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ISRAEL AND JORDAN - AN OVERLAPPING OF INTERESTS

Roni Shaked

The political break between King Hussein and the PLO in February 1986 provided an opportunity to renew the silent pact between Israel and Jordan regarding treatment of the Palestinians in the territories. Since the break, King Hussein has been extremely active in applying his "Jordanization" policy in Judea, Samaria and Gaza.

Jordan and Israel have common goals - to erode PLO power in the territories, to bolster an alternate Palestinian leadership, and to prevent the establishment of a third state between the Mediterranean and the desert. The silent understanding between Jordan and Israel has evolved over a number of years and required few coordinating meetings between the representatives of the two states.

The unspoken Jordanian-Israeli alliance against the establishment of a Palestinian state has existed, for all practical purposes, ever since King Abdullah invaded Judea and Samaria in 1948. King Hussein's grandfather annexed the area, with Israeli understanding and agreement, in order to prevent the establishment of a Palestinian state.

In his speech of 19 February 1986, King Hussein declared, "We can no longer maintain our political coordination with the PLO leadership as long as their pledges are meaningless, and they lack responsibility, reliability and stability," thereby justifying political initiatives which circumvent the PLO. The King is at present interested in building up a power base and a better negotiating position in anticipation of a

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political breakthrough leading to a political arrangement with Israel. Practically speaking, this means opening an economic, social and political offensive to increase his influence over the Palestinian public at the expense of the PLO.

Towards the end of his speech, King Hussein appealed to the inhabitants of the territories, vowing "We in Jordan shall continue to support you. We shall continue to assist you in every way, according to our possibilities and our capabilities, while awaiting the day we see you a free people on your own land," thereby emphasizing Jordan's renewed interest and involvement in the territories.

Unlike previous occasions over the past twenty years, it appears that the King is more determined this time. His steps seem to have been carefully planned out and his policy of eroding the PLO's power is aimed at the long term. In this way the King hopes to strengthen the voices of moderation in the territories and gradually build up centers of power and influence which will be dependent upon the Jordanian royal court.

It is difficult to foresee a political breakthrough in the near future. In Israel, the two-year stewardship of Shimon Peres, during which Peres strove actively to renew negotiations with Jordan, is over. A government headed by Yitzhak Shamir can be expected to block any attempt at negotiations which involve territorial concessions. The United States is currently preoccupied with other problems and the Middle East now occupies a much reduced place on the American agenda. The disintegrating PLO is engaged in attempts to unify its factions, as well as in battles in Lebanon. A settlement is of importance to Egypt, to facilitate its return to the Arab fold and to mute the criticism voiced by Egypt's internal opposition. But in Cairo, too, evaluations are not optimistic for a renewal of the political momentum. Hussein has not overlooked this evaluation, which partly explains his long-range planning.

King Hussein fears that the growth of Palestinian nationalism west of the Jordan river is liable to engulf the Palestinians east of the Jordan, who comprise 65 percent of the population of Jordan. Such a development would be a direct threat to the survival of Hashemite Jordanian rule. Therefore, the erosion of PLO power in the territories works to strengthen the Hashemite dynasty.

Gaza Switches to the Jordanian Sphere

The most significant innovation in this new policy is its unprecedented treatment of the Gaza district as a target for Jordanian influence. The King has taken three important steps in this regard:

1) He has granted Jordanian citizenship to all Gaza inhabitants residing permanently in Jordan, a step which means the "Jordanization" of the Gaza refugee population which until now were officially stateless and held no citizenship.

2) The Gaza district was included in the Jordanian program for the development of the territories. In order to carry out this policy, the Jordanian Ministry for Affairs in the Territories opened a special Department for Gazan Affairs. This represents the first formal Jordanian claim of authority over the Gaza district since 1967.

The Department for Gazan Affairs is headed by Hashem a-Shawwa, a high official of Gazan origin in the Jordanian foreign service. Last October, a-Shawwa visited Gaza. Although termed a "family visit," it was held after a-Shawwa was appointed to his new post. The visit took two weeks and was characterized by meetings with merchants, industrialists and plantation owners, as well as with the heads of the Civilian Administration in Gaza. His talks were initial probes preceding the preparation of development plans for the region.

3) King Hussein sought wider Arab political approval for his activities in Gaza. After talks with Egyptian President Mubarak in November 1986, the Egyptians approved his activities in Gaza. At the same time Hussein approached the Arab oil states to request contributions for the development of the area. In mid-December Saudi Arabia announced a contribution of \$1 million for sewage system development in the city of Gaza. The money was to be deposited in Jordanian banks and would be transferred to Gaza via the UNDP project.

New Economic Initiatives

King Hussein approved the opening of an Arab bank in Nablus (Shechem), to be controlled by the central bank in Amman. The new bank provides loans, savings plans, and investment opportunities in Jordanian companies. The bank has proven more successful than was anticipated. It has received millions of dinars in deposits, reflecting the degree of trust in it by local

residents. Jordan now wants to open additional branches in other towns. Ranking Israeli sources have said that after a running-in period in Nablus and a review of the bank's methods of operation, approval will be granted for the opening of additional branches.

Other new economic initiatives include an increase in direct Jordanian aid for the territories from \$12 million a year to \$22 million. Two new hospitals are being planned for the region, one in Hebron and the other in Jenin. Jordan is providing financial support to the new Arab municipal administrations in Hebron (\$200,000), Ramallah (\$300,000), and El-Bireh (\$100,000).

Jordan has agreed to fund the positions of 75 engineers in Arab municipalities. Their task will be to supervise the planning and execution of new projects within the framework of the Jordanian five-year plan. It thus comes about that in a municipality such as Tulkarm, headed by a pro-PLO mayor, Hilmi Hanun, Jordanian civil servants are supervising the development programs, bypassing the mayor and limiting his authority.

Ranking Jordanian officials have been dispatched to the territories to examine development programs. In the middle of December, the Jordanian head of the Development Plan for the Territories, engineer Sa'adallah Sa'adallah, visited the territories. He held a series of meetings in Judea and Samaria in order to finalize Jordanian aid programs for the Hebron and Nablus areas. The deputy director-general of the Jordanian Ministry of Tourism, Shahada al-Amla, visited the territories at the beginning of December to review the implementation of his ministry's part of the Jordanian five-year plan.

On the inter-Arab level, Jordan pressured the Arab League to permit industrial plants in Judea and Samaria to import raw materials via Israeli ports and to market the finished products in Arab countries. The Arab League authorized this step, which will lead to the expansion of exports from the territories to Arab countries. In addition, the King has personally approached the Arab oil states to request that they contribute to the development of the territories directly through Jordan in the framework of its five-year plan.

On the international level, the European Common Market's Council of Ministers approved a Jordanian request to view the territories as a separate economic unit and to grant them "affiliated state" status. In addition, the United States and Great Britain have announced their participation in funding the Jordanian development plan for the territories. To this end, the United States granted Jordan \$5 million in 1986 and will provide \$7 million on 1987. Great Britain has announced a grant of 2.5 million pounds sterling over the next four years and another two million pounds as a direct contribution to institutions in the territories.

Social Initiatives

King Hussein is attempting to accelerate the "Jordanization" of public life in the territories. For example, he is trying to open branch offices of the Jordanian airline, Alia, in Arab towns. Until now, there have been sub-agencies of the company operating mainly in East Jerusalem.

The issuing of Jordanian passports, until recently in the hands of municipal officials, has been transferred to special departments established within the Chambers of Commerce in Hebron, East Jerusalem and Nablus. Here the intention is to generate direct links with the Jordanian officials in charge, rather than work through the municipalities.

Jordanian television broadcasts a special program for the residents of the territories every Friday. This program features personalities from the territories who tell of the development programs. Jordanian radio, too, has begun to pay more attention to events in the territories. Even weather forecasts for the residents of the territories are broadcast from Amman.

At the end of December, the director of Jordanian television signed a contract with an American communications company regarding its filming in the territories. Interviews and film from the territories produced by an Israeli Arab reporter from Acre are sent across the Allenby bridge and broadcast by Jordanian television.

Political Initiatives

The renewal of Jordanian parliamentary activity was actually King Hussein's first step in

demonstrating the unity of the two banks of the Jordan. Half of the members of the Jordanian parliament are drawn from the population living west of the Jordan river. The King has announced that he will shortly enlarge Parliament to include 120 members, half of whom will be residents of the territories. By so doing, he hopes to lay the foundation for an alternative leadership in the territories.

The new Arab mayors of Hebron, Ramallah and El-Bireh would not have been appointed without the King's approval. These mayors are pro-Jordanian in their outlook and it is possible to visualize them as members of a Palestinian delegation to peace negotiations.

Hussein, in coordination with Israel, has instructed his representatives to open offices of the Palestinian "Abu-Za'im" organization throughout the territories. "Abu-Za'im" is 'Atallah 'Atallah, from the village of Beit Suriq near Jerusalem, who revolted against Yassir Arafat and declared himself the representative of the Palestinians, all with the support and encouragement of King Hussein. Abu-Za'im's organization maintains that a solution to the Palestinian problem can be found only through negotiations, relying on King Hussein and his Jordanian-Palestinian federation plan. The organization's first office was opened in Hebron. Its officials engage mainly in propaganda and in recruiting supporters for this Palestinian organization which professes to offer an alternative to Arafat's PLO. In this way, King Hussein is attempting to provide an outlet for the Palestinian nationalist feelings of the residents of the territories.

In fact, Yassir Arafat announced in mid-December that his organization does not oppose the Jordanian five-year plan. He claimed that any flow of funds to the territories helped lay the foundations for the establishment of the Palestinian national home.

After the *El-Quds* newspaper, which had been considered pro-Jordanian, deserted the King, Hussein's supporters in Jerusalem established *En-Nahar*. This new pro-Jordanian outlet has been very successful because of its high standards, as contrasted with the other newspapers. This weekly journal was scheduled to become a daily paper in January. The newspaper's success in

Jerusalem has encouraged Jordan's supporters to consider the publication of additional newspapers. Israel has already granted a permit to attorney Jemil El-Azza of Bethlehem to publish *Et-Taqqad* (Progress). This is the first time the military administration has granted a permit to a newspaper of a definite political orientation.

Direct Contacts Between Jordan and Israel

Direct contacts between Israel and Jordan, which date back to the days of King Abdullah, have been renewed in light of the new Jordanian plans. In recent months, news items have appeared concerning high-level meetings between Israelis and representatives of the King. One report which was later denied told of a meeting between King Hussein and Defense Minister Rabin in Paris in August 1986. There have been other reports of meetings between Avraham Tamir, at the time director-general of the Prime Minister's office, and the Premier of Jordan and the Jordanian Minister of Affairs in the Territories, to coordinate the implementation of the new Jordanian policies in the territories. It is believed that there were additional meetings held on lower and technical levels as well.

The present situation, after 20 years of Israeli occupation, is very different from that of previous years. King Hussein's operatives are working in a hostile environment. The Palestinians in the territories have become a politically mature population. They are today in an advanced state of national solidification and enjoy a consensus of opinion concerning an independent Palestinian state, while the PLO serves as the symbol of their national struggle.

The wave of disorders which first started at the beginning of December has reemphasized the predominance of the PLO or of the PLO idea in the territories. The slogans voiced during the demonstrations were aimed not only against Israel, but against King Hussein and the new Jordanian policy. At Bir Zeit University, the center of the disorders, it was explained that one of the main reasons for the wave of demonstrations was to protest against the "Jordanian-Israeli plot to eradicate the Palestinian identity."

Jordanian-Israeli encouragement of moderate Arab elements in Judea and Samaria must find a way to overcome this residual PLO

power in order to be able to promote the trends that King Hussein desires to introduce into the territories. With the PLO weakened and threatened by moderate Palestinian forces which are prepared not only to recognize Israel but also

to find a compromise solution, a political settlement may become a realistic possibility.

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DATABASE: EMPLOYMENT AND MIGRATION PATTERNS IN JORDAN AND THE TERRITORIES

The two tables below give insight into the relationship between employment opportunities in the Gulf and labor force migration patterns in Jordan and the territories. Table 1 shows the number of new work permits issued by Kuwait, a leading importer of labor up until mid-1984 when oil prices began their rapid decline. The resulting steep decline in the number of new work permits issued is a trend which, observers assume, has only accelerated since.

What is striking is the relative decline in work permits issued to Arabs as opposed to Asians and others. If in 1977, work permits issued to Arabs accounted for 46.5 percent of the total, about equal to that of Asians, they declined to 14.6 percent in the first nine months of 1984. The Asian share, by contrast, increased to 80.8 percent.

There are three reasons for the decline in the Arab share:

- 1) Security - Arabs and especially Palestinians are politically suspect in the Gulf states where concern for internal security has increased in the wake of the Iran-Iraq war.
- 2) Arabs (especially Palestinians) work primarily in

trade and services, while Asians are concentrated in construction. These Arabs are slowly being eased out by young educated Kuwaitis.

3) There is a growing Kuwaiti preference for an immigrant labor force with a high rate of turnover and a low propensity to settle.

In Table 2, one sees the relationship between what is happening in Kuwait and other Arab Gulf states and Jordan and the territories, using the gross indicator of arrivals and departures in Jordan of Jordanian nationals. Arab residents of the territories are included in these figures since they are Jordanian nationals and travel to the Gulf states via Jordan.

The traditional net out-migration halted in 1984, and in-migration exceeded out-migration by 16,000 in 1985. Looking at the recent past, only in 1978-79 did in-migration exceed out-migration. This coincided with a sharp spurt of economic growth exceeding 10 percent annually when Jordanians were lured back by the economic boom. Now they are returning due to other factors in the Arab world, as the Jordanian economic growth rate has slowed to the 2 to 3 percent range.

TABLE 1

Kuwait New Work Permit Issues by Nationality

Year	Arab		Asian		Other	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1977	29,522	46.5	30,400	47.9	3,570	5.6
1978	17,666	36.6	28,325	58.7	2,279	4.7
1979	16,934	38.1	25,372	57.0	2,168	4.9
1980	22,530	40.1	31,627	56.3	2,021	3.6
1981	17,684	35.0	30,637	60.7	2,133	4.3
1982	29,460	42.8	36,664	58.3	2,675	3.9
1983	31,379	36.5	52,093	60.5	2,603	3.0
1984 *	3,909	14.6	21,647	80.8	1,236	4.6

* First nine months only.

TABLE 2

Arrivals and Departures in Jordan of Jordanian Nationals
(in thousands)

Year	Jordanian Nationals		Net Departures
	Arrivals	Departures	
1975	615.3	654.7	39.4
1976	633.2	715.3	82.1
1977	653.9	754.7	100.8
1978	615.6	584.6	-31.0
1979	741.7	719.9	-21.8
1980	633.2	642.9	9.7
1981	731.9	669.5	62.4
1982	625.4	694.3	68.9
1983	682.5	706.6	23.9
1984	694.3	697.7	3.4
1985	909.7	893.6	-16.1