

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

December 1, 1981

Dear Margaret:

I greatly appreciate your messages of October 31 and November 4. Their constructive contents were heartening and reinforced my renewed hope for a Middle East peace settlement. These messages, along with the earlier views concerning Arab attitudes which you were good enough to share with me in your letter of October 1, attest to the continuing value of our cooperative efforts in the area and to the strength of our own relationship.

It was good to have your congratulations on the AWACS outcome. I am convinced that the sale will directly contribute to greater stability in the Middle East and to broadening the basis on which a genuinely even-handed resolution of the problems there can be found. In that connection, I am particularly grateful for your decision to participate in the Sinai force. I know how difficult this decision was for your government, and I fully understand the approach you plan to take publicly should you be pressed for explanations in Parliament.

I am also exceedingly grateful for the information you passed on concerning your talks with King Hussein in London, which I made good use of during his visit here.

I believe my talks with the King were successful. We certainly got along very well. We did express great concern over his seemingly irrevocable decision to buy Soviet air defense systems. In reply, he went to great lengths to explain to us that he didn't really want to do this but that he found himself in a bind, that the deed was done, but that he would keep to a minimum the number

DECLASSIFIED / FE / 09502

NLRR M07-019 #30798

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of Russians in Jordan and that, if he could get U.S. or Western counterparts on satisfactory terms, he would get rid of the Soviet weapons and probably sell them to Iraq.

Weapons aside, the main purpose of his trip was to find out if we still supported the integrity of the Hashemite Kingdom and what our views on the peace process are. I think we managed to convince him rather well. In fact, he said that his meetings had been the most successful he had had in Washington. The reason for this is that I think he left convinced that we are not going to abandon him. I believe he is also convinced that our interpretation of Resolution 242 is one that anticipates withdrawal for a negotiated peace as the fundamental basis for a settlement on the West Bank and Gaza.

There is no doubt that much remains to be done in the Middle East and that time is pressing upon us. Nevertheless, I feel confident that we are on the right track and that your own invaluable assistance has greatly improved our prospects for eventual success.

Sincerely,

Ronald

The Right Honorable
Margaret Thatcher, M.P.
Prime Minister
London