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Jordan and Its Arab Neighbors



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An Intelligence Assessment

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*NESA 83-10360
December 1983*

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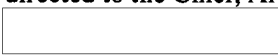


Jordan and Its Arab Neighbors



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An Intelligence Assessment

This paper was prepared by 
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was coordinated with the Directorate of
Operations. Comments and queries are welcome and
may be directed to the Chief, Arab-Israeli Division,
NESA, 

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**Jordan and
Its Arab Neighbors** [redacted]

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Key Judgments*Information available
as of 1 December 1983
was used in this report.*

King Hussein is increasingly vulnerable to political, economic, military, and terrorist pressure from his Arab neighbors, especially Syria, as regional tensions grow between Arab radicals and moderates. Hussein and Syrian President Assad have conflicting views on the Palestinian issue, are at odds on the Iran-Iraq war, and believe that each is trying to overthrow the other's government. Paradoxically, Syria's new boldness in the region may ultimately compel Hussein to improve relations with Damascus in the hope of warding off future threats. We do not believe that Hussein would go much beyond lipservice to improve relations with the Assad government, however, particularly at a time when Syria has been implicated in several terrorist attacks in the region, including some against Jordanians. [redacted]

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In our estimation, Hussein increasingly looks to Egypt as a partner to ease his sense of isolation in the Arab world and counter Syrian political influence. We believe, however, that he will wait for other moderate Arabs to take the lead before formalizing his relationship with Egyptian President Mubarak. [redacted]

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Hussein's unwillingness to go beyond an Arab consensus at times prevents him from supporting proposals he personally favors, such as the US peace initiative in late 1982. We believe the King will not accept a role in a US-sponsored peace initiative unless he has the explicit approval and firm backing of key Arab states, particularly the Saudis. He fears losing the vital political and economic support provided by the Arab moderates and does not want to invite Syrian and radical Palestinian retaliation by bold unilateral action. [redacted]

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The lack of resolution of the Lebanese and PLO crises, in our view, has virtually barred Hussein from joining a US-sponsored peace initiative. Despite the weakening leadership of Yasir Arafat, we believe Hussein will abide by the Rabat Arab summit decision in 1974 that declared the PLO the sole legitimate spokesman of the Palestinian people. Lack of Arab support for official Jordanian statements that Amman may consider the Rabat decision invalid if the PLO becomes a Syrian surrogate compels Hussein to seek a joint PLO-Jordanian approach to negotiations. [redacted]

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We believe Hussein still hopes an alternative Palestinian leadership will develop among West Bankers to serve as negotiating partners if he cannot reach an accommodation with Arafat on entering the peace process. West Bankers still support Arafat's leadership, however, and are reluctant to act independently of the PLO. We do not believe West Bankers would have the

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political will to act even if the PLO were dominated by the Syrians once the current crisis ends. At a minimum Hussein believes he needs West Bank cooperation and the explicit backing of key Arab states before he would consider making a move. [REDACTED]

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In our view, Hussein expects the United States to influence Israeli policy to bring about Middle East peace negotiations, but he is pessimistic about Washington's willingness to press Israel for concessions. He believes the close US-Israeli relationship highlighted during Prime Minister Shamir's visit to Washington in late 1983 and US vetoes of UN resolutions condemning Israel for its actions in Lebanon and the West Bank have damaged US credibility and undermined his efforts to convince other Arab moderates that a negotiated settlement is possible. [REDACTED]

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The drastic reduction of US aid to Jordan after Amman's rejection of Camp David has increased Hussein's dependence on Arab support. Hussein believes, in our view, that he needs US financial aid and modern weaponry to deter potential Syrian intimidation in the event he joins peace negotiations. [REDACTED]

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Jordanians believe the extensive media coverage of Amman's purported plans to participate in a US-supported Rapid Deployment Force has cast new doubt on Jordan's commitment to Arab interests, embarrassed King Hussein, and given the Syrians new reasons to criticize Jordan. We believe Jordan's denial of knowledge of the deployment plan presages further moves to reaffirm Amman's Arab credentials and place a certain distance between itself and Washington. [REDACTED]

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Jordan and Its Arab Neighbors



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Jordan is a small, resource-poor country that is vulnerable to political, economic, and military pressures from all sides.

King Hussein, who was an outcast among his Arab neighbors during the late 1960s and early 1970s, views Jordan's Arab relations as essential to the continued stability and security of his country. Jordan has correct, if not good, relations with all Arab states except Syria, and the King may be compelled to improve relations with Damascus in hope of warding off the potential threat represented by a more powerful Syria.

In the 1950s and 1960s Jordan's Arab relations could be characterized generally as an alliance of King Hussein with Arab moderates such as Saudi Arabia against the more radical states represented by Nasir's Egypt and its closest ally, Syria. Alliances changed frequently during this period, however, and Jordan at times found itself associating with countries traditionally viewed as opponents.

Hussein's closest contacts were with his Hashemite cousins in Iraq until they were overthrown in 1958. Jordanian-Iraqi relations have since been influenced by Hussein's relations with Iraq's chief rival, Syria; typically, as Hussein's relations with one improved, relations with the other suffered. Relations between Jordan and Egypt also improved in the early 1960s, and by 1967 Hussein had agreed to enter into the ill-fated military relationship with Egypt that led to Jordan's defeat and loss of the West Bank in the war with Israel that year.

In our estimation, the Jordanian civil war in 1970-71 in which Hussein expelled the Palestinian fedayeen probably had greater impact on Jordan's Arab relations than any other event in the history of the Hashemite kingdom. Not only did it embitter relations with Syria and Libya, who were providing military and financial assistance to the fedayeen, but it also damaged Hussein's standing with the rest of the Arab world for having taken a contrary stand on the one issue around which all Arab countries could

rally. Not to have done so, however, would probably have led to Hussein's ouster by Palestinians. Several countries broke diplomatic relations with Jordan in the early 1970s, and only Saudi Arabia continued to provide the financial assistance that had been promised to Jordan at the Arab League summit held in Khartoum after the 1967 war.

In 1972 Jordan's relations with the Arab states were strained further by its United Arab Kingdom plan, in which Hussein called for a federation of Jordan and the West Bank. the plan was seen as an attempt to make a separate settlement with Israel, and the proposal did not win any support, even among Jordan's friends.

Since 1973 Hussein has carefully cultivated relations with the Arab world in order to avoid a repeat of the diplomatic isolation and financial jeopardy of the early 1970s. US Embassy officials say he worked his way back into Arab graces by accepting, albeit grudgingly, the Arab League decision made in Rabat in 1974 designating the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, even though this brought into question Hussein's relationship with Jordan's Palestinian population, not only on the West Bank, but on the East Bank as well.

The King gained further acceptance in 1978 when he joined the rest of the Arab world in rejecting the Camp David accords and in breaking relations with Egypt despite the accords' call for Jordan's inclusion in the plan. For its stand, Jordan was promised \$1.2 billion in annual Arab assistance at the Arab League summit held in Baghdad that year.

Jordan's Perception of Its Regional Role

Over the years, in autobiographical writings, interviews, and discussions with senior US officials, King Hussein has revealed his somewhat exaggerated vision

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Hussein stands with other Arab leaders at the Fez Summit. [redacted]

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of Jordan's role in regional affairs. He sees Jordan as the geographic and strategic hub of the Middle East, bordering on Israel, Syria, Iraq, and Saudi Arabia, and by extension, in his interpretation, the Gulf states. [redacted]

still trying to encourage the Palestinians to undertake a diplomatic approach to their problems. [redacted]

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US Embassy reporting indicates that the King sees Jordan as an intermediary and conciliator in regional problems. This role has caused him at times to advocate Arab positions even when he has favored other action. For example, he accepted the leadership of the Fez delegation last year to present the Arab peace plan to the Soviets and Chinese at the very time he was giving serious consideration to the US peace initiative. More recently, according to US Embassy officials, he has kept in contact with President Gemayel through the latest Lebanese crisis and has tried to intercede with Lebanese Druze leader Walid Junblatt to convince him to work toward national reconciliation. [redacted]

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To him, Jordan should serve as an example to other Arab states, given the King's record 31 years in power and the country's prosperity for the past several years. Jordan, he believes, also should help protect regional security, first by maintaining its moderate policies and then by contributing military and security assistance to other Arab states, particularly in the Gulf. Hussein's plans to participate in a Rapid Deployment Force demonstrate his belief in Jordan's security role in the area. [redacted]

The King has told US officials that Jordan must work to minimize PLO radicalism, largely because it threatens the stability within Jordan's majority Palestinian community. Hussein has successfully prevented Palestinian terrorist strikes into Israel and the West Bank from Jordanian soil for many years, and he is

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In our estimation, Hussein believes his longstanding relationship with Washington enables him to promote US interests in the region. Through his contacts with Baghdad, for example, he has tried to bring about closer US relations with Iraq, which broke diplomatic relations with Washington in 1967. [redacted]

Limitations on Jordan's Influence in the Region

Several key factors directly affecting Jordan's security restrict Hussein's ability to assume an aggressive leadership role in the Middle East. Foremost among these is the threat posed by the unquestioned military superiority of three neighboring states—Syria, Iraq, and Israel. For the moment, the Jordanians see the greatest threat coming from the Syrians, with whom relations long have been strained, but Hussein knows that alliances shift rapidly and frequently in the Middle East, and he cannot ignore the potential threat of an Iraq turned against Jordan. Jordanian military leaders have initiated modernization plans to enhance their capabilities, but, even after a substantial modernization is completed, Jordanian force and equipment levels will remain quantitatively and, in most areas, qualitatively inferior to those of potential opponents (see the table). [redacted]

Embassy officials believe the Jordanians have worked out a modus vivendi with the Israelis, with whom Amman shares a 700-kilometer border. Jordanians are alert to the infiltration of Palestinians who want to strike at Israel and the West Bank from Jordanian soil, inviting Israeli retaliation. They also are aware of the "Jordan is Palestine" thesis expounded by former Israeli Defense Minister Sharon and others and are concerned that Tel Aviv eventually may decide to move toward that goal by forcing more Palestinians to leave the West Bank. [redacted]

[redacted] the King is also inhibited by Jordan's heavy dependence on funds from the oil-rich Arab countries to keep its economy afloat and to finance Jordan's military establishment. Arab aid and remittances from Jordanian workers in Arab states have contributed to an unprecedented prosperity in the country, creating living conditions attractive to both East Bank Jordanians and Palestinians and defusing potential discontent within these communities. A significant reduction in these funds would force Hussein to impose unpopular austerity

Jordan, Syria, and Iraq:

Number of units

Total Inventories, 1982 and 1987 ^a

	Jordan		Syria		Iraq	
	1982	1987	1982	1987	1982	1987
Combat brigades	14	14	26	32	42	54
Tanks	804	1,053	3,750	4,025	2,800	4,000
Armored personnel carriers	1,060	1,410	2,600	3,400	3,685	3,000
Artillery (100 mm and over)	358	422	1,350	1,350	1,740	2,000
Combat aircraft ^b						
Fixed wing	126	174	650	725	560	860
Attack helicopters	0	24	100	130	330	500
Total	126	198	750	855	890	1,360

^a Includes serviceable equipment in storage.

^b Includes combat-capable trainers.

[redacted] measures, and demands for political and economic change would increase. [redacted]

US Embassy officials have pointed out that Jordan's Palestinian community, the largest in the Arab world and estimated at 60 percent of the East Bank population, further limits Hussein's freedom of action. Although Jordan's Palestinians are relatively well assimilated, they still face discrimination in education and employment, largely because of Hussein's need to mollify his East Bank constituency. Moreover, the Palestinians, more than East Bankers, traditionally have been active politically and are impatient with Hussein's delay in recalling the parliament in Jordan. [redacted]

US Embassy reporting suggests that the Jordanians are acutely aware of the potential for increased Palestinian discontent as the demographic balance shifts further in their favor. For this reason, Hussein wants to press forward on the peace issue, at least to

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forestall another major migration from the West Bank into Jordan. He has been limited in his ability to do so, however, by the Rabat decision naming the PLO as the sole Palestinian representative as well as his own fears of retribution from those opposed to negotiations with Tel Aviv. According to US Embassy officials, Jordan's Palestinians have continued to support Yasir Arafat and the PLO and accept the Rabat decision. We believe any effort by Hussein to assume the role as spokesman for the Palestinians, unless sanctioned by the PLO and the Arab League, would create a strong backlash within the community.

unrest, and ultimately overthrow the Hashemite monarchy (see the box).

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King Hussein in late 1983 accused Assad publicly of continuing to undermine the Hashemite monarchy by encouraging radical Palestinian groups such as Abu Nidal's Black June to infiltrate into Jordan for strikes either in that country or at Israel and the West Bank. In recent interviews Hussein has cited the assassination attempts against Jordan's ambassadors to India and Italy as fresh examples of Assad's work.

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Rivalry With Syria

One of the most difficult relationships for Hussein to handle has been with his northern neighbor, Syria. Relations between the two countries have fluctuated widely over the years, ranging from Syrian military intervention in Jordan in order to aid Palestinian fedayeen in 1970 to talks of union between the two countries in 1976. Public statements of President Assad and King Hussein make clear they have rival leadership aspirations on the Palestinian question and back opposing sides in the Iraq-Iran war. They are also highly suspicious of each other.

Syria believes Jordan supports the dissident Muslim Brotherhood in Syria, and Jordan suspects Syria of trying to subvert the Hashemite monarchy and infiltrating radical Palestinians into Jordan to launch strikes against Israel and the West Bank.

Hussein blames the Syrians in part for his failure to convince Arafat to carry through on their reported agreement that would have allowed Jordanian/non-PLO Palestinian representatives to enter peace negotiations with Israel last spring. According to US Embassy reporting, the King believes the Syrians influenced radical Palestinian groups to reject the agreement, thereby destroying the chance for movement in the peace process.

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Although the Jordanians publicly deny any involvement with the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood, the Jordanians have supported Brotherhood elements since late 1980. Initially, they provided asylum to Syrians escaping persecution for their Brotherhood activities. This relationship subsequently expanded so that Brotherhood members were used to gather information within Syria and to conduct a covert propaganda campaign by publishing anti-Assad literature and smuggling it into Syria.

We believe Hussein is even more concerned now that Assad is supporting PLO rebel leaders who oppose Arafat's leadership. The King fears that Syria will destroy Arafat's position and persuade the rebels to adopt a more radical line toward events in the region, thereby ending any chance of resuming the Jordanian-PLO dialogue.

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The Jordanians have pointed out to US Embassy officials their concern over Syria's growing dependence on the Soviet Union and the implications for Jordan's own defenses of the SA-5 installations in Syria. According to these officials, the SA-5 facility

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US Embassy reporting indicates that the Jordanians hold the Syrians responsible for several terrorist acts in Jordan over the last few years. Jordanians believe these were efforts to discredit Islamic groups in Jordan, divert attention from Syria's own domestic

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Suspected Syrian-Instigated Terrorist Acts Against Jordan

<i>The Jordanians hold Syria responsible for a number of terrorist actions against Jordan since 1980. Amman believes that many of these are carried out by Syrian-supported Palestinian groups such as Abu Nidal's Black June.</i>	<i>November 1982</i>	<i>Two explosions in Irbid the same day; the first occurred when a bomb exploded under car of local mayor; the second at the office of Yarmuk University President Dr. Adnan Badran, brother of the Prime Minister.</i>
<i>February 1981 A plot to assassinate Prime Minister Badran was uncovered. Five Syrians arrested.</i>	<i>February 1983</i>	<i>Three separate explosions at Yarmuk University in Irbid, one at the office of the university president again.</i>
<i>Jordanian diplomat in Lebanon was kidnaped; he was released in April 1981, reportedly after the Syrian Government intervened.</i>	<i>June 1983</i>	<i>Two explosions at US business offices in Amman. No injuries.</i>
<i>March 1981 Attempt made to blow up Jordanian television station.</i>	<i>October 1983</i>	<i>Assassination attempts against Jordanian ambassadors in India and Italy and Embassy security guards in Greece. One of the guards later died.</i>
<i>July 1982 Two separate attempts to bomb Muslim Brotherhood facilities uncovered—one in Amman, the second in the northern city of Irbid—three intelligence officers assigned to the Syrian Embassy in Jordan expelled.</i>	<i>Mid-October to mid-November 1983</i>	<i>Three explosions in Amman, and at least four other bombs discovered and defused.</i>
<i>September 1982 Explosion outside Islamic Society center in Irbid.</i>		

[Redacted]

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has a range covering about half of Jordan for aircraft flying at 20,000 feet. Jordan's inability to protect itself from Syrian attack, in our view, increases the King's concern for the continued stability of his country. [Redacted]

Pragmatic Relations With Iraq

As Hussein's relations with Syria have deteriorated, Jordanian-Iraqi relations have improved. Jordan has been Iraq's most outspoken ally during its war with Iran and has provided Baghdad with both logistic support and military assistance. In return, Jordan's economy has flourished through the expansion of business ties, and King Hussein has gained an Arab neighbor willing to support his regional positions. [Redacted]

King Hussein's efforts to improve relations with Iraq are based partly on his desire to temper the traditionally radical Ba'thist regime in Baghdad and bring it more in line with the moderate Arab states, according to US Embassy officers. These officials say that Hussein still believes that Iraq can be persuaded to work toward a Middle East peace solution. In our view, Jordan also sees Iraq as a strong ally who can be counted on when Jordan is confronted with threats from Syria. [Redacted]

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[redacted]
King Hussein's support for Iraq also is motivated by a realization that only Iraq among the Gulf states can ward off the threat of Iranian expansionism in the region. [redacted] if Iran defeats Iraq militarily and overthrows the government in Baghdad, Iraq could become part of a Syrian-Iranian axis and pose a greater threat to the moderate Arabs. [redacted]

from Iraq to the port of Aqaba. [redacted]

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the Jordanians found the pipeline project particularly attractive because it will earn approximately \$200 million in annual transit fees as well as give Jordan an alternative source of oil. Saudi Arabia currently is Jordan's only supplier. US Embassy officials also believe King Hussein was attracted by the long-term ties the pipeline would establish between Amman and Baghdad. [redacted]

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We believe the extensive economic and financial arrangements that have developed have served to bind together the two countries. The Arab League summit held in Baghdad in 1978 approved payment of \$1.2 billion annually for Jordan in return for its rejection of the Camp David accords. Embassy reporting indicated Iraq was a leading force in establishing the program of regular payments, in which it pledged to give Amman \$186 million annually. During 1981 Iraq provided Jordan with about \$1 billion in grants in addition to its Baghdad payments. A portion of this aid, [redacted] went for purchases of military equipment, including Roland missiles and Soviet air defense equipment. [redacted]

Jordan has provided Iraq limited military assistance during the war. [redacted]

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During most of the Iran-Iraq war, Iraq has used the Jordanian port of Aqaba as its main transit point for both civilian and military cargo. A joint Jordanian-Iraqi transport company facilitates the delivery of these goods to Baghdad. US Embassy officials estimate that Iraqi imports through Aqaba increased by 300 percent between 1980 and 1982, as other transit routes across Syria and through the Gulf were closed off. While these arrangements helped the Iraqis in their resupply efforts, Amman also profited by receiving Iraqi financing to expand the port and to construct a new highway across Jordan in addition to the business generated for Jordan's transportation sector. [redacted]

US Embassy officials report that Jordan resisted Iraq's requests for regular troops, but it did send to Iraq in March 1982 a 2,200-man volunteer force called the Yarmuk Brigade. The role of the brigade was ill defined, however, and discipline problems forced Hussein to withdraw it in less than a year. [redacted]

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King Hussein and Saddam Husayn have developed personal ties, frequently consulting on the war as well as other regional issues. Saddam was one of the few Arab leaders to support Hussein publicly last year in his efforts to work out an accommodation with PLO chief Yasir Arafat. Both men also have reestablished contact with the ostracized Egyptian Government, and, [redacted] they plan to propose Egypt's readmittance to the Arab League at the next Arab summit. [redacted]

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The two countries have other economically beneficial arrangements. In early 1982 US Embassy officers reported that Jordan and Iraq had agreed on the supply of 160 million cubic meters of Iraqi water annually to northern and central Jordan, which will alleviate Jordan's increasingly serious water shortage. [redacted]

Despite the close ties between Amman and Baghdad, a chill may be developing in the relationship. [redacted] Jordan has become worried [redacted]

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[redacted] agreement has been reached in principle on construction of an oil pipeline [redacted]

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about Iraq's financial situation and the effect this will have on Jordan's economy. [redacted] Iraq defaulted on its Baghdad payments this year as its own economic problems grew because of the prolonged war with Iran and that Iraq has turned to Turkey instead of Jordan for importing the majority of its goods, thereby decreasing business opportunities for Jordan's transportation sector. This situation has prompted a senior Jordanian Government official to comment to US Embassy officers that Jordan is getting little or nothing from its relationship with Baghdad. The official asserted, however, that Jordan will continue to place great importance on its Iraqi ties. [redacted]

Uneasy Alliance With Saudi Arabia

In our estimation, Jordan is economically and politically dependent on Saudi Arabia. The Saudis are Hussein's key financial benefactor and an important political ally against Arab radicalism. Hussein gives serious consideration to Saudi opinion and usually follows the Saudi lead in making foreign policy decisions. [redacted]

Jordan's relations with Saudi Arabia are based on mutual concern for regional stability and internal security, according to US Embassy officials. Both countries fear the spread of Arab radicalism and Soviet influence in the area. Since the Iranian revolution, they also see a threat from radical Islamic forces who want to overthrow the Arab monarchies in favor of an Islamic state. These concerns encourage the two countries to consult frequently and coordinate their positions. Through these joint efforts they try to extend moderate Arab influence in the region. [redacted]

We believe the financial connection between the two countries has become essential to the continued prosperity and stability of the Hashemite Kingdom. Jordan receives approximately \$500 million in Saudi financial aid annually. Another \$500 million is received in remittances from the 140,000 Jordanians who work in Saudi Arabia. [redacted]

US Embassy officers report an uneasiness in the relationship stemming from historical animosities and from Jordan's unwillingness to accept its dependent role in Arab politics. During the early part of this century, ancestors of the Jordanian and Saudi royal

families fought for control of the Hejaz, where the Hashemites held the venerable position of Sherif of Mecca. The Al Saud eventually triumphed, and the British gave the Hashemites leadership roles in Trans-jordan and Iraq as consolation prizes. Bitterness over this feud has lingered and has underlain many misunderstandings between the two countries. [redacted]

As the longest reigning Arab leader, King Hussein also is sensitive to being taken for granted by the Saudis. US Embassy officials report that he bristles at the appearance of having to petition Riyadh and resents the condescension that he perceives when they give him money. Conversely, US Embassy officials in Amman believe the Saudis are disturbed by Jordanian attitudes. The Saudis reportedly believe the more sophisticated, modernized Jordanians look down on them as backward and inherently unstable. [redacted]

The Jordanians also are frustrated by what they see as Saudi unreliability in regional politics. Jordanian officials frequently characterize the Saudi leadership to US Embassy officials as weak and vacillating and complain of their timidity in inter-Arab relations.

[redacted] the Jordanians frequently point to the US peace initiative last year as an example of Saudi unwillingness to make a firm commitment. [redacted]

King Hussein indirectly blames the Saudis for the failure of his talks with Arafat earlier this year. He has told US Embassy officials that he believes the Saudis did not use their influence with PLO chief Yasir Arafat to convince him to work with Jordan and accept the US peace initiative. Hussein suspects that the Saudis may even have inadvertently encouraged Arafat to temporize by hinting that Washington would eventually agree to deal with the PLO directly. [redacted]

King Hussein also has expressed personal irritation with Saudi leaders, according to US Embassy reporting, for continuing to provide financial aid to Syria despite Syrian-Jordanian tensions, Assad's support for

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Iran, and Syrian intransigence in Lebanon. He believes Saudi funding has enabled Syria to augment its military inventory and has permitted further Soviet penetration of the area. [redacted]

Growing Relations With Egypt

Despite the break in diplomatic ties between Jordan and Egypt since March 1979, Hussein has worked to promote informal bilateral relations and has encouraged other moderate Arab states to reestablish contacts with Egypt in hope of facilitating Egypt's return to the Arab fold. Jordan's growing interest in Egypt's regional position was demonstrated recently at a conference in Amman, sponsored by the Office of the Crown Prince, on "Egypt and the Arab World." Conference attendees, who included both Egyptians and Jordanians, concluded, according to US Embassy reporting, that an Egypt reunited with the Arab world could serve as a moderating force and a counterweight to both Israeli designs and radical Arab ambitions. The conferees generally agreed, however, that Jordan was too weak to take the lead in reestablishing relations and suggested Iraq as best suited to make the first formal overture, with Jordan following soon after. [redacted]

Jordan's efforts to expand bilateral contacts with Egypt have included an upgrading of the level of representation at the interest sections in Cairo and Amman. Both representatives have easy access to the highest levels of their host governments. Egyptian and Jordanian delegations also regularly visit each other's capitals to exchange views on a wide range of issues. [redacted]

Hussein and Egyptian President Mubarak have been in contact since at least 1981, according to US Embassy reporting, although it was not until the Nonaligned Conference in New Delhi last spring that the two leaders finally met. [redacted]

[redacted] Hussein and senior advisers now are planning talks with, and possibly an official visit to, Egypt. These discussions are prompted by Hussein's growing sense of isolation in the region. [redacted]

While waiting for the right moment to reestablish diplomatic relations, the Jordanian Government has taken a number of practical steps to enhance its contacts with Cairo. The two governments agreed last



Egyptian President Mubarak and Jordanian King Hussein meet at the Nonaligned Summit. [redacted]

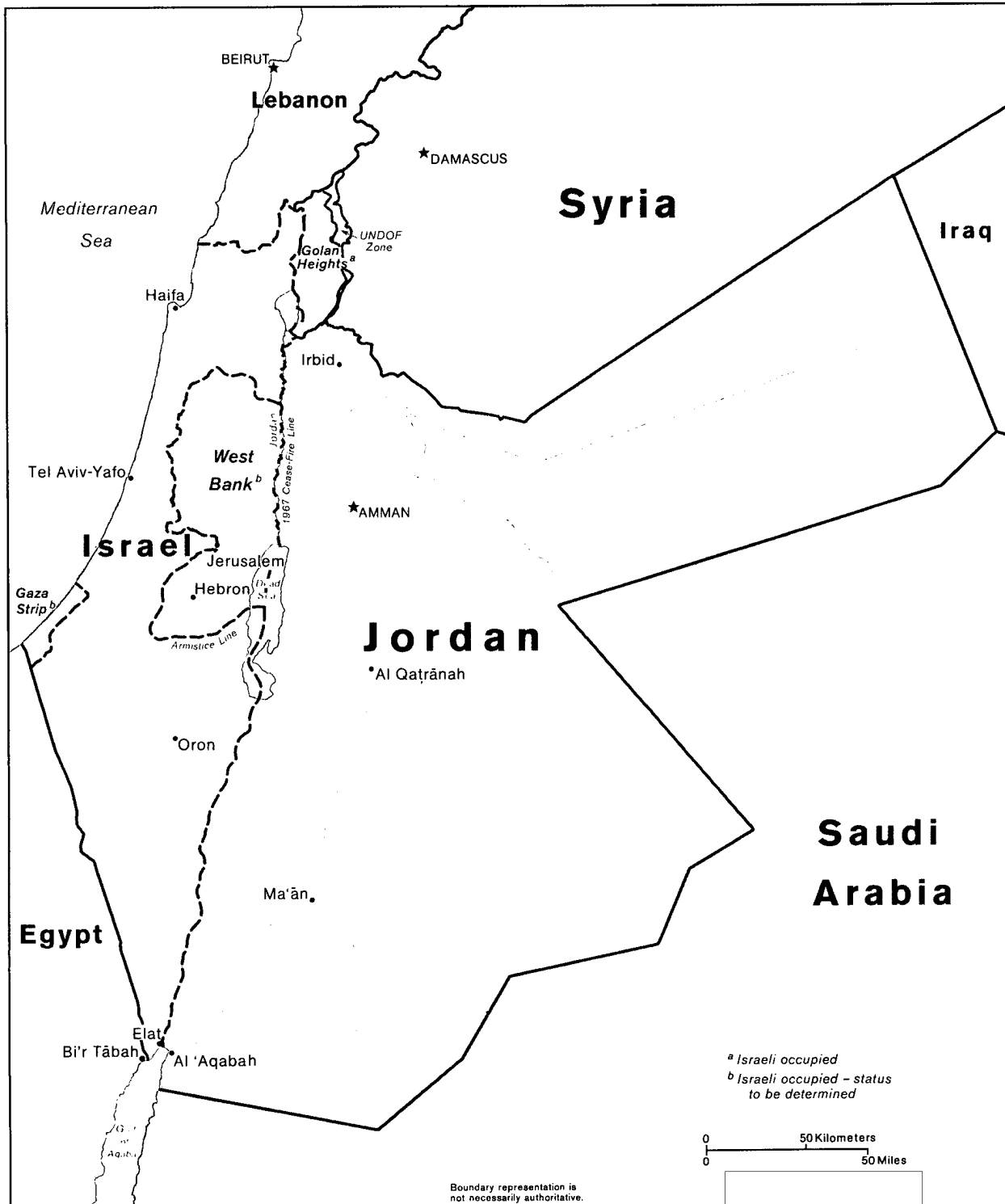
February to resume trade within the framework of the 1967 Jordanian-Egyptian Commercial Treaty. Under the February agreement, Jordan will permit the resumption of trade with public and private Egyptian firms that do not deal with Israel. US Embassy officials believe that the Jordanians found the resumption of trade attractive economically, as well as diplomatically, because it provides Jordanian companies with opportunities to expand their export markets. [redacted]

Jordanian officials have started to honor Egyptian passports carrying Israeli stamps from the border crossings into Israel at Al-Arish and Taba, thereby eliminating the travel restrictions on those who later want to enter Jordan. They also have eased their restrictions on the import of Egyptian publications. A satellite television hookup also has been established between the two countries, and as of late October the Egyptian Middle East News Agency was preparing to open an office in Amman. [redacted]

Outlook

To the degree that regional tensions increase between Arab radicals and moderates, we believe Jordan will become more vulnerable to political, economic, and military pressures from its Arab neighbors. Syria's new boldness in the region, an outgrowth of its dominant position in both the Lebanese and PLO

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crises, may ultimately compel Hussein to improve relations with Assad in the hope of warding off future threats against the Hashemite kingdom. An improvement in relations with Syria, however, would almost certainly have an adverse effect on Jordan's relations with Iraq. Nevertheless, [redacted]

[redacted] some senior Jordanian officials have already begun to question the government's continued support for Iraq in its weakened position and have encouraged improving relations with Syria. [redacted]

Ideally, Hussein would like to strike a balance between Damascus and Baghdad by maintaining his close ties to Saddam while mending his ties with Syria. In our view, a change in government in Jordan in which a Prime Minister was appointed who was less hostile toward Syria would be one way of opening up communication between the two countries. We do not believe that Hussein would go much beyond lipservice to improve relations with the Assad government, however, particularly at a time when Syria has been implicated in several terrorist attacks in the region, including some against Jordanians. [redacted]

We believe that Jordan will continue to depend heavily on Saudi political influence with other moderate Arabs when addressing contentious Arab issues. This support will become more important if Arab frustrations mount over the Lebanese and Palestinian issues and the chance for radical ascendancy in the Arab world increases. [redacted]

Jordan's dependence on Saudi money to keep the Jordanian economy afloat will keep Hussein tied to Saudi positions. We believe the fear of losing that support will force him to coordinate closely with the Saudis before making major domestic and foreign policy decisions, particularly those that affect the Palestinians. At times the absence of explicit Saudi backing will prevent him from acting on issues he personally favors. [redacted]

In our estimation, the Jordanians increasingly look to Egypt as a partner to ease Amman's sense of isolation in the Arab world and to counter Syrian political influence. They probably believe that the reinstatement of a powerful friend such as Egypt would enhance their own regional position and provide them with the political support necessary to face growing

radicalism in the area. We believe that Hussein remains reluctant to move ahead of other moderate Arab states in formalizing his relationship with Mu-barak; he will wait and take his lead, in our view, from others, especially Saudi Arabia. [redacted]

Implications for the United States

The Lebanese and PLO crises, in our view, virtually bar Hussein from joining a US-sponsored peace initiative. Despite the weakening leadership of Yasir Arafat, we believe Hussein will abide by the Rabat decision and continue to seek a joint PLO-Jordanian approach to negotiations unless the Arab League formally abrogates the decision. Last spring other Arab states ignored a Jordanian Government statement that Amman would no longer be bound by the Rabat decision if the PLO became a surrogate of any one country, for instance, Syria. We believe Hussein is acutely aware of this reserve and is unlikely to invite active Arab opposition by unilateral action. [redacted]

We believe Hussein still hopes an alternative Palestinian leadership will develop among West Bankers to serve as negotiating partners if he cannot reach an accommodation with Arafat on entering the peace process. West Bankers still support Arafat's leadership, however, and are reluctant to act independently of the PLO. We do not believe that West Bankers would have the political will to act on their own even if the PLO is dominated by the Syrians once the current crisis ends. At a minimum Hussein believes he needs West Bank cooperation and the explicit backing of key Arab states before he would consider making a move. [redacted]

In our estimation, Jordan is discouraged about achieving peace in the Middle East by the perception that Washington unquestioningly supports Israel in regional issues. Israeli Prime Minister Shamir's visit to the United States in late 1983 and US vetoes of UN condemnations of Israel for its actions in Lebanon and the West Bank have reinforced Jordanian pessimism about US willingness to extract concessions from Israel. Jordanian media commentaries after the US

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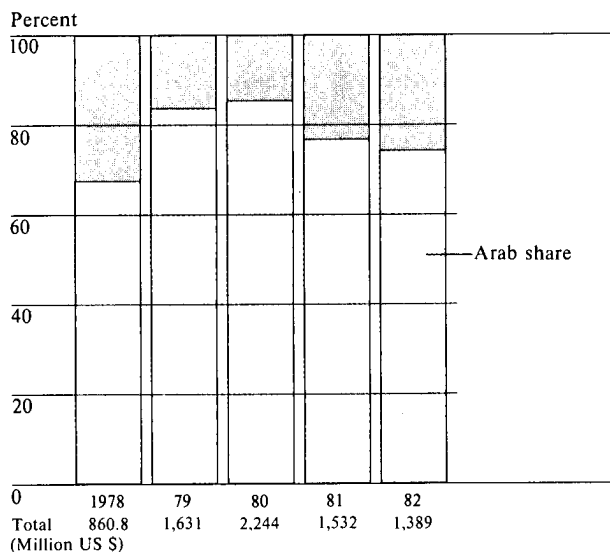
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Jordan: Arab Share of Total Capital



veto of the UN resolution on the shooting of a Hebron resident last summer revealed Amman's growing frustration and anger with US policies. We believe Hussein is especially sensitive on West Bank issues and feels betrayed by Washington's refusal to call the Israeli settlements there illegal and to denounce settler violence toward Palestinians. [redacted]

In our estimation, the strain in US-Jordanian relations has intensified because the Jordanians perceive Washington to be opposed to providing Jordan extensive financial and military backing to withstand Arab pressures. US aid to Jordan has fallen from approximately \$230 million in FY 1978 to \$50 million in FY 1983 in the wake of Jordan's rejection of Camp David and its failure to embrace the Reagan initiative. Over the same period Amman has become dependent on Arab financing to underwrite development programs and to finance its military modernization program (see the chart). [redacted]

We believe Jordan wants sophisticated arms, such as F16s and mobile I-Hawks, to give it the military strength to counter potential threats from Syria in the event Amman enters into peace negotiations with Israel. US Embassy officials report that the Jordanians argue that Congressional conditions—that the United States will sell equipment to Jordan only after it decides to join negotiations—are counterproductive; Jordan wants to strengthen its ability to deter military action before it risks Syrian reprisals. [redacted]

Jordanian difficulties in acquiring US equipment in 1981 encouraged Amman to purchase Soviet air defense equipment. Although US Embassy officials report that the Jordanians are not enthusiastic about expanding their arms relationship with the Soviets, we do not rule out the possibility that the Jordanians might turn to the Soviets again for equipment if they continue to be denied US equipment. [redacted]

[redacted] the Jordanians are dismayed by the recent disclosures by Israeli radio and the US media of Jordan's plans to participate in a Rapid Deployment Force, funded and trained by the United States and designed to "protect US interests in the region." The Jordanians reportedly believe these revelations cast new doubt on Jordan's commitment to Arab interests, embarrass King Hussein, and give the Syrians new reasons to criticize Jordan. Amman has accused the Israelis of trying to influence US Congressional opinion to block US provision of modern weaponry to Jordan. We believe Jordan's denial of knowledge of the deployment plan presages further moves to reaffirm Amman's Arab credentials and place a certain distance between itself and Washington. [redacted]

Hussein's unwillingness to ignore Arab opinion for fear of endangering his country's prosperity and security will continue to limit his freedom of action on the peace process. Although he values his ties to the United States, he expects Washington to understand the constraints under which he operates and the need to obtain meaningful concessions from Israel that will convince the Arabs that a negotiated settlement is possible. [redacted]

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