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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Directorate of Intelligence
24 November 1966

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

Situation in Jordan

(As of 4:30 PM EST)

1. Nasir, in his speech today, was restrained in his comments on Jordan. He did not openly attack Husayn nor attempt to incite Jordan's dissident Palestinians to rebel against the King, although his remarks will give them comfort. Nasir's restraint undoubtedly was based, at least in part, on his awareness that a revolution in Jordan might suck him into a war with Israel in which he probably would be defeated. At the same time he clearly is ready to exploit Husayn's present difficulties if this can be done without provoking Israel.

2. Nasir's caution was evident in the one direct reference he made to conditions in Palestinian west Jordan. "We do not want to exacerbate the tension on the west bank of the Jordan," he said, "for this is one of the lines of our political and military confrontation with Israel, which requires us all to evaluate the situation well and to be armed with the necessary vigilance and firmness."

3. He also stated that Israel's 13 November raid into west Jordan "was a source of pain to us" because Israel was able to attack "without any resistance." This comment, in effect, supports the demands Palestinian demonstrators against Husayn have made regarding arms for the populace of west Jordan and the deployment of foreign Arab troops there. The inspiration for these demands obviously came from Cairo, and especially from the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) which is headquartered there.

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4. The PLO has been engaged in a lengthy dispute with King Husayn over its role and privileges among Jordan's Palestinians. The present turmoil in west Jordan has presented the PLO with a new opportunity to promote its cause, and the organization, with Nasir's obvious blessing, is making the most of it. Nasir included a pledge of support for "the Palestine struggle" in his speech. While the PLO's objective ostensibly is to "liberate" Palestine from Israel, it now is focusing on the effort to liberate Jordanian Palestinians from Husayn's rule. The head of the organization, who also made a speech in Cairo today, said they "must inevitably liberate their free will from the Jordanian Government, which is linked with imperialism and reaction."

5. The PLO has also broadcast "communiques" on the situation in Jordan. One of these was addressed to "all Jordanian police and security forces," asking them to "leave the people alone with their revolution." Another communique was sent to "all Jordanian ministers." It called upon them to resign and leave Prime Minister Wasfi Tal "alone to meet his fate." The campaign against Tal is being conducted in the Cairo press as well. One newspaper claimed it has "proof" that Tal knew of Israel's raid in advance, "cooperated" with it, and communicated with Israel through the American Embassy. The attacks on Tal rather than Husayn may reflect Nasir's uneasiness about a possible revolution against the King. Tal, if anything, has been more consistently suspicious of Nasir than Husayn. If Husayn does not fall, Nasir may hope to force Tal's removal as part of a general effort to weaken Jordanian opposition to Egyptian influence in Jordan.

6. Jordanian authorities, meanwhile, have captured a sizable shipment of arms and explosives which allegedly were being sent by Syrian military intelligence to a "Fatah" terrorist depot in Jordan. This apparently is the first such shipment since Israel's 13 November reprisal for terrorism based in Jordan and, thus, indicates that Syria has not been deterred from supporting terrorist operations against Israel.

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