

## **Jordan and Gulf Crisis**

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In the present Iraq-Kuwait conflict and Gulf war. Jordan supported Iraq. Jordan's unequivocal backing for Iraq was the result of a special relationship that was first developed in the late 1970's<sup>(1)</sup>. For the last one decade this link made Jordan economically, politically and militarily dependent on Iraq. In this Chapter an attempt has been made to discuss the Jordan's role in the Gulf Crisis and reasons for its supporting Iraq in the Iraq-Kuwait war.

Jordan's active involvement in the Gulf Crisis was the product of three factors: its geographic position and close social, economic and political links with Iraq, Kuwait and the Gulf; a shared sense of belonging to the Arab community, a common destiny; and the recent formation of the Arab cooperation council (ACC) linking Jordan, Egypt, Iraq and Yemen<sup>(2)</sup>.

If one looks at the history of both the countries Jordan and Iraq-certain commonalities and similarities come forth. Between 1921 and 1958, Iraq and Jordan were ruled by two branches of the same Sharifi Hashimite dynasty. However, this relationship did not guarantee friendship and cooperation. Occasionally both the ruling brothers of Iraq and Jordan developed conflicting political interests and vied for the same territory<sup>(3)</sup>. The common familial framework, however, did have an effect on bilateral relations, even when personal relations were not always amicable. The violent end of Iraq's Hashemites in 1958 removed an important dimension from bilateral relations. After 1958, the relations between these two countries were dominated by the conventional factors shaping regional relations.

During the 1967 Arab-Israeli war, Iraqi forces entered Jordan on Jordan's request. However, in the succeeding years there developed several kinds of tension between the two countries. A gradual improvement in their bilateral relations began only after the October 1973 war. Since the mid-1970's relations were fairly stable. Iraq's role in organizing Arab opposition to the 1978 Camp David Accords enhanced its relations with Jordan. Iraq was courting Jordan and offering economic aid mainly to preventing it from joining the US-Egypt-Israel peace talks.

During the Iran-Iraq war, Jordan supported Iraq. Jordan was not only the first Arab state to support Iraq publicly, but it also worked to achieve a unanimous Arab backing for it. Jordan placed its whole transportation and communication system at the disposal of Iraq's war efforts. In 1982 it even sent a few thousand volunteers to Iraq as a token of its identification with Iraq's war aims<sup>(4)</sup>. Iraq rewarded Jordan for its stand during the war and provided a large amount of weapons of Jordan. Bilateral relations during this period were characterized by increasing military cooperation and coordination in regional policy. Both Jordan and Iraq were founding members of the Arab Cooperation council (ACC) in early 1989. During the war the King of Jordan was in close contact with the Iraqi President and visited Baghdad once every two or three months, more than any other head of the state.

Jordan's initial reasons for giving Saddam such staunch support were based on a rational calculation. The Jordanian leadership was wary of an Islamic upsurge in Jordan inspired by Ayotollah Khomeini's revolution and felt that the repercussions of the revolution had to be contained<sup>(5)</sup>. In addition, the King of Jordan was confident that Iraq would win the war and that he was backing the victor. More importantly, however, by late 19809 the King had already concluded that Iraq under Saddam Hussein was the most effective shield against his domestic and regional enemies and the best long-term guarantee for Jordan's economic welfare<sup>(6)</sup>. The King of Jordan also hoped that his support for Iraq would assure him an increased importance in the iner-Arab arena. The King of Jordan worked hard to organize an Arab consensus to back Iraq in its conflict with Iran. Jordan's media claimed that Iraq was fighting a war for the sake of entire Arab nation, to defend it from a non-Arab Predator. The dispatch of Jordanian volunteers to Iraq in 1982 was depicted as an Arabization of the war<sup>(7)</sup>. Commenting on the reasons for Jordan's support to Iraq. G.H. Jensen, the well known analyst of West Asian affairs observed that:

Jordan's motive for standing firmly and exceptionally by Iraq lay largely in the personal qualities of King Hussein. He is a plunger, and if he adopts a policy he follows it through with energy and enthusiasm. Having become friendly with Saddam Hussein, it was in his nature to stand by him in time of trouble. There are also solid economic reasons for the Jordanian stance. Over the years the economies of the two countries had become quite tightly intertwined. Long before the war, the Jordanian port of Aqaba had become an important channel for the Iraqi imports. Indeed a part of the port was leased to Iraq for its exclusive use, and it made considerable funds available for the port's development and for road construction between Aqaba and Iraq. Iraq was conspicuously regular in the payments of its share of Arab funds allotted to Jordan by the 1978 Arab Summit; and there were several joint development projects on hand or envisaged, even including one for the diversion of the Euphrates water to north-eastern Jordan <sup>(8)</sup>.

On the political plane, Amman's continued mistrust towards Syria and disillusionment with Egypt and Saudi Arabia after the Rabat Arab Summit of October 1974 when the PLO was recognized as 'the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people' made the country to look towards Iraq as a ally. From the Jordan's perspective, a connection with Iraq appeared lucrative largely because unlike Syria, Iraq was a major oil producer. Another reason for Amman's tilt towards Iraq is that King Hussein of Jordan felt that by becoming too close to Syria, the country will be sucked into the Israeli-Syrian confrontation. On the other had, by forging an alliance with Iraq, King Hussein could hope to deter Israel from offensive moves. As long as no Iraqi troops entered Jordan and excessive military cooperation could be avoided, the king Hussein could avoid provoking Israel <sup>(9)</sup>.

While the Jordan's relations with Iraq improved its relations with Syria deteriorated. In November 1980 bilateral relations reached their nadir when 50.000 Syrian troops poised on Jordan's northern border threatening a war. In February 1981 both countries recalled their Ambassadors and a few months later President of Syria Hafeez Asad accusing the Hashmeite family of 'dismembering the Syrian body' when it established Jordan in 1921, claimed the return of this 'lost region' in no uncertain terms. In the mid-1980's Jordan began providing assistance to Iraq in its running battle with Syria.

Jordanian and Syrian relations remained rocky until November 1985. They began to pick up after Jordan's new Prime Minister Zeyad al-Rifai met with his Syrian counterpart Abd al-Ra'uf al-Kassim. Jordan's interests in a rapprochement were essentially two: to hang a 'Damascus sword' above the PLO Chairman Yasir Arafat's head and to stop a Syrian sponsored anti-Jordanian campaign of murder and sabotage. At the same time however, Jordan maintained its staunch political and strategic support for Iraq in the Gulf war. Initially Baghdad, for its part, had feared that Jordan's rapprochement with Syria would come at its expense. To prove its loyalty to Baghdad, Amman tries between 1986 and 1988, to mediate between Baghdad and Damascus with the intention of driving a wedge between Syria and Iran. Thus primarily serving Baghdad's, rather than Damascus interests.

Following the Israeli-Egyptian peace Agreement of 1979 and Egypt's isolation in the Arab world it became very clear to Jordan that any close alignment with Egypt was impossible in the future. In its search for a strong ally to replace Syria, Iraq appeared as the natural candidate. Furthermore, in view of Iraq's deepening conflict with both Iran and Syria in 1979. The king could realistically hope to act as a bridge between Iraq and Egypt. From the point of Jordan, an eventual Iraqi-Egyptian rapprochement would help Iraq in its conflict with Iran and Syria and in return Iraq would help relegitimize the Egyptian regime and thus contribute indirectly towards a US-sponsored peace process.

## **ECONOMIC FACTORS**

During the 1970's Jordan was successful in developing a vibrant economy supported by transfers and remittances from abroad. Between 1973 and 1981, Jordanian exports jumped 12 fold, real growth in annual GNP increased by 9-10 percent, and remittances from 350,000 doctors, engineers, teachers and construction workers in the Gulf states reached one billion dollars annually<sup>(10)</sup>. However, Jordanian economic prosperity has been precarious because of its dependence on external political and economic factors as well as because of its low domestic productivity. Jordan's Ministry of labour attributed the growing unemployment problem in the country to two factors for the problem of unemployment: External factors and internal factors. Among external factors, the following are mentioned as important: (1) The slow down in the economies of the Gulf states and its adverse effects on Jordan resulting in: (a) Lack of demand for Jordanian labour; (b) Increase in the number of returnees from the Gulf into Jordan at the rate of 5000 workers a year; and (c) Decline of remittances from expatriate workers to Jordan. The internal factors include: (1) The slowdown in the Jordanian economy since 1982. (2) The increase in the number of college and university graduates, particularly those with academic specializations that are not needed (thus creating structural unemployment) (3). An influx of cheap labour from other countries<sup>(11)</sup>.

However, within a decade's time i.e. by 1980, the economic fortunes of Jordan got reversed. The two primary pillars of Jordan's economy – workers remittances and petro dollar foreign aid – fell into a period of steady decline from around US\$ 2.3 billion to US\$ 1.5 billion by 1987. Jordan soon began to face mounting balance of payments problems as its current account balance, which had been relatively stable through much of the 1970's increasingly dipped into the red. As economic growth slowed and growing number of expatriate workers returned from the Gulf, unemployment began to rise. During this period (1981-87) external grants fell from more than one-third of the state expenditures to less than one-sixth. State expenditures, however, continued to grow at an average rate of over 6 percent per year. As a result of such pressures, the state budget began to experience a chronic and slowly growing deficit. By 1987 this had grown to US\$ 880 million, almost one half of current expenditure and more than 25 percent of the GDP<sup>(12)</sup>. The Jordan's economic crisis further deepened because of both the continued regional petroleum slump and the expiry of foreign aid commitments made by the Arab oil states at the 1978 Baghdad Arab summit Conference. In 1988 GDP shrank by an estimated 3.5 percent and showed no growth at all the following year. Fueled by the return of some 35,000 expatriates in 1987 alone. Unemployment continued to grow far beyond the absorptive capacity of the public sector. In May 1988, the Jordanian dinar experienced sharp declines against the US dollar. The government responded in November 1988 with emergency controls on a whole range of luxury imports and restrictions on foreign currency transactions. It was in this context, in the spring of 1989, the government was finally forced to seek \$ 275 million in standby credits from the International Monetary fund and assistance in rescheduling its foreign debts.

## ECONOMIC TIES BETWEEN JORDAN AND IRAQ

As has been mentioned earlier that the relations between Iraq and Jordan were fairly stable since 1970's and the relations were mostly economic in nature. Iraq's aid to Jordan during this period was continued. During 1975 the talks were held between the two sides for a loan from the Iraqi Development fund for electric power projects in Jordan for around US\$ 60 million. Subsequently, Iraq agreed to make the electric power loan interest free. In early 1976 Iraq expressed its willingness to provide additional development-financing for Jordan and had begun studying a proposal requesting funds to help finance the US \$ 2.37 billion development plan 1976-80. On March 24, 1976 Iraq approved a US\$ 63 million loan to Jordan for various road construction projects. In August 1977, it was reported that Iraq was contributing US \$ 386.563 towards the establishment of agricultural cooperatives for fertilizer and fodder storage in Jordan. In

1978, Iraq granted Jordan US\$ 30 million in aid in appreciation of Hussein's stance on Camp David Accord<sup>(13)</sup>.

In the realm of trade, figures for 1974 showed Jordanian exports to Iraq of JD 1.6 million and imports from Iraq of JD 0.85 million. In 1974 the two countries set a target of an JD 6 million trade total for 1975. At June 1975 meetings, both sides expressed a desire to raise further the level of exchange to ID 3.5 million each. Jordan's exports did rise in 1975 to JD 2.45 million although imports from Iraq dropped slightly to JD 0.5 million<sup>(14)</sup>.

The real growth sector during this period was transit trade centered on the port of Aqaba. On March 31, 1975 Jordan and Iraq signed an agreement whereby Iraq was permitted to use the Aqaba port for importing goods at a rate of 300,000 tons per year. To supervise Iraq's imports, the Iraqi state overland transport company opened an office in Jordan in June 1975. Jordan also agreed to build four new Jetties with supplementary equipment at the port. The extent of increasing bilateral economic coordination is clear from the conditions according to which the Jordanians agreed to undertake the port expansion:

- 1- The Iraqi government would provide Jordan an interest free loan to cover 50 percent of the costs as long as the size of the loan did not exceed ID 7.5 million;
- 2- The work would be completed during the last quarter of 1977;
- 3- There would be regular consultation between the two about the progress of the project;
- 4- The payback of the loan would take place through paying 50 percent yearly of the returns on the Iraqi goods, beginning one year the completion of Jetties;
- 5- Iraqi imports and exports would have priority in using the new Jetties;
- 6- The Jordanian government would build a 50 km. Road between Azraq and H-5 and widen and improve the road between H-5 and the Iraqi border;
- 7- The Iraqi government would give Jordan an ID 4 million loan at 205 percent to cover the costs of the road<sup>(15)</sup>.

Aqaba's importance further increased with the outbreak of war with Iran. Iraq's own ports of Basra, Umm al-Qasr, and Faw were close to the Iranian border and hence were subjected to Iranian bombing. The Jordanian port on the other hand, was more than 300 miles from the Iraqi border and 800 miles from the areas where the fiercest fighting was taking place<sup>(16)</sup>.

#### 1980-1990

In early 1980 Iraq launched a major drive to win over Jordan. In 1980 Jordan received Iraqi government loans worth \$ 189.2 million and grants valued at \$58.3 million, much of which was to expand the facilities at Aqaba and improve the highway from Aqaba to the Iraqi border. It was agreed that, within two years, one third of Iraq's imports from the industrialized countries would be transported via Aqaba and a joint trucking firm would be established to transport goods between Aqaba and Iraq. When the war with Iran forced the closure of the ports of Basra and Ummal-Qasr, Iraq's dependence on Aqaba grew and was increased further by the closure of the Iraqi-Syrian border and its trans-Syrian oil pipeline in April 1982. During the war, Jordan's contribution to Iraq's logistical effort was enormous, but Jordan too, greatly benefited from the increased cooperation between 1979 and 1988, imported cargo transiting Jordan through the port of Aqaba increased manifold, with almost all the increase destined for Iraq. Transit exports through Aqaba almost entirely from Iraq increased to 3 million tons in 1988. Equally impressive was the increase in the movement of people through the port of Aqaba. While in 1979 the total number of arrivals to and departures from Aqaba was just over 7000, by 1988 the number increased to 823,000, almost all of them Egyptian workers heading to or coming from Iraq.

Aqaba port also became a major port for Iraq's import of military supplies. With the growth of arms deliveries from Egypt during the war with Iran, Aqaba became the most important cargo link between Egypt and Iraq. During this period Iraqi-Jordanian cooperation in energy, industry, agriculture, transport and oil explorations also substantially increased. While imports from Jordan came to \$ 8-10 million annually in 1977-78, the subsequent years saw the figures leap to \$ 57 million in 1978-79, \$104 million in 1979-80; \$204 million in 1980-81 and back to \$209 million in 1981-82. Prior to 1984 Iraqi exports to Jordan had been negligible but in 1985 and 1986 they rocketed to \$ 173 million and \$168 million respectively.

The impressive expansion of economic ties was supported by a strong pro-Iraqi business lobby in Jordan headed by Amin shukayr, a prominent pharmaceutical industrialist. By 1989, no less than 160 Jordanian firms had strong commercial and industrial connections to Iraq<sup>(18)</sup>.

Jordanian-Iraqi economic ties were not however, without their set backs. Throughout the Iran-Iraq war, Jordan was keen to export more to Iraq, but in 1983 Iraq made increased Jordanian imports conditional upon more credit to Baghdad. Partly in expectation of Saudi support and partly because of Iraqi and Jordanian mismanagement, the Jordanians extended generous credits. The Iraqis however were slow to repay. In the fall of 1989, it was reported by the Jordanian press that Iraq still owed Jordan no less than \$835 million, almost twice Jordan's foreign reserves<sup>(19)</sup>. When coupled with the decline in Saudi aid from \$1.25 billion in 1981 to \$400 million in 1989 and with the massive withdrawal of more than \$250 million by Palestinians from Jordanian banks in 1988 and 1989, Iraq's debt played a major role in Jordan's economic crisis<sup>(20)</sup>. Paradoxically, however, Iraq's debt tied Amman to Baghdad more closely than ever<sup>(21)</sup>. This fact partly explains Jordan's support of Iraq in the Kuwait crisis. The only chance of retrieving at least part of their investment, so the Jordanians believed, was to side with Iraq<sup>(22)</sup>.

## II

Jordan has carefully nurtured a reputation as the most consistently pro-western Arab state. Thus it came as a shock to many to find most Jordanians talking the side of Iraq in the Gulf Crisis and the western leaders are disturbed by the king Hussein's reluctance to join forces against Iraq<sup>(23)</sup>. Before discussing the Jordan's role in Gulf Crisis, one point has to be stressed here. Public support for Iraq is very extensive across Jordan and encompasses a wide spectrum of society. Pro Saddam demonstrations are even advertised in local news papers. It was reported that during the meetings, the speakers willy nilly vilify Kuwait ruling family for squandering Arab wealth on gambling and prostitutes: Kuwait's supporters such as Saudi Arabia and Egypt are feared as traitors. American flags are burned etc<sup>(24)</sup>.

During the Gulf crisis the Jordanian leadership made efforts to prevent the deterioration of relations between Iraq and Kuwait and to encourage the amicable resolution of problems between them. Jordan had continued these efforts within the context of the new situation created by Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in order to contain the crisis, reversing the occupation of Kuwait by Iraq and resolving all the causes of the eruption peacefully through Arab mediation. When these efforts failed, Jordan continued to take initiatives to convince the members of the United Nations to pursue diplomatic measures to solve the crisis and to avoid decisions which would lead to military confrontation. When these initiatives also failed. Jordan strove to avert hostilities before wide spread damage could be done to the political, social, human and ecological environment of the region<sup>(25)</sup>.

The Jordanian leadership identified the following three reasons for the Gulf Crisis. They are:

- a) Dispute about the frontiers between the two states:
- b) The rights to the production of oil from the Rumalileh oil field; and.

- c) The old Iraqi interest in securing an outlet to the waters of the Gulf which had been denied them because of the way in which the boundaries between the two countries were drawn by the representative of the British Government in 1922 <sup>(26)</sup>.

The Jordanian leadership felt that the above issues could be solved through mediation of other Arab governments. To this extent King of Jordan made attempts to mediate between Iraq and Kuwait and obtained assurances from Saddam Hussein that Iraq would not resort to force in settling its dispute with Kuwait as long as negotiations were underway. While similar attempts at mediation were meeting with some positive response from both the sides, action taken by United States for conducting naval exercises in Gulf and the American senate's decision to cut off all foodstuff supplies and to prohibit the transfer of military equipment and technology to Iraq <sup>(27)</sup>.

The Iraqi forces invaded Kuwait on 2<sup>nd</sup> August 1990. The king of Saudi Arabia contacted the King of Jordan and requested that President Saddam Hussein of Iraq should be urged to limit his invasion to the extent of the disputed boundaries between Iraq and Kuwait. The King of Jordan flew to Alexandria on 2 August to meet President Mubarak of Egypt who urged him to visit Baghdad. This was endorsed by the King of Saudi Arabia. The Jordanian and Egyptian heads of state also spoke with the US President George Bush who considered Iraqi invasion of Kuwait as totally unacceptable and voiced concern about the safety of the lives of the foreigners.

Both, the King of Jordan and the President of Egypt agreed that the Arab League should defer issuing the condemnation of Iraq pending the success or failure of King of Jordan's visit to Baghdad to find out the Iraqi position of two proposals:

1. A commitment by the Iraqi government to withdraw from Kuwait as soon as possible;
2. An agreement from Iraq to attend a mini Arab Summit in Jeddah to discuss and settle all facets of the Iraq-Kuwait dispute <sup>(28)</sup>.

The king of Jordan went to Baghdad to discuss the above proposals and got some positive response from Iraq to withdraw their troops from Kuwait. However, in the meantime Egyptian government issued a statement condemning the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait.

As the King Hussein was bust with his mediatory venture which was not in keeping with the Saudi Arabian line, Saudi Arabia moved in to put pressure on these Arab leaders and states who dissented it. Jordan was one among them. Saudi Arabia cut oil supplies of 33,000 barrels a day to Jordan claiming that it had failed to pay the arrears of \$40 million. Jordan reacted by warning that, in order to meet the challenge, it might be forced to break the UN sanctions against Iraq. Describing the Saudi action as a 'retaliation' for Jordan's opposition on the US led deployment of troops in Saudi Arabia, Jordanian officials said that Saudi Arabia and other states of the Gulf aimed at trying to bring Jordan to heel politically and economically <sup>(29)</sup>.

The president of Egypt called the emergency Arab Summit on 10 August to discuss about the Gulf Crisis. The King of Jordan participated in the meeting. The resolution of Arab Summit condemned the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. Jordan abstained from voting.

At the Cairo Arab Summit, the King argued that the Arab nation is indebted to Iraq after the latter spent eight years defending it against Iran and he maintained that precisely because Iraq emerged strong and victorious... other parties... initiated campaigns of distortions and slander... to weaken it and to prepare to liquidate it as a promising power in the large Arab homeland. King Hussein argued that the invasion did not come out of the blue, since Saddam had experienced real difficulties with Kuwait over borders. Oil and debt. The world could not therefore expect Iraq to withdraw unconditionally without addressing such legitimate claims. His most scathing remarks were aimed at the United States for mobilizing so rapidly when Iraq invaded Kuwait but failing to apply the same standards to the 23 year Israeli occupation of Jerusalem. The King viewed Israel as the most dangerous power in the region. He said:

There are other tigers aside from Iraq in the area that have been loose for a long period to time. Such a tiger exists in our neighbour Israel, in its continued occupation... and annexation of the Syrian Golan and Jerusalem... Israel represents a very serious threat... I believe that Israel has done a lot to create the present image of Iraq.

Thus the Jordanian government welcomed Saddam's statement of 12 August linking withdrawal from Kuwait with Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories and Syrian withdrawal from Lebanon. However, the King rejected the annexation of Kuwait and still recognized the Sabahs as the lawful rulers<sup>(30)</sup>.

The dispatch of the international coalition's massive land, sea and air forces to Saudi Arabia was widely perceived in the region as a major step towards the implementation of a plan to destroy Iraq's military and industrial capacity. The Iraqi government retaliated by retaining the citizens of various countries on its territory thus creating a climate of fear and uncertainty among foreign population in Iraq and the Gulf. Hundreds of thousands of refugees sought sanctuary in Jordan.

From the beginning of Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, the Jordanian government made it very clear that it did not accept the acquisition of territory by war. Though Jordan did not agree with other members of the Arab League to send the Arab Forces to join the international coalition against Iraq, it did continue its efforts to seek an Arab solution along with other members of the Arab League. These efforts were primarily exercised in two directions:

- 1- To contact the important actors of international coalition and persuade them to dialogue rather than confrontation with Iraq; and
- 2- To contact the like minded countries of Arab League to pursue the government of Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait in view of the massive presence of foreign forces in the region thus avoiding catastrophe.

To this end, the King of Jordan visited Yemen, Sudan, Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, Mauritania and Morocco. He also visit Bed Spain, Great Britain, Germany, France and Italy and explained the Jordanian view point on the crisis.

In September 1990, the King of Jordan sent a message clearly defining the Jordanian position to the United States of America. The message says that Jordan stood by the principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war... and continued to recognize the state of Kuwait. Jordan recognizes the sovereign right of the Saudi Arabia to seek assistance from friendly states and the right of the USA to respond to its request. The presence of the US and allied forces on the land of the state must be terminated within the shortest possible period of time<sup>(31)</sup>.

The position of international coalition led by the US was perceived by the Jordanian government as an inevitable prelude to a military confrontation and the consequences would be disastrous for Iraq. Kuwait and the whole region. Hence, Jordan continued its efforts to seek the help of the European members of the coalition and the Soviet Union to avert this confrontation. These efforts were again addressed to two objectives:

1. To secure the release of foreign national held in Iraq since the middle of August 1990.
2. To encourage certain European governments within the coalition and the Soviet government to undertake initiatives to persuade the Iraqi government to take necessary measures to avoid the resort to force sectioned by the Security council resolution 678.

As a matter of fact, the Jordanian government could persuade the Iraqi government to release all the foreign nationals. On the second point, the French and Soviet governments favourably received

the Jordanian government efforts. This was the vindication of the Jordanian diplomacy and commitment to peace.

When the deadline of January 15, 1991 approached the Jordanian authorities increased their efforts to persuade the European members of the international coalition to avert a military confrontation with Iraq and to warn it of the political human and ecological consequences of war. Between January 2-10, 1991, the king of Jordan had visited London, Bonn, Luxembourg and Rome and discussed with the leaders of these countries the need to avert the war and also limit the consequences of the war.

The failure of all attempts to persuade the Iraqi government to take steps to avert the implementation of Resolution 678 on the one hand and of all attempts to induce the coalition leaders into a more flexible stand on the other inevitably led to the opening of hostilities against Iraq by devastatingly massive air raids on military targets as well as on civilians over the entire Iraq. As the scale of destruction mounted the impact on the people of Jordan became increasingly violent. The bombing of vehicles carrying vital oil supplies to Jordan from Iraq and the Jordanian lives under bombardment from the coalition planes added to this tide of anger and frustration.

During the Gulf crisis. Jordan was subjected to severe strains on its economic and financial stability. The standard of living of people got sharply reduced. The Jordanian stance alienated Kuwait and Saudi Arabia as well as the US. The Jordanian economy took a nose dive with the government spending reduced by 25 percent in September 1990<sup>(32)</sup>. Thousands of people were pushed out of jobs. Collapse of transport, construction, manufacturing and the tourist industry has compounded the structural crisis that the economy was facing prior to August 2. It may be recalled that Jordan was one of the west Asian economies which were negotiating with the IMF in 1990 for a structural adjustment loan, and was on the verge of recognizing its economy. During this crisis period, the aid flow to the country was stopped because it sided with Iraq. In early February, the US government froze its aid amounting 56 million dollars for 1990, and 57.2 million dollars allotted for 1991. On March 22, the US congress approved a bill cutting off its aid programme, to Jordanian as mark of displeasure<sup>(33)</sup>.

Jordan also has had to settle those Jordanians and Palestinians who lost jobs in Kuwait, by finding jobs and housing as well as schools for their children. The impact of these returnees added another 10 percent in the already high rate of unemployment, estimated at 35 percent prior to the crisis. The financial conditions of these workers got further complicated by the fact that their assets had been wiped out as a result of the temporary conversion of the Kuwaiti currency into the Iraqi Dinar. Currently the Kuwaiti authorities are unwilling to compensate those workers who were forced to exchange their currency, because of their presumed support of Iraq and opposition to western presence in the region.

Some positive consequences of the Jordan policy during the Gulf War are encouraging. The Gulf Crisis united Jordan as a country. Jordan has always been in danger of splitting along demographic lines. Jordanians of Palestinian origin, who make up more than half of the 3.1 million population appreciate Saddam's anti-Israeli rhetoric and ask why the west is so concerned about Kuwait when it has done little to persuade Israel to withdraw from the West Bank. Non-Palestinian Jordanians, or East Bankers, ask the same question. Many older East Bankers cling to Baathist political beliefs from their school days in Baghdad or Damascus, and Saddam has given them hope that a strong, unified Arab Nation can be a reality. Finally, there is little Jordanian sympathy for Kuwait because many of the hundreds of thousands of Jordanians who have worked there now say the Kuwaitis were arrogant, even cruel, masters<sup>(34)</sup>. Jordan's pro-Iraqi stand turned them towards their own country and take pride in its policy.

There have been serious negative effects as well. Politically, Jordan appears to have been isolated from her former allies. The United States and Saudi Arabia. The reactions of the Saudi government are particularly revealing. The Saudi retaliation against Jordan, for its opposition to the intervention

by foreign troops in Arab problems. Started with massive mass media campaigns portraying Jordan as apologist for Iraqi aggression against Kuwait. This was followed by economic and diplomatic pressures which included halting sale of oil, harassing truckers at the Saudi borders and expelling Jordanian diplomats and workers<sup>(35)</sup>. The Saudis had done all this in retaliation for King Hussein's support to Iraq. It had cut the oil supplies under the pretext that Jordan has not made payments for past deliveries. It was reported that Riyadh had prevented Jordanian ships from picking up cargo from Jeddah and that it had searched Jordanian ships in the Red Sea. The Saudis were especially hard on king Hussain because according to a plan Jordan was to take the advantage of the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait to divide Saudi Arabia. Jordan would have been responsible for taking control of the Hijaz region where Mecca and Medina are located. The Jordan had placed its army and airforce on alert after the Iraqi invasion. Moreover, king Hussein preferred being called Sharif Hussein, like his grand father who once ruled the Hejaz until the Saudis expelled him<sup>(36)</sup>.

To conclude. Jordan exercised patience, restraint and maintained its cool despite gross provocations. Jordan balanced between two opposite poles bound by the constraints of tilting on neither side. As regards attitude towards Iraq Jordan's compulsions were positive as well as negative. Among the positive factors the urge for leadership. The desire for a constructive peace making role, the need to preserve Arab solidarity and commitments under the ACC were the most important factors. The negative factors consisted of fear of the Iraqi might, pressures of the Palestinians at home, apprehended loss of revenue from trade and transit and popular prejudices against prosperous arrogant Gulf rulers. Reasons for deference to the US were equally pressing. These could be found in the political, financial, military and strategic fields. In all these respects, Jordan's options were extremely circumscribed. By and large, Jordan could not defy or antagonize the US beyond a certain point. Even Jordan's role as a mediator was severely handicapped on three counts. Because of its financial insolvency it did not have intrinsic strength of its own. Its impartiality was not accepted by either side, particularly Gulf sheikhdoms. Historically, in terms of its relations with Iraq, record of attitudes towards Arab revolutionary and radical elements and ultimate dependency on the west, Jordan's credentials were questionable. His limit was exposed when in the midst of his activity against the induction of US-led troops, the US declared that in case of war, Jordan along with Turkey, Saudi Arabia and the Persian Gulf would be one of the bases of three pronged attack on Iraq. The King has, however, not commented on this plan.

It is to be mentioned that Jordan's choices are forced on it by developments outside its boundaries. Its political economy, its geographical location and its highly education and politically alert public have been the ingredients for its weakness and sometimes its strength as well. Although the country has felt the burden of this Gulf Crisis both politically and economically, the King has been able to establish the following facts. First, he secured the legitimacy of his rule in Jordan both among the Jordanians and Palestinians in his Kingdom, thus undermining the competition between him and the PLO for the loyalty of the Palestinian in Jordan, second, his stance against foreign intervention in the region and his opposition to the destruction of Iraq gained him the respect of both nationalist and modern Islamists in the Arab and Islamic worlds. Third, the destruction of Iraq has bough home to the Syrian leadership the need for a coordinated position with Jordan and the PLO which the King had worked out in Arab summit at Baghdad. Finally, Americas and Europeans have come to realize that even though Jordan took a stance contrary in their Gulf policy, the king and his country have a serious role to plan in the dialogue in the Arab-Israeli conflict. Jordan has emerged as a major player in the Gulf crisis. Its sustained support for an Arab solution sets Amman apart from its traditional Arab allies, who have lined up against Iraq and made the Jordanian regime appear at times pro-Saddmist in the extreme.

## JORDAN'S UNIQUE CONTRIBUTION TO THE ARAB WORLD

By adopting an independent policy and taking individual stand in the Gulf Crisis, no doubt Jordan had risked the wrath of combined Arab force as well as of the United States and its allies in the anti-Iraq coalition. However, it had taken pains in explaining the reasons of its independent stand to all the concerned powers. But in their anti-Iraq frenzy that time they did not take them in correct stride and considered it a betrayal to Arab unity. When the dust started settling the United States, Israel, the Gulf states and Saudi Arabia realized the compulsions of geo-political and strategic location of the country and the weight of pressures this tiny Kingdom had withstood.

The very concept of Arab unity on which Iraq had thrived was put to test when the war commenced. Iraq had tried to awaken the pan-Arabism, pan Islamism and Arab unity and had tried to project the war as the Arab-America war to hi-jack the oil wealth of the Arab world. This card did not find acceptability in the Arab states and in view of Saddam Hussein's arrogance in challenging the Saudi-Kuwaiti combine and their mentor – the United States, they feared the Iraqi power more than the West supported Israeli power and combined to fight Iraq under the US-Saudi banner. Jordan singled out itself by opposing the armed action and pleading for a negotiated settlement through the league of Arab states and the United Nations.

Jordanian stand proved that the concept of Arab 'Umma' is nothing but an emotional, sentimental and psychological expression which exists more in the minds of the Arabs than in their deeds. Earlier Egypt had adopted such stand by negotiating peace with Israel and signing the Sinai Agreement. Aswar Sadat even visited Israel and addressed the Israeli Parliament. The Arabs at that time including Jordan had condemned Egypt and boycotted it. Jordan had its own reasons in opposing the Camp David Agreement. It was of the opinion that settlement about all the occupied territories in Jordan (West Bank), Syria (Golan Heights) and Egypt (Gaza Strip and Sinai) should be negotiated through a collective deal and all the territories should be vacated by Israel. It feared that after the Sinai pact Egypt will lose interest in getting the Arab territories vacated. Jordan also thought that once a breakthrough is achieved with Egypt which has been a 'major force' the Arab World the United States will also become slack and club the Jordanian and Syrian problems caused by Israeli occupation with the settlement of larger Palestinian problem. However, success of Egypt, in not only regaining the lost territories but once again occupying a central position in the Arab world substantial financial backing from the United States emboldened King Hussein to adopt an independent policy in the Gulf War and seek solution of its problems with Iraq, Syria, Israel, Gulf Emirates, the United States on country to country basis individually instead of seeking a collective settlement. While supporting Iraq it weighed the advantage and disadvantages and cast its lot in favour of Saddam Hussein. Simultaneously, it continued efforts to regain the goodwill and trust of the United States as well. Jordan succeeded in persuading the United States and its coalition partners into agreeing to hold an international conference to settle the Palestinian problem at the end of the Gulf War. Its own negotiations with the Israelis also continued and progressed into a sensible understanding about each other's interest and limitations. This background helped Jordan in playing its role in the Israeli-PLO talks where both the parties trusted Jordan and the United States also appreciated its concern for the Arab cause. Despite their keen interest in the Palestinian affairs, none of the other Arab states enjoyed that status nor could they afford to play such role.

Jordan itself could negotiate separate accord with Israel and draw several beneficial commitments on water management, environmental development and other projects besides coming to an understating to security matter and matters of common interests.

These two – Israeli-PLO Peace Accord and Israeli-Jordanian Peace Accords have been discussed at length in the final chapter. Here it would suffice to say that the Jordanian efforts paved the way for bi-lateral country to country level peace settlements between Israel and on frontline Arab states which have common stakes in peace in the region and peace with Israel is a prime necessity to solve other problems having connection with inter-Arab policies and relations. The Israeli-Syrian peace talks which are now on the diplomatic rails, if succeed some credit for that

will go to Jordanian efforts as well. Notwithstanding its size, resources, heterogeneity of demographic structure, several legacies of the colonial and Arab past, historical compulsions and family ties, Jordan could play an important role in the Gulf Crisis and is maintaining its grip on the regional affairs. This diplomatic skill and sense of commitment to Arab cause coupled with King Hussein's political and diplomatic acumen makes Jordan a 'Central' country in the Arab politics – a position covered by many others.

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