

October 30, 1973

JORDAN - ISRAEL

The Main Elements of a Negotiated
Settlement

The strategy behind this approach would be for the US to press for an Israel-Jordan settlement in which at least the Arab populated areas of the West Bank would be returned to King Hussein's control. Since this is unlikely to be enough to satisfy Jordanian demands, it could be proposed as an interim measure, leaving Jerusalem and final borders for subsequent negotiations, but this is optional. The US would try to draw on its close relations with both parties to urge movement toward a settlement, and at critical points might suggest ways of resolving otherwise intractable issues. Israel can be expected to go along with the general idea but to balk at concessions on Jerusalem and territory. Hussein is likely to be interested in this approach, but will take a firm position on Jerusalem and final borders.

King Hussein has put forward his plan for a United Arab Kingdom as a framework for the future of Jordan which can be responsive in some degree to Palestinian Arab demands for a home of their own. Implementation of this plan would be Hussein's framework for re-establishing control over the West Bank. He himself has said it is a bare skeleton with wide flexibility. If settlement of issues between Jordan and Israel were to be phased, presumably Hussein would prefer steps that would enable him to move toward implementation of the United Arab Kingdom first. [See attached summary of the United Arab Kingdom plan.]

The discussion below analyzes the key issues that would be involved in negotiations between Jordan and Israel.

1. Borders

--The Allon Plan is generally considered to represent Israel's current minimum position. This would involve Israeli military control of the Jordan Valley; a number of border "rectifications"; and return of most of the inhabited areas of the West Bank to Jordan. While the rationale for annexing the Jordan Valley is ostensibly based on security, other border changes would be justified by historical and religious arguments. Gaza would be incorporated into Israel, although some of its population would be encouraged to resettle on the West Bank. Jordan might receive port facilities in Gaza and perhaps at Haifa as well.

--A watered-down variant of the Allon Plan might be more acceptable to Jordan. This would provide Israel with a minimal security presence in the Jordan Valley and only minor border changes elsewhere, to be offset by ceding Gaza to Jordan and the attachment of several Israeli Arab villages in the "little triangle" area near Jenin to Jordan. This arrangement would allow Hussein to point to mutual concessions, while continuing to permit Israel a military presence in crucial areas.

2. Demilitarization

Israel would insist upon, and Jordan would quite likely accept, the principle of demilitarization of the West Bank. The issue between them would be how to assure compliance with demilitarization. Several possibilities arise:

--Israel could retain present garrisons on the West Bank during the first stage of an interim agreement, reducing the size of the military presence as later agreements go into effect.

--Joint Israeli-Jordanian-UN observer posts could be stationed at the bridges across the Jordan River and electronic sensors and patrols could be employed along the rest of the border to detect infiltration.

--In return for a Jordanian agreement not to allow other Arab armies on the East Bank, Israel could minimize her military presence on the West Bank.

3. Jerusalem

A subsequent tab provides a more detailed discussion of possible ways of handling the Jerusalem problem and a comparison of Jordanian and Israeli positions now. More than any other issue except perhaps the final borders, the Jerusalem issue may require a formula for not meeting the issue head-on now. The art of any approach to a solution is to find ways of extending at an early stage of a settlement some Arab self-administration into a Jerusalem over which Israel remains predominantly sovereign. These are some of the approaches possible:

--Within a unified, Israeli-administered city, Jordan would at a minimum have to be allowed special rights over Muslim holy places.

--Jerusalem would remain an open city. By expanding the city's limits and overlapping administrative responsibilities as in US counties, townships and cities, it is theoretically possible to restore an Arab role even in the Arab quarters of the walled city. In new areas which would now lie within the expanded city limits on Jordan's side, one could even conceive of building a center for the capital of the West Bank.

--A Jordanian proposal would draw the final border in such a way that it would run around Jerusalem on both sides. Israel and Jordan would have immigration and customs facilities on their respective sides of the city. Entry into the city would be unhampered, with each side checking only those leaving the city. Within the city there would be complete freedom of movement. Israel and Jordan would each be sovereign in parts of the city, and details of joint administration would be worked out as part of a settlement.

4. Palestinian Rights

--If control over most of the West Bank were restored directly to Hussein, he would then begin forming a Palestinian administration and eventually a government there within his United Arab Kingdom.

--An interim alternative, which would probably be unacceptable to Israel and Jordan, might be to place the Palestinian population of the West Bank under a UN trusteeship for a designated period. During the trusteeship, normal political activity would be allowed, looking toward a time when a referendum would be held offering the Palestinians the choice of independence, association with Jordan as an autonomous region, association with Israel as an autonomous region, or reintegration with Jordan. During the interim period, all Palestinians would be invited to return to the West Bank and serious development and reconstruction efforts would be undertaken. Those refugees deciding to settle on the West Bank would be given compensation.

--Whichever of the above approaches is taken, the Palestinian issue will also have to be dealt with as a refugee problem. This aspect could be emphasized or de-emphasized to whatever degree is politically desirable. Israel might be encouraged to accept the return of a specified number of Palestinians and to offer compensation to others.

--Israel will insist on the right of Jews to settle on the West Bank. Eventually open borders might be established between Israel and Jordan, with free movement of goods and people, thereby allowing Palestinians to settle in parts of Israel, and Israelis to live on the West Bank. To minimize political problems, citizenship and place of residence would not necessarily have to coincide, so that Jews in Hebron would remain Israeli citizens and vote in Israeli elections, while Palestinians living in Haifa would be Palestinian or Jordanian citizens.

--Finally, Jordan might regain authority over the West Bank and Gazan Palestinians; declare its intention to end the status of the refugees; and receive a lump-sum payment from Israel as compensation for the lost homes in Israel. Other international contributions could also be channeled to the Jordanian government to help with the resettlement effort, and UNRWA would gradually be disbanded.

--In all cases above, support for the Jordanian development plan will enable Jordan increasingly to absorb the refugees now on the East Bank into its economy.

Comment:

Approaches to a Jordanian-Israeli settlement are complicated by the nature of the issues dividing the two countries. Israeli positions on Jerusalem and borders are very hard for Jordan to accept publicly, and there are few signs of Israeli softening. On the contrary, the Israeli appetite has grown with the passage of time, making a settlement increasingly difficult. Meanwhile, the US finds itself in the position of having promised to work for a settlement along lines closer to what Jordan prefers. It is easy to imagine negotiations deadlocking at an early stage over issues of borders, Jerusalem and refugees. If it proves impossible to settle these issues, the alternative will still remain of trying to work for tacit agreements and understandings between Israel and Jordan that will permit Palestinian autonomy to develop under Israeli auspices. For the moment this option is less attractive than a negotiated settlement, but it may deserve attention again if efforts at a formal settlement fail.

SECRET (XGDS)

UNITED ARAB KINGDOM
Summary of King Hussein's Proposal

In May 1972, King Hussein put forward a proposal for a United Arab Kingdom (UAK) to be formed of the East and West Banks under his authority. The novelty in this plan was that it provided for a measure of autonomy for the Palestinian region on the West Bank. This offer was made in the hope of accommodating the widespread sense of Palestinian nationalism within the framework of Hashemite sovereignty. The plan was poorly received in the Arab world, and even Palestinians on the West Bank expressed little enthusiasm initially. Nonetheless, the plan is flexible enough to suit a variety of political contexts and could be the embryo of a Palestinian entity that might be a step toward the resolution of the Palestinian dimension of the conflict. The UAK's essential features are:

- A federal framework, with national authority centered in the monarchy. Amman would be the national capital.
- Two autonomous regions, one consisting of the East Bank with Amman as its capital; the other consisting of the West Bank and perhaps Gaza, with Jerusalem as its capital.
- The King would retain virtually all authority in the fields of defense, internal security, and foreign affairs. While formally a constitutional monarchy, the UAK would remain very much under the King's control.
- For local issues, each region would be allowed a degree of autonomy. Regional parliaments would be elected and would select a Governor General. He in turn would choose a regional Prime Minister who would select a regional cabinet.
- The real functions of the regional authorities remain vague at this point, but economic development and the provision of social services would seem to fall within their scope.

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