

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

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Dag Hammarskjöld's samu

Amman, correspondence (1961)

From P.R. Spinelli - to Dag Hammarskjöld

(Europ. Office of the U.N.  
Geneva)

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REF. No. : PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL  
(à rappeler dans la réponse)

March 1st, 1961

Dear Dag,

When I left Amman, about ten days ago, the atmosphere there was relatively relaxed and hopeful : the King pleased at having finally made up his mind about stopping the anti - U.A.R. propaganda; the Prime Minister quite satisfied at seeing his popularity on the increase in Jordan, especially on the West Bank; the Minister of Foreign Affairs proudly convinced that the cease-fire in propaganda is a result of his own work at the Bagdad Conference. I hope that their blissful state of mind may last and that the King will continue to ignore, as he assured me he would, all further provocations (at least verbal ones) from the other side.

My feeling is that the King's decision was for the main part determined by the fact that the great majority of his subjects, including many of his supporters, had started to resent this lengthy and useless propaganda campaign and felt that more time and attention should be given to internal economic and social problems instead. I gathered this impression from many conversations I had with the King and from what Samir told me about his various and quite frequent meetings with him. It seems, and I heard so from several sources including Samir, that Hussein has recently been playing with the idea of holding a general election which would lay the base for a new kind of government in which all the political tendencies of the country would be represented.

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Mr. Dag Hammarskjöld,  
Secretary-General,  
United Nations,  
NEW YORK.



As far as the general political situation in the Middle East is concerned, I feel that there are some signs now of a tendency towards less strained relations between the Arab countries. This tendency is caused, perhaps, by a growing preoccupation of many political Arab leaders with certain new aspects of the Israeli policy; by a certain restraint in the attitude of President Nasser, who is presumably interested in avoiding open enmities which would weaken the role he is trying to assume in the Afro-Asiatic world; by an active and to a certain extent convincing effort of the Iraqi leaders - and particularly of Jawad - to induce the other Governments to approach the problem of the Middle East in a more constructive atmosphere.

It is too early, naturally, to say whether this atmosphere of "détente" is going to last, but I cannot help feeling that we risk ( I ) going through a period of relative calm in that region, notwithstanding the very recent oral outburst of President Nasser against one of the main political groups of Lebanon, and his continued reference to "the slaves of imperialism".

I am sorry to claim some of your time and attention for the Middle East at a moment when you are facing so many other complex and vital problems. But I thought it worthwhile to complete my reports from Amman with a general comment on the situation in this region which, strangely enough, seems to give no immediate reason for pessimism.

During my last conversations with the King and the Prime Minister we agreed, on the assumption that the situation would continue to give no cause for concern, that my visits to Jordan could from now on be less frequent.

(P.P. Spinelli)

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Le 5 April 1961

REF. No. 1  
(à rappeler dans la réponse)

Personal and Confidential

I have been in touch with Amman during the last few days about the recent happenings there. The information I have received up till now more or less confirms what the world press has lately been relating.

Hussein having realized how small the chances were of reaching any real standing agreement with any other Arab States on an anti-U.A.R. policy, has now decided to try to come to a direct understanding with Nasser. Things are slowly taking shape in the direction desired by Hussein and his popularity has, it seems, increased all over the country, but particularly so on the West Bank.

While these dealings between Amman and Cairo had been going on for many weeks, during the last few days the internal situation of Jordan has shown tendencies to complicate itself in account of the open rift between the most influential leaders of the Army. I am not inclined at all (as far as I can judge the situation from Geneva) to link this military feud in any way to the efforts towards a rapprochement between Jordan and the U.A.R. It is, according to me, just a phase of the long-existing struggle for supremacy in the Army between the two of the most important groups of Transjordan tribes, Najali and Beni Sakr. As such a clash has never, at any rate not during my "time", come to the fore so openly, I am afraid that some more internal complications may be expected.

I am planning to make a routine visit to the Middle East before the end of the month.

I should like to confirm my impressions about the Sudanese attitude towards the continuation of their participation in the U.N. military forces.

The majority of the Sudanese leaders feel that they cannot afford in the long run to be absent from such a military operation, and the President is looking for a propitious moment and an appropriate "formula" to take a decision which, by the way, was announced by him as being under consideration in a recent press interview he gave to the "Daily Telegraph".

As I already reported, the real and only sore point is their lack of confidence in the military command in Leq; I wonder if the offer of one of the most important operational or other posts in that command to a Sudanese officer might not prove to be a decisive factor in the whole problem.

Mr. Dag Hammarskjöld,  
Secretary-General,  
United Nations,

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P.S.

One of the points I mentioned in New York has been more or less settled in one of those incredible ways so typical of this part of the world. The messenger of the local UAR Embassy who was arrested here last month found - how, nobody knows - his own way out of the military prison and returned to his embassy. The Jordanians, after having thought of invading the embassy, limited themselves to keeping a more intense check on it. Talhouni, who showed to me for the first time a real sense of humour, greeted the UAR Charge d'Affairs at our UN Day reception with the questions: "May we express our best wishes on the happy return of the lost soul?"