

Central Intelligence Agency

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DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

22 May 1985

JORDANIAN ARMED FORCES' EQUIPMENT REQUIREMENTS

Jordan has designed its armed forces to deter aggression by its three vastly superior neighbors--Israel, Syria, and Iraq--and to counter internal threats such as the challenge mounted by the Palestinian guerrillas in 1970. Amman does not pretend to possess a major offensive capability, nor does it aspire to develop one. Even so, Jordan's ability to discourage an attack by increasing the costs for the aggressor or to buy time until the Jordan Armed Forces could be reinforced by allies is jeopardized by the growing obsolescence of a large portion of its equipment inventory. [redacted]

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King Hussein is acutely aware of the obsolescence of Jordan's equipment and is particularly determined to modernize his air and air defense forces, which are plagued with the most glaring equipment deficiencies. The King's determination is reinforced by his sensitivity to the need to preserve high morale among his soldiers. [redacted]

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The Jordanians have worked through the US-Jordanian Joint Military Commission since 1974 to develop a list of equipment replacement priorities. Since 1983, this list of about 100 items has remained fairly stable. As of November 1984, the top priority items include fighter aircraft; surface-to-air missiles; attack, transport, and observation helicopters; air defense radars; electronic warfare equipment; and air force munitions. There are other items of lower priority that Jordan would also like to procure, including man-portable air defense missiles, light antitank weapons, M-60 tank modernization kits, TPQ-36 and -37 weapon-locating radars, infantry fighting vehicles, small arms, ammunition, night vision devices, and cargo trucks. [redacted]

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This memorandum was prepared by [redacted] the Israel-Jordan-Palestinian Branch, Arab-Israeli Division, Office of Near Eastern and South Asian Analysis. Information as of 20 May 1985 was used in its preparation. Questions and comments are welcome and should be directed to Chief, Arab-Israeli Division, at [redacted]

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Jordan cannot purchase even a small fraction of either its top priority or lower priority equipment, however, without extensive grant aid, concessionary terms of credit, barter arrangements, or a combination of these measures. Of the countries that manufacture the equipment Jordan needs, only the US and the USSR have indicated a willingness to provide these items under the concessionary terms Jordan would require.* West European firms have not offered grant aid or concessionary terms of credit. The decline of world oil prices, moreover, has reduced Saudi interest in underwriting Jordanian arms purchases. [REDACTED]

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Recently, the Soviets have been more forthcoming than the US and have sold Amman a variety of air defense weapons. King Hussein's deep distrust of Soviet intentions probably would deter him in the near term from turning to Moscow as a principal arms supplier to Jordan. Given his determination to acquire more sophisticated equipment, however, the King is likely to conclude additional arms deals with the Soviets if he cannot satisfy Jordan's military needs through purchases from the U.S. or the West Europeans. [REDACTED]

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