



CHANGES AND CONTINUITIES IN JORDANIAN FOREIGN POLICY

By Brent E. Sasley*

This article examines Jordanian foreign policy, and the changes it has undergone since the death of King Hussein in 1999. Traditionally understood as shaped primarily by external events and security threats, the policies pursued by the new King Abdullah have illustrated that personality factors are equally important as determinants of foreign policy. The article highlights the continuing trends in Amman's regional policies, mainly in the form of drawing closer to the United States and maintaining ties with Israel, while also examining the recent changes, including the attempts at reconciliation with regional neighbors.

Studies of Jordanian foreign policy have most often focused on that country's small size and geographical location--and consequently external and material factors--as constraining and shaping Jordan's foreign policy. While this approach is certainly valid, it has also led to neglect of the domestic political, economic, or personal components of Jordanian foreign policy.(1) This article tries to redress the balance regarding these often-forgotten factors. In this context, it also analyzes whether or how the change in leadership between the late King Hussein and current King Abdallah II has affected these issues.

To this end, the article first examines Jordan's historical and long-standing domestic concerns followed by a consideration of Amman's traditional security and foreign interests and policies under King Hussein. The next section discusses the lines of regional policy followed by the new King Abdallah II in comparison to his father's foreign policies. Finally, the conclusion offers some preliminary thoughts on the future of Jordanian foreign policy.

Jordan has always been viewed as not being strong enough to direct regional politics on its own. Susceptible to the wishes of its more powerful neighbors, Amman has usually followed a conservative foreign policy, including the reliance on international allies, to maintain its independence and avoid involvement in destructive wars and outright invasion.(2) In fact, its vulnerability has often been cited as the key to understanding its foreign policies. These vulnerabilities can be found in both internal and external sources.

Pivotal to regional stability, because of its location between Israel and Iraq, Saudi Arabia and Syria,(3) Jordan is a small, poor country geographically trapped between stronger and more aggressive neighbors. This factor is coupled with its internal demographic problem of having a large Palestinian population (about 60 percent by some estimates) that does not see itself as completely Jordanian. Together, these concerns--both domestic and external--and their political and economic corollaries have occupied the bulk of the attention of Jordanian policymakers.

The foremost policymaker has always been the monarch, from the country's first emir, Abdallah, through Kings Hussein and now Abdallah II. Because of this personal involvement in politics, and despite or because of the aforementioned geostrategic factors, Amman has traditionally felt it has an important role to play in regional politics, particularly as they relate to the Arab-Israeli relationships and the Muslim holy places.(4) Because of this, Jordan's interests and ambitions have tended to exceed its resources, and this has contributed significantly to Jordanian foreign policy.

TRADITIONAL DOMESTIC CONCERNS

Amman's main goal has always been the survival of the monarchical regime. In recent years, strengthening the economy—a challenge clearly linked to that main directive—has become increasingly more important as well. These two points both show how Amman's external security concerns emerge from a need to rely on other states for Jordan's domestic stability and economic well-being.

The lack of a cohesive ethnic or communal base in Jordan creates its political and, to some extent, economic problems. Although this is the norm rather than the exception in the Middle East, Jordan is particularly vulnerable to having a segmented population, divided between those who identify themselves principally as Jordanians and those who identify themselves as Palestinians (primarily those who fled to Jordan following the 1948 and 1967 Arab-Israeli wars). This division is manifested in all social, economic, and political arenas, and creates an underlying tension between the two groups. The Palestinians have tended to dominate the economy; the "East Bank" Jordanians control the government and army.(5)

The regime fears that political instability—and historically leftist or

Palestinian nationalist ideas—might galvanize Palestinian opinion, already less supportive of the government, to revolt against the monarchy. The civil war of 1970 was one example of this factor. Another case was the 1990-1991 Kuwait crisis during which the Palestinian portion of the populace expressed overtly pro-Iraqi sentiments and demanding action in support of Iraq. King Hussein would have gambled on the kingdom's political stability had he joined the anti-Iraq coalition.(6)

In addition, after the 1979 Iranian Revolution, the regime feared that Islamist politics would influence its own subjects. This had not been a problem earlier since the main Islamist group in Jordan, the Muslim Brotherhood, had been a legal political party since 1945 and enjoyed a generally warm relationship with the monarchy for most of that time. However, the government in the 1990s grew increasingly concerned with the Brotherhood's policies and tried to limit its effectiveness through repression. Again, the concern is not only with radical Islamism itself but that such a movement could use Islam to mobilize an already somewhat alienated Palestinian opinion against the monarchy.

Aside from these identity issues, Jordan's economic problems have been a factor for concern. Particularly since the 1991 Gulf War, the economy has faced severe problems. Largely empty of natural resources, Jordan has been forced to rely on outside assistance for sustenance. The oil price increases of the 1970s had been a good thing for Jordan. They brought about a sudden, massive increase in oil-exporting countries' wealth, which for Jordan translated into much larger foreign aid. The same boom attracted hundreds of thousands of Jordanian workers to the Gulf region whose remittances also proved of great help. Yet by the early 1980s, when oil prices fell after profits peaked in 1981, foreign aid declined, and demand for foreign workers in

the Gulf was reduced or workers faced wage cuts. Government spending did not match the cutback in aid. Unemployment and a deepening recession hit hard in Jordan, and by 1988 Amman began to default on its international debts.(7)

Then came the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and the subsequent war there. Due to the domestic political considerations mentioned above, King Hussein felt he had to support Saddam Hussein's actions. This brought him the gratitude of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians within Jordan, but earned him the wrath of Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, which cut off all aid; Saudi Arabia closed the border. Thousands of Jordanian and Palestinian workers were expelled from Kuwait (about 350,000 settling in Jordan), and the United States suspended its aid program. Virtually all of Jordan's revenue sources were lost or reduced.

Although this situation has eased somewhat with King Hussein's shift to the West and peace with Israel, the economy still faces many problems. Unemployment, corruption, and lack of foreign investment are among the most serious. As well, a population's unhappiness with its socio-economic situation can easily be turned into hostility toward a government that has not alleviated such conditions. This, in turn, affects the regime's core interest of survival. As Laurie Brand argues, alliance decisions are made at least partly to help "balance the budget or to insulate against future potential economic challenges from abroad,"(8) such as those suffered as a result of Jordan's stance during the 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and subsequent 1991 Gulf War.

The link between internal and external interests can thus be found in the political economy of Jordan: as a result of its lack of natural resources, small population, and small size, Jordan relies heavily on external sources of revenue to fund its government and maintain living standards. First Britain, then the United States, and then Arab states

of the Persian Gulf were the primary aid providers. Trade with Iraq, which has certain aspects of an aid arrangement, has now become an additional factor with political overtones.

TRADITIONAL SECURITY INTERESTS **EXTERNAL SECURITY INTERESTS**

Shifting global power structures, regional security threats, and strategic balances of power are usually considered the prime motivators behind Amman's regional policy. King Hussein, ruler of Jordan from 1952 to 1999, had been responsible for virtually all of Jordan's foreign policy during this period. Therefore, the following section assumes that when speaking of Jordanian foreign policy, King Hussein's hand, though not explicitly mentioned, was always in place, guiding it.

Traditionally considered a conservative Arab state, Jordan is usually aligned on the "moderate" side--which refers to its monarchical nature, pro-Western leanings, and tendency to shun radical Arab politics based on pan-Arabism nationalism or Islamism. Yet geopolitical necessities have forced Jordan to try and maintain good relations with at least one of the radical states on its borders, namely Syria or Iraq. Moreover, this is not to say that all moderate states share the same interests or policies; in fact, they diverge from each other almost as often as they do from the radical states.

As Stephen Walt argues, in multipolar systems, alliances are less robust than in bipolar ones. There are more options available for states which allow for more frequent shifts. This, in turn, makes it difficult for states to appreciate where the greatest threats to their security lie, so that alignments are more fluid and flexible.(9) The Middle East as a regional sub-system, some have argued, has never been as bi- or uni-polar as other areas, so that choice for global or regional actors is more prevalent.(10) Mistrust and the reliance on

the use of force continues to plague Middle Eastern countries, which partly explains the predominance and resilience of Realist notions of inter-state behavior. Rivalry, hostility, antagonism, and a host of geopolitical disputes characterize state relations—not cooperation and harmony. International or systemic structures of power have always been the primary external determinant of the king's policies.

The problems King Hussein had to handle included the Arab-Israeli dispute; the Palestinian factor; Syria-Iraq friction; Syrian and Iraqi ambitions regarding Jordan; the Iran-Iraq conflict; and Iraq's international isolation following the Kuwait war. In each case, Amman has had to balance its policies as much as possible. Yet this has often not worked: hostility between its various neighbors has always forced King Hussein to choose, at least temporarily, one side or another.

At first, Jordan and Syria did experience a short period of good relations, primarily in the mid-1970s. This was based on Jordan's disillusionment with the Arab world's recognition, at the 1974 Rabat Summit, of the PLO as the "sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people," at the expense of Amman.⁽¹¹⁾ But these relations soon soured, and Iraq was soon seen as a far more effective ally.

Some of the reasons for this shift include the following points: Egypt's isolation in the Arab world following its peace deals with Israel left Iraq and Syria as the strongest Arab powers in the region; fear of a direct Israeli assault on Jordan; and fear of being dragged into Syrian-Israeli military hostilities. Iraq was assumed to be a protector against Israel and Syria, while this alignment would be less provocative to Jerusalem or Damascus than alliance with either of them. By fighting Iran, Iraq was also protecting Jordan from the spread of radical Islamism.⁽¹²⁾

By the late 1970s, and throughout the 1980s, King Hussein brought his country increasingly closer to Iraq. This was a result of Syria's continued hostility (exemplified by the abortive 1970 Syrian invasion of Jordan.) It was reinforced by Baghdad's supply of cheap oil and guaranteed economic links such as export markets. By 1989 and 1990, the King was increasingly concerned that Israel would make a push against the Palestinians that would produce a massive influx into Jordan, thus destabilizing the kingdom, endangering the regime, and turning Jordan into Palestine. This was also at the time when political liberalization was being undertaken, in turn the result of declining socio-economic conditions and growing domestic unrest and anger.⁽¹³⁾ There was also a genuine fear of Iranian expansionism if Tehran was to win the Iran-Iraq war.⁽¹⁴⁾ By the beginning of the 1990s, Iraq was Jordan's most valuable and important ally.

At the same time, relations between Iraq and Syria declined rapidly in the 1970s, and by 1976 Damascus had cut all land and air routes crossing its territory into Iraq. Therefore, Baghdad needed Jordan as an outlet to the Red Sea. In the end, Jordan became very economically dependent on Iraq--as a source of cheap oil and imports, a market for exports, and because of the transit trade that passed both overland and through the Jordanian port of Aqaba.

As one of the founders of the Arab Cooperation Council (ACC) in 1990, King Hussein believed this grouping could help balance Jordan's security interests against the myriad directions in which it might be pulled. The inclusion of both Egypt and Iraq, two of the stronger and more influential powers in the region, gave Jordan the opportunity to have supporters in case peace with Israel was achieved, or use them as protectors if it was not. At the same time, the ACC also helped Jordan more effectively against long-time antagonist Syria.⁽¹⁵⁾

Unfortunately for Jordan, Iraq invaded Kuwait shortly thereafter, forcing realignment in the region's politics and pushing Jordan, in the end, toward the West.

The 1990 Kuwait crisis united Jordanians, but not necessarily in the direction safest for Jordan's survival. King Hussein followed the tide of public opinion to support Iraq.(16) Public rallies chanting the heroics of Saddam Hussein were common across the country. But when Iraq lost the war, this policy proved disastrous. Jordan suffered severe economic repercussions. If Iraq had won the war, though, the effects on Jordan might have been worse.

The 1990s witnessed a Jordanian shift away from Iraq, toward the United States and to a lesser extent Israel and Turkey: King Hussein joined the Madrid peace talks, and signed a formal peace treaty with Israel in 1994. Jordan also participated as an observer in 1997's Reliant Mermaid operations, a naval search-and-rescue exercise involving Israel, Turkey, and the United States.

Jordan reaped almost instant benefits because of its change in policy: In 1994, major creditor states including the United States wrote off \$833 million of Jordan's debt. Other official creditors rescheduled Jordan's debts four times between 1989 and 1997. In 1997, Amman signed a partnership agreement with the European Union as a first step toward achieving a Jordanian-EU free trade area by 2010. In addition, Jordan was admitted to the World Trade Organization.(17) This new policy also helped Jordan's own security apparatus. It used peace treaty with Israel to improve access to American weapons and embark on a military modernization program.(18)

Any discussion of King Hussein's foreign policy should note his personal desire to have played a major role in the Arab world and in the arena of Arab-Israeli relations. The king's personality and effectiveness in

defending and communicating moderate policies, along with his own long and direct contacts with Western and Arab leaders, made him far more important than Jordan's small size and weak status would have otherwise indicated.(19)

KING ABDALLAH II: CHANGES AND CONTINUITIES

Abdallah, the eldest son of King Hussein, was named crown prince in January 1999, about two weeks before King Hussein died of cancer. A few hours after his father's death, he was sworn in as King Abdallah II.(20) One of the region's youngest leaders (he was born in 1962), Abdallah studied in the United States and Great Britain.(21) He is considered moderate and cautious like his father, but Jordanians also talk about his poor Arabic and are very much aware of his lack of experience.

Nevertheless, Abdallah has the important advantage of widespread support within Jordan, in three key segments of the population: First, the army has given him its support, partly as a result of its traditional loyalty to the monarchy but also because of Abdallah's past career as commander of the special forces and in tank and anti-tank helicopter units. (He was promoted to major general in 1998).(22) Second, the Bedouin tribes have also been long-time backers of the regime. Finally, Palestinians in Jordan were believed to look on Abdallah positively since he married a Jordanian-Palestinian woman in 1993 and has had two children with her.(23) This means that Abdallah's eventual successor as king could be half-Palestinian, potentially a major psychological and political factor for Jordan's future.

It was widely assumed that these three elements would guarantee Abdallah domestic stability. This is, of course, contingent on retaining the goodwill of these segments, particularly the Palestinians, as well as of the wider population, including

Islamists. This seems to be the case so far. There have been pro-Palestinian demonstrations particularly since the outbreak of the second Intifada in September 2000, and non-governmental ties to Israel have been frozen or reduced. But there have not been any major challenges to his regime.

But, in addition to his father's legacy, Abdallah has also inherited Jordan's problems and security concerns. The two main areas the king must attend to immediately are domestic socio-economic conditions and maintaining the delicate balance between various currents of regional and international politics.

On the domestic front, Abdallah is certainly aware of the economic challenge and the need to conciliate Palestinians. He talks often about the former issue but does not necessarily have a strategy for remedying it. On the other front, he has promoted several officials of Palestinian origin. Abdallah has also reduced the honorifics and ceremonies associated with Jordanian royalty in an attempt to increase its popularity.

Yet in terms of actions, he has so far done more on the foreign policy front. Abdallah has followed his father's strategy in a number of areas, sometimes moving beyond the point King Hussein had reached before his death. King Hussein had brought his country closer to Israel through a peace treaty and engaging in numerous joint economic enterprises.⁽²⁴⁾ Hussein spent much of his efforts putting Jordan back in the good graces of the West, especially the United States, after being pilloried for his stance in the 1991 Gulf War and suffering the economic consequences. It is in these two areas that Abdallah has most closely followed his father's direction.

Abdallah has been careful not to place blame for Arab-Israeli or Palestinian-Israeli tension and violence. Abdallah even managed to find some nice things to say about Ariel Sharon after he was elected

Israel's prime minister.⁽²⁵⁾ The outbreak of the second Intifada in September 2000 did not push the king to follow the trend of other Arab states, and point the finger at Israel as the sole cause of the violence and obstacle to its resolution. Abdallah, along with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak to a lesser extent, has worked to tone down the rhetoric of Arab summit meetings, including the 2001 Arab League meeting in Jordan.

This has not been easy, and it has put Jordan in a somewhat difficult position. The continuing violence has evoked widespread and strong criticism of Israel and support for the Palestinians across the Jordanian political spectrum. This has also created a region-wide movement to freeze links and to re-impose the economic boycott on Israel. Although Jordan has managed to tone down some of this rhetoric it nonetheless faces heavy pressure to fall in line with the regional trend.

Abdallah has been very balanced when discussing the Israeli-Palestinian peace process and the violence. He has many times referred to his "friends in Israel."⁽²⁶⁾ Moreover, he has made verbal efforts to indicate his feelings that Israel should be integrated within the region and not singled out as an outcast. Perhaps one of his clearest signals was his characterization of Israel as being subject to terrorism—something the rest of the Arab world has refused to do, only referring to Palestinian "militants" or "freedom fighters." When asked what his definition of a terrorist was, the king said, "Anybody who takes the lives of innocent people—if somebody puts a backpack of explosives and goes to a pizza restaurant and blows himself up and kills innocent people, that is a terrorist."⁽²⁷⁾

He also argues that no peace or stability in the region is possible until the Palestinians achieve statehood, continues to proclaim Jordan's support for the Palestinians, and asserts that Jordan stands "by their side with all our capabilities." ⁽²⁸⁾ At the same time,

he has refused to blame Israel as solely responsible for the violence, and does not classify Israel as an enemy.(29) He warns that continuation of the Arab-Israeli conflict “poses a serious threat to the development of the region,” but precisely in order to resolve the issue he has always maintained that the Arab world “must address the security needs of the average Israeli and move to accept Israel as a member of the neighborhood.”(30)

The new king, like his father, pushes for a more active American role in the peace process and in the region more generally. In April 2001, for example, he traveled to Washington to ask President George W. Bush to play a bigger role in stabilizing the region.(31) Abdallah believes that this larger American role would contribute to regional peace and stability, something that is essential for Jordan both to develop its economy and for security reasons, since an unstable regional atmosphere makes it more likely that Jordan would be the target of ambitious and more powerful neighbors.(32) At the very least, instability would place Jordan in the position of having to choose between sides—and this is where Abdallah does not wish to find himself. The memories of 1991 are still very strong in his mind.

As part of this effort to draw the United States closer into the region, Abdallah has been keen on enhancing Jordan’s own relationship with America. In September 2001, a free trade agreement between Jordan and the United States was signed into law by President George W. Bush (Jordan is now only the fourth country to have, along with Canada, Mexico, and Israel, such an agreement). One of the first world leaders to visit the United States after the September 11 attacks (he arrived on September 28), Abdallah declared that Jordan gave “full, unequivocal support” to America’s stand against global terrorism.(33)

Where Mubarak has been less enthusiastic in his support for American

efforts, Abdallah has made it clear in each interview he has given that he fully supports the U.S. actions in Afghanistan and efforts to eradicate terrorism. In addition, he has not been reticent about including Jews in his list of peoples who suffer from terrorism,(34) where other Arab leaders have continued to distinguish between terrorism committed on September 11 and the suicide bombers of Hamas, citing them as legitimate resistance efforts.(35) He has made it clear he will not repeat the mistake of 1991. Calling Usama bin Ladin, who had previously tried to carry out attacks in Jordan, an “enemy of Jordan,” the king said Jordan would do “whatever is required to join the international coalition to combat terrorism” though it is not clear precisely what he is willing to do.(36)

There are several domestic reasons for Abdallah’s desire to maintain close relations with the United States. He must be concerned about domestic Islamists imitating bin Ladin’s ideology or actions.(37) On the economic front, in April 2000, Jordan became a member of the WTO. Integration into the world economic order, he believes, is essential for Jordan’s economic development and growth. He has been trying to shift Jordan’s economy away from dependence on the Middle East and more toward the West. The U.S.-Jordan free trade agreement is part of this strategy.

In regional terms, Amman has been concerned about the Syrian-Iraqi détente underway since 1997, which gives him an added incentive to push for increased U.S. activity in the area and even maintaining links with Israel. One indicative event was the reopening of the Iraq-Syria oil pipeline and serious discussions about building an additional, larger one.(38) Traditionally, Syrian-Iraqi antagonism allowed Jordan to join one as protection against the other. Were Baghdad and Damascus to reach some sort of rapprochement, this would unite Jordan’s two closest and strongest Arab neighbors, posing a real threat, and leaving

Jordan in the awkward position of having to rely on a non-Arab country for protection (i.e., Israel, Turkey, or the US).

There are also signs that the direct Iraqi-Jordanian relationship might be faltering. In 1999, Iraq increased the cost of oil it sells to Jordan, usually at well below market value. Iraqi threats against Jordan, both veiled and open, makes Amman more interested in drawing closer to the United States and Israel. Saddam Hussein's growing confidence that the sanctions' regime has all but ended, that he can forge ahead with weapons of mass destruction programs, and that regional states are ready to welcome Iraq back might make him bolder, more aggressive, and more demanding. Such concerns weigh heavily on Amman.

Yet despite these continuities in Jordanian foreign and security policy, there have been changes evident as well. Few are path-breaking; indeed, most spring from previous trends, but include stronger relations with other states King Hussein might have been hesitant about.

The most notable example can be found in Abdallah's regional initiatives, especially efforts at reconciliation with some of Jordan's neighbors with whom Hussein had strained relations, particularly Syria and Kuwait. After President Hafiz al-Asad died in June 2000, his son and successor Bashar and Abdallah exchanged state visits. Jordan has been careful not to give Syria any reason for being angry. Abdallah has also been careful to repair relations with the Arab world that were damaged during the 1990-91 Kuwait crisis and war.(39) Diplomatic relations with the Gulf monarchies were restored soon after he became king. These states, including Saudi Arabia, began transferring money to Jordan again, which helped stabilize its dinar. In the first few months after ascending the throne, Abdallah received a number of high-level delegations from across the Arab and Muslim world, including Saudi Arabia, Iran, and Lebanon,

and visited these countries frequently as well.

In 2000, Amman took steps to improve relations with Iraq. Jordan's prime minister became the first Arab prime minister to fly to Iraq since 1991. And in his speech to the October 2000 Arab Summit, Abdallah stressed again Jordan could no longer accept the international sanctions against Iraq.(40)

Despite the continuation of support for the peace process, one noticeable change is the new king's absence from the core of the process. Abdallah has not, thus far, played any important or direct personal role in Israeli-Palestinian negotiations. This can be attributed to his lack of experience and regional stature, a quality which proved so helpful for his father on many occasions. Abdallah has, though, offered his services if others request them and has often expressed his commitment to backing the Middle East peace process.(41)

Abdallah also made great efforts to keep the border with Israel quiet and so cracked down on Hamas' offices in Jordan—a direct break with his father's live-and-let-live approach to the organization. He refused to accede to the demands of Hamas and Islamists that he break relations with Israel. In October 1999, Abdallah closed the offices belonging to Hamas in Jordan and expelled several of its top leaders. This was very unpopular, especially among professional associations controlled by Islamists. Although such moves have not resulted in any direct challenges to his regime, Abdallah opened the door to a tougher relationship with these organizations.

It is notable that when asked by Jane's Defence Weekly what he thought would be the greatest challenges to global security in the next five to ten years, Abdallah did not mention the Arab-Israeli conflict, in contrast to most other Arab leaders, but rather pointed to poverty, hunger, and environmental damage. This standpoint of broader vision has characterized Abdallah

since he came to the throne and put an emphasis on types of issues that his father discussed more rarely.(42)

INTERIM CONCLUSIONS

It is difficult to see how Abdallah will be able to sustain a balance between Iraq and the United States, particularly if Washington did act against Iraq after finishing its war in Afghanistan.(43) Given the animosity between Washington and Baghdad, there does not seem to be much space for Jordan to maneuver. Because of this, Amman will probably increasingly turn toward the United States. It does not want to alienate the only superpower, although Abdallah has refused to condemn Saddam Hussein or Iraq's policies. Perhaps here is a contrast with his father, who might have shifted from one to the other or tried to distance himself from both; Abdallah sought to maintain good relations with both.

Another feature of Abdallah's reign has been his greater emphasis on Turkey, though this follows a trend begun by his father. As Turkey continues to flex its political, military, and economic muscle in the Middle East, including its alignment with Israel, Jordan seems to find in Turkey a powerful, Western-oriented ally. Although Abdallah has not been too keen on overtly aligning Jordan with Turkey, given Turkey's antagonistic and even hostile relations with many Arab states, the option remains.

Abdallah's popularity was very high in the first few months after becoming king, partly because of his efforts to restore relations with Arab neighbors. But, he is under pressure domestically from several elements of the population that are not happy with Jordan's relationship with Israel, given the continuing Israeli-Palestinian violence. Further, some Jordanian officials have been tougher on this issue than the king (44) and have also expressed concern over the U.S. war against the Taliban and al-Qa'ida in Afghanistan that began in October 2001.

Anti-normalization elements in Jordan have urged a freezing or cutting of ties with Israel, including the country's 13 professional associations, and there have been many demonstrations supporting this goal.(45)

After the September 11, 2001, attacks on the Pentagon and World Trade Center, the king expressed Jordan's "absolute condemnation of the terrorist aggression" and assured the United States that Jordan's "leaders and people stand with you against the perpetrators of these terrorist atrocities." (46) At the same time, Abdallah knows how to toe the Arab nationalist line. In his address to the opening session of the Arab League conference in March 2001, he called the Arabs "our nation," and declared that they had to stand by the Syrians to achieve "liberation" of their lands, stand by the Palestinians and support "their martyrs," and even help Lebanon achieve "complete liberation of their occupied lands" (despite UN certification that Israel has withdrawn from all of Lebanese territory). As for Iraq, the king called for an end to the embargo, describing Iraq as being "at the forefront of the [Arab] nation in defending its causes and rights." (47)

One question mark is Abdallah's intentions toward Iran. At one point, there were reports that he would go to Tehran, but that trip was postponed from February 2001.(48) If such a visit were to occur, it would be an important departure from Jordan's past policy. Islamist Iran was never friendly with Jordan. A new approach might indicate Amman's efforts to counter Iraq and to find new economic partners, a step made easier since both the West and the Gulf Arab monarchies have been easing relations with Iran. Iraq would certainly be displeased by such a strategy.

It seems clear that the shifts that have occurred in Jordanian foreign policy are the result not of changes in Jordan's interests, which remain the same as when the country was first created in the 1920s, but more often result from the changing alliances or

behaviors of other states. Basically, Jordan's requirements include protection from larger neighbors (sometimes through appeasement, good relations, or finding Western or local rivals who help Amman survive). Good relations with regional states and the West are also important for economic reasons.

The transition from a king who was well-established, well-loved, and well-respected, both at home and abroad, to a new, young, and untested king has also meant a different tack in Jordanian policy. King Abdallah has tried to maintain much of his father's policy while putting more emphasis on economic issues, seeking some new friends (most importantly among Gulf monarchies), and perhaps going further toward an alliance with the United States. Although trying to maintain some balance between the United States and Iraq, he did not hesitate to declare himself fully on the American side of the war on terrorism.

The fluidity in Middle Eastern politics, accompanied or caused by rapid changes within and between states, makes it hard to foresee how Abdallah's Israel/Arab and U.S./Iraq balancing acts will develop. But surely the years to come will call for Abdallah to develop a level of skill equivalent to his father in order to survive, much less prosper, in that foggy and turbulent regional atmosphere.

**Brent E. Sasley is a doctoral candidate in Political Science at McGill University. His research areas include Middle Eastern politics, Caspian Sea energy politics, and international security. His co-edited book (with Tami Jacoby), Redefining Security in the Middle East, is forthcoming from Manchester University Press.*

NOTES

1. See, for instance, Laurie Brand, "Economics and Shifting Alliances: Jordan's Relations with Syria and Iraq, 1975-1981,"

International Journal of Middle East Studies, vol.26, no.3 (August 1994), pp. 393-413; Laurie Brand, *Jordan's Inter-Arab Relations: The Political Economy of Alliance Making* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994); and Curtis Ryan, "Alliances and Jordanian Foreign Policy," paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the International Studies Association, Chicago, Illinois, 21-24 February 2001.

2. Ryan, "Alliances and Jordanian Foreign Policy," p. 1. Clearly, Jordan has not been completely successful--it was involved in two Arab-Israeli wars and did suffer one brief Syrian assault. But, relatively speaking, it has avoided costly foreign entanglements that many of its neighbors have not.

3. Efraim Inbar and Shmuel Sandler, "The Risks of Palestinian Statehood," *Survival*, Vol. 39, No. 2 (Summer 1997), p. 33.

4. Since the capture of the Hijaz, which contains Islam's two holiest sites in Islam, Mecca and Medina, by Ibn Saud and its incorporation into Saudi Arabia, Jordan's focus shifted to Jerusalem and its Islamic sites. Between 1948 and 1967, Jordan was responsible for these sites; and since Israel's 1967 seizure of the West Bank and Jerusalem, Jordan's role in maintaining them has always been acknowledged by Israel.

5. Moshe Shemesh, "Bilateral and Trilateral Political Cooperation," in *The Jordanian-Palestinian-Israeli Triangle: Smoothing the Path to Peace*, eds. Joseph Ginat and Onn Winckler (Great Britain: Sussex Academic Press, 1998), 33. See also Onn Winckler, "The Economic Factors of the Middle East Peace Process: The Jordanian Case," same volume.

6. For a good discussion on the impact of public opinion on Jordanian foreign policy, see Paul L. Scham and Russell E. Lucas, "'Normalization' and 'Anti-Normalization' in Jordan: The Public Debate," *Middle East Review of International Affairs*, vol.5, no.3 (September 2001).

7. See Eliyahu Kanovsky, "The Middle East Economies: The Impact of Domestic and International Politics," *Security and Policy Studies* No.31 (Israel: The BESA Center for Strategic Studies, February 1997). Unemployment in 1989/90 was estimated at 20%.
8. Brand, "Economics and Shifting Alliances," 394.
9. Stephen Walt, "Why Alliances Endure or Collapse," *Survival*, vol.39, no.1 (Spring 1997), 163. Although alliances are generally considered to be more formal than alignments, Curtis Ryan points out that Middle Eastern alliances are generally "looser" and more subject to rapid change, leading to few formal military pacts. Because of this, the two terms are used interchangeably in this paper. See Ryan, "Alliances and Jordanian Foreign Policy," p. 1.
10. See, for example, Inbar and Sandler, "The Risks of Palestinian Statehood," p. 28.
11. Amatzia Baram, "Baathi Iraq and Hashimite Jordan: From Hostility to Alignment," *The Middle East Journal*, vol.45, no.1 (Winter 1991), p. 55.
12. Baram, "Baathi Iraq and Hashimite Jordan," p. 55.
13. Ann Mosely Lesch, "Contrasting Reactions to the Persian Gulf Crisis: Egypt, Syria, Jordan, and the Palestinians," *The Middle East Journal*, vol.45, no.1 (Winter 1991), p. 33.
14. For more on this topic, see Baram, "Baathi Iraq and Hashimite Jordan: From Hostility to Alignment," pp. 51-79; and Stanley Reed, "Jordan and the Gulf Crisis," *Foreign Affairs*, vol.69, no.5 (Winter 1990/91), pp. 21-35.
15. Curtis Ryan, "Jordan and the Rise and Fall of the Arab Cooperation Council," *The Middle East Journal*, vol.52, no.3 (Summer 1998), p. 390.
16. See Scham and Lucas, "'Normalization' and 'Anti-Normalization.'"
17. Ryan, "Alliances and Jordanian Foreign Policy," p. 21.
18. Inbar and Sandler, "The Risks of Palestinian Statehood," pp. 25-26.
19. See, for example, Aaron Wildavsky, "Jordan and the Arab-Israeli Conflict: The Hashemite Predicament," *Orbis*, vol.29, no.4 (Winter 1986), p. 796.
20. Abdallah was named Crown Prince shortly after his birth in 1962, but the title was transferred to Hussein's brother, Hassan, three years later. Just before his death in February 1999, Hussein demoted Hassan from the position and named Abdallah heir to the throne.
21. Although he has announced that he will continue Hussein's policies, Abdallah has, according to the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, already displayed "ingenuity and cunning" in steering the country toward a more regionally-successful and prosperous path. See "From Hussein to Abdallah: Jordan in Transition," Executive Summary, The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, Washington, D.C., 1999. Available from <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/pubs/pfs38exe.htm>.
22. See Alexander Bligh, "The Jordanian Army: Between Domestic and External Challenges," *Middle East Review of International Affairs* vol.5, no.2 (June 2001).
23. Much of the veteran political elite of Jordan, although publicly supporting him, have privately expressed concerns over Abdallah's inexperience. See Scham and Lucas, "'Normalization' and 'Anti-Normalization.'" This, though, need not necessarily be taken as a lack of support or a sign of opposition to the new king, but rather as legitimate concerns over a new ruler during an era crucial to Jordan's security and development.
24. In terms of the Jordanian-Israeli relationship, though there is some mistrust and some suspicion of each other's motives, the two have a long history of implicit or

secret cooperation. Jerusalem sees Jordan as an eastern buffer against more radical states, mainly Iraq, while Amman views Israel as a hedge against Arab aggression toward it. King Hussein was always careful to note this, despite fears at times of a direct Israeli offensive.

25. Abdallah said that his father Hussein had always called Sharon a man of his word, and that he was looking forward to Sharon having a very positive influence in the region. Interview on Jim Lehrer Newshour April 9, 2001. See http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/middle_east/jan-june01/jordan_4-9.html.

26. See, for example, his speech at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington, D.C., May 19, 1999. See <http://www.csis.org/html/sp99Abdallah.html>.

27. This is a reference to the suicide bombing at a Sbarro's Restaurant in Jerusalem. See speech at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington, D.C., May 19, 1999. See <http://www.csis.org/html/sp99Abdallah.html>.

28. Interview with Jordan Television, August 4, 2001. <http://www.jordanembassyus.org/hmkajtv080401.htm>.

29. See, for example, his Speech from the Throne, November 1, 1999, at: <http://www.jordanembassyus.org/HMKASpeech/110199.htm>.

30. Speech at the National Press Club, Washington, D.C., April 11, 2001. <http://www.jordanembassyus.org/hmkanpc0401.htm>. It should be noted that at first, Abdallah did say that had there been peace between Israelis and Arabs, the attacks might not have occurred, or at least not on such a large scale. But he has not repeated such assertions since then. (See Interview with CNN, September 12, 2001. http://www.jordanembassyus.org/CNN_09122001.htm.)

31. See Howard Schneider, "Jordan's Abdallah to ask for U.S. help," The Washington Post, 4 April 2001.

32. See interview with Middle East Insight. See http://www.mideastinsight.org/11_00/Abdallah_interview.html.

33. See "Joint Statement between Bush and Abdallah", September 28, 2001. http://www.jordanembassyus.org/wh_09282001.htm.

34. Interview with Fox News, September 17, 2001. http://www.jordanembassyus.org/fox_09172001.htm

35. See, for example, Interview with CBS TV, September 13, 2001. http://www.jordanembassyus.org/cbs_09132001.htm.

36. Speech at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington, D.C., May 19, 1999. See <http://www.csis.org/html/sp99Abdallah.html>.

37. Interview with BBC, November 11, 2001. See http://www.jordanembassyus.org/hmkauk_11112001.htm.

38. Arabic News, November 20, 2001. <http://www.arabicnews.com/ansub/Daily/Day/011120/2001112005.html>.

39. A closer examination of Hussein's policies show that although he did not break ties with Iraq or join to anti-Iraq coalition, he did not support the invasion itself or Baghdad's annexation of Kuwait, and in fact called for an Iraqi withdrawal. Thus Jordanian policy was more balanced than is usually assumed. For a good discussion of this, see Curtis Ryan, "Alliances and Jordanian Foreign Policy."

40. See David Schenker, "Between Baghdad and Washington: Jordan's Balancing Act," Policywatch No.501, Washington Institute for Near East Policy, November 8, 2000.

41. See, for example, Dateline Israel, April 12, 1999.

42. Jane's Defence Weekly, December 22, 1999.

<http://www.janes.com/>

[defence/news/2010/991222_f_Abdallah.shtml](http://www.janes.com/defence/news/2010/991222_f_Abdallah.shtml).

43. "U.S. Shifts its Sights to Iraq," Paul Koring, *The Globe and Mail*, November 20, 2001, A1 & A4.

44. See Interview with CNN, May 3, 1999.

<http://www.jordanembassyus.org/HMKACN/N/nt.htm>; *Arabic News*, October 12, 2002.

See <http://www.arabicnews.com/ansub/Daily/Day/011012/200111202.html>.

45. See Sarah Schaffer, "Dangerous Liaisons," *The Jerusalem Report*, December 6, 1999, 30-32; and Scham and Lucas, "'Normalization' and 'Anti-Normalization.'" See also Sarah Schaffer, "No Peace Now," *The Jerusalem Report*, December 4, 2000, 24-25.

46. Message to Bush, September 12, 2001.

<http://www.kingabdullah.jo/initiatives/initiatives.html>.

47. See <http://www.kingabdullah.jo/initiatives/initiatives.html>.

48. *Arabic News*, November 20, 2001. See <http://www.arabicnews.com/ansub/Daily/Day/011120/2001112017.html>.