intervention, especially on the ground. Secretary Rogers suggested that the group meet again before the day ended. The President agreed that they should meet as soon as the King's reply was received. Dr. Kissinger suggested late in the afternoon. The President then concluded the meeting by informing the group that they would reconvene at 6:00 p.m.<sup>13</sup> The meeting adjourned.

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<sup>11</sup> See footnote 3, Document 275.

<sup>12</sup> See Document 303.

<sup>13</sup> See Document 307.

**300. Transcript of a Telephone Conversation Among the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger), Secretary of State Rogers, and the Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs (Sisco)<sup>1</sup>**

Washington, September 21, 1970, 10:22 a.m.

R: Joe's on the line too. We have to touch base on how we will do this discussion with Rabin.

K: I think State should do it. Joe, so you will not—

R: He will do it and he will ask him to come in now. He will tell you exactly what we will say.

S: What do you think we should say?

K: What the Secy. proposes—we agree in principle and would like to review later in the day. We have passed it to the King and if he disagrees, we would want to consider that. It must succeed and we have preference for air action but if it must be coupled we will go with that. And confine it to Jordan.

S: That's all the points I have.

R: We haven't conveyed it to the King. We are conveying it.

K: Bill, you may not have seen it. We have a flash from Brown which says that in the King's mind, ground action is different.<sup>2</sup> We need the King's thinking exactly.

R: We will pass this message right away<sup>3</sup> and it should take care of it.

K: Send out the flash and try to get the King's thinking. By the meeting this afternoon.

R: We will if we can reach the King. I can't believe the King will [omission in the original] without knowing the intentions of the troops.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, Kissinger Telephone Conversations, Box 30, Chronological Files. No classification marking.

<sup>2</sup> Telegram 5008 from Amman, September 21, 1345Z. (Ibid., NSC Files, Box 619, Country Files, Middle East, Jordan Crisis)

<sup>3</sup> In telegram 154488 to Amman, September 21, 1545Z, the Department asked Brown to ascertain Hussein's reaction to Israeli ground intervention. (Ibid., RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, POL 27 ARAB–ISR)



**301. Transcript of a Telephone Conversation Between the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) and the Israeli Ambassador (Rabin)<sup>1</sup>**

Washington, September 21, 1970, 10:25 a.m.

K: We have asked Sisco to talk to you in a few minutes and you will be getting a call from him. He will give you a reply which in principle is yes but I would like to make the following suggestion. The less you say in reply, the better. Just say you will communicate with your government and then come in and see me. It's terribly important that we know who says what to whom and I will give you guidelines on that.

R: In the meantime I have instructions too. More detailed.

K: Can you give them to me?

R: The gist after the decision that took place estimates that our military activity to prevent Syrian and Iraqi taking over in Jordan would require activation and operation of a relatively large force on our part. Second, we have to assume that as a result there might be resumption of hostilities even along the Suez Canal. It would be a clear cut Israeli intervention against another intervention in Jordan. As a result even though the attitude is positive as a result of our experience of the last few months I have been instructed to make clear certain points. The first, will the U.S. approach Israel formally in this matter? Second, will the King agree to request our assistance and undertake methods of communication and coordination? Third, a little more clarification—how will U.S. prevent Soviet participation? Fourth, is it understood that the U.S. will side with us in the international political arena including U.N. veto on grounds that Syria threatens Israel and not only Jordan? We might find ourselves in and they will order our withdrawal immediately. The fifth question, is it clear that Israel will not be held responsible for the fate of the hostages? And 6th, I think this on the political side any public statement made by U.S. in regard to this question we hope to know about it beforehand. I know it's—

K: Is it possible for you to separate these questions in your meeting with Sisco or can you wait until after?

R: I have put them to you. I can get Sisco's answer and communicate it back and then wait.

K: And then communicate back to Sisco?

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, Kissinger Telephone Conversations, Box 30, Chronological Files. No classification marking.

R: No, get Sisco and then in the meantime if I get clarification from you, I will be able to know what to do else.

K: I cannot work—just get Sisco’s answer and we will discuss—make the first point to him. That’s been our great contention here and it’s important they hear it from you.

R: Fine.

K: You will have to follow my recommendations. I may ask you to put them into channels. Receive communications and make the first point. Then call Haig and make an appointment here. You will have to assume what I tell you is in the interest of everybody. The questions will get to the President. On the basis of his answer I may ask you to give the list to Sisco.

R: I have a cable that says if we have positive answers the tendency of the Cabinet is to respond positively.

K: That’s second. What’s the first point?

R: This is not a question. It’s a statement. Any military activity—

K: That’s what I want you to communicate. Just that much, no more.

R: I will do it.

K: Then come in and go back to him. I will decide how to handle it.

R: I will come when you are free.

K: You see Sisco and then come over here.

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**302. Transcript of a Telephone Conversation Between the President’s Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) and the Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs (Sisco)<sup>1</sup>**

Washington, September 21, 1970, 11:50 a.m.

K: Have you had Rabin in?

S: He is on his way in.

K: The President just asked me.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, Kissinger Telephone Conversations, Box 30, Chronological Files. No classification marking.

S: We called him 15 mins. ago. He must be at the Secy's office. I think the Secy. will have me do it.

K: That's better.

S: I think that's how it will work out.

K: Freeman is on his way in to see the Secy.<sup>2</sup> Did you get that flash out?

S: Yes. We agree in principle air and ground subject to review later in the day. We have passed the message to the King and urged the King to get in touch with the Israelis. We have asked the King what he thinks of Israeli ground action.<sup>3</sup> Air action [omission in the original]. If he disagrees we would want to take that into account. Governing principles which must succeed. How do we define the objective? To force Syria from Jordan.

K: Exactly.

S: We prefer air action but we defer to Israel's judgment. We strongly prefer in Jordan which is the source rather than in Syria. I will get a cable out reporting it. To Tel Aviv and Amman.<sup>4</sup>

K: Are you coming to the WSAG?

S: Eventually.

K: What about 5015?<sup>5</sup>

S: Sit tight. We have two cables in 1 and half hours and they are diametrically opposed.<sup>6</sup>

K: OK. I will wait.

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<sup>2</sup> A report on the meeting is in telegram 154587 to London, September 21, 1919Z. (Ibid., NSC Files, Box 727, Country Files, Europe, United Kingdom, Vol. III)

<sup>3</sup> See footnote 3, Document 300.

<sup>4</sup> Telegram 154558 to Amman and Tel Aviv, September 21, 1824Z. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 619, Country Files, Middle East, Jordan Crisis)

<sup>5</sup> In telegram 5015 from Amman, September 21, 1435Z, the Embassy reported that the Syrians had occupied all of Irbid and had moved into surrounding villages. The King called for an immediate air strike to alleviate the pressure on the JAA and accepted the possibility of an Israeli air strike against the Syrians, even though he preferred a U.S. air strike. (Ibid., RG 59, Central Files 1970-73, POL 27 ARAB-ISR)

<sup>6</sup> Sisco is referring to telegrams 5015 and 5007 from Amman. Telegram 5007, September 21, 1310Z, preceded telegram 5015 by one hour and 25 minutes. It reported that the situation in Jordan was "better than it was this morning," with Syrian forces not moving and reports of Syrian tanks withdrawing from Jordan and returning to Syria. (Ibid.)

### 303. Minutes of a Washington Special Actions Group Meeting<sup>1</sup>

Washington, September 21, 1970, noon–1 p.m.

#### SUBJECT

Middle East

#### PARTICIPATION

Chairman—Henry A. Kissinger

State—

U. Alexis Johnson

Talcott Seelye

Defense—

David Packard

G. Warren Nutter

James Noyes

JCS—

Adm. Thomas H. Moorer

Lt. Gen. John W. Vogt

CIA—

Lt. Gen. R.E. Cushman

David Blee

NSC Staff—

Gen. Alexander Haig

Col. Richard Kennedy

Harold H. Saunders

Samuel Hoskinson

Adm. R.C. Robinson

Jeanne W. Davis

#### SUMMARY OF DECISIONS

It was agreed that:

1. State will prepare two versions of a draft public statement we might make after an Israeli move: one confined to the local situation in the area and one in the general context of the peace initiative;

2. the NSC staff will collect the various aid packages for Israel into one package;

3. State will prepare a scenario including:

—what we might say to the Soviets, the NAC, the Security Council  
—a UN strategy

4. NSC staff to put together a book of all the contingency plans, with the readiness times.

Mr. Johnson: Cairo radio has announced that there will be a summit meeting in Cairo and that Hussein has agreed to attend.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-114, Washington Special Actions Group, WSAG Minutes (Originals) 1969 and 1970. Top Secret; Sensitive; Nodis. The meeting took place in the White House Situation Room.

<sup>2</sup> On September 22, a meeting of Arab leaders convened in Cairo to find a solution to the fighting between the JAA and fedayeen. The conference sent a mediation mission to Amman that day, led by Sudanese President Numeiri, in an attempt to talk with King Hussein and make contact with Arafat. The mission returned to Cairo to report on the

Mr. Kissinger: (referring to the recent flurry of telegrams from Amman) You pick your telegram and you take your choice.<sup>3</sup> Do you believe the Cairo announcement?

Mr. Johnson: We have no reason to doubt it.

Mr. Kissinger: Let's review the situation. The Jordanians still want an air strike—if necessary, an Israeli air strike. It is our Ambassador's judgment that their request for assistance does not include Israeli ground action. We are asking him to get a clear-cut answer on this from the Palace. We also have an Israeli request for staff contacts. The King wants the U.S. and the British to prepare for ground intervention. If the Syrians withdrew, do we think the Jordanians might be able to handle the remaining problem?

Mr. Seelye: If the Syrians localize their activity in the Irbid area and the Iraqis do not intervene, there is a chance the King could take care of it. He could deploy his armor in the north. It would depend on whether or not he has secured the cities. There are two critical factors: whether the Syrians move south and Iraqi intervention.

Admiral Moorer: The King has made reasonable progress in Amman. Assuming he succeeds there, the Syrians withdraw, the Iraqis do not move, and Hussein takes the cities he would be okay.

Mr. Kissinger: He has been making reasonable progress in Amman for four days. Is he moving fast enough to cope with the situation?

Mr. Packard: He will still need some armor in Amman.

Admiral Moorer: Yes, but not as much.

Mr. Kissinger: If the Syrians withdraw and the Iraqis do not intervene, is it our judgment that Hussein could handle the Fedayeen?

General Cushman: It depends whether or not the Fedayeen continue their present tactics.

Mr. Packard: He probably could not put them out, but they could not put him out.

Admiral Moorer: He could handle them in the cities, but guerrilla activity and sniping would continue for an indeterminate period.

General Cushman: Particularly if their leadership remains intact.

Mr. Johnson: If the Syrians don't move south and the King effects a reasonably stable situation in Amman, he could turn to them later. What the Syrians have done so far has had no catastrophic effect on

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conditions in Jordan, and then traveled again to Amman on September 24. The mission met with Arafat and abetted his escape to Cairo by providing him a disguise. Ultimately, King Hussein flew to Cairo, and on September 27, he and Arafat signed a cease-fire agreement at the Cairo Hilton.

<sup>3</sup> See footnotes 5 and 6, Document 302.

the Jordanian forces except for the psychological effect. It has had not real military effect.

Admiral Moorer: It has had an effect on the morale of the troops. Here, we are talking about the King's will.

Mr. Johnson: The last message indicated that the Syrians are moving into the villages around Irbid, not necessarily driving south.<sup>4</sup>

Mr. Kissinger: What conclusion do you draw from this?

Mr. Johnson: That we have more time—that the urgency of the action is somewhat reduced.

Mr. Kissinger: That is true if we assume that the only threat to Amman is the Syrian tanks moving on Amman. In some cables, the King has said that the presence of Syrian forces in Irbid has demoralized his troops.

Mr. Johnson: I read that as meaning the threat represented by the Syrian troops—not merely their presence.

Admiral Moorer: But the threat exists as long as they are present.

Mr. Kissinger: (to General Cushman) Would you like to update the situation for us?

General Cushman: We have a report [*less than 1 line not declassified*] that some tanks are moving from Irbid toward Mafraq. We have no hard confirmation but are watching this movement. We also have a Reuters report of an Amman radio announcement that the King has ordered a cease-fire. We don't know what conditions he may have attached or what he actually said.

Mr. Johnson: Didn't I see a report that some Syrian tanks had moved back?

General Cushman: Yes. The bulk of the force is digging-in in Irbid. But some tanks are moving to the southeast and some have gone home. This situation is unclear.

The Iraqis have still not fired a shot, although they have brought their forces together in the Mafraq area. They have asked the Jordanians to get their aircraft out of the field there and move them to H-5 so that the Iraqis would not be affected on the ground by any air combat. In Amman, fighting is still going on around the Embassy. The Jordanian Army does not have control. We have conflicting reports of what has happened in the refugee camps. The Jordanian Army holds parts of them. The Embassy area is still full of snipers, some commando re-infiltration has been reported, but we don't know how serious this is. There have been some flights by the Jordanian Air Force Hawker Hunters—they have 18 of them. The 104s have not been used so far.

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<sup>4</sup> Telegram 5007 from Amman; see footnote 6, Document 302.

There has been heavy Israeli air recce, with reports of helicopters being used. Israel has increased its alert measures and has moved two mechanized infantry brigades into the Golan Heights area.

Mr. Kissinger: Does this mean they have called up their reserves?

General Cushman: Yes. They have called some reserves, but we have no details.

Admiral Moorer: It doesn't take them long to mobilize.

Mr. Kissinger: I understand from 48 to 72 hours.

Admiral Moorer: They have both regular and reserve personnel in the same units. They only have to call up the reserves to fill up the cadres.

Mr. Kissinger: Any further movement on the diplomatic side?

Mr. Johnson: No.

Mr. Kissinger: In the meeting of the principals this morning with the President,<sup>5</sup> it was agreed to ask Amman to find out exactly what the King thinks about Israeli ground activity. Also, State has told Rabin: (1) that we agree in principle to their intervention; (2) that we would prefer an air strike but would understand if they feel ground action is essential; (3) we prefer they not enter Syria; (4) our agreement is contingent on the King's acquiescence; and (5) we reserve the right to reconsider our position in the light of changes in the situation during the day.<sup>6</sup> We don't know what the Israelis will reply, but we need to plan on the assumption that the operation will take place, even though we hope it will not be necessary. We have two major problems: our diplomatic posture and our public posture.

The President has asked this group to talk about Congressional consultations. What should we say? Everyone agreed in the meeting of the principals that Congress should be briefed today if possible on the factual situation, but not on anyone's intentions. They also agreed we should make no commitment at that briefing as to what we would or would not do. The more difficult question is what we tell Congress if Israeli action becomes inevitable.

Mr. Packard: In the factual briefing, we should stick to the line that our alerting actions are precautionary moves in the event we have to evacuate American citizens—nothing beyond.

Mr. Kissinger: I didn't understand that. I thought we were to leave this hanging in the posture of last week, saying only that we were planning for contingencies.

Mr. Packard: The contingencies include the possibility of an evacuation to save Americans.

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<sup>5</sup> See Document 299.

<sup>6</sup> See footnote 4, Document 302.

Mr. Kissinger: For today, we should brief on the military situation, and say that all planning is contingency planning without saying for what. Tomorrow, if the Israelis take action, we can say our planning is for the purpose of evacuation. We can promise to consult with the Congress if we go beyond that. Today I think it is important not to defuse our possible actions too much. We should say nothing about Israeli actions and say nothing one way or another about our own actions.

Mr. Johnson: Can't we say we have been in touch with the Israelis?

Mr. Kissinger: We are talking about the President or Secretary Laird briefing the Congressional leadership?

Mr. Packard: We are sending Dick (?) up to see Senator Russell and Stennis and Congressman Mahan to give them the facts. He will say our actions are preparing for the possibility of evacuating Americans. This is no more than Secretary Laird said on Saturday.<sup>7</sup>

Admiral Moorer: There is a newspaper story today that the 82nd Airborne has been alerted. After we brief them on the military situation, we can say we are taking normal precautions to protect Americans.

Mr. Kissinger: Ron Ziegler last week, on the instruction of the President, left it open to what we might do.<sup>8</sup> I don't see what we gain by foreclosing the situation.

General Haig: Ziegler thinks that, if he is asked whether or not we intend to intervene, an attempt to stone wall would bring on a massive scare story. If asked about our planning, he would like to say that there are many Americans in the area and we are taking precautionary measures.

Mr. Packard: Our reports to Congress will be limited to two or three people the President can trust. That is why we are going to Stennis and Russell.

Mr. Johnson: What about Senator Mansfield?

Mr. Packard: Yes, but Defense is not going to Mansfield.

Mr. Johnson: We are working on a master fact sheet<sup>9</sup> to provide the basis for further briefing. It will be available within the next hour, we hope, and we will circulate it.

Mr. Kissinger: (to Saunders) Make sure everyone gets it.

Mr. Johnson: We are starting with the peace initiative, saying that all of these recent actions are directed toward sabotaging that peace effort.

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<sup>7</sup> September 19.

<sup>8</sup> See footnote 2, Document 257.

<sup>9</sup> Paper prepared by the NEA Working Group, entitled, "Fact Sheet on Events Leading Up to Syrian Invasion of Jordan." (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-077, Washington Special Actions Group Meetings, WSAG Meeting Middle East 9/21/70)



Mr. Packard: With regard to our relations with Israel, we can say we are exchanging information but no more.

Mr. Johnson: Yes, that would be the natural thing to do. I will check on consulting with Senator Mansfield.

Mr. Seelye: The Jordanian Government instructed their man in New York to request a Security Council meeting. His Arab colleagues all objected, and he has gone back to Amman for further instructions. This means the Jordanians won't call for a meeting soon, but the British are now gung ho to do so. The Secretary is going to the British to try to cool them off.

Admiral Moorer: Are we also trying to coordinate our evacuation plans with the British?

Mr. Kissinger: Is the Secretary discussing that with the British too?

Mr. Seelye: I don't know.

Mr. Kissinger: Can you give a read-out on the Secretary's conversation with Freeman so all are informed.<sup>10</sup>

Mr. Johnson: Yes.

Mr. Kissinger: In the Congressional briefings, if the Israeli attacks take place, the Secretary of State feels strongly, and I agree, that we must talk to the Congressional leaders ahead of time. There are two problems: (1) the degree to which we want to indicate our advance knowledge of Israel's plans; and (2) the degree to which we indicate the limitations we have put on the action. From the point of view of honesty, we should of course tell them as much as possible. From the diplomatic point of view, both Israel and the US might prefer not to be so closely coupled. It is not in our or Israel's interest for Israel to appear as an agent of American imperialism. It would be better for Israel to act to protect its national security. Although this is unpalatable to the Arabs, they have lived with it for twenty years. If Israel is protecting its own security and also running errands for the US, it would be most unpleasant. We should have minimal formal association with Israel from the point of view of the Arab world. Also, we would not be needed with the Arabs if Israel goes in in a major effort. We would be needed to keep the Soviets out. We don't have to couple our intentions with those of Israel. We could take the position that Israel is acting in its own interest, and we will prevent Soviet military intervention in the Middle East. We have a ticklish problem, though. One could argue that a show of US toughness will assure that the Soviets won't intervene. What can we tell Congress ahead of time? Consultation with Congressional leaders would be okay, but putting the issue to a vote might weaken the deterrent. Is that a fair statement?

Mr. Johnson and Mr. Packard: Yes.

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<sup>10</sup> See footnote 2, Document 302.

Mr. Kissinger: Does anyone think we should publicly avow joint planning with Israel? If no one does, what degree of prior knowledge can we admit?

Mr. Packard: We have been thinking about this and we might get Israel to make a statement along the following lines: (Reading)

“The invasion of Soviet supplied tanks from Syria against the Government of Jordan, for whose people Prime Minister Meir has expressed concern, poses an intolerable threat to the security of Israel. Therefore, action is being taken to meet this threat. The Government of Israel has stated that it could not tolerate any shift of military forces in the Middle East which could threaten the safety of the citizens of Israel. For this reason, Israeli aircraft and ground force units are attacking the forces from Syria which have invaded Jordan and their support elements. No further details are available at this time.”

Then, the US response could be to refer to the Israeli statement.

Mr. Johnson: We could add that Israel has said it is not interested in occupation.

Mr. Kissinger: Do we say we agree with the Israeli statement? Or understand the statement?

Mr. Packard: We could just refer to it with no further comment.

Mr. Kissinger: Remember we would probably be in the UN within 24 hours. Are we prepared to veto a resolution condemning Israel's actions?

Mr. Johnson: From the UN side, obviously the best situation would be to preempt on the withdrawal of Syrian forces. Then Israel can be in the holy position of helping support the UN.

Mr. Kissinger: The Soviets wouldn't agree to condemn Syria.

Mr. Johnson: No, but we would be in the best position.

Mr. Kissinger: With regard to public posture, in the meeting of the principals this afternoon, I intend to sum up our general philosophy, but we have left open what we should say about Israel's actions. Should we say we knew beforehand? That we were generally informed?

Mr. Packard: It would be hard not to say at least that.

Mr. Seelye: The Arabs will assume collusion. We have to give them the least possible justification.

Mr. Kissinger: What is the least possible justification?

Mr. Seelye: That we didn't know.

Mr. Johnson: Israel won't let us get away with that.

Admiral Moorer: And no one would believe it.

Mr. Johnson: We could say we knew of their concern over the situation.

Mr. Kissinger: We could say we knew in a general way if things got to a certain stage, the Israelis would probably feel compelled to move.

This is why we have been urgently pleading with others to stay out; why we told the Soviets they should try to get the Syrians to withdraw. After three days of a Syrian advance, we understand why Israel felt it had to take action.

Mr. Seelye: Could we say we couldn't hold off the Israelis any longer?

Adm. Moorer: The Israeli position would be consistent with the statement we are proposing they make—they would say they could not tolerate any shift of military forces in the Middle East which could threaten their citizens.

Mr. Johnson: We will try to work out some language. I would like to get back to the point that all this is designed to sabotage the peace initiative, and we are trying to get a restoration of the situation.

Mr. Kissinger: Israel won't buy that.

Mr. Johnson: But we can and should say it.

Mr. Kissinger: (to State) Could you bring us two versions of a draft statement: one confined to the local situation in the area and one in the general context of the peace initiative. The question is first what we tell the Congressional leaders, which has to be consistent with what we plan to tell the public. Can we follow the line "you brought this on by expanding the conflict in the area, but we will not intervene unless powers outside the area intervene?"

Mr. Johnson: What can we say to Congress if powers outside the area do intervene?

Mr. Kissinger: We are committed to Israel.

Mr. Johnson: But what can we say publicly?

Mr. Kissinger: We can say that, if there is outside intervention, we will confer with Congressional leaders before considering US intervention. Would that be enough for the Israelis? More important, would it be enough for the Russians?

Mr. Seelye: Yes, I think so.

Mr. Johnson: It depends on the degree to which it backfires and we get statements from the Hill denouncing it.

Mr. Kissinger: If we have any hope of getting this over quickly, it will be by overwhelming the Soviets.

Mr. Johnson: I don't think the Soviets will overtly intervene.

Mr. Kissinger: Then there is no problem. We would then get to the various aid packages for Israel if the Egyptians, with Soviet help, move against them. Are we getting these together? (to Saunders and Kennedy) Can you get all these things in one package?

Mr. Packard: I would like Bob Pranger to work directly with the Israeli Attaché on this. We are ready to go but we need some details.

Mr. Kissinger: Go ahead and do it, and feed it to Saunders and Kennedy so we will have it all in one place. All the principals will get copies.

Mr. Packard: We need some feedback on what the Israelis need.

Mr. Kissinger: This would not go into effect unless they need it and without our concurrence in what they do.

Adm. Moorer: The DIA assessment concludes that the Soviets will not intervene, but we can't give the impression publicly that we accept this and are ignoring the Soviets. That is the most likely outcome, but we should keep looking over our shoulders.

Mr. Packard: We must be prudent.

Mr. Nutter: They might be thinking the same way we are about an initial show of force.

Mr. Kissinger: Let's get a draft statement of exactly what we should say.

Mr. Johnson: We shouldn't publicly say that we don't think they will intervene.

Mr. Kissinger: But we should warn against anyone outside the area going in.

Mr. Johnson: In effect, yes. We will let Israel deal with the Arabs, just as we were willing to let the Jordanians deal with their own conflict. But we are against broadening the conflict. We have two problems: we have to say something to the Congressional leaders about what we will do. This may be close to what we have to tell the Soviets. Congress will ask what an Israeli attack means so far as US action is concerned. We will say we have no plans for intervention unless the Soviets intervene. This will leak, but I think that's the only kind of public statement to make. We can't have Ziegler and Henkin and McCloskey stand up and say that. How about the diplomatic scenario?

Mr. Johnson [*Seelye?*]: We just have a checklist at the moment.

Mr. Kissinger: We need an outline of what to say to the Soviets.

Mr. Johnson: Yes, to the Soviets, to NAC, to the Security Council, etc.

Mr. Kissinger: We need a checklist, the content of an approach, a UN strategy—whether to veto or not. I assume we would veto.

Mr. Seelye: If we did not, we would get the best of both worlds.

Mr. Kissinger: How can we tell the Israelis, at the President's request, that they should do something, and then let them be condemned at the UN?

Mr. Johnson: They would not understand.

Mr. Saunders: As a variant, we might try for a resolution calling for a balanced withdrawal?

Mr. Kissinger: We might recommend a balanced withdrawal.

Mr. Saunders: Then Syria, Iraq and Israel would all withdraw.

Mr. Seelye: How about the hostages?

Mr. Johnson: If we say we will not intervene if the Soviets don't intervene, doesn't this lead to our saying that we will intervene if the Soviets intervene? Won't this create problems with Congress and the public?

Adm. Moorer: We could make a flat statement that we would not intervene if the Soviets did not intervene. We could say if they do, we would consider positive counteraction, or some such phrase. We would evaluate the situation and reach a decision.

Mr. Johnson: We would be making a commitment to Israel.

Mr. Kissinger: We made a commitment yesterday. Israel believes we have promised to protect them against Soviet retaliation. We are committed. The question is whether we say it.

Mr. Johnson: If we say the first, we strongly imply the second.

Mr. Kissinger: We would say that, before our forces were committed, we would consult Congressional leaders. This is desirable from a domestic point of view, but what does it do to us from the deterrent point of view?

Mr. Johnson: It depends on the Congressional reaction.

Mr. Kissinger: Soviet actions are inexplicable from many points of view. To put missiles into the standstill zone before the negotiations even started doesn't make sense. It would have been understandable if they had done it later, when the negotiations were stalemated. Their actions are very hard to understand unless we think they see the possibility of a showdown. It is particularly hard to understand in view of other problems we are having. If we see a 10% possibility that they merely want to get even with us for 1962 and are saying "to hell with international repercussions," then they may be trying to push us against the wall. Their behavior is hard to understand.

Mr. Johnson: It is hard to draw any other conclusion.

Mr. Packard: It is possible that they think they have to move the missiles every day because the Israelis are flying over every day.

Mr. Kissinger: When we got the first reports of missile activity, I told the President their action was insane; why do it on the first day of the cease-fire?

Mr. Johnson: I thought the activity would level off after the first week.

Mr. Kissinger: Yes, for the first week you could argue that they had them in the pipeline and didn't know what else to do with them. But we should keep open the possibility that we might have to be fairly stern with the Soviets. Let us meet again this afternoon before the principals

meet. Can we get some things down on paper? Just talking points—enough to help us get the issues down. Can we meet at 4:00 p.m.?<sup>11</sup>

All agreed.

Adm. Moorer: The 82nd Airborne will attain readiness at 8:00 p.m. tonight. The first reaction force was ready at noon. The brigade in Germany is being rigged for airborne operations. The first battalion was ready at 12:12 and the second will be ready at 5:30 p.m.

Mr. Kissinger: (to Kennedy) Can you get together a book of all these contingency things, with the readiness times.

Adm. Moorer: We can do that. The carrier aircraft that went to Tel Aviv has returned. Our people met with the Israelis, reviewed their intelligence, discussed overflight rights, established procedures for communications, IFF, flight corridors, diverting airfields, etc. It was a very fruitful discussion.

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<sup>11</sup> See Document 304.

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### 304. Minutes of a Washington Special Actions Group Meeting<sup>1</sup>

Washington, September 21, 1970, 4:25–5 p.m.

#### SUBJECT

Middle East

#### PARTICIPATION

Chairman—Henry A. Kissinger

State—

U. Alexis Johnson

Talcott Seelye

Defense—

David Packard

G. Warren Nutter

James Noyes

JCS—

Adm. Thomas H. Moorer

Lt. Gen. John W. Vogt

CIA—

Lt. Gen. R.E. Cushman

David Blee

NSC Staff—

Gen. Alexander Haig

Col. Richard Kennedy

Harold H. Saunders

Samuel Hoskinson

Adm. R.C. Robinson

Peter Rodman

Jeanne W. Davis

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-114, Washington Special Action Group, WSAG Minutes (Originals) 1969 and 1970. Top Secret; Sensitive; Nodis. The meeting took place in the White House Situation Room.

SUMMARY OF DECISIONS

It was agreed:

1. State will prepare new drafts of the proposed public statements for use if Israel should move into Syria rather than Jordan;
2. State will concert with the British with a view to briefing our NATO allies on the situation;
3. to review overnight the list of readiness measures the US might take vis-à-vis the Soviets, and select the most likely actions for discussion at the next meeting.

Mr. Johnson: Here is the package you asked us for.<sup>2</sup> It was produced in haste and represents only the views of the authors, but it is something to focus on. With regard to Senator Mansfield, the Secretary thinks the President spoke to him at breakfast this morning.

Mr. Kissinger: I think he did talk to him about the possibility of an evacuation. I will check this with the President. Could we have the latest on the situation?

General Cushman: There is some fighting reported between Jordanians and Syrians in the Irbid area. Eighty tanks are moving up from Amman to reinforce the 90 the Jordanians had there originally. We have nothing different from Amman.

Mr. Kissinger: Have you all seen the latest Israel assessment Rabin has given Sisco?<sup>3</sup>

General Cushman: The Arab summit meeting is apparently on. The Tunisians and Libyans have arrived, and the Sudanese is on his way. Others have indicated they are coming.

Mr. Johnson: We have an Amman telegram, saying Jordan will be represented by their Ambassador in Cairo.<sup>4</sup>

General Cushman: [2½ lines not declassified]

Admiral Moorer: That may not be so bad.

General Cushman: There has been no change in the Soviet position.

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<sup>2</sup> Reference to the "Fact Sheet;" see footnote 9, Document 303.

<sup>3</sup> Telegram 154557 to Tel Aviv, September 21, 1824Z, reported that Rabin told Sisco that at noon EDT Israeli intelligence detected the JAA inflicting "substantial losses" on Syrian forces and that the Syrians appeared to be constructing defensive fortifications in Irbid. Sisco asked Rabin if he thought the Syrians would attempt to attack Amman, but Rabin believed this would require the Syrians to commit more tanks. Overall, Rabin reported the JAA's military situation in Amman as "reasonably good" and improving in Jerash, Salt, and Ajlun. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 619, Country Files, Middle East, Jordan Crisis)

<sup>4</sup> Telegram 5026 from Amman, September 21, 1800Z. (Ibid.)

Mr. Johnson: We have a telegram from Moscow saying that TASS is carrying the Jordanian line in a fairly straightforward fashion.<sup>5</sup>

General Cushman: Yesterday three Soviet destroyers came into the Mediterranean from the Black Sea, but there has been no rapid move to gear up.

Mr. Kissinger: With regard to the Congressional briefing, are there any comments on the State paper?

Admiral Moorer: It covers all the points that were mentioned this morning.

General Cushman: I agree it covers everything.

Mr. Packard: It is okay in general, but we haven't had a chance to digest it.

Mr. Kissinger: I have one question. We are informing the Soviets we have no plans of our own to intervene, and we are warning them against intervening, but we are not giving them any indication of the consequences if they should.

Mr. Johnson: We are not saying this to the Soviets; we are saying it publicly. Tab B is our proposed public statement.<sup>6</sup>

Mr. Kissinger: This is a very elegant way of putting it: "It is essential that the conflict not be further extended by participation of outside powers. So long as the conflict is limited to the countries of the area, the United States intends to pursue its objective of a just peace in the area through diplomatic means."

Mr. Johnson: Now we need to work out exactly what to say to the Soviets.

Mr. Seelye: We have a draft in the Department.

Mr. Kissinger: Let's find an equally elegant way of saying it to the Soviets. I recognize we might want to be a bit blander to Congress than to the Soviets.

Mr. Johnson: We can draw from the Fact Sheet for all kinds of uses.

Mr. Seelye: We have done the two alternative statements: one pegged to the peace initiative and one to the local situation.

Mr. Kissinger: The last sentence of the second version seems a little sharper.

Mr. Seelye: We can use it in both versions.

Mr. Nutter: Not to the Soviets.

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<sup>5</sup> Telegram 5470 from Moscow, September 21, 1320Z. (Ibid., RG 59, Central Files 1970-73, POL 23-9 JORDAN)

<sup>6</sup> Attached to the Department of State Fact Sheet.



Mr. Johnson: No, to the public.

Mr. Kissinger: Have you all seen Amman's 5023.<sup>7</sup> In this connection, the President has ordered that we explore with Rabin the possibility of encouraging the Israelis to move into Syria after all—the course which we rejected yesterday. I realize we were all united against this yesterday on political grounds, but I would like to present some of the President's reasoning. Israeli ground intervention will be very tough on Hussein. An attack on Syria will be less dangerous to him than if it were directed against his territory. Also, it would be easier to get Israel to withdraw from Syrian territory than from Jordanian territory. If the situation unravels in Jordan, Israel could use it as a pretext to stay in. Also, it might give some help to the moderates, if there are any left in the Arab world, who could blame the Syrians for having brought on the fighting. Sisco is exploring this with Rabin. State might look at its draft texts to see how they might be changed if Israel went into Syria. It may be easier to reposition things in the event of a move on Syria even though our original judgement was in the opposite direction.

Mr. Johnson: I have no judgement of the move in a military sense.

Admiral Moorer: There is a real bottle-neck at the Syrian border. Once they seal them up, they can't get out. Also, the Israelis could get in behind them and cut them off.

Mr. Kissinger: We all rebelled against the notion of involving another state, but the impact would be easier on the King.

General Vogt: What would be the impact on the Soviets?

Admiral Moorer: The Soviets may react very differently to an attack on Syria.

Mr. Kissinger: One of the purposes of this exercise is to face them down. They will scream, and it will have to be over in 72 hours. I doubted at first the desirability of pegging the statement to the peace effort, but now that I see it, I like it. (to Mr. Seelye) Can you consider what to say on the same general theme if Syria were invaded rather than Jordan? The second version lends itself well to this.

Mr. Seelye: The suggested Israeli statement is Mr. Packard's with one slight change in the second sentence.

Mr. Kissinger: That is almost dual purpose—it's equally suited for a move against Syria. The Fact Sheet is just historical.

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<sup>7</sup> Telegram 5023 from Amman, September 21, 1719Z, reported that Rifai told Brown that Hussein would accept Israeli ground forces attacking the Syrians, but only if the Israelis engaged the Syrians outside of the Jordanian border. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 619, Country Files, Middle East, Jordan Crisis)

Mr. Johnson: We haven't had a chance to discuss possible Security Council action yet. That will require more careful consideration.

Mr. Seelye: This is consistent with the idea that we should seek parallel action.

Mr. Kissinger: If Israel moves into Syria, can we condemn Israel in the SC?

Mr. Seelye: We wouldn't have to. We would just say everyone should get back to his own territory.

Mr. Kissinger: Can we go over the Issues?<sup>8</sup> The President has already rejected another approach to the USSR before an Israeli strike.<sup>9</sup> And we have pretty well decided to do 2 and 3 under the USSR. Under Near Eastern Nations, we can't take a position based on a call for immediate Israeli withdrawal in the face of what we've done. We can't single out Israel after we put them up to it.

Mr. Packard: We will ask everyone to get out. What is the difference between 2 and 3?

Mr. Saunders: That's an error. They are the same.

Mr. Kissinger: On the fourth issue, we can't deny having some prior knowledge—Israel won't let us. On the other hand, if we go too far, it will produce the charge of collusion with all its consequences. We must strike a line between.

Mr. Seelye: We can say Israel decided independently to move and, in the light of the circumstances, we view the move sympathetically.

Mr. Kissinger: The UN issues are dealt with in the UN paper.<sup>10</sup> Can we do something to brief our NATO allies before they jump out of their skins? Can we give Ellsworth a few facts?

Mr. Johnson: Yes. We should probably concert with the British on this.

Mr. Kissinger: Shall we review the diplomatic actions. Obtaining the King's concurrence is in train. Establishing communication between Israel and Jordan is in train. The Secretary of State has briefed the British.<sup>11</sup>

Mr. Johnson: He discussed joint planning of an evacuation. General Vogt and Mr. Nutter are briefing Ambassador Freeman at 6:00 on the military situation.

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<sup>8</sup> Reference to the paper "Issues in Diplomatic Scenarios"; see footnote 2, Document 290.

<sup>9</sup> See Document 299.

<sup>10</sup> Paper prepared in the Department of State entitled "Possible UN Security Council Action In Event of Israeli Military Action in Jordan." (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 619, Country Files, Middle East, Jordan Crisis)

<sup>11</sup> See footnote 2, Document 302.

Mr. Kissinger: We will brief the French, less fully. We are preparing our approach to the Soviets. State is preparing instructions for our Ambassadors in the Arab capitals.

Mr. Johnson: Do we see any serious danger to our people in the Arab capitals from an Israeli air strike?

Mr. Seelye: Yes, there will be heightened tensions. We plan to warn them once the decision is made to give them a few hours advance notice of the strike so they can batten down the hatches.

Mr. Kissinger: Could we plan it so the warning reaches them as the strike is commencing?

Mr. Seelye: It depends on the time of day.

Mr. Kissinger: The various contingency plans seem to be in good shape.<sup>12</sup> Col. Kennedy will get them together for the contingency planning book. On the assumption that one of our objectives is to convince the Soviets that if they move, we will take action, what measures can we take to indicate we are stepping up our readiness?

Mr. Johnson: We have done some preliminary work on this. There is a paper in the red book.

Mr. Kissinger: We have been talking about moving an additional ASW group to the Mediterranean.

Admiral Moorer: There is a whole list of actions the US could take, and a list of the existing plans the actions would be related to.

Mr. Kissinger: Let's go over the list tonight and pick out the ones for discussion tomorrow that seem the most likely. We have already done some of them.

Admiral Moorer: We are continuously refining this list.

Mr. Kissinger: I think it would save time if we reviewed it tonight and picked out the most likely candidates.

Admiral Moorer: This is a list of all the things that should be considered. I have given Col. Kennedy the table on response times you asked for.

Mr. Seelye: We also have a draft study of short-range and mid-term assistance packages.

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<sup>12</sup> The contingency plans, prepared pursuant to the WSAG and NSC meetings of September 20–21 (see Documents 290, 299, and 303), included various moves in the event of an Israeli strike on Syrian forces. These consisted of possible UN Security Council action, various public statements, and talking points for briefing selected members of Congress. Papers and public statements not cited previously include "Suggested Israeli Public Statement" (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 619, Country Files, Middle East, Jordan Crisis); and "Talking Points for Briefing Selected Members of Congress." (Ibid., NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-029, Special NSC Meeting, Jordan 9/21/70)

Mr. Johnson: We need to do more work on the economic paper. It concludes that if we provide additional help, we would have to take it away from other high-priority projects, but doesn't say which ones.

Mr. Kissinger: Let us meet at 8:30 a.m. tomorrow.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> See Document 312.

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### 305. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon<sup>1</sup>

Washington, September 21, 1970.

#### SUBJECT

The Situation in Jordan

According to the Israelis, the Syrians took Irbid without a fight and are digging in.<sup>2</sup> It is not clear whether they intend now to advance on Amman. There are indications of Iraqi involvement in the conflict and they could well cast their lot with whatever side seems to have the upper hand during the day. Meanwhile, King Hussein has clarified his earlier message to include the landing of troops if he loses control. It is premature to predict where this situation is heading. However, it seems possible to say that, on the basis of this morning's report, it appears from the massing of Syrian equipment around Irbid that the immediate Syrian interest may be to consolidate a position in the north. If they continue to dig in, it will be understandable that the Israelis feel that air strikes may not be decisive.

#### *Message From King Hussein*

King Hussein has sent this follow-up message to you via his close confidant Zaid Rafai:<sup>3</sup>

"The King believes that (an) air strike will tip the balance but if communications between us break as a result of a complete breakdown

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-077, Washington Special Actions Group Meetings, WSAG Meeting Middle East 9/21/70. Secret; Sensitive.

<sup>2</sup> See footnote 3, Document 304.

<sup>3</sup> Transmitted in telegram 4989 from Amman, September 21, 0510Z. (Ibid., Box 615, Country Files, Middle East, Jordan, Vol. V)

of authority in Amman then you have my advice and authority to land.”

Ambassador Brown says that he does not know what the King means when he talks about a breakdown. He imagines, however, that going through Hussein’s mind is the possibility that defeat of his northern army by an overwhelming Syrian force would so demoralize his tired and confused troops in Amman that they would cease to function as an effective force.<sup>4</sup>

### *The Military Situation*

We do not yet have the full results of the most recent Israeli reconnaissance of northern Jordan. The Israelis, however, are able to confirm that Irbid fell to the Syrians last night without a fight as the Jordanians withdrew. The Israelis also report that the Syrians have reinforced their strength in the Ramtha–Irbid area to about 300 tanks and appear to be digging in. They caution that they have no way of knowing the Syrian intentions but that for the time being at least they are standing still in Irbid.

The Israelis report that the Iraqis are ready to intervene or have already intervened on the side of the fedayeen. They are reportedly deploying tanks moved in from Syria and, according to the Israelis have already taken a Jordanian radar station.

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<sup>4</sup> In telegram 4993 from Amman, September 21, 0547Z. (Ibid.)

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### **306. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Israel<sup>1</sup>**

Washington, September 22, 1970, 0017Z.

155165. SANDSTORM. Hold for action officer opening of business Sept 22. Subject: Syrian Intervention in Jordan.

1. Sisco met with Rabin late afternoon Sept 21. Read him King’s answer to Allon (Amman 5023)<sup>2</sup> and Rifai comments<sup>3</sup> (Sisco cautioned Rabin re Rifai fluctuations from euphoria to depression and back.)

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, POL 27 ARAB–ISR. Secret; Immediate; Nodis. Drafted on September 21 by Stackhouse; cleared by Atherton; and approved by Sisco. It was repeated to Amman. Passed to the White House.

<sup>2</sup> See footnote 7, Document 304.

<sup>3</sup> See footnote 3, Document 305.

2. Sisco said he wanted to explore with Rabin another possible option in addition to those discussed this morning, i.e., an Israeli operation from Golan Heights to relieve pressure on Jordanians. This would be an operation in Syria rather than in Jordan.

3. Rabin said as he had said to Sisco earlier it would be quite an operation to undertake in Jordan since 300 Syrian tanks was quite a considerable number. This was why an air strike just was not sufficient. Sisco said he had reported this. Rabin said such an operation ran the risk not only of Syrian reaction but also Iraqi, and possibly Egyptian reaction. Nothing of small size, Rabin said, would take care of 300 Syrian tanks. Rabin said he was opposed in principle to diversionary move if it was not aimed ultimately at source of problem, namely Syrian tanks in Irbid/Ramtha area.

4. Rabin noted Sisco had earlier today said that strike into Syria would be risky politically.<sup>4</sup> Sisco said that he had reference to this being riskier vis-à-vis Soviets in light of their special interest in Syria, from Jordanian angle, operation outside its country more politically attractive and less injurious to King's position. Sisco said any move outside Jordan would be less problem for King. Rabin asked whether this was an estimate. Sisco answered in affirmative. Rabin agreed with this judgment. Rabin then discussed topography and strategy, noting that perhaps best route would be direct across Jordan River south of Lake Tiberius. It was possible a strike to the north from Golan Heights would by threatening Syrian supply lines force Syrian units to withdraw from Jordan, but he doubted this. If this did not result in Syrian withdrawal, then Israelis would have to go south to strike at them.

5. At end of conversation after discussing other subjects, Rabin commented there really three options; i.e., direct thrust at Irbid/Ramtha, or sweeping movement from north out of Golan or combination of two. Pursuant to Sisco's request, Rabin agreed to query Jerusalem re alternative option calling for Israeli move into Syria. Chargé should follow up.

**Rogers**

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<sup>4</sup> See Document 302.

307. Minutes of a National Security Council Meeting<sup>1</sup>

Washington, September 21, 1970, 6 p.m.

## SUBJECT

Jordan

## PARTICIPANTS

The President  
 Secretary of State William Rogers  
 Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird  
 Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Thomas H. Moorer  
 Deputy Secretary of Defense David M. Packard  
 Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs Dr. Henry A. Kissinger  
 Deputy Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs General  
 Alexander M. Haig  
 Assistant Secretary of State for Middle East Affairs Joseph Sisco

Dr. Kissinger opened the meeting by reviewing the military situation as it had evolved since the morning meeting.<sup>2</sup> He noted that we had received a note from Vorontsov which urged no intervention by outside powers but which was on balance a soft note on the issue.<sup>3</sup>

The President then asked what the latest situation was on the ground. Secretary Rogers stated that the situation had improved somewhat since the critical reports we had had late Sunday night. He stated that we had one good report that the Jordanians had effectively turned and defeated Syrian forces,<sup>4</sup> and that there was a report of an Arab summit meeting to be held in Cairo the next morning.<sup>5</sup>

Dr. Kissinger then read the latest intelligence message which indicated that while the situation had improved somewhat on the ground that the King was nevertheless still concerned about having immediate air support.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-109, NSC Meeting Minutes, NSC Minutes Originals 1970. Top Secret; Sensitive. The meeting took place in the Oval Office.

<sup>2</sup> See Document 299.

<sup>3</sup> Transmitted in telegram 155169 to Moscow, September 22, 0024Z. The Soviet note, a response to the September 20 U.S. note verbale, expressed a shared concern with the United States over the Jordan situation and questioned U.S. motives in the region considering the military preparations being performed, especially the concentration of the Sixth Fleet in the immediate vicinity. According to the telegram, Vorontsov told Sisco that the Soviet Union was using all its influence in contacts with Syria. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970-73, POL 23-9 JORDAN) For the U.S. note verbale, see footnote 2, Document 276.

<sup>4</sup> See footnote 3, Document 304.

<sup>5</sup> See footnote 2, Document 303.

The President stated that the situation on the ground was of course important but not nearly as critical as the King's attitude. It is obvious, from the latest reports, that the King remains very upset and psychologically shaken and what matters at this point is whether he will continue to resist, whether or not he as an individual can hang on. [2 lines not declassified]

Admiral Moorer then noted that the Jordanian forces were now moving armored units to the North where they can better meet the Syrian threat, and suggested that perhaps the Israelis were watching this very carefully before taking precipitous action on their own. The President asked whether or not the group felt that Israel might not be too keen on going in. Dr. Kissinger stated that it was obvious that the Israelis were playing the situation very cool and would not move precipitously. Secretary Laird suggested that it was actually to Israel's advantage to move slowly. Dr. Kissinger confirmed this judgment, stating that it would be to Israel's advantage to keep out of Jordan until the King fell. Then, both the Jordanians and the Syrians would be weaker, their move would be somewhat simplified, and they would have a freer hand in the post-hostility situation.

Secretary Rogers then stated that Assistant Secretary Sisco had talked to Ambassador Rabin about the desirability of Israeli action against Syria within Syrian territory and the Israelis had responded very unenthusiastically about action against Syria.<sup>6</sup> According to Secretary Rogers the Israelis felt that it would be better politically to move against Syria but not militarily. Admiral Moorer stated that this puzzled him since action against Syria would be tantamount to cutting the rear of the enemy forces. Secretary Rogers stated that this may be the fact since Dayan had always regretted not doing this in the area of conflict. The President asked whether or not it might not be better to approach the Israelis separately again on this issue.

Assistant Secretary Sisco then stated that Soviet Chargé Vorontsov had left a Note Verbale with him that day which made four points: first, that the Soviet Union hoped the United States would prevent Israel from moving; second, that the Soviets for their part will continue their efforts to get the Syrians to discontinue their military action; third, that the Soviets will take the same line with the Syrians that they hoped we will take with the Israelis and will use all possible influence to quiet the situation down; fourth, that any intervention by outside powers would complicate the situation.<sup>7</sup> Mr. Sisco stated that he interpreted the Soviet note as a positive one and one that was not especially polemic.

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<sup>6</sup> See footnote 3, Document 304.

<sup>7</sup> See footnote 3 above.



The President stated this may be true but if they are true to form it could well be a lie. Assistant Secretary Sisco replied that he agreed and that he had told Vorontsov that we would be looking for results, not words, and that it was of the utmost importance that the Syrians withdraw immediately from Jordan.

The President asked Mr. Sisco whether or not he had told Vorontsov that the Israelis may move. Assistant Secretary Sisco replied, "I did not give him any assurances that they would not." The President commented that without this fear they would have no incentive to hold the Syrians. Mr. Sisco assured the President that he had given the Soviets no satisfaction in this regard. Secretary Rogers stated that he did not believe that the Soviets were under any illusions with respect to the seriousness of the situation and the possibility of Israeli action. The U.S., he commented, has promulgated some of the strongest statements in recent history. The President's statements in Chicago,<sup>8</sup> the military actions taken within the framework of the WSAG, the movement of our fleet elements, the forthcoming visit to the Mediterranean all conveyed the seriousness of the situation and U.S. determination to move if necessary.

Mr. Sisco stated that the Soviets are also concerned about the press reports to the effect that Jordan has asked for help. The President commented that it was remarkable that the Jordanians had their own problems with leaks. Assistant Secretary Sisco stated that the Jordanian Ambassador had tried to deny this leak.

The President cautioned Mr. Sisco that when he interprets the Soviet reaction as positive, that he keep in mind that he is only talking to a Soviet clerk and that it is difficult to know whether they are double-crossing us on this issue or whether they are actually sincere about getting the Syrians to withdraw. In either event, past experience confirms that the Soviets will sing from the same sheet of music. It is difficult to know; we should respond in a non-polemic way, perhaps very quickly.

Secretary Rogers stated that what these conversations with the Soviets confirm is that they alone are useless and that you have to draw your conclusions based on other facts. The President stated in either event speed is important. We should give our response in a way which is designed to cool the situation. Actually the Soviets may be very worried and concerned. Assistant Secretary Sisco stated it was significant not so much in terms of what the Soviets did say but in terms of what they did not say. For example, they did not repeat the same kind of threatening [language] used by the Secretary yesterday<sup>9</sup> and merely

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<sup>8</sup> See footnote 2, Document 261.

<sup>9</sup> See footnote 3, Document 275.

reiterated what they were doing with respect to the Syrians. Secretary Rogers stated that analysis of these conversations with the Soviet emissary are not especially helpful. It's just impossible to judge what their true thinking really is. The President agreed that we must assume a skeptical stance and observe carefully what they do rather than what they say.

The President asked what the U.S. should do next. Would it be preferable, for example, to wait until tomorrow morning before responding? Secretary Rogers stated that we should answer the Israeli note and answer their questions.<sup>10</sup> Dr. Kissinger drew everyone's attention to the exchange between Rafai and Allon which suggested that the Jordanians were still anxious to obtain support from Israel.<sup>11</sup> Secretary Rogers stated that the important thing to know now is how the U.S. would act if the Israelis move even at this late date. It is obvious that we are taking certain readiness measures, some of which are evident, some of which are not. Beyond this we should continue to sharpen up our contingency plan.

The President stated that we should tell the Israelis exactly what the problem is rather than answer their note at this point. Dr. Kissinger commented that it should not be necessary for us not to accept the Israeli memorandum of understanding, but that it should not be necessary for us to have a specific piece of paper giving specific assurances to the Israelis. Dr. Kissinger then reviewed the specific questions and specific responses raised in the Israeli Note Verbale. He noted that questions 4, 5, and 6 had already been answered and that question 7, the key issue, with respect to our actions vis-à-vis the Soviets should be responded to in a general way on the basis of mutual trust and not through the provision of a specific check list to the Israelis. Secretary Rogers stated that the fact is that the Israelis want to know precisely what we'll do if the Soviets come in. The President asked what would be wrong with telling them what we'll do. Secretary Rogers indicated that he agreed with Dr. Kissinger that it should not be necessary for a

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<sup>10</sup> The Israeli note verbale, delivered to Sisco by Ambassador Rabin the morning of September 21, explicated the Israeli military plan and posed several questions about the consequences of possible Israeli intervention in Jordan, including U.S. actions in the event of condemnation in the UN, U.S. actions to prevent Soviet participation, and a secret U.S.-Israeli memorandum of conversation. The note stated that Israel intended to act first by air attack and, if the Syrians failed to withdraw, to follow with a ground assault. Israel made it clear that the Israeli military would attack Syrian forces in Jordan and make no attacks against Syrians in Syrian territory. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-076, Washington Special Actions Group, WSAG Meeting Middle East 9/21/70) For the U.S. response to the Israeli questions, see Document 311.

<sup>11</sup> Rather than a direct exchange between Rafai and Allon as implied by Kissinger, this is apparently a reference to the indirect conduit of messages through the Embassies in Amman and Tel Aviv and the Department of State, allowing communication between Jordan and Israel.

specific understanding in this regard. Dr. Kissinger stated that we would be in a sorry state of affairs if the Israelis do not now trust what we've done and said up 'til now.

The President stated that if the Israelis are to move it is obvious that they must move on the ground in Jordan. Then what would be the consequences? Would we not be actually spelling the end of the King himself? What, for example, will we do if the King refuses to accept Israeli intervention? In the face of their insistence on air and ground action, what should be our position with respect to Israeli intervention which is not wanted by King Hussein?

Secretary Rogers responded that if the King does not want the Israelis to move except in the air and they actually refuse Israeli intervention, then our position is untenable; furthermore, if the King is unable to get control of Amman, he's probably not worth saving anyway. A move by the Israelis without his permission would only be self-serving from the Israeli point of view.

Dr. Kissinger then stated that all of this discussion is somewhat academic because if the King falls it is probable that the Israelis will move with or without our agreement. Secretary Rogers commented that he agreed with that assessment.

The President noted that that was the same point made earlier today by Dr. Kissinger and asked whether or not it was the best judgment of all concerned that the Israelis would in fact move in any event. Dr. Kissinger replied, yes, if the situation continues to deteriorate it is probable that the Israelis will move and that, in either event, we have the same problem. Secretary Rogers stated then if we feel that the King is about to fall it is probably better to let the Israelis move.

The President continued by stating that the main problem here is that we are damned if we do and damned if we don't. If we encourage the King and he fails, then the Israelis will probably move with or without our encouragement; and in the event they do, I am pessimistic about the survivability of the King in the face of Israeli intervention. Assistant Secretary Sisco stated that it is probable that the Israelis would move if the King falls in either event. This is what they regretted not doing during the '67 war. I think they would like to get some corrections along their borders.

The President then asked in view of all of this then, is it in our interests at this particular point to attempt to get the Israelis to move? Should we actually try to do this? Secretary Rogers replied, only in the event that the King specifically requests it and agrees to it. Secretary Laird then asked, well why have we not been able to find out what the King wants? The President stated let's find out once and for all. In the meantime we can conduct a further dialogue with Ambassador Rabin. Give him the answers to the questions as outlined by Dr. Kissinger.

The President then asked if the Embassy had conveyed the question again to the King. Assistant Secretary Sisco stated he believed that the message had gotten through.<sup>12</sup>

Secretary Laird then raised the problem of medical assistance, stating that the two surgical hospitals had not yet been moved into Jordan but that they were on the ground in Europe and ready to move. He added that the question now was whether or not we should unload the aircraft which would add some time for reloading in the event we have to move forward. All of the participants agreed that the aircraft should be unloaded in the event they were needed for rapid troop deployments.

The President then stated that we should have further consultations with Ambassador Rabin, and observe the intelligence situation on the ground very, very carefully. In the event we get into a hard place overnight there are additional actions that can be taken. For example, we could use U.S. air although this would probably not be to our advantage since it might not be decisive. With respect to Israeli action we are somewhat stymied until we are certain that the King wants this action. It's essential that we find out now exactly where the King stands. If the King wants both air and ground support, it appears to me that it is an acceptable course of action. As far as I'm concerned, we have warned the Soviets and the U.S. word is the important thing at this point.

Dr. Kissinger stated, then we must get the answer to the questions, give the Jordanians the facts and let them make up their own minds. If the King feels he needs the assistance, then we should go. If not, perhaps we should consider encouraging the Israelis to hold back somewhat.

The President stated that he felt that Israeli action against Syria would give King Hussein the best break. It would be easy for the Israelis to move in and act quickly, cut off the Syrian rear, and accomplish the same thing without jeopardizing the King's position in the Arab world as a result of his having brought Israeli forces into Jordan. For all these reasons, the President stated, I believe it would be best to have the Israelis attack Syria. If we are unsuccessful in doing that, in light of Israeli reservations, then air action alone would probably be best.

Dr. Kissinger stated that he agreed with this analysis, but that it might be difficult to get the Israelis to stick to air action alone. However, in light of the improving military situation on the ground, they might feel otherwise at this point in time.

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<sup>12</sup> See footnote 3, Document 300.

Secretary Rogers asked the President what position the U.S. should take in the UN. Should we try to prevent a condemnation of the Syrian intervention or call for a cease-fire? The President stated that he had no problem with UN action but he did not want it to be interpreted as a substitute for positive action by the U.S. It does no good to take diplomatic initiatives or to move within the United Nations; these are merely stalling tactics which could be tantamount to insuring the fall of the King. Secretary Rogers replied that it may be that the United Nations will call for an immediate cease-fire, and if that were to happen it might result in the fall of the King.

Assistant Secretary Sisco then stated that the Egyptians had indicated that they have talked to the Syrians about withdrawing and that they would support a resolution calling for the withdrawal of all sides.

The President remarked that he did not want any resolutions which called for non-intervention, that this was not what was wanted and it is contrary to U.S. interests to support such a resolution. The important thing to get was simple condemnation of the Syrian actions. Dr. Kissinger pointed out that this is also probably what the Jordanians want, since they have asked for notes to the Four Powers rather than a UN Security Council action. Secretary Rogers then suggested that we continue to work behind the scenes.

The President closed the meeting by indicating that the group should reconvene again at noon the next day.<sup>13</sup> He stated that in the interim, we can get the answer from the King and we could give some responses to the Israeli questions, especially question two. We can also find out again whether or not the Israelis would support or be willing to undertake an attack against Syria rather than intervening in Jordan.

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<sup>13</sup> See Document 313.

**308. Transcript of a Telephone Conversation Between the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) and the Israeli Ambassador (Rabin)<sup>1</sup>**

Washington, September 21, 1970, 7:05 p.m.

K: There is a point of clarification I want to raise with you. What did you tell Sisco this afternoon<sup>2</sup> about the alternate plan we mentioned to you this afternoon, the alternate courses of operations?<sup>3</sup>

R: He raised the question. He said they estimated that Jordan didn't want ground operations in Jordan and he asked about the possibility of carrying out diversionary action in Syria. He asked my opinion. I made it very clear that diversionary operations cannot achieve anything unless the purpose is to eliminate the forces in Jordan.

K: I want to get one thing clear. Did I understand you correctly when we talked this afternoon that if a major operation was carried out in Syria, from a military point of view this was a feasible operation? You and I have to be meticulous in our understandings for this reason. What you tell me I report to the President. When another version is reported, my version must be the correct one. Otherwise there is no sense in my talking to you. I reported my understanding of the conversation this afternoon—from a purely military point of view you expressed the thought that this might be an effective and probably the effective way of doing it.

R: Exactly.

K: We were told this evening that it was your judgment that from a military point of view it was not feasible.<sup>4</sup>

R: This time it is recorded. He talked about diversionary tactics. I went into detail and explained to him. I said to him you don't have diversionary . . .

K: You don't have to explain any more than that.

R: It is unbelievable.

K: The only essential thing is that any time you deviate, even in the slightest—which you didn't do . . . I want to know when I say in a meeting "It is my belief that this is the Israeli point of view," I want to be exactly right.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, Kissinger Telephone Conversations, Box 30, Chronological Files. No classification marking. All brackets are in the original.

<sup>2</sup> See Document 307.

<sup>3</sup> Presumably a reference to their conversation of 10:25, see Document 301.

<sup>4</sup> See Document 307.

R: I didn't deviate. He doesn't understand the difference between diversionary and military (?) actions.

K: I understand, Mr. Ambassador, Yes he does, but I understand.

R: It's really unbelievable.

K: I'll straighten it out. You should be getting your answers this evening. But when you get them, check them with me, will you?

R: When I asked Joe "If the Jordanians don't want ground operations in Jordan is it your estimate or have you information? . . ." He said "we don't have information; it's just our estimate."

K: He didn't give you the note to Allon?

R: He gave me the note but without the part about the Jordanians preferring not to have it on their own grounds. Since he started to talk about diversionary . . .

K: It is perfectly plain to me.

R: I said "what do you mean by diversionary?"

K: I understand.

R: I said nonsense. They have decided to move that force because they have a reason to do so. They are willing to take the risk. I don't believe in diversionary.

K: I fully understand.

R: There were at least two people on their part and one on our part, and he came to me and said . . .

K: But they were not at the meeting with the President.

R: It becomes something that's impossible to work.

K: It will be straightened out.

R: I tried to find out to Haig after I came back. I wanted to explain the concept of diversion.

K: You should have done that.

R: I couldn't reach him.

K: Then you should have left word.

R: I did and was told he would call me back.

K: It doesn't matter; no one is blaming you. Relax Mr. Ambassador. We will be back to you tonight.

R: Very strange. I didn't write it down—someone else did.

K: We'll confuse everybody if we keep this up. Someone has just come in. Goodbye. [The President had walked into Mr. Kissinger's office with Mr. Haldeman.]

7:20 p.m. [After the President left Mr. Kissinger's office.]

K: The President wants, on an urgent basis, the assessment of your government of the plan of a major attack in that region and on a diversionary attack.

R: Fine.

K: On your seven questions, it would make the second irrelevant. Isn't that true?

R: I don't understand.

K: Because you have been asked for air, and you would now have to be asked for ground under these conditions. Your second question is whether the Jordanian government will ask you.

R: I would have to send it back to my country, to my government.

K: Of course, you are being asked by the President to produce it. Tonight you will get the answers to the seven questions.<sup>5</sup> Most of them will be unambiguously positive; the ones that are not are not because of us. I will get you the answers.

R: When?

K: Well, you aren't the only one who has to deal with Sisco. It will be within an hour or so.

R: All right. Otherwise it would not be practical to put the first one.

K: Okay. I'll get the answers to you. But keep in mind some of the advice I gave you this afternoon—about cleverness.

R: Okay.

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<sup>5</sup> See Document 311.

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**309. Transcript of a Telephone Conversation Between the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) and the Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs (Sisco)<sup>1</sup>**

Washington, September 21, 1970, 7:20 p.m.

K: The first thing you should get to me is the answer to these questions which the President would like to get out tonight.

S: I have done a preliminary draft of the answer to these questions. There is a problem—I have done a companion piece re Question #2, Will the king agree to request our assistance and undertake to institute methods of communications between us? I feel simultaneously with drafting

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, Kissinger Telephone Conversations, Box 30, Chronological Files. No classification marking.



these answers we could get a flash to Amman right away on this question. Here is what I have drafted: "As you have been previously informed, the Israelis have under active consideration the question of air and ground action in Jordan. We have informed them, the Israelis, as previously reported to you that the 'US agrees in principle to the Israeli operation by air . . . in Jordan subsequent to the review of this matter.' The Israelis have not taken any decision and are awaiting a reply to the seven questions put to you. One question is as follows: Will the king agree to request our assistance and undertake to institute methods of communications between us? We know the exchange of messages between Allon and the King leaves the matter of liaison in abeyance for the moment. We note also revised [omission in the original] that Government of Jordan would recommend (?) ground action outside of Jordan, meaning Syria. We have not taken this refined statement as considered Jordanian judgment because we are not clear from your report as to whether you have put to the king what his view is with respect to a ground operation by the Israelis in Jordan. Since the Israelis have posed the question, we ask that you ascertain views of the king on this precisely."

K: No! I just will not hold up answer to the Israelis any longer.

S: Tell me what you want me to say. You should make it clear to the king that Israelis have this matter under active consideration and that no decision has been made by them.

K: What was this in response to?

S: In a previous telegram we sent to them, asked the king what his attitude was with respect to a ground operation in Jordan since the Israelis felt the air strike was insufficient.<sup>2</sup> My judgment is that Brown has not put the thing precisely and that this was a quick discussion between Rifai and Brown. He said Israelis were thinking of taking action in this area and they believed it necessary to conduct both air and ground action—he does not say in Jordan.

K: What area do you think he was talking about?

S: I hope he was talking about Jordan, but he may have been talking about Syria. He said ground operations are fine in the area as long as they are not here in Jordan. Tell me what you want?

K: We want an answer to those seven questions to go out in the next hour and a half.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> See footnote 3, Document 300.

<sup>3</sup> Kissinger called Rabin at 9:15 p.m. to tell him that the answers to the Israeli questions would be delivered by 10:30 that night. (Transcript of telephone conversation, September 21; National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, Kissinger Telephone Conversations, Box 30, Chronological Files)

**310. Transcript of a Telephone Conversation Between President Nixon and the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)<sup>1</sup>**

Washington, September 21, 1970, 9:10 p.m.

P: Henry, I am going to bed early—I am meeting with Congress in the morning.

K: Think it is going to be quiet tonight. I won't disturb you unless—

P: If you hear anything, let me know.

K: Haven't given them the answers. When I talked to Rabin<sup>2</sup> there were so many conflicting signals—I think by tomorrow morning we will have answers.

P: We will have additional intelligence on where it all stands.

K: Think noon tomorrow is a good time for this group to meet.<sup>3</sup> I think the Jordanian psychological end is stronger, more than their physical strength.

P: More than they are showing on their nerve.

K: They might still pull it out.

P: I hope so but whatever, if the thing quiets down, this trip<sup>4</sup> would be a reinforcement.

K: If the Israelis don't move by Thursday,<sup>5</sup> the thing will settle down.

P: Okay Henry.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, Kissinger Telephone Conversations, Box 30, Chronological Files. No classification marking.

<sup>2</sup> See Document 308.

<sup>3</sup> See Document 313.

<sup>4</sup> President Nixon left Washington on September 27 for a trip to Europe and the United Kingdom.

<sup>5</sup> September 24.

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**311. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassies in Jordan and Israel<sup>1</sup>**

Washington, September 22, 1970, 0338Z.

155203. Ref: State 155166. Following is text of questions and answers delivered to Israeli Minister Argov at 10:30 EDT September 21:

“Q. Will the U.S. agree to approach Israel formally in this matter?”

A. We have indicated in our conversations our agreement in principle to the operation under discussion. If decisions are taken to conduct such an operation, they should be on the basis of those conversations and the fact that our common interests would be served.

Q. Will the King agree to request our assistance and to undertake to institute methods of communication and coordination between us?

A. We do not know the answer to this question. Israel is aware of the informal exchange of messages between Deputy Prime Minister Alon and the King which we conveyed. With respect to ground operations, the only indication we have of the Jordan attitude on this question was a statement by Zaid Rifai to our Ambassador that Israeli ‘ground operations are fine in the area as long as they are not here in Jordan.’<sup>2</sup> We are seeking clarification on this question from the King. Israeli air strikes have been requested or approved on several occasions by the King.

Q. How will the U.S. act to prevent Soviet participation or involvement?

A. On September 20 the U.S. Government called upon the Soviet Government to take appropriate steps in Damascus to bring about withdrawal of Syrian forces from Jordan. Secretary Rogers made a public statement to this effect on September 20.<sup>3</sup> We have and will continue to make clear to the Soviets our support for Israel’s security and integrity and its right to live within defensible borders. In the present crisis, the U.S. has augmented the Sixth Fleet; it has also taken other readiness measures. These clearly imply a decision not to permit Soviet intervention against Israel in the conditions under discussion. As for specific measures the U.S. may take to prevent Soviet intervention, these would depend on the circumstances and the situation that exists at the time. We have contingency plans for these eventualities.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970-73, POL 27 ARAB-ISR. Secret; Immediate; Exdis (Treat as Nodis). Drafted on September 21 by Atherton; cleared by Kissinger; and approved by Davies. Passed to the White House.

<sup>2</sup> See footnote 7, Document 304.

<sup>3</sup> See footnote 2, Document 276 and footnote 3, Document 275, respectively.

Q. Is it understood that U.S. will side with us in the international political arena including the use of the veto in the Security Council on the grounds that the Syrian invasion of Jordan not only violates Jordan's integrity but also threatens Israel's security and therefore entitles Israel to take actions in her defense?

A. We would be prepared to take the position publicly, including in the Security Council, that such action by Israel represented legitimate self-defense since the Syrian invasion of Jordan threatened Israel's security. While we cannot state precisely how we would vote in the Security Council on any particular resolution in the absence of precise knowledge of terms of that resolution, we would be prepared to veto a resolution which condemned Israel for this act of self-defense.

Q. Is it clear that Israel shall not be held responsible for the fate of the hostages?

A. The U.S. shall not hold Israel responsible for the fate of the hostages resulting from Israeli action against Syrian forces in Jordan.

Q. Is it understood that U.S. public statements on all matters pertaining to above questions shall be made on highest levels and not lower than Secretary of State?

A. We agree that major U.S. policy statements on this matter would be made at the highest levels.

Q. Answers to above questions should be in the form of a secret memorandum of understanding.

A. We believe that the oral answers to the above questions are clear and should not be in the form of a secret memorandum of understanding."

**Rogers**

312. Minutes of a Washington Special Actions Group Meeting<sup>1</sup>

Washington, September 22, 1970, 8:30–9:05 a.m.

## SUBJECT

Middle East

## PARTICIPATION

Chairman—Henry A. Kissinger

State—

U. Alexis Johnson

John N. Irwin II

(briefly at beginning of meeting)

Talcott Seelye

Defense—

David Packard

G. Warren Nutter

James H. Noyes

CIA—

Richard Helms

David Blee

JCS—

Adm. Thomas H. Moorer

LTG John W. Vogt

NSC Staff—

LTG Alexander M. Haig

R/Adm. R.C. Robinson

Col. Richard T. Kennedy

Harold H. Saunders

Samuel M. Hoskinson

Peter W. Rodman

Jeanne W. Davis

## SUMMARY OF DECISIONS

It was agreed that:

1. State would modify the diplomatic scenario to take into account the Soviet response to our approach and the question and answer exchange with the Israelis, as well as the possibility of an Israeli move against Syria;

2. Defense would provide today an aid package for Israel that we might use to augment their capability if they should become involved in military action;

3. JCS will prepare a list of actions we might take, in the Middle East and worldwide, in two sets of circumstances: (a) if the Israelis intervene, and (b) if the Soviets make threatening moves.

Mr. Helms briefed orally from the attached notes.<sup>2</sup>

Mr. Kissinger: How do you explain that the Israelis are more confident at the same time we are getting hysterical appeals from the King?

Mr. Seelye: The Jordanians are just more emotional, giving to blowing hot and cold.

<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-114, Washington Special Actions Group, WSAG Minutes (Originals) 1969 and 1970. Top Secret; Sensitive; Nodis. The meeting took place in the White House Situation Room.

<sup>2</sup> Not attached and not found.

Mr. Helms: The Israelis are more objective about the situation.  
[3 lines not declassified]

Mr. Packard: [1 line not declassified]

Mr. Johnson: Their intelligence is better. [1 line not declassified]

Mr. Kissinger: The Iraqis say they will stay in their own area and are moving merely to protect their flank but a move to Jarash would be stretching their flank considerably. The King would not be paranoid if he saw a real threat in an Iraqi movement toward Jarash.

Can we have a rundown on the diplomatic side?

Mr. Johnson: Rabin gave us a note verbale yesterday asking us various questions.<sup>3</sup> We have replied to these questions. (Mr. Johnson read aloud the questions and answers from an outgoing State Department telegram, which is attached.)<sup>4</sup>

We have also received the Soviet reply to our representations of Sunday<sup>5</sup> (telegram attached).<sup>6</sup> The response contains virtually no polemics. There is no assertion that the Syrians are not involved. They did note the buildup of the Sixth Fleet.

Mr. Kissinger: I thought it was very mild. Either they are tricking us or they are sincere.

Mr. Johnson: We have independent information that seems to confirm what they are saying.

Mr. Helms: Yes, they are making some effort with the Syrians.

Mr. Kissinger: It is not in the Soviet interest to trigger an action here unless they are looking for a pretext for a showdown.

Mr. Johnson: It is very tough dealing with the Syrians.

Mr. Helms: There is no worse government than the Syrian government.

Mr. Kissinger: But the Soviets have advisors with Syrian units. They must have known Syrian intentions.

Mr. Seelye: Their advisors do not go as far down in the command structure as in the UAR—they are at the higher levels. Of course, they might still have known what Syria intended to do.

Mr. Johnson: We had advisors in Vietnam and we still did not know some of their intentions, or at least could not control them.

Mr. Kissinger: They are two separate things—knowing about them and controlling them.

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<sup>3</sup> See footnote 10, Document 307.

<sup>4</sup> Document 311.

<sup>5</sup> See footnote 2, Document 276.

<sup>6</sup> See footnote 3, Document 307.

Mr. Johnson: We did not know. I am not trying to justify the Soviets. I am merely pointing out they do not have absolute control of the Syrians. At least the situation in Amman looks more stable.

Mr. Kissinger: What is the likely outcome of the Arab summit meeting?<sup>7</sup>

Mr. Seelye: Words; nothing very conclusive. It will give a face-saving opportunity for the parties to come to some resolution in Arab fashion. I don't really expect them to resolve the problem, but it is possible.

Mr. Johnson: The Tunisians took the lead.

Mr. Seelye: They might get a North African mediation group which could get the Syrians to withdraw for some quid pro quo.

Mr. Kissinger: Some aspects of our diplomatic scenario have been modified by the answers to the Israeli questions. For example, the fact that we are now committed to a veto should be cranked into the UN scenario.<sup>8</sup>

Mr. Johnson: We will also have to redirect our approach to the Soviets in the light of their response.

Mr. Seelye: These are being done. We are also redoing the public statements to take care of a possible Israeli move in Syria rather than in Jordan. They don't require much change.<sup>9</sup>

Mr. Kissinger: Have we the two aid packages ready—for Jordan and Israel? Do we have the directive ready on the anti-SAM package? It should go out today.

Mr. Saunders: We have the Jordanian aid package but we still need the Israeli package.

Mr. Kissinger: Can we have it today?

Mr. Noyes: Depends on what the Israelis are asking for.

Mr. Kissinger: We put a package together for Jordan last week, without a Jordanian request, to give us an idea as to what they might need in various contingencies. We need the same thing for Israel today. We won't show it to anybody. I thought Mr. Pranger and the Israelis were supposed to get together on this. We have two separate problems here: one, to put together an anti-SAM package in response to Mrs. Meir's conversations with the President; the second, to get a package for Israel if their military activity should make it necessary for us to move to augment their capability. This second package was to be discussed by Mr. Pranger with the Israelis. I would have no objection if we want to do it unilaterally. Can we get it today?

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<sup>7</sup> See footnote 2, Document 303.

<sup>8</sup> See footnote 10, Document 304.

<sup>9</sup> See footnotes 6 and 7, Document 304.

Mr. Packard: Yes.

Mr. Seelye: We have a disturbing rumor that the Kuwaitis have decided to withhold their contribution to Jordan. The Libyans are withholding their \$60 million, and if the Kuwaitis withhold their \$105 million, it will cut Jordan about in half.

Mr. Kissinger: Can we make it up?

Mr. Johnson: No, not without a separate supplemental appropriation.

Mr. Kissinger: Can we get an appropriation?

Mr. Johnson: I have asked our people to discuss the question of a supplemental with ISA. (to Packard) Secretary Laird was less firm on the fact of a Presidential decision on a supplemental when he discussed this with Secretary Rogers than I had understood from you yesterday.

Mr. Kissinger: I think the President will be willing to do it. After the package has been put together, and if Secretary Laird recommends it, the President will probably do it.

Mr. Johnson: So the next stage is to get the package ready.

Mr. Packard: It is practically ready.

Mr. Seelye: We have a draft of an economic package for Jordan but it still needs some work.

Mr. Johnson: It does not set out clearly the trade-offs. It says assistance for Jordan would have to be at the expense of other high priority programs, but it does not tell the President specifically which other programs.

Mr. Kissinger: I am sure he would be sympathetic to an economic assistance package for Jordan.

Mr. Johnson: It is a question of finding the money.

Mr. Nutter: Is this supporting assistance?

Mr. Seelye: Yes, grant aid for budgetary support.

Mr. Kissinger: Could we look at our contingency actions—our answers to ourselves on what readiness measures might be needed?

Adm. Moorer: Within our fiscal and political restraints, we have done about everything we can now. Our forces are on the alert, including the 82nd Airborne; we have augmented the Sixth Fleet; we have stepped up the alert in Europe.

Mr. Kissinger: But only of one brigade in Europe?

Adm. Moorer: Yes, but we have also moved additional aircraft to Europe.

Mr. Kissinger: Has this been noticed?

Adm. Moorer: Yes. We have put all unified commands on increased intelligence alert.

Mr. Kissinger: Is this likely to be noticed?



Adm. Moorer: Probably. In addition, we have outlined the actions we might have to take with increasing tension, including the deployment of additional forces. We would also have to do some things in the U.S.: reserves; changes in personnel policy; obtain a supplemental appropriation; increase the draft; increase SIOP readiness.

Mr. Kissinger: We need a list of things, in the first place, when things get tense, and in the second, in response to Soviet moves.

Mr. Packard: I agree—we should put some priorities on these things.

Mr. Johnson: We have two situations: what do we do if the Israelis move, and what do we do if the Soviets move.

Adm. Moorer: We have two categories of actions: those associated with the Middle East and those in other parts of the world.

Mr. Kissinger: Let's get these broken down. We might want to make it clear when the Israelis move that the Soviets won't get a free shot at them. This might be the time to move that ASW group to the Mediterranean.

Mr. Packard: We could move the ASW group, possibly put more fighters into Turkey.

Mr. Johnson: If the Turks agree.

Adm. Moorer: We can move up to 36 fighters into Incirlik under our present agreement; we have 18 there now.

Mr. Nutter: Are these part of our NATO forces?

Adm. Moorer: In one sense.

Mr. Johnson: I would like to have Rodger Davies sit down with the JCS staff and go over the list.

Mr. Kissinger: Could we have today (1) those measures we should take in the Mediterranean and worldwide if the Israelis intervene; and (2) the measures we might take in the Mediterranean and worldwide if the Soviets make threatening moves.

Adm. Moorer: Yes. We can get the military moves within our current capabilities. As things build up, however, it would take domestic action in fiscal augmentation, personnel policy changes, obtaining overflight and base rights, etc.

Mr. Kissinger: Let's get your checklist broken down in relation to the two contingencies. (to Adm. Moorer) We are not trying to second-guess your contingency planning; we are trying to see what we could do in the form of signals to the other side. Could we meet later today, possibly at 4:30 p.m. to go over these?<sup>10</sup>

All agreed.

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<sup>10</sup> The next WSAG meeting did not take place until the next day; see Document 317.

**313. Minutes of a National Security Council Meeting<sup>1</sup>**

Washington, September 22, 1970, noon.

## SUBJECT

Jordan

## PARTICIPANTS

The President  
Secretary of State William P. Rogers  
Secretary of Defense Melvin R. Laird  
Director of Central Intelligence, Richard Helms  
Deputy Secretary of Defense David M. Packard  
Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Thomas Moorer  
Assistant Secretary of State for Middle East Affairs Joseph J. Sisco  
Henry A. Kissinger  
General Alexander M. Haig

The President opened the meeting by describing the kind of press guidance he wanted followed in dealing with the Jordanian crisis. He stated that he wanted it understood that these meetings of a select group of principals were to be conveyed as regular meetings of the President's chief security advisors and were in effect National Security Council meetings. He wanted it pointed out that Congressional leaders had been given information on the situation and that a number of problems associated with the crisis in Jordan had been discussed by the National Security Council. He added that he wanted it stated that the U.S. Government had taken certain steps to protect its interests. The U.S. posture throughout was to be one of cool, deliberate actions. He stated that he did not believe bombastic or flamboyant public statements were the solution to the situation. Rather, he preferred to let U.S. actions speak for themselves. He wanted to convey an impression of confidence and cool determination on the part of the United States. It was important that the country be aware that the President and his top security advisors were completely on top of the situation.

The President then asked Director Helms to give the group a report on the latest intelligence information. Director Helms stated that despite the fact that another cease-fire had been called, the situation in Amman was still uncertain and fighting was continuing. He mentioned specifically that there had been firing in the area just southeast of our Embassy. Director Helms also stated that Arafat had claimed there had

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-109, NSC Meeting Minutes, NSC Minutes Originals 1970. Top Secret; Sensitive. The meeting took place in the White House Cabinet Room.

been over 7,000 casualties in the Fedayeen camp within Amman and that the situation was most serious. In the North, Director Helms stated, the Syrians had already lost in the neighborhood of 120 tanks, between 60 and 90 due to Jordanian military action and the balance due to maintenance breakdown. The Jordanians, on the other hand, had reinforced their units in the North so that the overall balance now was something like 170 Jordanian tanks against 300 Syrian tanks. Additional Jordanian tanks enroute to the North would bring the balance to 200 versus 300. The Jordanians had successfully turned back each Syrian attack, and it was apparent that the Jordanian attitude was somewhat more optimistic about the outcome than it had been up to now. The Jordanian military action has been professional and constituted well-coordinated tank, artillery and air operations.

The President then asked what kind of planes the Jordanians were using. Admiral Moorer replied that they flew a British Hunter aircraft, which was a conventional prop plane perhaps better designed for a close support role than a more sophisticated version would be.

The President asked if there were anything that the U.S. could do to help the King by way of supplies, munitions or equipment. Deputy Secretary of Defense Packard stated that the Defense Department had ready emergency shipments of ammunition and was prepared to move, but the Jordanians had not specifically asked for any assistance yet.

Secretary Rogers then asked how many tanks the Syrians had actually lost. Assistant Secretary Sisco responded that the latest message he had read suggested they had already lost some 50 in combat. Admiral Moorer stated that all told 120 Syrian tanks were now inoperative due to both battle losses and maintenance breakdowns. The President asked which side had better tanks. In response, Admiral Moorer stated that he felt the Syrian tanks might be technically somewhat better and that their gun was of a slightly higher caliber, but that their training was far inferior to that of the Jordanian tank forces.

Assistant Secretary Sisco then stated that Ambassador Rabin had informed him that morning that in view of the Syrian losses it would be necessary for Syria to reinforce if they were to continue in Jordan. Israeli intelligence had noted a large convoy in Syria last night heading south towards Jordan. He also stated that the Israeli cabinet had met and was preparing to give the United States an answer with respect to Israeli intervention. The President noted that we had sent out a response to the Israeli questions and an assessment of the issue of the Syrian option.<sup>2</sup> He asked whether or not we had had a response

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<sup>2</sup> See Document 311.

from Hussein. Secretary Rogers stated that we had not, but that we had received a message from Ambassador Brown.<sup>3</sup>

Director Helms then remarked that the Israelis were now in a high state of alert and that they had moved many forces north to the Golan Heights. The Fedayeen had already claimed they had come under Israeli artillery fire from Israeli positions on the Heights. Helms stated that the broadcasts coming from Damascus suggested that indeed the Syrians were very concerned about Israeli intervention. Assistant Secretary Sisco stated that all of the actions had been taken within tight security without a huge public outcry and that it, in effect, constituted a cool, controlled U.S. response to events.

The President stated that he had talked to the Leadership earlier that morning and had pointed out the following:

- (1) The U.S. fleet was in position to act but that we were not taking a provocative stance.
- (2) The Israeli Government has a great interest in the outcome of events in Jordan but the U.S. could not speak for them.

Assistant Secretary Sisco stated concerning a possible Israeli offensive action that they appeared to be in no hurry, although there seemed to be no doubt that they would move if they had to. He also suggested that the Israelis might want a further compensation in the event that they did decide to move.

The President then asked Dr. Kissinger what the state of play was within the WSAG framework. Dr. Kissinger replied that the group had met earlier that morning, that there was nothing new on the status of the hijacking hostages, and that the group had completed most of the contingency planning necessary for U.S. intervention to evacuate U.S. personnel if required.<sup>4</sup> The President next asked about the status of the surgical hospitals. Admiral Moorer answered by reporting that we still needed security assurances before we could move them into Jordan, and that we were awaiting specific word from the Jordanians. He added that the aircraft had been unloaded for fear that they would be immobilized in the event they were needed for the movement of troops.

Secretary Rogers stated that Mr. Yost had informed him there would be no Security Council meeting for a few days. He stated fur-

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<sup>3</sup> In telegram 5049 from Amman, September 22, 1452Z, Brown offered a seven-point critical assessment of an Israeli intervention in Jordan. He noted the various risks involved with an Israeli ground assault against the Syrians and stressed numerous concerns regarding Israeli intentions. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 615, Country Files, Middle East, Jordan, Vol. V)

<sup>4</sup> See Document 312.

ther that Alex Scheel was coming to Washington the next day and that the situation could be discussed with him then.<sup>5</sup>

Dr. Kissinger then summarized the state of preparations by reporting that essentially all planning had been completed, contingency plans were ready, public statements were ready, notes were ready, Congressional consultation had been initiated and that the U.S. Government was prepared for whatever direction in which the President decided to move. The President stated that being ready was the best possible posture we could be in and that beyond that we should wait and see. He was very pleased with the statements that had been written.

Dr. Kissinger remarked that the Joint Chiefs of Staff had completed a full scenario for all contingencies. The President then asked whether or not we could do anything at this point to further shore the King's morale. Should we, for example, give him a note advising him that we will replace his losses. His psychology, the President emphasized, is the key point. While we may not now be in a position to opt for military support, he will certainly benefit from our assurances. Secretary Rogers stated that we could prepare such a message that day. The President indicated that the message should pursue the following line: that it is being sent on a personal basis from him, and that he wants to assure the King of U.S. support for all of his military needs. The President continued by stating that he wanted to assure the King that we will make up his losses and to express the President's personal admiration for the King's staunch action in this period of crisis. Finally, the President wanted to assure him of full U.S. political support against international outlaws who have been trying to destroy his government.<sup>6</sup>

Dr. Kissinger stated that the situation that morning looked quite good, but that it was important to watch the actions of the Iraqi forces who are moving in an ambivalent fashion along the Jordanian flank. It was also important that we keep a constant eye on the Egyptians who may be driven to extreme action in light of the most recent turn of events. The President confirmed that this was an essential requirement. The President asked whether or not Secretary Rogers' warning had been specific only with respect to Syria.<sup>7</sup> Assistant Secretary Sisco

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<sup>5</sup> Alex Scheel is not further identified.

<sup>6</sup> The message was sent in telegram 156092 to Amman, September 23, 0251Z. In it, Brown was instructed to inform King Hussein verbally that the President wanted to give him "this personal word saying how much I admire what you are doing to preserve Jordan's integrity in the face of both internal and external threats. Your courageous stand has impressed the entire free world. I am confident that you will not waver in your determined effort to restore peace and stability to your kingdom." (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 615, Country Files, Middle East, Jordan, Vol. V)

<sup>7</sup> See footnote 3, Document 275.

replied that indeed it was and that the Iraqi issue was treated in a very fuzzy fashion. The President stated that we must continue to be ready for any turn in events and that we would have to watch especially Israeli [*Iraqi?*] action. In the interim we should exchange views via telephone and cancel the afternoon's 6:00 p.m. meeting of the Security Council unless events dictated otherwise.

The President then turned to the need to maintain a strong U.S. presence, remarking that these events confirmed the importance of maintaining a strong U.S. presence in the Mediterranean and that we should investigate with Greece and Turkey the possibility of putting some new U.S. installation or weaponry in the Mediterranean. He remarked that perhaps what was needed was an additional facility in both countries, not for the purpose of waging war but to underline our determination to maintain a U.S. presence and to strengthen our credibility with respect to the Soviets, especially in light of Soviet actions in Cuba. The President asked what facilities we had in Greece at the present time, and Admiral Moorer responded that we used Suda Bay and the regular Greek harbor. The President then asked about U.S. facilities on Cyprus, and Admiral Moorer stated that the British are the only ones with facilities on Cyprus. Finally, the President suggested that it might be advantageous to attempt to get something there, perhaps something which would permit our aircraft to utilize Cyprus.

Dr. Kissinger stated that with the loss of Wheelus, Cyprus and Turkey became important assets. The President commented that at this critical juncture when it looked like the Soviets were again moving aggressively worldwide we needed something more in the Mediterranean. The withdrawal of our Jupiters from Italy and Turkey during the Cuban missile crisis indicated the advantage of having additional assets with the situation developing as it is in Cuba. The President stated that he did not want this considered in a negative way, but to look at it positively and to see what could be done.

The meeting was adjourned.

314. **Transcript of a Telephone Conversation Between the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) and the Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs (Sisco)**<sup>1</sup>

Washington, September 22, 1970, 9:50 p.m.

K: —possibility of a reply.

S: What's your thoughts?

K: I asked you first.

S: I think that we ought to go back in the course of tomorrow and first we ought to make a judgment that we give to them—before I say what we say, let me tell you what the problem is. The Jordanian point of view and from our point of view, we are trying to get the King to do this by himself. If not by himself, in order for the Israelis to be responsive in order to be helpful to the King and yet with the least possible adverse repercussions to him. If the situation warrants our presence, will be nothing there on down but the Israelis or if they need help from the Jordanian point of view, minimal air strikes as a way to help Hussein do the job himself. Now from the Israeli point of view, Israelis getting the Syrians out and if need be hold on to a certain chunk of territory for a certain period of time as the best way to assure [omission in the original] against Israel/Iraq [omission in the original]. The Jordanians are thinking much more in terms of an Israeli strike in areas. The Israelis are thinking much more in terms [omission in the original] as a way of achieving the withdrawal of forces. I have overstated both positions for obvious reasons for purposes of clarifying our own thinking. [omission in the original] have said that looking at the situation tomorrow morning and if we [omission in the original] to the Jordanians. We should continue the dialogue with the Israelis.

K: How do you continue the dialogue?

S: Answer their questions, keep the option and try to facilitate a get together between the Israelis and the Jordanians. We agree in principles but we ought to know before they go and we ought to know [the results].<sup>2</sup> Ought to be responsive to the Jordanian request.

K: How much more clear can they be than air request?

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, Kissinger Telephone Conversations, Box 30, Chronological Files. No classification marking.

<sup>2</sup> Brackets are in the original.

S: Read the Annenberg cable about Hussein's complaint about the fedayeen.<sup>3</sup>

K: It is conceivable . . .

S: It is conceivable but not certain. Are you sure in your own mind . . .

K: I am sure in my own mind that we are going one way or the other. Hussein is going to collapse.

S: I don't at the moment think the facts sustain that.

K: I am not talking about tomorrow, how are you going to keep the Israelis in play by answering their questions?

S: I am not quarrelling with that.

K: You can't give it to them *carte blanche*.

S: They ought to go to them but then say before you do, we want to be consulted. Don't suggest that you don't answer their questions. If you don't respond positively in principle, you lose your option.

K: How do we answer their questions?

S: Don't know. Got this paper and want to reflect on it.<sup>4</sup> Think we say the Jordanians are obviously trying to do this job by their own means. Very anxious to have the two of you to get together because both of you obviously feel there has got to be coordination and think one of two ways the Jordanians indicate that the grounds [omission in the original]. The Israelis are ready to go or give a yes and pass along that contact between the two regardless of what the discussions are, we want an opportunity to consult before the final move is made.

K: What did you say, either want an opportunity to consult or the other come . . .

S: If we go along, we then ought to send a message to the Jordanians, make the [omission in the original] response and let them send the message to indicate to the Jordanians what we are prepared to do and if we say this is what we are prepared to do, we would still say to the Israelis, after you talk to the Jordanians, we would still want you to come back and talk to us. I may have some further thoughts as I reflect on this tonight. Frankly, I haven't consulted anyone.

K: I have scheduled a WSAG for 8:00 in the morning just to bring ourselves up-to-date.<sup>5</sup>

S: Okay Henry, see you in the morning.

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<sup>3</sup> In telegram 7681 from London, September 22, 2050Z, the Embassy reported that Hussein was complaining that the fedayeen were only continuing to fight because the U.S. Government had not persuaded the Israelis to act. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 727, Country Files, Europe, United Kingdom, Vol. III)

<sup>4</sup> Not further identified.

<sup>5</sup> See Document 317.



**315. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon<sup>1</sup>**

Washington, September 22, 1970.

## SUBJECT

Meeting on Jordan

*The Situation*

1. This morning's reports indicate that the military situation for the moment seems to have stabilized. The Jordanians have turned back a southern Syrian thrust and inflicted losses.

2. Following last night's meeting, our replies to the Israeli questions were given to the Israeli minister here.<sup>2</sup> [Text at *Tab A.*] In two related further moves:

—We asked the Israelis for their view of an attack on the Syrian rear from the Golan Heights.

—We asked Ambassador Brown for direct clarification of King Hussein's personal view on an Israeli ground attack in Jordan as contrasted to an attack in Syria. We have no reply yet.

3. The Soviet Chargé yesterday delivered a note to Assistant Secretary Sisco replying to the U.S. request Sunday that the USSR press the Syrians to pull back from Jordan. It is non-polemical, urges prevention of Israeli attack and asks about concentration of U.S. Forces. [Text at *Tab B.*]

4. There are some straws in the wind this morning that suggest discussing the possibility that the Jordan problem may be resolved in an Arab context. The Israeli military believe Syria will have serious logistical difficulty within 3–4 days. The Arab summit could—although we should not count on it—produce a face-saving compromise under which the Syrians would withdraw.

*Public and Diplomatic Posture in the Event of Israeli Intervention*

1. *Congressional Briefings*—We have drafted talking points for briefings which include background on the situation and notes (1) that we are informing the Soviets that we have no plans to intervene and warning them not to do so, (2) that we are doing contingency planning for evacuation, and (3) that, if contrary to our expectations, the situation

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, RG 218, Records of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Records of Thomas Moorer, Box 114, Work File (Middle East). Top Secret. Printed from an uninitialed copy. The tabs are not printed. All brackets are in the original.

<sup>2</sup> See Document 311.

should require a larger direct role we will consult Congress in advance.

2. *Public Statements*—We have drafted a public statement which reviews the background of the situation and notes (1) that Syria's invasion of Jordan is understandably considered by Israel as a threat to Israel's security and (2) that we have no intention of embarking on other than diplomatic steps in order to end the fighting unless powers outside the area become involved.

3. *United Nations*—We are drafting a contingency statement supporting a veto of any motion condemning Israel. This supports our agreement with Israel.

4. *Diplomatic Scenario*—Messages for our approaches to the USSR, Middle East Nations and our NATO allies have been drafted for this contingency.

#### *Military Readiness*

1. *Navy*—Two Carrier Task Groups (*Saratoga* and *Independence* with Cruiser *Springfield*, 14 destroyers, and 140 aircraft remain off the coast of Lebanon.

An amphibious task force with 1,200 Marines is ready and in position 35 hours off the coast.

A third Carrier Task Group (*John F. Kennedy* with two guided missile frigates) will enter the Mediterranean early Friday morning, September 25.

A second amphibious task force (*Guam*, additional ships, 17 helos, and a reinforced battalion of 2,814 Marines) has split into fast and slow groups. Will enter Mediterranean on September 27 and 30.

Five Navy P-3 ASW-patrol aircraft are now at Rota.

Two additional attack submarines will enter Mediterranean on September 25 and September 29.

Four additional destroyers will depart the US tomorrow for the Mediterranean.

#### 2. *Army*

One Airborne battalion and one Infantry battalion ready in Europe. Another airborne battalion will be ready at noon today. Transit and load time is 4 hours for first rifle company, 8 hours for the rest. Total force is 1,600 troops. Initial company and battalion air drop; other battalions airland.

82nd Airborne Division at Fort Bragg has the initial ready force of one airborne company rigged for drop on 6-hour alert. One battalion also is ready on 6-hour alert; an additional battalion will be on same alert by 2:00 p.m. today. Remainder of division on 84-hour alert.

### 3. *Air Force*

18 F-4s and 4 C-130s are at Incirlik, Turkey. (Turkey has *not* authorized us to use the base to launch these aircraft in strikes over Jordan.)

### 3. *Medical Assistance Units*

Two hospital units (one in the UK and one in Germany) are loaded and ready to move in one hour. First elements can arrive Amman in 10–11 hours, closing entire unit in 18 hours.

The situation in Amman is such that a medical effort (under the umbrella of the ICRC) may become the most urgent action as soon as the security situation will permit entry of the medical units.

The foregoing military measures will put us in a position to conduct evacuation or intervention operations. They also have a deterrent effect on Soviet intervention.

### *Military Equipment Packages for Israel and Jordan*

—A package is ready to replace materiel expended by Jordan. Transport plans are complete.

—Packages of equipment for Israel, in the event of an Israeli move, to (1) replace that expended in the attack and (2) improve defensive posture in the Suez area will be completed today.

### *Actions to Deter or Counter Soviet Intervention*

In addition to the military measures already taken, scenarios of additional military and diplomatic steps to deter or, if necessary, counter Soviet intervention are being refined by the WSAG.

**316. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon<sup>1</sup>**

Washington, September 23, 1970.

## SUBJECT

The Situation in Jordan

The military situation remains about the same this morning with sporadic fighting continuing in Amman and the Jordanians beating back repeated attempts by the Syrians to drive south from the Irbid area. In short, the Jordanians are holding their own against both the fedayeen and the Syrian tanks. It could be that—as long as the Iraqis continue to stay out—a stand-off is developing around present positions at the present level of hostilities. If this is true, and if Hussein has little hope of driving the Syrians out with his own forces, then his choice is among (a) risking the disadvantages of outside intervention, (b) continuing the war with the added disadvantage of a consolidating Syrian-fedayeen position in the north and (c) some sort of compromise settlement, which—given the above—would probably further reduce his authority.

An Israeli note responding to our answers to their questions was delivered to State last night. The text is at Tab A and a fuller analysis is being provided for the 9:30 a.m. meeting.<sup>2</sup>

*Israeli Reaction*

The Israelis have responded to our answers to their questions concerning intervention in Jordan with a request for more assurances and clarifications of our position. Text at Tab A [Analysis is included in your book for this morning's meeting.] Meanwhile, they are apparently continuing to mobilize their armed forces for possible actions.

According to our Defense Attaché in Tel Aviv there is a continuing state of high military alert in the Israeli Bet Shean region opposite the Irbid Heights, a substantial reserve mobilization is in process and there is considerable military movement on the roads including troops in battle gear. The Defense Attaché believes that the

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-076, Washington Special Actions Group Meetings, WSAG Meeting Middle East 9/23/70. Secret; Nodis. The tabs are attached but not printed. All brackets are in the original.

<sup>2</sup> See Document 318.

present positioning of Israeli forces would permit military intervention at almost any point in the Jordan Valley or even from the Golan Heights area.

### *King Hussein's Position*

Ambassador Brown finally was able to get in touch with the palace last night concerning our request for a clarification of King Hussein's thoughts on Israeli ground intervention in Jordan and coordination directly with the Israelis. He had to double talk again with Zaid Rifai who said that the King "prefers action from up high" and that "if anything is to be done low it should not be here but away." Rifai added that "we agree it is important to discuss details" and will do so "as soon as possible but do not know how long it will be." Rifai also said that it is important for the U.S. to keep up the pressures it has already asserted and that the principal aim must be to get the Syrians withdrawn so that the Iraqi do not also get the idea they can get away with something. [Tab B]

Your personal message to King Hussein has been called to our embassy in Amman but because of the continued fighting it apparently has not yet been delivered.<sup>3</sup> [Tab C]

### *The Military Situation*

There is no significant change in the military situation this morning. Zaid Rifai, the King's confidant, does, however, report that if the Syrians do not move up reinforcements and if Iraq does not intervene, he thinks that the Jordanians can handle the situation. Rifai may be right but it should be noted that in the past there have been sharp ups and downs in his assessment. His comment is noted so you will be aware of it—not because it is worthy of confidence. [Cable at Tab D]

The Israelis report [Tab E] that the fighting between the Jordanians and Syrians in the Irbid area continues along the same lines but that it is "not a big battle." The Jordanians remain in defensive positions with the Syrians attacking though apparently not in a very determined way. According to Zaid Rifai, the Jordanians now have tank parity with the Syrians—resulting from the number of Syrian tanks they have knocked out and, according to the Israelis, from logistical problems.

The Iraqi forces have made some small moves in the last 24 hours, but the Israelis still are not clear about their intentions. Zaid Rifai,

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<sup>3</sup> See footnote 6, Document 313.

however, says that the Iraqis have promised not to let the Syrians through the Mafrak area—are on the main invasion routes to Amman and where most of the Iraqi forces are now located. It is hard to say at this point how much faith can be placed in Iraqi promises.

The Israelis report that a Libyan force has arrived in Damascus but they have no information on its size or what it will do.

*The War with the Fedayeen*

King Hussein and the number two man of the Palestine Liberation Organization announced this morning an agreement providing for the movement of the fedayeen out of the cities and back to the borders with Israel. This was then followed up by an order from the military governor lifting the curfew in some parts of Amman for several hours and providing that military units cease firing during this period. It seems doubtful, however, that these moves really signal the end of the fighting, since the PLO leader involved was captured several days ago and the organization's leader, Yasir Arafat, is still at large and calling for continuation of the fighting. It is more likely that this is simply a tactical response by Hussein to increasing pressure from the other Arab states that he stop the fighting. In any case, heavy artillery started at dawn in Amman and lasted for about a half hour and considerable machine gun and small arms fire continues in the streets.

The CIA morning Situation Report is at Tab F.

317. Minutes of a Washington Special Actions Group Meeting<sup>1</sup>

Washington, September 23, 1970, 8:10–8:40 a.m.

## SUBJECT

Middle East

## PARTICIPATION

Chairman—Henry A. Kissinger

State—

U. Alexis Johnson

Talcott Seelye

Defense—

David M. Packard

Robert Pranger

James Noyes

JCS—

Thomas H. Moorer

Lt. Gen. John W. Vogt

CIA—

Richard Helms

David Blee

*[name not declassified]*

NSC Staff—

Harold H. Saunders

Adm. R.C. Robinson

Jeanne W. Davis

Samuel Hoskinson

Peter Rodman

Gen. Alexander Haig

Col. Richard Kennedy

## SUMMARY OF DECISIONS

It was agreed that:

1. State and the NSC Staff would vet the JCS checklist of possible US actions from the point of view of things that might trigger a Soviet response and provoke the thing we are trying to prevent.

Mr. Helms briefed from the attached notes (Tab A).

Mr. Kissinger: What is the Palestinian infantry you referred to—is that the Fedayeen?

Mr. Seelye: That is the Palestine Liberation Army. It is a cross between the Fedayeen and paramilitary units.

Mr. Kissinger: Has it been stationed in Syria?

Mr. Helms: Yes.

Mr. Kissinger: If this “agreement” is valid, what does it mean?

Mr. Helms: Victory for the King.

Mr. Johnson: Seventy-five percent victory for the King.

Mr. Kissinger: What does it mean in terms of the Arab-Israeli conflict? Does it sharpen it? Does it push the PLO against Israel?

<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-114, Washington Special Actions Group, WSAG Minutes (Originals) 1969 and 1970. Top Secret; Sensitive; Nodis. The meeting took place in the White House Situation Room. The tabs are not attached and not found.

Mr. Seelye: It might. If the Fedayeen get out of the cities, they can focus more of their attention on the border.

Mr. Johnson: This “agreement” is with a captured Fedayeen, not with Arafat.

Mr. Kissinger: It could be a face-saver.

Mr. Helms: I think it is cosmetics.

Mr. Kissinger: With regard to the Syrian withdrawal, Vorontsov jumped me at the UAR Embassy last night, asking why we had not answered their note.<sup>2</sup> He claimed the Soviets were trying desperately to get the Syrians out of Jordan, and asked if we would settle if they would just stop. I replied it was not up to us. Vorontsov said we may not believe them, but they were trying very hard with the Syrians and also trying to get in touch with the Palestinians.

Of course, their record for veracity is not overwhelming.

Mr. Helms: We know nothing inconsistent with his claim. They usually lie at high levels.

Mr. Johnson: We are working on a reply to the Soviets.

Mr. Kissinger: Will we see it before the meeting?

Mr. Johnson: We will bring it to the meeting. I note Dobrynin is coming back today, arriving in New York at 6:30 this evening.

Mr. Kissinger: Is he coming directly here?

Mr. Johnson: Apparently; they have asked permission for his car to go up to get him.

Mr. Kissinger: (to Mr. Johnson) Do you have the check list?

Mr. Johnson: Yes, we have a check list (attached at Tab B) and talking points for us with the Soviets (attached at Tab C). These are only first drafts. We are feeding information to Ellsworth, who is keeping NAC fairly well informed. The NATO Military Committee wants more Defense reporting, and we are having trouble shaking it loose.

Admiral Moorer: That is DIA. I will check on it.

Mr. Kissinger: Are there any comments on the check list or the talking points?

Mr. Seelye: We have also modified public statements (Tab D), the suggested Israeli statement (Tab E) and the suggested UN action (Tab F) to take into account Israeli action against Syria.

Mr. Johnson: We have received the list of JCS actions vis-à-vis the Soviets and they seem very consistent with the work done previously. (to Admiral Moorer) I would like Rodger Davies to go over the list with your people.

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<sup>2</sup> See footnote 3, Document 307.



Admiral Moorer: (handed a paper to Mr. Kissinger—attached at Tab G) I would like to explain this paper. On the first page, we have assumed Israeli intervention has taken place, have shown the actions already taken, our posture now, and stated the purpose of additional actions. There is an index on page 2, with the idea that if the Israelis intervene, we would want to take early action to deter the Soviets. We assume they would respond and we would then counteract. This would be the sequence. The actions are in two categories: those in the Middle East and those in other areas, either inspired by a third country or a direct Soviet response. We then list the series of actions. On the last page, we list the enabling actions that would be required as the tempo increased, principally in the U.S., and also the initiating agency. We have indicated with asterisks the things we can do now and the things which would take additional enabling action. I must emphasize that we have real limitations with regard to resources. We have gone as far as we can go without additional resources and additional authority.

Mr. Johnson: There is a conceptual problem that we should discuss. To what degree are the actions we would take in the name of deterrent likely to be read by the Soviets as an intention to intervene, and thereby provoke the very thing we are trying to prevent?

Mr. Kissinger: Vorontsov also asked last night if we are going to intervene in Jordan. I mumbled a reply, and Vorontsov said, "It is not in our vital interest so we don't care, but you would be getting into terrible difficulties in the Arab world." I replied, "Then you would win either way."

(to Mr. Johnson) Is it your judgement that, if the Israelis intervene, and we would do the things we are talking about, the Soviets are more likely to intervene against us? Possibly in Egypt, yes, but in Jordan?

Mr. Johnson: I do not necessarily think they are *more likely* to intervene. I think, however, we must guard against the sequence in which Israel intervenes; we make a lot of moves, publicized and unpublicized; the Arabs conclude we are preparing to intervene, with all the consequences for our relations with the Arabs, and call on the Soviets for help to deter us from coming in. This is tricky business. We may think our motives are pure, but others may not.

Mr. Packard: But if Israel intervenes, we probably wouldn't have to. In this case, I think there is nothing the Soviets are likely to do.

Mr. Helms: We will get a blast from them, saying "Get them out—they are going to do what they did in '67." The Soviets would probably move a unit to Damascus to show the flag, but I think that is as far as they will go. We shouldn't slide over Vorontsov's point. If anything happens, American institutions and American citizens in the Arab world will "have their hats taken off." We should give all our people in the area maximum warning, if the Israelis intervene, to save their skins.

Mr. Packard: We should get them out.

Mr. Johnson: That, in itself, is a problem.

Mr. Kissinger: (to Mr. Johnson) Would you vet Admiral Moorer's list of actions? If Rodger Davies meets with a JCS staffer, I would like a member of my staff present.

Mr. Packard: There are lots of things we can do to deter the Soviets which would have no impact on the Middle East situation.

Mr. Kissinger: I find this a very useful paper.

Mr. Helms: It is the best of its kind that I have seen—the most complete.

Mr. Johnson: I agree.

Mr. Kissinger: Let's vet the JCS list from the point of view of anything that might trigger a Soviet response. We should also consider, in general, what would be more likely to deter the Soviets: a ferocious stance at first or a slow escalation.

Mr. Johnson: We should consider the Soviets on the one hand and the Arabs on the other.

Mr. Kissinger: We would not get much mileage with the Arabs by not doing it. The Arabs won't pick up much, but the Soviets will. But let's not prejudge the paper. Let's get everyone's views. (to Col. Kennedy) Let's get someone from our staff—possibly a Soviet expert. (to Admiral Moorer) The chief question is not the military moves but their impact on the Soviets.

Admiral Moorer: There is a definite interplay between the two check lists. I might note that the hospital planes are now on 24-hour notice.

### 318. Minutes of a National Security Council Meeting<sup>1</sup>

Washington, September 23, 1970, 9:30 a.m.

#### SUBJECT

Jordan and Cuba

#### PARTICIPANTS

The President  
Secretary of State William P. Rogers  
Secretary of Defense Melvin R. Laird  
Director of Central Intelligence Richard Helms  
Deputy Secretary of Defense David Packard  
Assistant Secretary of State Joseph Sisco  
Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Thomas Moorer  
Henry A. Kissinger  
General Alexander M. Haig

The President opened the meeting by stating that there would be two topics on the morning's agenda—the first a review of the situation in Jordan and the second a sensitive discussion of the latest intelligence on the situation in Cienfuegos Bay in Cuba.

Mr. Helms initiated the first agenda item by presenting an intelligence briefing. The highlight of this briefing was the confirmation that the Syrians had withdrawn their three armored brigades from Jordan—with two having been moved to their home stations and the third serving as a covering force along Syria's border with Jordan. He also reported that there were indications that Syrian armored forces were being replaced by Palestine Liberation army units from Syria.<sup>2</sup>

During Mr. Helms' briefing, the President commented that the Soviets appeared to be taking a soft line at the moment with respect to Syrian intervention and that they apparently were working officially to insure the withdrawal of the Syrian forces. The President noted that domestic press reports suggested that the United States was ready to intervene militarily. The President continued by reviewing his discussion in a meeting the previous afternoon with the Democratic Congressional

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-109, NSC Meeting Minutes, NSC Minutes Originals 1970. Top Secret; Sensitive. The meeting took place in the White House Cabinet Room.

<sup>2</sup> Helms's briefing was not attached, but CIA Intelligence Information Cable TDCS DB-315/04963-70, September 23, 0800 hours, reported the information. (*Ibid.*, Box 615, Country Files, Middle East, Jordan, Vol. V)

members who support the Administration on the ABM.<sup>3</sup> The President told them:

—They had performed more responsibly than some of the weak Republican Congressmen.

—It was his view that the King must survive and that the Syrians must withdraw since there could be no peace with a Jordanian non-government.

—The U.S. does not want to become involved and our military moves have been conveyed in a context of the need to intervene only to evacuate U.S. citizens. However, we wished to convey in more subtle terms that military intervention was a possibility on other grounds. The U.S. had, for this reason, maintained an ambivalent position on intervention while undertaking acts which suggested that it might intervene. These signals, the President told the Congressmen, created doubts and complicated the enemy's problems.

—President Eisenhower took a similar posture with respect to Quemoy and Matsu during the Chinese Straits crisis of the '50's. President Eisenhower maintained at that time that the U.S. could not tell the enemy that we would not fight and that it was essential that we keep the threat real even though it was recognized in our official councils that we would not act militarily.

—If the Syrians do, in fact, disengage, it will be because of the strong posture taken by the U.S.

Secretary Rogers stated that the previous evening's television had developed a real war scare as evidenced by references to the readiness of U.S. forces. Secretary Laird pointed out that the forthcoming NATO Exercise Reforger would involve some 11,000 additional U.S. forces and would further add credibility to U.S. seriousness. Secretary Rogers commented that this was an ideal time also to announce the resumption of military assistance to Greece. The President stated that he had, in fact, mentioned this to the friendly Democratic Congressmen the day before and agreed that the timing had been excellent. Secretary Rogers stated that announcing the resumption of military aid to Greece, the Spanish base agreement, and our South African aircraft sales were all moved gracefully under the mantle of the Middle Eastern crisis. The President agreed that this was an excellent tactic and suggested that in the future it might be well to hold controversial decisions of this type and to announce them during similar periods of crisis.

Secretary Rogers commented that an additional benefit of our handling of the Jordanian crisis was the fact that Syria had suffered massive casualties and that this would serve as a deterrent to their future aggressiveness. Further, the Palestinian extremists had been badly hurt

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<sup>3</sup> According to the President's Daily Diary, President Nixon met on September 22 with Southern Democratic Senators in the Map Room between 5:05 and 6:25 p.m. (Ibid., White House Central Files)

and no matter what the ultimate outcome of the situation in Jordan, the extremist elements would be weakened. Thus, Israel, in turn, had realized benefits from the actions in Jordan. The President added that all of this constituted a further drain on Soviet resources as well.

The President then turned to discussion of the U.S. response to the Israeli Note Verbale.<sup>4</sup> Secretary Rogers stated that the U.S. response must insure that the Israelis do not believe that they have a *carte blanche* to act militarily in Jordan as a result of our earlier exchanges of notes. He stated that the U.S. should make it clear to Israel that we do not think that any move on their part is called for in the light of most recent events.

The Secretary expressed special concern about the earlier U.S. response<sup>5</sup> which he felt constituted an open-ended commitment on the part of the United States to support Israel in the event they intervened. He stated that the U.S. language, in effect, constituted a treaty with Israel and that this situation should be straightened out now. The Israelis must know precisely what we are talking about. He strongly urged a response to the latest Israeli note which would make it clear that (1) Israel should not act on its own; and (2) should Israel do so, our commitments expressed earlier were no longer binding and that they related only to the circumstances of the moment.

The President stated that our exchange with the Israelis actually began with a note from Jordan<sup>6</sup> which we, in turn, conveyed to the Israeli Government and that Israel was merely responding to our initiative. It was therefore important, he stated, that the U.S. reply recognize that the Israeli Government has acted responsibly and that they have, in effect, been responsive to a U.S. initiative. The President directed that the WSAG carefully review the language of the U.S. response to take cognizance of these facts, noting that the situation of the moment had improved, and it may be that King Hussein does not want Israeli or U.S. air support.<sup>7</sup> If this is true, the United States will have finessed the problem. In effect, the U.S. response should suggest that we do not want unilateral Israeli action but, at the same time, make it clear that we are grateful for Israeli cooperation. The President added that it was the United States which took the initiative with the Israelis on this issue and it is the Government of Israel that was most helpful in response to our request. Secretary Rogers expressed his agreement with the President's analysis. The President cautioned that the situation in Jordan

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<sup>4</sup> For the Israeli note verbale, see footnote 10, Document 307.

<sup>5</sup> Apparently a reference to the response in Document 311.

<sup>6</sup> Apparently a reference to the message in Document 284.

<sup>7</sup> See Document 326.

was still tense and that there could be a requirement ultimately for Israeli action. Therefore, our response should be carefully couched so as not to preclude future Israeli action if required.

Secretary Rogers asked how the President felt about a strong cautionary message against Israeli attack at this time and a strong expression that the U.S. does not want such an attack. Dr. Kissinger asked whether this would be a wise course without knowing the Jordanian position. The President stated that we should inform the Israelis that we do not want military action without further consultation with us. Then, we will have an opportunity to evaluate the situation. Secretary Rogers emphasized that our written communications and documents must reflect this view specifically. The President stated that the situation had changed and that the U.S. does not want the Israelis to move unilaterally, noting that Israeli interests differed from U.S. interests and that we did not want to be drawn into the conflict as a result of Israeli initiatives. On the other hand, the President added, if the Jordanians still want air support, then we should still withhold agreement pending Israeli consultation with the U.S. Government. At the same time, the U.S. must keep in mind that the Israelis are doing our work, that they moved in at our request, and that we have gotten the benefits from their action.

Director Helms added that on a secondary level, the Arabs would love to have an issue with which to get after the Israelis and that we therefore needed to keep a very cool stance. Secretary Rogers stated that if King Hussein can't, at this point, save himself, what is the value of assistance by us or Israel? Dr. Kissinger then indicated that he was in agreement with the thrust of the note as outlined by the President. He stated that the outcome of the situation in Jordan was not necessarily a victorious one. If, at this point, Jordanian forces faced Palestine Liberation forces or if Syrian forces remain in Jordan, the King may indeed fall. If he reacts forcefully in the north, he will be weak in the cities; if, on the other hand, he acts forcefully in the cities, he may lose the North. Thus, the situation is far from solved. And, in either event, the Israelis may decide to move at some point. Should they do so, much will depend on how the U.S. acts. We must avoid having a record which confirms that we put them up to it and then, when it occurs, be in a position in which the Russians can split us away from the Israelis and isolate them.

The President stated that this was a strong possibility. He pointed out that he wanted the WSAG to consider carefully what U.S. reactions should be in that event. Specifically, what should the U.S. posture be if the Israelis move in the future. He commented that if the Syrians remain in Jordan, it is obvious that the King's days are numbered; but if the only way to get the Syrians out is for Israel to take military action, then the King's position is also jeopardized. Therefore, we are faced with an insoluble problem. If the Israelis move, the U.S. must be prepared with contingencies.

Secretary Rogers stated that his concern was the fact that they believe now that we have given them a *carte blanche* to act. The President stated that this had to be clarified since, up till now, we have talked only in the context of Syrian armored brigades in Jordan. Secretary Sisco stated that was correct. Our exchanges were dictated by the presence of Syrian armor in Jordan. The situation has changed. For this reason, we must carefully review our response to Israel's Note Verbale and insure that our language takes careful note of the change in the situation. Certainly, we must give Israel credit for helping to ease the situation thus far. The President commented that the Israeli questions were good ones and deserve a serious response.

[Omitted here is discussion of Cuba; for text, see *Foreign Relations, 1969–1976*, volume XII, Soviet Union, January 1969–October 1970, Document 214.]

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### 319. Telegram From the Embassy in Israel to the Department of State<sup>1</sup>

Tel Aviv, September 23, 1970, 1500Z.

5318. Subj: Hijacking Hostages.

1. Foreign Ministry (Baron) has asked us make urgent suggestion that Government of Jordan be urged to include release of hijacking hostages as part of any settlement made with fedayeen. Baron noted GOJ said to be holding number of important fedayeen prisoners, and should not let them go without getting hostages out.

2. Since, in a sense, hijacking and hostage situation was immediate cause of GOJ–fedayeen blowup, there would certainly seem to be logic in Israeli idea that settlement of hostages should be part of settlement of blowup. In this connection, we note Israeli radio broadcast noon today said four fedayeen leaders had been released by Jordanian Army.

Zurhellen

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, AV 12. Secret; Immediate. It was repeated to Amman (Immediate), Beirut, Bonn, Bern, London, and Geneva.

**320. Telegram From the Embassy in France to the Department of State<sup>1</sup>**

Paris, September 23, 1970, 1640Z.

12857. Subject: Highjack Hostages Reported Safe. According Quai, French Embassy Amman was informed September 22 by “good source” that highjack hostages all safe. Source told French that hostages were removed from Amman area prior to outbreak of fighting, and are being held elsewhere in Jordan in small groups of about six persons each. Hostages reportedly still under tight PFLP guard.

**Culley**

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, AV 12. Confidential; Priority. It was repeated to Amman (Priority), Beirut, Bern, Bonn, Geneva, London, and Tel Aviv.

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**321. Telegram From the Department of State to the Embassy in Jordan<sup>1</sup>**

Washington, September 23, 1970, 1952Z.

156385. Ref: Tel Aviv 5318.<sup>2</sup> Subject: Hijacking Hostages. While we are confident GOJ has welfare of hostages very much in mind, Embassy should, unless it perceives objection, urge Jordanians to provide for release of hijack hostages in any settlement with Fedayeen as proposed reftel.

**Rogers**

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, AV 12. Secret; Immediate. Drafted by Seelye and Alfred D. White, and approved by Seelye. It was repeated Priority to Beirut, Bonn, Bern, London, Geneva, and Tel Aviv.

<sup>2</sup> Document 319.



**322. Memorandum From Harold Saunders of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger)<sup>1</sup>**

Washington, September 23, 1970.

SUBJECT

The Situation in Jordan

At Tab A are the most important cables since this morning.

At Tab B is the noon Situation Report from CIA.

*The following are the main new elements in the situation this afternoon.*

1. The fighting continues in Amman but at a reduced level. A palace official claims that there is only one major pocket of resistance left in the city and that once it is cleared there will only be some snipers left in various parts of the town. This happens to be where our embassy is. The embassy is battening down the hatches, however, for another night since there is still considerable fighting in the neighborhood.

2. The Jordanians are publicly claiming to have routed the retreating Syrians from the Irbid-Ramatha area. It is still not clear, however, whether the Syrians are just retreating across the border to regroup or whether they have disengaged for good. They seem also to be in the process of replacing their forces with units from the Palestine Liberation Army and in this way "legitimizing" the intervention. The PLA is the military arm of the Palestine Liberation Organization and is largely composed of regular units seconded by the Arab governments. The Syrians presumably could turn more of their regular units over to the PLA as could the Iraqis and others.

3. In the now familiar pattern, the day ended in Amman with another cease-fire. The only apparent difference today is that it was announced by the visiting Sudanese President<sup>2</sup> who also said that the principles announced this morning concerning the withdrawal of the fedayeen from the cites would be used as the basis for a settlement. The only hitch is that these were repudiated by the PLO central committee this morning and there is no reason yet to believe the captured fedayeen leaders have any more authority to speak for the PLO now than they did this morning.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-076, Washington Special Actions Group Meetings, WSAG Meetings Middle East 9/23/70. Secret. The tabs are not attached.

<sup>2</sup> Sudanese President Numeiri was leading the mediation mission sent by the Arab leaders at their summit in Cairo; see footnote 2, Document 303.

4. Our embassy in Tel Aviv believes that an Israeli military move at this point would certainly meet with surprise, and perhaps even fairly sharp criticism in public. The embassy reports that there is no indication that the government is seeking to prepare the public for military action and much evidence to the contrary. This, of course, is in sharp contrast to the continuing indication of a military build up.

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### 323. Telegram From the Department of State to the Mission to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization<sup>1</sup>

Washington, September 23, 1970, 2128Z.

156554. Subject: Jordan Situation. Ref: USNATO 3417.<sup>2</sup>

1. You may assure PermReps and Brosio of US understanding of their interest in and concern about military dispositions. You should state that actions taken have involved the moving of the carrier *J. F. Kennedy* from the Atlantic to the Mediterranean area along with a number of supporting ships.

2. Other than that we have taken certain measures as a series of precautionary actions to increase the readiness of Army, Navy, Marine and Air Force units to support an evacuation operation for Americans in Jordan should that be necessary.<sup>3</sup>

3. *Begin FYI*: We do not interpret any actions taken to date as requiring a report to the NAC under CM(55) 82. *End FYI*.

**Rogers**

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, POL 23–9 JORDAN. Secret; Priority. Drafted by Colonel Earl L. Boyd (DOD/ISA); cleared in EUR/RPM, Jordan Working Group, and J–5; and approved by George Springsteen (EUR). It was repeated to USNMR SHAPE, USCINCEUR, USNAVEUR, USAFE, and USAREUR.

<sup>2</sup> Telegram 3417 from USNATO, September 22, reported that the NATO Representatives discussed the issue of “U.S. readiness measures” relating to the Jordan situation and how these measures might impact NATO forces. (Ibid.)

<sup>3</sup> In backchannel telegram 1217 from USNATO, September 23, Ellsworth urged Kissinger to have the Departments of State and Defense draft a report that Ellsworth could give to the NAC. Ellsworth believed this would allay concerns among NATO allies regarding possible U.S. intervention in Jordan. (Ibid., Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 423, Backchannel, Backchannel Messages, Europe, Middle East, and Latin America)

### 324. Telegram From the Department of State to Certain Diplomatic Posts<sup>1</sup>

Washington, September 24, 1970, 1717Z.

157107. Refs: Bern's 2423, 2425, 2427.<sup>2</sup>

1. After careful consideration reftels, we are persuaded that fresh approach to problem is highly desirable. Situation on the ground in Middle East has evolved over past several days. We strongly doubt that PFLP interlocuter with whom Boissier has been talking represents those elements actually holding hostages. Indeed, Boissier himself recognizes this probability and has proposed course of action Bern's 2423 in order to smoke out valid negotiator on PFLP side.

2. We continue to hope that situation in Jordan will continue to improve and that Jordanian Government can play a larger role in obtaining the release of the hostages. Obviously, the GOJ must have numbers of PFLP members among prisoners currently held.

3. Boissier desires that the Bern Group powers undertake a more precise engagement. This is reasonable and we therefore propose for Group consideration a proposed letter to Boissier as set out below. In this connection we consider it essential that Israel participate and that the communication to Boissier be in the name of the five repeat five powers. *Begin text:*

"We have received your report on your efforts to obtain the release of the hostages held by the PFLP. The five governments are prepared to authorize you to discuss with your interlocutors on the following basis:

"(a) The United Kingdom, Germany, Switzerland, and Israel are prepared to release seven prisoners held in Europe plus two Algerians held by Israel in exchange for the release of all the hostages held by the PFLP.

"(b) The PFLP will gather all the hostages in a secure place so that they can be safe during the period when the modalities for their release are being arranged."

<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970-73, PS 7-6 JORDAN. Secret; Immediate. Drafted by Beaudry (EUR/AIS); cleared by Seelye, Sisco, and Johnson; and approved by Rogers. It was sent to Bern, Bonn, London, Beirut, Amman, Tel Aviv, and Geneva.

<sup>2</sup> In telegram 2423 from Bern, September 23, 1611Z; telegram 2425 from Bern, September 23, 1815Z; and telegram 2427 from Bern, September 23, 2300Z, the Embassy discussed Boissier's proposed letter to the PFLP, which sought the release all of the European and U.S. hostages not holding dual citizenship with Israel while moving the Israeli and Israeli dual citizens to a safe place. While the U.S. and Israeli Governments resisted the offer, the Swiss, West German, and British Governments considered the proposal the best opportunity to get some of the hostages out while securing the rest in a safe location during further negotiations. (Ibid.)

4. With respect to the covering confidential memorandum, we believe it could be changed as indicated in the revised text which is set out below:

“For your confidential guidance: Our main objective remains to liberate all hostages in a global solution. As a first step you should aim to bring all hostages to a safe place, where their number and conditions can be verified by a representative of the ICRC. We, of course, understand your difficulties.

“You may in your oral presentation to the PFLP representative indicate that the language of point (a) indicating willingness to exchange prisoners for hostages in effect accepts the principle of exchange. You are cautioned that the governments have serious doubt about the ability of your interlocutors to deliver hostages, but have agreed to this procedure as a means of continuing the dialogue in the hope that you may discover a valid interlocutor.” *End text*

We recognize that Embassy Bern will have problems negotiating the above, but we consider it essential that Israel be brought on board. Furthermore, in light of fluid situation in the area, other powers should have no objection to spending some additional time in trying to arrive at reasonable negotiating position and finding those PFLP who actually control the hostages.

**Rogers**

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### 325. Intelligence Memorandum Prepared in the Central Intelligence Agency<sup>1</sup>

02452/70

Washington, September 24, 1970.

Jordan

(Supplement to 1200 Situation Report)

According to a sensitive State Department cable, Foreign Minister Eban told Ambassador Yost at the UN on September 23 that while Israel, on balance, favored Husayn as of this time, ‘the world would not

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 615, Country Files, Middle East, Jordan, Vol. V. Secret; No Foreign Dissem; Background Use Only; Exdis. Prepared in the Directorate of Intelligence of the Central Intelligence Agency. Received in the White House at 1:07 p.m. An unidentified handwritten note reads, “Interesting comment by Eban to effect that Israel could live with Palestinian regime in Jordan if Hussein were toppled.” Kissinger initialed the memorandum.

come to an end if he departed the scene.' Eban said the Palestinians would become more responsible when saddled with the day-to-day burdens of government, and the long-term trend in Jordan was toward greater recognition of the fact that Jordan was 70 percent Palestinian. Yost added that Eban seemed to imply that, sooner or later, Israel had to find an accommodation with the Palestinians and that it might in the long run be easier if they dominated the state of Jordan.

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### 326. Minutes of a Washington Special Actions Group Meeting<sup>1</sup>

Washington, September 24, 1970, 3:10–3:45 p.m.

#### SUBJECT

Middle East

#### PARTICIPATION

Chairman—Henry A. Kissinger

State—

U. Alexis Johnson

Talcott Seelye

Defense—

David Packard

Robert J. Pranger

James H. Noyes

CIA—

Richard Helms

David Blee

[*name not declassified*]

JCS—

Adm. Thomas H. Moorer

LTG John W. Vogt

NSC Staff—

Harold H. Saunders

B/Gen. Alexander M. Haig

Adm. R.C. Robinson

Col. Richard T. Kennedy

Samuel Hoskinson

Jeanne W. Davis

#### SUMMARY OF DECISIONS

It was agreed:

1. to examine the availability of tanks for Jordan;
2. to review the Lebanon contingency plans.

Mr. Helms briefed from the attached notes.<sup>2</sup>

Mr. Kissinger: Have we more on the diplomatic front?

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-114, Washington Special Actions Group, WSAG Minutes (Originals) 1969 and 1970. Top Secret; Sensitive; Nodis. The meeting took place in the White House Situation Room.

<sup>2</sup> Not attached and not found.

Mr. Johnson: No, not particularly. With regard to the hostages, we have sent a telegram with instructions to try to keep the five countries together and to test whether the PFLP representative in Beirut has any validity as a channel.<sup>3</sup> We have entered a new phase now, with Jordan becoming more important since they now hold a lot of prisoners. With regard to relief for Jordan, we have a disturbing report from London of a British conversation with an ICRC representative who said that they did not want any help, military or civilian, from either the UK or the US.<sup>4</sup> We are baffled by this and have asked Geneva to reconcile this report with present planning.<sup>5</sup> The first evacuation plane, containing some 24 Americans and 25 others, has arrived in Beirut. There will be another flight tomorrow.

Mr. Kissinger: Has Sisco seen Rabin yet?

Mr. Johnson: We are waiting for the message to be approved.

Adm. Moorer: Would it be advisable to ease off on some of these response times for the 82nd Airborne and the forces in Europe? We could put it right back up if we had to. On the one hand, it might give the impression that we think everything is over and we are relaxing. On the other, it might be reassuring to the American public. We might also ease the alert on the aircraft in Turkey from four to six hours.

Mr. Kissinger: I think easing the response time on the aircraft is all right.

Adm. Moorer: We might also return the 82nd Airborne to its normal 22-hour time. The first brigade is now at 8 hours.

Mr. Kissinger: Let's hold that for 24 hours.

Adm. Moorer: How about the forces in Europe?

Mr. Kissinger: Let's hold those for 24 hours, too. The planes in Turkey were originally for evacuation and I think it is all right to let them slip. I think we should look at the other elements every 24 hours.

Mr. Packard: I agree.

Mr. Johnson: You would keep the ships where they are?

Adm. Moorer: Yes, except for replacement of the *Saratoga*. I think we should look at this every day. Not only does it cost money but there is an effect on morale since the men are confined to their barracks and can't go anywhere.

Mr. Kissinger: I agree—we will look at it every day.

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<sup>3</sup> Document 324.

<sup>4</sup> In telegram 7736 from London, September 24, 1324Z. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, SOC 10 JORDAN)

<sup>5</sup> In telegram 157108 to Geneva, September 24, 1659Z. (Ibid.)

Mr. Johnson: Frank Sieverts<sup>6</sup> has been made our coordinator of emergency relief operations, working with AID. He has good contacts with the ICRC.

Mr. Kissinger: What about the hospital planes? Does the ICRC edict mean they can't move?

Mr. Packard: They were being unloaded anyhow.

Adm. Moorer: They are on 24 hours notice.

Mr. Kissinger: How about economic assistance to Jordan?

Mr. Johnson: AID has enough money in its contingency fund for emergency relief for Jordan. The proposed supplemental package for Korea and Cambodia will include some MAP for Jordan. We have been discussing the amount and there is a good argument for \$15 million, which was the amount of FMS credit which they won't get now. I think inclusion of Jordan in this supplemental package will strengthen it. There appears to be no necessity for major economic assistance now. We have funds for emergency relief, and the Jordanian reserves are in pretty good shape. We do plan to go forward in the next budget on economic reconstruction.

Mr. Seelye: We are also weighing in with the Kuwaitis to get them to turn their support back on.

Mr. Pranger: We also have an ammunition replacement package ready to go.

Mr. Johnson: Fortuitously there is a ship arriving on October 10 which carries much of what they will need as replacement ammunition.

Mr. Pranger: Also, the first increment of the artillery package will dock soon.

Mr. Saunders: Have they asked for replacements? How could we do this?

Mr. Pranger: There are various ways: by MAP diversion requiring a Presidential Determination, or the Defense Secretary's contingency fund. We have identified these in the resupply paper.

Mr. Johnson: If we get \$15 million in the supplemental this will give us some flexibility. They will probably need replacements for the tanks they lost but these can come down the MAP road.

Mr. Kissinger: What do we do if the Syrians come back?

Adm. Moorer: We would be right back where we were on Sunday,<sup>7</sup> although the Israelis might take them on right away. It would be

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<sup>6</sup> Frank Sieverts was the Secretary of State's Special Assistant for POW/MIA Affairs.

<sup>7</sup> September 20.

a question of what Iraq would do, and we should probably see how the Jordanians are handling it. They are in a better position than before. If there should be a combination of the Syrians and the Iraqis, without any outside help, we should probably start talking to the Israelis again.

Mr. Helms: I have a hard time seeing a scenario where Iraq would be off-again-on-again, too-little-too-late again. If they team up, this would be a major situation. We would be back to Sunday, only worse.

Adm. Moorer: We would not have an evacuation problem.

Mr. Kissinger: Nor would we have the evacuation pretext.

Mr. Johnson: The evacuation pretext was never very relevant to action in the north.

Mr. Packard: There would still be Americans there.

Mr. Kissinger: When you start losing more men than you are taking out you lose the pretext.

Adm. Moorer: The Ambassador was not too eager about the air evacuation. He was thinking about wheels.

Mr. Johnson: The road to Aqaba looks better.

Mr. Kissinger: If the Syrians should come back, would this be the time for a quick strike? Or should we let them come in and out every five days?

Mr. Johnson: If they should, it would be best if Jordan could bloody their noses every time.

Mr. Packard: It would be preferable to let the Jordanians do it by themselves.

Adm. Moorer: If the Syrians strike again by themselves, they probably won't get back in. At least their losses would be much higher.

Mr. Packard: What do we know about Jordan tank losses?

Adm. Moorer: Very little—nothing like the Syrian losses.

Mr. Helms: The highest figure I have seen is 90.

Mr. Kissinger: How many were lost to breakdowns?

Mr. Helms: It's hard to know that.

Adm. Moorer: Israeli recce indicates 75 to 90 lost all told.

Mr. Packard: Is there any way to replace these tanks in a hurry?

Mr. Johnson: They haven't asked for anything yet. The King hasn't had a chance to take inventory. I expect we will be hearing from him in the next few days.

Mr. Kissinger: But we are ready to replace ammunition and small arms.

Mr. Johnson: A ship arrives October 10.

Mr. Packard: Any possibility of a trade deal on tanks with Iran?



Mr. Johnson: Or Saudi Arabia?

Gen. Vogt: Israel is trying to sell tanks.

Mr. Kissinger: Let's look at the availability of tanks for Jordan.

Mr. Packard: The best way to nail this thing is to keep Jordan's capability up. (to Pranger) Let's get on this tank availability question.

Adm. Moorer: Rabin mentioned the outstanding performance of Jordanian tanks.

Mr. Seelye: The Israelis consider that the crucial factor was the inter-Arab pressure on Syria.

Adm. Moorer: Let's first find out if the Jordanians need tanks. There are lots around the cities now. When they are no longer needed in the cities they could be moved north.

Mr. Johnson: Are Saudi tanks compatible with Jordanian tanks?

Mr. Pranger: Yes.

Mr. Packard, Adm. Moorer and Mr. Johnson agree to undertake a quick survey of the availability of tanks.

Mr. Kissinger: How about the Lebanese questions? What do we do if the same thing happens in Lebanon? Have we a draft cable?

Mr. Seelye: We have a cable.<sup>8</sup>

Adm. Moorer: What do you mean by the "same thing"?

Mr. Kissinger: If we have a civil war in Lebanon resulting from Palestinian action, and Lebanon asks for intervention, what would be our view?

Mr. Johnson: We can't repeat 1958.

Mr. Helms: The imagination boggles. It was bad enough in 1958, but now, with the fedayeen as a complicating factor!

Mr. Kissinger: If we don't do it, would we have the Israelis do it—or anyone do it? Let's review the existing papers on Lebanon.

Mr. Saunders: You recall we had an Israeli option.

Mr. Kissinger: Would nothing be better than the Israelis? Let's review these papers again.

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<sup>8</sup> Not further identified.

**327. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon<sup>1</sup>**

Washington, September 25, 1970.

SUBJECT

Points to be made to Israeli Ambassador Rabin

Events have overtaken the need for a precise response to the Israeli Note Verbale which was received on September 22 and which was related to the possible provision of Israeli air attacks on Syrian forces in Jordan.<sup>2</sup> As you know, on the afternoon of September 23 Ambassador Rabin suggested that the matter of Israeli military action in Jordan be held in abeyance in view of the withdrawal of Syrian regular forces from Jordan.<sup>3</sup> In order to clear the record with respect to this and prior exchanges with the Israelis, State has proposed that Assistant Secretary Sisco deliver orally to Ambassador Rabin the message at Tab A. I do not believe that paragraph 4 of the proposed State text<sup>4</sup> is acceptable for the following reasons:

(1) It would raise serious questions in the minds of the Israelis as to our fundamental willingness to defend Israel against Soviet attack.

(2) It is an especially abrasive and unnecessary affront to the Government of Israel in the light of the cooperative attitude they maintained throughout the recent crisis.

(3) Most importantly it could seriously hamper future cooperation with Israel at a time when the situation in Jordan remains tense and before we can be absolutely certain that it may not be necessary to call upon Israel again to take military action in Jordan.

I am informed that paragraph 4 was written personally by the Secretary of State because he believes that paragraph 3 of our earlier Note Verbale of September 21 to the Government of Israel constituted an open-ended commitment to protect Israel against Soviet attack (Tab B).<sup>5</sup> I do not agree with this interpretation.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 336, Subject Files, Items to Discuss with the President, September 9–December 1970. Secret; Nodis. Sent for action. Printed from an unsigned copy. All tabs are attached but not printed.

<sup>2</sup> See footnote 10, Document 307.

<sup>3</sup> A summary of the meeting with Rabin was transmitted in telegram 156646 to Tel Aviv, September 23, 2215Z. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, POL 27 ARAB–ISR)

<sup>4</sup> Paragraph 4 stated that "all aspects of our exchanges with Israel with regard to the Syrian invasion of Jordan, including those relating to the problem of possible Soviet military intervention, applied only to the situation which arose from the Syrian invasion and therefore no longer apply."

<sup>5</sup> See Document 311.

*Recommendation:*

That you authorize a new and terser response to Israel which will clearly clean the slate with respect to commitments made this week but which will avoid an unnecessary irritant and would not jeopardize future cooperative action if required.

An alternate text for your approval is at Tab C.<sup>6</sup>

Approve alternate text.

Retain proposed State language.

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<sup>6</sup>No action is indicated. In a September 25 memorandum from Saunders to Kissinger, Saunders sought Kissinger's approval for an oral reply to Rabin, which included a modification to the text Kissinger objected to in paragraph 4 of the original draft. The new paragraph 4 opened with the U.S. Government's appreciation for "the prompt and positive Israeli response to our approach." It continued that since "circumstances will be different if there is another attack, we consider that all aspects of the exchanges between us with regard to this Syrian invasion of Jordan are no longer applicable, and we understand that Israel agrees." (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, NSC Institutional Files (H-Files), Box H-076, Washington Special Actions Group Meetings, WSAG Meeting Middle East 9/25/70)

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**328. Memorandum From the President's Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs (Haig) to President Nixon<sup>1</sup>**

Washington, September 26, 1970, 9 a.m.

SUBJECT

The Situation in Jordan

The situation appears to have stabilized this morning. The cease-fire is holding up in both Amman and in the north. There has still, however, been no authoritative fedayeen agreement to King Hussein's terms and the other Arab leaders, especially Nasser, are growing increasingly impatient to end the conflict. Hussein appears to be holding out for a settlement on his terms and could decide to move again against the remaining fedayeen strongholds in the Irbid area if the commandos do not soon capitulate. Meanwhile, efforts are underway to mount an international medical and food relief effort to cope with the critical situation that has developed, especially in Amman.

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<sup>1</sup>Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 615, Country Files, Middle East, Jordan, Vol. V. Secret; Nodis. The time is handwritten. A stamped notation indicates the President saw the memorandum.

### *The Military Situation*

The latest cease-fire seems to have taken hold, at least for the time being. The Jordanian forces appear to be in effective control of most of Amman with the possible exceptions of the area where our Embassy is located and at least one of the refugee camps on the edge of the city. The fighting has apparently all but ceased in the north also. A newspaper man who toured the key northern towns of Ramtha, Irbid and Jarash yesterday with the permission of the commandos reported that all was quiet in these locations, with the fedayeen still in control. The towns, however, were all ringed by Jordanian troops and armor.

Despite the cease-fire, Sudanese President Numayri, accompanied by PLO leader Yasir Arafat, went back to Cairo with the rest of the Arab mediation delegation and charged the Jordanian army with violations. This news apparently then prompted Nasser to fire off a harsh cable to King Hussein alleging that "all the promises made to us have been completely ignored" and claiming that "there is a plan to liquidate the Palestinian resistance." Nasser further complained that the Arab mediating committee had been "unjustifiably subjected to evasiveness." Hussein responded this morning by denying that his forces had not broken the cease-fire and asserting that they would observe it in the face of "unceasing and unbearable provocations." He also said that a new cabinet will be announced shortly.

King Hussein is coming under fire from other Arab states as well. In addition to the usual verbal blasts emanating from Baghdad and Damascus, Libya has broken relations with Jordan.

### *The Hostages*

There is no further word on the remaining hostages. As you know, the Jordanian army yesterday freed 16 of the 54 hostages held by the guerrillas—two Germans, 6 Swiss and eight British. (One more hostage turned up in the course of the day after the original group of 15 was found.) The whereabouts of the remaining 38 American and dual American-Israeli nationals is still unknown, although there are unconfirmed reports that they were moved out of Amman to the Irbid area when the fighting broke out. If the remaining hostages are being held in Irbid it may be some time before the army is able to free them and they could still be used as bargaining counters by the fedayeen.

### *The Relief Problem*

The Embassy reports that the food situation in Amman is critical. Those who can are leaving the city for surrounding villages but most of the people are pinned down by curfews and continuing skirmishes. What food stocks people had are now exhausted and the stores for the most part have been looted and will require a considerable period to be replenished. The army's food supply is also dangerously low.

Following up on the contingency plans developed in the WSAG,<sup>2</sup> State has set up a new task force to report to Under Secretary Irwin to oversee the disaster relief effort.<sup>3</sup> This is an interagency group. Most of our diplomatic and military posts in the area and in Europe have been instructed to take immediate action to obtain foodstuffs to be sent by air freight to Amman, drawing from PL-480 stocks as necessary. Defense has also tentatively authorized the use of the C-130's at Incirlik in Turkey for airlifting food into Amman, including C-rations. Plans with the International Red Cross to move U.S. army field hospitals from Europe into Jordan are on standby to be implemented when the Red Cross feels it is safe to do so.

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<sup>2</sup> See Document 326.

<sup>3</sup> In telegram 159077 to all diplomatic posts, September 26, 2223Z. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 615, Country Files, Middle East, Jordan, Vol. V)

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### 329. Telegram From the Department of State to Certain Diplomatic Posts<sup>1</sup>

Washington, September 26, 1970, 1941Z.

159035. For Chief of Mission.

1. We note that within Arab world Arab leadership and public media are taking the line that Hussein is responsible for the bloodshed in Jordan and that resulting deep feelings mean that there can be no reconciliation and that he is "finished".

2. From the history of the past months it is clear that Hussein exercised maximum restraint in attempting to avoid confrontation and to coexist with Palestinian movements on the basis of agreements which invariably were violated by uncontrolled elements within Palestinian complex. If there are villains in Jordan tragedy they are clearly George Habbash, Hawatmeh and others in leadership of extremist groups.

3. We hope that you can get across in your contacts with Arab leaders and representatives that while it is understandable that feelings are

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970-73, POL 23-9 JORDAN. Secret; Exdis. Drafted by Sisco and Davies; cleared by Seelye; and approved by Davies. It was sent Priority to Amman, and was also sent to Beirut, Cairo, Jidda, Kuwait, Tripoli, Benghazi, Tunis, Algiers, Rabat, and USUN.

deep when such bloodshed has been involved, we believe Hussein forced into situation by Maoist-inclined forces among Palestinians, and that he is fully capable of putting his house in order and maintaining the broad support of his entire population.

4. Arab and western press has posed question in terms of loyal Bedouin forces versus the Palestinians. Fact of the matter is that Hussein's army is made up of 55 percent Palestinians. Moreover there is no evidence that PFLP and Fatah in fact reflect the broad consensus of the Palestinians. There are still many Palestinians who favor a political solution, though we recognize that when radicals take the lead it makes it hard for the more moderate elements not to follow.

5. In the days ahead we hope that you can help maintain this view. Jordan Ambassador here is convinced that in a week or so a more moderate approach to Jordan will develop among the Arabs.

6. We are particularly concerned at hard line Nasser and UAR media have taken toward Hussein. It is hard for us to conceive that UAR's interest would be served by replacement of Hussein by Baathi-supported radical Palestinian-dominated regime or regimes. This would have resulted in an indefinite postponement of further peace-making efforts since it is highly unlikely that there would have been anyone with whom peace could have been made in Jordan.

**Rogers**

### 330. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon<sup>1</sup>

Washington, September 28, 1970.

#### SUBJECT

Jordan Situation Report

A new cease-fire agreement was announced Sunday night in Cairo.<sup>2</sup> While it appears from the ambiguous language that Hussein may have made some concessions to Arafat, the test will be in the implementation.

Meanwhile, arrangements for the initial phase of the relief effort were completed Sunday, and planes were scheduled to begin arriving in Amman at daybreak today.

#### *Cease-Fire Agreement*

The Agreement to end the fighting in Jordan emerged from a meeting of Arab leaders attended by Hussein and Arafat. [*less than 1 line not declassified*] Arafat passed the order to Fedayeen forces to cease all military operations as of 1925 GMT.

The test of the agreement seems to represent some concessions to Arafat's demands, but the Jordanians seem pleased. The terms include withdrawal of both army and Fedayeen forces from Amman, release of detainees, return of military and civilian conditions in other towns to what they were before the crisis, restoration of security responsibility to the police and an end to the military government. A follow-up committee headed by the Tunisian Premier<sup>3</sup> with one government and one Fedayeen representative has been appointed.

Ambassador Brown in Amman reports his assumption that both Hussein and Arafat were under heavy pressure in Cairo to accept a cease-fire. He expresses reservations about the staying power of any agreement reached under this kind of duress.<sup>4</sup>

Hussein remains under heavy pressure from his own army to eradicate the last major elements of the guerrillas, and the Jordanian

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 615, Country Files, Middle East, Jordan, Vol. V. Top Secret; Sensitive. Printed from an unsigned copy.

<sup>2</sup> September 27; see footnote 2, Document 303.

<sup>3</sup> Bahi Ladgham was the Tunisian Prime Minister.

<sup>4</sup> In telegram 5334 from Amman, September 28, 1525Z. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970-73, POL 23-9 JORDAN)

Government is having difficulty holding back the army from continuing its attacks. The cease-fire held generally through Sunday in Amman, but Israeli sources reported fighting in the northern towns of Jerash, Ajlun and Ramtha. Irbid remained quiet with the Fedayeen controlling the city and the army surrounding.

#### *Relief Effort*

Four C-130s with food supplies and the first mobile hospital unit will arrive in Amman beginning at daybreak Monday. The second hospital will follow Tuesday.

#### *Hostages*

The 32 hostages released Saturday were flown to Cyprus Sunday.<sup>5</sup> The remaining six are reported to be in the UAR Embassy in Amman.<sup>6</sup> The UK informed the UAR Government that it is prepared to release the girl hijacker if the remaining hostages are turned over safely.<sup>7</sup>

#### *U.S. Forces*

The one 250-man infantry company in Germany that has been on alert since the beginning of the Jordan crisis was taken off alert Saturday as part of the general relaxation of alert status and then was returned to nine-hour alert for contingency use for protection of the hospital units.

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<sup>5</sup> As reported in telegram 1703 from Nicosia, September 27, 1050Z. (Ibid., Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 619, Country Files, Middle East, Jordan Crisis) A debriefing of 2 hostages from the group of 32, which provides eyewitness accounts of the hostages' ordeal, is in telegram 1710 from Nicosia, September 27, 2120Z. (Ibid., RG 59, Central Files 1970-73, PS 7-6 JORDAN)

<sup>6</sup> As reported in telegram 5292 from Amman, September 27, 1740Z. (Ibid., PS 7-6 JORDAN) According to telegram 159271 to Naples, September 28, 1557Z, the six hostages were apparently not at the UAR Embassy as of 11 a.m. EDT, but at an unknown location. (Ibid., POL 23-9 JORDAN)

<sup>7</sup> As reported in telegram 159169 to Amman, September 27, 2149Z, the British agreed to release Leila Khaled. (Ibid.)



**331. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon<sup>1</sup>**

Washington, September 28, 1970.

## SUBJECT

The Situation in Jordan—1700 GMT, September 28

There are no new specific developments to report on the situation within Jordan. The cease-fire appears to be still generally holding up; there apparently has been no change in the situation in northern Jordan; there is nothing new on the remaining hostages; and Arab efforts to forge a more permanent settlement between King Hussein and the fedayeen continue. You may, however, be interested in some of the Israeli reflections on the current situation and our latest moves in mounting the relief effort.

The Director of the Research Department of the Israeli Foreign Minister believes that the Cairo agreement signed yesterday by King Hussein simply brings the situation back to what it was prior to the outbreak of fighting.<sup>2</sup> He believes that Hussein's agreement to mutual withdrawal of the army and the fedayeen from Amman gives the fedayeen a clear advantage since they will re-enter the city clandestinely and rebuild their bases. Because of this he expects the army to resist the Cairo agreement and continue on its own way. CIA analysts are also not very optimistic that the Cairo agreement will prove to be anything more than a "stopgap".

The following are some of the more important measures we are taking on the relief effort:<sup>3</sup>

—All eight aircraft with the general purpose mobile hospital and four with food and medical supplies from Turkey have landed in Amman and unloaded. The hospital unit is awaiting arrival of Jordanian forces for escort to the hospital site. The aircraft have left Amman.

—Under Secretary Irwin held a special meeting this morning to coordinate our official relief efforts with those of private U.S. agencies.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 615, Country Files, Middle East, Jordan, Vol. V. Secret; Nodis. Sent for information. Printed from an uninitialed copy.

<sup>2</sup> For a summary of the Cairo agreement, see Document 330.

<sup>3</sup> In a September 27 memorandum to President Nixon, Haig explained the U.S. Government's numerous efforts to provide relief for Jordan. These included \$5 million in assistance, shipments of foodstuffs and medical supplies, and mobile hospitals. (National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 615, Country Files, Middle East, Jordan, Vol. V)

—There is a possibility that the second hospital unit may not be needed. Embassy Amman will make clear that it is ready to come but that Jordanian needs govern.

—Apart from the above flights, one has flown from Beirut each day Sunday and Monday with a total of 22 tons of perishable foods and canned goods.

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### 332. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon<sup>1</sup>

Washington, September 29, 1970.

#### SUBJECT

The Situation in Jordan—0200 GMT, September 29, 1970

The tenuous cease-fire is still holding up in both Amman and in northern Jordan. Virtually no observers expect that this situation will continue for very long. There is little new to report on the six remaining hostages although we do have a fairly good report that they are safe. Our relief effort is continuing although some bottlenecks have been encountered in Amman and a temporary halt in the supply of foodstuffs may be necessary.

It is difficult to determine at this point what will be the effect of Nasser's death<sup>2</sup> on the Jordan crisis other than to say that it may bring a few days of relative quiet. It is worth noting, however, that Nasser played a generally moderating role, although he tried to straddle the fence between Hussein and the fedayeen.

#### *The Cease-Fire*

The cease-fire remains generally effective in Amman. There were some reports of limited clashes Monday<sup>3</sup> morning but nothing serious. There are so far no indications, however, that either the army or the fedayeen are withdrawing yet from the city. There are reports that things are beginning to return to normal, although it will be some time before utilities and sanitation services are restored. Ambassador Brown reports that since it is obvious that the embassy area will not be cleared

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 615, Country Files, Middle East, Jordan, Vol. V. Top Secret. Printed from an uninitialed copy.

<sup>2</sup> Gamal Abdel Nasser died of a heart attack on September 28.

<sup>3</sup> September 28.

of fedayeen for a long time, he and several embassy officers will soon establish a "branch embassy" in a more secure area.<sup>4</sup>

Attempts to enforce the cease-fire in northern Jordan appear to be running into more difficulty. Intercepted fedayeen messages indicate an intention to break the cease-fire and considerable bitterness. There are no reports of actual cease-fire violations however, although it is quite possible that there have been some.

Commenting on the Cairo agreement, our embassy in Amman states that the efforts of the special committee headed by Tunisia's Premier Bahi Ladgham and the observers sent to Amman may give the country a breathing spell, but that it is doubtful if they can keep the fedayeen and the army apart for any length of time.

The embassy thinks that while Ladgham may be acceptable to the government because of Tunisia's moderate stand, the fedayeen may denounce the chairman and the committee if they think it is favoring the government. The fact that the Syrians and Iraqis have also not supported the agreement could also encourage the fedayeen to resist the committee's decisions. Finally, the embassy seriously doubts that the fedayeen will ever leave Amman of their own free will or that the army can agree to continued fedayeen presence in Irbid since this amounts to a political defeat.<sup>5</sup>

### *The Hostages*

The remaining six hostages are still in fedayeen hands, probably in Irbid, and negotiations for their release are continuing. A responsible Red Cross official reports that they are safe and there have been several reports that they may be released soon.

### *Relief Program*

The following is the current status of our relief efforts:

—The Defense Department has announced in a press briefing that American relief aircraft have been using the Sinai–Aqaba route to Amman. Our embassy in Amman has stressed that, to placate the military in Jordan, King Hussein wants American relief planes to come in from Saudi Arabia.<sup>6</sup> We have sought and received Saudi permission for these overflights and although we may only use Saudi air space minimally the relief flights will be publicly billed as coming from Saudi Arabia.

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<sup>4</sup> In telegram 5340 from Amman, September 28, 1615Z. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, POL 23–9 JORDAN)

<sup>5</sup> Reported in telegram 5334 from Amman; see footnote 4, Document 330.

<sup>6</sup> In telegram 5348 from Amman, September 28, 1715Z. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, SOC 10 JORDAN)

State is also asking through the Italian embassy in Damascus for Syrian overflight rights.

—Some difficulty has arisen with respect to moving from Amman airport the general purpose mobile hospital and the food and medical supplies that were brought into Amman airport on Monday, the 28th. Because of these difficulties and uncertainty as to the extent of further needs, Amman Embassy has recommended a 24-hour pause in further relief flights from Turkey.

—Ambassador Brown thinks that the Mobile Army Surgical Hospital will be extremely useful and that it has been ordered from its base in Germany and is due in Amman at dawn on the 29th.

—A civilian aircraft has been chartered to fly from Beirut to Amman on the 29th with relief supplies (about 10 tons of food).

—Other major sources of relief supplies for Jordan have been the International Red Cross relief flights from Beirut (four per day) and shipments of food overland from Israel. A British medical unit is scheduled to arrive in Amman on September 29 and 30.

#### *Military Aid*

The Jordanians have sent us a long military aid shopping list. Defense estimates that to deliver all that the Jordanians have requested would cost at least \$10 million and that supplementary legislation would therefore be necessary after the election. Ambassador Brown is urging prompt delivery of the most urgently required items in order to maintain Jordanian morale and as a follow-on to your personal message to King Hussein.<sup>7</sup> A sum for Jordan is tentatively included in the plans for the supplemental budget request.

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<sup>7</sup> In telegram 5357 from Amman, September 28, 1810Z. (Ibid., DEF 12-5 JORDAN) For President Nixon's message to King Hussein, see footnote 6, Document 313.

**333. Memorandum From the President's Assistant for National Security Affairs (Kissinger) to President Nixon<sup>1</sup>**

Washington, September 29, 1970.

## SUBJECT

The Situation in Jordan—1800 GMT

The situation in Jordan remains about the same, although Nasser's death could ultimately remove one of the principal building blocks of the fragile cease-fire. Amman remains relatively calm but the fedayeen are not withdrawing and the situation in the north may be shaping up along classic guerrilla warfare lines. The international relief effort is continuing without any major problems but we may be approaching the point now that we have met the most urgent needs—to pause momentarily to take stock. Initial U.S. military resupply shipments to Jordan will begin in about three days.

*The Cease-fire*

Nasser's death may further undermine the shaky cease-fire agreement reached in Cairo. Our embassy in Amman thinks that for a short time it is likely that the hostility between the government and the fedayeen will be muted as the Arab world mourns Nasser's death, but that in the near future Nasser's passing may act as a solvent of the agreements reached in Cairo. Arab radicals such as Syria and Iraq might feel that with Nasser's moderating influence removed, there will be new opportunities for their leadership and the turmoil in Jordan could provide them with an ideal arena. Nasser, moreover, was probably the only Arab leader who might have marshaled Arab public opinion to restrain the fedayeen.<sup>2</sup>

Amman is relatively calm, although the fedayeen remain in semi-official and almost uncontested control of some areas. The city is taking on a more normal appearance, however, with considerable civilian foot traffic and firing diminished to occasional intense but brief exchanges. The embassy speculates that the slowdown may have resulted from fatigue on both sides, shortages of ammunition and the desire of both the King and the fedayeen not to weaken their case in the eyes of Arab public opinion. King Hussein, however, has told an embassy of-

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 615, Country Files, Middle East, Jordan, Vol. V. Secret. Printed from an uninitialed copy.

<sup>2</sup> No such reporting cable from Amman has been found.

ficer that the army will not leave Amman and the other cities until the fedayeen depart first.<sup>3</sup>

The situation is still very fragile in northern Jordan. The British see the situation there developing along classic guerrilla lines. The army holds the center of most of the smaller towns in the north—although not the important towns of Irbid, Ramtha and Mafraq which they have surrounded but not entered—and are able to use most of the roads. The fedayeen, however, seem able to move with considerable freedom across the countryside, to harass army lines of communication, to re-infiltrate after they have been expelled from an area, and to launch attacks on army posts.

### *Hostages*

A spokesman at the International Red Cross Headquarters in Geneva announced at 1715 GMT that the 6 remaining hostages have been turned over to delegates of the ICRC in Amman today.<sup>4</sup>

### *Relief Program*

The following is the current status of our relief efforts:

—The general purpose mobile hospital is now in position and has received its first patients.

—The eighteen aircraft bringing in the Mobile Army Surgical Hospital (MASH) have all arrived at Amman Airport and have departed without incident. The MASH unit is now being moved into position at the site of the general purpose mobile hospital.

—The two U.S.-supplied hospitals will be supported by one C-130 supply flight per day from Germany.

—In addition to the two hospitals supplied by the United States and the British medical unit scheduled to arrive on September 29 and 30, a German 50-bed hospital (with a 12-man staff, including two surgeons) is scheduled to arrive by September 30. A French mobile hospital has already been moved into Jordan and has been operating since about September 26.

—The chartered food flight from Beirut to Amman on Tuesday, the 29th, has been cancelled because trucks carrying food were unable to reach the Beirut airport in time.

### *Military Aid*

Preparations are being made to ship ammunition to Jordan as soon as possible. The first military flights will begin from Turkey in about

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<sup>3</sup> In telegram 5358 from Amman, September 28, 2120Z. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970–73, POL 23–9 JORDAN)

<sup>4</sup> Ambassador Brown met with the six hostages shortly after their release. An account of the hostages' ordeal, based on Brown's interview with them, is in telegram 5475 from Amman, September 30, 1430Z. (Ibid., Nixon Presidential Materials, NSC Files, Box 615, Country Files, Middle East, Jordan, Vol. V)

three days. The initial 20 flights will enter Jordan from Saudi Arabia, where we already have the necessary clearance, and land at a military airfield in Jordan.

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**334. Telegram From the Department of State to Secretary of State Rogers in Naples<sup>1</sup>**

Washington, September 30, 1970, 0639Z.

Tosec 39/160803. Naples pass Sisco. Subj: Jordan Sitrep No. 49 as of 0100 EDT Sept. 30, 1970.<sup>2</sup>

*Part I—Relief and Supply Operations*

1. Arms and Ammunition Shipments: We have notified Embassy Amman that we are ready to resume arms and ammunition shipments to Jordan, including an advance ammunition resupply package to be airlifted beginning October 1 or 2.<sup>3</sup> The latter should provide the needed psychological and material lift for the Jordan army without imposing an undue burden.

2. Relief Operations: Distribution of relief food in Amman is proceeding under supervision of the eight-man Jordanian coordination committee in cooperation with ICRC. The Jordan Army appears to be doing most of the actual distributing. Attempts are also being made to bring drinking water to water-short areas of the city.

3. Fig Hill Medical Assistance: The Fig Hill Hospital is being rapidly set up although water remains a problem. The Ambassador reports that it is a first-class facility.<sup>4</sup> The combined ATH and MASH will have nearly 100-bed capacity.

*Part II—Political and Military Developments*

4. Departure of the Six Remaining Hostages: Arrangements have been made for the six remaining hostages to leave Amman early this morning (2:00 a.m. EDT) via an ICRC-chartered MEA plane for Athens where we hope they can make connections with TWA flight

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<sup>1</sup> Source: National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970-73, POL 23-9 JORDAN. Secret; Immediate. Drafted and approved by Theodore A. Wahl (JTF). It was repeated Immediate to the White House.

<sup>2</sup> Not found.

<sup>3</sup> In telegram 160537 to Amman, September 29, 2252Z. (National Archives, RG 59, Central Files 1970-73, DEF 12-5 JORDAN)

<sup>4</sup> In telegram 5420 from Amman, September 29, 1755Z. (Ibid., SOC 10 JORDAN)

881 scheduled to arrive in New York at 5:25 p.m. EDT. The Ambassador has visited them and we have passed messages from several members of the group to their families. All of the hostages said they were in good health.

5. Situation in Jordan: Embassy Amman reports that control of the city appears to rest with the five-nation Arab commission force, whose green-flagged cars are conspicuously circulating throughout Amman. As a result, the Jordan Government's internal political and military freedom of movement seems to be severely restricted. The city remains divided with the fedayeen to all appearances firmly entrenched in the areas they control, including the district around the Embassy. The Embassy questions whether the five-nation force will be able to induce the fedayeen to withdraw in accordance with the Cairo agreement.<sup>5</sup>

6. The separate three-man "follow-up" committee headed by Tunisian Premier Ladgham is pursuing its mediation efforts. Arafat is reported to be in the Irbid area.

7. In the quietest day since the fighting began, large numbers of people were in the streets and some shops were open. We have no reports indicating a change in the situation in northern Jordan since the last sitrep.

### *Part III—Situation Following Nasser's Death*

8. Cairo Prepares for Nasser Funeral: Cairo and the rest of the Arab world appear to be in a state of suspended animation following the shock of Nasser's death. Crowds have gathered at Nasser's house and in the Cairo streets in a state of public mourning. The UAR armed forces, according to the Cairo press, have been placed on a state of alert against possible military initiatives, although the government is apparently preoccupied with the immediate problems of the succession and preparations for the funeral. To date, the following world leaders are expected to attend the funeral: Soviet Premier Kosygin, French Premier Chaban-Delmas, British Foreign Secretary Douglas Home, Yugoslav Federal Councilor Kardelj, Italian Foreign Minister Moro, and Turkish Prime Minister Demirel. Delegations from Communist China and North Korea are under the top rank.

9. Israel and Nasser's Death: Although most Israelis have long held that Nasser's departure from scene would be a boon to Israel, there is some ambivalence in initial reaction. While stressing Nasser's hostility to Israel, many newspapers and individuals recognize he was a powerful, stabilizing force whose passing opens the prospect of greater instability and uncertainty. The first reaction gives no repeat no hint that GOI's response for time being will be other than watchful waiting.

**Irwin**

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<sup>5</sup> In telegram 5431 from Amman, September 29, 2020Z. (Ibid., POL 23–9 JORDAN)