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ACTION: NONE INFO: FILE, RF, CR/NE, IAD/CAS-3, IAD/SOG-4, MID-E, NE/ARN-3, NESA/AI, NESA/AI/E-2, NESA/AI/I-2, NESA/AIDC, NESA/PG, NESA/PG/P, NESA/PGDC, NESA/SCIO, NESA/SO, NESA/SO/C, NFAC/ACIS, NICAG/PM, NIO/GPF, NIO/NE, NPIC, ODPN-N, ODPS-S, OER, OGI-2, OGI/R-2, OIA/LFMEA, OSWR/CIG, OSWR/TTC

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FM AMEMBASSY AMMAN
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6574
INFO RUQMBE/AMEMBASSY BEIRUT 2230
RUEHEG/AMEMBASSY CAIRO 9495
RUEHDM/AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS 7742
RUEHJM/AMCONSUL JERUSALEM 3350
RUEHJI/AMEMBASSY JIDDA 7290
RUQMKW/AMEMBASSY KUWAIT 4110
RUQMYA/USLO RIYADH 1309
RUEHTV/AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV 4328
BT
C O N F I D E N T I A L AMMAN 03275

E.O. 12065: GDS 04/14/88 (ROGERS, BRUCE C.)OR-P
TAGS: PEPR MASS JO US
SUBJECT: F-5G'S FOR JORDAN: "A SLAP IN THE FACE"

1. (U) APRIL 14 JORDAN TIMES QUOTES A NEW YORK TIMES ARTICLE REPORTING A US COMPROMISE ARMS SALE TO JORDAN WHICH WOULD EXCLUDE F-16'S AND MOBILE I-HAWK MISSILES BUT PERMIT THE SALE OF F-5G AIRCRAFT.

2. (U) AN EDITORIAL IN THE SAME ISSUE CALLED THE "COMPRCmise" A SLAP IN THE FACE OF THE

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State Dept. review completed.

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ARABS. IT STATED THAT THE FUNDAMENTAL TENET OF THE REAGAN MIDDLE EAST POLICY IS THE MAINTENANCE OF ISRAEL'S QUALITATIVE MILITARY EDGE. SELLING F-5G'S TO JORDAN WHILE SELLING F-16'S TO ISRAEL IS INSULTING AND WILL FURTHER STRAIN OLD U.S. FRIENDSHIPS IN THE MIDDLE EAST. (FULL TEXT IN LAST PARAGRAPH).

3. (C) COMMENT: THE EDITORIAL EXPRESSED WHAT MANY JORDANIANS HAVE TOLD US: A U.S. REFUSAL TO FILL JORDAN'S LEGITIMATE DEFENSIVE NEEDS, I.E., PROVIDE SOPHISTICATED AIRCRAFT AND AIR DEFENSE SYSTEMS, WHILE SELLING ISRAEL THE MOST ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY DEMONSTRATES ISRAELI CONTROL OVER U.S. FOREIGN POLICY. THE OBVIOUS LESSON, MANY JORDANIANS CONCLUDE, IS TO LOOK ELSEWHERE TO MEET JORDAN'S DEFENSIVE NEEDS.

4. BEGIN TEXT

REAL FRIENDS DON'T SLAP

THE NEW YORK TIMES HAS REPORTED THAT THE REAGAN ADMINISTRATION IS PREPARING A "COMPROMISE" DEAL TO SELL JORDAN THE F-5G TIGERSHARK FIGHTER JET WHILE DENYING JORDAN THE SALE OF IMPROVED HAWK MISSILES OR THE F-16 FIGHTER JET. IT ADDED THAT THE DEAL IS LOOMING AS A TEST CASE FOR THE REAGAN ADMINISTRATION'S MIDDLE EAST POLICY, WHICH, IT QUOTED REAGAN ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALS AS SAYING, WAS "TO CONTINUE TO SUPPORT ISRAEL WHILE TRYING ALSO TO WIN NEW ARAB FRIENDS."

IF THE TIMES REPORT IS ACCURATE, OUR INITIAL FEELING IS THAT A REAGAN MIDDLE EAST POLICY BASED ON A PROPOSED COMPROMISE SUCH AS THIS IS NOT ONLY UNLIKELY TO WIN NEW ARAB FRIENDS, BUT IS VIRTUALLY CERTAIN TO FURTHER STRAIN THE TIES OF FRIENDSHIP THAT HAVE EXISTED FOR MANY YEARS WITH SOME VERY OLD AND SINCERE ARAB FRIENDS. THE FUNDAMENTAL TENET OF WHAT THE REAGAN ADMINISTRATION IS DOING IN THE MIDDLE EAST IS THAT ISRAEL MUST MAINTAIN A QUALITATIVE TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANTAGE OVER THE COMBINED FORCES OF ALL THE ARAB STATES. THAT TENET

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IS UNACCEPTABLE TO THE ARABS, AND IS AT THE HEART OF THE SLOWLY DISINTEGRATING WEB OF TRADITIONALLY FRIENDLY TIES BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND MANY ARAB COUNTRIES. WE ARE AMAZED YET AGAIN BY THE NAIVE, SIMPLISTIC, INSULTING AND ARROGANT ATTITUDE AMONG AMERICAN DECISION-MAKERS THAT ARAB STATES WILL ACCEPT SO-CALLED COMPROMISE DEALS THAT SACRIFICE ARAB DIGNITY AND SELF-RESPECT AT THE ALTAR OF AMERICAN SUBSERVIENCE TO ISRAELI FEARS AND POLITICAL BLACKMAIL. IT SOUNDS LIKE WHAT WE MAY BE GETTING FROM WASHINGTON IS A BIG FAT SLAP IN THE FACE. THIS HARDLY SEEMS THE WAY TO WIN -- OR KEEP -- FRIENDS.

END TEXT. VIETS

END OF MESSAGE

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