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KING HUSSEIN'S STRATEGY OF SURVIVAL

URIEL DANN

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THE AUTHOR

Uriel Dann was Professor Emeritus of History at Tel Aviv University and Research Affiliate of The Moshe Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies. Among his published works are *King Hussein and the Challenge of Arab Radicalism: 1955-1967* (Oxford University Press, 1989); *Studies in the History of Transjordan, 1920-1949: The Making of a State* (Westview, 1984); and *Iraq Under Qassem: A Political History, 1958-1963* (Praeger, 1969). Professor Dann wrote this Policy Paper while a Visiting Fellow at The Washington Institute in the summer of 1991. He died on October 19, 1991.

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URIEL DANN: AN APPRECIATION

The sudden and tragic passing of Professor Uriel Dann on October 19, 1991 was a most painful loss to all who knew him and especially to his colleagues at the Moshe Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies at Tel Aviv University. Uri, as he was known to all, was an intellectual pillar of the Center, a true scholar, a teacher second to none, a gentleman, and a man of letters.

Uri was a historian with a passionate love of his vocation, a perfectionist with scholarly interest as far afield as England and the Continent in the eighteenth century, to Iraq and Jordan in the twentieth century.

Of himself Uri wrote that he had a "penchant for the role of the individual" in history. Each major theme that drew his scholarly attention had "one person who occupies center stage." Thus it was in his study of Iraq under General Qassem, Transjordan under the Amir Abdullah and King Hussein in Jordan during its struggle for survival against the challenge of Arab radicalism. So it is in the present paper as well, focusing on King Hussein, whose character and political behavior Uri had studied for a generation and had come to understand better than any other observer.

Sadly, this Policy Paper is Uri's last scholarly work. It is a fitting tribute to Uri's memory that this paper should be on one of the many subjects he knew so well, Hashemite Jordan.

Asher Susser
Director, The Moshe Dayan Center

PREFACE

One of the most fascinating and enigmatic figures in the rich panorama of Middle Eastern politics is Jordan's King Hussein. Since assuming the throne in 1953 at the age of eighteen, he has steered an extraordinary course of survival. Hussein has navigated the shoals of superpower rivalries, met the ideological challenges of pan-Arabism, Palestinian nationalism and Islamic fundamentalism, and adroitly withstood the uncertain designs of his fellow Arab leaders to the east, north and south. On his west, he, like his grandfather before him, has learned to live in a precarious co-existence with the Jewish state.

In the ups and downs of nearly four decades on the throne, King Hussein has proved himself to be the indispensable man—whom no other "actor" can be said to control, yet whom no one can do without. The story of how he has managed to stay in power speaks volumes, not only about his own skill, but also about the intricacies of Middle Eastern history and the differences that individual leaders can make in shaping events. Again and again, as one contemplates Hussein's extraordinary career, one cannot help but ask: how has he done it?

Few scholars were better equipped to grapple with that question than the late Uriel Dann, who, before his sudden death last fall, was one of Israel's most distinguished historians of the Arab world. In this Policy Paper, the last project he completed before his death, he summed up his decades of research and thinking on Jordan's Hussein to produce a work of rare acuity, understanding and style. During his stay at The

Washington Institute in the summer of 1991, he charmed and impressed all who came in contact with him with his erudition, gentlemanliness and wit. Though he was not able to review the final draft of this volume, these pages nonetheless reflect the qualities for which he will be missed, and comprise an invaluable addition to our understanding, not only of Jordan, but of politics in our time.

Barbi Weinberg
President
May 1992

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

For nearly four decades, King Hussein of Jordan has managed to survive and to consolidate his rule in the face of difficult internal and external circumstances. Indeed, Hussein's will to survive has been and will remain the central organizing principle of his statecraft.

Throughout Hussein's reign, there have been several constant factors: Hussein's identity as a conservatively inclined, hereditary Hashemite monarch; a regular leavening of this essentially elitist posture with periodic populist appeals, especially towards the large Palestinian population of Jordan; Jordan's weak economic base and its social, geographic and military precariousness; a concomitant need for foreign patronage; and Hussein's personality, which over the years has changed remarkably little.

The first major challenge that Hussein faced in the mid-1950s was the wave of pan-Arab nationalism inspired and led by Egypt's Gamal Abdul Nasser. Hussein responded to Nasserism first by swimming with the tide and then making a tacit alliance with the anti-Nasserist Muslim Brothers and discreetly winning American patronage with promises to resist "communist" influence. A key pillar of his survival from the mid-1950s to the 1967 war with Israel was his loyal army and security forces, an abiding presence in Jordan, seldom used apart for times of crisis when they were deployed ruthlessly.

Contrary to popular wisdom, Hussein's decision to participate in the 1967 war was, under the circumstances, a

reasonable course for him to follow. He had long been suspect as a traitor to Arabism, an image that would have been reinforced had he stayed on the sidelines, and he never had reason to fear a direct Israeli attack against the East Bank core of his kingdom. Afterwards, the chief threat to his survival came from the Palestinian nationalist organizations, which Hussein first tried to appease but then was forced to oppose with the full weight of his army in September 1970.

From 1971 to 1988, Hussein enjoyed relative calm. That period was marked by a strategic understanding with the U.S. and Israel and by large-scale financial aid from the oil-rich Gulf states. By the outbreak of the *intifada* in late 1987, Arab aid had dried up and many Israelis had begun to raise the slogan of "Jordan is Palestine." Internally, the *intifada* coincided with an upsurge of Islamic fundamentalism within Jordan. Hussein attempted to save himself from these dilemmas by announcing an administrative disengagement for the territories in July of 1988. At home, he allowed limited democratization that allowed some fundamentalists into the political system, giving them a stake in the status quo.

The 1980s also witnessed the development of deep and wide-ranging ties with Iraq, conditioned in part by the King's longstanding fear of Iran and, especially, Syria. Given those ties and the great popularity that Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait enjoyed among the Jordanian people, Hussein felt he had no choice but to publicly side with Saddam. Yet throughout the crisis, Hussein tried to maintain a role as sympathetic mediator, identifying more with the people of Iraq than with its government. He genuinely tried to give no more offense to the anti-Saddam forces than was absolutely necessary. In the end, this proved a wise strategy. The West has forgiven and almost forgotten.

Hussein's politics are essentially passive: whosoever poses in his judgment the danger of the moment determines his reaction. His one guiding principle is survival. Other goals, such as economic development, expansion, or dynastic ambition are subordinate to this. This makes him a dubious partner for undertakings requiring political courage or innovation.

The essentials of his survival strategy are: 1) Today's perils must be looked at today, while tomorrow's may be looked after tomorrow. 2) It is important to be popular and bad to be hated.

3) Powerful allies are a necessity, but one must keep all options open. 4) Syria is a perennial object of suspicion and fear, while Israel must be made to feel secure along its Jordanian frontier. No breakthroughs with Israel should be made to seem imminent. 5) Direct and efficient control of the army is the ultimate fundament of survival.

PRELUDE

> Hussein has come out. . . employing Arab traditions and Islam. . . The battle is now joined. . . If Hussein [is] able to sustain his anti-Communist [if not necessarily pro-American] stand. . . I recommend aid be granted.[1]
>
> On April 29 [1957], American and Jordanian representatives exchanged a series of notes regarding economic assistance. In response to a Jordanian request for economic and technical aid, the United States agreed to assure the "freedom" of Jordan and to maintain its "economic and political stability."[2]
>
> His Majesty stated and subsequently reaffirmed that the line of action and policy which he has adopted would have been followed in any event. . .[3]

This prelude offers as good an illustration of King Hussein's survival strategy and its tactical expression as can be found. Two essentials were at issue in this episode. The first and surpassingly prime issue was his realization sometime in early 1957 (for reasons discussed below) that he had to shed the stance of aligning with, or behind, the government that had

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[1] U.S. ambassador to Jordan (Lester DeWitt Mallory) to Department of State, February 13, 1957, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1955-1957*, vol. XIII (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1988) pp. 84-86.

[2] Ibid., "Editorial Note," according to Department of State, Central Files, 785.5-MSP/4-2957, p. 118.

[3] Ibid., U.S. ambassador to Department of State, November 25, 1957, p. 165.

as circumstances permit—but it is not, and does not strive to be, totalitarian.[1] The regime is imbued with the values of Islam as befits the descendants of the Prophet Muhammad, the Sharifs,[2] though traditionally it is less than fanatic; by the same token—Muhammad being the Arab Prophet—the Hashemite rulers of the twentieth century have regarded themselves as the predestined leaders of Arab nationalism, though here their interpretation of these claims has widely fluctuated with the times. Also, by a tradition going back some eighty years (arguably much further still), they cooperate with—many would say, are the clients of—the West. At the same time, though, they have always preserved their spiritual and, so far as feasible, their political freedom. (It will be argued in this study that their freedom of action, both spiritual and political, went farther much of the time than was realized by even close observers.) In keeping with their background—historical, social, psychological—the Hashemite rulers incline towards a conservatism that does not make for a broad popular base in the climate of the twentieth century, at least in the post-colonial period since World War II, and hence they have buttressed their rule with a strong professional army recruited as far as possible from the least volatile elements of the population.

The third constant is Hussein's felt need, throughout his reign, for constant populist appeals, merging into populist policies, as a necessary complement to the basically elitist characteristics of the Hashemite regime. His grandfather and true predecessor, King Abdullah, (his father Talal's brief reign does not count in this respect) belonged to another world where populism was incomprehensible. That Hussein's world should be different is of course part of a historic process; however, in part it is also a strain in Hussein's personality that was absent from his grandfather's—the need to feel in rapport with the mass of his subjects. The elaboration of this strain will

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[1] It is impossible to do justice in a few lines to the distinction between these two fundamental precepts of strong government. Suffice it to say that Hussein, like other Hashemite rulers in the twentieth century, has never aspired to press on his subjects a uniform outlook on, and practice of, life—as did, for instance, Gamal Abdul Nasser and Saddam Hussein.

[2] The Hashemites are the unquestioned descendants in the male line of the Prophet's daughter, Fatima. The honorific "Sharifa" is conferred on the women of the family as well. The followers of the Hashemites during World War I and its aftermath, political and military, were known to the British as the Sharifians.

also stand out in this study. The specific thrusts of these populist appeals or policies varied from time to time, depending on the dominant elements in the changing scene as well as on Hussein's reading of those scenes. The nexus is there; it is not always self-evident.

Notwithstanding the fluctuations of time, two basic facts were always present: first, Jordan's poverty and second, the presence of a large sector in the population—the Palestinians—that is *prima facie* alienated from the Hashemite kingdom and attached to its historic base in the West Bank, although by now their vast majority has never lived west of the Jordan river.[1]

The last constant which must always be kept in mind is the significance of Hussein's personal traits. These are crucial to this discussion and will be better developed throughout the study. One point, however, should already be made. It is naturally expected of a person to change his approaches and reactions as he grows from youth to manhood, to maturity, and to approaching old age. Undoubtedly, so did Hussein. The wonder is that as a political creature he has changed so little in the essentials, and the foremost essential wherein he has not changed is his self-image as the ruler of Jordan. He can be influenced, but none too easily; he has made mistakes, but not too easily defined. Yet he has never since the first day of his reign doubted that the destiny of Jordan lies in his hands, and he has always acted on this conviction.

Before proceeding to the actual theme of this work, two further preliminaries should be outlined. These are the social basis of the regime and the strategic situation in which it finds itself.

In the beginning, the regime of Abdullah, Hussein's grandfather, had no social basis at all: the British had installed him, for a variety of their own reasons, and that was that. Still, with his background and associations, Abdullah was less a misfit in his new environment than was his younger brother

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[1] The debate over whether the Palestinians are a numerical majority in Jordan cannot be decided by meaningful statistics. The present argument is a qualitative assessment of their impact on Jordanian political life, and for this purpose it may be assumed that they constitute "half the population." There are, however, Palestinian families who migrated to Transjordan in mandatory times where they set up much of Abdullah's administration—the Touqan, Rifa'i, Hashem and others. Those struck root and must be considered, if you will, as the most Jordanian of Jordanians. In any case, they are well identified and no faceless "mass" whether of the middle or lower class.

Faisal at Baghdad in his. From these unpropitious beginnings, things developed rather well. By the end of Abdullah's first decade in Transjordan, he had a constituency of villagers and small-townspeople who might be designated the social basis of the regime, though they were hardly enthusiastic about the fledgling state or its ruler. By the end of another decade, the nomadic tribes had been brought into the tent, and by virtue of their becoming the core of the army (almost entirely paid for by Britain) they soon gave Transjordan the name of a bedouin state, though this is hardly correct. So far as loyalty and self-identification with the state are concerned, the combination of villagers and bedouin, all distinctly rooted east of the Jordan river, has remained the social basis of the Hashemite kingdom ever since.

The half of the population that hail from the West Bank—first, second or, by now, of the third generation—are of the greatest importance to the maintenance of the country as they tend to be better educated (by Western lights) than the East Bankers, more enterprising, economically and politically (again, by Western lights) and thus certainly part of the social basis of the regime. The West Bankers also include among their number the deprived of the city slums and the refugee camps and the bulk of unskilled laborers in the population. Together they too form part of the social basis of the regime; they may not feel rooted, but Jordan is their country, the ideological appeal of a return to lost Palestine notwithstanding. Be that as it may, the Hashemite Kingdom—as it was constituted seventy years ago and crystallized since—is emphatically East Bank in its power structure. Hussein knows this and acts on that knowledge, albeit with the great flexibility that fleeting circumstances regularly demand.

The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan possesses few material resources that could tempt the cupidity of a predator. (The contrast with Kuwait immediately comes to mind.) However, it has certainly been an important strategic prize and, for historical reasons, an emotional prize as well. Jordan lies at the crossroads of the north-south and east-west axes of the Arab world, between the Taurus mountains and the Arab Sea, between the Maghreb (and Egypt) and the Valley of the Two Rivers emerging into the Persian Gulf. Of greater practical significance for the kingdom, three of her neighbors could lay claims against her legitimacy. First among these is Syria, which has never ceased to regard Jordan, notionally at least, as Southern Syria by dint of Ottoman administrative history.

Second, whoever ruled in Jerusalem was apt to see the land east of the Jordan river as exactly that—the eastern extension of Palestine, or Israel—even if the concept were not acted on. And Saudi Arabia might claim that Jordan was essentially northern Hijaz, and to complicate matters, that it is currently being ruled by the former princes of Hijaz who had been booted out within living memory by the present dynasty of Saudi Arabia. Only Iraq among Jordan's contiguous neighbors has no claims, overt or covert, though until 1958 the link created by a dynasty common to Baghdad and Amman, decreed by Britain after World War I, created problems of its own. King Hussein, a political animal to the bone, was indeed conscious of these lurking dangers from the moment he assumed the throne; he was conscious too of their changing intensities which might even tend to cancel each other out. By gut reaction, he was chiefly wary of Syria, whose frontier came so near to his capital of Amman, separated only by a stretch of terrain that posed no particular difficulty to an invading army.

These, then, are the parameters within which Hussein has had to maneuver. This paper aims to draw a composite picture of Hussein's strategy of survival by examining his behavior in a variety of situations which poignantly threatened his survival, and after examining them, to arrive at a synthesis which distills their essence. In political terms, strategy implicates tactics and *vice versa*, and for all intents and purposes the dividing line between the two is blurred—and inconsequential.

I FIRST TESTS, 1953-1957

The first test case is the first two years of Hussein's rule, 1953-1955, when the overriding issue confronting him was the security of the armistice line with Israel. This is not to say that the issue was resolved by 1955; merely that, in Hussein's mind, it was superseded.

At first blush, these years do not yield much in the way of evidence as to his survival strategy—Hussein was not yet twenty and completely inexperienced. And yet, during those years, one can see the emergence of his political personality as has been known ever since, along with a constellation of security dilemmas which have also persisted over time. Those were the years when refugee frustration and despair along the armistice line with Israel exploded in successions of raids and reprisal raids which became a major security problem for both sides. It was during this time, in October 1954, that parliamentary elections almost uniformly returned a loyalist House of Representatives, thanks to the scrupulous supervision of the voting process by the Arab Legion and to the bloody suppression of mass riots in Amman. It was then that detestation of the Anglo-Jordanian Treaty of 1948, the symbol of British political and military control of "independent" Jordan, became *de rigeur* among the budding intelligentsia—though not among Palestinians. And it was then that young *hadari* (i.e., non-bedouin) army officers styled themselves "Free Officers" in emulation of the new rulers of republican Egypt.

Hussein's part was viewed as unexceptionable throughout. He left to the British Chief of the General Staff of the Arab Legion, the famous Lieutenant General John Bagot Glubb, the

visible task of holding down the lid of unrest and blocking the thirst for revenge on the Zionist invader. Hussein even garnered some popular credit from shadowy rumors that he resented Glubb's power and prominence. The King indulged with verve and obvious enjoyment in public appearances, calling for Arab unity, solidarity, patriotism, courage and sacrifice, while skillfully avoiding statements that might really annoy the powers that were, whether at London or at Glubb's Arab Legion headquarters. He took a genuinely sustained and intelligent interest in the affairs of his kingdom, though less so in social and economic matters, a further prefiguration of his later persona. He clearly regarded himself even then as carrying the burden of the state on his shoulders; concerned onlookers, abroad and in Jordan, regarded this self-image of his with some amusement—or apprehension.[1]

At some time during 1955 this period of innocence metamorphosed into the first troubles which demanded that Hussein form a security strategy. That year saw the emergence of Egypt's Gamal Abdul Nasser as leader of the Arab world's mounting struggles for liberation from imperialism, for revenge for past humiliations (whether real or not, humiliations were honestly and passionately felt), and for communal honor and dignity, culminating in a commitment to the political unification of the Arab *umma* (nation) in fulfillment of the ideology of *qawmiyya* (pan-Arab nationalism). These emotions were not new, of course, nor were they without doubters or opponents within the Arab, or Arabic-speaking, world; but it was Abdul Nasser's rise on the international scene, his self-identification with the standard-bearer's task and, last but not least, his personal charisma that created a wave which for a time seemed all-embracing and unstoppable.

Jordan was particularly susceptible to the lures of "Nasserism." This was especially so for its Palestinian majority, advanced by Western standards and disadvantaged in the state of which they were formally—and unwillingly—

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[1] In retrospect the apprehension seems more well founded than the amusement, considering that as early as May 1954, Hussein dismissed Prime Minister Fawzi al-Mulqi—whom he had appointed on his accession one year before—for being overly permissive towards "progressive" trends. Though Hussein in this case was rather clearly influenced by conservative politicians, he certainly regarded and presented the step as an outflow of his royal will.

citizens, half their number destitute refugees herded into closely guarded camps. Similarly, Nasserism was antagonistic to all that the Hashemite kingdom stood for. Hussein sensed this from the outset; though no intellectual, and very young as he was, his political instincts have always been good. He reacted in what was to become a pattern, one that will turn up on these pages again and again: **if you can't beat them, join them.**[1] From the early fall of 1955, his public utterances, like many of his administrative directives, became geared to the aid and encouragement of the new spirit of the age; to all appearances the King had jumped on the bandwagon. (His British mentors grumbled but did not assert themselves; their profile and their self-assurance had been slipping for years—even in Jordan.)[2] The newly aroused spirit of *qawmiyya*, coupled with the almost paranoiac determination of the public not to let attention be deflected from the Zionist enemy, prevented Hussein, in spite of British pressure, from joining the Baghdad Pact in December 1955, something he might otherwise have been willing to do in return for massive British assistance in augmenting his army. The crisis was accompanied by violent riots, bloodily suppressed by the Arab Legion. Hussein managed, with a dexterity remarkable for a person of his age and experience, to garner credit with the British for his determination in having the riots suppressed, foist public opprobrium for the bloodshed on to General Glubb and gain popular applause for not joining the Pact—for the time being—all at no cost to his image as a fighter. It was a phenomenon which was to repeat itself time and again.

The Baghdad Pact crisis was followed by Hussein's dramatic dismissal of Glubb on March 1, 1956—a move which was at first furiously resented by British government and public opinion and then quickly acquiesced in as an ultimately inevitable retreat which would still leave Jordan a

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[1] The relevant Foreign Office files in the Public Record Office in London (henceforth PRO), opened to the public since 1986, are revealing on this point. On this period, see this author's *King Hussein and the Challenge of Arab Radicalism, 1955-1967* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989).

[2] Here the murder of King Abdullah in July 1951 and the subsequent departure of Sir Alec Kirkbride, British minister at Amman and friend of the old King, were landmarks. It is a curious portent that Kirkbride stayed on in Amman for some time, against his personal inclination, because his prestige alone could ensure the hanging of Abdullah's murderers—or so he believed.

client in its essentials. The acclaim of the Arab public was delirious, both inside Jordan and abroad, so that Hussein again came out the gainer on all fronts, in the short run. That summer, Hussein joined in expressing his satisfaction at Nasser's nationalization of the Suez Canal, in unison with the voice of the Arab (and indeed the Third) world, while making it known discreetly in London that his applause was a mere matter of form. The fall of 1956 brought a quantum leap in Hussein's endeavor to keep in step with what he perceived as the mounting tide, namely parliamentary elections comparatively free of their traditional supervision. The result was a parliament dominated by politicians who might loosely be described as pan-Arab, Nasserite, or socialist, and more precisely as owing no loyalty to the Hashemite kingdom as established. Most of them bore party tags—Ba'th, Communist (transparently camouflaged as the National Front), "National Socialists"—in itself a portent of the new ideological politics to come. It was this majority on whom the King called to form the new cabinet, in the best traditions of Western parliamentary government.

The inevitable, under the circumstances, soon happened. The new government took Hussein's attitude to be a readiness to abdicate the Hashemite prince's traditional role as the active ruler. The moderates in the government became more subservient to the extremists, who took the lead and extended their aims; their followers in the press, the incipient trade unions, the professional organizations, and in the "street" grew more excited by the week; the establishment-minded lowered their profile if they did not run for cover. Soon the Arab world in its majority hailed (and in its minority, deplored) Jordan's accession to the "liberated" camp; shortly, leading members of the Amman government began to publicly express their doubts as to whether a Jordanian sovereignty was justified or whether Jordan should be ruled from Damascus as part of a "Federation."[1] Western observers deemed Hussein's days

[1] This penchant for Syria had its roots in several realities—in Ottoman times Transjordan was indeed the southern part of Damascus province; the pan-Arab Ba'th party had its roots in Damascus; and Prime Minister Sulayman al-Nabulsi had deep support in Irbid near the northern border, where Syrian ties were traditionally strong. These manifold links made the idea of Jordan's immersion in Syria particularly credible—and frightening.

"numbered," whether in glee or apprehension—by no means for the last time.[1]

Some time in early 1957, Hussein realized that by swimming with the tide he was drifting downstream. Moreover, though financial concerns have never played a predominant part in his political makeup, he nonetheless had to take account of the fact that Britain's annual subsidy of some £12 million would lapse with the termination of the Anglo-Jordanian treaty which the new government, together with the prevailing climate of opinion, pressed upon him (and which the British for their part were not at all eager to continue). The offer of an Egyptian-Syrian-Saudi substitute was just not good enough, both in terms of political as well as financial risk.[2] Significantly, the alarm was sounded for him by the impossibility of paying his bedouin regiments their salaries; though faithful, their pay claims had to be met to the day, and Hussein understood both sides of the equation. Hussein knew that cash, much of it and immediately, was key to his survival—and the only practicable source was the United States.[3] Secretary of State John Foster Dulles was no soft touch, nor did he believe in Hashemite Jordan's chances of survival. But the perceived necessity for the United States to stop communism, and, at a short remove, to scotch Abdul Nasser's power and glory, took precedence over all else.

So it was that when Hussein, in a series of secret meetings at Amman with Ambassador Lester D. Mallory and his military attaché, J.L. Sweeney, convinced first his interlocutors and, through them, their superiors in Washington, that he detested communism and was prepared to fight, the American government decided to back him up. Hussein's anti-communist protestations were sincere enough, even if the Soviet Union as such meant less to him than to Eisenhower

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[1] Nor for the first. It is a sobering reflection of the present author that he himself had pronounced Hussein's days numbered during the Baghdad Pact crisis of the previous year.

[2] At the beginning of 1957, King Saud of Saudi Arabia was still an ally of Egypt—only just.

[3] It also might have been Hashemite Iraq with its rapidly mounting oil revenues, but the Iraqis characteristically failed to recognize the importance of shoring up Hussein, whom they regarded more than anything as a poor, impudent relation.

and Dulles. But if anti-communism was to be the "magic word" that would ensure the backing of the United States—a backer less pedantic and less taxing on his ego than Britain—so be it. As a result, on April 29, 1957, the United States bound itself—not by treaty, but in a secret understanding—to support the Hashemite entity as personified by King Hussein, for an indefinite period of time.[1] (As recent events have shown, that understanding is still in force, notwithstanding all the strains of the Kuwait crisis and the Gulf War of 1990-91.)

Hussein, for his part, had proven his trustworthiness over the previous three weeks by, in rapid succession, dismissing Nabulsi, defusing a military coup headed by the new Chief of the General Staff, and clamping military rule on the country. Until the imposition of military rule after midnight on April 25, 1957, the urban centers on the West Bank and some chief towns on the East Bank, including the capital, had been racked by a crescendo of demonstrations intended to culminate in a general strike set for that very day, with the all but explicit object of toppling the Hashemite order. Through the preceding weeks of violence there had emerged one popular opponent to the variegated forces of *qawmiyya*, equally violent but, being of a single hue, better led: the Jordanian branch of the Muslim Brothers. As the first political organization in modern times representing the claim of Islam to be the measure of all things within the community of believers, the Brothers were deadly enemies of the secular totalitarian Abdul Nasser. The resultant cooperation between the Brothers and King Hussein is a stunning example of political opportunism, but it held good for all that, and has lasted, *mutatis mutandis*, into our own days.

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[1] See the above "Prelude" for the appropriate documentation.

II CONSOLIDATION AND THE NASSERIST CHALLENGE

The following ten years—from the imposition of military government in 1957 up to Hussein's penitential pilgrimage to Abdul Nasser in Cairo on May 30, 1967—can be treated as one case study. The defining themes of this period were: first, Hussein's defiant determination, not merely to remain the copestone of authority in the state, but also to be seen as such; and second, his stand opposite Abdul Nasser, the champion of *qawmiyya*, and for much of the time ruler of Syria to boot, as Hussein himself was widely execrated in Arab public opinion as traitor and renegade.

To this basic and overt challenge Hussein offered a basic and overt response: he would struggle to the last to survive on his own terms as ruler of the Hashemite monarchy—independent, authoritarian, conservative. Let those join him who saw his terms as being to their own advantage; he himself would go on regardless. In mundane terms this necessitated having a patron-ally who would ensure him a subsidy amounting to anything between $40 million-$75 million per year (not all of it openly budgeted) to keep the impecunious Jordanian polity afloat without that patron-ally inquiring too closely as to how that subsidy was spent, so long as it could be assumed that it was by and large money well spent. It also meant a patron-ally willing to offer physical protection to the Hashemite monarchy in an emergency. From the crises of April 1957 on, the United States answered to these needs, with occasional misgivings of which Hussein was probably never informed. All in all, taking into account the swings on the American side, the steady support Hussein enjoyed through

the administrations of Eisenhower, Kennedy and Johnson bear impressive testimony to the King's ability to inspire confidence where it mattered; not absolute confidence, but the belief that in difficult and murky situations it was still in America's interest to invest in his survival.

The events of 1957—when Hussein first adhered to, and then reneged on, the *qawmiyya* led by Abdul Nasser—made the King's always vital need to preserve and develop loyal and efficient military and security services especially salient. It was here that the American subsidy was first and most useful. But Hussein understood that loyalty and efficiency are not bought with money alone. While he has always been deeply interested in the army and security services—particularly the former, where his involvement was more visible—it was during this decade that his care was more intense than ever before or after. He combined rational application—augmentation, procurement, training—with alertness, political acumen and an instinct for the mentality of his bedouin solders that can only rouse an observer's admiration.[1]

It bears noting that even during those years of ever-present danger Hussein habitually refrained from flaunting these two main sources of support—abroad, the United States; at home, the army and the security forces. This reticence to advertise his American backing was simple common sense at a time when America stood for the West and the West stood for Imperialism, the embodiment of all evil.

The precise role of the army and the security forces in maintaining Hussein's regime deserves some elaboration. The existence and strength of these forces were well known to the Jordanian people, and in times of looming crisis they were ruthlessly deployed. Generally, however, "normalcy" prevailed; in other words, they were held *in posse* rather than *in esse*, their interference possible rather than actual. One aspect of police procedure is instructive in this regard; the sanctity of the home. This right was particularly respected, with little of the intrusive searches and midnight knocks on the door that characterize security-minded regimes around the world. This was less the rule of law in the Western sense than a legacy of

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[1] His personal intervention, always speedily successful, in inter-tribal brawls within the bedouin units is particularly noteworthy and was noted even in some of the Western media. These units were the core of Hussein's power structure and their importance for his survival cannot be exaggerated.

Arab political civilization, actually predating Islam. By these tenets it was expected that the ruler should rule, and if necessary, rule harshly to preserve his regime (and thereby society). On the other hand, violating the confines of the subject's house was a hallmark of despotism, and therefore illegitimate. Hussein—scion of the oldest ruling family in Islam—knew this; it was in his bones.

However, it must be stressed that in a crisis nothing mattered except the immediate dictates of survival. The most striking instance of this is Hussein's request to British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan for the immediate dispatch to Amman of British paratroopers after the military coup at Baghdad on July 14, 1958, which toppled the Hashemite monarchy of Iraq. The coup, in which King Faisal II and his uncle, Crown Prince Abdul Illah, were murdered along with Prime Minister Nuri al-Sa'id, seemed to presage similar overturns in other pro-Western countries in the Middle East, among which Jordan was conspicuous. Abdul Nasser, though in fact not directly involved in what had happened at Baghdad, was generally credited with planning and executing the coup. This perception led both to a tremendous surge in his prestige and a wide-reaching paralysis among circles previously presumed antipathetic to his claims.

This was the background to Hussein's striking appeal to the British government; though it is now known that the bulk of the army remained steadfast, Hussein himself could not be so sure at the time, particularly as a conspiracy of higher ranking officers had been uncovered a few days before.[1] Hussein's appeal found a positive response and a British airborne brigade was deployed in Amman at the airport and about the Royal

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[1] Among those implicated was Hussein's chief *aide-de-camp* and personal friend, a disclosure which deeply depressed Hussein, coming as it did after a similar experience less than a year-and-a-half before. In fact, that particular officer's involvement, an Egyptian plant aimed at destabilizing Hussein's morale, nearly succeeded; the second half of July 1958 saw Hussein in a state of depression that made him consider tossing in the sponge. While the personal crisis passed, Hussein-watchers must remember that for all his sturdy looks Hussein is given to violently fluctuating moods, just as at least two members of his close family are, or have been, mentally unhinged.

Palace for several weeks until relative calm returned.[1] It is idle to speculate what might have happened to the Hashemite throne if Hussein had not called for British military help; voices were not lacking in the West which vociferously maintained that Hussein's step was counterproductive and a shameful admission that he and regime were just what his enemies claimed they were: foreign puppets. Whatever the commentaries and the howls of hate and triumph going up at Cairo and Damascus, the fact is that Amman stayed subdued and the prospect of a popular wave sweeping away the Hashemite regime never materialized.

Besides these two pillars of Hussein's "strategy for survival" during those years—the loyalty of army and security forces and the American backing—other elements pale. Even so, they deserve some analysis.

The Iraqi connection was of importance while the monarchy survived there and Hussein did his best to buttress it. His genuine fondness for King Faisal, his second cousin and equal in age, undoubtedly played a part, though Faisal, amiable and kind, was ineffectual as ruler and politician. The Iraqi relatives reciprocated, as mentioned, with little warmth; for them Jordan was a needy and acquisitive relative. However, the union between Egypt and Syria, the "United Arab Republic" concluded in January 1958, threw Hussein into something approaching panic. The territorial closeness of Syria joined to what was by then the almost mythical might of Abdul Nasser was frightening in all conscience. After intense lobbying Iraq agreed to an Arab Federation with Jordan. This was quite properly referred to commonly as the "Hashemite Federation," for a dynastic alliance it was and remained for all its constitutional trappings. It was unpopular in Iraq as in Jordan, excepting a small circle of direct beneficiaries, mostly politicians. Abdul Nasser and Arab public opinion, which took its cue from him, predictably reacted to the Hashemite Federation like the proverbial bull to the red rag; it was the Baghdad Pact crisis of 1955 all over again, though—history never repeats itself in detail—in this case Hussein did not let himself be deterred. With the upheaval at Baghdad a bare five months later, it dissolved. The upshot of this episode is not that the "Hashemite" Federation neither saved the major partner,

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[1] Washington carried out a similar operation at the time in Beirut, in response to a cry for succor from President Camille Chamoun of Lebanon.

nor strengthened the minor, but that Hussein followed his hunch in an existential crisis and, however risky his action, came out unscarred in the long run.

Another salient aspect of Hussein's survival strategy during this period was to be accepted among the Arab League, whether as a colleague in good standing or, if possible, as a spokesman addressing non-Arab parties. His successes in this regard were balanced by his failures. The latter were more conspicuous, as Hussein never resisted opportunities to provoke Abdul Nasser. The King crowed over the break-up of the union between Egypt and Syria in September 1961; in the mid-1960s he made some much publicized attempts at creating the impression that he and King Faisal of Saudi Arabia were at the center of a projected "Islamic Alliance" as an obvious counterweight to Abdul Nasser. (Though Faisal for his part was chary of Abdul Nasser, he was not eager to have his closeness to Hussein advertised in public.)

The relationship with Israel figured in his survival strategy, as indeed it always has and will. As ever—unless deflected by momentary overwhelming considerations—Hussein strove for passivity, whose practical meaning was above all a quiet armistice line and, in consequence, a never-ceasing effort to hold down infiltration into Israel, of any kind. This did not preclude—in fact, it went well with—occasional contacts with Israeli personages, made in secrecy, on the one hand, and on the other hand a viciously hostile stance versus Israel in the Jordanian media, for inter-Arab no less than for domestic, Palestinian, consumption.

This period saw the emergence around 1959 of the "Palestinian entity" as a concept embodying the eventual solution of the Palestinian (and, inversely, the "Zionist") problem. This notion in turn led to the founding of the Palestine Liberation Organization in 1964. Inasmuch as Hussein saw the West Bank as an integral part of his kingdom, and the Palestinians, whether as inhabitants of the West Bank or as refugees, as legally Jordanian subjects, this development profoundly disturbed him. Under the circumstances, he remained as pragmatic as he could manage. On the one hand, he could neither ignore the PLO and its vociferous chairman, Ahmad Shuqayri, nor would he deny its basic legitimacy; on the other hand, he almost never recognized its right to speak for Palestinians in Jordan. While the fundamental hostility between Hussein and Shuqayri was never questioned, neither

did it ever shake the state beyond imposing an additional burden of surveillance on the security services.

This leads to a final component of Hussein's survival strategy, one that is constant and, in historical perspective, by no means insignificant. It is his populism—the conscious attempt to remain in sync with the masses. During the period covered here, the problem was both simpler than later on and more intractable. Hussein did not need to bother much with East Jordanians, whether bedouin, peasants or small-townspeople. Though they had been none too loyal to Hashemite rule under Hussein's grandfather, the union with the West Bank and the acquired majority of Palestinians had turned them into upholders of the established order. The Palestinians, on the other hand, were passively sullen at best, constantly liable to erupt in hate-inspired riots with each spectacular triumph of Abdul Nasser or Israeli reprisal raid. It was dangerous to further incite them beyond the generalities of Arab nationalism and unity, where Hussein genuinely believed his own credentials to be above reproach. Fervent anti-communist doctrine, set up as Islamic orthodoxy in the face of atheism, did not catch the common imagination since communism was by then widely identified as an arch-enemy of the hated West. Anti-Zionism played a prominent role in Hussein's pronouncements and in the state-run mass media, but here too some caution was called for lest they release forces which were difficult to control, particularly in view of possible Israeli retaliation.[1]

Abdul Nasser posed a different sort of dilemma. Hussein knew, of course, that Abdul Nasser was a hero to the majority of his nominal subjects and at the same time his own bitter and vocal enemy. Hussein, no coward, hit back. His (or his minions') counter-jeers and accusations may not have been inspired, but they made his position clear and may have intimidated people who had more reasons to fear his displeasure than to court Abdul Nasser's praise. It is interesting, however, that Hussein was generally on the watch for opportunities to join Abdul Nasser's bandwagon. His enthusiastic approval of Abdul Nasser's instituting "Arab summitry" in December 1963 is a major example. A minor

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[1] Education, held to be innocuous from the security point of view, was another matter entirely. Anti-Israeli, anti-Zionist and indeed anti-Jewish indoctrination in the schools was unrestrained, on par with the most extreme Arab countries.

instance, nonetheless instructive for showing a typical pitfall and the alacrity with which he knew how to react, occurred early in 1961, during one of the recurring breaks when Hussein hoped to shore up his relations with Abdul Nasser at no risk to himself. Hussein had written Nasser, for no practical purpose but in a spirit of brotherhood and common Arabism. Nasser for his part replied with cold courtesy, denying Hussein's imputation that there was no real difference between them.[1] This exercise in public relations, though safe in the short run, was dangerous in the longer. On the day that Hussein's step became known in Jordan, enthusiastic multitudes paraded in the streets of Amman and the towns of the West Bank, chanting their love of Abdul Nasser and their joy that for once they might do so without risk, accompanied by giant portraits of Abdul Nasser and smaller ones of the King. Hussein thanked the demonstrators for their loyal support and then had his troops immediately disperse them.

[1] Within less than three years, Abdul Nasser was to adopt Hussein's stance as the basis of summitry—that it was the common aim that mattered, and not the difference in guises; a case of *quod licet Jovi, non licet bovi.*

III FROM THE SIX DAY WAR TO BLACK SEPTEMBER

Hussein's survival strategy during the Six Day War of June 1967 is held by common wisdom to have been a disastrous mistake. Hussein declined to accept Israel's offer on the eve of the war to stay a non-belligerent, and by joining Abdul Nasser, he lost most of his field army and the whole of the West Bank. It is this writer's contention that, on the contrary, his decision was correct under the prevailing circumstances. Indeed, by joining Abdul Nasser, the King saved himself from certain dishonor and the Hashemite kingdom from probable extinction.

After Abdul Nasser's decisions to enter Sinai in force on May 14, 1967, and oust the United Nations observers from the Israeli border and the entrance to the Gulf of Aqaba—decisions which set in motion the process which inexorably led to the third Arab-Israel war—Hussein hesitated. The King's image as the arch-traitor to Arabism sharpened from day to day. Syria, since the previous year under a Ba'thist regime of particular vehemence, led the pack baying for his destruction, and his own Palestinian population grew restive to the edge of rebellion.[1] After a fortnight's agonizing he took the plunge. A

[1] It is a moot point, of course, whether the Palestinians in Jordan ever were, or for that matter are, capable of rebelling in any meaningful way. What matters is that Hussein at all times took his precautions. During the six months prior to the 1967 crisis, the Palestinians in general, and in the West Bank in particular, had been especially unruly in the wake of an Israeli reprisal raid in force on the village of Samu, south of Hebron.

swift call on Abdul Nasser at Cairo resulted in an undertaking which put the Jordanian army under Egyptian command and announced to the world that Hashemite Jordan had rejoined the Arab fold under Abdul Nasser's leadership in readiness for the final battle with Israel. In his public appearances between that day and the outbreak of war on June 5, one week in all, Hussein fully and exuberantly identified with "The Cause." Some grumbling and some skepticism among his enemies remained but, clearly, in the mounting euphoria Hussein had been forgiven.

After the war, Hussein maintained that he had expected defeat all along, though he was surprised by its speed; in all likelihood this is hindsight. At any rate, it is worth noting for our purposes that when, on the very eve of the war, Secretary of State Dean Rusk made a last minute attempt to restrain him, Hussein replied that his, the King's, honor left him no choice. The expression is in order, emotive as it is. Even in politics "honor" is a reality, to be ignored at one's peril. Hussein went to war and lost. Yet he lost in communion with the Arab community and he could, and did, hold up his head. Hussein hardly risked all when he went to war, as it was unlikely in the extreme that a victorious Israeli army would cross the Jordan river and in the event it did not. Hussein lost the West Bank, part of his inheritance; he deeply resented his loss and he has never given up hope of retrieving it one way or the other;[1] but he did, after all, save the East Bank, the core of his kingdom and the base of his power. Had he stayed out—and here one is dealing with surmises—whether Israel won or lost, Hussein would probably not have survived the shame. His political instincts have rarely been wrong on the grand scale, and this writer, for one, believes he was right in this case, which exhibits survival strategy on an heroic scale.

The main theme of the following stage in King Hussein's survival strategy is his confrontation over the years 1968-1971 with the Palestinian organizations. They were, during this period, engaged in a protracted merger and metamorphosis into the PLO, chaired since 1969 by Yasser Arafat, leader of Fatah, which had been loosely coordinated with Shuqayri's PLO until the Six Day War. Though neither the PLO nor Fatah had distinguished themselves in the 1967 war, the collapse of the Arab armies catapulted them into the effective leadership of

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[1] This is still the case, notwithstanding the waiver of July 31, 1988, about which more below.

the Palestinians. Thus, for the first time since 1948, the Palestinians credibly saw themselves as at least somewhat responsible for their own fate, and their elation corresponded with their perceived opportunity. Jordan, where even after the war the Palestinians were incomparably stronger than in any other Arab country, was the natural field for a contest for domination, especially since both the PLO and Fatah had always regarded the conservative, pro-Western Hashemite monarchy with suspicion at best, and more often with downright hostility, an attitude that was reciprocated.[1]

The confrontation between Hussein and the Palestinians developed in fits and starts. Hussein was on the defensive until the late summer of 1970, desperately striving to publicize his fighting brotherhood with the Palestinian organizations while maintaining the sovereignty of the state.[2] The incompatibility of these two aims may not have been quite clear to him at the time. What was clear to him was the self-feeding enthusiasm the organizations generated as the saviors of Arab honor and future restorers of the Palestinian homeland as well as his own fervent desire not to return to his status of outcast from the Arab community, from which he had so recently emerged. It was only when the more committed among the organizations had ceased, by declaration and deed, to recognize the legitimacy of the Hashemite kingdom altogether that he sent in the army on September 16, 1970.

It has been said that he would have faced a mutiny otherwise; while this is possibly true, for him it was no more than one factor in his assessment, alongside others; an attempt on his life early in September 1970 by the Popular Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PDFLP) was probably as decisive in pushing Hussein over the brink. Be that as it may, once he had made up his mind, Hussein proceeded remorselessly, though with much tactical regard for the Arab governments who were inclined to sympathize with the

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[1] An attempt by Fatah soon after the war to turn the conquered West Bank into its power base was easily defeated by Israel. Indeed, it was Lebanon's similarity with Jordan in a number of ways that led the Palestinian organizations to transfer their power base there after their expulsion from Jordan.

[2] The ups and downs of the struggle—mostly "downs" from Hussein's viewpoint—are well discussed in Daniel Dishon, ed., *Middle East Record 1968*, pp. 587-602 and *Middle East Record 1969-70*, pp. 789-880 (Jerusalem: Shiloah Center for Middle East and African Studies, 1973, 1977).

Palestinian organizations and their struggle to survive. Here Hussein was favored by the good luck which is said to attend the brave—a Syrian invasion to succor the organizations miscarried, and Abdul Nasser died a few days later, on September 28, 1970. The fighting was bloody and protracted. It was only in July 1971 that the last organized remnants of the Palestinian organizations broke and ran.

At the time, the Syrian invasion—thinly disguised as a Palestinian counter-offensive from across the northern border—seemed to thrust an additional burden on the King at a critical moment, one that might break his back. In reality, Hussein's external position was not at all bad. The U.S. (with Henry Kissinger poised at the National Security Council) and Israel threatened Damascus with the consequences of a resolutely pushed intervention.[1] The Soviet Union was not prepared to face a major confrontation with the U.S. *pour les beaux yeux* of Syria. Iraq, never in the forefront of the Arab quarrel with the King, was then in the throes of a power struggle (not well understood at the time) between Defense Minister Hardan al-Tikriti and the up-and-coming deputy secretary of the Iraqi Ba'th, Hussein al-Tikriti (no relation), soon to be better known as Saddam Hussein. Also, Iraq would not lightly promote what was essentially an enterprise of its rivals at Damascus. Abdul Nasser, mortally ill—though this too was not widely realized—and King Faisal of Saudi Arabia were less than enthusiastic in their support of the PLO-Syrian alliance, for all the decencies they had to observe. And finally, the Syrian Minister of Defense, Hafez al-Assad, refused to engage the air force, out of innate caution and to trip up his own rival in the power struggle at Damascus, Prime Minister Salah Jedid (whom he would succeed in toppling within two months). But with all this, the crux of the King's salvation lay in the loyalty and fighting fitness of his army (and not just of the senior officer corps). And even the favorable political constellation should be attributed largely to his skill in pursuing his survival strategy.

Viewed as a major chapter in Hussein's unending struggle for survival, the question arises as to the substance of Hussein's strategy between 1968 and 1971. What were the considerations

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[1] Already then there were mutterings in Israel that Hussein should be left to his fate; but the Meir-Peres-Allon dispensation held fast to the traditional line that Hashemite Jordan was not "really" an enemy, for all its liability to aberrations.

that made him play up to the Palestinian organizations, his enemies ideologically as well as pragmatically, while commonsense, observation, and the warnings of friends and allies from within and without might have told him that he was approaching a point of no return, with each week's delay worsening his chances of survival? The answer is, of course, complex and speculative, but enough clues are scattered over the whole of Hussein's rule to give meaningful indications.

At the time, the Palestinian organizations were riding the wave of popularity in the Arab world and, as always, if Hussein could get a lift on such a wave, he would. Conversely, standing in their way would draw on him the ire of that world as a traitor, at a time when his image as a traitor was still recent. Also, not every move of Hussein should be understood in purely opportunistic or rational terms. The organizations had, after the war, acquired the reputation of standing up for the good fight, as the Jordanian army had done during the war; it would be rash to assume that Hussein, still a young man in his thirties, was not moved.[1] Still, there can be no doubt that such emotion was never decisive when compared to cool self-interest. Hussein has never easily reached an heroic decision which involved an about-face. When he did reach such a decision in his confrontation with the Palestinians, his sympathizers in Jordan and (especially) abroad judged him to have acted "at the last moment." The student of history can never determine whether this was so. What he can determine is that from the moment Hussein imposed military government on Jordan, and until his kingdom was cleared, he never looked back, though the clearing lasted ten months and cost thousands of lives. It is also clear that the risks he undoubtedly took in "Bloody September" and its wake proved

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[1] After the March 1968 "battle of Karameh," a bloody clash with Israeli forces raiding the main PLO base at the time, in the south-eastern Jordan valley, into which the Jordanian army was drawn, Hussein declared, "We are all fedayeen [a term for self-sacrificing fighters then commonly appropriated by PLO and Fatah activists] now." He was widely criticized for this and similar expressions, as a craven and self-defeating attempt to curry favor with irreconcilable enemies. Undoubtedly, this is one aspect. Another is the popular applause he expected to earn and did earn. A third aspect is that he may have hoped to buy time against a head-on clash for which he did not as yet feel prepared. And lastly, who can say for certain that he did not feel a measure of genuine elation? This is, *inter alia*, a good example of the complexities which Hussein experienced in his quest for "survival."

justified. The Arab governments—especially the oil-rich countries—cut off their official subsidies to Jordan for some time, until they realized that Hussein (who, as they well knew, was fighting their own battle) was emerging victorious. Even more important, the civil war did not involve the masses of the Palestinian population or the established East Bank Jordanian population, for that matter. The majority of the Palestinians, who were not organized or affiliated in some manner with the PLO, may have sympathized with the latter; the evidence is unclear and, after all, many Palestinians had a clear stake in law and order as represented by the Hashemite state. At the same time, most East Bank Jordanians certainly feared and hated the organizations as violent and overbearing foreigners, though here too there were "progressive" circles who bore them a sympathy that was not entirely self-seeking. The point is that neither part of the population, overwhelmingly its bulk, took an active part in the fighting, and that the population as a whole acquiesced in its outcome without giving trouble.

Other perennial aspects of Hussein's survival strategy during these four years pale beside the central problem of the Palestinian organizations or are subordinate to it.

A prime desideratum of the Palestinian organizations was the destabilization of the Jordan-Israel frontier—both along the river line and along the Aravah Valley to the Red Sea—in order to involve Hussein in military trouble with a superior enemy who might finish the job left only half-done in June 1967. They were successful insofar as the frontier was almost perpetually tense during those years, while it was not too difficult then, as at other times, to strain Israeli patience regarding border security to the breaking point. On the other hand, Hussein could trade on his conviction that a broad political consensus in Israel saw his regime as preferable to any conceivable alternative. He did not have to pay a heavy price to maintain that conviction; his traditional image as a "moderate"—deserved, unless the penalty became overwhelming as in the days prior to the Six Day War—has proved indestructible and was inexpensively supported by clandestine meetings, soon leaked, with Israeli politicians, which never did any good or harm.[1]

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[1] It is instructive in these days to recall how quickly Hussein was "forgiven" his part in the Six Day War. He paid a heavy price, of course, just as he has paid a heavy price for his support of Saddam Hussein in the Gulf crisis of 1990-91. But in both cases he saved the substance.

One main prop of Hussein's survival strategy—a dependable ally who provided a strategic insurance and sufficient financial day-to-day support—remained secured in the United States. The alliance proceeded with little fuss, just as the two partners would have it. The other prop, a loyal army together with equally loyal security forces (well trained—and paid) equally showed its worth. If anything, Hussein had to consider their impetuosity when he showed forbearance which strained their patience and, perhaps, their faith in his forcefulness. But, in the end, he let them loose and vindicated his judgment.

As to the Israeli positive consensus on Hussein, it was during this period, about 1970, that General Ariel Sharon started publicizing his view that Jordan, east of the river, was the "real" Palestinian state, and the Hashemite entity unnatural and unviable. Sharon has always remained in a minority on this matter, but Hussein was undoubtedly perturbed.

IV THE QUIET YEARS AND THE *INTIFADA*

The next period in King Hussein's survival strategy can usefully cover seventeen years, until the landmark of his "withdrawal" from the West Bank and the virtual end of the Iran-Iraq war, both in the summer of 1988—though it will be argued here that both events are adventitious rather than causal in the context of this discussion. From the vantage point of survival, Hussein's head may be described as jogging along, important as the issues at hand were. The perennials remained—strategic insurance and budgetary support—and were basically looked after by the United States, with the oil-rich Arab states, chiefly Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, playing an increasing role as financial sponsors.

The domestic scene was not particularly disquieting, generally and by Jordanian standards. The PLO had been cowed; its mainstream leadership, personified by Arafat, acted on that knowledge and saved Hussein from the need for its absolute, i.e., organizational, suppression—a need Hussein gladly circumvented and which he would resolutely have acted on, if necessary. Hussein's attachment to the West Bank remained constant, visible and explicit, though it was clothed over the period in wildly fluctuating forms—from a formalized "Federation" proposal in March 1972, widely discussed (and resented), to an understanding of cooperation with Shimon Peres, then Israeli minister of foreign affairs, in April 1987, the so-called "London Agreement."[1] Within these limits

[1] The agreement was subsequently vetoed by Prime Minister Shamir. The question of whether the understanding would have changed history—of the Arab-Israel conflict, of the Middle East, of Hashemite Jordan—had Peres been more decisive or adroit in his dealing with

Hussein's strategy is best described as pragmatic—saving as much, and risking as little, as possible. He accepted the Rabat decisions of October 1974, when the Arab League, each of its members assenting, recognized as a body the Palestine Liberation Organization as "the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people."[1] By standing apart, even by merely abstaining, Hussein would again have been marked as an outcast from the Arab fold; it was a position which he would accept when he considered his existence was at stake, but in no other case. This stated adherence to the PLO did not prevent Hussein from continued involvement in all affairs of the West Bank as opportunity seemed to offer, though he had henceforth to take cognizance of the PLO as a partner—preferably as a very junior partner; it was a shadow play in which Arafat, for his own reasons, connived.

Various turns of the wheel promoted by the United States, on the initiative or the blessing of Presidents Nixon, Ford, Carter, and Reagan, made no lasting impact. Secretary of State Kissinger, who determined the grand tactics of the Nixon-Ford administrations, paid little attention to the West Bank, and less to Jordan, in what seems in retrospect to have been wise. Presidents Carter and Reagan, the former chiefly associated with his part in the Egyptian-Israeli peace, the latter with the "Reagan plan" of September 1982, ultimately left Hussein feeling that he was deliberately put on ice by his patron-allies.[2] By and large, the three regional actors directly involved in the West Bank—Israel, the PLO and King Hussein[3]—progressively

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Shamir over the case, is one of those tantalizing riddles which cannot be solved. This writer believes it would have led nowhere, if only because Hussein, with the ball passed into his own court, would not have followed up with any daring move.

[1] The "Arab League" is properly named the "League of Arab States"—a distinction with a difference which gives every member individual standing and makes a unanimous vote noteworthy.

[2] Few of the Israelis and Americans involved in the Camp David process would have known, or remembered, that Sadat and Hussein had taken a dislike to each other when they first met in Amman in December 1955.

[3] "King Hussein" rather than "Jordan." There are indications that Wasfi al-Tall, Hussein's forceful prime minister, until his assassination in November 1971, and later Hussein's younger brother and designated heir, Prince Hassan, disagreed with the King's preoccupation with the West Bank. But it was the King who made policy. (On Tall, see Asher

lost influence over the years, a process brought home to all three with dramatic force when the *intifada* erupted in December 1987, to their surprise. But all this hardly comes, from King Hussein's angle, under the heading of survival strategy.

More pertinent to survival strategy during this period were Hussein's Arab, as distinct from his Palestinian, policies. Egypt mattered little in this respect after Abdul Nasser's death, for all the personal antipathy between Hussein and Sadat. The ill-feeling created by Hussein's destruction of the Palestinian organizations as a military presence and, even more pungently, by his Federation Plan in early 1972, evaporated by the time Egypt and Syria came to plan what emerged as the 1973 October War. Hussein's essential passivity in that war was grounded in the basics of the situation.

The distinguishing historic characteristic of the Six Day War is that "it happened." The main actor, Abdul Nasser, was as much the object of developments as their cause. A fever had gripped the Arab world over the three weeks that preceded the war, and it swept all along up to the explosion of June 5. Hussein went with the rest, though his peculiar position made for different nuances. The October War had entirely different antecedents. It was a major adventure coldly calculated by Sadat and Assad, for whose success the primary conditions were secrecy and surprise. Hussein had to be kept out of the secret like everybody else—his dubious past, from the *qawmi* viewpoint, was an added factor, no more. Also, Sadat and Assad during the months prior to the war attenuated their public hostility to Hussein which hailed from "Black September" and Hussein's Federation plan; but this was merely an additional reinsurance. When the war broke out, Hussein was under no pressure, political or otherwise, to take mortal risks. He behaved with a proper show of solidarity and even sent a division to strengthen the Syrian front—after the first danger to Israel had passed. The assistance was strictly limited and Israel was inclined to see it as such and forgave. There is a remarkable story current that Israeli aircraft were set to blast to smithereens an enemy command group on the

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Susser, *Between Jordan and Palestine: A Political Biography of Wasfi al-Tall* (Hebrew), Tel Aviv: Hakibbutz Hameuchad, 1983.) On the fifteen years after Tall's murder, the same author's *Double Jeopardy: PLO Strategy Toward Israel and Jordan* (Washington: The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 1987), is essential reading.

southern sector of the Syrian front, until it was discovered that King Hussein was present and the group was spared. That was the end of Hussein's part in the war. Nothing heroic, no tangible gains, but another vindication of his long-term survival strategy.

As before and after, it was Syria that mattered. An interlude of good feeling in 1975 remained an aborted interlude. At the turn of 1980-81, matters reached a point when another Syrian invasion of Jordan was widely expected. The invasion did not, in fact, materialize—it is said because of pressure from the Saudis, on whose goodwill and financial backing Assad depended at the time.[1] Otherwise the relationship remained, on Hussein's part, in a state of low-key alert; at the same time Hussein took care not to provoke Assad, except for temporary and temperamental lapses which seem to be part of his nature.

Syria's role in Hussein's calculations is far from secondary. There is no doubt that ingrained suspicion of Syria, a knee-jerk suspicion greater than towards any of his other neighbors including Israel, was one cause of Hussein's rapprochement with Iraq at the outbreak of the Iraq-Iran war in 1980, and insufficiently appreciated by outsiders. The King would have sided with Iraq in any case. First, his fear and loathing of Khomeini (about which more will be said below) was a good reason on its own. Second, Iraq's outlet to the Jordanian port of Aqaba on the Red Sea, when Iraq was cut off from the Persian Gulf, was a valuable source of cash and employment at a time of deepening recession for the Jordanian economy. And last but not least, siding with Iraq in the war was, after all, the majority attitude within the Arab League and the urge to appear as part of an Arab consensus was always important to Hussein. Still, the fact that Syria was the only Arab country that sided with Iran throughout the war and which showed its preference in practical terms (and to Iraq's detriment) gave zest to Hussein's camaraderie with Saddam Hussein during these years.

Domestically too, the years between the mid-1970s and the mid-1980s were a time of relative liberalism in Jordan. Such liberalism extended to a degree of permissiveness *vis-à-vis* the press, professional organizations and trade unions, and even

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[1] Hafez al-Assad had finally eliminated his rival Salah Jedid in November, 1970. Though Assad was believed to be less ideologically oriented as a Ba'thist, this has made no difference to Hussein's basic stance *versus* Syria.

the Communist Party. The importance of this episode is noteworthy for what it leaves out. That is to say that it underlines the fact that a need for persecution (an element of paranoia, if you will) is no part of Hussein's strategy of survival—a conclusion which fits well into his persona as it has become known over the decades.

The years of low pressure as regards survival ended in late 1987-early 1988 with the outbreak of the *intifada* in the Israeli-occupied territories and the spectacular strengthening of Muslim fundamentalism in Jordan. Both developments reached critical mass, so far as King Hussein was concerned, at about the same time, but while the *intifada* erupted with dramatic suddenness, the growing intensity of religious feeling in Jordan had been observed for some time.[1] In the latter case the lack of "dramatic suddenness" had two reasons. First, it was not a specifically Jordanian phenomenon. Second, Muslim fundamentalists had for decades been identified in Jordan chiefly with the Muslim Brothers, who had a history of mutual toleration with the Hashemite regime.

The *intifada* soon came to highlight a decline of both PLO and Jordanian influence in the West Bank; "the people," no longer tolerant of self-centered and ineffective patrons outside, were taking their fate into their own hands. (It is pertinent in this regard that the *intifada* generated, almost from its outset, organs of self-rule—education, welfare, taxation—which were independent of both the official tutelage of Jordan and, at the unofficial level, of the arrogant presumption of PLO institutions based far away from the homeland. These were organs which the Israeli authorities could not, and perhaps did not try very hard to, suppress.) While this image may err on the side of idealization and oversimplification, and while under the relentless pressure of realities it was soon to lose much of whatever truth it ever held, for a time the image was the reality that impressed itself on the King. As such, it contributed to his sense that, for the time being, any involvement in the West Bank was damaging and against "the current of the times," as always an important consideration.

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[1] On this, see Robert B. Satloff, *Troubles on the East Bank: Challenges to the Domestic Stability of Jordan*, The Washington Papers No. 123 (Washington: Georgetown University Center for Strategic and International Studies, 1986), and *idem., They Cannot Stop Our Tongues: Islamic Activism in Jordan* (Washington: The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 1986).

But another factor entered into the King's calculations. Ever since the early 1970s, the notion that a restructured Israeli grand strategy might see in Jordan a "Palestinian state," with a consequent—possibly precedent—exodus of the West Bank population to the east, had seriously exercised Hussein, much more than the political realities in Israel seem to have warranted. Now, with the *intifada* shaking the Israeli scene from top to bottom (as Hussein of course knew) any factor notionally promoting a population "transfer" to the East Bank ought to be scotched so far as possible. In the light of this consideration, the decision officially to sever Jordan's legal and administrative ties with the West Bank took on a distinct, "negative," survival dimension, making it more difficult (or at least less seductive) for Israel to resort to an extremity which spelled the extinction of the Hashemite state.[1]

While this certainly was not the only consideration that caused the succession of steps that came to a climax in Hussein's speech to the nation on July 31, 1988, it certainly did contribute to the pragmatic calculations which had pointed to the same end for fourteen years, with ups and downs. Moreover, for the first time in as many years, Hussein had undertaken a major emergency measure—as distinct from set policies like the suspicion of Syria—which can be labelled a "survival" reaction. It marked a stage in the rapidly darkening circumstances surrounding the Hashemite entity. It is also important to point out that the constitutional consequences of the withdrawal also concern the East Bank. The new electoral legislation, which cancelled the vestiges of West Bank representation in the Jordanian parliament which had so far survived the Israeli conquest in 1967, made Hussein's survival strategy merge in the far more vital consequences of the "Islamic revival."[2]

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[1] Not many observers, to my knowledge, have pointed to this motive in Hussein's complex attitude which underlay the resounding decision publicized on July 31, 1988; Asher Susser, *In Through the Out Door: Jordan's Disengagement and the Middle East Peace Process* (Washington: The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 1990), is an exception.

[2] It may be mentioned here that the measures of July 31, 1988, were not the "end of the road." It has become clear since, as indeed many suspected then, that Hussein has not forgone his abiding attachment to the West Bank and that he finds new expressions for that attachment as opportunity seems to offer.

Islamic fundamentalism did not create a "survival crisis" in Jordan by its sudden appearance. It has been present in strength ever since the end of the British mandate in 1946, at the latest. But because of peculiar circumstances, it has rarely posed a serious problem to the Hashemite regime. This, at first glance, is curious. The Hashemite rulers have historically been political allies of the West, even before King Hussein's grandfather settled in Amman. But whereas Abdullah, like his father Hussein, the British-installed king of the Hijaz, was culturally a Muslim to the bone, the present King Hussein has been heavily acculturated to the West since his early youth. It may be said that his education in British (or British-oriented) institutions[1] have been the formative influences of his life—inclusive of life's lighter side. Though he bears his faith with pride—he is apt to flaunt his descent from the Prophet, and not just because of the kudos it confers—he is not orthodox in his lifestyle. All this adds up to a persona which, to those who would qualify as "fundamentalists," would be deeply suspect, or outright obnoxious. The source of Muslim reluctance to criticize Hussein lies in the fact that despite occasional times of trouble over the years both sides have mainly confronted the same enemies, enemies whose hostility was perceived as more existential.

The fundamentalists had their time-honored framework in the association of the Muslim Brothers, *al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun*, with their historic and sentimental base in Egypt. There they had been locked in a struggle of life and death with Abdul Nasser, whose claim to rule was exclusive and secular. In the critical first years of Hussein's kingship it was Abdul Nasser who was the external threat, with a fanatical mass following inside Jordan, especially in the crowded towns of the West Bank, in the refugee camps of the Jordan Valley and about Amman. In the ensuing clashes the Brothers came out on the side of the regime—a physical stiffening that was important, and perhaps vitally important—at a time when the regime represented even less of the Arab "national spirit" than usual. This alliance, entirely opportunistic in its origins, became over the years a premise of Jordanian politics, made easier no doubt by the King's gift of being able to charm people he wanted to charm as well as his "chemistry" with Muhammad 'Abd al-

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[1] These include the Victoria College in Alexandria, Harrow public school and Sandhurst Military Academy.

Rahman al-Khalifa, the elderly guide of the Brothers in Jordan.

Beginning in the early 1980s this satisfactory state of affairs, from the Hashemite viewpoint, deteriorated. There are several reasons for this. For one, attrition was at work; the special circumstances which were originally responsible for the King Hussein-Muslim Brothers alignment had by then receded far into the past, and the need for Muslim self-expression in the face of a basically unsympathetic regime grew stronger with a rapidly worsening economy and its attending frustrations. (The Brothers' satisfaction with the help extended to them by the King in their bloody quarrel with Assad in 1979-80 did not, apparently, generate lasting sentiment.) Also, the lure of the PLO and its even more inspiring rival organizations called for an "Islamic" response. Whether this response came as an effort to give the secular Palestinian organizations an Islamic bent, or whether it concentrated within the existing Muslim Brothers organization in an attempt to find Islamic answers to the questions raised by the secular organizations, the effect was bound to damage the easygoing tolerance which had for decades been at the base of the Brothers' attitude to the regime. And lastly, the Brothers lost their monopoly of organized Muslim fundamentalism with the appearance and steadily mounting appeal in Jordan of more radical trends such as Islamic Jihad and Hamas (*harakat al-muqawama al-islamiyya*—"the Movement of Islamic Resistance").[1] Born and bred in the different atmosphere of the Israeli-occupied territories, their spread to Jordan was probably inevitable, but it was given a terrible impetus by the presence in Amman of Shaykh Assad Bayud al-Tamimi, whom the Israeli authorities had expelled from Hebron—always a center of Muslim "fundamentalism" even before it became a political problem—as early as 1969.

The regime reacted according to pattern—up to a point. The King started to orchestrate a campaign of approval and emulation. In part it consisted of symbols—the King grew a beard and took to stressing his traditional title "Sharif"—and declarations, among which the determination to recapture the

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[1] The Tahrir (Liberation) Party, politically incorruptible and a bastion at all times against the Western taint of the Hashemite regime (and Western taint everywhere in the Arab East), had by then disappeared from Jordan. Numerically it never compared even remotely with the Muslim Brothers.

Holy Places of Jerusalem was especially prominent.[1] Another element of the King's response, the return to "democratization," is more important in retrospect. The process has not been superseded to this day—in contrast to the earlier "democratization" of 1956-57 (and even briefer episodes up to the Six Day War) which had then changed with dramatic finality into the traditional style, blatantly authoritarian, of Hashemite rule in Jordan.

At the outset, democratization meant—and was supposed to mean—that Muslim Brothers and their identifiable sympathizers could occupy positions of political trust and influence closed to them previously. But when more radical organizations, including various ill-defined Islamic "action groups," supported by an upsurge embracing East Bankers as well as Palestinians, pushed the Muslim Brothers to the wall, or gave signs of subverting their basic loyalty to the regime, the King tried to reassert himself in the old manner. This time, though, he gave up at an early stage, as he had not given up in previous crises.[2] His will may have failed him; it seems more likely that his political instinct, his greatest asset as a ruler, told him that conditions had changed. Be that as it may, Hussein soon returned to the policy of democratization to which he still holds fast, with finely graded calibrations.

Here a brief digression is necessary:

In the ongoing exercise of "Understanding King Hussein" it is important, and none too easy, to come to grips with his

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[1] King Hussein was not noted for his attachment to Jerusalem when its eastern part, with the Old City, was in his possession. It has been said that his grandfather's assassination in his presence at the entrance to Jerusalem's al-Aqsa mosque left him with a lasting sense of alienation.

[2] The most visible incident of this phase may also have been instrumental to its abandonment. In May 1986, troops stormed a women's dormitory at Yarmuk (i.e., Irbid) University where demonstrating students had taken refuge; the demonstrators had not, apparently, set out under Islamic slogans, but they speedily assumed them in the course of the event. During the scuffle the troops killed a number of students. Such blatant invasion of domestic sanctity is highly untypical for the regime—and it is possible that the commander on the spot lost control. If so, the King would not be likely to admit it; officially he threw the blame on "Marxist subversion," another throwback to 1957. Characteristically, the brief phase of Hussein's anti-Islamic activism went with an equally brief phase of making up to Assad. For a more detailed description of the Yarmuk University incident, see Robert Satloff, *They Cannot Stop Our Tongues*, pp. 22-26.

attitude toward "democracy." Hussein's background, education and life experience have made him authoritarian. He also believes in a society of political consensus—being authoritarian, preferably a consensus defined and guided by himself. On the other hand, he has shown more than once that he will, when under a perceived constraint, merge with a consensus defined from outside. If this temporary state is commended as "democracy," so be it. But Hussein is too intelligent not to know that this commendation is a weak reed to lean on, though insofar as it comes from circles whose wrath would be dangerous, it is an additional insurance. All this does not amount to democracy as understood in the West. Hussein uses the term when it suits him; fundamentally it is alien to him—not, perhaps, as hateful and despicable as it is in the eyes of other rulers in the region; just alien.[1]

There is no need here to go into the details of the democratization process. The chief landmark is the general elections of November 1989, which gave Islamic activists of one shading or the other a near-majority in the parliament, despite the gerrymandering built into the Jordanian system of territorial-*cum*-ethno-religious constituencies (with the bedouin having a reserved number of seats to boot).[2] If Hussein was surprised—as a temperamental optimist he has often been taken by surprise when the unhoped-for materialized—he did not show it by faltering in the follow-up. In subsequent cabinets, Islamists became increasingly represented in those ministries that catered for the spiritual future of the nation, like Education and Social Development, rather than for the present security of the state, like the premiership or the interior—a

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[1] These comments must not be connected with a supposed "bedouin democracy" of which much has been made since the First World War—sometimes in good faith, sometimes in brazen attempts to sell special interest to a gullible West; mostly in a romantic melee of both impulses. Hussein has in the past praised its virtues; in particular it was a media stock in trade of the late General Glubb "Pasha." All this has nothing to do with "democracy" as a phenomenon of Jordanian politics.

[2] Though women had the passive as well as the active franchise, no woman candidate was successful. Here, Hussein's acquiescence in what undoubtedly symbolized the mainstream of opinion may be taken as more than time-serving; he always was a male-traditionalist to the marrow.

very Husseinian view of priorities.[1] The elections had been clean, by Jordanian standards, even if it is possible to argue that the true state of public opinion justified an even larger representation of the Islamic element. The "voice of the people" was certainly loud in claiming Islam as its source of inspiration, hope and hate; dissenting views remained subdued. The King joined the mainstream. It was the safest he could do, while his position as head of state—"the state," it must be stressed, as traditionally understood in Jordan—was accepted. He was not challenged, either on constitutional or on functional grounds. There was no need; he took care to give no provocation.

[1] The army command remained unaffected; the army is constitutionally the King's preserve. Twice in the past, though, Hussein let political tendencies unfavorable to the Hashemite tradition influence him in appointments to senior army posts—during the Nasserite upswell of 1956, and the Palestinian ferment of 1968-1970.

V THE KUWAIT CRISIS

The Kuwait crisis of 1990-91 put King Hussein's survival strategy into the limelight once more, especially because the King took up a position which put him squarely in opposition to his traditional supporters abroad—and just as squarely on the losing side. The subject will be treated here in greater detail.

It is useful first to outline the King's historical attitude towards Iraq, and especially his relations with Saddam Hussein over the years prior to the latest Persian Gulf war. His grandfather Abdullah's relationship with Iraq had been difficult. Jealousy of his younger brother Faisal, who as king of Iraq had drawn a greater prize than Abdullah in the lottery arranged by Britain after World War I, played a part. So did their common coveting of Syria; they both looked on Damascus as the true crown of their aspirations, superior to Baghdad, far superior to Amman. Also, since World War II, Abdullah mistrusted Iraqi aspirations for a Fertile Crescent federation, one which was to coerce Transjordan.

Abdullah's grandson Hussein never shared this aversion, but in his case too, Syria has always played a major role in his relationship with Iraq. One early factor was indeed personal—Hussein always felt close to his cousin and equal in age, who reigned in Baghdad as Faisal II. Lacking Abdullah's territorial ambitions, Hussein did not resent the Iraqi Hashemites' plans, real or reputed, concerning Syria. On the contrary, ever since Syria aligned with Abdul Nasser's Egypt in 1955, an alignment which gave substance to Syria's claim to be the core of Arab nationalism, Hussein has feared Syria, and it is this fear that is a key to his attitude towards Iraq.

Hussein's fear of Syria has several facets. The fear might be of subversion, given that even in Abdullah's times Damascus was the home-away-from-home to East Bankers who had fled, or had been evicted from, their country. The ideological chasm between Syria and Jordan became ever deeper with time, republic versus monarchy since the beginnings of Syria's and Jordan's statehood, and followed by the sequence of moderate Ba'th in Damascus since 1963 and its "radical" displacement in 1966 that created its own dynamic. Moreover, Jordan feared military invasion; Amman is a mere fifty miles from the Syrian border and can easily be reached by a south-eastern detour. That this view is well-founded was proven in September 1970 and again made plausible in December 1980. And even barring the fear of invasion, Syria was a standing threat to Jordan's communications with the world, already circumscribed by the lack of an outlet to the Mediterranean. And, finally, add to that aspirations for a "Greater Syria," more plausible when they emanated from Damascus under any regime than from Abdullah's Amman. Indeed, no regime at Damascus since the 1950s has ever waived the claim to a Syrian motherland which included Lebanon, Transjordan and Palestine.[1]

This forms the background to King Hussein's view of Iraq, Syria's perennial rival, as a natural ally, whatever the regime in Baghdad. As early as two years after the bloody uprooting of the Hashemite monarchy in Iraq, Hussein sought active coexistence with 'Abd al-Karim Qassem, the first ruler of the Republic—an overture accepted by Qassem with little enthusiasm.[2] Qassem's successors posed no particular problems

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[1] Including the Alawites ruling at Damascus for the last quarter-century. As recently as March 1991 President Assad referred to Jesus Christ as "a Syrian" in a political talk with American visitors, and his (Sunni) Minister of Defense, Mustafa Tallas, on May 9, 1991, expressed his hope for unity with Lebanon "soon." (*The Middle East Today*, May 10, 1991, quoting *al-Hayat.*) See generally, Daniel Pipes, *Greater Syria: The History of an Ambition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990).

[2] Hussein did join the Arab League action during the "first" Kuwait crisis in the summer and fall of 1961, when it was Qassem who announced the "return" of the emirate to Iraq, though he took care to demonstrate no military zeal. But it was always of foremost interest to Hussein to appear as a partner in any Arab combination that was not specifically dangerous to himself and what he stood for. And, of course, he had a rational interest in the preservation of a small Arab monarchy

to the ongoing relationship, not particularly cordial on the Iraqis' part, but generally void of tension and certainly not "anti-Hashemite." An Iraqi army contingent entered Jordan on the eve of the Six Day War and stayed on with the King's consent; during the "Bloody September" of 1970 it remained inactive and was recalled soon afterwards. Though it gave no help to the King during the aborted Syrian invasion, it did not assist the Palestinian organizations either—which, given the ideological complexion of the new Ba'th regime, had been one of the King's fears during the crisis. This basically reactive stance *vis-à-vis* Iraq—"survival thinking" only insofar as it represented a reinsurance against Syria—underwent a subtle change as Saddam Hussein tightened his grip over the country, some time after 1970 and long before he became officially head of state (and of the army, and of the Ba'th Party) in the summer of 1979.

It is not known to what extent Hussein, never a penetrating analyst of situations that were no direct concern of his, was conscious of the terrifying "Republic of Fear" that developed relentlessly on his country's eastern frontier, and if he was, to what extent it moved him; probably little enough. So far as it did, it can only have strengthened his desire to not draw upon himself Saddam Hussein's displeasure. In any case, the relationship, so incongruous in many respects, strengthened throughout Saddam's reign virtually without a break, right up to, and including, the Gulf War of 1991.

Three stages in the relationship between the King and Saddam are easily recognized. Until Khomeini's take-over in Iran early in 1979, relations between Jordan and Iraq did not rank high in either regime's priorities. Even so, Hussein picked his way carefully. The steady expansion of economic relations had no specific political background. These were upbeat years when Jordan's economy experienced a euphoria occasioned, though only partly justified, by the first and second oil booms—the Arab oil producers' largesse combined with Jordanians finding job opportunities by the ten-thousands in Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states—and by the Lebanese civil war. It is of greater significance in our context that occasional acts of brutality perpetrated on Jordanian territory or against Jordanian nationals in Iraq, either by Iraqi agencies or by terrorist organizations under Iraqi control, were played down,

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allied to the West, similar to himself. See generally, this author's *Iraq Under Qassem* (New York: John Wiley, 1969).

visibly on higher orders, after first bouts of publicity. Evidently, Saddam Hussein was even then a neighbor whom it was best to treat with circumspection.

The Islamic revolution in Iran, in February 1979, introduced a new element. Hussein's relations with the Shah had been cordial but of no particular significance as the Shah had no special use for cooperation with Jordan. Khomeini, on the other hand, was repulsive to Hussein from the first, even while other rulers in the Arab world, conservatives as well as secular "progressives," were still groping their way about the portent at Tehran. Hussein understood that he, the King[1] with claims to Islamic excellence as a descendant of the Prophet (and an archetypal Sunni to boot), was central to all that Khomeini hated and scorned. The emerging conflict between Ba'thi Iraq and the Islamic Republic of Iran (which, be it said, Saddam Hussein did not originally wish to provoke), gave Hussein's aversion a focus. He became and remained Iraq's closest ally in the Arab arena throughout the war that broke out in September 1980. Apart from giving his cooperation with Saddam Hussein a new dimension, this position was also a snub and an annoyance to Syria, Khomeini's one consistent ally among Arab states. And as a built-in benefit to Hussein, it meant merging in an Arab consensus, as always a desideratum.

In practice Hussein's impact on the Iran-Iraq war was limited, though not trivial. His resources being circumscribed, his assistance was of necessity circumscribed, too. But within these limitations his help went all out and was not confined to declarations and diplomatic assistance. To be sure, a Jordanian army detachment of several thousand sent to Iraq—or one which the King said, in 1982, would be sent to Iraq—could make no difference. But Jordanian airfields became refuges for Iraqi combat aircraft and the port of Aqaba became the terminal of a trans-desert route which grew to prime importance for Iraqi earnings from oil export (its outlets via the Persian Gulf and, from 1982, through Syria, being cut off) as well as for essential imports. (Financially this connection would have spelled greater relief to Jordan, if the Iraqi government had not started, in 1983, to default on its debts to Jordan as to other, more affluent, Arab countries.) An attending feature of the war years was a series of meetings between the King and Saddam which

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[1] "King" (*malik*) is a title suspect to Islamic tradition and political thinking—as Hussein, of course, knows.

took place with regularity, usually in Baghdad. It was significant, though, that the first meeting in the summer of 1979, was in Amman; Saddam Hussein, who by then expected an armed confrontation with Iran in the foreseeable future, could not as yet take the King's backing for granted. Over the years, the meetings were shows of unlimited fraternal cordiality.

The last phase of Hussein's relations with Saddam Hussein for our purposes is the total alignment with Iraq in the Kuwait crisis and the Persian Gulf War of 1990-91. Unlike the former two, it is dramatic. It cast the King into a persona which runs counter to the norms of political behavior expected from him; it put him into opposition to allies of a generation and, in brief, it seemed to endanger his very existence to the point where many observers regarded it as downright suicidal. "The King's days were numbered" once more.

The fact that his days had been "numbered" more than once before and that he survived each time to have them numbered afresh should on its own have warned against simplistic judgments. It would seem that at the core of the last phase—the core of its fundamental distinction from the former two—lay Hussein's estimate that whatever the present inconveniences and long-time risks, *now* he had to identify with Saddam Hussein or perish. In this respect, it was a repetition of the June 1967 scenario.

The start of this third phase of Hussein's relations with Saddam can be pinpointed with unusual clarity. It is a public speech of Saddam given on April 1, 1990.[1] As we now realize, he was by then on the road that led to the invasion of Kuwait on August 2, though he may not as yet have set his sights on outright annexation. He was using the Islamic imagery which had been his public style since early in the war against Iran. He also used the expression, "by God, we will make fire eat up half of Israel. . ." The speech was not especially geared to Israel; the phrase was uttered in a defensive context—evidently Saddam's fear that the recent discovery of nuclear capacitors on their way to Iraq might induce Israel to a repeat performance of its destruction of the Osiraq reactor in June 1981. These, though, are quibbles. The time was ripe: once more Arab society had been delivered in its search for its hero,

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[1] Baghdad Domestic Service [Arabic], April 2, 1990, as reported in *Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS) Daily Report: Near East and South Asia*, April 3, 1990.

the Abdul Nasser of 1955 transposed to 1990. Like Abdul Nasser in his time, Saddam Hussein had not until then been especially popular with the wider Arab public, in spite of the heroic rhetorics of an anti-"Persian" crusade. As the protagonist of the Ba'th, a movement pronouncedly secular in its nationalist ideology, he could certainly not count on the knee-jerk adulation of pious Muslims, for all his recent endeavors to seduce just that constituency. During the crisis of the war against Iran he had even courted American Jewry by appearing as a moderate statesman who might concede to Israel the right of existence (if justice was done to the Palestinians) and who, in any case, did not have the Palestinian problem prying on his mind.

All this became irrelevant in a moment. The new Saladin had appeared to avenge his people[1]—"the people" yearning for the avenger being, by now, Arab Muslims rather than Muslim Arabs. Nowhere in the Arab world did Saddam's popularity surge higher than in Jordan. The setting was uniquely favorable: the conglomeration of frustrated and angry Palestinians, still without roots in a state which emphatically was not "theirs;" the economic misery which hit Jordan in the early 1980s harder than other countries in the region, and its attending social problems; a regime both alien to the prevailing mood and at pains to placate it; the established cooperation between Amman and Baghdad which made demonstrations of enthusiasm for the Iraqi ruler appear less provocative to the powers governing Jordan;[2] and lastly, the aura of sheer brutality which Saddam Hussein exuded and which became a vicarious release for the downtrodden.

For a number of months after the speech, Saddam's new-found popularity hovered in the void. It was the Kuwait crisis that provided a focus. Saddam Hussein's invasion and subsequent annexation of Kuwait did not inspire his admirers with any particular enthusiasm; his turning the affair into a challenge to Western imperialism, and, by one easy remove, Israel and Zionism, did. Within days public opinion in Jordan

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[1] The historic Saladin was a Kurd. But anybody disposed to argue might be answered with reason that it was the Muslim, and not the Arab, *umma* that was at stake.

[2] By way of contrast, demonstrations for Abdul Nasser had always been regarded since 1957 as a hostile challenge to King Hussein, and rightly so, except on rare and atypical occasions.

was at fever heat. By a curious phenomenon of wish-fulfillment not unknown in the contemporary Middle East, hope merged with expectation, and expectation with achievement. Naturally, the climax was reached when the first Scud missiles passed over Jordan (and the West Bank) towards Tel Aviv.

King Hussein totally identified with his home consensus.[1] He did so the more pungently as the crisis inexorably moved towards war. He not merely joined, and because of his exposure seemed to lead, the Jordanian chorus in adulation of Saddam; he became chief spokesman for Saddam to the West. He did his best to keep Iraq open to imports in spite of the tightening blockade, including the import of strategic goods. He paid heavily in terms of American wrath; a Saudi boycott and the cessation of Saudi and Gulf subsidies; and the knowledge that Israel would pounce on him the moment she saw an acute danger of Jordanian territory becoming available for Iraqi armor, aircraft and, above all, missiles. He paid by having his own approaching exit trumpeted once more in a thousand media throughout the world as being "inevitable"—no small matter, as prophesies like these might become self-fulfilling. And still he did not flinch. It is true, though, that he tried, somewhat shakily, to control the damage, by claiming neither consistently nor convincingly, that he did not really break the Security Council resolutions regarding Iraq.

Hussein's public appearance, which drew the attention of Western media and roused much anger, deserves to be analyzed in some detail. In the West it was widely held that the King had finally burned his bridges in a speech, addressed to "the Arabs and Muslims," which he delivered at Amman on February 6, 1991, when the war in the air against Iraq had reached the peak of its intensity.[2] Yet despite its rhetoric and cloying devotion to the Iraqi cause, it makes curiously bloodless reading. The speech pays glowing tribute to "Iraq, its heroic army and its steadfast, courageous people." "The war," Hussein said, "aims at Iraq's existence and right to a dignified and free life." The Iraqis' fate, under the onslaught of "28 allies

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[1] As always and everywhere, the consensus consisted of those who spoke out and came out. Those who did neither, though perhaps a majority, do not count.

[2] Amman Domestic Service [Arabic], as reported in *FBIS, Daily Report: Near East and South Asia*, February 7, 1991.

and 28 armies" is bitter indeed. There is "a Gulf crisis" and a conflict—but it should never have come to war. That it did come to war is, unhappily, the fault of "the concerned Arab parties" who did not put their faith in "Arab dialogue." The result is far more serious for "the nation" than even the Sykes-Picot treaty, and only the nation's enemies, and above all Israel, would benefit. The tragedy should be stopped at once, Hussein said, and "Iraqi-U.S." as well as "Arab-Arab" dialogues would solve the problem.[1]

For all his identification with the "Muslim nation," Hussein paid much attention to the suffering of Christians, too; the Church of the Holy Sepulchre is mentioned by the side of al-Aqsa (both sanctuaries being under Israeli domination made the coupling natural), and Pope John Paul II—who had come out against the war—is mentioned with great respect, the only individual identified in the whole speech. The United Nations received its due, together with its resolutions which are in no way spelled out, but it is the "alliance" in its onslaught on Iraq which puts these resolutions to naught by its excesses. Saddam Hussein goes unmentioned; so does President Bush; so does Kuwait as well as the United States (with the marginal exception of the "Iraqi-U.S. dialogue," mentioned above). In spite of the aggression against Iraq which cries to Heaven, the theme of retribution or revenge is studiously circumvented. In all, it is Hamlet without the Prince of Denmark. The uninitiated would not recognize the stage on which the King plays.

Three themes emerge from this momentous oration. The first and obvious is the intense identification with Iraq in her trouble. The second, less obvious but very noticeable to the observant, is the wish not to give traditional allies more offense than is strictly necessary, if the first theme is not to be blurred. The third is the King's urge to cut a figure in the general helter-skelter—somebody to be considered in his own right, an

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[1] The so-called Sykes-Picot agreement of 1916, then secret, divided the spoils of the Ottoman empire between Britain and France in anticipation of an Allied victory. It contradicted, in spirit if not by letter, the promises which King Hussein's great-grandfather, the amir of Mecca, Sharif Hussein bin 'Ali, believed he had received from Britain if he rose against his Ottoman sovereign. It has always been held up in Arab historiography as the epitome of imperialist treachery. To the "Hashemite Arab" Hussein it was certainly a living document, especially fit to dramatize his own place within the national context.

actor playing his own historic role. Taken together, it is Hussein the survivalist in pure essence.

It is the first theme that is supreme. Saddam's cause as such may not have moved Hussein, but with the fever raging in Jordan during the entire crisis, identifying with Saddam (and to be seen as identifying) was a matter of survival. All else, while not insignificant, took second place: the goodwill of the West, Saudi and Gulf subsidies, Israel's abstention from hostilities. It was a clear case of "first things first." Today was vital; let tomorrow look after itself.[1]

Who will say that Hussein's calculation during the hair-raising dangers of the war did not work out? The West has forgiven and almost forgotten; even as Hussein was at his most decisive in defending Iraq, there were signs of allowances being made in his favor in the United States, let alone in Europe. King Hussein's press conferences in April and May 1991 convey a surrealist feeling, as if the first two months of that year never happened at all.[2] Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States are harder nuts for Hussein to crack; after all, a sense of tribal treachery compounds the issue, added to the monies which Hussein's fellow Arab monarchs are expected again to fork out to their erring cousin. But there are overt signs, and covert allusions, that they too have accepted the inevitable. Besides, what alternative do they have? There were indeed rumors that if Armageddon were let loose, Saudi Arabia would try and help herself to southern Jordan—it is not forgotten in Riyadh that Aqaba and Ma'an were part of the Hijaz until the 1920s. But Armageddon has been averted, and the al-Sa'ud do not easily embark on adventures.

Mainstream Israel, as represented by a majority of its cabinet ministers, continues to hold its stance of ill-humored tolerance of the King and his regime, predicated on a quiet frontier—more or less—and the success of the King's efforts to keep it so. With the denouement in Iraq, his task has become

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[1] As to Hussein's somewhat ludicrous attempt to project his political ego onto the scene, not too much should be made of it. Hussein has a healthy self-respect and he is confident by nature and experience. He feels good; play-acting is part of the game. When he pursues three lines at once, as he did in the speech just examined, he strikes us as being too clever by half. What matter? It is the result that counts.

[2] A good example is his appearance together with Secretary of State Baker at Amman on May 14, 1991—all harmonious, without a hint of friction, whether personal, diplomatic, or strategic.

noticeably easier and his efforts more convincing. And for good measure, according to reports the substance of which need not be doubted, he reinsures his position with Saddam Hussein after his defeat (and, it seems, only since Saddam's surprising recovery after his shattering defeat became known) by re-activating Jordan as a semi-clandestine supply line for Iraq. One cannot know whether Hussein believes that Saddam will show gratitude; one may, however, be reasonably sure that the "reinsurance" is well applied to his public at home.

This leads to the last point, the crucial point which first had set Hussein on his course. Opinion at home over the war is confused and leaderless. God had so plainly ordained Saddam's victory over the infidel; God, to be sure, cannot be wrong, but his ways have turned out to be deeply perturbing for the believer. There are signs that the King is tightening the reins again in the tradition of his house, and that the pious have it no longer their own way, in the streets, the schools, the press, even from the pulpits. The men of the Hashemite establishment, in the army and the civil service, are gathering confidence that the chain is not broken. Yesterday's "tomorrow" has become "today," and it is far closer to the ingrained ways of authority. Today's "tomorrow" will take care of itself.

VI CONCLUSIONS

The study so far has, the author hopes, substantiated the claim that Hussein's survival strategy, though not coterminous with his overall policy, has been its core and his main concern. It is the application of that principle that has shifted with shifting situations, not the principle itself. While the maintenance of a strong government and a strong army may be counted as chief components of his survival strategy, they are also the outcrop of his personality as a ruler; here the differentiation becomes artificial. It is Hussein's politics in the narrower sense that gives the clue to our quest.

Hussein's politics are essentially passive: whosoever poses in his judgment the danger at the moment, determines the reaction. His judgment has thus far proven remarkably true, though it may be argued that identifying the dangers—Abdul Nasser, the PLO, Israel, Syria, Muslim fundamentalism, the external enemy or the home front, in kaleidoscopically changing combinations and concentrations—has usually been easy or even obvious. And since the identification of the danger, and the measures deemed necessary for its containment, are the task with which he is saddled as the mainstay of the Hashemite kingdom—nay, its personification—it becomes meaningless to charge him with inconsistency, unreliability, lack of principle, treachery or political prostitution. He has one principle—to survive as ruler of the state with which he identifies and for which he has been willing, so far, to fight to the last. Indeed, he will fight with every means at his disposal, up to and including—one need not doubt it—the supreme sacrifice if necessary.

Having outlined his supreme goal—to survive—may it also be said here, with some reluctance, that this does not seem a mean or evil goal, as rulers and states go nowadays in the Middle East. There is a complementary corollary to be remembered: since this overall goal is primarily reactive, it makes the King a dubious partner for undertakings which envision initiative, political courage or conceptual innovation.[1] It certainly makes Hussein loath to embark on grand designs of his own choosing. (This is in contrast to his grandfather King Abdullah, whom he resembles less than is often supposed.)

Before trying to make inferences respecting the future, it is well to sum up the actual essentials of Hussein's survival strategy as they emerge from his political life over the past four decades. They are:

1) Today's perils may be final and have to be looked after before tomorrow's; tomorrow's perils may be looked after tomorrow, and hopefully they may vanish on their own account.[2]

2) It is important to be popular and bad to be hated, not only because of the inherent benefits and risks involved, but also because the moral uplift of popularity spells increased strength.

3) Powerful and opulent allies are a must in the long run, but these relationships should be based on mutually compatible interests; Hussein will always keep a free hand for unusual contingencies. To be considered "reliable" may be as bad as being taken for granted.

4) The neighbor to be watched above all is Syria—confronted, considered, conciliated, blocked. There is no formula, except that Syria remains an object of suspicion, even of fear.

Israel is certainly a factor in Hussein's survival calculations. But so far he has found a working formula: play them along; they love it. Two provisos remain with respect to Israel. A real and ongoing effort must be made, and seen to be made, to keep the common frontier quiet; here the Israelis have little tolerance and may become dangerous to Hussein at any moment. On the other side of the Israel equation, no

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[1] Disciples of the "Jordanian option" in Israel would do well to consider this angle—if they have not done so by now.

[2] "Hussein's Law"—the antithesis of Murphy's Law.

breakthrough in relations should look imminent; this is risky with no compensating gain.

In contrast, the Palestinians, including the PLO, have long since ceased to rate a place of their own in Hussein's "survival strategy," though they certainly rate high in what remains of his political world when abstracted from "survival."

5) And finally, direct and efficient control of the army is the ultimate fundament of survival, though the day-to-day visibility of the army may fluctuate with changing needs and lapses in attention or judgment may happen.

Does past experience enable us to make inferences respecting the future? Let us view the imponderables. First, Hussein's health: he looks older than his 55 years, though robust enough. He is given to moods; his father was an incurable schizophrenic, and his younger brother Prince Muhammad (between Hussein and Crown Prince Hassan in age) is known to have mental problems; Hussein himself has been treated for a variety of ailments throughout most of his adult life. In sum, there is no particular reason to doubt that his condition will remain tolerable for yet another decade or two—*absit omen.*

Second, Hussein's political will: If his past history, as has been examined here inductively, means anything, it is that he will not give up voluntarily, except in conjunction with a physical or mental breakdown. As far as the possibility of Hussein's violent disposal, he has survived many attempts on his life; he is well protected and has had luck. Protection and luck may fail him any day. On the other hand, for many years now he has been less an object of murderous hatred than he was from the mid-1950s to the mid-1970s, through circumstances interwoven with his survival strategy. This is not much of an insurance, especially as complacency carries its own danger; but so far as it goes, assassination does not rank high among adverse factors on the list of potential contingencies.

Another conceivable terminus would be Hussein's overthrow—whether entailing his death or not—by domestic upheaval. So far, and ever since "Transjordan" became a distinguishable polity under Abdullah about sixty years ago, there has been an extraordinary interaction between the Hashemite leadership, with the King as its undisputed spearhead, an establishment of entrenched classes rooted in the East Bank urban elite, a generality of small-town and village people, and bedouin tribes still conscious of their

identity. This is, and has always been, the core of the army, the police and security services, and the civil administration, and not just their upper echelons. This dynamic has evolved the routine, by which the state is run. *This is the state.* To expect this living and self-assured entity to be superseded by the "Palestinians," whatever their numerical part in the population, and whatever their economic or educational level, must seem unreal to all who are conversant to any extent with how the polity works and, just as importantly, how it sees itself.[1]

Hussein's removal by outside aggression is difficult to envisage in the foreseeable future. There could be another Syrian invasion, tactically a dangerous possibility, as always; but what could induce Assad, a circumspect ruler unless he sees himself under a mortal threat, to take such a risk? As for what Syria may wish to do after Assad one is utterly in the dark, and speculating on the initiative a future regime might embark upon is a wasted effort. As for Iraq, Saddam has proved that there is no ferocity he is not capable of, but one is concerned here with material and not moral capabilities, and his material capabilities are crippled for the foreseeable future. Even should he recuperate, what can Jordan offer him? As to Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States? Not on their own.

Israel? Over the years the traditional attitude of successive governments as well as public opinion, that Jordan as constituted is the least of all evils in that area, and possibly a partner in cooperation, has become eroded to some extent; it is still, however, the prevailing attitude. There is no doubt that the King no longer takes for granted Israel's fundamental benevolence respecting his rule in the East Bank. Even so, an

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[1] It is commonly claimed nowadays that "the Palestinians" make up about 60 percent of the population, or even more. Apart from serious difficulties in definition—hence the inverted commas—there are demographers with expert knowledge who deny that the Palestinians in Jordan have even approached half the total number; in any case it is, within the given situation, not the quantity that is decisive. It is undisputed that the Palestinians play an important role in the economic and cultural life of Jordan, but this bears no direct relation to the feasibility of a political take-over. The vision of some Israeli politicians and publicists of turning Jordan into an alternative Palestinian homeland, to replace the Hashemite monarchy, is just that—a vision.

Israeli invasion of the East Bank is difficult to envisage.[1]

Finally, that the King should ever find the United States or other Western powers arrayed against him in operative hostility is, after the acid test of the Kuwait crisis, too improbable to consider.

From here to the realm of probabilities:

Hussein's guiding principle and objective will remain survival—survival, be it stressed, within the age-old terms of the Hashemite monarchy. That means survival and not territorial expansion; nor dynastic ambition; nor Muslim or Arab preeminence;[2] nor "development;" nor "the people's well-being;" nor revenge; nor retribution; nor personal aggrandizement; nor honor; nor the acquisition of riches. It is not that these objectives may not exist in the King's mind; rather, it is that they are subordinate to survival.

Survival, on these terms, means flexibility, tolerance and the ability, on occasion, to swallow hard. But it also means that the power to make decisions, to switch, and if need be, to reverse course must remain in his hands.[3] Should that power be lost, "survival" will have lost its meaning. And to keep that power the trust and loyalty of human props are necessary: the inner family, the clan of Hashemite "Sharifs," the hierarchies of the army and officialdom, by now in many cases servants of the Hashemite state in the second and third generation.

Survival, by definition, is a lifelong aim. But in order to survive for long, you have to survive each day. It is today that matters if there is to be a tomorrow, and when "survival" makes up as much of national policy as it does in Jordan strange contradictions may arise. This happened in the Kuwait

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[1] Though perhaps less so than in the past. The recent suggestion by Rehavam Ze'evi, a prominent Israeli politician of the far right and a sometime member of the Shamir government, that Israel should establish a Lebanon-like security zone east of the Jordan River may not presage more than the merest contingency planning at the Israeli General Staff, but it is undoubtedly a sign of changing perceptions.

[2] Hussein takes his own and his family's "Muslim and Arab preeminence" for granted. This is part of the Hashemite self-image; he does not see it as an aim to fight for, or a weapon to employ.

[3] It has occurred many times in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries that monarchs abdicated in a crisis in favor of a son or brother—and the dynasty was saved. One cannot envisage King Hussein's exit in this fashion.

crisis, when King Hussein's behavior seemed near insane to those who knew, and sympathized with, his long-term interests and policies. But he knew that it was today's exigencies that came first, provided he read them correctly. He suffered damage, but he succeeded in containing it. And despite the damage done, he can breathe more freely now. He has returned to the accustomed alignment where there is no basic contradiction between what survival demands today and what it is likely to demand tomorrow and after. The West, Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States, Syria, Saddam Hussein, the Palestinians, and Israel all must be kept in a reasonable mood, or at least be kept out of dangerous moods. Above all, popular rage must be diverted from himself, but for the immediate future this is not the danger it was so recently.

But granting that survival strategy has returned to its well-worn track, the corollary, too often neglected by interested outside parties, has also resumed its place: *No risks; no heroic initiatives. If possible—upset nobody. If a party must be upset, upset that which is the least dangerous* ***now****. And the* ***ratio ultima****, one may assume, has not vanished either. If there remains no way to survive but fight—fight brutally hard.* This is as far as one can go.

POSTSCRIPT

This essay is predicated on its "first assumption," namely, that "the will to survive" is the prime mover determining King Hussein's political behavior, and that in the peculiar circumstances pertaining to the Hashemite Kingdom it is of extraordinary significance relative to the other factors involved in his decision-making.

This assumption serves, in the author's view, as the key to the understanding of Hussein as a political being from the day he assumed his constitutional duties in May 1953. Any discussion of future contingencies are based on his assumption that the "will to survive" will similarly remain the determinant in the King's political behavior. However, here the objectively unknown enters, in contrast to the past-and-present which is a matter of interpreting facts. We all incline to believe that what has been, will be. This, of course, however human, is a fallacy. For all we know, King Hussein may change, for whatever reason and under whatever influences. His "will to survive" may radically buckle; in other words, he may give up. We just cannot know.

This is not written as an intellectual fail-safe device. It is a real possibility, just as it has been a real possibility at any time over the last four decades. The student of history must give his mind to the penetration of why things happened as they did happen, and what was relevant to the things that happened. Being inquisitive, he will also give his mind some idea as to what may conceivably happen in the future; but he must realize that here he deals with a literally infinite number of unknowns and imponderables. Knowing that, he has a

rational excuse for carrying on in his cogitations, "as of now." This may indeed be so, for a stretch of what is now the future. But it may be otherwise—how "otherwise," we just cannot know. And as long as we do not pontificate on what we cannot know, our intellectual integrity is intact.

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