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July 18

NEAR EAST AND SOUTH ASIA

KING HUSSEIN VISITS PRESIDENT SADAT

*Concessions by Sadat and Hussein
Leave Fedayeen in Disarray*

The joint communique issued at the conclusion of King Hussein's July 16-18 visit to Egypt confirms that the Palestinian issue dominated the Jordanian King's talks with President Sadat and that concessions were made by both sides. The two most significant substantive paragraphs of the joint statement follow:

"The two sides agreed on the necessity of undertaking continued and regular coordination between the Arab Republic of Egypt, the Syrian Arab Republic, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), so as to insure mobilization of the greatest strength avail-

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able to the Arab position, balance this action with the Arab confrontation forces, and secure Arab understanding prior to resumption of the Geneva Peace Conference.

"The two sides declared that the PLO is the legitimate representative of the Palestinians, except for those Palestinians residing in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. The two sides concur on the need to make the PLO take part independently in the Geneva Conference at the appropriate stage in support of the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination. The two sides also agreed on the need to reach a disengagement agreement on the Jordanian front as a first step toward a just, peaceful solution."

Press Comment

Press comment has focused mainly on Jordan's recognition of the PLO as the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people and Jordan's willingness to accept a separate PLO presence at Geneva. Even though the communique clearly qualified the parties' recognition of the PLO by excluding Palestinians in Jordan, most press reports have depicted this as a Jordanian concession. The opposite seems to be the case. The Jordanians have frequently said -- both publicly and in diplomatic channels -- that they would be ready to accept separate Palestinian representation in Geneva and that they had no objection to the PLO's claim to represent Palestinians outside of Jordan.

Egyptian Concessions

The real significance of the Egyptian-Jordanian statement appears to lie in Egypt's acceptance of Jordan's position that the PLO does not represent the Palestinian citizens of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. For Egypt this represents a definite step back from the November 1973 Algiers Summit Conference resolution which recognized the PLO as the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people (without any distinc-

tion regarding those living in Jordan). By differentiating between the Palestinian people elsewhere and those Palestinians living in Jordan; the communique can be cited by Jordan to support its claim to speak for Palestinians on both the East and West Banks, and Jordan has not renounced its asserted right to negotiate the return of the West Bank. So interpreted, this clearly is an Egyptian concession to Jordan although Egypt may argue that it only recognizes the East Bank as Jordanian.

Another Egyptian concession to Jordan is the statement that the two sides "agreed on the need to reach a disengagement agreement on the Jordanian front as a first step toward a just, peaceful solution." This is an obvious gesture to Hussein and Prime Minister Rifai in their insistence that the next step in the Middle East peace negotiations be disengagement negotiations between Jordan and Israel. The language in the communique, however, does not go as far as Hussein and Rifai might like; it describes a disengagement agreement on the Jordanian front only as "a first step" (presumably there could be other first steps) and does not say anything about this taking place, or even beginning, before the reconvening of the Geneva Conference. While the Jordanians can be expected to claim Egyptian endorsement of disengagement on the Jordanian front as supportive of their demand to be next in line in the negotiations, the Egyptians quite clearly avoided associating themselves fully with the Jordanian position.

Jordanian Concession

If Egypt made significant gestures toward Jordan, what did the Jordanians give in return? As noted above, Hussein did not really agree to anything that could be termed absolutely new in his policy. His willingness to extend formal public recognition to the PLO as the legitimate representative of Palestinians outside Jordan and as a separate party at Geneva (though qualified by the phrase "at the appropriate time"), however, suggests flexibility and the possibility of future compromises with the PLO. The statement endorsing regular coordination between Egypt, Syria, Jordan, and the PLO virtually puts the PLO on a par with the three Arab states.

The PLO thus has Sadat's and Hussein's endorsement as a full-fledged partner and participant with the Arab states in the up-

coming negotiations. This gives Sadat something to offer Yasir Arafat and other PLO leaders who incline toward taking part in the negotiating process, though some may attack Sadat for excluding Palestinians in Jordan (particularly if interpreted to include the West Bank) and for recognizing Hussein as negotiator of a West Bank disengagement agreement.

Fedayeen Reaction

Despite the obvious significance of the communique for the PLO, Embassy Beirut reports that there appears to be more than the usual disarray in fedayeen ranks on precisely how to deal with the development, with spokesmen for the various groups taking their cuts at the Egyptian-Jordanian "knuckleball," all of them swinging late and blindly.

Reaction was simplest for the fedayeen "rejectionists" who only had to replay their pre-recorded denunciations of imperialist "plots" and Arab "reactionaries." The diehards were thus able to set the tone for what has become a universally negative fedayeen reaction to the communique. PLO moderates, obviously stunned and upset by the communique and Egyptian concessions to Jordan, have joined the chorus of denunciation. Yasir Aragat has, to date, avoided personal involvement in the fedayeen reaction, and the organizations have shown reluctance to criticise Egypt directly. The PLO leadership is undoubtedly aware of implications for their relations with Egypt and other Arab states anxious for further progress toward a negotiated settlement. (CONFIDENTIAL)



*Arafat: Publicly
Silent on
Knuckleball*

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NEA NOTE

Kashmiri Leader Negotiates With India

Kashmiri leader Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah has been continuing his negotiations with the Indian Government aimed at developing a new relationship between Kashmir, which has the status of a state in the Indian Union, and the central Government. In public, the Sheikh has asserted that a return to the conditions of 1953 (i.e., a semi-autonomous Kashmir) is his basic bargaining position. If so, there is probably not much scope for agreement between the Sheikh and the Indian Government. Abdullah recently met with Foreign Minister Swaran Singh, however, and there have been other contacts with the Indian Government. On July 18, Mirza Afzal Beg, one of Abdullah's principal lieutenants, met with Prime Minister Indira Gandhi in New Delhi. The substance of these talks is not known.



*Abdullah: No
Comfort to
Pakistan*

The Sheikh's recent public statements offer no comfort to Pakistan. Abdullah has reportedly said that the 1947 act of Kashmiri accession to Indian was final, that the interests of Pakistan and Kashmir differ on fundamentals, and that he never accepted the two-nation theory on which the existence of Pakistan is based. In the Sheikh's speeches, the term "plebiscite" has come to mean a Kashmiri decision on whatever agreement he may work out with the Indian Government rather than a decision on what country (if any) Kashmir might wish to join.

Sheikh Abdullah's negotiation with the Indian Government has undoubtedly disturbed the Pakistanis. It may also have played a part in the recent war of words the Pakistanis have been waging with India and Afghanistan which now appears to be abating. (CONFIDENTIAL)

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