

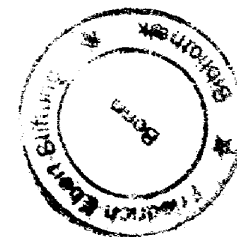
Jordan's Diplomacy:
Balancing National Survival With Nation's Revival

Published by the
Center for Strategic Studies,
University of Jordan,
Amman, Jordan

Summer 1995



University of Jordan



C 96 - 00865

Opinions expressed in this essay are solely those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the opinions or judgments of the Center for Strategic Studies

© 1995 by the Center for Strategic Studies,
University of Jordan

All rights reserved

Deposit No.
(1112/10/1995)

Class No.:	327.2
Author:	Musa Breizat
Title:	Jordan's Diplomacy
Subject Heading:	Jordan / Diplomacy
Deposit No.:	(1112/10/1995)
Notes:	Center for Strategic Studies

Prepared By The National Library

Acknowledgments

Several people have helped me in the process of writing this monograph. Professor Fawzi Gharaibeh, president of the University of Jordan, deserves special tribute for his continued encouragement and support. Dr. Mustafa Hamarneh, director of the Center for Strategic Studies at the University, has been of great assistance all along. Without his determination I would have been thwarted by various obstacles which normally appear in such an endeavor. I owe him a great deal. Another person who must be recognized is Dr. William Quandt who read the first version of the document while I was a guest scholar at the Brookings Institution in Washington, D.C., during the academic year 1993/94. Mr. Quandt made valuable suggestions which improved the text.

Finally, special thanks and appreciation must go to Jennifer Hamarneh for her conscientious editing of the manuscript and Lina Sabbah for her perseverance throughout all the publication process.

Musa Braizat
July 1995

Table of Contents

I- Background: The Region	1
II- The Arab System	7
III- The Regional Agenda	13
IV- Jordan's Regional Diplomacy	
A- Arab Reconciliation	21
B- Economic Policies	31
C- The Peace Process	35
D- Democracy	45
V- Conclusion	49

I- Background: The Region

The gulf war was a watershed in the modern history of the Middle East and its political, economic, and social consequences will continue to reverberate throughout the entire region and beyond for many years to come. It inflicted indelible wounds and scars on inter-Arab relations and unveiled new realities. It polarized the Arab World in an unprecedented way, seriously injuring Arab solidarity, thus putting meaningful collective Arab action beyond reach, at least for the time being. Joint Arab actions vis-à-vis Israel and other powers, particularly those seeking to dominate the area and marginalize the Arabs are no longer feasible. Several Arab regimes even deemed it in their best interest to team up with the same powers against Iraq in the wake of its occupation of Kuwait. Not only was the collective will of the Arabs fatally struck by the war, but inter-Islamic solidarity was seriously undermined as well. In sum, the Gulf war dealt a severe blow to an already fragile regional order within which Jordan is operating. The League of Arab States (LAS) and the Organization of Islamic States (OIS) were used to legitimize the U.S.-led efforts to disable Iraq as an anti-status quo power, using Baghdad's thrust into Kuwait on August 2, 1990 as a pretext. The level of polarization within the Arab arena was such that an in-between stand toward the whole affair by some Arab states was disdainfully rejected on both sides of the aisle. King Hussein's efforts to secure a peaceful resolution to the crisis were slighted by the anti-Iraq alliance. The Gulf war's long-term impact on the Arab World will be as destructive as was the creation of Israel within the Arab hinterland, if not worse. It is no coincidence that in both cases Jordan suffered tremendously.

Bad as it was, the Gulf war was not the only negative development in the Middle East. The region is afflicted with severe social, ideological and political illnesses. Political, social, and

religious heterogeneity has led to deep schisms between various countries and has hindered genuine cooperation and interaction among them. As a source of more than one civilization, the birthplace of the three monotheistic religions, and a living place for numerous sects and multiple ethnic minorities and nationalities, the area has become attractive to outside powers seeking to gain influence in this strategic and resource-rich region. Concomitantly, social, cultural and ideological multiplicity has led to the emergence of many types of political systems and forms of government and institutions dominated by narrowly focused elites and political groups making fractiousness a permanent feature of the region's politics. Different regimes have different notions of legitimacy and, more often than not, contradictory objectives and interests. In such an environment it is not unusual that disagreement and conflict between and within states would be widespread. Historically, foreign actors have exploited intra-regional dissension to their own benefit. Consequently, they hampered the evolution of potent and effective collective intra-regional structures for conflict management and conflict resolution to deal with disputes and confrontations that are likely to engulf the region.

Still, the tottering regional system is beset by two more serious deficiencies: first, the lack of democracy and political pluralism; second, deep economic disparities both within and between countries.

The above-stated complex situation in the area that constitutes the regional political environment of Jordan has further been aggravated by the legacy of colonialism in the past as well as continued intervention by external nations at present. Colonial rule left everlasting implications for the countries and peoples of the region. The territorial and political arrangements that were imposed by colonial powers have become, over the years, structural causes of regional disputes among neighboring countries. The partitioning of the region into colonial possessions has wrought havoc on successor states and peoples. One glaring outcome of meddling in the affairs of the region is the decidedly volatile phenomenon resulting from the discrepancy between national and ethnic boundaries in many cases.

Few countries command the full allegiance of their citizens, as the area comprises national units of varying ethnic, linguistic, and religious composition. The dismemberment of the Arab homeland in Asia in the wake of World War I by Britain, France and others has been at the heart of the national question that has been boiling ever since, with dangerous intervening outbursts of violence. Colonial rule, foreign occupation, and external intervention have sharpened local nationalism and provoked nationalistic sentiments among various peoples and groups. Also, changes in social and economic structures created formidable challenges to many nations. They have complicated the attending issues related to development and modernity.

Lately religious ideologies have forced themselves on the political scene, creating fear and apprehension in many quarters. While religion, particularly Islam, has always been a main feature of life in the Middle East, it has acquired new dimensions with the advent of the Khomeini regime in Iran in 1979. Iran's espousal of disaffected religious groups throughout the region and elsewhere, as well as the perceived failure of nationalistic ideologies, has led to the resurgence of religion as a political paradigm and as an organizing political principle. Non-democratic, non-accountable regimes have indirectly contributed to the wide appeal the religious message is receiving in many countries. The religious approach purports that the present malaise which characterizes most Middle Eastern societies is due to the absence of a sense of moral purpose and the negative role of politicians who are incapable of anything but corruption. Of course, foreign meddling with the region's affairs works as a catalyst for the religious campaigns against particular countries, especially those that are viewed as too secularist, such as Algeria and Tunisia, or regarded to be too closely operating within the West's orbit, such as Egypt and the Gulf states. Secularism in its most fundamental form, i.e., the separation of state and religion, is summarily rejected by religious activists and intellectuals. To many religious organizations in the Middle East, nationalism and secularism are synonymous, and are the manifestations of westernization and alienation from the otherwise Islamic societies of the Middle East. Concomitantly,

notions relating to modernity and modernization are shunned by the religious establishment.

Recalling that Arab nationalism and Islam are both important sources of legitimacy for Arab regimes, one can imagine the strains such national/religious and modern/traditional dichotomies would have placed on such regimes. The same applies to others including Turkey, Iran, and Israel as well. In a Halakhic society, Jewish religious leaders promised that Israel would become more harmonious than it is now; all its aspects integrated under religious law. "Man cannot live by bread alone," Meir Kahane reminded his supporters of Jesus Christ's words. "Religion is more than just belief and ritual, it is all of life," Rabbi Moshe Levinger said.¹ Religious attachments have a wide appeal in the Middle East, and religious perspectives influence both internal and external issues. Their impact ranges from dealing with simple questions of civic life of the family to inter-state conflicts, with such issues as population control in-between.

Rivalry between nationalism and religion is further aggravated because both are conceptual frameworks that legitimate authority, although the ultimate focus of such authority is totally different to each. While the former puts the authority in man's hands, the latter ascribes it to God, the almighty. This functional similarity between nationalism and religion, with two different sources of moral authority, is further underlined in that the two respond to the same needs for collective identity, ultimate loyalty and moral authority. A clash between the adherents of each is almost unavoidable, and the task of reconciling them under the well-known precarious conditions of Middle Eastern states is herculean. The most immediate arena for these opposing sources of legitimacy, authority and rule has been the incipient democratization process in the region.

¹Mark Juergensmeyer, *The New Cold War: Religious Nationalism Confronts the Secular State* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), p. 24.

Now what would this fragile, conflict-ridden, tension-generating regional order portend for a country such as Jordan? Evidently insurmountable challenges. But Jordan did face such challenges forthrightly and achieved, relatively speaking, an impressive record of success, as this paper will later illustrate. Jordan's interaction with its broader regional environment, however, has been shaped by another sub-regional context which is by no means less complex: the Arab system.

II- The Arab System

The modern Arab state system is the product of the political and territorial arrangements that ensued as the result of the dismemberment of the ailing Ottoman empire and subsequent British and French dominions within the Arab World. In many respects it is a microcosm of the wider Middle Eastern order that has been outlined earlier.

It suffers from the effects of the disintegrative pull of the same factors that are operative at the regional level. States experience challenges to their very existence as states, to the inviolability of their boundaries, and to the legitimacy of their governments -- sometimes from their neighbors and sometimes challenges from within. Likewise, various forms of intervention by foreign powers -- with or without local invitation -- have been abound. Thus disputes between Arab countries over boundaries and water are rampant. Ideological disputes and competition between various sources of legitimacy and political paradigms have overtaxed the Arab system and complicated inter-Arab relations. The failure of the national state to deliver on fundamental needs of the citizenry in the areas of social justice, freedom and security as manifested by authoritarian, single party rule in many countries; failure to check Israel's aggressive posture and intransigence; and the Gulf War, which pitted Iraq against a U.S.-led coalition, all have rekindled Arab nationalism.

However, this new rise in pan-Arab sentiment is confined at this stage mainly to the popular grass-roots level. There are political groups sharing the same sentiments in various Arab countries, but they are mostly ineffective. Actually pan-Arabism is challenged from both ends of the political spectrum. From one direction, state nationalism has gained momentum in the period between 1967 and the Gulf War (1990-91) because of the retreat of the revolutionary

fervor of Nasserism, Ba'athism and other leftist political groupings which, in general, dominated inter-Arab relations in the 1950s and 1960s. In the 1970s and 1980s the "state" consolidated its role and began to take precedence over the "nation" within the Arab political discourse. At another level, pan-Arabism was and is being challenged by a supranational ideology: Islam. The same external factors that have led to the rekindling of feelings of pan-Arab solidarity contributed more or less to the resurgence of Islamic forces in Arab societies. Both foreign hegemony as well as socio-economic factors combined to feed the new phenomenon. What is significant about this new ideological surge is the additional burden it places upon political and economic structures in respective Arab states as well as their leaders, as they try to cope with other challenges.

Each of these ideologies pulls society and state institutions in opposing directions. Their inherent contradictions make the formulation of a national agenda and the proper functioning of state institutions next to impossible. They increase polarization and deepen schisms within polities, drain national energies and make consensus, by and large, an elusive goal. Further, they aggravate the linkage phenomenon that is prevalent at the regional level. Because of the interconnectedness between various countries in the region, the policies of each have actual or potential consequences on the security of others as well. Even what seem to be purely domestic challenges and policy responses in any one country can impinge on the domestic politics of a neighbor in any number of ways and affect that neighbor's perceptions and policy responses accordingly.

Furthermore, and despite the tremendous potentialities for complementarity, the Arab system has many other divisive factors. Its confederal nature makes it less conducive to initiatives aimed at genuine and closer cooperation between its constituent elements. As a balance of power system, its *raison d'être* is usually the preservation of the existence and independence of respective units, thus making the goal of integration, or for that matter, any substantive integrative efforts among Arab states, hard to pursue. That is why most "unity

initiatives" espoused by most regimes and leaders have, in essence, either disingenuously sought to bolster a tottering regime at home, or, restore or maintain a particular balance of power between various players. The United Arab Republic experiment between Egypt and Syria (1959-61) was met with hostility on the part of many Arab countries, mainly because it tipped the balance in favor of one axis in the power constellation within the Arab World. It is no secret, at least to the countries of the Arab Maghrib, that Libyan leader Muammar Qaddafi's unity proposals with various countries in that area were always timed to coincide with a possible or perceived shift in the balance of power within the Maghrib subsystem or the entire Arab system. The same thing can be said of the attitude of Syria and the Gulf states to the formation of the moribund Arab Cooperation Council comprising Egypt, Jordan, Iraq, and Yemen (1989-90). Those countries were very hostile to the stepping up of closer cooperation between four Arab countries which were given an institutional character.

Another recent example of the inhospitability of the confederal Arab system to genuine integrative or unification acts is the trying sail the unity of the two Yemens has experienced. It has been widely believed that internal opposition to the unity is, to a great degree, fueled by outside powers mainly from the region. And fingers have been pointed at Riyadh which has throughout been the linchpin of the status quo in the Arab World. Similarly, Egypt let it be known that it was not totally pleased to see King Hussein mediate and oversee the latest efforts to overcome inter-Yemeni disagreement. Yet the most enduring example of fierce opposition by other Arab regimes to meaningful unification efforts within the Arab political system could be seen in the attitudes of various Arab regimes to the Jordanian-Palestinian unity, 1950-1988. Apart from monarchical Iraq, no country supported the territorial fusion of Jordan and the West Bank in 1950. Conversely, leading Arab regimes did all they could to dismantle that unity. Yet, political and ideological disagreements are not the only defects of inter-Arab politics.

The Arab system has been marked by a wide gap between the haves and have-nots, both within states and between them. Because of the interconnectedness the Arabs feel toward each other, economic disparities between Arab societies in oil-rich states and their kith and kin in the least-blessed ones are viewed with dismay by the latter. There is no well-defined regime or concept of burden-sharing within the Arab system which would identify areas and countries that need economic support and simultaneously gauge the strategic and political importance of such countries to the providers of aid. Both Jordan and Iraq, for instance, viewed themselves as defending the Gulf states: the former from Israel since 1948 and the latter from Iran during 1980-1988. The two countries, therefore, expected to be compensated for the enormous resources they committed to this endeavor which, otherwise, would have been spent on purely national programs to raise the standards of living of their own peoples. Yet the frugality of oil-rich countries toward their brotherly Arab states has been accompanied by evident munificence on the part of the former toward foreign powers which are enjoying unhindered access to Arab wealth and resources.

So far, we have seen how personal rivalries, political disagreement and ideological differences have made the attainment of meaningful, closer cooperation between Arab countries very difficult. Such difficulty has been particularly acute over such issues as Arab unity, the Arab-Israeli conflict, and the relationships with outside forces, especially the two blocs of East and West, prior to the end of the cold war. Other issues pertaining to modernization and development, and human rights and democracy constituted serious challenges to various Arab states though they were less divisive. Many Arab countries are approaching the 21st century void of clear ideas about how to deal with fundamental questions of change, stability and progress.

This is the regional context within which Jordan is interacting and through which it is pursuing a hefty national agenda. The Jordanian leadership have -- to deal with unpredictable domestic

conditions. Further, they have to deal with a less than friendly regional milieu, and within the broader context of a unipolar global system in which at the pinnacle sits the only superpower -- the U.S. -- which Jordan only recently annoyed by its independent stance vis-à-vis the second Gulf war.

III- The Regional Agenda

Jordan has tried to beat the odds as we shall see in a moment, and it is succeeding. Sifting through the records of the regional interactions we can identify the headlines of the most salient regional issues as follows:

- 1- Inter-Arab relations and intra-regional affairs**
- 2- The Arab-Israeli peace talks and the implications of the peace settlement for Jordan**
- 3- Regional disputes**
- 4- Economic development**
- 5- Democracy and human rights**
- 6- Orientations toward outside powers**
- 7- Questions pertaining to social change, progress, modernization, political ideology, and religion.**

The first three items currently top Jordan's agenda. Inter-Arab politics alone is a tiring, time-consuming affair. It comprises numerous national political, economic and social questions, in addition to security-military related matters. Yet such questions can be generally subsumed under three broadly defined themes. These are: the type of Arab political order that member states would like to see obtaining within the Arab arena, including the attitudes of various parties and quarters toward the subject of Arab unity and pan-Arabism; joint and collective Arab efforts aimed at dealing with the Israeli situation before and subsequent to the peace process; and finally intra-Arab disputes whether border disputes, disagreement regarding water, or what have you. At this stage the focus will be on themes one and three since number two will be addressed separately.

The question of what type of political framework should the Arab states ultimately adopt has occupied a central place in inter-Arab debate since the emergence of the modern Arab state system early this century. In this context two formulas have competed all along. They are the federal nation and the confederal one.

Since the Great Arab Revolt of 1916 led by Sharif Hussein Ibn Ali, great grandfather of King Hussein, against the Ottomans, the Hashemites have been associated with the federal notion. The confederal option on the other hand has been pursued by Saudi Arabia, Egypt -- except during Nasser's era -- and Syria. The majority of the Arab states have, invariably, supported the confederalist approach, notwithstanding Colonel Qaddafi's ill-conceived numerous unity proposals. Also inter-Arab dealings regarding the question of Arab unity witnessed tense discussions over the suitable approach to achieve it. There have been two approaches: The revolutionary approach, and a gradualist, more cautious one. Jordan and its leadership have espoused the second path, and shunned the former.

As a result of collusion between Britain and France on the one hand, and local Arab chieftains, leaders and separatist forces in Arabia, Egypt, Syria on the other, the confederal scheme was imposed to the dislike of the majority of Arab populaces at the time. After it had been formalized with the imposition of the political and territorial arrangements by colonial powers in the wake of World War I, the confederal scheme was institutionalized in 1945 by the adoption of the charter of the League of Arab States.²

Yet, the Hashemites did not give up on their federal idea. King Abdullah, the grandfather of King Hussein and founder of the modern state of Jordan, pursued it feverishly as he tried to unite

²For more see Bruce Maddy-Weizman, *The Crystallization of the Arab State System: 1945-1954*, (Syracuse, Syracuse University Press, 1993), chapter 1.

Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine (prior to the creation of Israel) and Syria into a single entity. At times he attempted to include Iraq in his visionary plan. Yet this initiative was thwarted by the confederalists within the Arab arena and was discouraged by the predominant power in the region, at the time, Britain.³ But his efforts succeeded in one place, Palestine. After a political and military struggle with the Zionist forces, the mandatory power, Britain and the confederalists within the Arab World, he managed to unite Jordan and the West Bank in 1950. The Jordanian-Palestinian unification in 1950, which was dissolved only formally on July 31, 1988 when Jordan severed its legal and administrative links with the occupied territory of the West Bank, was the longest and most viable federation experiment within the Arab World that has been achieved politically and voluntarily. Saudi Arabia is another more durable example of a federated Arab state, but one that was achieved by force. Ibn Saud used military force to conquer and ultimately amalgamate the five regions of Najd, Asir, Najran, Hejaz and Hail in the 1920-25 period, creating the modern state of Saudi Arabia. It is ironic that Al-Sauds, who must have known the advantages of federation in Saudi Arabia, would turn to be the staunchest opponents of such an approach at the broader Arab level.

Iraq's thrust into Kuwait on August 2, 1990, and the subsequent eviction of Iraqi forces by the U.S.-led coalition, therefore was, in many respects, a symptom of the chronic and debilitating crisis which the Arab system has been experiencing ever since it emerged almost seven decades ago. It is this impotent and paralyzed system that led to Kuwait's waging, in collusion with outside powers, an economic war particularly against Iraq, at a very critical time for the Baghdad regime. Among OPEC members Iraq was most affected

³Kamal Salibi, *The Modern History of Jordan* (London: I.B. Tauris & Ltd. Publishers, 1993), chapters 5-7.

by Kuwait's oil dumping practices in the second half of 1990⁴. And once more the Arab confederal system demonstrated its impotence.

In the past it failed to confront the Zionist onslaught and to curb Israel's subsequent outrages and excesses; it also did not deliver on the vital issues of freedom of expression and free political activities for the Arab people in most Arab countries. Likewise it failed to prevent even humiliating interventions by outside powers against Arab countries, such as U.S. bombings of Libya in 1983 and 1986. And most frustratingly, though expectedly, the Arab confederal system failed to successfully deal with the Gulf crisis. In brief, the confederal formula has rendered meaningful coordination and genuine cooperation among the Arab states unattainable.

Conversely, the prevalent practices of alliance formation and continuous shifts in coalition building by various Arab countries, attending characteristics of confederal structures, have made it much easier for outside powers to make inroads within the Arab World. In the Gulf crisis certain Arab states cooperated with foreign powers to create the conditions favorable to those powers in order that they might dominate Arab affairs. Further, the confederal system failed to foster genuine economic integration among the Arab states. It only succeeded in preserving the impotent national "state" which, in turn, dominated both the society and the individual in the various Arab countries and used them to perpetuate this ineffective state of affairs. To be sure, there were attempts at redressing this untenable situation, but they all fell through. In the 1950s and 1960s calls for radical changes within the Arab World were obstructed. In certain instances they turned inward and became even worse than the defunct system they aspired to replace. The reference here is to revolutions in Syria since 1963, in Iraq, since 1958, and south Yemen as well as the Sudan.

⁴Saddam Hussein, President of Iraq, statement to the emergency Arab Summit, Baghdad, Iraq, May 28-29, 1990.

The oil boom of the 1970s had few positive implications for the Arab World. Oil revenues permitted the development of impressive infrastructures and health and education systems, but fell short of helping genuine social change in attitudes, outlooks and methods of rule within most of the Arab countries. In many instances it provided the wherewithal for the leaders to maintain the patterns of social power on which they depended for their security. The boom obscured the problems brought about by rapid modernization and bought the acquiescence of many opponents and opposition groups. In many countries economic prosperity and wealth were not accompanied by political reform at the state system levels. To the contrary, they were utilized to arrest such reforms, thus causing the overall Arab political order to stagnate and move from bad to worse over the years. In anticipation of financial benefits from the Gulf states, Egypt, since Anwar Sadat, has cultivated the Gulf states, thus adding to the forces of the status quo within the Arab World. Also the utilitarian outlook that swept the Arab World because of the monies brought about a degree of pragmatism at the level of formal dealings between various regimes. But it is this pragmatism which has been employed to conceal other unsound and outmoded practices that led to the current malaise within the Arab World. Money and wealth have been used to frustrate not only positive social change and democratic changes, but also the drive toward unity that Arab masses and few Arab leaderships have struggled for.

The military outcome of the Gulf war has entrenched this unfortunate Arab system further. It retarded the forces of change and strengthened the status quo powers. These powers (mainly Egypt, the Gulf states, the Gulf Cooperation Council, and Syria) moved to create new norms for inner-Arab dealings. In an attempt to codify the new balance of power within the Arab World in the wake of the dismantling of Iraq's powers, the group initiated as early as December 1990 closer consultations among them which culminated in the emergence of what was known then as "six-plus-two". Their foreign ministers met several times during the war and afterward in an attempt to forge a new post-war Arab regional order. On March 6, 1991, a few weeks after the cease-fire in the Gulf, they made their first formal joint announcement in this direction. The eight countries

endorsed what came to be known as the Damascus Declaration, signed by the new alliance of six-plus-two. With their eyes riveted on oil monies, the leaderships in Egypt and Syria were anxious to set new rules for access to such riches. Such rules were drafted to satisfy the six Gulf states' strong interest in the consolidation of the status quo, reformulate guidelines for economic assistance provided by them in a manner conducive to their overall vision of perpetuating the status quo and, finally, appoint Egypt and Syria as the gatekeepers of the new arrangements. In an attempt to demonstrate its leading role in this context Cairo had issued, three weeks earlier, a tough outline of the Arab anti-Iraq coalition's vision to the post war "new Arab order".⁵ Yet these guiding principles were anything but new. They were a reaffirmation of the principles contained in the charter of the League of Arab States and the Arab Joint Defense and Economic Cooperation Agreement of 1950 which stipulated good neighborliness, the inviolability of interstate boundaries, the resolution of regional disputes by peaceful means and the promotion of economic cooperation. They were the precepts of the confederal regime that has hindered meaningful cooperation and harmony between various Arab regimes. Obviously the immediate concern for the GCC and the U.S. was the security of the Gulf region in the post-war era. Egypt and Syria were anxious to fill the vacuum there when U.S. and other Western nations' forces were withdrawn. Initially, Egyptian and Syrian forces were envisaged as constituting a nucleus for an Arab deterrent or peace force that would safeguard the security of the Gulf states, as well as serve as a manifestation of a new comprehensive Arab defense regime.

Although then U.S. Secretary of State James Baker met with his counterparts of the six-plus-two, and despite determined efforts by

both Egypt and Syria to formalize and institutionalize the new coalition, it fell too short of their expectations. Six months after the issuance of the Damascus Declaration the six-plus-two foreign ministers met again in Qatar and issued their new statement, which was a revised version of their first declaration in the Syrian capital. In the new text the reference to Egyptian and Syrian forces changed, and they were no longer described as "constituting a nucleus for an Arab peace force" that would guarantee the Gulf's security. A few weeks later, Egyptian officials did not conceal their disappointment that the GCC's attitude toward the Damascus Declaration was less than lukewarm. The downturn in the fortunes of the new axis was not due to any change in the regional balance of power or in the attitude of its supporters. The Gulf states of the GCC were discontented or insecure about regional protection in the face of potential threats similar to Iraq's move into Kuwait. They believed they could only rely on foreign -- U.S. and Western -- protection. Also the Saudi leaders were anxious, to the consternation of the Egyptians, to placate Cairo's regional rival, Tehran. Thus Egypt was denied the role it set for itself at the outset of the Gulf crisis -- guaranteeing the security of the Gulf. And it does not seem that any other Arab country will be afforded this privilege as long as the region is viewed as vital to the U.S. and West's interests.

⁵"Inter-Arab Politics" and "Egypt", In *Contemporary Survey of the Middle East, 1990/91*, Ed. Haim Shaked Et. Al. The Shiloah Center, Tel Aviv Univ., Tel Aviv. See also Al-Ahram, (Arabic), daily, Cairo, Egypt, January 10-28, 1991, Passim.

⁶Op. Cit.

IV- Jordan's Regional Diplomacy

A. Arab Reconciliation:

The above-described historical background of the Arab state system may appear at a first glance odd, especially when discussing Jordan's regional role. Yet, in fact it is at the center of Jordan's current regional diplomacy. Jordan must cope with the consequences of the Gulf war. But in order to do that successfully, it must deal with the ailing Arab system and its broader regional environment with all their weaknesses and shortcomings.

This is the type of inter-Arab politics through which Jordan is pursuing its national agenda. It is antithetical to change, inhospitable to wider and meaningful cooperation, and inimical to democracy. But the Jordanian leadership has persisted. It has pursued a two-pronged strategy. On the one hand, the Jordanian leadership -- mainly the King and the Crown Prince -- realized that they could not ignore the prevailing realities pertaining to the existing balance of power within the Arab World, the vindictive mood toward Jordan in particular in certain Gulf states, Egypt's divisive role, and Syria's tendency to continually maneuver between rival alliances within inter-Arab politics, avoiding any firm and long-term entanglement with any side. At the same time, the King was not willing to succumb to the dictate of the "victors" in the Gulf war, the benefactors of the status quo. Therefore, a tedious and complex process of adaptation and adjustment in Jordan's foreign behavior began immediately on the eve of the cessation of hostilities against Iraq in February 1991.

The theme of the new phase of Jordan's regional diplomacy was a familiar one: Arab reconciliation and renewed inter-Arab understanding.

Because of its stand in the Gulf war and its refusal to endorse the U.S.-led military campaign against Iraq, Jordan's relations with the Gulf states, except Oman, were strained. Upon Kuwait's prodding, and with Saudi agreement, the GCC members cut oil shipments and financial aid to Amman. And Gulf markets were also sealed off to Jordanian trade. On March 30, 1991 the Gulf states, in an apparent retributive act, stated that they would no longer provide financial aid to Jordan and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). The secretary-general of the GCC said the members' policy toward Iraq's allies would be that of "no forgiveness, no forgetting." The Gulf leaders interpreted Jordan's refusal to endorse the U.S.-led coalition onslaught against Iraq within the context of an originally Egyptian-inspired theory about an alleged conspiracy between the three leaderships in Baghdad, Amman and Sanaa to partition Saudi Arabia among the first two in addition to Iraq's incorporation of Kuwait. As it turned out, President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt, in trying to cultivate the oil-rich Gulf Kingdoms, had put forth such a scenario. He in fact linked these allegations about a hidden plan to carve out portions of Saudi Arabia to the formation of the Arab Cooperation Council in 1989 comprising, in addition to Egypt, Iraq, Yemen, and Jordan. Saudi officials were led to believe that the real objective of the council was the encirclement of the Saudi kingdom in preparation for the eventual restoration of the disputed region of Asir and Najran to Yemen, and the Hejaz to the Hashemites. Thus Saudis were particularly piqued when King Hussein grew a beard during the crisis and asked a journalist in the course of an interview to use his formal epithet of "Sharif" instead of "Majesty."⁷

The above incidents give but a small picture, but they give the reader a flavor of the regional politics with which Jordan had to cope in the aftermath of the Gulf war. A leading Arab regime was trying to

⁷ "The Guardian", daily, London, November 16, 1994; EU-January, 1995.

exploit historical rivalries and old sensitivities between various Arab entities and rulers to gain favor with some of them. Jordan issued a document called the White Paper in which it put out its own version of the events surrounding the Gulf war and moved on to heal the wounds.⁸

In its drive to foster better inter-Arab understanding in the post-Gulf war period, Jordan moved on two tracks. First, its anti-status quo stand within the inept Arab political order was reviewed. The anti-status quo profile was slightly modified. The pro-Iraq stance was re-examined. The first question in this context was the U.S.-inspired U.N. sanctions against Iraq. After a long period of intense debate and soul-searching, sanctions imposed against Iraq were complied with. But only after there was no alternative. Going along with the sanctions was a difficult decision to take for the Jordanians. More than 60 percent of Jordan's trade was with Iraq, and Iraq has been the only available source of oil after the Gulf states cut their oil supplies to Jordan.⁹ In addition, adhering fully to the sanctions has posed moral and political problems. King Hussein gave a series of interviews in which he stressed that his main concern was Iraq and the Iraqi people. In a speech on November 5, 1992 the King called on the Arabs to resist tyranny, and said Jordan refused to support wrongful occupation of other lands. He also alluded to the importance of democracy as a device to prevent decision makers from the path of adventurism.¹⁰ Although these and similar statements in which he criticized authoritarian rule were applicable to most Arab regimes, they were interpreted by some to refer to the situation in Iraq.

⁸The government of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, White Paper: Jordan and the Gulf crisis - August 1990 - March 1991, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, August 1991.

⁹ "The Guardian", London, November 16, 1994, EU-January 1, 1995.

¹⁰ Al-Rai, (Arabic), daily, Amman, November 6, 1992.

regimes, they were interpreted by some to refer to the situation in Iraq.

At the same time, the King initially made some conciliatory remarks toward the Gulf states. On the eve of the cease-fire between Iraq and the U.S.-led coalition, the King called on the Arab countries to heal the wounds caused by the war. In a televised speech on March 1, he hinted at Jordan's readiness to repair its strained relations with Arab members of the U.S.-led coalition against Iraq. "Jordan," the King said, "did not bear grudge . . . was ready to turn a new page." He appealed to Arabs -- leaders, politicians and intellectuals -- to draw the proper lessons from the tragedy of the war and work to build a new Arab order. In this speech he noted Kuwait's "independence" and affirmed his sympathy with the Iraqi people and that Jordan still had a responsibility toward Iraq.

In its new path Jordan tried to steer away from the killing ground between the two bitter axes within the Arab arena that have ensued because of the Gulf war. The Jordanian message may not have been loud enough but it was clear: the status quo is unacceptable, as well as Iraq's remedy of it. In rhetoric and action Jordan has adopted a unique approach, a third option, if you wish. This independent outlook has evolved over time and in a form of trial and error, as it is never easy to present a third way in a deeply polarized situation such as the one that resulted from the Gulf war within the Arab domain. Yet after some initial difficulty King Hussein succeeded in charting out a distinct Jordanian approach at the level of inter-Arab politics. This approach, as mentioned earlier, neither endorses the untenable status quo nor does it seek to change it violently. Within the parameters of this approach Jordanian officials toned down their pan-Arab rhetoric, and simultaneously acknowledged the validity of some of the availing realities. This was evident from the kind of message that was conveyed to leading figures in local media in a series of informal working lunches with the King, as well as systematic efforts at persuading editors to refrain from criticizing any other Arab leader; namely those of Egypt and the GCC. Among those realities which Jordan began to reckon with was that "state-nationalism," as opposed to higher Arab nationalism, was

indeed stronger than its opponents would have liked it to be. In a speech on May 22, 1991 at the War College, King Hussein admitted that the Gulf crisis represented a new phenomenon which raises questions over the future of the Arab nation. The war, he said, changed the nature of Arab politics. Prior to the Gulf war all Arab regimes were usually attentive to the collective interests of the Arab peoples and countries and sought to harness their respective national policies with the overall pan-Arab interests.

Eight months earlier the Arab leaders held their summit in Baghdad in May 1990, and the main topic on the agenda was Arab national security. They discussed the implications of the end of the cold war and other new changes in the global arena for the Arab World, and how to affect greater harmony and cohesiveness among the Arab states in order that they would be enabled to effectively respond to such new challenges. "Obviously", the King declared, "the Gulf war ended that." Naturally, he was not exuberant about this development, but he did not criticize it either, as had been the case in the past. He was sending a dual message. The King was addressing both the Jordanian people as well as the pro-U.S.-Arab regimes. To the former the message was that they should climb down from their unrealistic, high aspirations about pan-Arabism and reckon with the existing facts on the ground. At the same time he was sending a signal to the Gulf states implying that Jordan acknowledged the prevailing political order predicated upon the preservation of these countries' independence. Of course, Jordan does not possess the means or power to threaten these countries in any physical sense. But propagation of pan-Arab interests and sentiments persistently by the Jordanian leadership would undermine the legitimacy of those regimes. The Hashemites' popularity among Arab masses peaked during the war, and afterwards. Also, in particular, anti-U.S. and anti-West feelings were running high among Arab masses in the wake of the Gulf war. The Gulf regimes, particularly Saudi Arabia, were very susceptible to the charge of being pro-West. But the King neither tried to exploit his own popularity nor the Arab popular rage to undermine the legitimacy of the pro-U.S. allies for abandoning the higher Arab ideals by supporting the destruction of Iraq which was perceived by Arab masses as the only defender of collective Arab

interests. To the contrary, he redefined Jordan's national agenda in terms that are more palatable to both rival regional regimes and the leaders of the "new world order." In a series of public speeches, press statements and interviews by the King, the theme "Jordan first" was underscored repeatedly. Recent developments in Amman's relations with the Gulf states have reinforced this trend. Abdul Karim Kabariti, Jordan's Foreign Minister, visited Riyadh twice in July and August 1995, met with senior Saudi officials, and the two sides appeared to be coming closer to full reconciliation, thus paving the way, possibly, for a summit between King Hussein and the Saudi Monarch. Conversely, Amman's relations with Baghdad chilled in the wake of the defection in early August to Jordan of two of President Saddam Hussein's sons-in-law, Lieutenant-General Hussein Kamel and his brother Colonel Saddam Hassan Majeed and their wives. The circumstances pertaining to the escape of the Iraqi general and the impact that would have an immediate consequence of this episode appeared to be a thaw in Jordan's cold relations with both Riyadh and Kuwait. Despite the fact that authorities in Amman and Baghdad were keen to prevent these strained relations over the defection of the Iraqi general to degenerate into a total rift in both capitals could not be concealed. Analysts believed that Jordanians seized the opportunity to distance themselves from President Saddam Hussein's falling regime and were trying to present this as a sign of good will toward the Gulf critics.

But it will require some time to judge whether Amman's rapprochement with the GCC as well as King Hussein's disenchantment with the Iraqi leadership represent a fundamental shift in Jordan's strategic overtures toward the Gulf states and their disaffection with Baghdad's ruler wake of Jordan move of a status quo power. Still it is premature to determine, for sure, those initiatives constituted a drastic and irreversible shift in Jordan's outlook toward the Arab balance of power. But it may very well be that the Jordanian leadership has quickly grasped the new political map and realized that previous patterns of alliance formation with the Arab System have disappeared including the notion of a status quo versus anti status quo powers. The dismantling of Iraq's military power and the castration of its technological potentials as well as the

new power relationships that ensued in the wake of the Oslo accord and the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty have probably blurred the old lines defining political alliances in the region. Such developments may have persuaded the Jordanian leadership that earlier anti status quo inclinations are no longer feasible in the new Middle East. The reactions of Egypt and Syria as well as leading Arab countries in the gulf to Jordan's new attitude toward the Iraqi regime prove the entrenched anti Hashemite current in those countries. All these countries justified their opposition to Jordan's suggested role in a possible change in Iraq as being Hashemite expansionism. They did not review Amman's fresh policy toward Baghdad in the context of the emerging new reality in the region. Conversely, Cairo, Damascus and Riyadh in particular saw in the Jordanian call for a change in the Iraq leadership a Hashemite compensation.

But the consolidation of state nationalism within the Arab regime order was not the only lesson Jordan drew from the Gulf war and sought to reckon with. Jordanian leaders were quick to admit the constraining factors emanating from the international environment on anti-status quo powers. The international system is premised on the preservation of the nation-state and would not tolerate efforts by any power seeking to wreak havoc with this fundamental principle. In a departure from previous criticism of the League of Arab States and the United Nations, which in Jordanian eyes had been used simply as tools to legitimate the U.S.-led onslaught against Iraq, Jordanians recognized the role that these organizations play within the regional as well as international order. In a clear reference to Iraq's defiant act in the case of Kuwait, the King said that membership in the international community was not voluntary like membership in a club. The "world order" is a fact of life, and states wishing to further their interests must do so through dialogue and cooperation. Yet, the espousal of a reconciliatory posture toward the new regional and international order does not mean that Jordan accepted the status quo as it was. Likewise, cautioning against the adoption of a militant or radical attitude toward the international world order, the cushion for the present Arab regional order, does not imply that Jordan abandoned its long-term objective of seeking a different, more viable Arab order. Amman simply does not support or approve the use of

violent means such as had been the case of Iraq. On several occasions, Jordan's dismay about the status quo within the Arab World and globally, was registered. Criticism of the new world order was echoed in the King's speech at the global forum in May 1992 as well as in Crown Prince Hassan's speech to the 49th Session of the United Nations General Assembly.

Jordan's vision of the desired Arab order can be distilled from the King's statements, remarks and comments as well as those of the Crown Prince. They call for a new Arab order responsive to the challenges and problems that confront the Arab World. They believe such an order should be based on guaranteeing democracy, human rights and political participation; effective mechanisms for the solution of border disputes, a major bone of contention between several Arab countries; safeguarding Arab human and natural resources; equality and social justice and dealing with the wide gap between the haves and the have-nots; recognition that Arab security is indivisible; and, finally, remaining open-minded toward the outside world and cognizant of the constraints imposed by the prevailing international order, and of the state of interdependence that characterizes the international system.

Consistent with the policy of seeking to reduce the impact of inter-Arab friction and working for a broad-based Arab legitimacy, the King visited Egypt several times since the Gulf war, Syria and Gulf states, including Saudi Arabia where he performed the Omra or lesser pilgrimage. He did not meet King Fahd despite initial speculation that such a meeting would take place. Apparently, Jordan's consecration into a status quo power has not been complete yet, as was the case with the PLO whose chief, Yasser Arafat, was received by the Saudi monarch more than once since the Gulf war. Or, more precisely, the PLO's past record as an ally of the confederal coalition led by Egypt and Saudi Arabia and its potential role for this group in the future in this regard was sufficient reason for King Fahd to forget Arafat's stand in that war. While a breakthrough in inter-Arab relations may still be far off, Jordanian officials believe such visits help heal the wounds and reduce the impact of inter-Arab disagreement and hostility toward Jordan and other Arab countries.

As part of Jordan's reconciliation strategy initial disagreement with King Fahd over Jerusalem was glossed over. For the Hashemites, and particularly King Hussein, Jerusalem has a special significance. Earlier on, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the Saudi king tried to overshadow Jordan in the restoration efforts of Islamic places in the holy city. And after an initial wrangling, Jordanian and Saudi efforts at saving Islamic holy sites in the city are supposedly going hand in hand now. In April 1992 Saudi Arabia announced that it would cover the costs of badly needed restoration work at the Islamic sites. Jordan responded that it has always been responsible for the city, and the Hashemites have retained its patronage, therefore they would themselves cover the renovation costs. King Hussein sold a house he owned in London to cover the expenses. But Jordan's reaction to another recent initiative by Saudi leaders toward Jerusalem in February 1994 was different. Crown Prince Hassan praised King Fahd for launching a fund-raising drive to renovate the Islamic sites saying it would contribute to Arab solidarity. Notwithstanding this and similar conciliatory pronouncements, the issue of Jerusalem has remained contentious. Israel's acknowledgment of a special role for Jordan in overseeing the religious places in the holy city and in the future negotiations regarding its permanent status has spurred outrage in many quarters within the Arab World.

At another level Jordan mediated between rival factions in the ongoing dispute over the practical questions pertaining to the unification process which began in 1990 between the North and South of Yemen. High level Jordanian officials carrying personal messages from King Hussein to Yemeni leaders visited both Sanaa and Aden in the period preceding the unification war in mid-1994. In those letters the King urged President Ali Saleh and his deputy, Ali Salem Al-Beid, to try to put their disagreement aside and focus on the higher interest of Yemen first and save the unity experiment. He appealed to them to put aside partisan interests for the sake of Yemen and the Arab nation. Undoubtedly, the success of the Yemen unification efforts means a great deal to Jordan's strategic outlook, particularly its attempts to change the status quo peacefully.

Eventually, Amman hosted the meeting between Saleh, Al-Beid and Sheik Abdullah Ibn Al-Ahmer, speaker of the Yemeni parliament, in which a new pact was signed. When intra-Yemeni war erupted in April 1994, Jordan supported the legitimate central government in Sanaa, whereas Riyadh and other GCC allies stood behind the secessionists.

B- Economic Policies:

Another topic which is relevant to Jordan's regional behavior is the country's economy. As the financial windfall which accrued from the oil boom of the 1970s came to an end, Jordan began to experience signs of economic strain. Economic retreat reached its peak in 1988 when the country's reserves of foreign currency dwindled drastically. The Jordanian dinar was devalued and tough economic policies were adopted. Riots erupted, mostly in the south, in protest against then Prime Minister Zaid Rifai's economic policies. Since then, several tough economic measures have been put in place, including an International Monetary Fund (IMF) economic restructuring program. Yet, the battle to reinvigorate the Jordanian economy is far from over. Since then, public spending has been cut drastically, unemployment has soured, and prices have increased. Consequentially, the standard of living of Jordanians has deteriorated, and one third of the population now lives below the poverty level.

The bleak economic situation was further exacerbated by the Gulf crisis. Three hundred - fifty thousand refugees and returnees from the Gulf put the country's meager economic resources and infrastructure to the test. Their sudden return placed pressures on social services and on an already faltering economy. This is not to mention the impact this extraordinarily large number of people had on the demographic balance of the country. Some suggested that Jordan might not survive the challenge, economically. But forecasts of imminent economic collapse because of the Gulf crisis proved to be incorrect. Jordan managed to tackle the significant issues of foreign debt and economic restructuring with relative success. The goal of the adjustment program, 1992-98, is to steadily reduce the budget deficit from about 18 percent of the GDP in 1991 to 5 percent at the end of the period, gradually increase the GDP thus provide increased employment opportunities, tackle internal and external imbalances, ease the problem of poverty, reduce foreign debt, and instill confidence in the national economy.

The results of the economic adjustment program are mixed. But the overall performance of the economy has improved. The areas where progress has been more visible include the balance of payment and current account, government budget, exports, low inflation and GDP growth. But such positive results were not attributable only to the adjustment program. Other factors contributed to these results, mainly generous foreign aid in the form of grants from Germany and soft loans from Japan as well as those portions of the returnees' savings in foreign exchange that they brought back with them. But one should not ignore the adverse effects of the program on the people as it did increase hardship for the middle class and the least privileged. Still, the economic restructuring plan and the agreement with the international financial institutions (IMF and World Bank) to this effect enabled Jordan to negotiate successfully its debt problems with the creditor nations.

At the end of 1990 Jordan's foreign debt totaled \$8.9 billion. The country needed \$700 million annually to service it. The amount due in 1990-93 was \$1.6 billion. The burden of debt creates troublesome problems for Jordan's economy. Debt repayment accounts for 25 percent of current spending and it complicates the government's efforts to deal with rising unemployment, increasing poverty and a sharp drop in living standards. But the success of the economic adjustment program and Jordan's exemplary economic recovery paved the way for rescheduling arrangements with the creditors. Since 1992 Jordan has managed, on the basis of a certificate from the IMF, to negotiate repayment with both the Paris and London clubs, after which it negotiated bilateral debt relief with individual creditors. Also Jordanian officials approached Japan, France, the European Union (EU) and the United States to request debt relief in the form of total write-offs or partial reduction. The Clinton administration has canceled most of the Kingdom's debt and announced its commitment to write-off the rest next year. About one quarter of Jordan's current foreign debt (\$6.5b) is owed to EU member countries and institutions. The response from these countries has, generally, been favorable. Jordan's economic woes are not over yet, but the economy has been stabilized, and at least recovery is being placed on firm ground.

Jordan's strategy of dealing with its economic problems is twofold. At one level the Jordanian government has taken all possible steps in terms of adhering to the economic adjustment program, diversifying its export markets and cutting on consumption. At the same time, the Jordanian leadership has taken advantage of the desire of wealthy, powerful nations outside the region to create an atmosphere conducive to and encouraging the Arab-Israeli peace process consistent with these countries' interests in a stable global order. Simultaneously, Jordan tried to apply the same concept of the need of regional wealthy countries for regional stability, and pursued its earlier vision of a more equitable economic regime among the Arab states. In both instances, Jordanians have utilized their country's geopolitical centrality very successfully.

In his vision of the "new Arab order," King Hussein has always cautioned against the implications of existing wide disparities between the haves and the have-nots for the stability of the region. Jordan let it be known to Arab donor countries that it was not, and is not asking for charity. Rather it asserts to the fact that some type of burden-sharing is essential between the economically haves and the have-nots as part of a joint approach to achieving regional peace. Hence as a response to a new tight aid policy by Gulf states, based, not on political but economic considerations, and with a greater involvement by the private sector, Crown Prince Hassan announced that Jordan was not asking for hand-outs, "but rather for a contract between manpower-exporting countries and the hinterland of oil-rich states." But Jordanians have continually encountered competition for this same hinterland from Egypt, a manpower-rich country which has, through diligent means, denied access to the oil-rich states to other regional partners. But the interaction between political considerations and economic imperatives is not confined to inter-Arab relations. In the Middle East peace talks, political and economic factors interact in a dynamic fashion. And in the case of Jordan, the highest of stakes in both arenas are involved.

According to former Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali, "Jordan's entire future depends on the peace process." This viewpoint considers that the political dangers of Jordan's opting out of the peace

talks far outweigh any risks that are associated with Amman's participation in them. Withdrawing from the talks or choosing to stay out of them could lead to isolation, economic pressures by Western countries and possibly an Israeli-inspired forced migration of Palestinians from the occupied territories, according to Dr. Majali.

Lower House. These efforts were further complicated by Israel's tough stance in its negotiations with the Palestinians and its initial decision to confiscate 51 hectares of Arab land in Jerusalem in early May 1995. Most of the deputies would lend their support to a settlement that would alleviate Jordan's acute demographic situation.

Another equally important issue in the peace process is the idea of comprehensiveness, i.e., how to synchronize Jordan's singular moves in its bilateral talks with Israel, with progress or the lack of it, on other tracks. The notion of Jordan either being left out or going too fast ahead of other Arab teams was a key issue for Jordanians handling the talks on a day-to-day basis. Israel is pushing for progress on each track independent of others. It demands that each set of negotiations with various Arab parties should be independent of other sets of talks and stand on its own feet. At the same time it tries to defer final agreement on specific issues or certain aspects of them--arms control, water and refugees as well as economic cooperation-- to a broader regional context. But other regional parties are lukewarm or selective toward certain issues.

Also, tactical problems, such as assembling a viable, short-term negotiating strategy with an acceptable order of priorities and possible trade-offs was complex. That negotiations on each track were fragmented into many levels and groups, with such groups divided into sub-groups, created further difficulty for the Jordanian decision makers. Eventually Jordan and Israel concluded their talks and signed a peace treaty in October 1994. Yet the smoothness of the implementation process and the two countries' successful adjustment to the new conditions will be a litmus test for their ability to overcome serious roadblocks that stand along the way.

Still, there have been many other constraints that have limited Jordan's maneuverability in the peace talks. The disparity in the balance of power between Israel and the Arab parties, the absence of a genuine understanding between the Arab parties themselves, the state of disarray that characterizes inter-Arab relations, as well as the economic pressures that Jordan was subjected to by both the Arab Gulf states and Washington through the U.S.-instigated sanctions

against Iraq and the economic blockade of the port of Aqaba were constraining factors on Jordan's freedom of action within the peace negotiations. It became noticeable over the last two years that the degree of political and economic pressures that the Gulf countries applied against Jordan has been linked to progress in the peace negotiations. Pressure would ease only in proportion to the degree Jordan yields or concedes to Israeli and U.S. demands in the two areas of peace talks and the sanctions against Iraq, Jordan's major trading partner in the region.

D- Democracy:

Evidently, managing the peace process was a giant task. Still, it was carried out simultaneously with another equally difficult task: democratization.

Democracy presupposes the existence of a well-integrated citizenry which subscribes to the principle that the interest of the community should reign supreme. In the case of Jordan, this is far from being a foregone conclusion. Mainly for historical reasons, there is no firm, well-established national consensus regarding principal issues, such as the nature of the polity, its political boundary, its regional role as we have seen earlier, as well as a broad political ideology. There are significant political groups in the country whose allegiance is not to the state, but to supranational ideals such as pan-Arabism or Islam. They therefore support the state to the extent that it comes close to adopting or embracing these ideals. When the imperatives of national survival of the Jordanian state clash with these principles, tensions immediately arise between pan-Islamic and pan-Arab groups and the state apparatus. Further, subnational loyalties within the Jordanian society are obvious.

The above situation has led to many complications. Usually, democracy should provide channels for changing political leaders and public policy. But in Jordan, progress in this direction has been stymied by the absence of a national consensus between the regime and the opposition on principal objectives. There is a latent fear that the opposition may use the democratic rules to leap to power and redefine the Jordanian polity politically and socially. There is a genuine fear also that Islamic parties may use the elections in Jordan to harness power, then change the rules of the game and cancel elections entirely. The notion of one-person, one-vote, one-time hovers over political debate in the country.

In an attempt to deal with this challenge, or at least regulate political forces' activities concerning it, King Hussein proposed, more than four years ago, the formulation of a new social contract. A 60-

member committee representing all hues of political thought was formed and entrusted with the task of drafting such a contract. Within six months, the committee approved a document which was adopted in June, 1991 and became known as the National Charter. The end product contained general guiding principles for the political discourse rather than binding norms and precepts. It did not redefine the nation, the state or the people in new terms. It only laid out certain rules in accordance with which various societal elements and social groups would reach agreement on a coherent point of view on such essential questions as economic development and education.

Lurking in the back is the unresolved tension among conflicting notions of legitimacy, justice and authority. A central question which was not adequately answered in the charter was whether the government gives rights to the individual or secures such rights. Answering this question means defining the relationship between the individual and the state in a particular way. Historically, the dilemma for politics is guaranteeing the rights of the good citizen as well as of the good person. The first obeys the law, whether it is just or unjust and regardless of its source; the latter obeys only just laws. Further, the latter puts public interests above personal or partisan gains. Society is composed of representatives of both, and if they turn against each other, national life in the polity degenerates into anarchy. Therefore, society actually needs a document in the form of a constitution, pact, charter or contract that would reconcile the two notions.

Although the National Charter, which was approved by a national congress, does not adequately answer such fundamental questions, it does, however, outline general guidelines for constructive dialogue between the executive and legislative organs, as well as between decision makers and political and intellectual elites regarding authority, rights and responsibility. It facilitated the adoption by parliament of the Political Parties Law, in addition to several other bills aimed at strengthening the democratization process in the country. It also facilitated the repeal in 1991 of Marshall

law, in place since the June 1967 war. It emphasized Jordan's cultural pluralism. But more importantly, the charter has given Jordanian leaders a sense of direction, an insurance policy against excessiveness by unrestrained groups, and a degree of predictability in the political arena. It eased the concerns about the consequences of unbridled freedom of expression. So its mere existence is a helpful device or tool in managing change and democracy. Together with the Constitution the two documents provide signposts for the national debate on fundamental national issues.

Still, the democratic process cannot be switched on auto-pilot and guarantee it will function satisfactorily. Questions regarding proportional representation, accountability, effective government, as well as power-sharing still need to be developed further. The gap between the regime and the opposition is still wide. Non-democratic practices relating to both culture and structure are still pervasive and must be addressed. A recurrent question in political discussion ever since 1989, when fair and open elections were held, is how to deal with the pre-democracy era. Can previously non-democratic persons and elites now assume the mantle of democracy? Opposition groups are pushing harder and want to see the new balance of power that has, more or less, been apparent in the parliament and elections permeate deeper into state structures and institutions. On the other hand, the regime is wary of extreme demands that do not take stock of the limited capabilities of the country. Further, extremism creates a dangerous state of polarization which would destroy the center in the political discourse. One central task is how can the regime echo exactly the social realities without either moving too far ahead or lagging too far behind.

The Muslim Brotherhood as well as other Islamic and leftist parties still openly challenge the government, and implicitly the regime on many issues. Al-Sabil, a pro-Islamic movement daily and other left-leaning papers such as Al-Majd routinely lash out in their editorials at the government's overall conduct in the peace process with Israel, its economic policies and on questions pertaining to civil

liberties.¹³ In the 1989-93 parliament two deputies were implicated in a conspiracy against the regime and were sentenced to life in prison with hard labor. Eventually they were pardoned by the King after serving a few months in jail. The parliament never stripped them of their immunity. To the contrary, the majority of the deputies and some influential commentators in the media were sympathetic to their case; particularly to deputy Laith Shbailat. These two institutions have to a certain extent, been dominated by anti-status quo groups in the country. The present cabinet as well as the short-lived government of Taher Masri (June-October 1991) can be described as supporters of the regional status quo. The palace is the balancer; being the institution normally capable of grasping the entire picture with its domestic, regional and global dimensions and present a coherent viewpoint for the country. Generally, the status quo group is sensitive to the external constraints on the country's freedom of action. It lacks sufficient understanding of the popular pulse. Conversely, the anti-status quo forces can only comprehend the aspirations and feelings of the average person on the street, while usually lacking a full appreciation of the limitations placed on the decision makers by both external actors as well as the limited resources of the country. Only when the palace intervenes does the picture of Jordan's national policy become clearer.

Despite numerous challenges, the democratic process in Jordan is moving forward. The regime has been able to satisfy various political groups and forge a national consensus behind its three major policy goals at this stage: the peace process, the economic restructuring program, and the democratization process. Lately, complaints of undemocratic practices by the government have increased. Two weeklies, *Al Bilad* and *Akbar Al Sa'a* were closed by the authorities for violating the Press and Publications Law. Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Information Khalid Al Karaki was

¹³ *Al-Sabil* and *Al-Majed*, (Arabic), weeklies, Amman, Jordan, April-June, 1995 issues.

continually denounced for that decision by journalists. It was generally believed that the move against the two weeklies was taken because of their harsh and tabloid-style coverage of certain officials and local developments in the country.

The success in the last goal has encouraged the Jordanian leadership to present Jordan as a model for other regimes in the region. In his bid to forge a new Arab order, King Hussein does not shy away from offering Jordan's experience for others to emulate. He believes that non-democratic Arab regimes should gradually democratize themselves from within, or most probably they will be themselves changed by popular pressures and wide demands for democracy. Jordan does not aspire to deliberately export its democratic experiment to other Arab countries, but it certainly looks for the spread of democracy throughout the Arab World.¹⁴ And to encourage this, the King launched an initiative in late 1992 to establish in Jordan a center for freedom, democracy and human rights studies in the Arab World. He entrusted the task of establishing such an institution to a 15-member royal commission. In addressing the commission, the King did not hesitate to note the anticipated wider role of the center, particularly in attracting intellectuals and activists from all over the Arab World. He said, "we want this center to serve as a minaret for all free men and women of the nation," and its message "is to bolster Jordan's democratic experience... to build the complete model of political, social and cultural democracy... develop a clear vision of a future phase, from which we can launch a comprehensive Arab movement that can spark the Arab renaissance, which was, and still is the focal point for the message of the Great Arab Revolt." Now it is the King himself representing the anti-status quo movement, not only in Jordan but at the broader Arab level. But the approach is different from that of some other Arab leaders who, in trying to overcome the status quo within the Arab World, called upon Arab masses to revolt and violently overthrow their leaders. Jordan is offering the example of orderly change and constructive engagement.

¹⁴ *Al-Rai*, (Arabic), daily, Amman, August 18, 1993.

Jordan's contribution to the regional political discourse has not been limited to its successful accommodation and neutralization of radical and militant religious groups, such as the Moslem Brotherhood, the Islamic Action Front party, and other leftist groups. The overall approach to the subject of social change and control has been remarkably successful. Jordan approached modernization and modernity with an open mind. The decision makers allowed a healthy and benign interaction between the forces of modernity and traditional structures of society. Manifestations of modernity and modernization were not permitted to wreak havoc with traditional symbols. At the same time, traditional forces were not encouraged and nourished to the degree to which they could hinder or block steady social change. The result has been a fairly progressive social development throughout the years, with no dislocation or alienation of major social groups or parties. To absorb social change successfully, the polity has created new institutions, abolished others, or modified the roles of existing ones. To help create a genuine Islamic revival based on true Islamic thought and the application of reason and rational discourse to religious thinking, in 1992 King Hussein established AL al Bayt University (prophet's descendants university) with an envisaged faculty from all over the Islamic world.

At another level, Jordan did not hesitate to embrace modernity. It has overhauled the personalized patronage system of governance almost entirely. The King was the first among Arab leaders to notice the rising tides of popular and mass participation heralded by changes in eastern Europe and to act swiftly. He severed Jordan's legal and administrative links with the West Bank in July 1988 and called for elections in November 1989 in the wake of public uprising in the south of Jordan in April earlier that year. Furthermore, the polity managed to balance the forces of secularism and religion. The violent exchanges between the two sides have been tolerated solely in parliamentary debates and in the press. No group is allowed to carry such disagreement further outside the accepted rules of debate. When any side goes beyond the limits, the law rules supreme.

C: The Peace Process:

The decision by the Jordanian government to accept the U.S.-brokered formula for direct negotiations between Jordan and Israel within the framework of an international conference came after intense national debate. The ever-present dangers of a no-peace, no-war situation between Israel and the Arab countries - with the exception of Egypt - were insufficient in themselves to convince many of the Jordanians to support Jordan's participation in the U.S.-orchestrated peace talks. While some saw far greater dangers stemming from engagement in such talks, others had serious doubts that such talks would lead anywhere. Therefore, managing the peace process was no easy task for the government, particularly as it had coincided with the implementation of a stern economic adjustment program. Since the Gulf war and the beginning of the preparations for the peace talks with Israel, which started in earnest from President George Bush's speech of March 6, 1991, seven cabinet changes were affected in Jordan. And in each instance, the peace process was a factor.

Difficulties were not limited to the discussion to join the peace process, in the first place, as well as its management, thereafter, but to the peace treaty itself which was signed on October 26, 1994. Many groups, political organizations and personalities were doubtful about the wisdom of negotiating with Israel at a time when Arab solidarity was at its lowest ebb and the Arab states were weak. Islamic, most leftist and pan-Arab parties were opposed to the idea as a matter of principle. The eleventh parliament issued a statement urging the government not to attend the proposed conference in Madrid, Spain. Yet, the King utilized the political and moral weight of the monarchy to buttress enough popular support for Jordan's participation in the talks. A national congress was convened in late October, 1991, which the King employed as a forum to address the nation and explain the circumstances that necessitated Jordan's participation. Jordan's absence from the talks would be very costly in both economic and political terms. The country's higher national

interests, as well as the requirements of national security, dictated its involvement. Both Jordan and the Palestinians were besieged, the King declared. He was referring here to the attempts by the GCC to strangulate Jordan and the Palestinians both politically and economically, in the wake of the second Gulf war, as well as to the semi-quarantine imposed by the U.S.-dominated multinational marine forces against Jordan's only outlet to the sea, Aqaba. Further, Jordanian officials maintained that the idea of an international conference to deal with the Arab-Israel conflict and its core, the Palestinian problem, had been called for by Jordan and other Arab states all along, and such a conference was convening on the basis of principles and terms acceptable to Jordan, namely U.N. Security Council Resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and the formula of land for peace. Jordan's early and unequivocal endorsement of the U.S.-led initiative was critical. Secretary Baker recognized that, and because of Jordan's forthcoming attitude, disagreement between Amman and Washington over the Gulf War was quickly overcome. The U.S. secretary of state publicly recognized Jordan's contribution and the King's role in this context.

After the process was inaugurated in Madrid in October-November, 1991, the task of managing it turned out to be mammoth for Jordanian officials.

First Jordan provided the umbrella of the joint delegation to the Palestinians so they could participate in the negotiations with Israel. The then Likud-led right wing government in Israel refused to sit down with an independent Palestinian delegation. Jordan conceded portions of its sovereign prerogatives to enable the Palestinians to take part in the process. Handling this aspect was complex. Formally, the Jordanians and Palestinians were one delegation, but in reality they were two independent teams, each discussing its own agenda with Israel separately. Consistent with its bid to further suppress the Palestinian entity, Israel, under Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, and until the signing of the Palestinian-Israeli Declaration of Principles (DOP) on September 13, 1993, sought to emphasize the concept of a joint delegation in its negotiations with both Jordan and the Palestinians.

The first round of bilateral talks which was held in December 1991 between Jordan and the Palestinians on the one hand, and Israel on the other, ended in a deadlock and without the delegates entering the negotiating rooms because they could not agree on a common interpretation of the role and meaning of "the joint delegation." True there were issues that involved the three parties, and a trilateral forum may have been necessary to negotiate such common matters. At the same time, Jordan did not want to leave the Palestinians entirely at Israel's mercy. In such a case, they might cave in, as they did under the overwhelming power of Israel, and compromise on issues that were vital to Jordan. Or, finding themselves without any cover from Arab countries, the Palestinians may have fallen, themselves, into Israel's lap. Such fears were not unjustified. The Palestinians were sensitive to any involvement by Arab states in their affairs, particularly Jordan. They regarded such involvement as a form of tutelage or guardianship. Furthermore, Jordanian leaders wanted to emphasize the national identity of Jordan and that "Jordan is not Palestine" as right wing constituents in Israel propagated.

Managing this complicated trilateral relationship was arduous. It required better coordination and consultations between Jordan and the PLO than was usually the case. Yet, meaningful coordination eluded the two sides, mostly because of the absence of a common vision of what their future relationship should be. All along, Arafat avoided genuine cooperation with Jordan. Even today, his cooperative moves toward Amman do not go beyond the tactical level. Strategic cooperation between the two sides is still a long shot. And while one might find numerous causes for this discrepancy between Jordan and the PLO at the strategic level, the most enduring one is Arafat's association with the confederal school of thought led by Egypt and Saudi Arabia at the inter-Arab level. It is within this context that Jordan has to deal with the Palestinian question and the implications of any specific solution to the problem that eventually would emerge. The kind of political, economic regime that would ensue as a result of the PLO-Israel peace agreements will have far-reaching consequences for Jordan. Therefore, Jordan has to take an

active role in the Palestinian-Israeli talks in order to safeguard its own interests. And despite many positive developments in this regard, the picture is unclear. Confusion or lack of clarity still prevails as to what is the exact formula of the future Jordanian-Palestinian relationship. The PLO speaks of a confederation between an independent Palestinian state and Jordan. This formula is not much different from the broader confederal framework that has been the hallmark of the Arab political system, and which has proven to be impotent. Jordan, on the other hand prefers to postpone a final decision as far as its future relationship with the Palestinians is concerned until such time when the outcome of the final status negotiations between the PLO and Israel regarding the West Bank and Gaza is known.

But managing the Palestinian dimension in the peace process is not the only question that the Jordanians must deal with. The peace era assumes drastic changes in the structure of the various parties' relationships. Such changes have serious implications for Jordan's geostrategic position in the region. In the past, Jordan played the role of a buffer zone, preventing undesired and unintended friction between the conflicting parties. In peace time, Jordan must redefine its role.

Here there are two competing outlooks. One views Jordan's future role as that of promoting peaceful relations between the Arab states and Israel as well as an important player in maintaining such peace. The advocates of this viewpoint continue to see Jordan's importance in the region within the context of Arab-Israeli relations. Together with other actors, Jordan played a moderating or sometimes even pacifying role prior to the peace era, and its new role, according to this group, should be an extension or variation of this role under peace conditions. The counter viewpoint, which never endorsed Jordan's role as a buffer state in the first place and interpreted the regime's nonbelligerent posture, in general, as a sound tactical policy to avoid destabilization and/or physical danger from its previous foe, sees Jordan more as a pioneer within the Arab World in promoting democracy, liberty and freedom. The adherents of this viewpoint

believe that Jordan's lot is better served by presenting itself as a role-model for other Arab countries in dealing with questions of change, stability and modernization, not by playing a bridging role between Israel and the wider Arab World. The vital area or sphere for Jordan, according to this view, is the Arab nation, not the Middle East region. To this group, Jordan's stability and viability in the future would be better served by avoiding deep entanglements with Israel, and instead, by strengthening its links with the Arab states. The followers of this school of thought argue that Israel will always be a source of threat to the Arab nation, and it is ironic, they add, that while Jordan blames the PLO for attaching itself so deeply to Israel as the Israeli - Palestine Declaration of Principles stipulates, there are Jordanians who want their country to do the same with the Jewish state. Jordan, the anti-normalization group says, is more effective within the Arab arena. In this context the country's record has been, fairly, successful. Jordanian planners have to reconcile the logic of the "nation" and the logic of the "region." This fact has been highlighted by the developments and the internal debates that have been accompanying the implementation phase of the Jordanian - Israeli peace treaty of October 1994.

Of course, to outside observers the above-stated two points of view regarding Jordan's future role in the region are not mutually exclusive. Therefore, one would presume that Jordan should pursue them simultaneously and reap the benefits of both. But these two views are espoused by two opposing schools of thought within the Jordanian polity. The proponents of these two views hold incompatible outlooks as to the nature of the Jordanian entity and what Jordan's role within the region should be. Disagreement here is at two levels. Domestically, there is a gap between the pro-peace forces and the opposition. Such internal splits were played out at the broader level of inter-Arab politics between supporters of the status quo and the anti-status quo forces both within the country, and at the level of inter-Arab politics. Those Jordanians who see Jordan's importance as a guarantor of peace in the future are generally pro-status quo groups. Although the followers of this group hail from different political and social backgrounds, the majority of them are

from the ranks of the ruling elite. The anti-status quo group is concentrated mainly in the opposition, parliament and the refugee camps. The peace process is generally supported by those individuals and conglomerations within the country that are not hostile to the status quo both within the region and globally. Such parties within Jordan that are not hostile to the status quo tend to show empathy with dominant regional and global powers. Democracy is not a favorite theme either to most regional status quo powers or to local forces within Jordan that might lose power in a vibrant democracy. Still, the demarcation lines between these groups overlap.

Closely linked to this branching out within the Jordanian body politic is the concept of what kind of peace each side would like to see, or for that matter, is willing to support. Although there are groups within the Arab World which do not see the merits of peace negotiations between the Arabs and Israel as a matter of principle, the significant division is between those who support warm, interactive, peaceful relations with Israel and those who advocate a cold, dissociative kind of peace. For both ideological (religious and nationalistic) considerations as well as considerations of practicabilities, there has, so far, been no firm majority of Jordanians in support of a particular peace modality with Israel. The difference between the two concepts of peace is significant and the key word to understanding such differences is "normalization", *tatbe'* in Arabic. Normalization is the hallmark of positive peace, and it is the type of peace that Syria, initially refrained from endorsing, notwithstanding President Assad's promises to President Clinton during their meeting in Geneva, January 1994. Syria's refusal to spell out clearly its concept of peace may have to do with tactical reasons; namely pressing Israel, first, to declare its readiness to evacuate the Golan Heights. Yet recent developments indicate that Syria may have come around and accepted the concept of a warm peace with Israel. There are people in Jordan who may not oppose a peace settlement per se with Israel, but they do not favor closer ties with the Jewish state in the post-peace era. On the other hand there are those who even foresee some advantages of forging such ties, and as part of a wider

regional economic integration. There is enough support among Jordanians for a peace settlement, in principle, but only a minority would favor a warm embrace with the Jewish state at this stage, or even in the foreseeable future.

Many in Jordan have begun to organize popular opposition at the grass roots level to people-to-people normalization with the Israelis. Opposition to normalization or *tatbe'* is stronger among members of professional associations and unions. The anti-normalization forces called for a one-day public meeting on May 29, 1994 to denounce government efforts in this direction. But the authorities withdrew a permit it had granted earlier to the organizers of the event. The cancellation of the permission provoked strong reaction from the opposition, which vowed to hold the meeting in the future regardless of any government decision in this context. Needless to say that the opposition condemned the government stand as non-democratic.

On the other hand, Israel together with influential Western countries among whose ranks are most of Jordan's creditors is pressing for a more interactive, associative kind of peace. It was suggested that the United States and Israel had made their support for economic assistance for Jordan contingent upon the continuation of the normalization process.¹¹ Israeli leaders are even pushing for mutual cooperation and joint programs ahead of the conclusion of formal peace agreements with respective Arab states.¹²

At the same time Jordanian strategists realize that there is a need to involve other regional actors if a satisfactory peace settlement is to be obtained. Issues such as water, the refugees and arms control

¹¹ Al-Sharq Al-Awsat, (Arabic), daily, *The Middle East Issues*, London, May 20 - June 5, 1995.

¹² Shimon Peres, *The New Middle East* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1993), chapters 4-9.

can only be dealt with, in an effective fashion, within a wider regional context. The land mass of Jordan and Palestine would not by itself be able to absorb all the Israelis, the Palestinians and Jordanians. More importantly, peace needs substantive and massive economic investments, and most of the capital as well as markets can only be made available if a region-wide approach is adopted. This was evident in German Chancellor Helmut Kohl's visit to Jordan, from June 4-5, 1995, and the trilateral meeting he had with both King Hussein and Israeli Prime Minister Rabin in Al Baqura, the proposed site of joint Jordanian-Israeli ventures in the area of water.

It is true that both the Arabs and Israelis came to the Middle East peace conference in Madrid with widely differing aims. Although the foundations of the conference were U.N. Security Council Resolutions 242 and 336, the parties have different, even incompatible, interpretations of these resolutions. Even among the Arab parties there is no consensus about the concept of peace. Syria and Lebanon have so far boycotted the multilateral negotiations dealing with issues such as water, economic cooperation, arms control and security and refugees at a regional level. Israel scuttled a similar working group on Jerusalem. Jordan's position is that both bilateral and multilateral negotiations go hand in hand and complement each other. This view is consistent with Jordan's desire to reshape the regional set up through the peace talks. Within this inviolate picture, Jordan has to articulate a peace conception that meets with acceptance by its negotiating partners and still be able to sell it at home.

The previous parliament refused to back the government on the issue of the peace negotiations. And in the present Lower House, there is a significant group of Islamist, leftist and pan-Arabist deputies who are opposed to the continuation of the peace talks. The kind of peace settlement that will ultimately come into being, particularly the way it deals with the refugee issue, would have a great impact on the nationalist deputies who until now, support the government's peace strategy. The Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty was endorsed by the parliament. But government efforts to repeal standing laws describing Israel as an enemy state faced stiff opposition in the

To all of the above-stated principles of political management, one must add King Hussein's leadership. His considerable skill at maneuvering through social tensions within Jordan, regional threats in the Middle East and global imperatives has always given the country the extra breathing space it has needed to stem serious challenges.

Now, in Jordan, economic weaknesses are being tackled successfully, political pressures are easing, and fallout from the Gulf war is receding. Likewise, one notices the consolidation of its fledgling democracy and its adaptive social policies. The outcome of such successful management of challenges is an unprecedented contribution to regional peace and stability. Jordan is trying to remain a bright spot in an otherwise dark environment of the Arab World.

For these reasons it is not wholly untrue to view Jordan's role in the Arab arena and its wider regional context as being a model for other nations in the area in their dealing with issues of change and stability, modernity, economic and social development, democracy and human rights, as well as a host of the recurring questions pertaining to both inter- and intra-regional cooperation and/or conflict. In pursuing both its short-term tactical aims, as well as its long-term strategic goals, the Jordanian leadership has, over the years, developed what can be called a "Jordanian role model" in tackling the huge strategic military, political, economic and social challenges which confronted the country throughout the years.

IV- Conclusion

Jordan's meager resources, as well as the political strings explicitly or implicitly attached to external assistance, conflicted with the requisites of the country's strategic outlook carved out by its Hashemite leadership. Jordan's goals cannot be sustained by its modest means alone. Yet grand objectives have to be maintained and pursued parallel to the more limited, accommodating short-term policies and moves. So Jordan's regional role has actually proceeded along two tracks. The first represents the activities, attitudes, choices and behavior that relate to what can be viewed as urgent, immediate, yet important business that affects "the country's survival." The second pertains to Jordan's ability, still, to build momentum on what can be termed the "national revival" pan-Arab track. Evidently, actions on the first track, where most of the country's energy is spent, deal, in the main, with vital matters pertaining to the welfare of the state and its survival. While efforts carried out on the second track, which though less in volume, are by no means less vital, pertain to the nation's (Arab nation) future. Here two questions jump to the fore. First, why does such a duality exist in Jordan's dealings with its immediate political environment? Second, if the presence of such a duality of themes in Jordan's foreign policy is unavoidable -- as has been the case -- why would the state's interests conflict with the nation's (Arab nation) aspirations? Detailed answers to these two questions will be found in other places in the text. But a brief comment now is necessary as it helps put the discussion in perspective.

Jordan suffers from what analysts consider the "mother of all economic problems," i.e., the imbalance between resources and population. The country's limited economic base could not support adequate defense requirements, especially in light of military and economic burdens resulting from a long-term direct Israeli menace and the hosting within its own borders of about 1.5 million Palestinians, the majority of whom are refugees. In adverse economic conditions, even some major economic and social programs can hardly be sustained without pumping into them necessary funds from

external sources. Therefore, in order to maintain a reasonable defense capability, as well as viable socioeconomic programs until full peace is realized and a satisfactory solution to related questions, including the refugee problem, is found, the Jordanian state needs the help of external powers. Prior to the Gulf War, 1990-91, such help used to come mostly from wealthy, oil-rich Arab countries. Also, Western countries, particularly the EU, contributed to Jordan's economic well-being. While the short-term interests of Jordan and such countries -- both Arab and non-Arab -- have, in the past, converged, partly to maintain a modicum of stability in the region, the long-term interests and strategic outlooks of the two sides, as has occasionally been made apparent or transparent in the course of the parties' interactions over vital regional issues, were far from identical.

As far as Jordan and its Arab regional partners were concerned, the divergence in strategic outlooks stems, in principle, from disagreement over the type of ultimate political Arab regional order that should in the end prevail in the Arab World. Jordan is a representative of what can be called the "royal" school of thought, which has been espoused by the Hashemites. The main viewpoint of this school is that the Arab peoples and countries, particularly in Asia, should organize themselves politically along federal lines. Counterpoising the advocates of a viable Arab federation among any number of Arab countries, there has been the "confederal" school of thought, which includes among its prominent adherents Egypt -- except during Gamal Abdul Nasser's heyday of pan-Arabism -- the Gulf States and, most of the time, Syria. And since the confederal framework is the prevailing one, its supporters, who are the majority, see themselves as status quo powers. Concomitantly, they oppose any party that would challenge this status quo. Jordan, of course, does not constitute a military challenge to the status quo as Iraq did. But the confederalist powers have historically been wary of the political and ideological outlook of its Hashemite leadership. Further, Jordan's drive to seek orderly change in political discourse in the Arab World in the three areas mentioned in the beginning; namely how various Arab states deal with each other, their orientations toward prominent global powers, and finally, how each regime treats its own population, is unwelcomed by the pro-status quo powers.

In Jordan, closer association between Arab countries is sought in a gradualist fashion. Positive interaction with global powers is carried out in an independent fashion, without total submission to, or total rejection of what they propose. And opposition and political freedom are tolerated and regulated according to law. But Jordan's conduct in these three areas has not been applauded by most of its Arab neighbors. Generally, most of Jordan's Arab benefactors are from the rival confederal school. Because of this subtle but potent historical disagreement, some or most of Jordan's detractors have been from this group too. To further its short-term, tactical aims Jordan needs support from status quo powers, while its long-term strategic goals are perceived as a source of potential threat to the same status quo those powers seek to preserve and consolidate. The aforementioned fact has led to the existence of built-in tension in Jordan's foreign policy between the pulls of short-term, immediate tasks and policies on the one hand, and the push of long-term strategic objectives on the other; namely to rejuvenate the Arab nation. Therefore, in one way Jordan's regional behavior can be seen as a continued balancing act between short-term, immediate interests and long-term goals.

This maintenance of equilibrium has to be executed within the myriad of regional issues and regional set-ups that are beyond comprehension. In working to find a median point between large claims and limited capabilities, Jordan's record has not been flawless. Faced with one crisis after another in the region, and with no effective institutions that could comprehend the King's vision and respond to the dynamics of local, regional and global changes, the country has occasionally stumbled. Circumstances sometimes led to Jordan supporting different purposes or potential contenders against likely allies. The intensive lobby in the early 1980s to bring Egypt back into the Arab fold is a case in point. Also support for the PLO and Arafat all along may prove to have been another such strategic mistake.

Recently, the conclusion of the Jordan - Israel peace treaty has substantially changed the regional equation. This new development has created serious ramifications for Jordan both internally and externally. It heralded both opportunities and constraints for the

Kingdom. Internally, the signing of the peace treaty with Israel has led to stiff resistance by some local groups. Popular support for the government peace moves receded as original hopes of economic benefits for Jordanians once peace prevailed dimmed. This disappointment of substantive, tangible economic gains on the part of the Jordanians was compounded by Israel's unyielding stance on remaining issues such as Jerusalem and the refugees as well as the lack, so far, of progress on other tracks. Opposition to the government peace moves reached an alarming stage in late June 1995 during a Lower House debate on a draft bill submitted by the authorities scrapping three standing laws which prohibit normal dealings with Israel and its Jewish citizens including trade and the selling of Arab land. A fist fight erupted in the parliament between the supporters and the opponents of the measure.

Further, the treaty has had its toll on Jordan's Arab relations. As Amman's ties with Israel strengthened, its relations with key Arab states chilled. Coordination between Amman and Tel Aviv aroused fears in certain Arab quarters. Senior officials in Jordan and Israel did not conceal the readiness of both sides to take their relations to new horizons. Some speak possibly of a new partnership. Crown Prince Al Hassan understood the efforts of the two states in this regard as a suitable approach for the rehabilitation of the region and its economies which have suffered tremendously because of long periods of war and violence. According to Shimon Shamir, Israel's Ambassador to Jordan, the two countries are serious in their drive to foster closer relations and coordination among them in order to change the regional status quo.¹⁵ This new development has brought about serious ramifications for Jordan both internally and externally. It heralded both opportunities and constraints for the Kingdom. Internally, the treaty aroused the opposition to the extent that a showdown with dissenting groups seemed almost inevitable several times in 1995. Also Jordan's Arab relations were adversely affected as its ties with Israel improved. The leaderships of both countries do not conceal their desire to exploit the new opening in their relationship to forge a new partnership. They consider such an

¹⁵Haretez, daily, Tel Aviv, June 25, 1995.

approach as the appropriate entry point for the much talked about "New Middle East". The news regarding closer consultations between Jordan and Israel has annoyed leading Arab players, in particular Egypt.

Egyptians viewed the new embrace between Jordan and Israel as a serious challenge to Cairo's eminent role in regional matters. So did Syria as well as other Arab parties who accused Jordan of bearing the cause of pan-Arabism. Yet one must pause here and look into the real causes of Egypt's and its friends' unfavorable attitude toward Jordan's peace strategy. One can see that Arab criticism of Jordan's approach in this regard is motivated less by anger at Amman's alleged abandonment of pan-Arab principles and more by fear of its practical implications. The Jordanian-Israeli treaty and subsequent diplomatic coordination between the two sides will have two major consequences. First, it has at least temporarily changed the existing regional balance of power in Jordan's favor. Second, it heralded the advent of a new states system in the region. Current autocratic and authoritarian regimes in most Arab countries are wary of prospects of a new Middle East which in part is being constructed through the initiation of closer coordination and cooperation between Amman, Tel Aviv and other leading world powers in the west which have a stake in the region's future. The current moribund state structures cannot survive the new challenges and are likely to be dismantled. The future heralds a new state system which tolerates and accepts as members only modern, democratic and forward-looking secular states. The modes of governance in the expected system must be based on transparency, accountability and consent. Hence most of the states would have to be radically transformed in order to be effective partners in the new Middle East.

Jordan has found in its new proactive relationship with Israel an opportunity to pursue its original objective of seeking a gradual and peaceful transformation of the region. But this is no risk-free objective. Previously Jordan had hoped to do that in association with other Arab parties but did not succeed. Most of the potential players are status quo powers. They had never been interested in forging a genuine partnership with Jordan and its Hashemite leadership. To the

contrary, many of the leading Arab players persisted in their common negative attitude toward Amman; differing only in the ultimate policy each of them espoused: Egypt and Syria have sought to dominate, Saudi Arabia to isolate, and the Palestinians to manipulate. At the same time Jordan cannot afford risking its own existence. Yet the Arab option is not available. Most of the influential Arab actors have been lukewarm about a substantive association with Jordan as we have noticed both in the past and most recently. Iraq has been severely disabled, and its future remains unknown. Only Israel has demonstrated both a readiness and a capacity to work with Jordan toward reshaping the region's agenda. The Jordanian leadership did not miss the opportunity. They ceased upon it to pursue their fundamental goal of changing the status quo in a manner advantageous to their interests. Also there are risks inherent in any partnership with Israel. Israel has its own vision of how the region should look in the coming years. And such vision is not identical to the Hashemites'. Also, this perceived partnership with Israel antagonized other Arab parties. They accuse Jordan of becoming a conduit for 'Zionist penetration' of the Arab world. Thus it looked as if Jordan is faced with a dilemma that would help it on the short run and alleviate some of the threats to its national well-being, but clash with a much-cherished ideal; namely the revival of the Arab nation.

In conclusion, Jordan has succeeded in the past in reconciling conflicting goals and managed to preserve its two principal objectives of national survival and the nation's revival. With the entering of Israel into the picture one has to wait and see before reaching any particular conclusion. For the requirements of survival may change as well as the verities of Arab nationalism. But regardless of any changes in circumstances Jordan should not abandon its balanced approach toward new developments. Such an approach has helped it cope with the adverse circumstances successfully. And for that it is worth the others' attention, as well as continued vigilance on the part of the leadership to avoid being dragged, unwillingly and/or unintentionally, into the morass of the status-quo within the Arab world, or drifting into the unknowns of Israel's strategic calculations; either one would lead to its losing its soul.