

## *Original Paper*

# The Kingdom of Jordan: The Eye of the Hurricane in a Turbulent Middle East

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### **Abstract**

*The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, situated not only physically at the center of the world has also been the center of some of its most significant moments. These involved the Kingdom's role in supporting peace between Israel and Egypt alongside former President and Humanitarian Jimmy Carter.*

*Carter, demonized for his Southern style and failures in the Middle East, especially during the Iran Hostage Crisis, engineered one of its greatest diplomatic feats ever: Peace between ancient enemies, Israel and Egypt. Their long-standing vendetta which had real consequences for centuries nearly moved the modern world to the brink of World War 3.*

*In stepped President Carter, Anwar Sadat, Menachem Begin and eventually, the Royal Family of Jordan and all that changed. In this paper I would like to explore the personalities, roles and conditions that brought them together, re-celebrate their achievements, and challenge the world to model their characters and repeat their successes.*

*Once again or even still, Israel is the pearl in the Middle Eastern oyster, and a weary world is eager move on. It is my hope my research will give us an inkling where to begin a process that could once again prevent a Global Conflict.*

### **Keywords**

*kingdom of jordan, israel, palestine, benjamin netanyahu, abdullah ii, mid-east peace*

## **1. A Brief History of Jordan**

Jordan, which was recognized as an independent country in 1946, was formerly known to the ancient world as Canaan. Jordan is situated between Israel, Iraq, Syria, and Saudi Arabia, Mark (2021). The country was named for the River Jordan, which means "to descend". The territory has been of historic and economic importance since ancient times.

The oldest city in the world, Jericho is situated in Jordan and dates as far back as 9,000.

According to scholar G. Lankester Harding:

“Cities like Jericho provide evidence of far higher culture than we had hitherto suspected, for here was not merely a village of well-built houses with fine plaster floors, but there was a great stone wall all around the settlement with a ditch or dry moat in front of it. This implies a high degree of communal organization, of subordinating the personal interests to those of the many.”

Where did that kind of organization go? We will see it crop up once again when the world deteriorates into utter insanity, after the Israel/Egypt Pan Arab War. Then as now, peace comes and goes and it did as time went on, Jordan known as Sumer was subdivided by the Akkadian Civilization, Circa 2900 BCE, and its ambitious monarchies, MMA (2004).

*During this time, Sumer was divided politically between competing city-states, each controlled by a dynasty of rulers. The succeeding period (ca. 2350-2150 B.C.) is named after the city of Agade (or Akkad), whose Semitic monarchs united the region, bringing the rival Sumerian cities under their control by conquest.*

*The Empire changed hands numerous times as various kings and emperors struggled for dominance. The period and people are known for their achievements in the arts, which are considered quintessential of the Ancient World.*

Mark says, “Early in its history the area attracted and inspired traders, artists, philosophers, craftsmen and, inevitably, conquerors all of whom have left their mark on the history of the modern-day country.”

## 2. Old Testament Era

The Iron Age, 1200-332 BCE, displayed the effects of city state dominance. The Akkadian Empire split into three discrete territories, Edom in the south, Moab in the center and Ammon in the north. Ammon was close to Damascus, where the Aramaeans made their stand and substantial trade in gold, precious metals and spices took place through Jordan into Syria. *Jordan - History - The Old Testament Kingdoms of Jordan.* (n.d.).

During the period the Bible calls the Exodus, 1270-1240, BCE, which has false claims of Israelite conquests, history states the opposite was actually true. Not one Jordanian crown or his people wanted Jews on their doorsteps and they wandered around the area seeking food, water and stability. Joshua remedied the situation. King Hussein’s history states:

*Joshua then led the remaining tribes across the Jordan River into Palestine. A united Kingdom of Israel arose there about 1000 BCE with **Saul** and **David** as its first kings. After the death of David’s son King Solomon in 922 BCE, the kingdom divided into two, with Israel in the north and **Judah** in the south.*

### 3. The Ottoman Empire

During the reign of the Ottomans, 1299-1922, of which Jordan was a part of, Jordan suffered from the empire's lack of security resources. Instability and corruption in the region was a chronic problem and eventually led to revolts:

*The late King Hussein's great-grandfather, Al-Hussein bin Ali, Sharif of Mecca and King of the Arabs (later he also became known as King of the Hijaz), led the liberation of Arab lands from their domination by the Ottoman Turks in **the Great Arab Revolt of 1916**, About Jordan (n.d.)*

After that, the map started to look as it does now, with Palestine sandwiched in between jihad inclined Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, Jordan and Israel, a ton of Shi'I Muslims and change-adverse and unstable state regimes, Calvert (n.d.).

When the French challenged the Ottomans for Syria and Lebanon on May 24<sup>th</sup>, 1920, in the Battle of Maysalun, Jordan like the former was liberated from Ottoman control, Solomon, (2020).

### 4. World War I and the Creation of a Jewish National Home

After the Ottoman Empire fell, the country we now call Jordan was named the Emirate of Transjordan and became a part of the British Empire. The British and this established yet again another new country along with Palestine which was supposed to be a new National Jewish Home. Reimer (2000) says:

*The land on which Israel was located contained only a fraction of the Palestine Mandate originally dedicated to the Jews as their homeland, incorporating the Balfour Declaration.<sup>1</sup> The League of Nations and the British had designated the land called "Palestine" for the "Jewish National Home" -- east and west of the Jordan River from the Mediterranean to Arabia and Iraq, and north and south from Egypt to Lebanon and Syria.<sup>2</sup> Historian Arnold Toynbee observed in 1918 that the "desolate" land "which lies east of the Jordan stream,"<sup>3</sup> was capable of supporting a large population if irrigated and cultivated scientifically. ... The Zionists have as much right to this no-man's land as the Arabs, or more.*

*Thus, the territory known variously as "Palestine," as "South Syria," as "Eastern and Western Palestine," or as part of "Turkey" had been designated by international mandate as a "Jewish National Home," concerning which the United States declared, that there be established a separate state of Palestine.... placed under Great Britain as a mandatory of the League of Nations ... that the Jews be invited to return to Palestine and settle there.... and being further assured that it will be the policy of the League of Nations to recognize Palestine as a Jewish state as soon as it is a Jewish state in fact. . . . England, as mandatory, can be relied on to give the Jews the privileged position they should have without sacrificing the [religious and property] rights of non-Jews<sup>4</sup>See Figure 1:*



**Figure 1. A Map of the Middle East Showing Jordan, Israel and Surrounds after the British Redrew Their Borders**

After WWII, on May 14, 1948, the subject of a State of Israel was broached again and it became official, Palestine was to become something else. War broke out at once as five neighboring Arab states invaded, *Milestones: 1945-1952-Office of the Historian*. (n.d.).

The reasons why and what has happened since are the subject matter of many papers and essays, but suffice to say it was not the end of the metamorphoses many nations and people in the area were going to be forced to witness, the Kingdom of Jordan was one and seemed to escape much of the carnage and remain intact all these years.

Why and how?

First came its independence, which not only included that of territory but of opinion as well.

## 5. World War II and the Declaration of Independence

Transjordan “beyond the Jordan River” became the *Kingdom of Jordan* upon an announcement made by the White House on January 31, 1949. Jordan declared its independence from Great Britain on May 25, 1946, *Office of the Historian* (n.d.).

The Emirate of Transjordan was a British protectorate established in April 1921 following the Battle of Maysalun. Originally, the British in neighboring Palestine chose to avoid any connection to the lands where Jordan was, but this changed at a March 1921 conference. At the conference, it was agreed that Abdullah bin Hussein would become Emir of Transjordan and rule the territory with a fully autonomous governing system, but under the guidance of Great Britain.

## 6. After World War II

After WWII tensions and outright war over the Suez Canal, the rise of communism, and ongoing agony over the presence of the Nation of Israel forced King Hussein to choose strategic partners in order to protect Jordan’s interests. The British were out, so America, which shared the His Majesty’s anti-communist leanings was a logical choice, Ackerson (2018).

Ackerson says:

*Lacking the military or economic strength to defend itself from Israel, its Arab neighbors, or Soviet aligned forces without significant assistance from an outside nation, Hussein began looking for a new partner. After the British, the United States were the logical choice. Fortunately for Hussein, the US was also in the market for a regional ally.*

## 7. The Egypt-Soviet Connection

The Russians started trading guns for cotton when Egypt’s leader, Gamal Abdel Nasser began showing anti-Israeli tendencies and needed trading partners. Particularly those with weapons for sale.

Ackerman adds:

*Jordan and the United States found a mutual enemy in the socialist and nationalist ideology of Egypt’s leader Gamal Abdel Nasser. Nasser led an Arab nationalist movement focused on uniting the Arab world under his leadership in opposition to the West and Israel. Nasser’s rise challenged Western interests as well as moderate local governments like Hashemite regime in Jordan. When the Soviet Union offered to trade weapons for cotton with Egypt, the Eisenhower administration saw the possible deal as an immediate threat to the American position in the Middle East.*

## 8. The Truman Doctrine

The withdrawal of the British from their imperial territories left a bunch of unstable fledgling nations in the Middle East and Eastern Europe vulnerable to interference from Soviet Communist Russia. Egypt was one of the biggest to partake but there others, Yesilbura (2005).

This rang the alarm bell for greater involvement of America called the Truman Doctrine. Yesilbura states:

*The Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan formed the main instruments of political and economic containment against communism. The instrument of military containment was the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), which was formed in April 1949 by Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Iceland, Italy, Luxemburg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, the United Kingdom and the United States. The Truman administration, which had been conducting a general review of the situation created by the Cold War in Europe and elsewhere, translated containment into a policy of military alliances and American bases abroad to contain the Soviet Union militarily.*

As with all ventures involving the Middle East, however, it was *also* to keep Britain's gas tanks, larders and closets full of cheap Arab goods: oil, cotton, spicy food, and fancy sweaters. This was called the "oil shield."

Britain had many contracted Alliances in the area with Iraq, Egypt, and Transjordan, all with options to renew but their flavoring with British Colonialism made them unpopular and almost all Arab countries ordered the immediate withdrawal of British troops from their soils. Hence the transfer of power to America.

That just left Iran, Turkey and a few other vestiges of hope for stability, oil, and opportunity and with it came *the Baghdad Pact*, which eventually included Jordan.

## 9. The Baghdad Pact

The Baghdad Pact began in September 1954 as triangle between Iran, Iraq Pakistan, and Turkey and was a way to include British and American military presences in the Middle East as buffers, but was really intended to curb Communist incursions into the area. The Pact was initially supposed to have initially included Jordan but King Hussein could not sell the deal to his people, *The Baghdad Pact* (1955) (2009).

The American goal was a kind of Mid-East NATO set up which was eventually called CENTO, or the Central Treaty Organization. Israel as usual was a problem for the others so American and British interests had to work around it.

Even though America backed the plan and signed alongside willing countries, American forces and interventions were not permitted due to a pro-Israeli Lobby in the American Congress, leaving the heavy lifting to the British. America claimed technical and budgetary difficulties for its conspicuous absence from the Pact and CENTO.

Egyptian malfeasance regarding the Suez Canal, October-November 1956 strained emotions in the area and spurred CENTO on. A brief war ensued in the region including an Israeli led British invasion of Egypt ensued, though Egypt maintained its interests in the Canal. This did not help and deepened anti-Israeli British sentiment in the region and deepened Egypt's relationships with the Soviets.

The Iranian Revolution in 1979 eventually caused CENTO to disband. The Baghdad Pact/Cento is considered one of the least successful acts of statecraft in history.

### **10. The Last Israeli War with Egypt and the Jimmy Carter Conference, AKA the Camp David Accords**

Prior to the breakdown of things in Iran and its aftershocks, a diplomatic catastrophe from which the world never recovered, one of its greatest moments took place because an underdog of a president, meager peanut farmer named Jimmy Carter visualized a peace bigger than a war.

Israel and Egypt did not get along. They fought four wars since Israel's foundation in 1948, Greenspan, (2019), and were heading towards hopeful but inconclusive talks until Jimmy Carter got involved. After his election in 1977, Carter took an interest in the long-standing conflict at once and dove in.

Additional credit needs to be given to Anwar Sadat, who bravely traveled to Jerusalem in 1977 to stave off hostilities much to the chagrin of other Arab states, including King Hussein of Jordan who remained distant from the Peace Accords.

As with all "situations" in the Middle East, there is always the worry peace with one's enemy means making an enemy of one's friends. His Majesty feared an Egyptian-Israel Alliance would disrupt Jordan's ties and ability to support the Palestine Liberation Organization, (PLO) a nearly infinite ulcer in the gullet of the world:

*Despite his enthusiasm for Sadat's speech, Hussein was reluctant to join the Egyptian-Israeli peace process. He feared that by joining the negotiations he would isolate Jordan in the Arab world, incur Syria's wrath, and potentially destabilize Palestinians on the East Bank with little possibility for Jordanian gains. Moreover, Hussein did not want to represent Palestinian interests at such negotiations unless he had a clear Arab and Palestinian mandate to do so.- Jordan, the Camp David Accords.*

By the Summer of 1978, a Peace Treaty was achieved. Greenspan says:

*With peace tantalizingly close, negotiations stalled. To break the impasse, Carter invited Egypt's President Anwar el-Sadat and Israel's Prime Minister Menachem Begin to a summit at Camp David, sequestering them for nearly two weeks as the terms of a peace agreement were painstakingly hammered out.*

*Since then, Israel and Egypt have not once come to blows, even as tensions between them remain high. Likewise between Jordan and Israel over the same thing: what to do about Palestine and when?*

### 11. The Hussein-Arafat Accord, 11 February 1985

Prospects for the PLO have always been dim due to the ever-evolving responses of surrounding Arab states to its affairs, Aruri (1985). Immune to fads and favoritism on the subject, King Hussein finally met with Yassir Arafat to discuss the Israeli-Palestine conflict and put it to bed, *Ministry of Foreign Affairs*, (1988).

Hussein had a tempestuous relationship with the PLO to say the least, they tried to oust him in 1970, and everyone around the world was hostile towards them, but Palestinians, numbering in the millions were here to stay and a solution needed to be found. For that, they needed Israel, and Israel did not want to play ball, so Hussein and Arafat buried the hatchet and met. With some help, completed a resolution in February of 1985. The Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs reports:

*With Egyptian mediation, Hussein and Arafat met in November 1984 at the session of the Palestine National Council. The following agreement, released on 23 February, called for total Israel withdrawal, the right of self-determination to Palestinians within the context of the formation of the proposed confederated Arab states of Jordan and Palestine, resolution of the refugee issue in accordance with UN resolutions, resolution of the Palestine question in all its aspects and the convening of an international conference with the participation of the parties (including the PLO) and the permanent members of the Security Council.*

There were more meetings on the subject of Jordanian-Syrian-Israeli-PLO relations after that. None were conclusive.

### 12. The Oslo Accords

In September of 1993, Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres and PLO Chairman Yassir Arafat met in Oslo, Sweden in order to hammer out a clearly defined path to peace in the region, *Jewish Virtual Library* (n.d.). Afterwards, Yassir Arafat sent a letter to the Prime Minister of Israel outlining the following resolutions:

- Recognizes the right of Israel to exist in peace and security.
- Accepts UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338.
- Commits itself to a peaceful resolution of the conflict.
- Renounces the use of terrorism and other acts of violence.
- Assumes responsibility over all PLO elements to ensure their compliance, prevent violations, and discipline violators.
- Affirms that those articles of the PLO Covenant which deny Israel's right to exist are now inoperative and no longer valid.
- Undertakes to submit to the Palestinian National Council for formal approval the necessary changes to the Covenant.

In reply, Israel recognized the PLO as the representative of the Palestinians in the peace negotiations.



As Al Jazeera states: “Oslo was the greatest idea Israel ever had. It let them continue the occupation without paying any of the costs.” -Mustafa Barghouti, Palestinian National Initiative.

### **13. Why not? The failure of the Palestinian State**

Palestinian violence has prevented solid between itself and the rest of the world. Peace never established itself, and the proxy wars waged by neighboring states and interference from Christendom have made things untenable.

Still, there have been numerous attempts, including a promising one made by US President Bush on June 24, 2002, accepted a year later on May 23. Things went well until August 19, 2003, when a suicide bombing of a bus in Jerusalem put an end to that.

As a result of the attack, the Cabinet decided on September 1, 2003, among others, to wage an all-out war against Hamas and other terrorist elements, and to freeze the diplomatic process with the Palestinian Authority.

Not a beginning, but not an end. Enter the Annapolis Conference and Mister Benjamin Netanyahu.

### **14. The Annapolis Conference and Beyond**

Mr. Netanyahu spoke glibly of brotherhood, prosperity and amity as features of a successful twin-state solution, complete with separate flags, songs, and country colors in 2010, but later said the following:

*“whoever moves to establish a Palestinian state or intends to withdraw from territory is simply yielding territory for radical Islamic terrorist attacks against Israel.” - Jewish Virtual Library.org.*

After this, back and forth, back and forth, Jews this, Muslims that. All utter nonsense, and to this day, no one lives in peace or has any hope of it at all, yet we are always “going forward”.

*-September and October 2015, spreading false information about Israel’s actions surrounding the Temple Mount. Mahmoud Abbas stated that Israelis were “desecrating” Muslim holy sites the al-Aqsa Mosque and Church of the Holy Sepulcher with their “filthy feet,” and encouraged Palestinians to carry out acts of violence against Jewish Israelis.*

*-U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon travelled to Israel on October 20 to meet with officials, and U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry met with Prime Minister Netanyahu later that week to discuss a potential solution to the recent violence. Afterwards, Kerry told reporters, “I would characterize the conversation as one that gave me a cautious measure of optimism... there may be a way to defuse the situation and begin to find a way forward.”*

They did not “go forward”. PLO leaders staunchly refused Benjamin Netanyahu’s generous invitations dated October 28, 2015 to discuss peace. In spite of global encouragement, the PLO continued to refuse, and John Kerry left office without a deal, leaving the territory vulnerable to additional confusion and violence egged on by continual Israeli expansion into Palestine.

That left plenty of room for the genius of Donald Trump and Jared Kushner to solve the problem.

### **15. Trump and the Ultimate Deal. And the Fly in the Ointment: The Kingdom of Jordan**

Even while things with Israel were going well with the Gulf States, and economics looked promising, they looked too promising for King Abdullah of Jordan to feel comfortable. US President Donald Trump's Ultimate Deal, proxied through PM Netanyahu was a real estate buyout plan of Palestine, not much more. Hardly statecraft in the least.

His shady "Jerusalem Embassy Move Act" was little more than a pre-emptive strike at Palestine, a flimsy excuse to invite the PLO into war, a logical American counterstrike/invasion and at last, a Single-State Solution could be had, Al Shariff (2020).

We must also be sure to state it was a *Promise Kept* to American Evangelical Zealots who viewed the consolidation of Jerusalem and conquest of Palestine by force to be an element of prophecy and a clear route to "salvation". For them, of course-Robertson (2018).

And what about all those Palestinians and the fate of Donald Trump's *Jihad For Jesus and Jerusalem*? Where would all the displaced natives who resided in the Holy Land go once Kushner bought them out on America's dime and sold their properties to himself for pennies on the dollar? They could all move to Jordan, of course. About this, *about all of it*, King Abdullah II, made his position clear:

*Last year he told representatives of local tribes that he will never accept the settlement of refugees in Jordan, relinquishing his special role in Jerusalem and turning his kingdom into an alternative homeland for the Palestinians. Two weeks ago, before the unveiling of the plan, he said that his position remains the same. "No means no, and that is clear to everyone."*

King Abdullah saved the world by standing his ground and garnering, somehow, the bi-partisan support of neighbors and the US Congress. Driving millions of Palestinians off their ancestral lands into the Kingdom of Jordan, just because, and leaving millions more at the mercy of eager new landlords would have been a blood bath the world would never have survived.

The Israeli-Palestine-Jordan "Middle East Bermuda Triangle" remains the greatest threat to world peace and its very survival to this day. The situation remains unholy and volatile at the utmost.

All eyes turn to Israel every day as a kind of temperature check. "Are we still alive?" Thanks to a small patch of nearly unremarkable land, and the goodness and wisdom of its King Abdullah II and his people we can say yes.

Perhaps it will be enough of an opportunity to solve the issue of who deserves a lasting place to call home once and for all.

### **16. Conclusion: Jordan Holds the Line**

Jordan has indicated it would assume combat posture if Israel continues to pursue American led annexation plans. In spite of the cost of this to Jordan-Israeli relations, relations between Jordan and the US are in somewhat good condition. Jordan's economy is heavily supported by western and Arab partners, Sharp (2020). Aid has quadrupled over the past 15 years, and 3,000 US Troops are

permanently stationed there. Tensions between King Abdullah II and America, however are straining over Israel's failure to correct its stance towards Palestine.


Which way will it go? King Abdullah said:

*Over the past few years, the road to confrontation has shown its consequences: loss of innocent lives, destruction and fear. Most costly, however, was the loss of hope. The most precious gift that you can present to your peoples over the coming weeks is renewed hope born out of tangible progress on the ground.*

Let us see then as the King prays, whether we saturate the ground with hope instead of more blood.

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