

~~SECRET~~
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

16777

Memorandum of Conversation

DATE: October 22, 1969
Time: 10:00 a.m.
Place: Blair House

SUBJECT: Lebanon/Saudi Arabia/Jordan
(Part 4 of 8)

PARTICIPANTS: Foreign
His Imperial Majesty the Shahanshah of Iran
H.E. Ardeshir Zahedi, Foreign Minister of Iran
H.E. Amir Aslan Afshar, Ambassador of Iran

United States
The Secretary of State
The Hon. Joseph J. Sisco, Assistant Secretary of State
The Hon. Douglas MacArthur II, American Ambassador to Iran
Mr. Jack C. Miklos, Country Director for Iran

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The Secretary expressed our hope that the Shah could do something to bolster Saudi Arabia and Lebanon who are among the very few remaining moderate Arab governments in the area. The Shah said he of course agreed with the Secretary that something should be done about Saudi Arabia. He said that in Rabat he had not had the opportunity of speaking to King Feisal as extensively as he had hoped. He was concerned about the arrests that had been made in Saudi Arabia recently -- regarding them as evidence of internal unrest. The Shah said that the Saudis needed to embark on a really imaginative reform program. He hoped to speak to Prince Fahd, who is to visit him in Tehran in the near future, about this. The Secretary and Mr. Sisco told the Shah that he would have a receptive audience since they had both found Prince Fahd very reform-minded. The Shah observed that really meaningful reforms were difficult to implement under King Feisal because he thought differently than he about these matters. He said that King Feisal believed in the strict letter of the Koran which he, the Shah, even though he was a good Moslem, found inadequate to modern day needs. He lamented the absence of a clear arrangement for succession should anything happen to King Feisal. He said the Crown Prince was a weak, ineffectual nonentity.

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With reference to Lebanon the Shah expressed contempt for its present leaders characterizing them as untrustworthy liars. He said, however, that to the extent that Iran had any influence with the people of Lebanon he would attempt to exercise it in persuading them to counsel the Fedayeen to be more moderate with regard to its neighbors and to do anything else he could to help the people of Lebanon maintain their integrity.

Speaking of other personalities in the area, the Shah said that he was much concerned about King Hussein. He had had reports from his ambassador in Amman that Hussein felt that he was becoming increasingly isolated not only from his neighbors but from his own people. He said that Hussein had recently talked to his military telling them that they were the only ones he could rely on any more. He said King Hussein was a good, brave man but he was evidently thoroughly disheartened and he did not know what Hussein would do in the future.

