

# Jordanian Foreign Policy toward the Palestine Issue

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## **Abstract**

This study aims to discuss the various factors which have influenced Jordan's policy towards the Palestine issue, and the actions which have resulted, at the national and diplomatic level, Jordan's kings and governments have been actively concerned supporting Arab Palestinian rights, and the idea of a negotiated peace. This study is divided into three chapters, the reign of King Abdullah I, king Hussein and the present King Abdullah II.

**Keywords:** Jordanian Foreign Policy, Palestine Issue.

## **Introduction**

The following study of Jordan's foreign policy towards Palestine question under the Hashemite dynasty, since the late founder of Jordan king Abdullah I to king Abdullah II.

Geographic proximity and demographic reality make it virtually impossible for Jordan to escape the potential impact of any conflict or settlement related to the Palestinian problem. Situated on the doorstep of Palestine, Jordan has always been involved and affected by the Arab-Israeli struggle over the fate of the West Bank and East Jerusalem. Meanwhile, Jordan has sought to protect its interests in the Palestinian question through strategic vacillation. For example, during the 1948, and 1967 wars, Jordan has obtained military assistance from the Arab states. But more often, Jordan has tried to protect itself and its interests through some kind of tacit understanding with Israel.

The problem of this study is to emphasize and analyze the Jordan's involvement with the Palestine question during the Hashemite kings' rule of Jordan.

King Abdullah the founder of Jordan had his own political design on Palestine which set him against both the Jews and the Palestinian national movement dominated by Hajj Amin Al-Husayni. The Arab States as well as the Palestinians failed to prevent the creation of Israel in 1948 and that part of the mandate allotted for Arab Palestine state was seized by king Abdullah I, who subsequently ruled with the help of the British and his local Palestinian allies. After engaging too openly in negotiations with Israel, Abdullah was assassinated in 20 July 1951 in Jerusalem by one of his Palestinian subjects.

During the period between 1953-1999, Jordan's relations with Palestinians was characterized by weak legitimacy. On the other hand the influence of the Arab regimes on the behavior of the Palestinian political groupings increased. In January 1964 the Arab Summit at Egypt created the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO).

Since 1967 till 1974, the period was initiated by defeat and loss of the West Bank and East Jerusalem to the Israelis, civil war between the Jordanian army and the Palestinian commandos, and finally the Rabat Summit of 1974 assigning the role of sole spokesman of the Palestinians to the PLO. Since the mid 1975 till 1988, this period examined the ups and downs of Jordan's relations with the Palestine issue. King Hussein did not accept the Rabat Summit decision and considered the importance of the future role of the Jordanian –Palestinians in Jordanian national life. For him the PLO represents the Palestinians, but did not disclaim sovereignty over the West Bank. The king continued the open bridges policy with the West Bank Palestinian. He had a sense of Arab nationalism and felt a duty to defend the holy city of Jerusalem. The king worked very hard to move the region in the

direction of peace. On July 1988 he announced his momentous decision to cut legal and administrative links with the West Bank.

Since 1989 till 1999 the PLO leadership finally willing to work with the new giving's of the situation and calling for the settlement of the conflict a way from struggle or otherwise. King Hussein as a moderate in a violent region, was considered as a key figure in any negotiations. In October 1991 Jordan accepted the invitation to participate in the Middle East peace conference.

The death of King Hussein in February 1999 and the succession of his son Abdullah II did not lead to a fundamental change in the way in which Jordan viewed the Arab-Israel conflict. Since 1999 King Abdullah believed that the core issue in the region is the Palestinian-Israeli issue, He is working to get them back to the tables.

### **The study plan is consisted of the followings:-**

- 1- An Introduction which we point out the importance of the study and its problem.
- 2- The first phase of Jordan's relations with Palestine issue under the reign of King Abdullah I.
- 3- The second phase of Jordan's relations with Palestine issue under the reign of King Hussein.
- 4- The third phase of Jordan's relations with Palestine issue under the reign of King Abdullah II.
- 5- A general conclusion which we have quoted the findings of the study.

### **King Abdullah I and the Palestine Issue:-**

The continuing struggle between the Arabs and the Jews goes back to the Zionist dream in the late nineteenth century. The Zionist leaders in Eastern Europe and Soviet Union envisaged a national home for the Jews. In his book *The Jewish State*, he wrote: "We shall take what is given us, and what is selected by Jewish public opinion."<sup>(1)</sup> Britain had already betrayed the Arab trust. First by the Sykes-Picot Agreement of May 1916, which Palestine was put under the British mandate system, and second the Balfour Declaration was simply a colonialist imposition by Britain which insisted to make Palestine a national home for the Jewish people.

Between 1922 and 1948 tension between Palestinian Arabs and the Zionists increased. The western powers found Zionism politically expedient to favor. The Jewish immigration to Palestine was increased.<sup>(2)</sup> Subjected to growing American pressure and at odds with both the Arabs and Jews, Britain decided to terminate the mandate and submitting the Palestine issue to the United Nations on 2 April 1947.

From the time Abdullah arrived at the border of Transjordan until his assassination, he carried out with him a vision of a Greater Syria under his preside. In his repeated efforts to raise and press his

plan, Abdullah met with antagonism, suspicious, and open hostility. This resistance came first from Britain and then from Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Sudia Arabia, and the Palestine Arab nationalist. Abdullah maintained that the Hijaz had been lost by the Hashimis because they had devoted themselves to the libration of Syria and Palestine. He added: " I say frankly that we left Hijaz for the sake of Syria and Palestine and lost Hijaz to a barbarous Arab people who set themselves with a will to destroying, plundering, and committing desecration in it is holy territory".<sup>(3)</sup>

The British Government recommended the partition of Palestine into three parts: A Jewish State, an Arab State and a permanent British mandate. Britain did not define the Arab state, but stated that it was to be united with Transjordan.<sup>(4)</sup> It was generally believed that the Amir favored partition. He wrote:

" Since the people Palestine have confined themselves to making protests, I have considered it my duty under my religion according to which I worship God and as something enjoined upon me by my racial affiliation, to strive to ward off the calamity by bringing about the union of Palestine and Transjordan."<sup>(5)</sup> Meanwhile the United Nations approved the partition of Palestine into Jewish and Arab states on November 29, 1947. The Arab States rejected partition. King Abdullah declared that the Greater Syria Plan was the only solution to the Palestine issue.<sup>(6)</sup>

Finally the British Government decided to give up the mandate over Palestine. It was understood that king Abdullah would extend his rule over proposed Arab State of Palestine with British approval. It was decided that the Jordanian army occupy the area allotted to the Arabs in the partition plan. Up to the last moment king Abdullah did not believed that the Palestine issue be resolved by war. Finally the Arab defeat at the hands of the Jews hardened the Arab states opposition to king Abdullah's plans. But he was determined as ever to go a head with them. One of the major causes of the Arab failure in 1948 was their unwillingness to face facts, who they neglect to study the potential military strength of both sides. In his words king Abdullah declared that:- "My conclusion from all this is that the Arabs must give up day-dreaming and apply themselves to realities".<sup>(7)</sup> It was obvious that the Arab attempt to prevent the establishment of the Israeli state had been effectively negated by the determination of the newly born Jewish state. The consequences of the 1948 defeat also was blamed on Glubb John Bagot who was accused of bringing about the defeat in order to force the Arabs to accept the truce as requested by the British Government, since he was a British Officer complying with secret British orders. King Abdullah said to him: " If you don't want to serve us loyally, there is no need for you to stay."<sup>(8)</sup> Finally the Jewish-Transjordan armistice agreement at Rhodes was signed on April 13, 1949.<sup>(9)</sup>

All the Arab league member states recognized an Arab government of all Palestine on September 20, 1948, led by Hajj Amin Al-Husseini, set up in the Gaza Strip. This government was the challenge thrown to king Abdullah by his opponents, daring him to defy the Arab League by annexing Arab Palestine. The king refused to acknowledge the existence of the Gaza Government. To counteract this Government, a Palestinian notables conference was convened in Amman on October 1, 1948 which invited king Abdullah to take Palestine under his protection. On November 1, the king declared that the Palestine Government in Gaza was not basic but simply a matter of opinion over timing.<sup>(10)</sup> And in December 1948 another Palestinian group held a special congress at Jericho and asked for union with Transjordan. It was an open invitation which the king had done everything to encourage. Formally King Abdullah annexed the West Bank in April 1950 with Britain's approval.<sup>(11)</sup>

The Palestinians in West Bank owed no loyalty to king Abdullah, who, they felt, the king had let them down in the Arab-Jewish war. His links with the British were partly responsible for what had happened in Palestine. To advance the annexation scheme, king Abdullah included Palestinian members to the Trans-Jordanian cabinet in order to strengthen the ties between the East and the West Bank. In his speech, king Abdullah stated:-

"Conclusion of unification has been accomplished by a meeting of Jordan parliament, which represents both sides of the Jordan, without, however, prejudicing the final settlement, which will establish Arab rights in matters concerning Palestine. This will, in fact, strengthen the defense of a united people and it's just cause."<sup>(12)</sup>

Britain approved Jordan's annexation of Arab Palestine. On 27, April 1950 the British government announced that: "His Majesty's Government have decided to accord formal recognition to the union and regarded the provisions of the Anglo-Jordanian Treaty of Alliance of 1948 as applicable to all territory included in the union".<sup>(13)</sup> for Jordan the unification of the two banks involved new and great responsibilities. It added an economic and political pressure which would become too heavy for Jordan. Britain and the USA governments continued to subsidize Jordan, but none of them took any step to bring a bout peace between the Arabs and the Jews.

On July 20, 1951, king Abdullah was visiting Jerusalem for the Friday prayer, he was assassinated by one of his Palestinian subject.<sup>(14)</sup> His death ended abruptly the career of the most spectacular personalities in the Middle East. Only he among the Arab leaders was capable of realizing that a large part of the difficulties stemmed from their own shortcomings. They must face the realities and give up daydreaming. With his death, the Middle East was deprived of a leader who looked forward constructively toward the future. In the words of Winston Churchill "Not only was the

champion of Arab rights but he always sought that reconciliation between the Arabs and the Israelis, which is the foundation of all future hopes in Palestine".<sup>(15)</sup>

### **King Hussein and the Palestine Issue:**

On the second of May 1953, the late king Hussein ascended the throne<sup>(16)</sup>. The principles and practice of Jordan's foreign policy was the king's commitment to the Palestine issue<sup>(17)</sup>. The creation of the Jewish state at the expense of the Arab Palestinian ran directly against the Hashemite call for Arab self-determination and unity. Jordan and Palestine were one entity constituted part of Greater Syria. In his view the issue of Palestine as one of the most important and serious of his concerns. To find a solution favorable to the Palestinians became an integral part of his value system. His intense involvement with the Palestine issue was also the result of the incorporation of the West Bank into Jordan in 1950. There were also ideological differences between the king's interpretation of a just solution to the Palestine cause and that of other Arab states. From the start of his reign the king made considerable efforts to help Palestinian people living in Jordan. He carried out a programmed of visits to all parts of the country, including refugee camps, mainly on the West Bank. These visits was to meet his Palestinian subjects and to learn about their needs and aspirations. Until his death in 1999, the king's desire to find a just solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict continued and was one of the reasons for his acceptance of the creation of the PLO at the Cairo Summit in 1964<sup>(18)</sup>.

King Hussein presented an image of one Jordanian family and only Jordan was the only host to offer full citizenship to the refugees. The PLO was infiltrated by radical elements and was used against Jordan's authority by hostile Arab states. The PLO and other organizations threatened Jordan's sovereignty. They sought to establish a Palestinian state within a state in Jordan. The PLO conducted raids into Israel which were not authorized by Jordan's government. These heightened the massive retaliation by Israel and it is invasion of the West Bank. Criticism of the king by the Palestinian, encouraged by Egypt and Syria, mounted in the 1960s and was one of the major reasons for Jordan's participation in the 1967 war<sup>(19)</sup>. The king's desire to demonstrate his commitment to the Palestine issue was also the result of his Hashemite heritage. He could not fail to participate in any action directed towards helping the Arab Palestinians. Throughout his reign, the king had sought to resolve this problem by bringing his state into a regional defense structure<sup>(20)</sup>.

The period between 1953-1966, was marked by a series of nation-shaking crises. It was during this period that the seeds were sown for the Arab-Israeli war of June 1967. The Palestinians bitterly faulted Britain for the loss of most of Palestine. They considered Jordan to be very friendly to the British<sup>(21)</sup>, to examine the relations between Jordan and the West Bank in situation where the pattern of conditional legitimacy was weak. The weakness of and the crisis in conditional legitimacy reflected

in the large gap between the political objectives of Jordan and the West Bank and in the weakness of the bargaining process.

Until 1956 the radical Arab regimes had still not made their influence on the political behavior of the West Bank. But from 1957 to 1967, the influence of the Arab regimes on the behavior of the Palestinian political groupings increased<sup>(22)</sup>. The ultimate result was the creation of the Palestinian entity by Egypt and Iraq in the late of 1950s and early of 1960s. In January 1964, the Arab Summit at Egypt created the PLO which was recognized by the Arab countries including Jordan. Meanwhile, Jordan declared that its political objectives were identical with those of the Palestinians, on issues such as the restoration of Palestine, struggle against colonialism, and the desire for Arab unity. On these issues, Jordan's express ultimate political objectives coincided with those of the Palestinians on one hand and with those of the Arab countries on the other. In 1965, King Hussein declared that he regarded Palestine as the ultimate goal, but stated that:- "The Organizations which seek to separate Palestinians from Jordanians are traitors helping Zionism in its aim of undermining the Arab camp"<sup>(23)</sup>.

To confirm Jordan's policy towards the Palestine issue, the king sent a letter to his Prime Minister Wasfi Al-Tel in February 1965 and stated: "The Government must support the PLO and cooperate closely with it in Jordan, the Arab homeland, and internationally"<sup>(24)</sup>.

Jordan's positioning emphasizing the resolution of the Palestine cause through a common all-Arab effort lay in a white paper published by Jordan's foreign Ministry in July 1962: "Jordan, the heir of Palestinian sorrow and hopes feels the urgent call to inject new life into the Palestinian problem and to move it from deadlock to movement and from a passive to an active level. The government of Jordan feels that it is charged with a heavy and special responsibility in this work since the burden of the Palestinian problem is heavy and requires a consistent effort... and general agreement by all the Arab states. The first step in unifying the effort is, first and foremost, getting a way from splitting it up. The government of Jordan sorrowfully notes that it does not see in the present Arab political reality, particularly at the level of those in charge, any manifestations of realistic evaluation of this axiom."<sup>(25)</sup>

King Hussein did not deny the need to deal with the Palestinian issue, but he laid down strict conditions about how this might be done. Despite the rift between the PLO and Jordan, the king continued to try to maintain coexistence through the conditional legitimacy pattern by advocating a pan-Arab solution to the Palestinian problem. Furthermore, Jordan's position on the Palestinian issue found support in the resolutions of the third Arab summit conference, which met in Casablanca in September 1965<sup>(26)</sup>.

The period of 1967-1974, was initiated by defeat and loss of the West Bank and East Jerusalem, the dramatic events of civil war between Jordanian army and the Palestinian commandos, the Rabat Arab summit of 1974 assigning the role of sole spokesman of the Palestinians to the PLO. The United Nations Security Council Resolution of November 22 1967, based on the basic principled for a just and lasting peace in the Middle East. In this regard the king had consistently supported the implementation of the 242 resolution. In his speech in April 1969 before the national press Club in Washington. The king proposed a six point peace plan<sup>(27)</sup>:

- 1) The call for an end of all belligerency.
- 2) Respect for an acknowledgment of the sovereignty, territorial integrity, and political independence of all states in the area.
- 3) Recognition of the rights of all to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries.
- 4) Guarantees for all of freedom of navigation through the Gulf of Aqaba and the Suez Canal.
- 5) Guarantees of the territorial inviolability of all states in the area through whatever measures are necessary, including the establishment of demilitarized zones.
- 6) Accepting a just settlement of the refugee problem.

In return, an Israeli withdrawal from all territories occupied during the 1967 war and for Israel's implementation of all other provisions of the security council resolution.

In 1968 the Jewish army invaded Karamah in the Jordan valley to destroy the Palestinian commandos. The Jordanian army and the PLO commandos defeated Israel. The king expressed admiration for what his army and the commandos had done at Karamah. He added<sup>(28)</sup>:

"It is difficult to tell who is a commando and who is not. Besides, what do you expect me to do? What should I do to a people who have lost everything-who were driven out of their country? Shoot them? I think we have come to the point where we are all fedayeen"(Commandos).

The growth of the Palestinian guerrilla movement was a challenging to the monarchy. They formed something of a state within a state. Sporadic out bursts of fighting occurred during the first half of 1970. After his victory over the guerillas, the king succeeded in reestablishing his authority throughout Jordan. This was the nadir relations between Jordan and the Palestinians. For so many years, the relations between them remained relentlessly hostile<sup>(29)</sup>.

In march 1972 the king announced his plan for a federal Jordanian-Palestinian state of the tow Banks, to be known as the United Arab Kingdom and with twin Capitals in Amman and Jerusalem<sup>(30)</sup>. Under this plan, there would be tow regions, tow parliaments, but only one foreign policy, one army, and one king. The king's proposals ridiculed by the PLO, Egypt, Syria and Israel.

The period from 1967 through 1974, was capped by quite successful PLO maneuvering on the regional and international level. The Rabat Summit of Arab leaders of 1974 declared that the PLO was the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. King Hussein accepted the resolution and cut him out of a role the Hashemite occasionally asserted<sup>(31)</sup>.

The Rabat Summit decision of 1974 temporarily set back the king's relations with the Palestinians. At the time prince Hassan king's brother with some Jordanians have reportedly urged the king to give up his claim to the West Bank in favor of the PLO. The king did not accept this position and considered the importance future of the Jordanians-Palestinians in Jordanian national life. On November 23, 1974, the king dissolved the parliament which was composed of an equal number of East and West Bankers. In February 1976, parliament was recalled and many of the West Bank members attended. For the king excluding the West Bank meant giving in completely to the Rabat resolution. For Jordan the PLO represents the Palestinians, but did not disclaim sovereignty over the West Bank. Therefore, Jordan continued the open bridges policy with West Bank Palestinians. The king was not willing to sever connections with the West Bank population. He has a sense of Arab nationalism and feels a duty to defend the holy city of Jerusalem. The Palestinian Jordanians have not tried to challenge the king's authority in any major way since the 1970-71 conflict<sup>(32)</sup>.

King Hussein was very critical about the Camp David Accord, which was signed between Egypt and Israel in March 1979.

The agreement secured no commitment from Israel to withdraw from the West Bank or to stop the construction of new Jewish settlements, as it lacked that urge which could solve the conflict. Finally the king felt he had to join the rest of the Arab Leaders in rejecting them<sup>(33)</sup>.

King Hussein had worked very hard to move the region in the direction of peace. Jordan has also scaled down the PLO demand for an independent Palestinian state. The PLO leadership finally willing to work within the new givens of the situation for the first time and calling for a settlement of the conflict a way from armed struggle or otherwise. Jordan, the Palestinians, and many other Arab states look forward a peaceful resolution of the conflict as a strategic aim. Jordan has continued to adhere to its centrist pragmatic approach. It has accepted every constructive peace initiative as long as it could form a reasonable basis for the commencement of a peace process. The process began with the Jarring Mission, the Rogers peace plan, passing through Kissinger's step by step approach, to King Fahd plan, The Regan Plan and finally the Arab Fez peace plan. It is only the Israeli intransigence that causes of destabilization along with the radicals waiting for the final and total collapse of the moderate's efforts to bring about an honorable peace<sup>(34)</sup>. Yasser Arafat backed away from his tentative approval of a joint Jordanian- Palestinian negotiating team led by King Hussein. Syria and the militant

factions of the PLO opposed the US peace plan. In this regard and on April 10, 1983 the king said: "we leave it to the PLO and the Palestinian people to choose the ways and means for the salvation of themselves and their land"<sup>(35)</sup>. He added: "Capable of pursuing political action with Arab support, could take advantage of the available opportunity to liberate our people, land and above all, Arab Jerusalem, but that Arafat had decided on a new course of action that did not give priority to saving the land. It is best left to the PLO and the Palestinian people to choose their own ways and means for the salvation of themselves and their land and for the realization of their declared aims in whatever manner they see fit"<sup>(36)</sup>.

King Hussein continued to emphasize the importance of a union between Jordan and the West Bank. In May 1982, the king noted<sup>(37)</sup>:

"We and the Palestinians have been a single people in the past and the present... this future may be realized in the declaration of a federation (Union), between the West Bank and Jordan on the basis of Jordanian and Palestinian choice".

The United States approach to the Palestinian issue in the 1984 in which the US came to the conclusion that only a limited autonomy could be offered to the Palestinians of the occupied West Bank. This autonomy was defined as some sort of self-government in association with Jordan. On 16 January, 1984, the king invited his government to open talks with the PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat<sup>(38)</sup>.

In November 1984, the Palestine National Congress met in Jordan. The king opened it is session with a speech in which the king urged the need to get a way from the no peace no war status quo. The king states: "The international position is one that perceives the possibility of restoring the occupied territories through a Jordanian-Palestinian formula, and this requires commitments from both parties which the world deems necessary for the achievement of a just and peaceful settlement"<sup>(39)</sup>.

In 1985, king Hussein made significant initiatives with respect to the Israeli- Palestinian conflict and opened negotiations with the PLO<sup>(40)</sup>. The king believed that the necessity of reaching a peaceful settlement to the conflict. Such a solution must be based on the total withdrawal of Israel from the occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem. In return, reasonable security guarantees acceptable to Israel and the other Arab states must be provided. On various occasions the king stated that, he will not act as substitute for the Palestinian leadership, but rather as a source of support for it. He also believed that the PLO which had proved that it may mirrors the aspirations of the Palestinian people, is capable of representing their interests once discussion of the issue is conducted on a just and balanced basis<sup>(41)</sup>. In the mid of 1985, Yasser Arafat came to Jordan for talks with king Hussein and the two accepted a joint Jordanian-Palestinian negotiations with Israel under the auspices of an international conference in order to obtain peace if Israel's withdrawal from the occupied lands<sup>(42)</sup>.

Meanwhile, the PLO refused to accept resolutions 242 and 338 within the American message. This led the king to announce on 19 February 1986<sup>(43)</sup>: "After too long attempt, I and the Government of Jordan thereby announce that we are unable to coordinate politically with the PLO leadership until such time as their word become bond, characterized by commitment, credibility and constancy". After that, Jordan ordered the PLO to close its offices in Jordan, its officials were to leave the country in two days. This was due to a statement issued by the PLO leadership accusing Jordan of being involved in a plot with the USA to destroy the PLO<sup>(44)</sup>.

King Hussein as a moderate in a violent region, he should be regarded as the key figure in any negotiations for peace in the Middle East. In 1988, the king supported the concept of an independent Palestinian state. He emphasized the importance of the PLO in the search for peace. The king added<sup>(45)</sup>: "We have no designs, ambitions or goals other than the liberation of Palestinian territories and enabling the Palestinian people to determine their own destiny on their national soil and regain their legitimate national rights".

King Hussein described the uprising (Intifada) as a revolution against the Israeli rule. He called for support from all the Arab states to help the uprising against colonial oppression.

In order to help liberate the occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem the king dismantled Jordan's legal and administrative links with occupied lands. In the king's viewpoint the move was to support the steadfastness of the Palestinians in the occupied lands<sup>(46)</sup>.

Jordan accepted the invitation to participate in the Middle East peace conference in October 1991<sup>(47)</sup>. Israel refused to negotiate with the PLO until 1993 and insistence that the Palestinian be part of a joint delegation with Jordan at the conference, somehow helped Jordan to assume a pivotal role in the peace process. To the US administration Jordan was considered the key factor in the advancement of the peace process<sup>(48)</sup>. To the king, there could be "no room for procrastination"<sup>(49)</sup>. A window of opportunity was open, and no alternative to peaceful settlement existed "except disaster"<sup>(50)</sup>. Finally the Oslo Accords signed between Israel and the PLO in September 13, 1993. On October 26, 1994, Jordan and Israel signed the Accord, which had been left since October 1992<sup>(51)</sup>.

King Hussein's concern was the possible impact of the emerging Palestinian entity on the relationship between the Jordanian and the Palestinians on Jordan. In many occasions, the king warned that any one tampering with national unity would be his "enemy until doomsday". The king added that the Palestinian in Jordan enjoyed all rights of citizenship and would continue to do so unless they freely elected to leave for Palestine<sup>(52)</sup>.

Among the Arab states only Jordan had sacrificed for Palestine and the king reaffirmed that, Jordan would not compete with the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.

In fact the king assured the PLO that Jordan's own self-interest, dictated support for the PLO. The king would fully support the Palestinian until the establishment of their independent state on their national soil with Jerusalem as its capital<sup>(53)</sup>. Hence, Jordan would not be a signatory to the final status agreement between Israeli and the Palestinians, but would seek involvement to protect its own interests. Jordan still had to clarify the mechanism that would ensure required coordination with Palestinians in the final status negotiations<sup>(54)</sup>. Jordan's involvement with the Palestine issue was regarded as a real twin ship, the political, historical, and social bonds between the two Banks would make strategic ties essential to both nations once the Palestinians finally achieved their national aspirations. Relations with the Palestinian Authority were not particularly friendly, since the US and Israel promised to grant Jordan high priority in the negotiations over the future of Jerusalem in the peace treaty. Despite the king's repeated attempts to help with the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations, the Palestinian Authority would not let the king interfere with their affairs<sup>(55)</sup>. King Hussein, after forty six years in power died on February 7, 1999, and was considered as the spokesman for the Arab Camps, as Jordan more than any other Arab States, is geographically, humanly, politically and economically involved in the Arab-Israeli conflict<sup>(56)</sup>.

The king was regarded as desirable, that he had demonstrated what decides events is not the shouting of slogans and the search for acclaim but indeed the exercise of power.

Jordan's involvement with the Palestine issue has always been, and still remains, one of the most crucial. Jordan was born out of the Palestinian question and has been tied by its fortunes and misfortunes from the beginning of the Arab-Israeli struggle for Palestine. The geographical factor has been conducive to the development of strong social, commercial, and administrative ties between Jordan and the West Bank<sup>(57)</sup>. During the King's rule, the Arab-Israeli conflict was also winding down required a more inward-looking leadership, where as king Hussein found it difficult until his death to make that transition.

### **King Abdullah II and the Palestine Issue:**

The Death of King Hussein in 1999 and the succession of his son Abdullah did not lead to a fundamental change in Jordan's foreign policy towards Palestine. During his first visit to the United States in May 1999, he continued to argue that Jordan was needed as a "fulcrum for the future stability of the region"<sup>(58)</sup>. Meanwhile Jordan tried to get the peace process back on track after so many collective failures between Israel and the concerned parties. Jordan has a vital interest in a lasting and mutually acceptable solution to the Palestinians in order to gain the occupied territories culminating in the fulfillment of Palestinian aspirations to statehood. King Abdullah II said "As we all know the core issue in the region is the Israeli-Palestinian issue. So much suffering, so much frustration, and it can

only get worse if we don't solve the problem. We are trying to get the Israeli and the Palestinians back to the tables."<sup>(59)</sup>.

The United States has called on the Israeli to freeze settlements. Obama administration is under question now as well as his credibility in the Middle East. The undivided attention of America is desperately need to set the right tone for negotiations with Palestinians and the Israelis. On solving the problem actually doom the Middle East and the whole region to many decades of instability, and the parties concerned will pay the price. The king stated:" The only credible viable way of solving this problem is the two state solution giving the Israelis and the Palestinians the ability to live together."<sup>(60)</sup>.

The Jordanian apprehension about security is based on the rekindled fear that Israeli policy might eventually lead to a displacement of Palestinians from the occupied territories to make rooms for the new Israeli settlements. Regarding the voices in Israel saying Jordan is Palestine theory. King Abdullah II said: "By trying to make Jordan Palestine it does not make any sense to me. That is not going to happen, because it doesn't solve the long-term problems of Israel"<sup>(61)</sup>.

Jordan viewed the conflict as critical for the future of the region. The king wants to see a solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, because its in the vital national security interest of the kingdom. As long as the conflict continues, all parties affected by the instability and all going to pay the price. In his speech to congress, King Abdullah urges adoption of recommendations. He added:" This was the cause that brought my father King Hussein here in 1994. There was tremendous hope for a new era. There was tremendous hope that people would be brought together. There was tremendous hope that a final and comprehensive settlement of all the issues would be achieved. Thirteen years later, That work is still not completed. And until it is, we are all at risk. We are all at risk of being victims of further violence resulting from ideologies of terror and hatred "<sup>(62)</sup>.

Sixty four years of Palestinian dispossession, and under occupation, a stop-and -go peace process, all this has left a bitter legacy of disappointment and despair, on all sides. Jordan's commitment in the Arab peace initiative is real. Meanwhile. The Arab States are involved in ongoing efforts to advance a fair, just and comprehensive peace. Therefore, Jordan is committed to playing a positive role in the peace process. The peace process has witnessed many ceremonial events which ended up in frustration and disappointment. In an interview with the Israeli TV, King Abdullah II said: " There has been a sense of frustration over the years. The Palestinian, the Israeli and the Americans, realize how important it is to move the peace process forward"<sup>(63)</sup>.

Jordan and the King support the efforts to bring the Palestinians and the Israelis back to the process of negotiations. They have not met in order to be able to move forward. This has been at

tremendous coast to security and stability of the whole region. Jordan's role in promoting the future talks with the Palestinian and the Israeli has always to play the role of being able to solve the conflicts and the problems that have plagued the region. Jordan has proven to be the honest broker that tries to look at opportunities to end the conflict because it believes in peace and prosperity for all and will continue to play an active role whenever it can. King Abdullah emphasized Jordan's commitment to a negotiated settlement and support for international efforts to resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict. In the king's view, the conflict has caused great frustration not only for the Arabs and the Palestinians, but also for the rest of the world. They just keep discussing the problem and yet nothing seems to change. In this regard king Abdullah II said: "The core issue in the region is the Palestinian-Israeli issue. It is been going on for so many decades. And it can only get worse if we don't solve the problem. The international community also pay the price for not solving this problem"<sup>(64)</sup>. The king believes that to solve the issue , the only way of doing that is the two-state solution, giving the Palestinians and the Israelis the ability to live together. By not solving the issue, it would be the root cause of conflict in the Middle East.

Therefore, the king stressed the need for immediate measures to lift the blockade imposed on Gaza Strip by Israel, as well as the need for an international independent investigation of the Israeli raid on the occupied territories.

From Madrid to the present, the clear picture of the Arab-Israel conflict can be seen as a sense of frustration over the years that the Palestinian and the Israeli have not been able to achieve the ultimate dream of coexistence. The Palestinian and the Israeli leadership must realize how important it is to move the process forward, and put an end to the conflict. But if they get into the status quo mentality, there is going to be a conflict. At the end it's people who would suffer and pay the price with their lives. King Abdullah stated that "If we accept the status quo then will always be on the receiving end of violence"<sup>(65)</sup>. To Jordan, only the Palestinian and the Israeli leaderships to be able to move forward and end the conflict on the basis of a two-state solution that creates an Israeli secure state alongside a Palestinian state allows the other Arab and Muslim nations to integrate itself with Israel. The king added: "We want peace today for us, for our children"<sup>(66)</sup>.

King Abdullah has stressed on Jordan's independence and the Palestinian rights to an independent state. Referring to Jordan's foreign policy towards Palestine issue the king said: "We have not changed politically and we will not change, the alternative Palestinian homeland will never be part of the discussion, it is not an option and is not in the Jordanian lexicon"<sup>(67)</sup>. Jordan reiterated her support for Palestinian rights. In viewing the Arab revolutions sweeping the region, king Abdullah stated: "Jordan and the future of the Palestinian people are in better shape than Israel today. Now it is

the Israelis who are fearful, and not in Israel's interests<sup>(68)</sup>. The King assured that Jordan's position on the Palestine issue and the issues of refugees rights have not changed. He pledged to protect Jordan from any moves which could harm its future. He added: "I want to reassure everyone that Jordan is not an alternative homeland for anyone. We will sit still and let Jordan become such an alternative. We have an army and we are ready to fight for our country and for Jordan's future. We have to speak out strongly and not allow this idea even to exist in some of our minds. Jordanians have to be cautious and not allow discussions to take place which could cause to disintegrate"<sup>(69)</sup>

King Abdullah repeatedly called for intensified efforts by the international community to find a just solution to the Palestinian issue. To him this issue represents the core conflicts in the Middle East, called for more efforts to create a suitable environment that enables the resumption of peace talks that will address all final status issues and lead to the creation of an independent Palestinian state at the borders of 1967. Therefore, Jordan and the king called on the international community to shoulder its historic responsibility in solving the decade-long Palestinian problem, urged the United Nations to condemn the Israeli settlement activities that the king labeled as illegal<sup>(70)</sup>.

The king has been pushing Palestinians and Israelis to open a new avenue to put the peace process on track, stemming from his deep belief in the Palestinian cause and the need to thrust it back in to international and Arab arenas. On the other hand Jordan would back the Palestinian choice in their quest for freedom and independence. Jordan deems the conflict as its first issue as it affects Jordan more than any others, and that a solution to the conflict is a Jordanian interest, therefore, the Palestinians should not be left alone to face the might and racism of the Israelis. To Jordan, the Palestinian must have their statehood, as they have had faced the worst colonization in history after being driven out of their homeland and replaced with Jews who illegally migrated to Palestine with the help of Great Britain and other Western Powers<sup>(71)</sup>. To King Abdullah, solving the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and achieving the two-state solution is a national interest for Jordan and of course it is in the interest of the Middle East and the world. The king has never spared any efforts to achieve peace, as his father and grandfather did in the past, and he will always continue to work for a just solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. To Jordan, peace always remains a strategic choice, because it is prerequisite for stability and development. The king underlines the kingdom's firm stance to maintain centrality of the Palestinian issue as a priority in Jordan's foreign policy. He added also the need to protect the rights of the Palestinian people to establish their own independent state on their national soil with Jerusalem as its capital. Therefore, Jordan will continue its endeavors to push the peace process forward and help the parties to the conflict return to the negotiating table<sup>(72)</sup>. On May 2nd, 2012, King Abdullah warned Israel against settlements in east Jerusalem which would increase tension

and insatiability in the region. He said: "Israel's continued policies and plans to build settlements and take unilateral measures in Palestinian territories, particularly Jerusalem, will hinder peace efforts and increase tension and instability in the region. The international community has a responsibility to support peace efforts, resolve the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, leading to the establishment of an independent Palestinian state...with East Jerusalem as its capital"<sup>(73)</sup>.

### **Conclusion:**

Jordan's intimate and multidimensional ties with the Palestinians has always been, and still remains, one of the most crucial hinges. The geographical factor has been conducive to the development of strong relationships between the Jordanian and the Palestinian.

Jordan is considered pivotal in the geopolitics of settling the Arab-Israel conflict. Since its creation, Jordan became a bastion of moderate Arab camp and followed a generally pro-western foreign policy. Jordan's quest for peace with Israel, must balance its own security needs with Palestinian aspirations for a separate state.

So much has been written about the Palestinian-Israeli issue. It is almost universally accepted that this conflict is the greatest flash-point in the region as well as in the world, the most violent and dangerous one as well. The current ongoing violence between the parties to the conflict is only one example in this long and uninterrupted series of violence, death and destruction.

The Israeli aggression against the Palestinians civilians continued by blaming the Palestinians for propagating incessant violence and on the other hand whatever Israel is doing is only in its self-defense. The only practical solution to the conflict is a two-state solution. The conflict arises from competing for the same region. It was British policy in the Middle East which supported the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine in the Balfour Declaration of 1917. The Arab-Israel conflict is an extremely sad. An innocent people on both sides have died. The only way out to both parties is peaceful, mutual coexistence. Both the Palestinian and the Israeli should realize that they don't have the capacity to exterminate the other and will go on to exist in each other's neighborhood.

This study points out the significant role played by Jordan in the 1991 secret negotiations between the PLO and Israel that led to the Oslo Accords of 1993, which finally gave the Palestinian a self-rule in the Gaza Strip as a result of the Oslo agreement. Jordan under King Abdullah, affirmed his kingdom's commitment to the peace process in the Middle East and to the founding of a Palestinian state. Violence between the Palestinian and Israel increased dramatically since the peace treaty between them. King Abdullah reassured that Jordan would back any international initiative directed toward an end to the violence and the Israeli occupation of Arab lands, in order to establish a Palestinian state. The King stated: "What is the single most important thing in the Middle East, a

future for Palestine, and I think the west needs to understand that the core issue is still the Israeli-Palestinian one".

The Palestinian-Israeli conflict remains to this day an arena for the struggle of ideas and the confrontation of armies. Since the peace treaty , peace remains an illusion and impossible to grasp, which making the region a place of missed opportunities and lost chances. The Palestinian and the Israeli are wounded and they are unable to come to grips with the realities of their situation and the changing configuration of world power, economics and politics. Finally, the conflict can not be resolved until both parties adopt a more realistic approach vis-à-vis the underlying problem.

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