

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

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PER E.O. 13526

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

2016-0999-M [1.01]

SUBJECT: King Hussein of Jordan

KBH 11/22/2019

PARTICIPANTS:

U.S.

The President  
The Vice President  
Madeleine Albright  
Samuel Berger  
John Podesta  
Leon Fuerth  
James Steinberg  
William Burns

Jordan

King Hussein  
Ambassador Marwan Muasher  
Samih Batikhi, Director General of  
Intelligence

Bruce Riedel, NSC Notetaker

DATE, TIME January 5, 1999, 9:55 - 10:25 a.m.  
AND PLACE: Oval Office

The President: Good morning. It's wonderful to see you. (U)

King Hussein: It's good to be here, sir. (U)

The President: When I was in Israel and Gaza the Prime Minister told me he would not be able to sustain the coalition and would have to call for early elections. Netanyahu was right. No one knows what will emerge. (U)

King Hussein: Any act of violence will play into Bibi's hand. I've been in touch with all sides but quietly to see how things develop. I don't want to seem to be too involved. (C)

The President: I agree. But, if Arafat wants a government more committed to Oslo, he should cooperate on security hard. Hamas

SECRET

Reason: 1.5 (d)

Declassify On: 01/07/09

wants Bibi to win and will do what they can to sway the vote.  
(S)

The other thing is the May timing. If Arafat declares a state on May 4<sup>th</sup>, Bibi will win on the 17<sup>th</sup> or in the runoff in June. We need to discourage a declaration of unilateral statehood.  
(S)

King Hussein: Your trip helped a lot. Your speech was visionary. (S)

I have two things to raise with you. First, with regard to Israel, let's coordinate on how and what we say. At the right time we may have a role. Let's be in close touch. We can influence the situation if we work together. (S)

The President: There may be a time, but it is too early now. Barak may do better than many expect. (S)

King Hussein: On Arafat, I'll do whatever I can on statehood. Arafat, we think, has a deal with Hamas to hold things quiet.  
(S)

The President: Yes, but in the last elections their bombs contributed to Bibi's victory. (C)

Conventional wisdom here is that a runoff is likely between Barak and Bibi. (C)

Mr. Berger: It's still very confused; especially Shahak's role.  
(C)

King Hussein: The quality of candidates is unclear. It's not like in the past in Israel. There were always tough people, but you knew where you stood. (C)

The President: Israel is changing and their politics is still held hostage to all the small parties, each with its own ideology. The two party system worked better. This system is vulnerable to small minorities. I'm very concerned. A national unity government may be the only answer. Netanyahu could not sell Wye in his own coalition. I hope there will be some focus now. A runoff could produce that kind of focus. Netanyahu should have gone for a national unity government right after the elections. A fatal error, I think. (C)

On your suggestion as to saying something publicly, let's wait and see. The key is to get Arafat past the May 4<sup>th</sup> date. If Arafat declares a state he'll help Bibi. (C)

King Hussein: I agree with you. (U)

The President: Also, I am committed to the \$200 million Wye Supplemental for you. (C)

The other thing is I am quite serious about supporting opposition to Saddam. I recognize how hard this will be. I want to work with you on this. The Congress is carried away with the external Iraqi leadership which we think will fail. We want to work quietly but effectively. (S)

King Hussein: I'd like to make two points on this. First, we should be closely working with the Saudis. There should be no surprises to them. We need to make sure we are all on the same wavelength. (S)

Second, Saddam Hussein is pushing hard to create an explosion. He is trying to use the Arab-Israeli issue. He tries to show he is standing up to the United States and Israel. (S)

Recently many Arab parliamentarians met in Amman. The Crown Prince's speech to them has been criticized by Iraq. I would send the parliamentarians to Iraq -- let them try to talk freely there. (S)

I differentiate between Saddam and the Iraqi people. I still have an oil problem -- a dependence on Iraq. So, I can't push too far or we'll be left high and dry. I don't know if I will have help if refugees flow to Jordan or if oil is cut off. (S)

We are at a critical stage. We need all the help we can get from the United States. The Ambassador knows this well. Morale is high in Jordan, but we need a sign we are not alone. I've raised this before. (S)

The President: I've thought a lot about the oil problem. I'll be back in touch with you on it. (S)

Mrs. Albright: The key is how to find a different source of oil from the Saudis and the Gulf. (C)

We appreciated the Crown Prince's speech. (C)

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| 001a. memcon             | Memorandum of Conversation with King Hussein of Jordan [partial]<br>(1 page) | 01/05/1999 | P1/b(1)     |

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Clinton Presidential Records  
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Ambassador Muasher: We consume 60,000 - 70,000 barrels per day of oil in Jordan. We can get you the numbers. (C)

King Hussein: The more help we can get the better. (C)

Mr. Berger: Of course, the aid package is tied to Wye and we need to keep Wye alive to get the supplemental alive. We can't let Israel off the hook on Wye or we will lose the supplemental. (C)

Mr. Batikhi: In Amman we feel we are partners in three issues: the peace process, counterterrorism and Iraq. We do joint operations in all three very closely. We will do more on Iraq with you; we have to stop his smuggling of arms into Jordan. During Desert Fox Saddam Hussein tried to provoke demonstrations in Jordan against you and us. We are partners in fighting the enemies of peace. [REDACTED] EO 13526, 1.4b, EO 13526, 1.4d

[REDACTED] We will continue to do so. (S)

The President: Thank you, I agree. (U)

King Hussein: [REDACTED] EO 13526, 1.4b, EO 13526, 1.4d

Mr. Batikhi: [REDACTED] EO 13526, 1.4b, EO 13526, 1.4d

[REDACTED] They also have the Arab Liberation Front and 15 May. (S)

The President: They're probably hiding in one of Saddam's palaces! (C)

-- End of Conversation --