

*Memorandum*

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TO : NEA - Mr. Atherton

DATE: Oct. 5, 1973

FROM : NEA/ARN - Edward Djerejian

*1973-10-5, Assad, Jordan, Diplomacy*SUBJECT: Implications of Syria's Resumption of Diplomatic Relations with Jordan

On October 4 Syria resumed diplomatic relations with Jordan. This move was the latest in an important series of developments in the Arab world during the past six weeks which are leading to political realignments in the area.

A brief chronology of these events would include:

- Aug. 23-25 - As the deadline for "union" with Libya approaches, President Sadat flies to Saudi Arabia for a meeting with King Feisal.
- Sept. 1 Egypt and Libya fail to implement a meaningful union.
- Sept. 10-12 Summit meeting in Cairo between President Sadat, King Hussein, and President Asad of Syria. Conference results in reactivation of "Eastern Front."
- Sept. 12 Restoration of diplomatic relations between Egypt and Jordan
- Sept. 13 Syria loses 13 planes to the Israeli Air Force, and there are rumors of friction between Syria and Russian advisors.
- Sept. 15 Syria closes down fedayeen broadcasting station at Derra for comments critical of Cairo summit. Syrians arrest some fedayeen in Damascus.
- Sept. 18 King Hussein announces broad amnesty for political prisoners, many of whom are fedayeen.
- Sept. 23 King Hussein visits PLA contingent in Jordan
- Sept. 28 Reports of Syrian military build-up on Golan Heights
- Early Oct. Reports that King Hussein will initiate dialogue with PLO and permit limited return of fedayeen to Jordan

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Oct. 4

Syria restores diplomatic relations with Jordan.

As a result of the events of the past six weeks Jordan is no longer isolated in the Arab world, and King Hussein has regained his Arab credentials. Jordan's new-found acceptance in the Arab world should increase prospects for the eventual resumption of the Kuwaiti subsidy (\$40 million per year) although, as Embassy Amman points out, there are no signs that Kuwait is yet prepared to do so.

Jordan has had to pay a price for her reintegration into the Arab world. There is reportedly substantial unhappiness among East Bank elements over King Hussein's amnesty proclamation. If, as appears likely, a limited fedayeen return to Jordan is in the offing, it could generate important opposition from the military. Reportedly, King Hussein agreed to reopen the PLO office in Amman and to strengthen the PLA unit in Jordan to perhaps a full brigade and to integrate the PLA unit into the Jordan Arab Army. In the last analysis, King Hussein's apparent willingness to initiate a dialogue with the PLO must also be seen as a concession.

By choosing to rejoin the Arab mainstream and associate with "moderate" states such as Egypt and Jordan, Syria may be tacitly opting for the benefits which might accrue from a negotiated settlement to the Middle East problem. There was some unconfirmed press speculation recently that Syria may be moving toward acceptance of UN Resolution 242 as the basis of a settlement. In addition, Jordan reportedly agreed in Cairo to protect Syria's flank on the Golan Heights in case of an invasion from Israel, thereby freeing substantial Syrian forces for alternate deployment. There are also unsubstantiated reports that by being increasingly reasonable and repairing her relations with Jordan, Syria stands to gain increased financial support from Saudi Arabia.

The losers in this new equation would seem to be the radical Arab States of Libya and Iraq which are further isolated from the mainstream of Arab policy, and the fedayeen who opposed the Cairo Summit and improved Egyptian-Jordanian-Syrian relations but were powerless to do anything about it. King Hussein's amnesty decree has created morale problems and desertions from the fedayeen ranks (the Jordanian Embassy in Beirut is reportedly processing 10-15 applications per day from fedayeen wishing to return to Jordan.) By shutting down the Derra broadcasting station, the Syrians have demonstrated that they are not prepared to accept fedayeen activities which conflict with the national interest - in this case better relations with Jordan.

There are also indications that Syria, through Sa'iq, may be trying to dominate the fedayeen movement. The fedayeen must now look increasingly to distant countries such as Libya and Iraq for support. In effect, Egypt, Syria and Jordan have demonstrated a willingness to act in what they consider to be their national interests with only secondary regard for the interests of the fedayeen.

As a result of the above developments Israel may be faced with increasingly self-confident Arab neighbors who are now able to exert greater psychological and military pressure against her.

The unknown in this analysis is the extent to which the entire scenario was masterminded and/or bankrolled by King Feisal. Certainly the events of the past six weeks mesh with King Feisal's efforts to marshal Arab political and economic pressure on the United States to "improve the atmosphere" in the Middle East. They would also be consistent with the King's efforts to oust Russian and radical Arab influence from the area and improve Jordan's standing in the Arab world.

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