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TO : Department of State
INFO : BEIRUT, JERUSALEM, TEL AVIV, CAIRO, JIDDA, KUMAIT, BAGHDAD, DAMASCUS, LONDON for POL/W
FROM : Embassy AMMAN
DATE: March 2, 1967
SUBJECT: Visit of Haj Amin al-Husseini to Jordan
REF : Amman's A-283, February 15, 1967

Haj Amin al-Husseini, ex-Grand Mufti of Jerusalem and still leader of the Arab Higher Committee for Palestine, arrived by plane at the Jerusalem Airport on March 1 to begin a two-week private visit to Jordan. The Governor of Jerusalem, other West Bank officials, family and friends met Haj Amin upon his return to Jerusalem after an absence of nearly thirty years.

Directly after arrival courtesies Haj Amin went to the al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem to pray, following which he visited the tombs of Hussein ibn Ali, great grandfather of the present King Hussein and leader of the Arab revolt; of Musa Kadhem al-Husseini and of 'Abd al-Qader al-Husseini, members of Haj Amin's family who were prominent in the "Arab Palestine" movement ('Abd al-Qader was killed during the 1948 war), and Moulay Mohammed Ali, one of the early leaders for Pakistan independence. He then came to Amman where he called upon King Hussein.

According to the Jordan press, Haj Amin will today call upon Governor Amwar al-Khatib in Jerusalem and then receive visitors at the Islamic Aqqaf Office. On March 3 Haj Amin reportedly will lead the Friday prayers at the al-Aqsa Mosque. The press also reports that Haj Amin's visit to Jordan is a stop-over en route to Mecca for the pilgrimage.

COMMENT: As is well known Haj Amin's bad relations with the Hashemites have long been a major factor inhibiting his return to Jerusalem.

Group 3
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Allegedly Haj Amin played an important if not dominant role in the murder, in 1951, of King Abdullah on the steps of the al-Aqsa Mosque. In fact one member of the Hussein family, a first cousin of Haj Amin, was among those executed for his part in the assassination plot. Therefore it is interesting to note that one of Haj Amin's first acts upon his return was to pay his respects at the tomb of the King's great grandfather. Further indication of the rapprochement between Haj Amin and the Hashemites may be seen in the fact that King Hussein has turned over his private palace near Jerusalem to Haj Amin and has made a palace car available for his use during his visit.

Although nothing to date has appeared in the press, we assume King Hussein, by agreeing to Haj Amin's visit to Jordan, expects to be able to make some use of whatever residual sentiment and influence the Haj may have with the Palestinian population of Jordan. We believe it is possible that Haj Amin, some time during his visit, may urge Palestinians to support King Hussein as the "new leader" in the struggle for the "liberation of their home land" thereby, hopefully, helping to weaken Ahmed al-Shuqairy's and the PLO's influence in the West Bank. It will be more than apparent that the venerable Haj Amin, thought to be approximately 75 years old, can no longer play an active role in this matter.

Another interesting comment on Haj Amin's visit is contained in WJA-6656 which reports that Prime Minister Wasfi Tall has been encouraging Haj Amin to try to increase his influence among West Bank Palestinians in the hope that he, Tall, through Hussein, can develop a personal political base on the West Bank for his own political ambitions.

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