

# Middle East conflict - Jordan. Amman files: Middle East conflict - Jordan. ...

*HS L 179:106a*



Dag Hammarskjöld's saml.

Aurman, [1958] - Oct. 8, Nov. 5

Piero Spinelli (Under Secretary, Aurman)  
u.r.

— to Sec. Gen.

L 179: 1069

PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL

Amman, 8 October 1958

Dear Dag,

I am giving you in this letter some account of the first stage of our mission.

On the whole, things have gone more or less as I expected they would, and, I believe, as you expected, except for a sensitiveness which I sensed in my first discussions with Rifai regarding the size of the mission. This sensitiveness of Rifai was apparently based on the feeling that such a mission (about 100 members had been mentioned in the press) might take on the appearance of an observer group in Jordan, especially if there were fixed posts outside Amman. That my inference was correct was corroborated during conversations I had with both the British Ambassador and the American Chargé d'Affaires who told me that the King had said that he had been informed that some of the military observers in the Lebanon had involved themselves in the local political situation, and he was evidently fearful lest something of the same sort should happen here.

I feel that I have been able by now to satisfy Rifai that this mission, except for the observation of the sort which is made by any political mission, would in no way be involved in activities outside those set forth clearly in your report.

.../...

Mr. Dag Hammarskjöld  
Secretary-General  
United Nations  
New York



It is evident that in presenting and establishing here a mission of 60 to 65 international personnel it will greatly facilitate our work if we can reassure the local authorities on these points, showing them, at the same time, that the size of the mission here is closely related to the liaison offices to be established in Damascus and Beirut.

By the end of this week I hope to have ready for you a report on the establishment of the Amman Headquarters. I should then be prepared, according to your instructions and whenever it should prove opportune, to start on the next phase of the operation, that is, the arrangements for the liaison offices outside Jordan.

Since arriving here I have given some thought to the question of the airplane for this mission, which we discussed in New York. With so many other U.N. groups in the area, there is a purely practical question as to what would be the best place to keep such a plane. However, I believe, transcending this purely practical aspect of the question, there is the other aspect of being able to deploy the plane in such a manner as will strengthen our arrangements for the line of communications we have to establish via Syria and the Lebanon. While I think there are some advantages in basing the plane in Jordan, and particularly in Amman if that is possible, it might be desirable to base it in Beirut simply because this would enable us to establish firmly a bigger group outside Jordan and give a little more substance to our idea of the line of communications. The main disadvantage which I see from basing the plane in Beirut

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is the difficulty which might arise in keeping it distinct from the operation of UNOGIL. If the plane were based in Jordan, and particularly in Jerusalem, we might find ourselves faced with the possibility of using the alternative and shorter route via Israel, which, of course, is regularly used by TSO. This would not only be politically undesirable, but it would weaken our claim to a line of communications Amman-Damascus-Beirut.

To come now to the problem of the headquarters building in Amman, we have explored carefully various alternatives which were open to us. I am sure that the decision now taken to lease a house which is nearly completed, on Jebel Amman, is by far the best of the alternatives we have seen. The house is on the hill in one of the best sections of town, and without being pretentious it has a dignified appearance and is easy of access. We shall be able to occupy it in about 15 days, which will give us an opportunity to celebrate UN Day in it.

In the few days that I have been here I have attempted to get a picture of the general situation in Jordan. My impressions broadly confirm the account which you yourself gave me in New York. While it seems that there was very considerable tension here soon after the events in Iraq, no such tension is now evident on the surface and I feel reasonably certain that when Rifai tells me that they are not at the moment greatly disturbed by the propaganda, his attitude is based on the conviction that the internal situation has improved. Our direct impressions, that is, mine and John Reedman's, from our daily contacts in Amman and from our visit to Jerusalem and other centres, are that the people are going about their regular duties

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without any appearance of excitement or tension. If we had to pass a judgment on the present attitude of the population to the King, we should say that it is more favourable than we had anticipated and we are inclined to think that this is due in part to the public bearing of the King in the face of the scurrillous attacks which are being made on him. Our feeling is that when the British troops depart, there is a good chance that no serious disturbances will take place here so long as the King and His Government do not vacillate to the point at which the support of the Army might become doubtful.

This, on the face of it, rather optimistic outlook is naturally limited to the immediate future. If we take a longer view, the basic problem which Jordan has to face is not only to achieve liberalization of its present internal regime, but mainly also adjustment to the constant pressure of the forces of arab nationalism.

The spirit of the whole mission is very high, and the collaboration I have until now received is really excellent, particularly from John Reedman and Bruce Stedman.

*Truly  
yours  
D'Amico*



Personal and  
Confidential

Amman, 5 November 1958

Dear Dag,

In a talk I had with Samir yesterday he mentioned two questions about which I should inform you, although I believe they are a little outside the direct scope of this mission.

The first of these concerns the delivery to Jordan of a number of British Hunter fighter aircraft for the use of the Jordan Air Force, and cargoes of spare parts for these fighter aircraft which are being delivered by U.S. transport planes. The point at issue is that the UAR authorities insist that the Hunters should come via Cairo. However, Samir says that the flying range of the Hunters is too short to permit direct flight from Cairo to Amman, and since the landing facilities at Aqaba are not suitable for aircraft of this type, they would in any case have to come via Cyprus, Lebanon and Syria.

According to Samir, the UAR are also making difficulties over the proposed flight via Cairo or Damascus of a number of U.S. transport planes carrying spare parts for the Hunters.

I told Samir that this was a matter which I should prefer not to take up and that it was better to continue to deal with it through other channels now being employed, (U.S. diplomatic representative). He said, however, that he feels it does raise

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Mr. Dag Hammarskjold  
Secretary-General  
United Nations  
New York



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the principle of normal freedom of traffic between friendly States, and so he asked me to inform you of the situation in case you should find it opportune to raise it with the UAR.

The second matter concerns the accused Army Officers of whom I think I have already informed you in my letter of 22 October. You may remember that the British Ambassador had informed me that the question of the fate of these officers was being considered and he had suggested that a public trial at this stage might be unfortunate for the present trend towards improved relations with the UAR. It has been decided, as I stated was likely, that the officers will be called to a private session when they will be given an opportunity to explain themselves. It is expected that most of them will be released and that the few who may not be immediately released will simply be kept under house arrest. Samir said the King had expressed the wish that I should be present at this session as an observer, since confessions of some of the accused allege complicity of the UAR. I replied, however, that I considered it at the very least unwise for me to be present at such a session and Samir agreed, adding that he would send me, confidentially, a documented account of the case to be forwarded to you.

On an entirely different matter, from what was said during the conversation it seems that Samir expects that before very long Iraq will also lift the ban on communications with Jordan and that, therefore, you may possibly be informed of such a move within the next few days.

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I hope that I shall soon receive from you instructions to proceed with the establishment of the offices in Beirut and Damascus, now that the Mission is well established in Amman.

*Truly  
Yours  
D. M. S.*