



**UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA**

**JORDAN'S NATIONAL SECURITY UNDER KING HUSSEIN**

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**DEDICATION**

TO HIS MAJESTY KING ABDULLAH II BIN AL HUSSEIN... TO HIS MAJESTY  
THE LATE KING HUSSEIN BIN TALAT... WHO, THROUGH HIS LOVE FOR  
HIS PEOPLE, HIS SINCERITY, AND HIS GRACE, JORDAN FLOURISHED  
AND ASCENDED TO THE PEAK OF GLORY.

AND  
TO MY PARENTS,  
BROTHERS AND SISTERS

Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Science.

## **JORDAN'S NATIONAL SECURITY UNDER KING HUSSEIN**

**By**

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**November 2000**

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This study examines Jordan's national security during King Hussein's reign. The late King focussed on security and stability issues, and this thesis analyzes the factors that affected the enhancing of his country's national security. The most important of these factors were his personality, military institutions, the role of the tribes, national covenant, the Palestinian question, the Jordan-Israeli peace treaty, and Jordan's relations with the oil producing Arab states.

In addition to the presentation of Jordan's history, this study analyses its national historical experience, historical environment, and its political experience in order to understand how it managed to overcome the political obstacles and threats faced by its national security.

This study follows the descriptive approach and analytical method for the thoughts and given concepts in Jordan's national security and moreover, it discusses all the factors and elements that affect the kingdom's national security.

Jordan's political system has bridged major difficulties in the building of its social stability and the preservation of its national security. The elimination of the factors affecting its national security is solely attributed to the late king's ability and wisdom.

Jordan managed to enter into the international political arena despite the limitation in its resources and abilities. The condition of its security and stability, which makes Jordan distinctive, is rare. This is what attracted the world's concern, in particular the United States.

It is known that Jordan faced successive historical challenges because of its geographical location, borders, and the conditions of its surrounding environment, in addition to pressure of domination on the part of the great powers.

Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada pihak Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Master Sains.

## **KESELAMATAN NEGARA JORDAN DI BAWAH RAJA HUSSEIN**

**Oleh**

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Kajian ini menyelidik tentang keselamatan negara Jordan semasa pemerintahan Almarhum Raja Hussein. Almarhum Raja Hussein telah memberi penumpuan ke atas isu-isu keselamatan dan kestabilan serta menganalisa faktor-faktor yang memberi kesan yang mendalam terhadap keselamatan negaranya. Faktor yang paling penting dan ketara ialah keperibadiannya, institusi-institusi ketenteraan, peranan suku kaum, perjanjian-perjanjian yang dimeterai oleh negara Jordan, masalah Palestin, perjanjian damai Jordan-Israel dan perhubungan Jordan dengan negara-negara pengeluar minyak Arab.

Tambahan kepada persembahan sejarah negara Jordan, kajian ini juga menganalisa pengalaman sejarah negara, sejarah persekitaran dan pengalaman politik bagaimana ia dapat mengatasi rintangan politik dan ugutan-ugutan yang dihadapi oleh pihak keselamatan negara.

Kajian ini menggunakan kaedah-kaedah keperihalan dan penganalisan bagi pemikiran dan konsep politik yang dibincangkan dalam keselamatan negara Jordan.

Ia juga membincangkan segala faktor-faktor dan unsur-unsur serta ciri-ciri yang menjejaskan keselamatan negara.

Sistem politik negara Jordan telah membantu menangani halangan-halangan utama dalam membangunkan kestabilan sosial dan mengekalkan keselamatan negara. Penghindaran dari faktor-faktor yang boleh menjejaskan keselamatan adalah semata-mata bergantung pada kesungguhan dan kebijaksanaan Almarhum.

Jordan berjaya menembusi gelanggang politik antarabangsa sekalipun keupayaan dan sumber-sumber semulajadi negaranya terbatas. Keadaan keselamatan dan kestabilan negara telah menjadikan Jordan istimewa, unik dan menakjubkan. Ciri-ciri ini telah menarik perhatian dan pandangan dunia terutamanya negara Amerika Syarikat.

Telah diketahui umum bahawa Jordan telah berjaya menghadapi dan mengharungi berbagai cabaran bersejarah yang disebabkan oleh kedudukan geografi sempadan-sempadan dan keadaan sekelilingnya selain daripada dan kongkongan terhadap negara Jordan oleh kuasa-kuasa besar dunia.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<b>LHP</b>	Lower House of Parliament
<b>USA</b>	The United States of America
<b>PLO</b>	Palestinian Liberation Organisation
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>GHQ</b>	General Headquarters
<b>HMK</b>	His Majesty King
<b>AD</b>	Anno Domini
<b>AH</b>	Anno Hegirae
<b>NGP</b>	National Gross Product
<b>GATT</b>	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
<b>ALIA</b>	Alia Line International Airport

# **CHAPTER 1**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Preamble**

The foundation of an authority in a country can not be established without justice prevailing among its citizens. It has been suggested that authority and justice are closely related. As justice prevails, the values of freedom and security grow among individuals on the one hand, and between individuals and their rulers on the other hand.

The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan enjoys a certain degree of security and stability that is seldom enjoyed by other states in the region. Therefore, Jordan provides an ideal sample for research at understanding the issue of national security and its related dimensions, not only of Jordan in particular, but of other Arab States in general.

## **1.2 Geography**

### **1.2.1 Location**

The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan is located between 29-33 degree latitude North and 35-39 degree longitude East (Figure 1.1). Jordan's location is distinguished by the following important characteristics. Firstly, it occupies an important middle position among the Asia-Arab countries. Syria and Lebanon surround it to the North, Palestine to the West, Iraq to the East and Saudi Arabia to the South. Secondly, Jordan is situated at the centre of the land and sea routes between central and East Asia, and between the countries of the Mediterranean. Hence, Jordan is a natural outlet for Syria, Iraq, Saudi Arabia and Palestine.

The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan officially came into existence under its present name in 1947, when the Emirate State gained independence from Britain under an agreement signed by Prince Abdullah.

### **1.2.2 Area and Population**

The total area of Jordan is 97,740 sq. km (37,738 sq. miles) (Abu Shariah, 1999: 53). According to the official 2000 Census, the population of Jordan is





Figure 1.1: Location of Jordan



estimated at about 5 million people.<sup>2</sup> The capital city is Amman, which is also the largest city. The official language is Arabic, and a large majority of its population is Muslim.<sup>3</sup>

The majority of Jordan's population is of Arab descent. A small but insignificant number comprises Chechens and others. About 70% of the population reside in three major cities such as Amman, Az-Zarqa and Irbid. These three cities are located in the central north of the country. The rest of the population is scattered throughout the state and found mostly in other cities like Al-Karaj, Ma'an and Al-Aqabah.

### **1.2.3 Land and Natural Resources**

Jordan's terrain consists chiefly of desert and steep plateaus. Most of the country lies between 2,000 and 3,000 feet (600-900 meters), rising in some areas to more than 5,000 feet (1,500 meters). It forms an extension of the great plateau of Arabia. Although virtually landlocked, Jordan does have a coastline of about 15 miles (25 km) on the Red Sea's Gulf of Aqaba<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> Jordan. (2000). General Population and Housing Census. Amman: Department of Public Statistics.

<sup>3</sup> The Encyclopaedia Americana, Vol. 16, p.166.

<sup>4</sup> The Encyclopaedia Americana, Vol. 16, p.166.

Jordan has very little mineral resources, the major ones being phosphates and potash, both of which are essential components of fertilizers.<sup>5</sup> In 1989, both minerals contributed to about 80% of Jordan's Gross National Product. Its domestic economy depends largely on agriculture, small-scale industries and tourism, as well as natural gas (Hiro, 1996: 152).

#### **1.2.4 The Importance of Jordan's Strategic Location**

Jordan's strategic location made it a meeting point for various tribes and nationalities. It is a convergent point for the movements of peoples from four different areas. In the North, Jordan was linked with the Hauran Province during the Ottoman rule. From this direction, the Syrian commercial communities and political refugees arrived in Jordan. The latter had left Syria to escape the atrocities of the French occupation. The Syrians were later followed by the arrival of the administrative officials, Prince Abdullah and his companions, who settled in Jordan at the early stages of the Emirate's rule.

From its eastern part, the Anza tribes moved to Jordan. One of these tribes had settled in the extreme Northeast part of the country. The Anzan tribes were later joined by Sharakat of Wadi Al-Serhan. From the South, the tribes of Al Hwaitat moved from Sinai and the Saudi territories, reaching Bayer and Qatrana in Jordan. It

<sup>5</sup> The Encyclopaedia Americana, Vol. 16, p.16.



is said that these tribes were the original inhabitants of Trans-Jordan, and that their kinship are descendants to the Nabateans (Al-Buhairy, 1973: 132).

On the western side, commercial transactions between Palestine and Trans-Jordan had been in existence since 1921. During this time, many Talhamites had immigrated from Bethlehem to the prosperous land of Muab (Al-Buhairy, 1992:11). The prosperity of the big cities in the two banks had provided a stimulus for many Palestinian families to move from Nablus to Salt and from Hebron to Kerak. Conversely, some tribes in East Jordan had also migrated from the Badia into Palestinian territories. For example, the Al-Masaeed tribe had moved from Kerak and settled in Baisan and Wadi Al-Fara'h and the Sarweyeh tribes from the Northeast of Jordan and Huran had moved and settled in Baisan and Samakh. Another tribe, the Bani Issa, had also moved from the same region, but had settled around Haifa City (Al-Buhairy, 1973: 99).

This strategic location had made Jordan a meeting point for human traffic and civilisation. As a result, Jordan had been a host to a small number of people from communities such as the Kurds, Turkumans, Armenians, Bushnags and later the Sharks, who settled in Jordan (Gharaybeh, 1962: 16).

At the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Al-Hijaz railway was built between Damascus and Mecca. One third of the total length (10308Km) of that railway passes through Jordan. When Britain took over the control of the region from the Turks, the importance of Jordan became more apparent. During the Second World War, Britain

constructed a dockyard in Aqaba for military purposes. This dockyard later became the foundation for a modern port in Aqaba. In addition to being the only outlet to the open sea, the port of Aqaba plays an increasingly important role in trade for the Arab Gulf states, Iraq and the northern part of Saudi Arabia. When the Suez Canal was closed due to the Second World War, Aqaba provided the linking point between Syria and Lebanon, and the countries of the East Asia. The port also plays an important role in the trade between Iraq and the port of Beirut as well as providing access for Saudi oil pipes, which crosses Jordanian territory through the tap lines.

Jordan's strategic position makes it the central access point for Arab trade. It also serves as the buffer state for many unfriendly Arab neighbours. This strategic position has worked to the state's advantage, especially in international relations and in dealings with superpowers that compete for influence in the region. For example, Jordan has exploited this strategic position in return for loans and grants to offset its trade imbalance. Between 1950 and 1968, the state received loans and grants totalling between 34% and 65% of its annual budgets (Al-Buhairy, 1992: 14-15).

### **1.3. Importance of the Study**

Although there are plenty of literature on history, to date, there is no study on the national security of Jordan, especially in the post-Cold War period. This study therefore is a pioneering attempt to understand Jordanian national security and its underlying factors.

In comparison to other Arab states, Jordan has been relatively politically stable, especially during King Hussein's reign. The government under King Hussein enjoyed a high degree of legitimacy. This was perhaps most unusual for a state within the Arab region. It is therefore important to understand how Jordan had managed to successfully engineer, and at the same time, maintained its national security. Lessons from the successful management of national security in Jordan may help provide a model and guidance for other unstable Arab states in the region.

National security is not only important for political stability alone. It also has a direct bearing on economic growth that in turn influences social order and harmony. As Jordan was able to uphold its national security and generated a certain level of economic development, it has at the same time been able to withstand the generally unstable political environment in the Middle East.

This research may be considered unprecedented in the politics of national security in Jordan, because previous studies only addressed the other issue of food in Jordan's national security. Besides, this study is important because it focuses directly on the role of King Hussein in relations to the issue of national security. In that aspect, the study sought to determine how the King had played a crucial role in ensuring and enhancing national security that has made it possible for a very high degree of economic development and social harmony to be realised during his reign.

## 1.4 Research Questions

The following are some of the major questions that this study seeks to address in an attempt to understand Jordan's national security.

### 1.5.1 National Context

1. How was Jordan's national security formulated?
2. What were the implications of Jordan's national security on the economic development and social harmony?
3. How did pluralism in Jordan affect the formulation of national security?

### 1.5.2 Regional Context

1. How does the Palestinian question fit into Jordan's national security?
2. How did the overall interests of the neighboring Arab oil producing states affect Jordan's national security?
3. What was the impact of the peace process in the Middle East on Jordan's national security?