

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

SECRET

September 23, 1970

MEMORANDUM FOR DR. KISSINGER

FROM: Harold H. Saunders

SUBJECT: The Situation in Jordan

At Tab A are the most important cables since this morning.

At Tab B is the noon Situation Report from CIA.

The following are the main new elements in the situation this afternoon.

1. The fighting continues in Amman but at a reduced level. A palace official claims that there is only one major pocket of resistance left in the city and that once it is cleared there will only be some snipers left in various parts of the town. This happens to be where our embassy is. The embassy is battoning down the hatches, however, for another night since there is still considerable fighting in the neighborhood.
2. The Jordanians are publicly claiming to have routed the retreating Syrians from the Irbid-Ramatha area. It is still not clear, however, whether the Syrians are just retreating across the border to regroup or whether they have disengaged for good. They seem also to be in the process of replacing their forces with units from the Palestine Liberation Army and in this way "legitimizing" the intervention. The PLA is the military arms of the Palestine Liberation Organization and is largely composed of regular units seconded by the Arab governments. The Syrians presumably could turn more of their regular units over to the PLA as could the Iraqis and others.
3. In the now familiar pattern, the day ended in Amman with another cease-fire. The only apparent difference today is that it was announced by the visiting Sudanese President who also said that the principles announced this morning concerning the withdrawal of the fedayeen from the cities would be used as the basis for a settlement. The only hitch is that these were repudiated by the PLO central committee this morning and there is no reason yet

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to believe the captured fedayeen leaders have any more authority to speak for the PLO now than they did this morning.

4. Our embassy in Tel Aviv believes that an Israeli military move at this point would certainly meet with surprise, and perhaps even fairly sharp criticism in public. The embassy reports that there is no indication that the government is seeking to prepare the public for military action and much evidence to the contrary. This, of course, is in sharp contrast to the continuing indication of a military build up.